

RESULTS OF HUMPBACK WHALE POPULATION MONITORING IN GLACIER BAY AND ADJACENT WATERS: 2007

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the findings of the National Park Service's (NPS) humpback whale monitoring program during the summer of 2007, the twenty-third consecutive year of consistent data collection in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait. Each summer, Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve (GBNPP) biologists document the number of individual humpback whales in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait, as well as their residence times, spatial and temporal distribution, reproductive parameters and feeding behavior. These data are used to monitor long-term trends in the population's abundance, distribution and reproductive parameters. Photographic identification data are also shared with other researchers studying North Pacific humpback whales. In addition, Park biologists use whale distribution data on a daily basis to make recommendations regarding when and where GBNPP "whale waters" vessel course and speed restrictions should be implemented in Glacier Bay.

METHODS

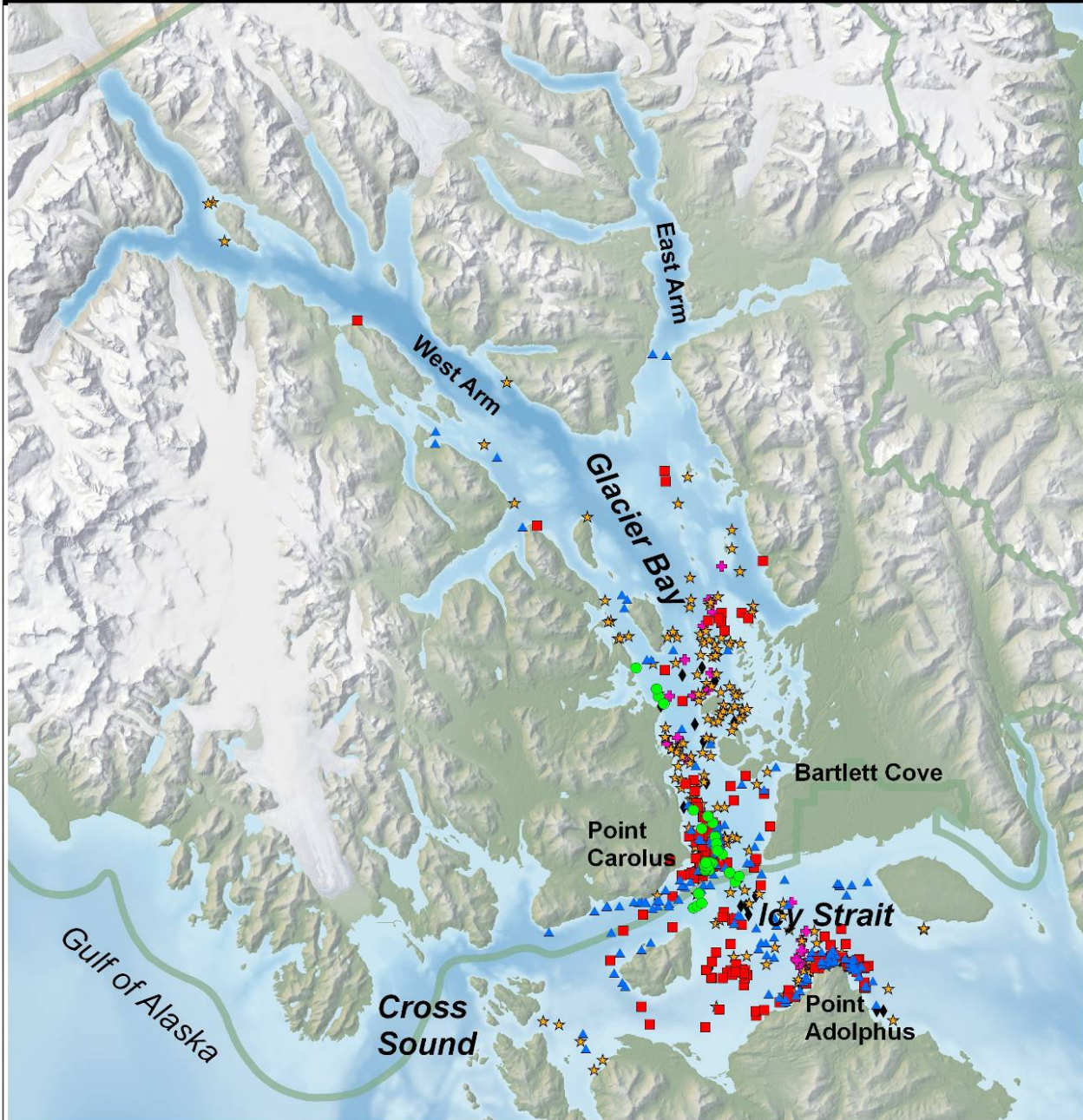
The methods used for population monitoring have been described in previous reports. The primary techniques have not changed significantly since 1985, allowing for comparison of data between years. The specific methods used in 2007 are outlined below.

Vessel Surveys: We conducted surveys in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait from May 16 through October 19, 2007. We searched for, observed and photographed humpback whales from the *Sand Lance*, a 5.8-meter motorboat equipped with a single four-stroke Johnson 140 HP outboard engine and based in Bartlett Cove. To minimize the potential impact that monitoring efforts might have on whales, we typically did not conduct surveys in the same area on consecutive days.

