

Alaska Beluga Whale Committee

Chairman Willie Goodwin, Kotzebue
(Robert Suydam, North Slope
Borough/ABWC)
2010 Open Water Meeting

Goals

- 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

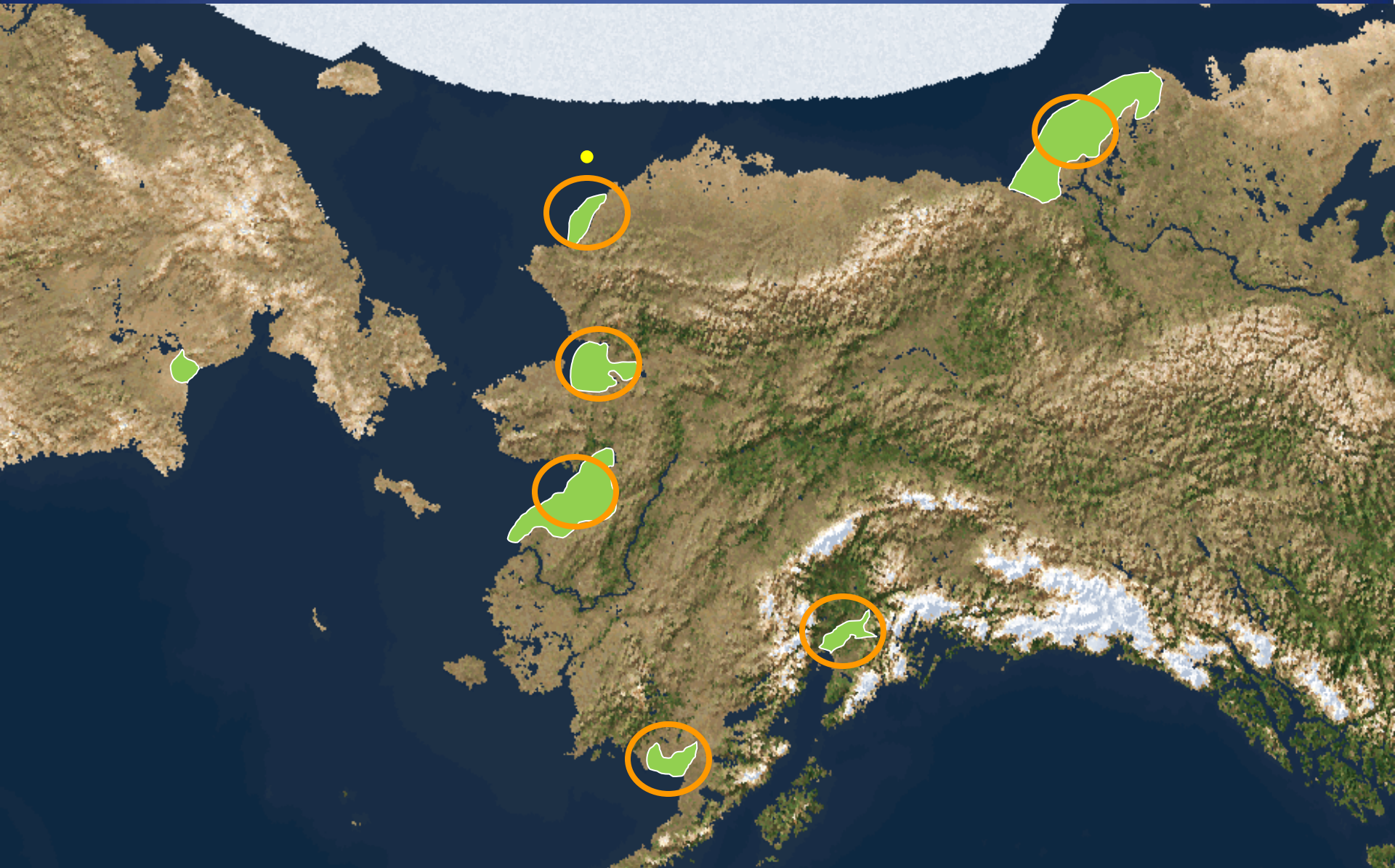
ABWC

- 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

