



Steller seals doze in the sun at a rookery on Ano Nuevo Island. UCSC researchers report there are no other comparable rookeries outside the arctic and antarctic.

Isle Of Controversy

By Don Righetti
Sentinel Staff Writer

The status of the right of public access to Ano Nuevo Island, much loved retreat of fisherman, sightseers and alone hunters, remains thoroughly muddled.

The public is allowed at least restricted access to the island now, however, and it appears that condition will remain in effect for some time.

The State Department of Parks and Recreation recently ordered the island — a state park — closed. A stream of letters from local nature lovers and fishermen, however, has given the state pause in its decision to enforce the order. The opposition was taken into account at a meeting last week in Sacramento at which an agreement to turn administration of the island over to the University of California was discussed.

No decision was reached, but the island is nonetheless under practical administration of the university and the Stanford Research Institute, although neither possesses legal policing authority.

Other newspaper accounts of the closing reported it resulted from prodding by the two universities. This has been denied

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by both Division of Beaches and Parks Director Earl P. Hanson and UCSC biology instructor Richard S. Peterson.

Hanson stated the island was closed to protect the public from the vicious tidal patterns between it and the mainland which have resulted in a number of drownings. It is possible, at considerable hazard and only during minus tides, to walk the half-mile to the island from the mainland at Ano Nuevo Point.

Fishermen and sightseers have often been marooned on the island by high tides after they waited too long to come ashore.

Some of the bad blood between the public and the island administrators originated because of the more adamant contention by chiefs of the Stanford study project that visitors spoil the island for research. Arguments had resulted when fishermen were flatly ordered off the island by the Stanford researchers.

The Stanford project is rapidly drawing to a close, however, and it appears visitation policy making will fall into the hands of Peterson and his team.

The UCSC professor takes a milder view of the subject. "A lot of fishermen have been going out there for a long time, and we have to get along with them," he said.

He reported the island, with the exception of some off-limits areas, will remain open to the public. Visitors will merely be met by a caretaker who will ex-

plain what the research team is doing and ask their cooperation in the effort.

Peterson explained why there is such intense interest in the island. It appears that Ano Nuevo, the former eight-acre home of a Coast Guard station, some 20 miles north of Santa Cruz, is a unique place.

The professor said there were no comparable rookeries outside the arctic and antarctic. And it is believed to be the only place in the world where five different kinds of seals — elephant seals, California sea lions, Steller sea lions, harbor seals, and occasionally fur seals and sea otters—come ashore.

But the research value is a fragile thing. If visitors swarm unrestricted over the island, the animals will disappear, Peterson claimed.

He said he had been to the island the day after several other visitors had been there and discovered a number of dead seal pups. It was unknown whether they had been stoned to death or had been trampled by the larger animals after they had been frightened by the sightseers.

The research project is designed to study the biology of

the animals and describe their behavior on land. The number of seals using the island will be counted to determine whether their number is increasing.

The seals will be tagged with metal identification flaps and their migration and food habits will be studied. For one thing, the scientists hope to discover whether the seals consume appreciable amounts of commercially valuable fish as professional fishermen have long charged.

And, Peterson thinks, this can all be done while allowing the public to visit the island, if the sightseers and fishermen will cooperate in the effort.

'CHEMICAL' TOWN

Four chemical elements—ytterbium, yttrium, terbium and erbium—are named for Ytterby, a hamlet near Stockholm, Sweden. The town's fame is owed to a local quarry which provided a wealth of minerals for chemists in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Barbados Island, in the West Indies, was the only foreign country ever visited by George Washington.

Who Is The Mysterious Author, B. Traven?

By Howard C. Heyn

Los Angeles (AP). — Where, and who, is the author of "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre"?

This is a perennial question. His many stories of adventure, violence and hardship are known to millions over the world. Yet the man who wrote them has been an international mystery

American movie.

Traven has eluded them all. Among those intrigued by his secret life is William Weber Johnson, a professor of journalism at the University of California at Los Angeles and a student of Mexico who is preparing a history of that country.

As a hobby Johnson has

brose Bierce, journalist and short-story writer in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., who went to Mexico in 1913 and later vanished.

Could Traven and "Bitter Bierce" be the same? The work of both displayed strong cynicism but their literary styles and subject matter differ wide-

eral books of short stories have appeared. Nine novels were published first in Germany.

As a storyteller Traven deals with such subjects as landless Mexican Indians, migrant foreigners, economic hardships, superstitions and loneliness. His style is uneven, but he weaves an exciting

man, Johnson said. He believes Traven, now 77, is in Mexico City, but he declines to say why he thinks so.

"His passion for privacy interests me. But I respect his right to live his life as he chooses."