Between June 1 and August 31 we surveyed the main body of Glacier Bay (a rectangle defined by four corners: Bartlett Cove, Point Carolus, Geikie Inlet and Garforth Island) 3 – 4 days per week (Fig. 1), focusing the day's effort in a particular part of the study area. We surveyed the West Arm of Glacier Bay (to the mouth of Tarr Inlet) a few times per summer and the East Arm of Glacier Bay infrequently. We surveyed Icy Strait approximately once per week, with the greatest survey effort focused along the shoreline of Chichagof Island from Pinta Cove to Mud Bay and in Park waters around Point Carolus. Glacier Bay is the main area of NPS management concern with regard to whales, but descriptions of the whales' use of Icy Strait provide essential context for the Glacier Bay results because whales frequently move between these areas and because Park waters include portions of Icy Strait. Several Icy Strait surveys included Dundas Bay, Idaho Inlet, Lemesurier Island and Pleasant Island.

Humpback Whale Distribution

Glacier Bay and Icy Strait 2007



Humpback Whale Pod Locations by Month

- May (n=35)
- ▲ June (n=156)
- July (n=193)
- ★ August (n=190)
- ✦ September (n=34)
- ◆ October (n=25)



Glacier Bay National Park
Resource Management



0 2.5 5 10 Nautical Miles



Figure 1. Study area in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait showing distribution of humpback whale pods in 2007. Each symbol represents a pod containing one or more whales.

In 2007 we changed the way that we calculate survey effort and we made these changes retroactive to 2005. Therefore, 2005 and 2006 effort statistics have been recalculated and are different than previously reported (Neilson and Gabriele 2005, Neilson and Gabriele 2006). Prior to 2005, we defined survey effort hours as our total time on the water, including transit time to the portion of the study area that was the day's focus. Beginning in 2005, we began logging the amount of time that we were on effort (*e.g.*, excluding transit time), thus we re-defined survey effort hours as only those hours that we spent actively surveying for whales. In addition, prior to 2005, in counting the number of days of survey effort, we counted any time that we spent in Glacier Bay as one Glacier Bay survey "day", even if we were just transiting through Glacier Bay off effort *en route* to Icy Strait. Beginning in 2005, days in which there was transit time but no survey effort in Glacier Bay were not counted as a Glacier Bay day, although days in which there was survey effort in both Glacier Bay and Icy Strait were still counted as one Glacier Bay day and one Icy Strait day.

We defined a pod of whales as one or more whales within five body lengths of each other, surfacing and diving in unison. Upon locating a pod, we recorded the latitude and longitude coordinates of their initial location, determined with a GPS. We recorded on field datasheets all information pertaining to the pod, including the number of whales, their activity (feed, travel, surface active, rest, sleep, unknown), sketches of the markings on their tail flukes and dorsal fin, photographs taken, whale identity (if known), water depth, temperature and any prey patches observed on the echo-sounder. If the whales were feeding we categorized their feeding behavior as sub-surface, vertical lunge, lateral lunge, bubble net, other bubble, flick or unknown.

Individual Identification: The ventral surface of each whale's flukes has a distinct, stable black and white pigment pattern that allows for individual identification (Jurasz and Palmer 1981; Katona *et al.* 1979). For some whales, the shape and scarification of the dorsal fin also serve as unique identifiers (Blackmer *et al.* 2000). We took photographs of each whale's flukes and dorsal fin with a Nikon D100 digital camera equipped with a 100-300 mm zoom lens. We compared fluke and dorsal fin photographs to previous NPS photographs and to other available fluke catalogs (Appendix 1) to determine the identity and past sighting history of each whale.

We referred to many whales by a permanent identification number common to the combined catalogs of Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve and University of Alaska Southeast researcher Jan Straley (Straley and Gabriele 2000). We also referred to those whales first photo-identified by Jurasz and

Palmer (1981) by their nicknames (Appendix 2). We only assigned calves a permanent identification number if we obtained adequate photographs of the calf's flukes and the calf was sighted on more than one day. For whales that had not been previously identified in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait, we assigned temporary identification numbers. We replaced these temporary numbers with permanent identification numbers if we identified the whale on more than one day or if the whale was identified elsewhere by another researcher. Photographic and sighting data were added to a relational database containing Glacier Bay and Icy Strait whale sighting histories from 1977 to 2007. We also printed and catalogued the best 2007 identification photograph (fluke or dorsal fin) of each individual.

Whale Counts: We analyzed the 2007 photographs and then counted the number of distinct individual whales in the sample. We made separate counts of Glacier Bay and Icy Strait for the dedicated monitoring period (June 1 – August 31) and for a 'standardized period' (July 9 – August 16) (after Perry *et al.* 1985). Although the standardized period is substantially shorter than the current NPS monitoring period and the beginning and ending dates have no particular biological significance, we continue to use the standardized period because it provides the only valid means of comparing whale counts in 1982 – 1984 to subsequent years (Gabriele *et al.* 1995).

We defined the following age classes: calves (less than one year old), juveniles (age 1 – 4 years, as determined by prior sighting history) and adults (age ≥ 5 years). We also determined the number of whales that were 'resident' in Glacier Bay, Icy Strait and the combined area. We defined a whale as resident if it was photographically identified in the study area over a span of 20 or more days (after Baker 1986).

