

# Alaska Beluga Whale Committee

Chairman Willie Goodwin, Kotzebue  
(Robert Suydam, North Slope  
Borough/ABWC)  
2011 Open Water Meeting

# Goals of ABWC

- Maintain healthy populations of beluga whales in northern and western Alaskan waters
- Provide for adequate subsistence harvest of beluga whales and protect hunting privileges for Alaskan subsistence hunters

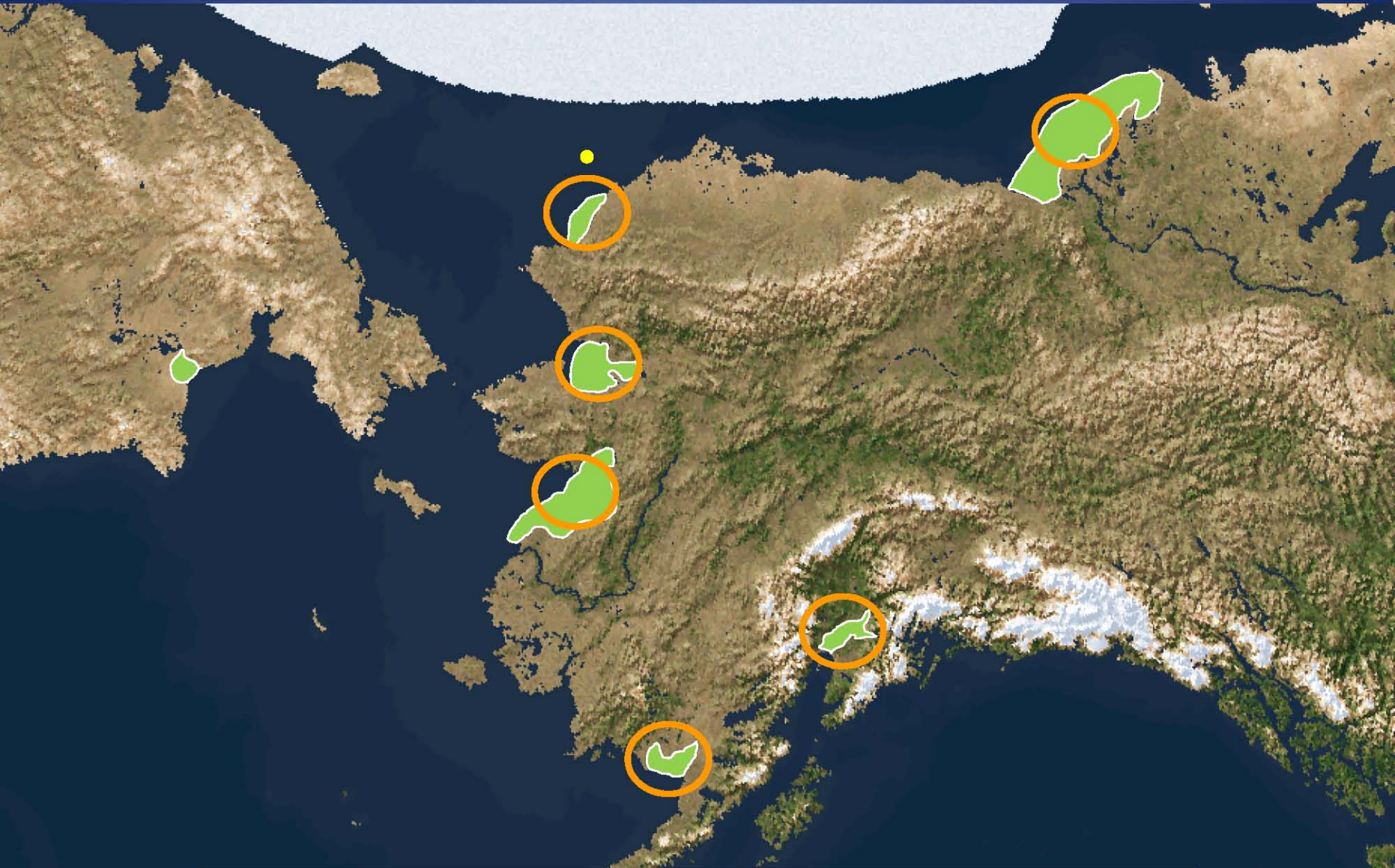
# ABWC

- ABWC comprised of hunters, managers and scientists
- Management Plan adopted in 1995 and accepted by tribal organizations in 1996 and 1997
- Cooperative Agreement for the co-management of the western Alaska Beluga Whales signed with NMFS in 1999