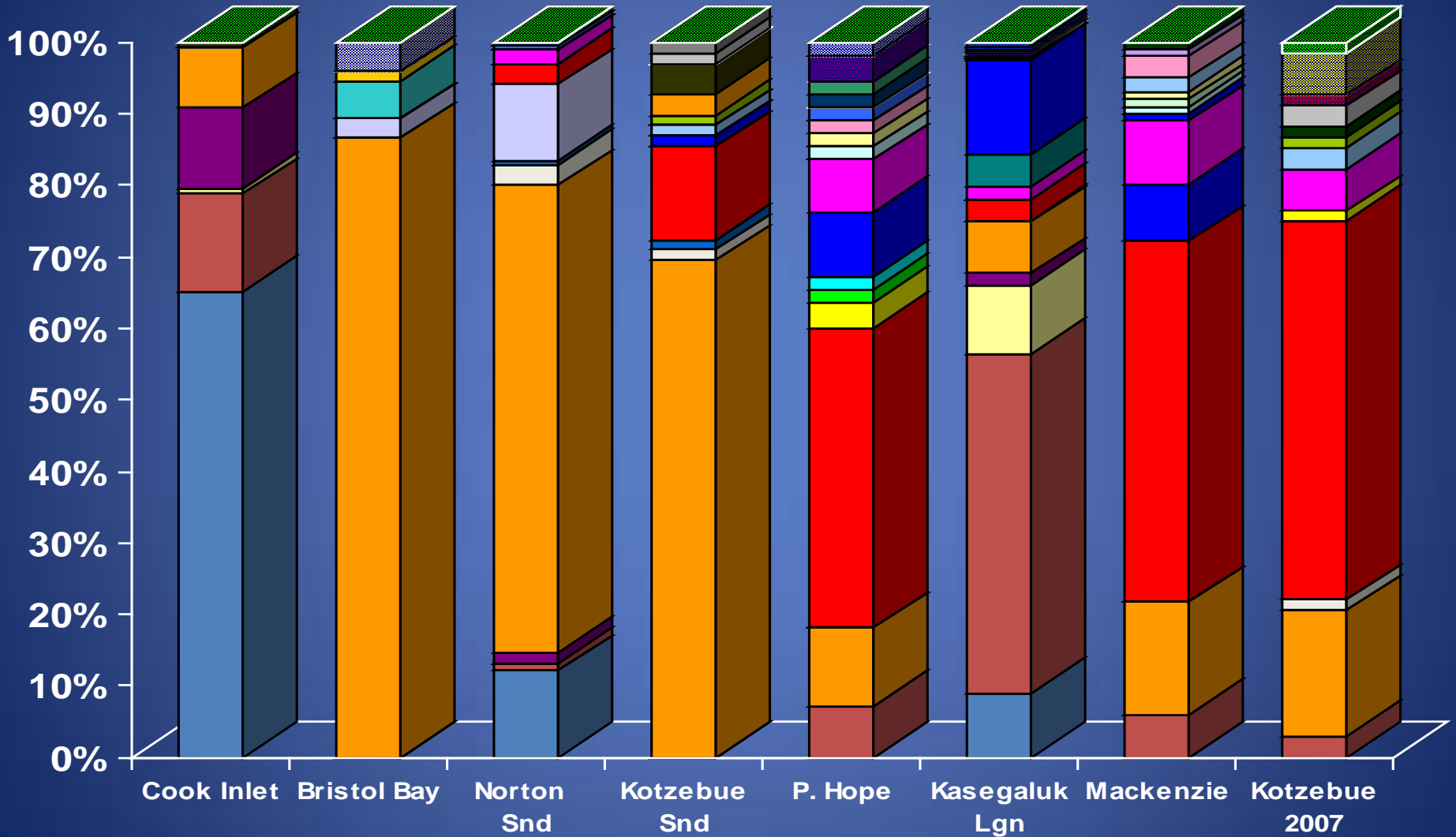
Alaska Beluga Stocks



Beluga mtDNA haplotype frequencies – Kotzebue Sound

June and July 2007

n = 132 75 205 69 55 500 101 68



Preliminary results

Harvest

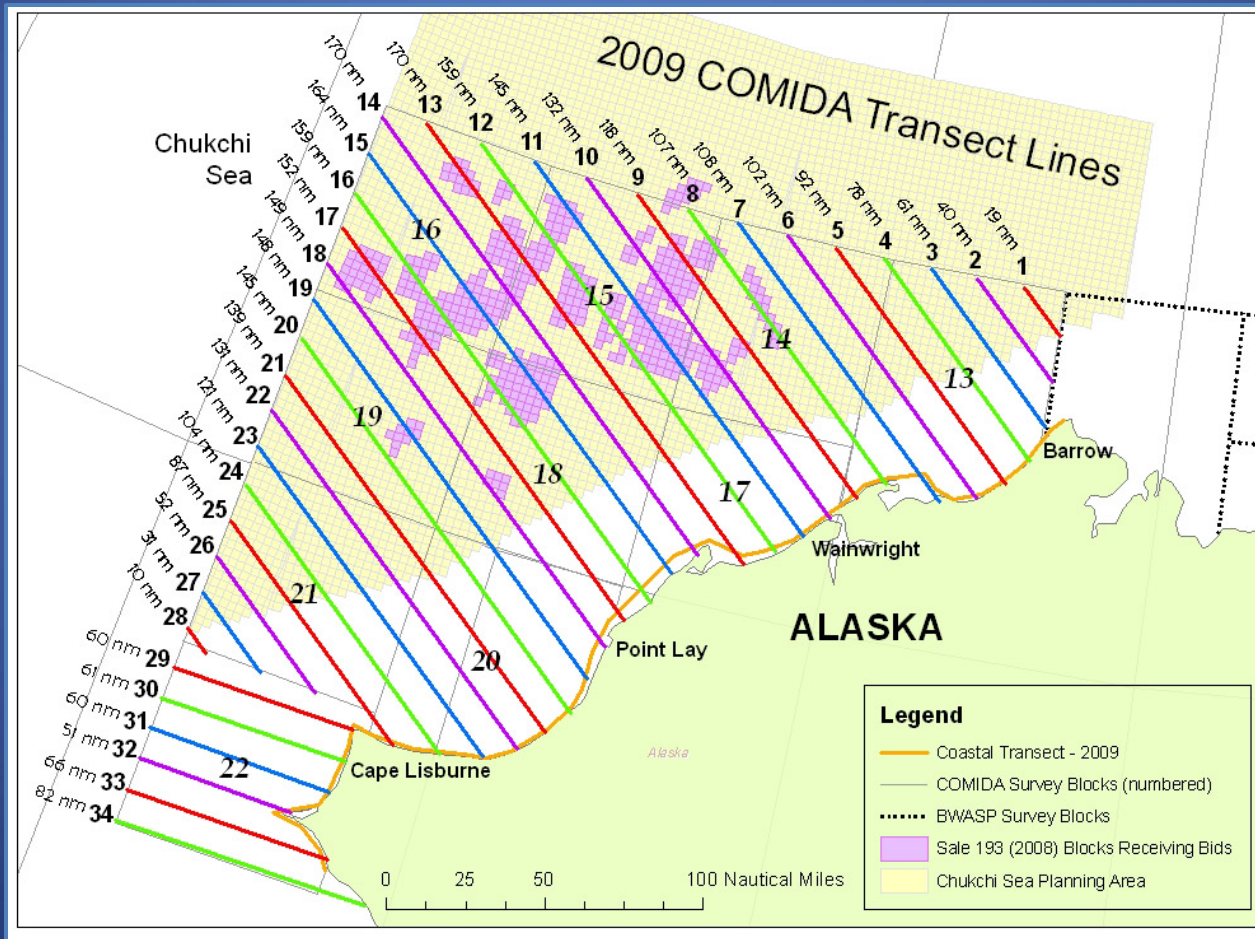
- Beaufort Sea stock: Little Diomedede, Point Hope, Barrow, Kaktovik
 - 2005 to 2009: average harvest = 25.8/year
- Eastern Chukchi Sea: Kotzebue Sound(?), Point Lay and Wainwright
 - 2005 to 2009: average harvest = 94.2/year
- Eastern Bering Sea: Norton Sound, Yukon & Kusko Deltas
 - 2005 to 2009: average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