Genetics: We opportunistically collected sloughed skin on the sea surface with a small dip net when whales breached or performed other surface active behavior. We stored these sloughed skin samples in plastic canisters filled with dry table salt (NaCl). We archived half of each skin sample at GBNPP (in dry salt) and sent the other half to be archived (in DMSO or frozen at -80° F) at the National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Fisheries Science Center where they are available on request to other scientists studying a variety of topics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vessel Surveys: We searched for, observed and photographed humpback whales for a total of 323 hours in the combined Glacier Bay/Icy Strait study area (Table 1). Compared to 2005 and 2006, this

Table 1. Monthly & Annual Survey Effort, 1985 – 2007.

YEAR	MAY		JUNE		JULY		AUG		SEPT		TOTAL # SURVEY DAYS (June 1 - August 31)		TOTAL # SURVEY HOURS (June 1 - August 31)		
	# survey days		# survey days		# survey days		# survey days		# survey days		GB	IS	GB	IS	GB + IS
	GB	IS	GB	IS	GB	IS	GB	IS	GB	IS					
1985	0	0	10	7	11	4	10	3	0	1	31	14	234	92	326
1986	0	0	13	5	17	3	6	6	0	2	36	14	-	-	-
1987	3	2	12	5	12	7	5	7	1	2	29	19	-	-	-
1988	0	0	11	5	12	7	12	5	7	3	35	17	199	108	307
1989	3	1	17	6	14	6	16	7	1	4	47	19	231	123	354
1990	6	4	16	5	18	6	14	8	0	0	48	19	215	115	330
1991	7	3	14	7	17	6	13	4	6	3	44	17	256	100	356
1992	3	2	19	4	17	5	12	4	7	1	48	13	248	71	319
1993	2	1	10	3	13	3	7	5	1	1	30	11	192	62	254
1994	1	0	9	5	10	4	13	8	1	1	32	17	169	92	261
1995	3	2	10	4	11	4	10	7	2	2	31	15	167	90	258
1996	4	2	11	5	17	10	16	3	3	1	44	18	259	116	374
1997	5	2	17	4	21	7	19	6	9	4	57	17	327	90	417
1998	10	4	20	3	23	6	12	4	5	2	55	13	344	64	408
1999	4	1	16	4	18	6	18	3	5	1	52	13	318	64	382
2000	1	0	21	8	21	5	23	6	5	1	65	19	321	84	405
2001	3	1	17	6	14	5	20	5	6	2	51	16	236	76	312
2002	3	1	19	6	19	4	18	2	4	2	56	12	297	68	365
2003	5	0	20	7	19	5	16	5	3	1	55	17	283	101	384
2004	6	2	21	3	19	5	21	5	8	2	61	13	373	74	447
2005	1	0	16	5	17	3	12	3	4	3	45	11	216	56	272
2006	2	2	14	6	15	7	16	7	5	1	45	20	197	85	282
2007	4	2	15	10	14	7	14	6	5	2	43	23	206	117	323
2005-2006 average survey effort:											45.0	15.5	206.5	70.5	277.0

Note: The dashed line highlights a change in the way survey effort was calculated beginning in 2005. Total # survey hours are not available for 1986 & 1987.

total is above average for the study area. The overall increase in effort is attributable to an above-average amount of survey effort in Icy Strait. The main reason for this increase was the unprecedented number of whales in Icy Strait, including a prolonged aggregation of whales centered around Point Carolus. Although we strive to maintain a comparable level of survey effort each year, it inevitably fluctuates as a result of inter-annual variability in uncontrollable factors such as weather, availability of staff and the frequency of unexpected events that detract from our ability to conduct surveys (*e.g.*, mechanical difficulties and marine mammal strandings).

Whale Counts: For the fifth year in a row we documented a record high number of whales in the study area as a whole ($n = 161$, Fig. 2, Appendix 3), with a total count 9% higher than in 2006. In Icy Strait,

