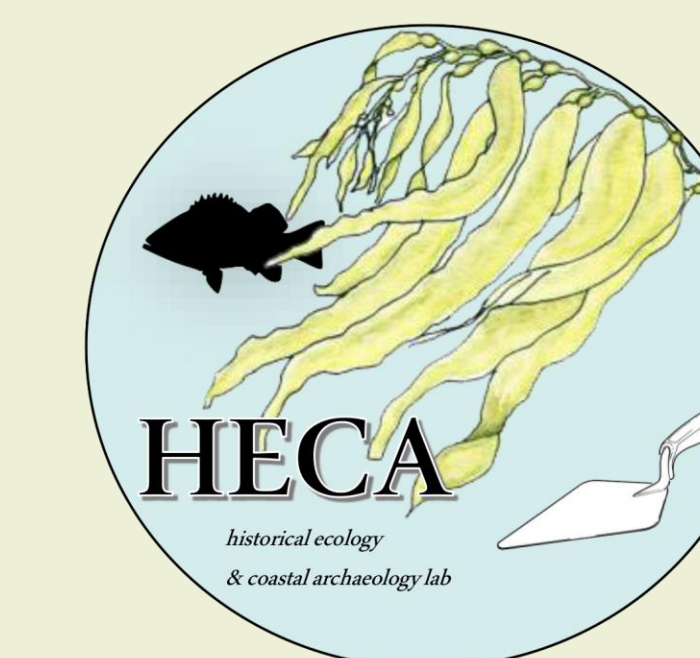




Denial of Compensation For Marine Conservation: Pelagic Northern Fur Sealing as an Indigenous Industry on the Northwest Coast Archaeological & Historical Comparisons

Fynley Calder-Rasmussen & Iain McKechnie
 fcalderasmussen@uvic.ca & iim@uvic.ca
Historical Ecology and Coastal Archaeology (HECA) Lab
UVic Department of Anthropology



In affiliation with the
 Historical Ecology and
 Coastal Archaeology
 (HECA) lab, University of
 Victoria

BACKGROUND

- Hunting northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*) has been an enduring practice across the Northwest Coast for millennia¹ but hunting was prohibited after the 1911 North Pacific Fur Seal Treaty.
- For >50 years, Victoria was an international hub for pelagic sealing. Schooner captains seasonally hired Indigenous sealers, many from Nuuchahnulth communities along western Vancouver Island.²
- After 1911, fur sealers could no longer hunt or make a living out of this livelihood. This study examines how where & how many were denied compensation.

Knowledge from Elders

Nuuchahnulth sealers hunted from dugout canoes.

Chief Charlie Jones,
 Pacheedaht



Chief Louie Nookmiis w fur
 seal harpoons, Huu-ay-aht.



