



# Teacher Directions: Island of the Blue Dolphins



**Student Question: What caused Juana Maria (Karana) to be alone on the island?**

**Introduction:** This mini research project is meant to be guided, with opportunities for group and individual discovery through small group activities, conversations and writing.

1. Students will **read the 3 different texts**. All texts have text dependent questions for you to use as you work through the text. Look at the text to determine how **your** students will read it:

- 1<sup>st</sup> read either with partners, individually or chunked and read together with the teacher to clarify meaning (some of the TDQs may be used here).

- 2<sup>nd</sup> read will be working with more difficult text dependent questions that you ask. Students can partner, work in groups, or work as a class to answer –**students must be involved in the process of answering the questions.**

2. After you have read each text, guide student in filling in the process grid:

Understanding the Text			
	Text 1: Russian Fur-Trappers	Text 2: Aleut Indians of Alaska	Text 3: Juana Maria, Lost Woman of San Nicolas
<b>Summarizing Skills:</b> What did you learn from this article?			
<b>Detective Skills:</b> What specific evidence did you find to help you answer the question?			
<b>Connections:</b> How does each text connect with the others?			

- **Summarize the text** (main ideas and details) – When summarizing, use this questioning technique: **Who/What / did what / to whom?** Then ask **“Why?”** **Students should begin to discover that economy, greed, and manipulation (harder concept) due to need to survive – led to the chain of events.**

- **Find the specific evidence** that helps you answer your question – Students may not be able to understand at first which pieces of evidence help them answer the question about Juana Maria until they read all texts – getting the big picture. Work on this section as they begin to see how all the events led to her eventual solitary life.

- **Determine how each text is connected to the next one**, linking the chain of events. As students read each text, they will see how each connects – “Because the Russians wanted otter pelts, they use the Aleuts... As otters were over-hunted – none left – The Russians and Aleuts moved south... eventually coming to Juana’s island.

3. **Collaborative Conversations: Chart the sequence of events on the map:** Students can do this in groups –it would be fun, especially if the maps were printed larger, of students could use large paper and create their own maps together in groups, charting events and dates on the map – using arrows, symbols, etc. **See what students can do on their own and allow them to work it through in groups, using the evidence, etc.**



**4. Create a flow map:** Use the evidence to create a chain of events (flow map) to show the causes and effects that led Juana Maria to be alone on the island. NOTE: if students did this all on the map, this step is not necessary, but it might help them organize their thoughts. This could be a great homework exercise. They can also just move directly to a flee map.



**5. Answer the question in an essay:** Flee Map is provided:

**a. Opening:** Turn the question into a statement:

**When, who, did what, where:** In 1835, a young indigenous girl, Juana Maria, was left alone on San Nicolas Island off the coast of southern California.

**2<sup>nd</sup> sentence – explain what you will be writing:** Here are the chain of events that caused her to live alone for 18 years.

**b. Body of Explanation:** Chain of events is the “**Why**”

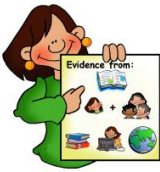
- What happened first? **Who/ did what?** ... (It all began when.... then have students tell about the Russians (needing otter pelts to trade for their economy). Then add details (evidence).

- What happened next? **Who/ did what?** ... (The Aleuts were used to help them hunt.... then have students tell about the Aleuts (persuaded to work with the Russians to hunt for otter pelts to trade for their economy). Then add details (evidence) “What they did to whom” ... how the Aleuts traveled down to Southern California and *why*.

- What happened to force Juana Maria to be alone? **Who/ did what?** ... (missing the boat, surviving and her eventual rescue).

**c. Conclusion:** What finally happened – her death and the ironic situation about how she lived longer than her people. Students can reflect in any way they want about this – but opinion is not a part of explaining or informing.

**6. Reflect on the mini- research process:** Talk with students in a collaborative conversation about the process – this meta-cognitive exercise: what did we do.... what worked well... what was difficult... and how did you learn – will help them gain the agency needed to become more independent for the next exercise.