Bio-sampling

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

Chukchi Sea Aerial Surveys

COMIDA: Chukchi Offshore Monitoring in Drilling Area

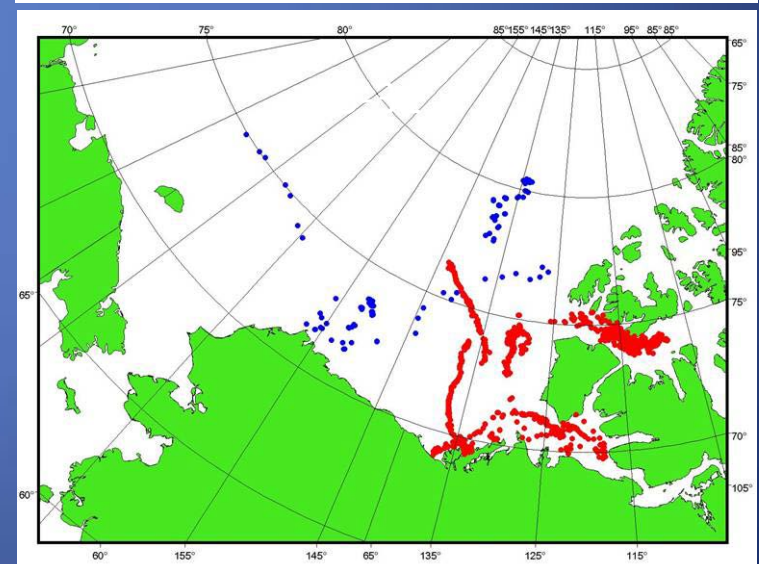
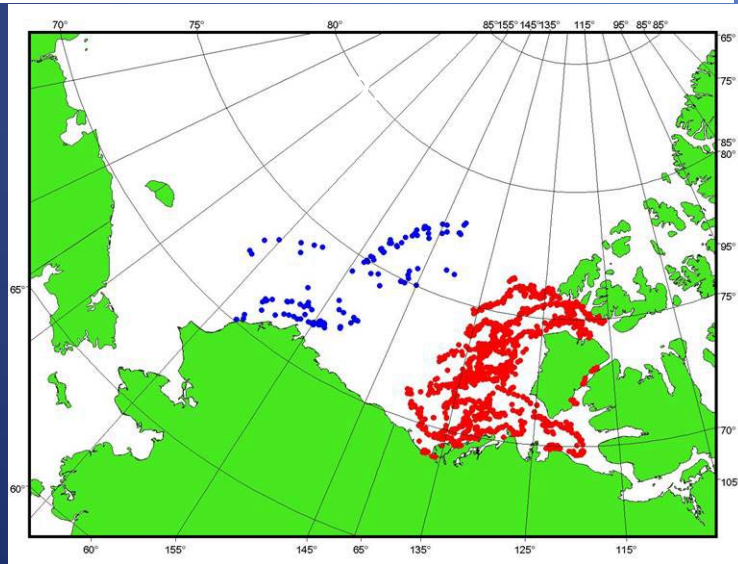
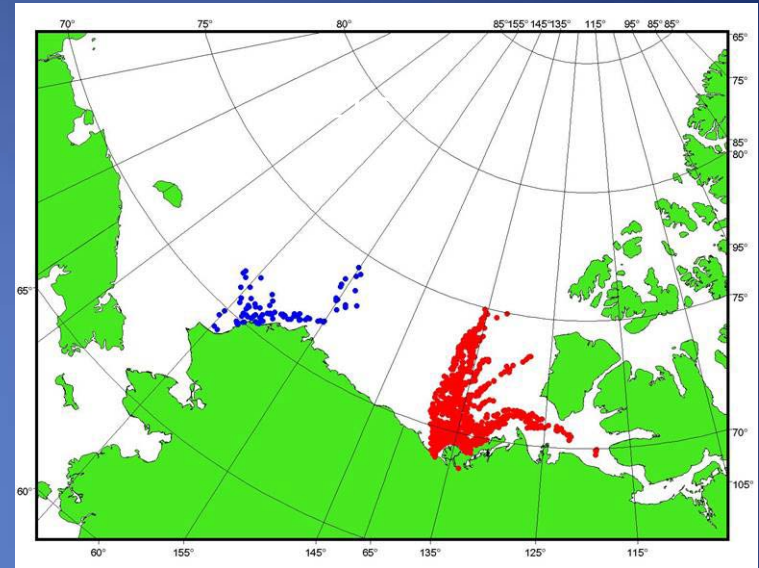
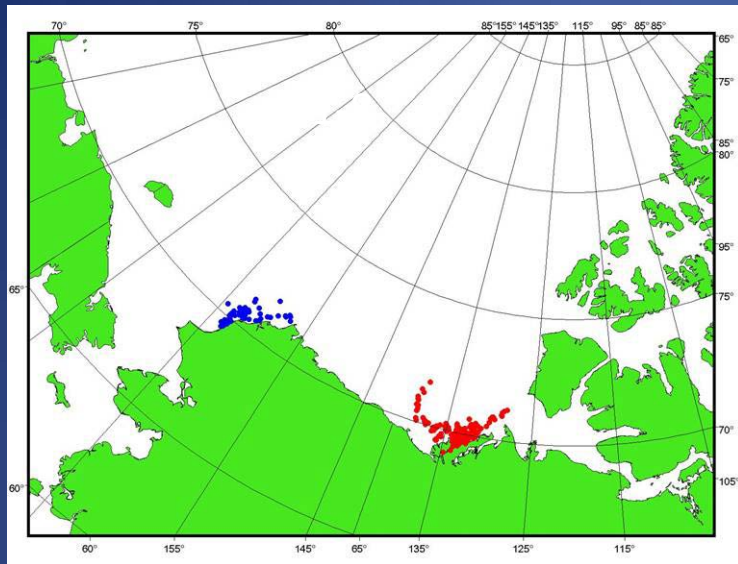


