

Draft 2008 Alaska Region Marine Mammal Stranding Summary

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Summary

Strandings of cetaceans and pinnipeds that occurred in Alaska waters and were reported to the National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region (NMFS) are summarized here. Polar bear, sea otter and walrus are under Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction and are not reported to NMFS. Currently a total of 185 events are recorded, involving between 236-238 individual animals. This data is subject to change as more information becomes available and with further review of the records.

Stranding events include animals found dead (floating and beach-cast) and reports of live stranded, mass stranded, abandoned, sick or injured animals. Human interactions like collisions, fishery interactions and entanglements are included. Known subsistence takes are not included, but suspected subsistence animals are in some cases included here (e.g., animals reported shot). Fishery observer reports are not included unless the animal was observed outside of statistical reporting protocols (and thus would not be included by the observer program as part of their watch data set).

Stranding events where the animal(s) could not be examined are included in the numbers below as long as the animal was at least identified as either cetacean or pinniped. Both unconfirmed and confirmed reports are compiled here.

Events involving two or more individuals are rare in the Alaska stranding data: an adult and a juvenile beluga were observed beach cast, two dalls porpoise became entangled in a gillnet, and over twenty belugas were observed in live stranding situations at low tide on two separate occasions.

Further stranding information and references are available at the NMFS Alaska Region webpage:
<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/strandings.htm>

Acknowledgements

This summary is made possible by the people who report stranding events and the efforts of the Alaska Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

2008 NMFS Alaska Region Stranding Summary - Draft

Table 1. Draft 2008 Alaska Region Stranding Reports by Initial Sighting Month, Number of Events, and Number of Animals. (Does not include a harbor porpoise necropsied in July- initial sighting date is currently unknown).

Month	Events	Animals
Jan	0	0
Feb	1	1
March	3	3
Apr	6	6
May	17	18
June	33	34
July	48	49
Aug	46	75
Sept	16	35-36*
Oct	14	14-15**
Nov	0	0
Dec	0	0
Total	184	235-237* **

* Was unable to determine whether both a cow and a calf were struck in a collision or just the cow.

** Two humpbacks were originally reported entangled in a single event but it was only possible to confirm one whale entangled.

Table 2. Draft 2008 Alaska Region Marine Mammal Strandings by Initial Condition, Species, and Number of Animals.

	Initial Condition		
	Alive	Dead	Total
Beluga	51	14	65
Grey	0	6	6
Bowhead	0	5	5
Humpback	17-19* **	17	34-36* **
Orca	0	3	3
Dall's porpoise	2	0	2
Sperm	0	3	3
Harbor porpoise	0	8	8
Cuviers beaked whale	0	1	1
Unknown cetacean	1	13	14
<i>Cetacean Total</i>	<i>71-73* **</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>141-143* **</i>
Bearded seal	0	3	3
Steller sea lion	14	22	36
Northern fur seal	3	0	3
Elephant seal	0	1	1
Ringed seal	2	6	8
Spotted seal	0	1	1
Harbor seal	16	15	31
Unknown pinniped	0	10	10
California sea lion	2	0	2
<i>Pinniped Total</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>94</i>
Total	108-110* **	128	236-238 **

* Was unable to determine whether both a cow and a calf were struck in a collision or just the cow.

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Table 3. Draft 2008 Alaska Region Live Strandings Handled by the Alaska Sea Life Center for Rehabilitation by Species, Outcome, and Number of Animals. (Does not include animals that were dead on arrival)

Species	Outcome	Animals
California sea lion	euthanized	2
	<i>California sea lion Total</i>	2
Harbor seal	died	5
	released	9
	<i>Harbor seal Total</i>	14
Total		16

Table 4. Draft 2008 Alaska Region Stranding Events involving Human Interaction. These numbers should be treated as preliminary. They include both confirmed and unconfirmed reports; not all human interaction reports recorded evidence. Fishery interactions are separated from entanglements here by internal evidence of human interaction.

Human Interaction?	Details	Species	Animals
Could not be determined	pos. shot	Steller sea lion	1
		Harbor seal	1
		Ringed seal	3
	pos. entanglement	Harbor seal	1
		pos. collision	Humpback
		Unknown cetacean	1
		<i>Could not be determined Total</i>	8
	Yes	collision	Humpback
entanglement			Dall's porpoise
		Northern fur seal	3
		Humpback	7-8**
		Harbor porpoise	2
		Steller sea lion	8
		Ringed seal	1
fishery interaction		Steller sea lion	1
fishery interaction and shot		Steller sea lion	1
shot		Harbor seal	3
		<i>Yes Total</i>	36-38* **
Total		44-46* **	

* Was unable to determine whether both a cow and a calf were struck in a collision or just the cow.

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Table 5. Draft 2008 Alaska Region Marine Mammal Strandings by Area, Species, Initial Condition, and Number of Animals. (Does not include one dead unknown species of pinniped that was observed floating and one dead harbor porpoise- location could never be confirmed).

Area	Species	Animal Initial Condition		Total
		Alive	Dead	
Arctic	Bowhead	0	5	5
	Grey whale	0	5	5
	Unknown cetacean	0	5	5
	Harbor porpoise	0	1	1
	Ringed seal	2	6	8
	Bearded seal	0	3	3
	Spotted seal	0	1	1
	Unknown pinniped	0	7	7
	<i>Arctic Total</i>	2	33	35
Southcentral Alaska	Beluga	51	11	62
	Sperm	0	1	1
	Humpback	3	6	9
	Unknown cetacean	0	4	4
	Harbor porpoise	0	2	2
	California sea lion	2	0	2
	Steller sea lion	0	5	5
	Elephant seal	0	1	1
	Harbor seal	12	8	20
	Unknown pinniped	0	1	1
	<i>Southcentral Total</i>	68	39	107
Southeast Alaska	Orca	0	1	1
	Cuviers beaked whale	0	1	1
	Humpback	12-13*	0	12-13*
	Unknown cetacean	1	3	4
	Dall's porpoise	0	2	2
	Harbor porpoise	0	4	4
	Steller sea lion	12	14	26
	Harbor seal	0	4	4
	<i>Southeast Total</i>	25-26*	29	54-55*
Western Alaska	Beluga	0	3	3
	Orca	0	2	2
	Humpback	0	5	5
	Sperm	0	2	2
	Unknown cetacean	0	1	1
	Steller sea lion	2	2	4
	Northern fur seal	3	0	3
	Harbor seal	4	3	7
	Unknown pinniped	0	1	1
	<i>Western Total</i>	9	19	28
Kodiak	Humpback	2-3**	6	8-9**
	Grey whale	0	1	1
	Steller sea lion	0	1	1
	<i>Kodiak Total</i>	2-3**	8	10-11**
Total		106-108**	128	234-236***

* Was unable to determine whether both a cow and a calf were struck in a collision or just the cow.

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