



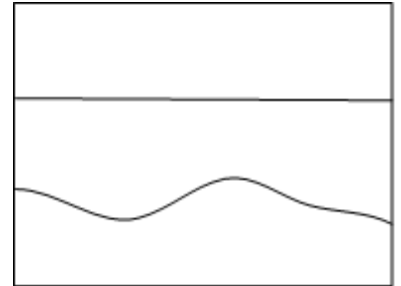
Paint Fur Seal Art

Paint a fur seal rookery, based on the art of Henry Wood Elliot!

Materials Needed: Paper, pencil, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, paper towels.

Instructions:

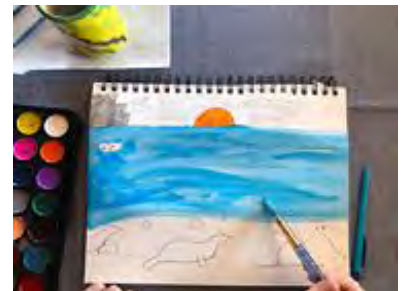
Step 1: Draw a straight horizontal line across the top third of your paper. This line is called the *horizon line*. The space above the horizon line will be the sky.



Step 2: Draw a slightly wavy line across the bottom third of the paper. The top (sky) is the *background*. The middle section (water) is the *middle ground*, and the bottom (beach) is the *foreground*. You can keep the landscape simple or add mountains or cliffs in the distance.



Step 3: Draw large seals in the foreground and smaller seals in the middle ground. If any seals are in the water, make them the smallest. This will help show *perspective* in your painting. You may want to make your rookery crowded with fur seals and fur seal pups. Try making some overlap each other, and some peeking in on the sides and bottom. Add details such as floating ice, rocks, or clouds.



Step 4: After you have finished drawing the landscape and the seals, you are ready to paint. Use colors to show the weather or time of day.



Ready for more? Make art to tell a story about a cause you care about, as Henry Wood Elliot did with fur seals. Can your pictures and words lead to positive change? Create a meme, a cartoon, or a painting with an attached story to help your cause.

Henry Wood Elliot and Seal Art



Henry Wood Elliot (1846-1930) was one of the first Western artists to work in Alaska. In addition to making art, he was one of the first wildlife conservationists. For 22 years, Elliot made watercolor paintings of northern fur seals and passionately spoke out about the overharvesting of the fur seals in Alaska. This helped rescue these animals from probable extinction.

In 1872, Elliot was sent to the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea as a U.S. assistant treasury agent to supervise the fur seal business. Elliot admired the northern fur seals and their environment. In addition to his official duties, Elliot spent much of his time in the fur seal rookeries observing the animals and conducting a population census.



Elliot observed and illustrated every aspect of the fur seal harvesting. He painted idyllic rookeries full of happy seals and pups, as well as groups of fur seals being rounded up and slaughtered, and empty beaches that had at one time been full of seals. His art showed just how serious the decline in fur seals was, and he became known as the nation's foremost fur seal expert.



Elliot mailed his images and explanations of the situation to congressmen and reporters. The art, together with his writing and speaking out, led to legislation being passed in 1911 to protect the fur seals.

See Henry Wood Elliott artwork in the Rose Berry Alaska Art Gallery!

Discover more about fur seals:

ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/marine-mammals/wandering-fur-seal

(Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute & NOAA)