Fall
1982-1991

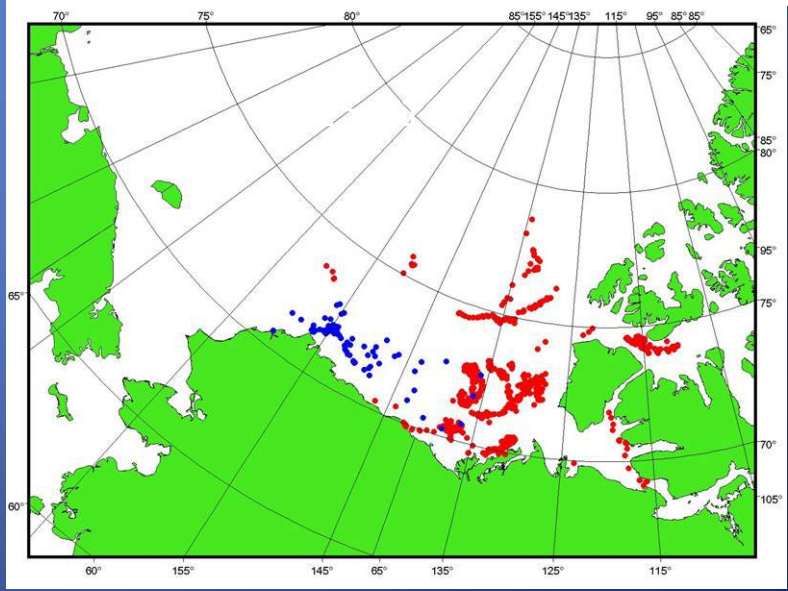
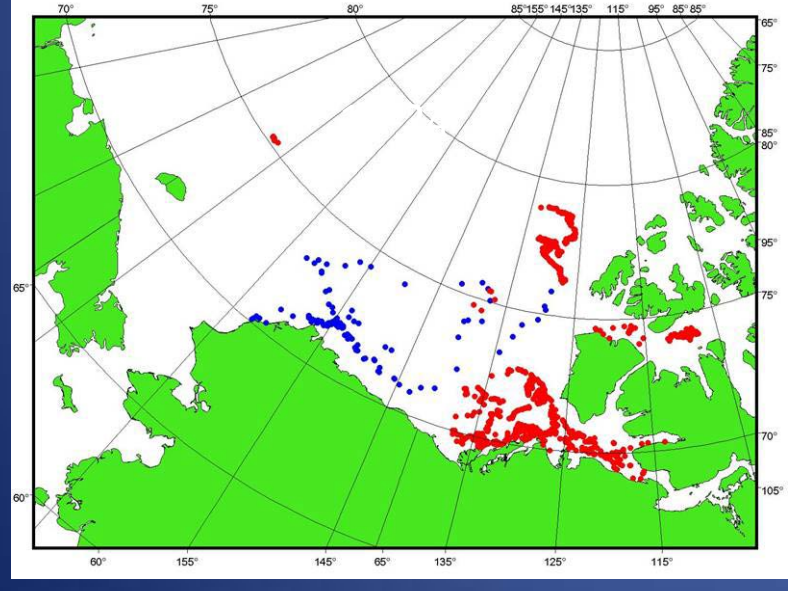
