

Beach It — *Culu'ulluku*, *Culurt'slluku*

PARAG'UUTATENG CULURTAARAIT. – SOMETIMES THEY BEACH THEIR BOAT.



Photo: The Alutiiq Pride, the Afognak Native Corporation boat, landing on the beach in Kizhuyak Bay.

Most fishermen who know Alutiiq words are familiar with *culu'ulluku*, a term that means to beach your boat. Whether intentional or accidental, beaching is an age-old way of reaching the shore. In classical Alutiiq society, paddlers who wished to bring their skin-covered *qayat* or *angyat* to land would select an appropriate beach, wait for the right wave to carry them landward, and use special strokes to pull their boats safely through the surf. Archaeologists note that many ancient coastal villages were built behind a good landing beach: a protected length of sand or gravel shoreline.

While beaching a boat is a convenient way to unload, it can also be an important safety choice. By bringing your boat to land in a storm, you can avoid being smashed against rocks and thrown into the water. This was a particular concern in the past when Alutiiq hunters paddled lightweight, skin-covered boats that could easily be torn by the jagged slate that lies along Kodiak's shores. Kayakers who couldn't get to shore in a storm-lashed their boats together to create a raft or tied inflated sea mammal stomachs to each side of their boats to improve stability.