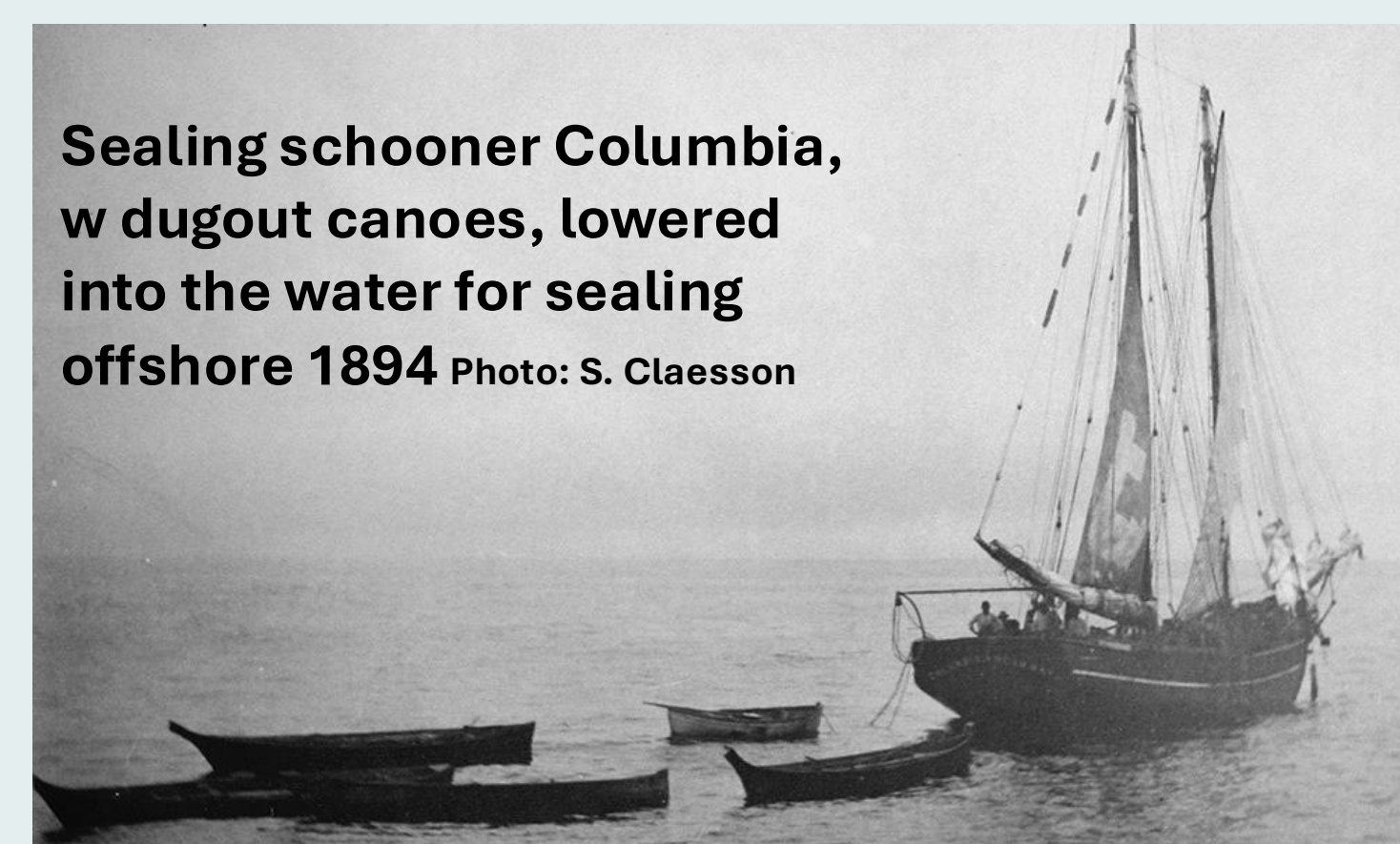
"The [northern fur] seals
 were like deer they could
 hear a splash for miles. We
 paddled silently to get close
 to them."
 1981

"In the year 1894 I embarked
 on a sealing schooner &
 reached Bering Sea because
 Boskwits had killed all the fur
 seal in Barclay Sound. Boskwits
 gave guns to white men, so
 they killed more seals than the
 Indians, & Barclay Sound was
 cleared out of fur seals."
 1964