# Student Planner

## Discovering Answers through Research

### Island of the Blue Dolphins



**Your Question: What caused Juana Maria (Karana) to be alone on the island?**

**a. Read the 3 different texts.** After you have read each text, fill in the process grid:

- summarize the text (main ideas and details)
- find the specific evidence that helps you answer your question
- determine how each text is connected to the next one, linking the chain of events.

Understanding the Text			
	Text 1: Russian Fur-Trappers	Text 2: Aleut Indians of Alaska	Text 3: Juana Maria: Lost Woman of San Nicolas
Summarizing Skills: What did you learn from this article?			
Detective Skills: What specific evidence did you find to help you answer the question?			
Connections: How does each text connect with the others?			

**b. Chart the sequence of events on the map provided using evidence from each text to help you.**

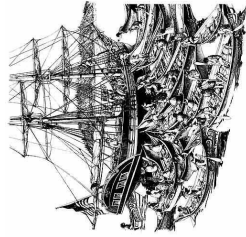
- tell the story on the map



**c. Use the evidence to create a chain of events (flow map) to show the causes and effects that led Juana Maria to be alone on the island.**

➔

**d. Answer the question: "What caused Juana Maria (Karana) to be alone on the island?"** in an essay on a separate piece of paper.



### Understanding the Text



**Text 1:** Russian Fur-Trappers

**Text 2:** Aleut Indians of Alaska

**Text 3:** Juana Maria: Lost Woman of San Nicolas

**Summarizing**

**Skills:**

What did you learn from this article?

**Detective**

**Skills:**

What specific evidence did you find to help you answer the question?

**Connections:**

How does each text connect with the others?





Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Explain or Inform a Chain of Events

**Opening:**

- When? 
- Who? 
- What? 
- Where? 

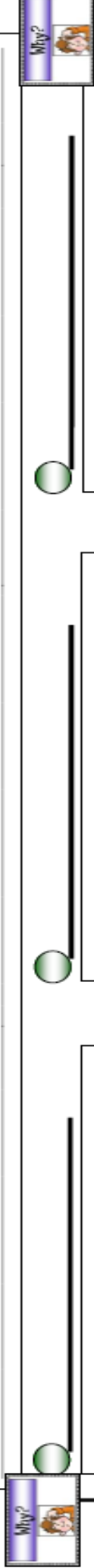
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What you will prove in your essay:



1<sup>st</sup> event that happened

2<sup>nd</sup> event that happened

3<sup>rd</sup> event that happened

Evidence From Research

Evidence From Research

Evidence From Research

Conclusion - What finally happened?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





**Text 1:** Online  
Encyclopedia Excerpt

## Russian Fur Trade

Russian fur trade was a major supplier of fur-pelts to Western Europe and parts of Asia. Fur was a major Russian **export** and highly profitable.

### Expanding the Hunt

Originally, Russian fur trappers hunted and sold furs from land mammals like beavers, wolves, foxes, squirrels and hares. When they had over-hunted the land mammals, Russian fur traders began to focus on **maritime** fur trading as there were two mammals especially valuable with thick, dense fur. Russian fur traders searched for the prized sea otter (With up to a million hairs per square inch, otter fur was prized for its softness and warmth—the warmest in the animal kingdom), and later the northern fur seal.

The Russian Empire **expanded** into North America, particularly Alaska to find these valuable animals. The most profitable furs were those of northern sea otters, which inhabited Asia and from Alaska all the way down to the northern coastal waters of California. Their fur was the thickest of all, because they lived in cold waters. But they didn't quite know how capture them in their large boats.