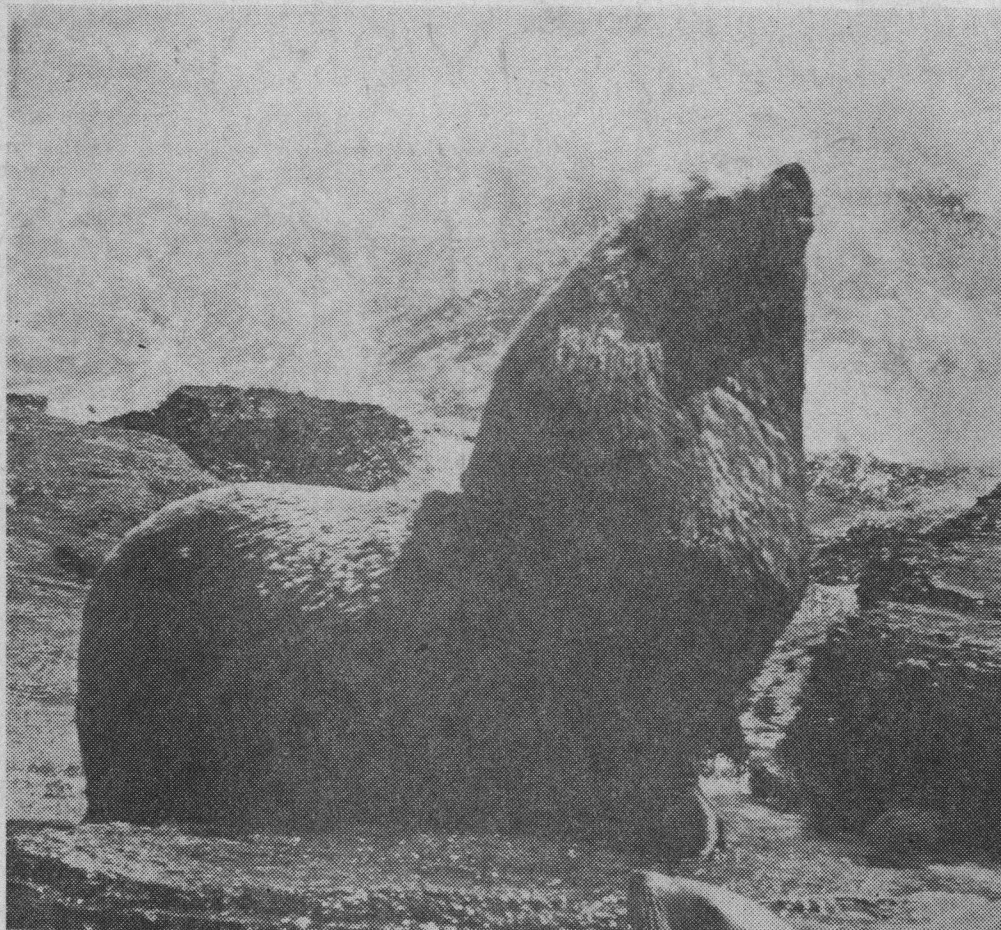
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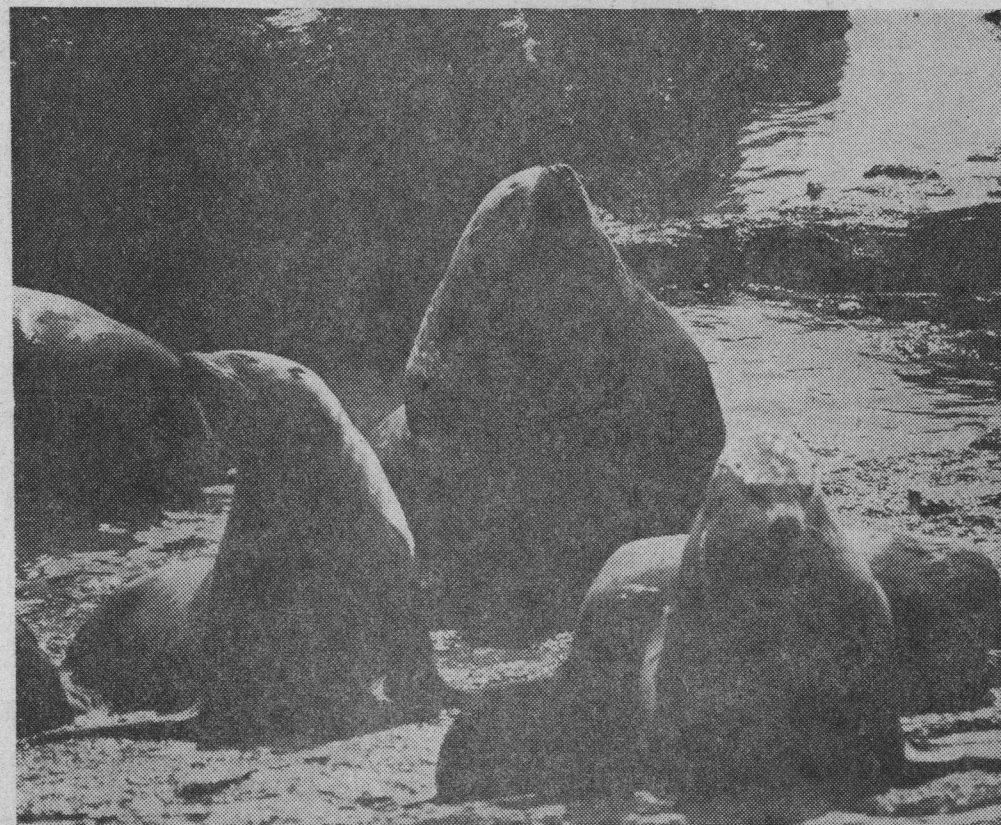