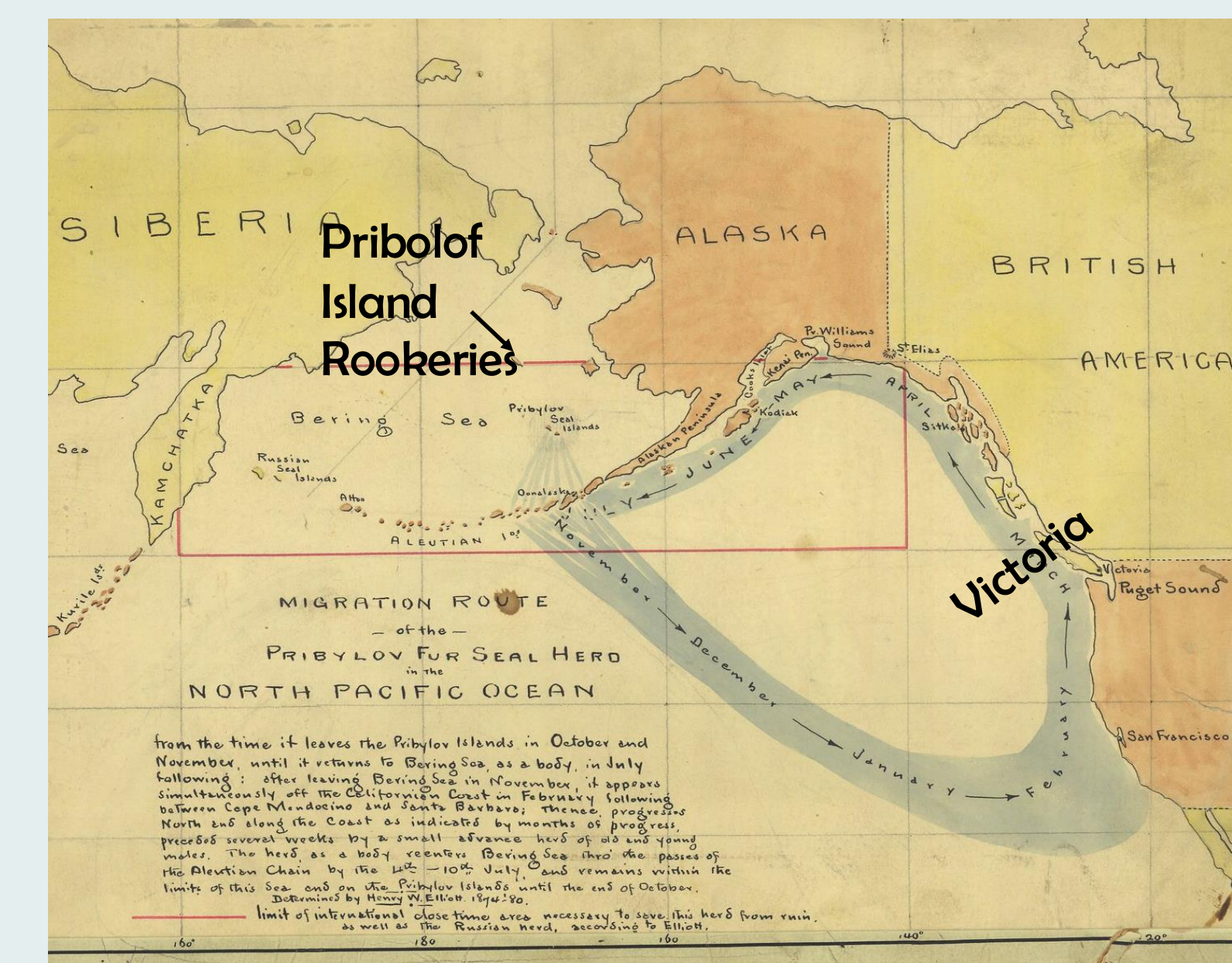
METHODS

- We transcribed data for 900 Indigenous sealers who filed claims across dozens of coastal communities as listed using the 1916 Canadian Pelagic Sealing Commissioner's Report.³
- We documented names, village locations and compensation requests and created a maps of community locations scaled to.
- We compare these to zooarchaeological site data from 58 assemblages from southern British Columbia and Northwest Washington.¹