1780, drawing of sea otter

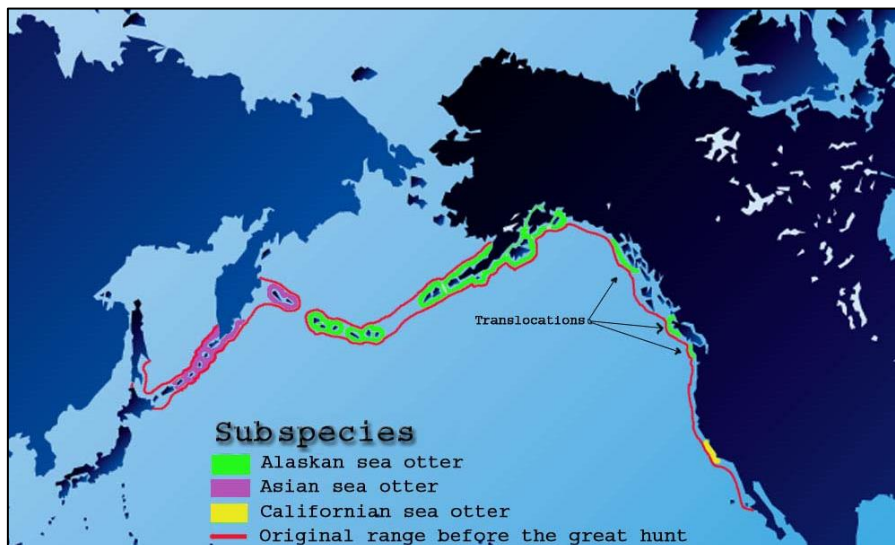
### Partnership for More Otter



In the 18th century, Russia traders established settlements on the Aleutian Islands and decided to partner with the **indigenous** people of the Pacific Northwest coast, including the Aleut, Tlingit, Haida, and Chinook peoples of Alaska to help them kill sea otters. The Russians knew that these people had the skills to hunt the otters in their small boats, while the Russians had the big boats to travel farther and trade the fur.

### Over-Hunting

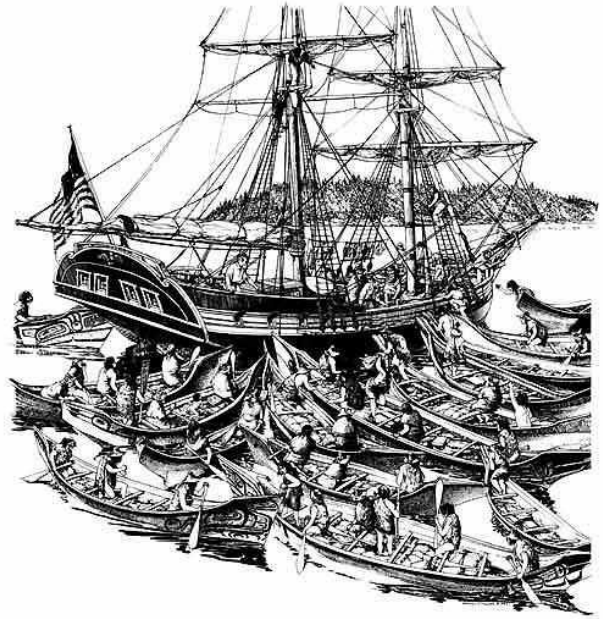
Now, the Russians, with the help of the indigenous people, could hunt for more and more otter. Before the 19th century there were around 20,000 to 25,000 Alaskan sea otters, but after the years of the Great Hunt (1790-1820), the population in these areas was only 750.



Original Otter Habitats

### Expanding the Hunt

During the Great Hunt, Russian fur traders focused on Northern waters to find otter. The fur of the Californian southern sea otter was less highly prized and thus less profitable because the fur was not as thick as their northern cousins. But after the northern sea otter was hunted to almost extinction, the maritime fur traders shifted to Southern California shores and islands near by to hunt for sea otters. Russian fur companies took the Aleuts on large ships to the targeted areas to do the hunting in their smaller kayaks. By the early 1800's, the Russians and the Aleuts were hunting in the Channel Islands off the coast of Santa Barbara.



Otter pelts





**Text 1:** Online  
Encyclopedia Excerpt

## **TDQs on Russian Fur Traders**

1. What caused Russian traders to move toward **maritime** fur trading?

**Follow up 1:** What animals were valuable for maritime fur traders?

**Follow up 2:** What clues helped us know what “**maritime**” means?

2. What details explain why the Russian fur trappers decided to hunt for otters?

3. Why do you suppose the Russians partnered with the **indigenous** people of Alaska?

4. What do you think the “Great Hunt” was and what were the results?

**Follow up:** How does the map help you answer the question?

5. What caused the Russian fur hunters to travel south?

6. Why do you think California sea otters have thinner fur than their cousins in Alaska?

7. What do you think sea otter fur was used for? (use the pictures to help you infer)



## TDQs on Russian Fur Traders

1. What caused Russian traders to move toward **maritime** fur trading? (*thick, dense fur of sea otters and seals*)

**Follow up 1:** What animals were valuable for maritime fur traders? (*With up to a million hairs per square inch, otter fur was prized for its softness and warmth —the warmest in the animal kingdom*)