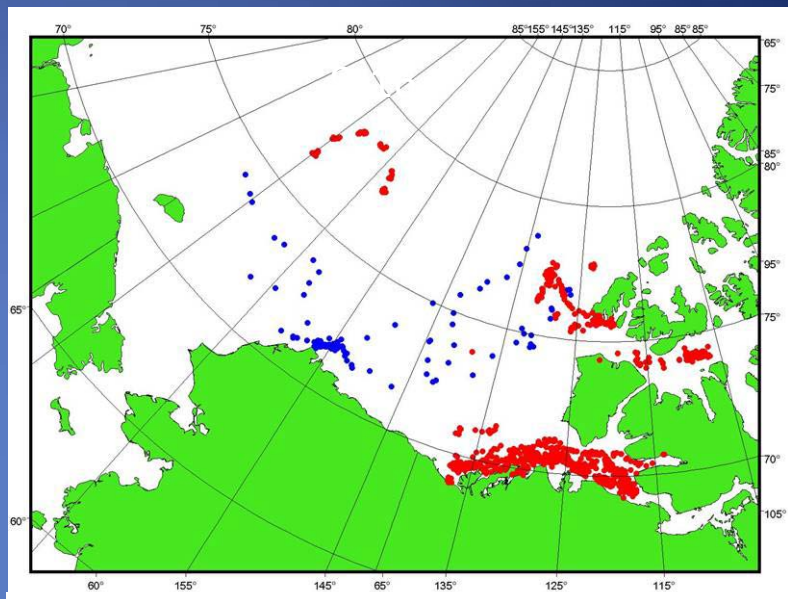
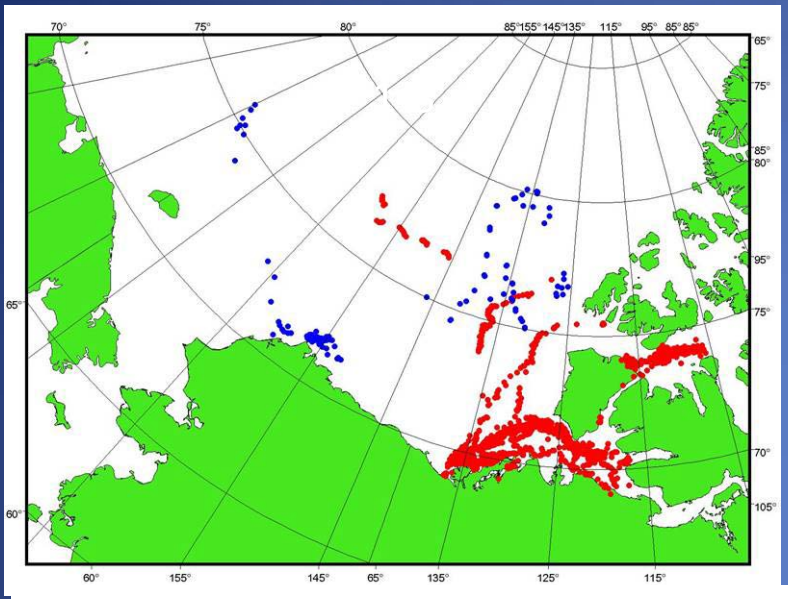
Summer/Fall
2008-2009