Commercial Sealing



Northern Fur Seal Migration⁴



Fur Sealing Methods



Harpooning a sleeping seal from a dugout canoe
 Photo: A. Curtis



Northern fur seal sleeping at sea.
 SFGate

RESULTS

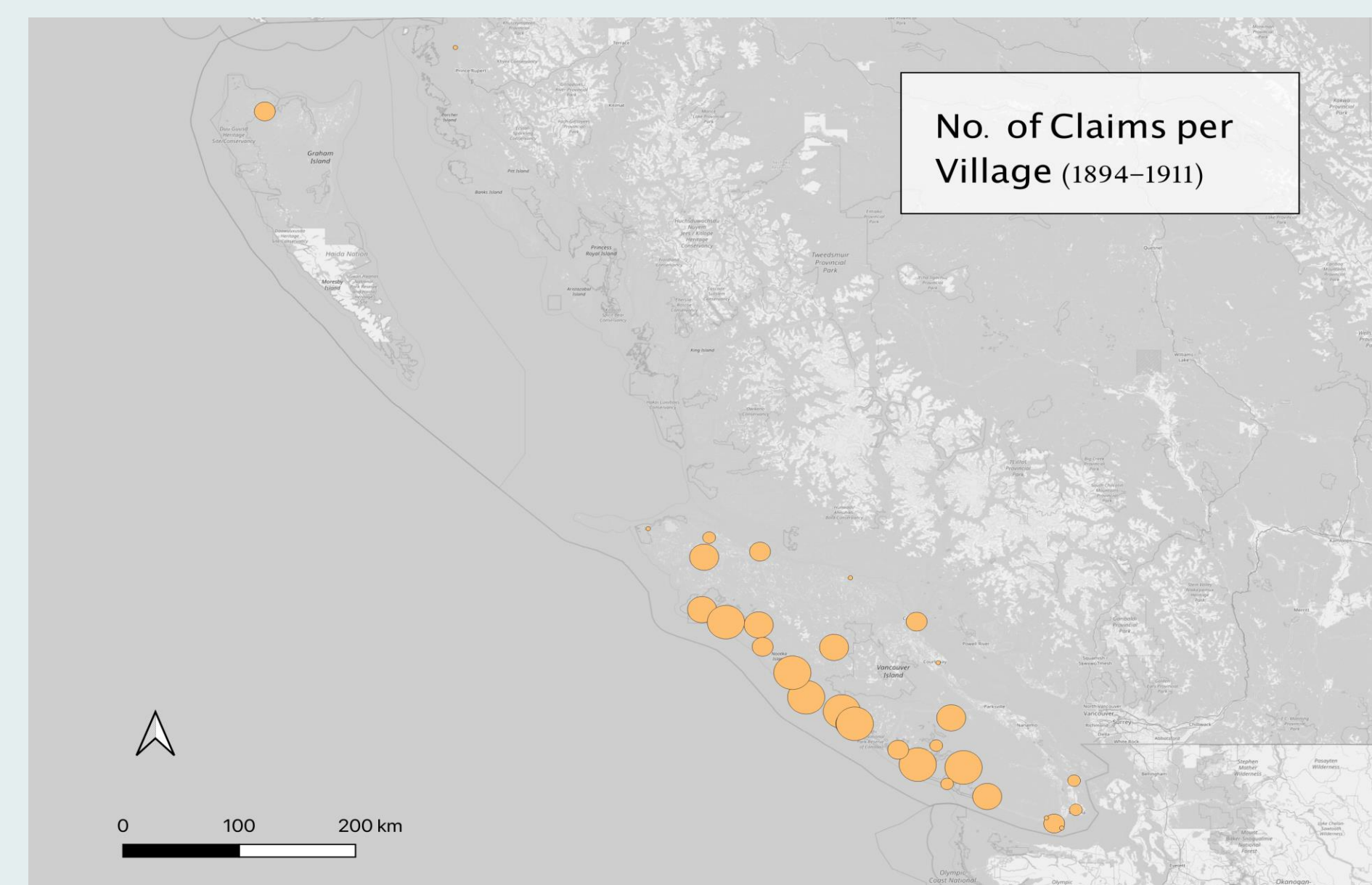


Figure 1. Map of the study area demonstrating the distribution and abundance of claims made by Indigenous sealers as listed in the 1916 Pelagic Sealing Commissioner's Report.