**Follow up 2:** What clues helped us know what “**maritime**” means? (*opposite of land mammals, “sea otters” and “seals”*)

2. What details explain why the Russian fur trappers decided to hunt for otters?

(*opposite of land mammals, “Sea Otters” and “seals”*)

3. Why do you suppose the Russians partnered with the **indigenous** people of Alaska?

(*these people had the skills to hunt the otters*)

4. What do you think the “Great Hunt” was and what were the results?

(*Since the population of the sea otter in these areas was only 750, then it was the 30 years (1790-1820), that the otters were hunted to near extinction.*)

**Follow up:** How does the map help you answer the question?

(*It shows where the different sea otters were and where they once existed prior to the great hunt. (“original range” may need to be explained)*)

5. What caused the Russian fur hunters to travel south?

(*Northern sea otters were all gone due to over-hunting.*)

6. Why do you think California sea otters have thinner fur than their cousins in Alaska?

(*Warmer waters = need for less dense fur*)

7. What do you think sea otter fur was used for? (Use the pictures to help you infer)

(*Fur was used for hats, coats, shoes, anything to keep warm. (The text also explains that it was traded to Europe and Asia obviously for those reasons.) The one picture shows Aleuts wearing coats*)

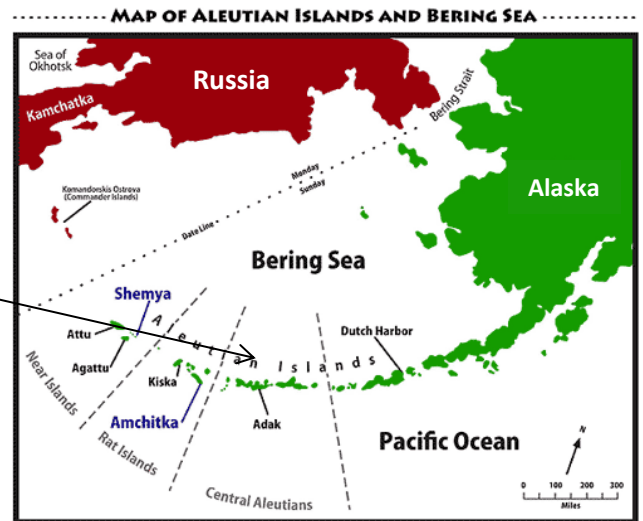


**Text 2:** Online Encyclopedia Excerpt, maps, and Primary Source Photographs

## The Aleuts Indians of Alaska

### Location

The Aleuts Indians lived on small islands located off the coast of Alaska between the Bering Sea (near Russia) and the Pacific Ocean for thousands of years. They traded with other local islands, but basically lived among themselves for centuries.



### Using Resources



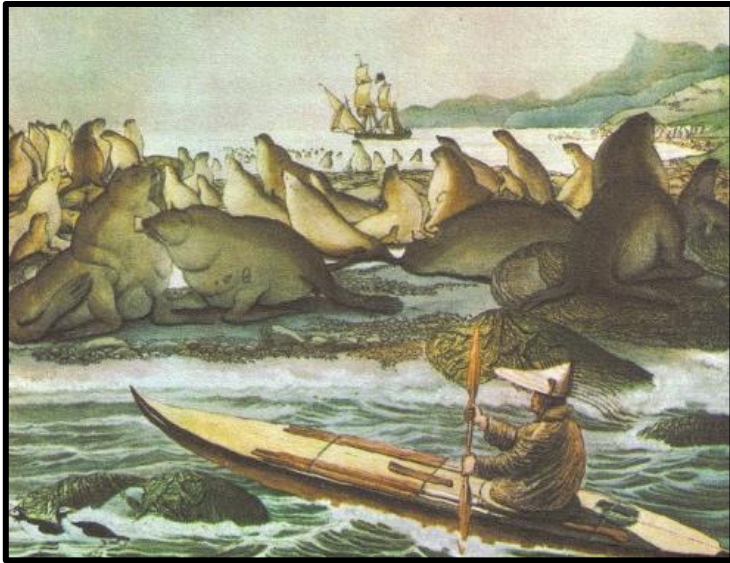
The Aleuts hunted seals, sea otters, whales, sea lions, sometimes walrus, and, in some areas, caribou and bears. Fish, birds, and mollusks were also taken. One-man and two-man skin boats known as bidarkas, or kayaks, and large, open, skin boats, Eskimo umiaks, were used. Aleut women wove fine grass basketry; stone, bone, and ivory were also used to create **utensils**.