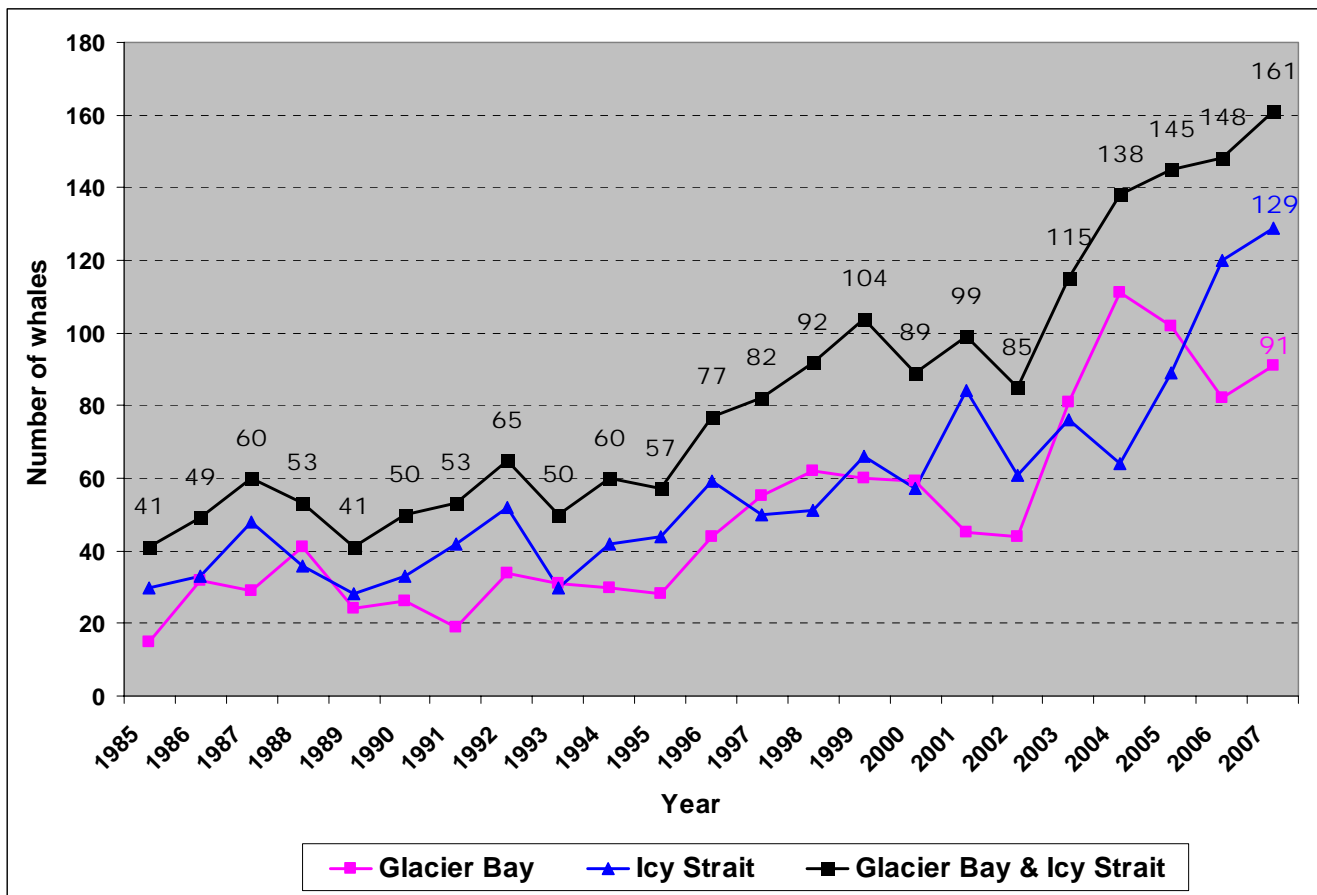


Figure 2. Number of individual whales documented in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait, 1985 – 2007.

the number of whales ($n = 129$) was at a record high for the third year in a row. In Glacier Bay, the number of whales ($n = 91$) was higher than in 2006, but lower than in the two record-breaking years of 2004 and 2005. Overall the humpback whale population in southeastern Alaska is growing and the current rate of increase for humpback whales in the North Pacific is estimated to be approximately 5% per year (Calambokidis *et al.* 2008).

Whale #183 was sighted in the study area for the first time since 1982, although this whale has been sighted elsewhere in southeastern Alaska in recent years (J. Straley Investigations, unpublished data). Fifteen (9%) of the whales that we documented in the study area in 2007 had not been sighted previously in Glacier Bay or Icy Strait. The percentage of “new” whales in the study area (9%) was

slightly below the 1985 – 2006 average (12%). Similar to recent years, two of the 15 whales had been sighted elsewhere in southeastern Alaska and 13 whales had never been documented in southeastern Alaska. One more new whale was observed in Icy Strait outside of the regular June through August monitoring period.

Seasonal Distribution: NPS law enforcement rangers made the year's first whale sighting report in mid-March near the entrance to Berg Bay (M. Seraphin and T. Bruno, pers. comm.). For most of April, people out on the water had few if any whale sightings in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait, but whales were sighted in low numbers at Hugh Miller Inlet and Adams Inlet. A concentration of whales near Point Carolus was first reported in early May by Park staff and Superintendent Tomie Lee, marking the start of a whale aggregation that lasted until mid-September in that area. The main whale concentration was just outside the mouth of Glacier Bay proper, from Point Gustavus and Point Carolus west to the "Salt Chuck". At times there were at least 30 whales using this area, and several whales flowed in and out of lower Glacier Bay with the changing tide. The second major whale concentration in Glacier Bay began in August, when whales moved further into the Beardslee Entrance and Flapjack Island area. During this time, additional whales were distributed between Willoughby Island, the Marble Islands and Sandy Cove, and remained in the area until early September.

Whale monitoring surveys ceased in October, but an uncommonly large number of November sightings were made possible by Park staff trips to Russell Island and Blue Mouse Cove. There were whale sightings at Blue Mouse Cove, Whidbey Passage, Hugh Miller Rocks, Willoughby Island and Reid Inlet. The year's final whale sightings were made in early December, when Ranger Maya Seraphin sighted whales at the mouth of Bartlett Cove and in Fingers Bay. Underwater sound monitoring in outer Bartlett Cove documented whale vocalizations in November and early December.

Whale sightings in the West Arm of Glacier Bay (not typically covered by whale monitoring surveys, so these sightings originated from Park rangers and researchers onboard cruise ships) were sparse but occurred regularly at the following locations: Gloomy Knob, Hugh Miller Inlet, Lone Island, Reid Inlet, Ptarmigan Creek, Tlingit Point, Rendu Inlet and occurred occasionally at Composite Island, Jackie Point, Jaw Point, Russell Island, Tarr Inlet and the mouth of the West Arm.