# Science

- Genetic studies for clarification of stock structure
- Document harvest on an annual basis
- Bio-sampling for a variety of studies (e.g., health assessment, natural history, etc.)
- Population assessment
- Satellite tracking

# Alaska Beluga Stocks

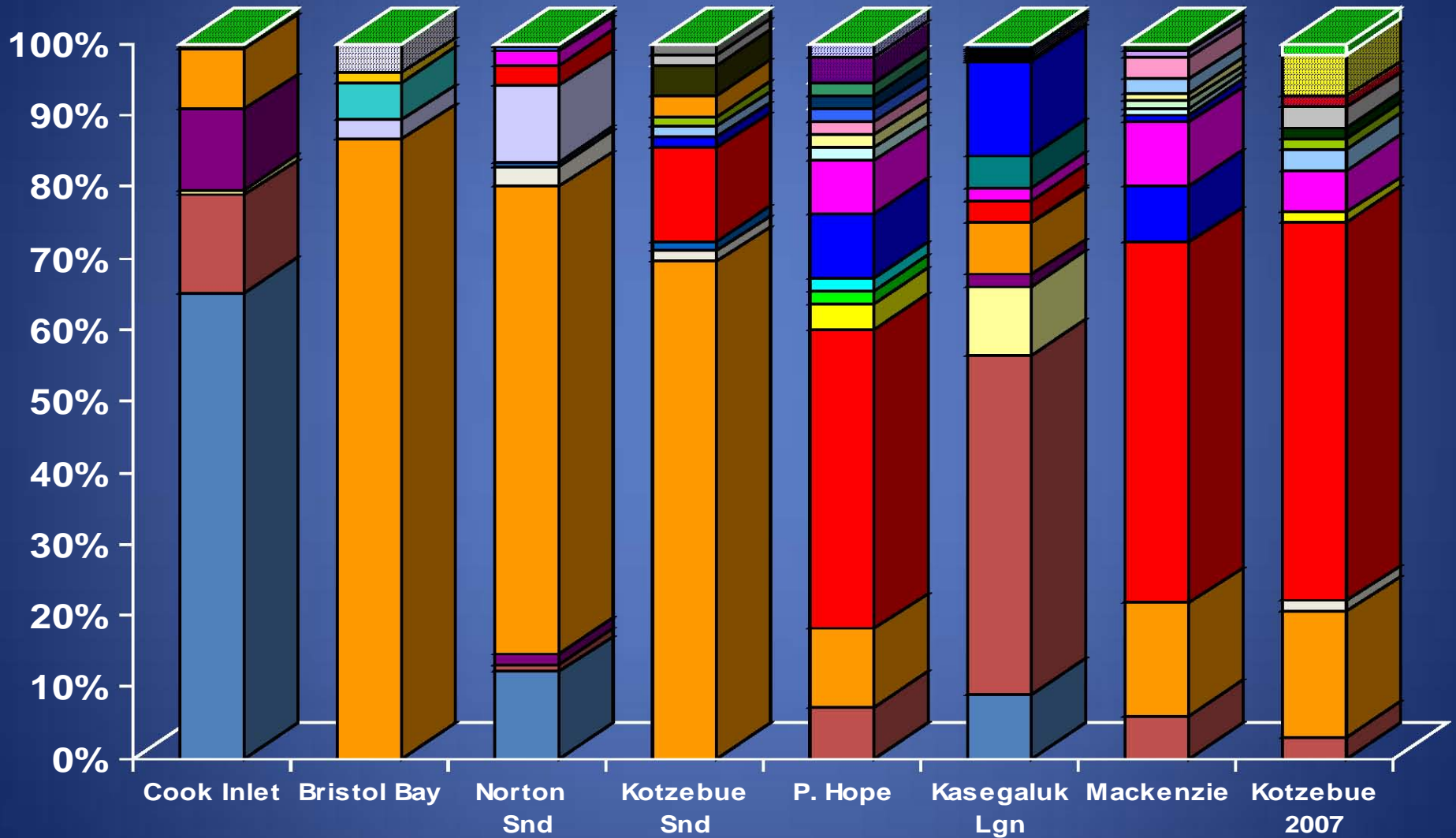




# Beluga mtDNA haplotype frequencies – Kotzebue Sound

*June and July 2007*

n = 132      75      205      69      55      500      101      68



Preliminary results

# Harvest

- Beaufort Sea stock: Little Diomedede, Point Hope, Barrow, Kaktovik
  - 2005 to 2009: average harvest = 25.8/year
- Eastern Chukchi Sea: Kotzebue Sound(?), Point Lay and Wainwright
  - 2005 to 2009: average harvest = 94.2/year
- Eastern Bering Sea: Norton Sound, Yukon & Kusko Deltas
  - 2005 to 2009: average harvest = 181.2/year (Kusko = 11.8/year)
- Bristol Bay
  - 2005 to 2009: average harvest = 20.8/year
- Total = 320/year