### Expert Hunters Wanted

By the 18th century, the Aleuts were no longer solitary people. Russian fur traders established settlements on the Aleutian Islands due to the high demand for sea otter furs. Since the Aleuts were expert hunters of sea otter, the Russians persuaded the Aleuts to do their hunting. Russian fur traders told the Aleuts that if they helped them hunt for otter, the Russians would trade minerals, metal, firearms, and other goods not available to the Aleut. Often the Russians **exploited** the Aleuts, trading unsatisfactory materials and goods, while forcing them to work long periods of time. Another problem was the Russians were **depleting** an important source for Aleuts, sea otter and seals. By the early 1800's there were hardly any otters left in the Northern waters surrounding the islands and shores of Alaska. Soon all were looking for sea otters farther south.



Russian settlement on Aleutian Island



Hunting near the larger ship.

In 1811, in order to obtain more otter **pelts**, a party of Aleut hunters traveled south on a large Russian ship. They went toward the Channel Islands where sea otters were plentiful. Before long, the Aleuts and Russians fur trappers reached the coastal island of San Nicolas, near the Alta California-Baja border.

Living on these islands were many Indians who believed the sea otter were rightfully theirs. These indigenous Nicoleño people opposed the hunting and over the course of a year their otter population was **decimated**, adding to the Nicoleño islanders' **tense** relationship with the fur trappers.

#### Demanding Payment

The **locally resident Nicoleño nation**, made up of more than 300 people, sought a payment from the Aleut hunters for the large number of otters being killed in their area. They were losing their natural resources and feared for their ultimate survival. In 1814, conflict finally erupted when the trappers kidnapped some Nicoleño women. A violent battle arose and because the Nicoleño lacked firearms, the Aleut **massacred** nearly all the Nicoleño men, some women and children.

In coming years, there were more battles as hunters not only were killing their otter but their seals – a resource desperately needed by the Nicoleño people. By 1835 there were less than 30 Nicoleño islanders left, total.



Aleut used spears during battles but soon learned how to use Russian guns.





## TDQs on Aleuts



1. Who might have an impact on the Aleut people?

**Scaffold:** Use the map and look where the Aleutian Islands are located.

**Follow up 1:** Who else did the Russians probably want to trade or work with besides the Aleut?

2. Reread the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph and look at the photograph. Explain this statement: The Aleutians lived off the land to survive.

**Follow up 1:** What do you think the Aleut women used to cook their food?

**Scaffold:** Women used bones, stone and ivory to make utensils. What do you think utensils were?

3. Explain how the Russians **exploited** the Aleuts. Why did they do this?

**Follow up:** How was “depleting the sea otter” another way the Russians exploited the Aleuts?

4. What caused the **tense** relationship between the Nicoleño islanders and the Aleuts?

**Follow up:** What do you think “decimated the otter population” means?

5. Do you think the Aleuts actions were right? Why or why not?

**Follow up:** Why might the Aleuts have acted the way they did?



**Text 2:** Online  
Encyclopedia Excerpt

## TDQs on Aleuts ANSWERS



1. Who might have an impact on the Aleut people? (*look at the map and you will see Russia – also other indigenous peoples of Alaska and islands close by.*)

**Scaffold:** Use the map and look where the Aleutian Islands are located. *between/ above/ right and left of other land masses or islands*

**Follow up 1:** Who else did the Russians probably want to trade or work with besides the Aleut? *People of Alaskan, Kamchatka, Amchitka, & Shemya*