Whale distribution in Icy Strait appeared to be strongly influenced by the concentration of whales near Point Carolus in May. In June and July, whales were distributed into the middle of Icy Strait, in North

Passage and off the west side of Lemesurier Island. Also in June and July, we observed numerous whales around Point Adolphus, including six cow/calf pairs. In August and September whales were still relatively numerous near Point Adolphus, but appeared to have moved slightly north (offshore) of the Point. Several whales were present in our final 2007 surveys of Point Adolphus and the middle of Icy Strait in October.

Whale Waters: The length of whale waters vessel speed restrictions in lower Glacier Bay (125 days) was the second longest since 1985. The duration of these speed restrictions varies greatly from year to year depending on whale use in this area, with a significantly shorter duration in 2006 (22 days) but similar durations in 2003 (134 days) and 2005 (124 days). For the third year in a row, an unusually large aggregation of whales centered around Point Carolus in Park waters in Icy Strait and resulted in a 13-knot speed limit in that area from May 31 – September 14 (107 days). In addition, similar to in 2004, a high number of whales in northern Beardslee Entrance necessitated temporary whale waters there from August 25 – October 2 (39 days).

Residency: Thirty-five (38%) of the 91 whales that entered Glacier Bay between June 1 and August 31, including three cow/calf pairs, remained 20 or more days, or long enough to be considered resident (Appendix 2). The proportion of Glacier Bay residents in 2007 was higher than in 2006 (24%) but below the historic average (1990 – 2006 average = 46%). Sixty-six (51%) of the 129 whales that we identified in Icy Strait, including six cow/calf pairs, remained long enough to be considered resident. The proportion of Icy Strait residents in 2007 was lower than in 2006 (58%) but above the historic average (1990 – 2006 average = 41%). Thirty (19%) of the 161 whales that we sighted in Glacier Bay/Icy Strait were resident in the combined Glacier Bay/Icy Strait study area. Eighteen whales were resident in more than one area (*e.g.*, resident in Icy Strait and then resident in Glacier Bay). Notably, 13 (72%) of these whales started out as residents in Icy Strait or Glacier Bay/Icy Strait and then moved into Glacier Bay later in the summer to become Glacier Bay residents. Overall, 113 whales (70%) were resident in Glacier Bay, Icy Strait or the combined area.

We identified 37 (23%) of the whales in the study area, including three mother/calf pairs, on just one day: 13 in Glacier Bay and 24 in Icy Strait. These single sightings occurred over a broad range of dates, indicating that it was not a single pulse of whales arriving in the area. We documented four more whales on just one day outside of the June 1 – August 31 monitoring period. The proportion of whales sighted on one day in the study area varies each year, with a range of 16% – 43% since 1994.

Reproduction and Juvenile Survival: We documented a record number of mother/calf pairs ($n = 17$) in 2007 (Table 2) with a crude birth rate (10.6%) similar to the historic average (10.2%) (Table 3).

Table 2. Mother-Calf Pairs, 2007

	Mother ID#	Calf ID#	Documented in:
1.	155	2032	IS
2.	250	250_calf_2007	GB & IS
3.	353	2035	IS
4.	535	2036	GB & IS
5.	581	2037	IS
6.	587	2038	IS
7.	1014	2028	GB
8.	1302	2029	GB & IS
9.	1421	1421_calf_2007	IS
10.	1428	2030	GB & IS
11.	1460	2031	GB & IS
12.	1473	1473_calf_2007	GB
13.	1479	1479_calf_2007	IS
14.	1593	2033	IS
15.	1671	2034	GB
16.	1812	1812_calf_2007	IS
17.	1903	1903_calf-2007	IS

Notes: GB = Glacier Bay; IS = Icy Strait. Only calves whose flukes were photographed received an identification number.

Female #353 (born 1984) had a new calf for the second year in a row. Annual birth intervals in humpback whales are relatively rare (Baker *et al.* 1987) and since 1985 only four other females in the study area have been documented giving birth in successive years; two of the females had a calf two years in a row and two females had a calf three years in a row (Straley *et al.* 1994). Interestingly, one of the females who had a calf three years in a row is #581. In 2007, not only was #581 a grandmother (she is whale #353's mother), but she also returned with her own new calf, making her the most prolific female known in the study population with a total of 11 calves since 1984.

Females #1421 and #1428 (both born in 1997) returned to the study area with their first known calves; previously their sex was unknown. Female #1421's mother (#587) was already known to be a grandmother and also had a calf. Females #1473, #1671, #1812 and #1903 (all ages unknown) were

Table 3. Reproduction and known age whales in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait, 1982 – 2007.

Year:	# Calves	# Calves Photo ID'd	% Calves Photo ID'd	Crude Birth Rate (%)	# Known Age Whales	Total # Whales
1982	6	3	50	-	-	-
1983	0	0	0	-	-	-
1984	7	5	71	17.9	-	39
1985	2	1	50	4.9	3	41
1986	8	5	63	16.3	2	49
1987	4	3	75	6.7	5	60
1988	8	5	63	15.1	4	53
1989	5	3	60	12.2	5	41
1990	6	6	100	12.0	7	50
1991	4	4	100	7.5	8	53
1992	12	10	83	18.5	7	65
1993	3	3	100	6.0	12	50
1994	9	5	56	15.0	10	60
1995	3	2	67	5.3	9	57
1996	6	3	50	7.8	18	77
1997	9	7	78	11.0	17	82
1998	8	7	88	8.7	18	92
1999	9	5	56	8.7	24	104
2000	3	2	67	3.4	23	89
2001	12	9	75	12.1	26	99
2002	11	6	55	12.9	23	85
2003	7	5	71	6.1	27	115
2004	16	12	75	11.6	36	138
2005	10	5	50	6.9	35	145
2006	13	8	62	8.8	41	148
2007	17	12	71	10.6	38	161
1982-2006 average:	7.2	5.0	66.5	10.2	15.2	74.7

