

## Animal — Unguwallriaq

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### UNGUWALLRIAT AMLERTUT MAANI. – THE ANIMALS ARE PLENTIFUL HERE.

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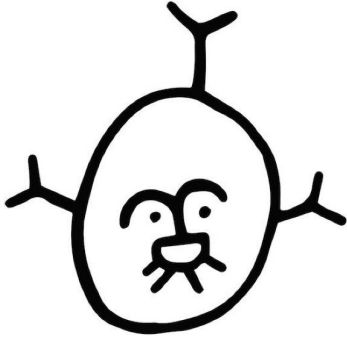


Image: Sea mammal petroglyph, Cape Alitak, Kodiak Island. From a drawing by Sven Haakanson Jr.

According to Alutiiq lore, *Kas'arpak*, a powerful being who resided in the third of five sky worlds, created all of the animals and birds in the universe. He formed the earth's creatures from a little man, giving them the ability to shift between animal and human form and endowing each with a soul.

Although everything in the Alutiiq universe is believed to have a *sua*—a person inside that gives it consciousness—only humans and animals are thought to have souls. When an animal dies, its *sua* dies as well. However, if the animal is properly treated, its soul survives and can be reincarnated in another animal. As such, respectful human action is critical to regeneration of game. The Chugach Alutiiq people of Prince William Sound believed that an animal's soul rested in a particular part of its body and hunters had to be careful to release this part to the environment. Honoring the animal's inner person, or *sua*, was also an important part of regeneration. Many of the masked dances performed at winter festivals were dedicated to this task.

The *unguwallriat* were cared for by two powerful female beings. *Imam Sua*, who lived at the bottom of the ocean, ruled over marine creatures. Hunters asked her to provide them with game and for protection from the wind and waves when they were caught in a storm. *Nunam Sua*, the ruler of creatures that lived on the land, lived in mountain forests. She wore a knee-length coat covered with small animals and was surrounded by a bright light that made her difficult to see. Some people believed that she could read hunters' thoughts.