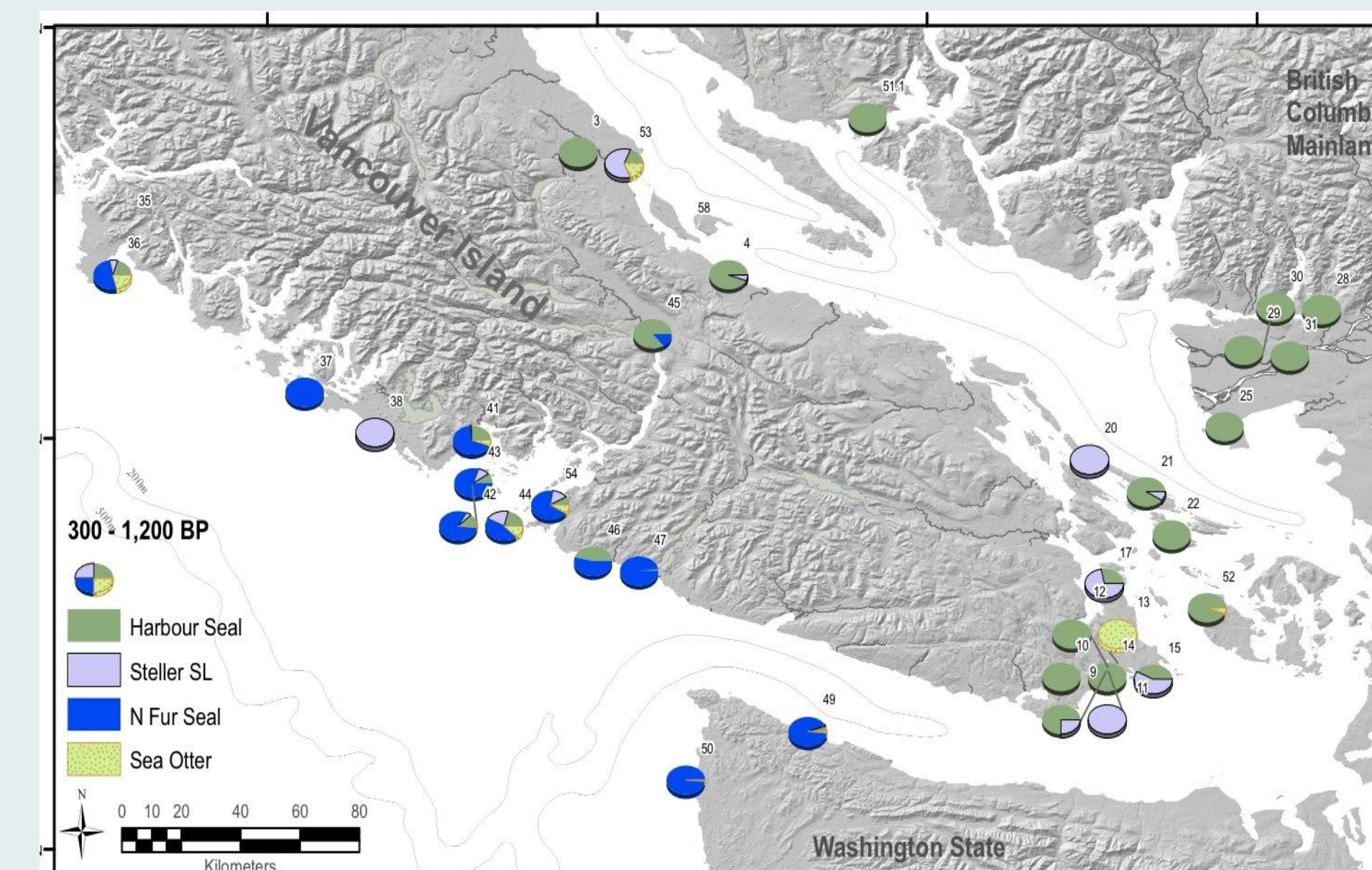
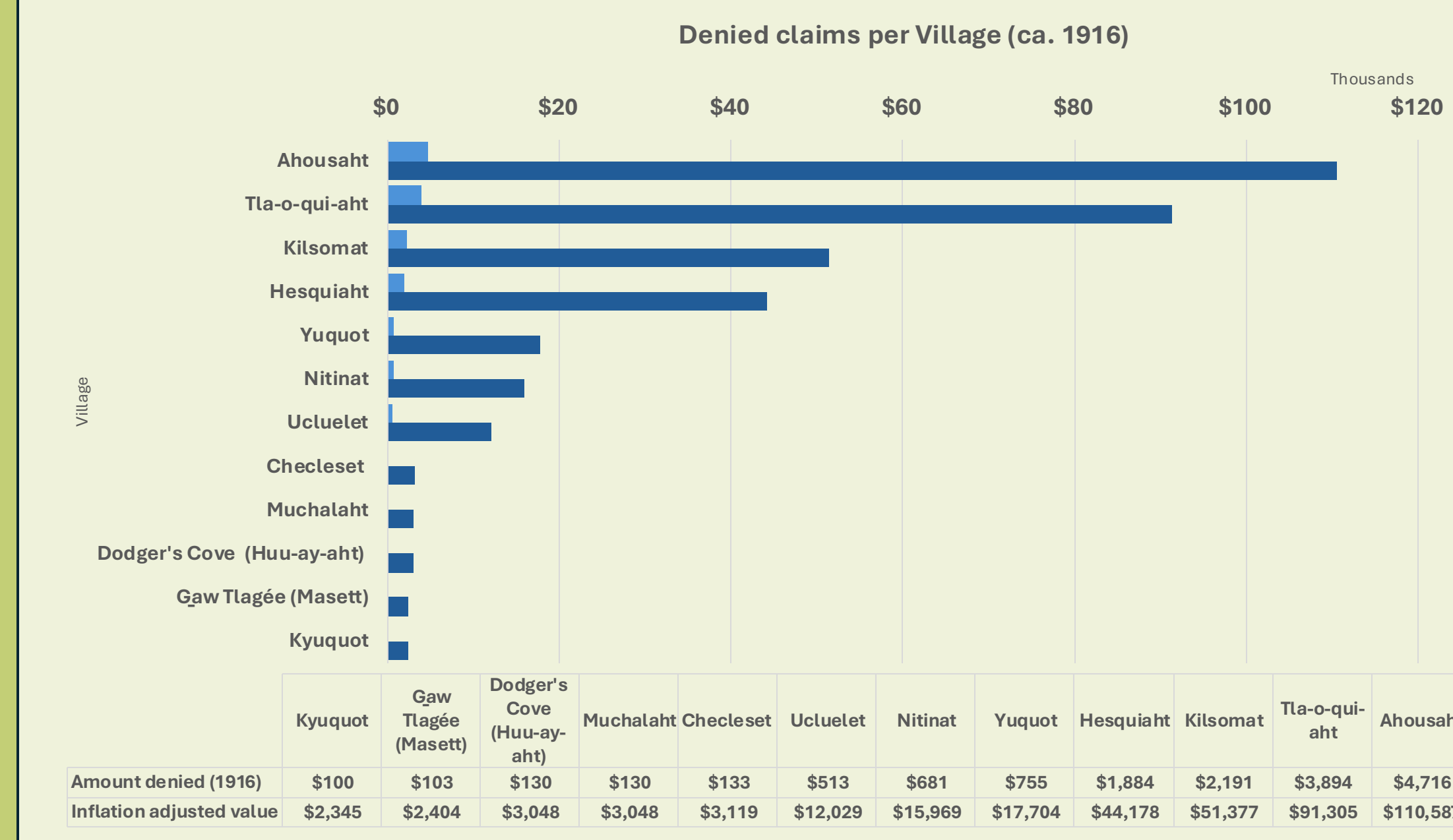