Note: Only includes whales documented during the June 1 – August 31 study period. Crude Birth Rate (CBR) = a percentage computed by # calves / total whale count. CBR's for 1982 & 1983 could not be calculated because total whale counts for these years are not available. Number of known age whales does not include calves of the year. These data are not available for 1982 – 1984.

documented with their first known calves. We identified two whales (#1655, born 2002, and #2023, born 2006) that had not been sighted in the study area since they were calves.

In June and July we documented female #1593 and her calf (#2033) five times in Icy Strait, primarily around Point Adolphus. However, when we sighted #1593 later in the season her calf appeared to be

missing. We observed #1593 for 31 minutes on August 31 and for 8 minutes on September 15. Although we occasionally observe mothers separate from their calves for periods up to one hour (NPS, unpublished data), in most cases we eventually document both the mother and the calf on the same day. The apparent absence of #1593's calf in late August and September is cause for some concern, although our observations were not long enough to determine conclusively that the calf was missing. We will not know the fate of this calf unless we resight it in subsequent years using the fluke and dorsal fin photographs that we took earlier in the summer. Only three documented cases of calf mortality have been recorded in the study area (Baker 1986, Baker and Straley 1988, Doherty and Gabriele 2004). In a fourth case we documented a female without her calf late in the season but we could not determine if the calf had died or been weaned early (Doherty and Gabriele 2001). Overall, late season calf absences are very ambiguous given observations of temporary mother/calf separation as well as weaning on the feeding grounds (Baraff and Weinrich 1993, Gabriele *et al.* 2001).

Incidentally, on July 27 we received a report from a whale watching vessel of an injured humpback whale calf at Point Adolphus (T. Merriman, pers. comm.). As the calf rolled at the surface, a passenger reported seeing a large red circular wound measuring approximately 40 cm (16 in) in diameter on the calf's flank. The wound was located about half-way down the calf's body posterior to the insertion point of the pectoral fin. It was not clear if the wound was anthropogenic or natural. On July 30, the captain of the same whale watching vessel thought he saw a "flash of red" on a calf's flank near Point Adolphus (T. Merriman, pers. comm.). We were unable to survey for whales at Point Adolphus until July 31, when we documented several mother/calf pairs but none of the calves had any visible wounds. It is worth noting that our last sighting of #1593's calf was on July 18, thus it is possible that #1593's calf was the injured calf reported in late July and that the calf then died, which would explain its apparent absence in late August and September.

For the third year in a row we documented a record high number of known-age juveniles ($n = 8$) compared to the 1985-2004 average of 2.6 known-age juveniles per year. The most likely reason for this increase is that the high number of calves documented in the study area in recent years (Table 3) has increased our potential for sighting juveniles in subsequent years. Southeastern Alaska juveniles tend to return to the areas where they were brought by their mother in their calf year (Straley 1994). It is also possible that prey availability or other habitat characteristics of the Glacier Bay area make the habitat especially attractive to juvenile whales.

Genetics: We collected 20 sloughed skin samples from 18 unique individuals, including five calves. Since 1996, we have collected 208 sloughed skin samples from humpback whales in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait. Genetic analysis of these samples allows sex determination, definition of mitochondrial DNA haplotype and nuclear DNA genotyping. The only other practical ways we determine a whale's sex are if the whale returns to the study area with a calf (in which case we know that the mother is female) or in the infrequent event that we obtain photographs of the whale's genital area.

Feeding Behavior and Prey Identification: We positively identified two types of prey in association with feeding humpback whales in 2007: Pacific herring (*Clupea harengus pallasii*) and sand lance (*Ammodytes hexapterus*) (L. Meyer, pers. comm.) (Table 4). In addition, on seven occasions between mid July and late August we noted a distinctive cucumber smell near feeding whales that was likely capelin (*Mallotus villosus*). In most past years the prey type we identified most often was capelin, but in 2007 we were unsuccessful in collecting any specimens with a dip net.

Table 4. Humpback whale prey type determinations.

METHOD:	PREY SPECIES (# of cases):		
	<i>herring</i>	<i>capelin</i>	<i>sand lance</i>
Collected specimen with dip net	1		1
'Cucumber' smell in air		7	

Whale/Human Interactions: We are aware of one possible collision between a humpback whale and a vessel in Glacier Bay in 2007 but as far as we know the collision did not result in serious injury or death of the whale. On July 27, the captain of a 13 m chartered jet boat reported that he was transiting on plane at approximately 28 knots near Lamplugh Glacier in the West Arm when a humpback whale surfaced unexpectedly right off his starboard side. He immediately reduced the vessel's speed and made an evasive maneuver that was so abrupt that it threw him out of his seat and jolted others onboard. The captain did not think that his vessel had struck the whale and he subsequently observed the whale surface at least three more times. However, at least one passenger reported that the whale had been struck (National Park Service Incident Record 07-082). Due to weather and other logistics we were unable to conduct a whale survey in the area for several days, but on August 3 we encountered a whale in the West Arm near Russell Island that may have been involved in the incident. The whale was adult

#1018, a female who regularly frequents the West Arm, and we observed an unusual skin abrasion on her left side (Fig. 3) that we speculated may have been an injury from a vessel collision. The injury consisted of a swath of abraded skin and appeared to be superficial and not life threatening.