# Harvest 2010

- Kotzebue: one whale landed
- Point Hope: >15 landed (Apr/May)
- Point Lay: 22 landed & 2 struck and lost (30 June)
- Wainwright: ~11 landed (late July)
- Barrow: ~3 landed (summer)
- Kaktovik: 5 landed (early August)

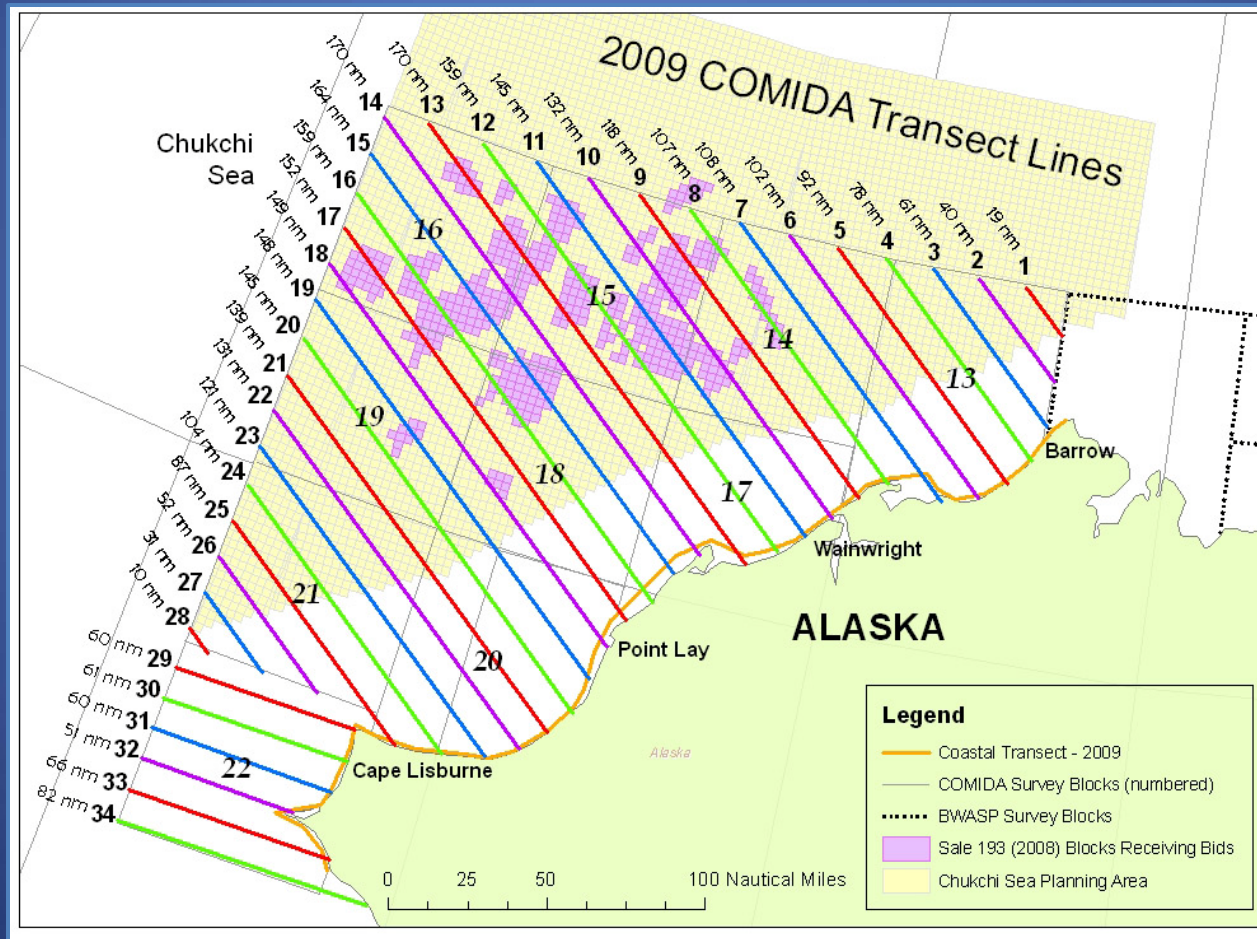


# Bio-sampling

- Health Assessment
  - Body Condition
  - Exposure to disease
  - Immune function
  - Hearing
  - Contaminants
- Age, growth and reproduction
- Diet
- Genetics

