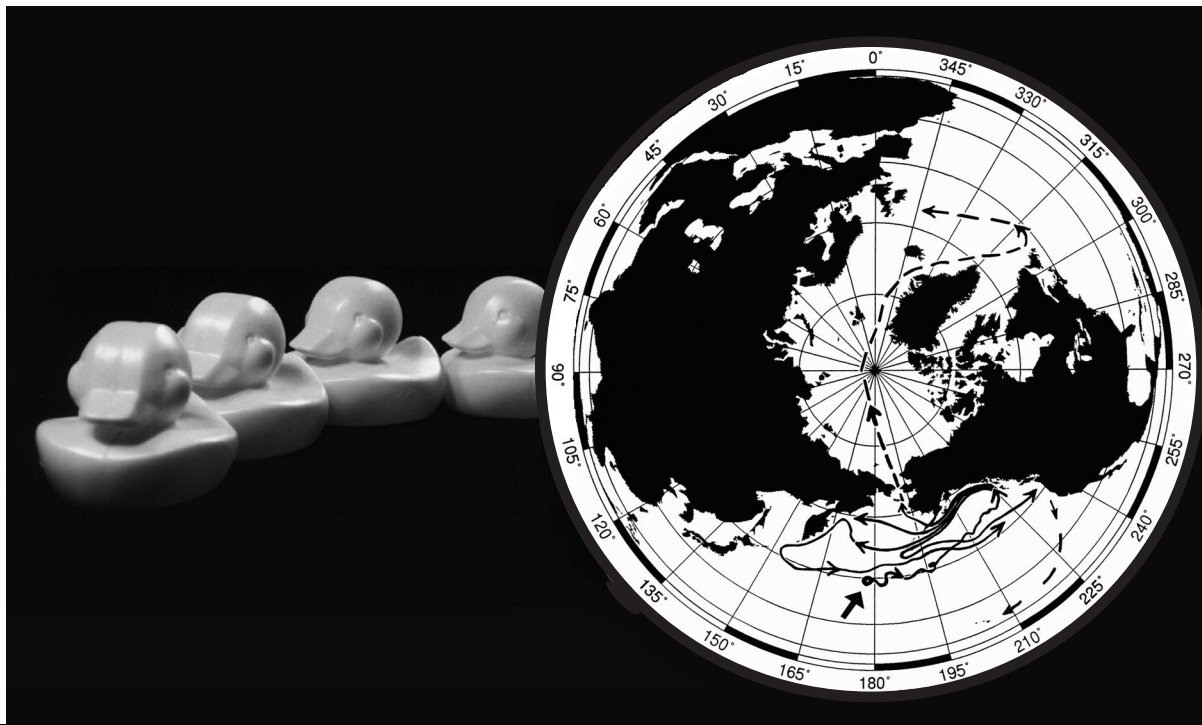


Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Quack Heard "Round the World"

29,000 plastic bath tub toys are now afloat on the Pacific Ocean. The yellow ducks (pictured below) are the most famous. The toys were headed from China to Tacoma, Washington, aboard a container ship when it was caught in a fierce storm in the mid-North Pacific Ocean (see arrows on map). In the storm, 12 containers went overboard (one with toys) on January 10, 1992. After the container burst open, the toys were free to drift with the wind-driven ocean currents.

At the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, we map ocean surface currents using an Ocean Surface Current Simulations model called OSCURS to study the effects of current changes on fish populations. OSCURS normally uses special drifters which are tracked by satellites to map ocean currents -- the toys were natural drifters! The ducks provided us with a great chance to see how good the OSCURS model would be at guessing where and when the toys would reach land. The lines and arrows on the globe (see map) show their most likely paths across the North Pacific Ocean, which eventually will lead them back to the Washington coast in 3 years. Some may find their way to Hawaii! The dashed lines show where the toys that head toward the North Pole may go after being frozen in the polar ice, eventually reaching Europe. The British Parliament has discussed giving the ducks protected status when they arrive! Each toy will have an amazing story to tell us after it has been found on a beach.



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