Figure 3. Whale #1018 on August 10, 2007 with a minor skin abrasion that may have been caused by a vessel collision.

In 2007 there were seven reported “close call” incidents in which humpback whales nearly collided with vessels in Glacier Bay, compared to 2005 ($n = 0$) and 2006 ($n = 1$). Of the seven close calls reported in 2007, six involved cruise ships and one involved a tour boat. On May 17, NPS rangers observed a whale breaching less than 200 m from a cruise ship as the ship transited in the lower West Arm at a speed of approximately 17 knots (M. Fisher and M. Seraphin, pers. comm.). On July 31, a whale surfaced approximately 10 m in front of a 31 m tour boat that was transiting near Strawberry Island at a speed of 13 knots. The operator slowed down the vessel, made an evasive maneuver and avoided a collision (D. Johnson, pers. comm.). On August 3, we observed a cruise ship pass by a whale in the West Arm at a distance of approximately 300 m. On August 6, a whale crossed approximately 40 m in front of a cruise ship’s bow as the ship transited north of Strawberry Island at a speed of approximately 15 – 17 knots (K. Harris, pers. comm.). On August 8, a whale surfaced approximately 120 m from a cruise ship as the ship transited near Willoughby Island. Later that day, another whale crossed approximately 120 – 150 m in front of the same ship’s bow as the ship transited through Sitakaday Narrows (N. Drumheller, pers. comm.). On September 26, a mother/calf pair surfaced very close to a cruise ship (exact distance unknown) as the ship transited near Rush Point. The pair was observed off the bow of the ship and then off the stern (L. Lieberman, pers. comm.).

Although we do not systematically solicit or track reports of vessels harassing whales in the study area, we occasionally receive reports of harassment. In 2007 we received several reports of the tour boat

Fairweather Express II harassing whales at Point Adolphus during their whale watching trips based out of Bartlett Cove. Passengers reported that the vessel violated federal regulations which prohibit placing a vessel in the path of an oncoming humpback whale so that the whale surfaces within 91 m (100 yards) of the vessel (50 CFR Part 224.103). In addition, we received a report that the *Fairweather Express II* observed the same group of whales continuously for 90 minutes, which conflicts with NOAA Fisheries recommended “Code of Conduct” advising vessels to limit the time they spend observing individual marine mammals to 30 minutes.

In addition, for the second year in a row, we observed many vessels in Park waters in Icy Strait around Point Carolus in close proximity to whales (within 100 m), but in most cases the vessels were anchored or drifting while fishing. Efforts are ongoing to increase awareness among area boaters that the Park’s ¼ mile humpback whale approach regulation applies in all Park waters, not just in Glacier Bay proper.

Elsewhere in southeastern Alaska, on July 8 a dying humpback whale was reported in Chatham Strait with a grossly inflated tongue and deformed head (Fig. 4). The animal was identified as whale #1211, an adult first documented in southeastern Alaska in 1992 (J. Straley Investigations, unpublished data). On July 11 the whale was found dead on a beach on Admiralty Island. A necropsy revealed that the whale had been in excellent body condition and that the probable cause of death was blunt trauma to the



Figure 4. Whale #1211 while still alive in Chatham Strait (photo credit NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region).

chest/neck which could have been caused by a collision with a vessel. It appeared that the impact ruptured part of the respiratory tract, forcing air into the tongue and causing it to inflate (Burek 2007, A. Jensen, pers. comm.).

In 2007 we received one report of an entangled whale near Point Adolphus and we documented one whale in Glacier Bay with a minor entanglement. On June 28 a private vessel operator reported a humpback whale entangled in line near Point Adolphus. Subsequent analysis of the reporting party's video footage revealed that it was #2037, whale #581's calf, and that the calf was probably not entangled; instead, it appeared that the calf was playing with strands of bull kelp that closely resembled line. We observed this calf on June 27 playing with kelp and again on July 3, when the calf was surface active, including breaching. In the latter encounter, we confirmed that the calf was not entangled during 18 minutes of observation. Incidentally, on July 12 a different private vessel reported a "sick" whale at Point Adolphus and said that the whale appeared to be lethargic and barely breathing. However, subsequent analysis of the reporting party's digital images of the animal revealed that it was again #2037 and that the calf was probably just resting.

On August 9 we observed adult whale #1426 near South Marble Island in Glacier Bay and suspected that the whale was trailing entangling gear from its flukes, however the whale's dives and travel were so erratic that we were unable to collect detailed observations. Four days later, we encountered #1426 in Sitakaday Narrows and obtained digital images showing what appeared to be a small amount of monofilament line snagged on the whale's right fluke tip. The entanglement was assessed to be non-life threatening and no further action was taken.