# Chukchi Sea Aerial Surveys

## COMIDA: Chukchi Offshore Monitoring in Drilling Area



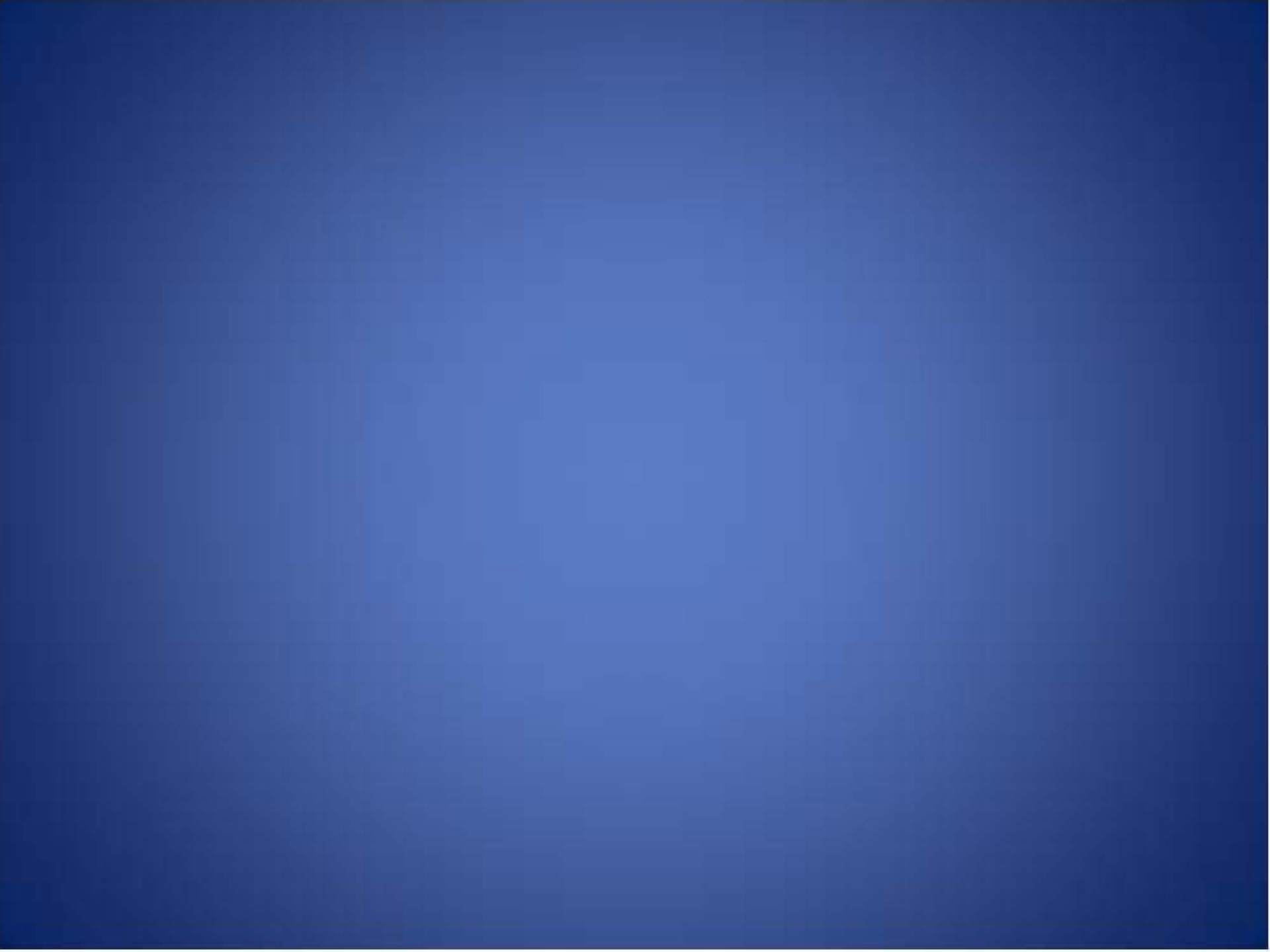
Fall  
1982-1991

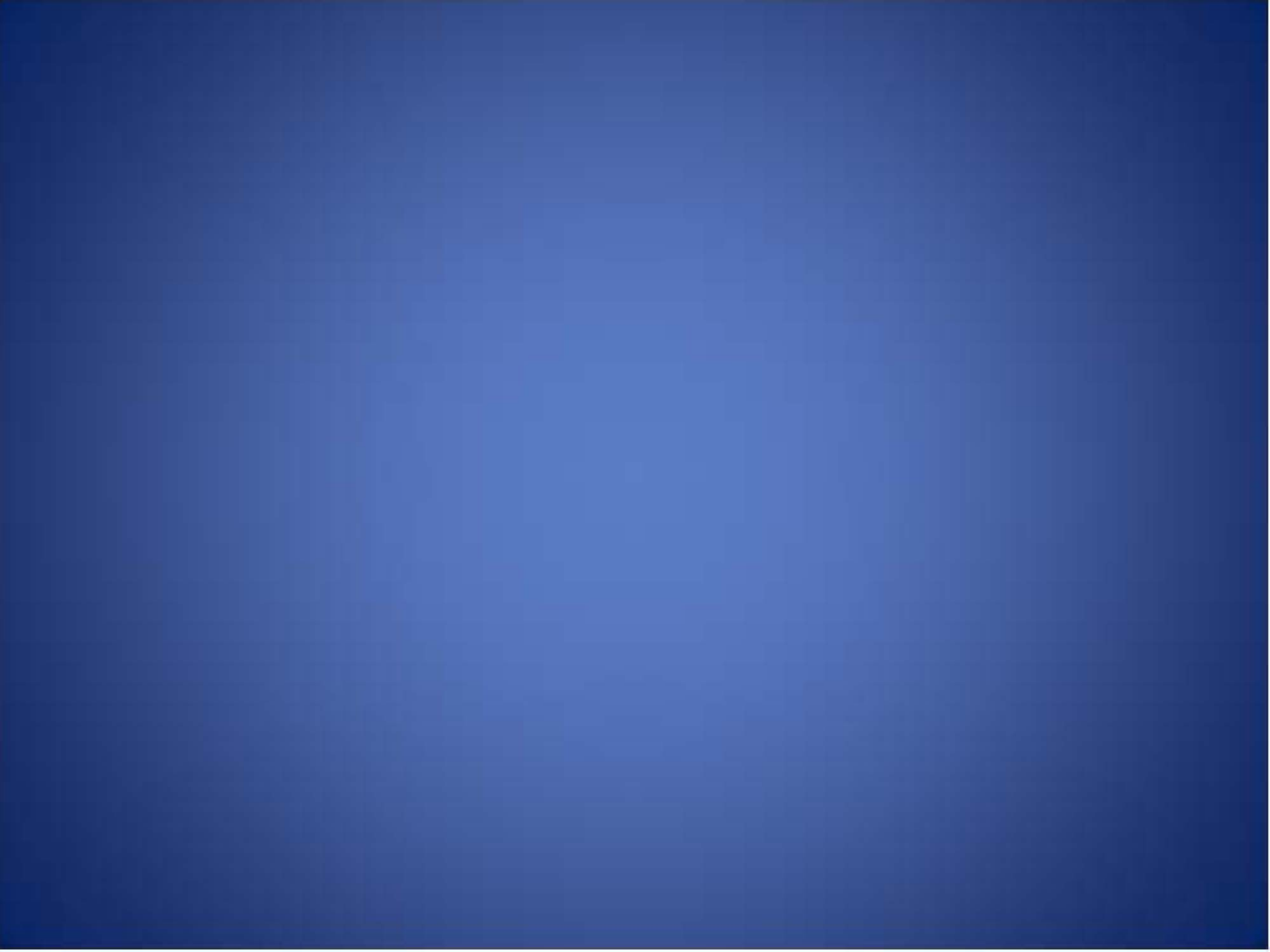
Summer/Fall  
2008-2010



Photo by Amelia Brower  
NOAA Fisheries Service  
AFSC. National Marine Mammal Lab  
Permit No. 782-1719

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# Concerns about Offshore Industrial Activity

- Point Lay hunt occurs in late June or first two weeks in July
- Wainwright hunt occurs in late July or early August
- Deflection away for coastal areas
  - Wainwright-vessels/barges interrupted a beluga hunt in 2007 and 2009
- Beluga response to industrial sounds?  
Cumulative impacts?
- Impacts on beluga health or prey items