2. Reread the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph and look at the photograph. Explain this statement: *The Aleutians lived off the land to survive. The photograph shows an Aleut hunting for food in the ocean and the text says Aleuts hunted seals, sea otters, whales, sea lions, sometimes walrus, plus fish, birds, and mollusks. From the land, they hunted caribou and bears. The picture shows the man wearing skins and his boat of skins and wood. Also the women used grass, stone, bone, and ivory (tusks) to make bowls, tools, etc.*

**Follow up 1:** What do you think the Aleut women used to cook their food? *The women used grass, stone, bone, and ivory (tusks) to make bowls, tools for cooking, etc.*

**Scaffold:** Women used bones, stone and ivory to make utensils. What do you think utensils were? *tools for eating and cooking*

3. Explain how the Russians **exploited** the Aleuts. Why did they do this?

How *Promising them to trade goods, but trading unsatisfactory materials and goods, and forcing Aleuts to work long periods of time.*

Why: *Greed and need for otter fur – they knew that the Aleuts knew how to hunt for otter better than the Russians did and the Aleuts' wanted metal, minerals and other foods that they didn't have. The Russians were more worldly and having advanced technology and goods. They used these to entice the Aleuts.*

**Follow up:** How was “depleting the sea otter” another way the Russians exploited the Aleuts? *When they no longer had local resources, the Aleuts were forced to go farther distances – without a larger boat like the Russians', they would not have been able to hunt for otter.*

4. What caused the **tense** relationship between the Nicoleño islanders and the Aleuts? *Greed - depleting the Nicoleño's natural resources without compensation, and kidnapping their women.*

**Follow up:** What do you think “decimated the otter population” means? *wiping out the population of otter – none left.*

5. Do you think the Aleuts actions were right? Why or why not? *No, because it was not their land or animals – or yes because they were forced into the situation themselves – survival tactics.*

**Follow up:** Why might the Aleuts have acted the way they did? *Probably to survive, and bring back goods to their own people/families (who had already lost their population of otter and seals), so the Aleuts were forced to take from others. They probably also had a fear of Russian retribution.*



**Text 3:** Online Excerpt & Primary Source Photographs

## Juana Maria, the Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island



### Introduction

Juana Maria (her Indian name is unknown) was an islander on San Nicolas, off the California coast. Beginning in 1814, the population of her people

was nearly wiped out by a group of **roving** Aleutian hunters from the north. The Aleutians killed nearly every man, woman and child on the island, and by 1835 there were less than 30 islanders left, total. Juana Maria was one of the survivors.

### Rescuing the Remaining Nicoleña People

When news of the devastation reached the **mainland**, the Santa Barbara Mission decided to **sponsor** a rescue operation. In late November, 1835, the schooner, *Peor es Nada*, commanded by Charles Hubbard, left Monterey, California to sail to San Nicolas Island in order to remove the remaining people



living there. Upon arriving at the island, Hubbard's party gathered the Indians on the beach and brought them aboard. Juana Maria, however, was not among them by the time a strong storm arose, and the *Peor es Nada's* crew, realizing the immediate danger of being wrecked by the surf and rocks, panicked and sailed toward the mainland, leaving her behind. There are several stories that she may have jumped off the boat to rescue her daughter or brother, but it is not known if it is true.

### Blessing in Disguise

Juana Maria ended up completely alone on the hostile island of San Nicolas. But it turned out that not being on the rescue boat was a **blessing in disguise**. The rest of her people who fled to the mainland (Santa





Gabriel Mission) ended up dying almost immediately. When Hubbard brought them to San Pedro Bay, many islanders chose to live at the San Gabriel Mission. The mission had a high death rate because the Indians had no **immunity**, or resistance, against the sickness or disease within the mission.