Elsewhere in southeastern Alaska, the number of humpback whales reported entangled in 2007 ($n = 6$) was typical of recent years. On March 17 a humpback whale was reported entangled in line and a buoy in Jamestown Bay in Sitka (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data). On June 10 a humpback whale was reported entangled in line and a buoy in Sitka Sound (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data), however it is unclear whether this was the same animal as the whale reported entangled on March 17. On June 15 a humpback whale calf was reported entangled in shrimp pot gear in Tenakee Inlet and then apparently self-released within a few hours of the initial sighting (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data). On June 19 a sub-adult humpback whale was reported entangled in gillnet that was trailing approximately 50 feet behind the animal outside the study area in eastern Icy Strait near Spasski Island (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data). On June 22 a

humpback whale calf was reported entangled in line and two buoys at the mouth of Port Frederick outside the study area in eastern Icy Strait (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data). On July 1 a humpback whale calf was reported entangled in gillnet in lower Lynn Canal near Juneau but then apparently self-released, although this was never confirmed (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data). On November 13 a sub-adult humpback whale was reported entangled in line in Wrangell Narrows near Petersburg. A trained disentanglement team from the Petersburg Marine Mammal Center successfully removed the gear (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data).

Notable Behavioral Observations: On August 31 we observed a group of four transient killer whales attacking a Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*) near Point Adolphus in Icy Strait. Several hours later, near the end of the kill, two humpback whales approached the kill site wheeze blowing and tail slashing at the remains of the dead sea lion (D. Matkin, pers. comm.). Based on dorsal fin photographs taken by killer whale researcher Dena Matkin, we identified the humpback whales as adult male #166 and whale #1907 (age class and sex unknown). Incidents in which humpback whales are apparently attracted to killer whale predation events on other marine mammals (particularly Steller sea lions) are difficult to interpret but not uncommon (Dolphin 1987, Doherty and Gabriele 2003, Jefferson *et al.* 1991, Matkin *et al.* 2007, Neilson and Gabriele 2005, D. Matkin and V. Deecke pers. comm.). These curious interactions highlight the need to exercise extreme caution in interpreting reports of attempted predation or harassment by killer whales on humpback whales, especially when the observations are brief and/or made from a distance.

On August 19 a NPS marine mammal observer onboard a cruise ship near Rush Point in lower Glacier Bay saw a group of killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) apparently pursuing a humpback whale (N. Drumheller, pers. comm.). Initially, four killer whales splashed and milled while a group of six humpback whales surfaced in tight formation nearby. A few minutes later, a single humpback whale surfaced near the ship with three killer whales “right behind it and almost on top of it”, while the group of six humpbacks continued to surface approximately 0.5 km away. As the single humpback whale dove, the observer caught a brief glimpse of a flesh-colored patch on its right side behind the pectoral fin which may have been a wound, but he could not be certain. Further observations of the interaction were not possible and whether or not this was truly a predation attempt could not be confirmed.

We received two more reports of killer whales apparently pursuing humpback whales in the study area, but both reports were second-hand and neither could be confirmed. The first report involved a group of

killer whales apparently trying to separate a humpback whale mother and calf (C. Murdoch, pers. comm.) and the second report involved a group of killer whales apparently pursuing a surface active humpback whale in Icy Strait (D. Johnson, pers. comm.).

On October 3 we observed three humpback whales (adult male #186, adult male #1244 and an unidentified individual) wheeze blowing next to a group of four or five killer whales. Soon after, the humpback whales began to travel away while the killer whales began milling approximately 500 m away. We did not detect a killer whale predation event associated with this interaction and we do not know the significance of the behavior we observed.

In 2007 we visually confirmed the identity of two singing humpback whales in Glacier Bay. On September 18 we detected a singing humpback whale on a portable hydrophone deployed off the whale survey vessel *Sand Lance* at the entrance to Glacier Bay. By correlating the timing and loudness of the song with our observations of a nearby whale, we positively identified the singer as whale #352, a 23-year-old male who had not been documented singing in the study area before. On October 14 we deployed the portable hydrophone off the *Sand Lance* in Sitakaday Narrows and heard a whale singing who we positively identified as whale #1065, a 15-year-old whale of unknown sex. Whale #1065 was documented singing in 2003 and was also the first whale ever to be confirmed as a singer in Glacier Bay, exactly four years prior to our 2007 observation on October 14, 2003 (Doherty and Gabriele 2003).

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APPENDIX 1

Humpback Whale Fluke Catalogs Used for Matching

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APPENDIX 3

**STANDARDIZED (July 9 – August 16) and TOTAL (June 1 – August 31)
Humpback Whale Counts, 1985-2007**

Year:	GLACIER BAY		ICY STRAIT		GLACIER BAY & ICY STRAIT	
	standardized whale count	total whale count	standardized whale count	total whale count	standardized whale count	total whale count
1985	7	15	19	30	24	41
1986	26	32	24	33	39	49
1987	18	29	33	48	40	60
1988	19	41	29	36	40	53
1989	23	27	23	31	33	41
1990	16	26	24	33	33	50
1991	17	19	33	42	44	53
1992	27	34	38	52	48	65
1993	24	31	24	30	40	50
1994	17	30	29	42	44	60
1995	18	28	26	44	37	57
1996	37	44	43	59	65	77
1997	41	55	33	50	66	82
1998	45	62	28	51	69	92
1999	36	60	40	66	69	104
2000	44	59	26	57	62	89
2001	26	45	58	84	72	99
2002	28	44	34	61	56	85
2003	53	81	61	76	102	115
2004	85	111	38	64	110	138
2005	66	102	50	89	95	145
2006	66	82	98	120	130	148
2007	76	91	98	129	132	161
average:	35.43	49.91	39.52	57.70	63.04	83.22