Figure 2. Map of the study area demonstrating the distribution of archaeological assemblages demonstrating the abundance of northern fur seal zooarchaeological data along the outer west coast of Vancouver Island.

- The highest sum of claims following the Paris Awards (1894) were from Tla-o-qui-aht (n = 79), making up 9.2% of the total claims following 1894.
- The highest sum of claims following the Northern Pacific Fur Seal Convention (1911) were from Ahousaht (n = 31), making up 31% of the total claims following 1911.
- Nuuchahnulth sealers are the most represented in both 1894 and 1911 claimant groups.

DISCUSSION



- As a condition of settlement, Canada was given \$2,000,000 with \$1,000,000 allocated to sealers.
- Sealers from Indigenous communities, primarily Nuuchahnulth, did not receive any amount of this sum⁵.
- Moreover, claimants were denied even modest payments, such as Ahousaht, which amounts to the modern equivalent of roughly \$110,587.

CONCLUSION

- Indigenous and non-Indigenous hunters had to make significant concessions following the 1894 Paris Accords & the Northern Fur Seal Convention of 1911.
- Nuuchahnulth sealers were the most represented groups which corresponds closely with the archaeological evidence of this ancient practice.¹
- Given the primacy of conservation in federal legislation, Indigenous hunters require permission to seal today, continuing to infringe on Aboriginal Rights as defined under DFO policies regarding food, social, and ceremonial fishing rights.⁶

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