#### Alone



Juana, soon after being rescued

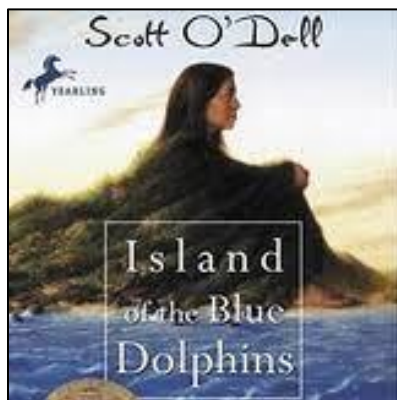
Captain Hubbard was unable to return for Juana Maria because his boat sunk during a storm. So Juana Maria not only survived alone on the island, but **thrived** there for 18 years, outliving everyone else she knew. After several failed attempts to rescue her, Juana was eventually found in 1853 wearing as one newspaper said, "...the skins and feathers of wild ducks, which she sewed together with sinews of the seal." The newspaper went on to add that "she cannot speak any known language, is good-looking, and about middle age." She was taken to Santa Barbara Mission.

#### Lack of Resistance

Despite her amazing ability to survive alone for almost 20 years on the island, Juana Maria did not last two months once she reached the mainland, living near the Santa Barbara Mission. Many people came to see who the "Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island" was and her body was incapable of **resisting disease**. Just like her people 18 years before her, Juana Maria died October 19, 1853, only 7 weeks after being rescued.



Juana's burial plaque at Santa Barbara Mission



#### Afterward

Scott O'Dell's award-winning children's novel *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (1960) was inspired by Juana's story. Scott O'Dell researched her name, and determined that maybe her real name was "Karana" – which sounds like the Spanish name "Juana."



**Text 3:** Online  
Encyclopedia Excerpt

## TDQs on Juana Maria, Lone Woman



1. Why were the Aleut people on Juana's island?

**Scaffold:** What does roving mean in this sentence:

“...nearly wiped out by a group of **roving** Aleutian hunters from the north.”

2. Why do you think Santa Barbara Mission **sponsored** a rescue mission?

**Scaffold:** Where was the mission? Who lived on Missions with the Spanish? Why would the people of the mission care about the Nicoleña people?

3. Using only evidence from the text, explain why the schooner left without Maria.

4. What was the “blessing in disguise” for Juana Maria?

**Scaffold:** How do you think Juana felt being left behind? What did she not know that happened to her people at San Gabriel Mission? What caused the death of her people?

5. Why did Juana Maria thrive, even though the rest of her people had died?

6. Who rescued Juana Maria?

**Scaffold:** Using the text features (photographs, etc.) where does it tell you who rescued her?

7. How were Juana Maria's and the Nicoleña people's death similar?



## TDQs on Juana Maria, Lone Woman Answers



1. Why were the Aleut people on Juana's island? *They were "roving" or moving place to place to search for otter to kill.*

**Scaffold:** What does **roving** mean in this sentence: (*moving around*)

"...nearly wiped out by a group of **roving** Aleutian hunters from the north."

2. Why do you think Santa Barbara Mission **sponsored** a rescue mission? *The mission, when hearing it was "devastating" took responsibility for rescuing indigenous people as part of the mission's responsibility.*

**Scaffold:** Where was the mission? Who lived on Missions with the Spanish? Why would the people of the mission care about the Nicoleña people? *Missions were on the mainland and inhabited the Indians – who now were dependent on the mission for food, work, etc. The mission padres probably felt responsible for all the natives of the land and wanted to rescue them from the Aleuts and Russians.*

3. Using only evidence from the text, explain why the schooner left without Maria. *A strong storm came in and they would not have been able to leave if not immediately.*

4. What was the "blessing in disguise" for Juana Maria? *The rest of her people who fled to the mainland (Santa Gabriel Mission) ended up dying almost immediately from disease.*

**Scaffold:** How do you think Juana felt being left behind? What did she not know that happened to her people at San Gabriel Mission? What caused the death of her people?

*We can predict that she was fearful, because of recent events and no one to help her. Little did she know that her people died and she remained living, if even all alone. A good collaborative question would be – which one was worse...alone and fearful or to be rescued and die together?*

5. Why did Juana Maria thrive, even though the rest of her people had died?

*She knew how to live off the land and had survival skills. She was not near any diseases.*

6. Who rescued Juana Maria? *Look at the plaque and it tells you "found and bought to Santa Barbara by Capt. George Nidever.*

**Scaffold:** Using the text features (photographs, etc.) where does it tell you who rescued her?

7. How were Juana Maria's and the Nicoleña people's death similar? *Both did not have resistance to diseases.*