While controversy surrounds the right of public access to Año Nuevo Island, this hefty Steller seal bull, nose high in the air, appears highly indignant that any humans, researchers and sightseers alike, be allowed on his island.

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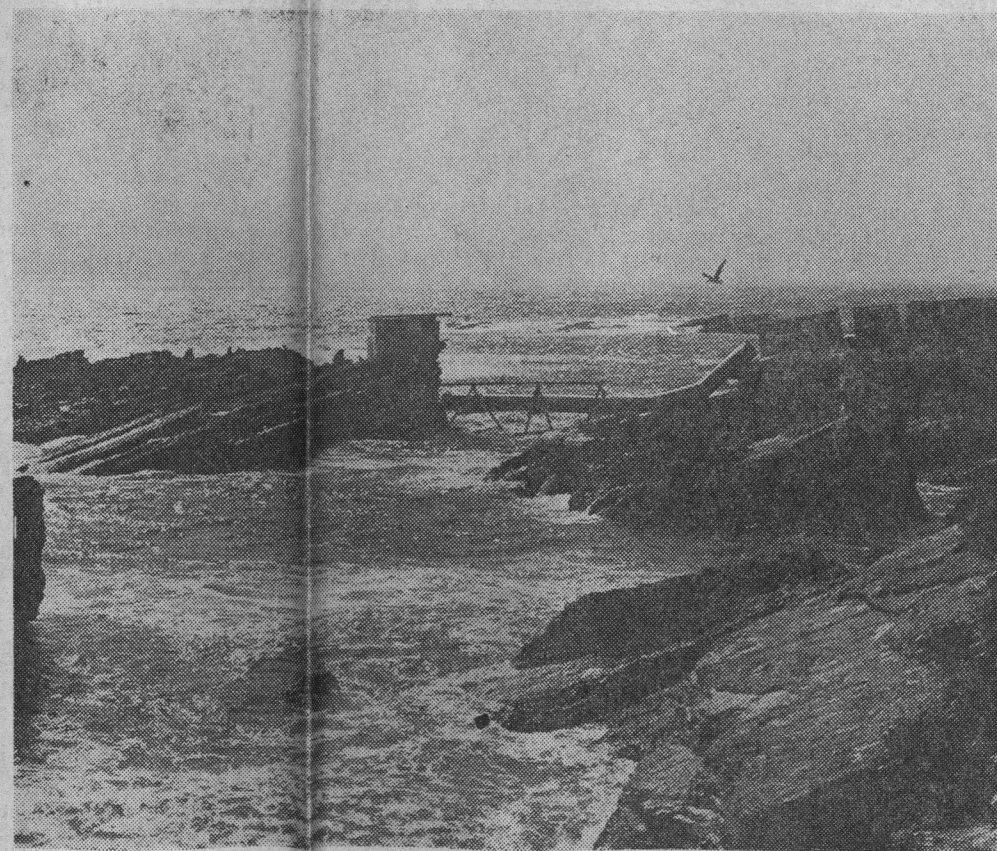


Richard S. Peterson, assistant professor of biology, heads the UCSC research project at Año Nuevo.



Fat and sleek, a Steller seal bull shepherds his harem of females on Año Nuevo. The island is thought to be the only place in the world where

five different kinds of seals come ashore.



The UCSC research building at Año Nuevo Island perches precariously at the edge of the sea. Researchers reach the building by crawling behind the fence at right, then through the aluminum tubing to avoid being seen by seals.

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