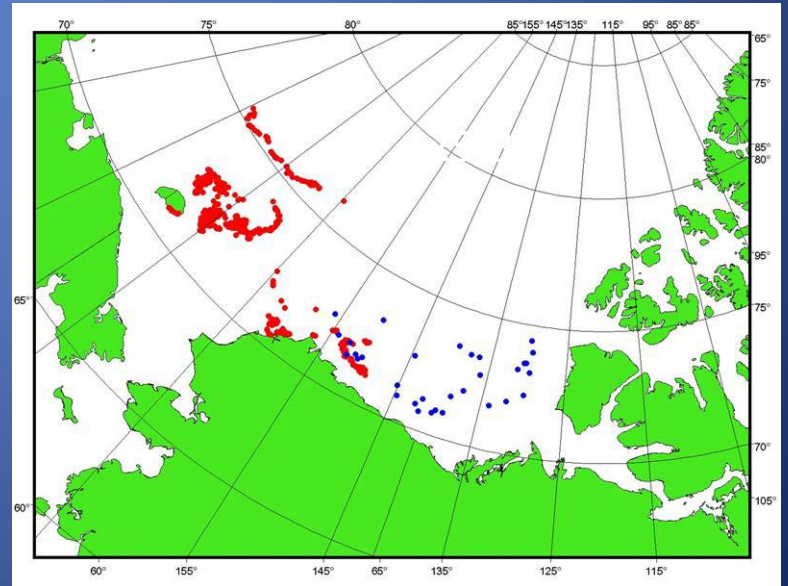
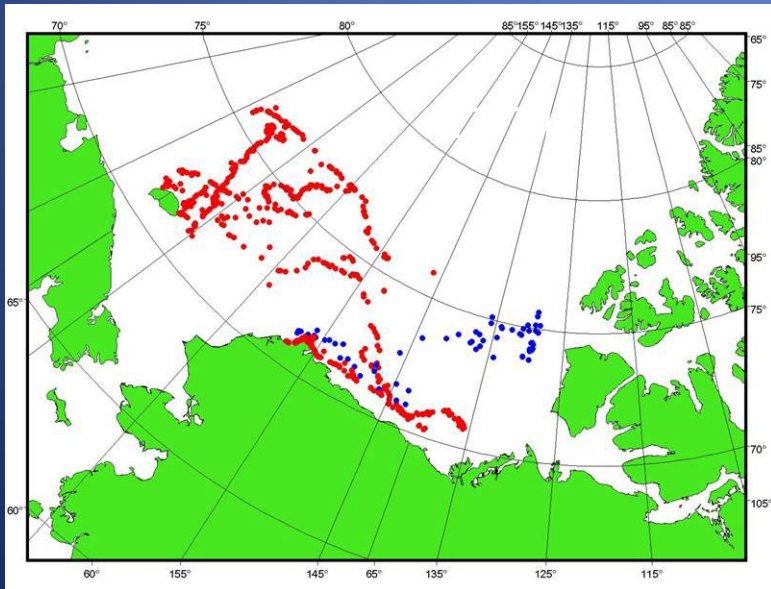
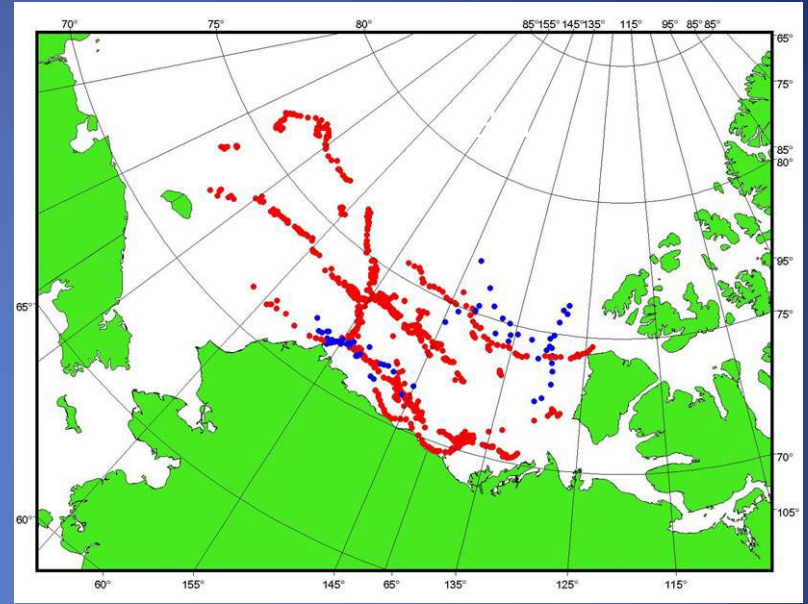
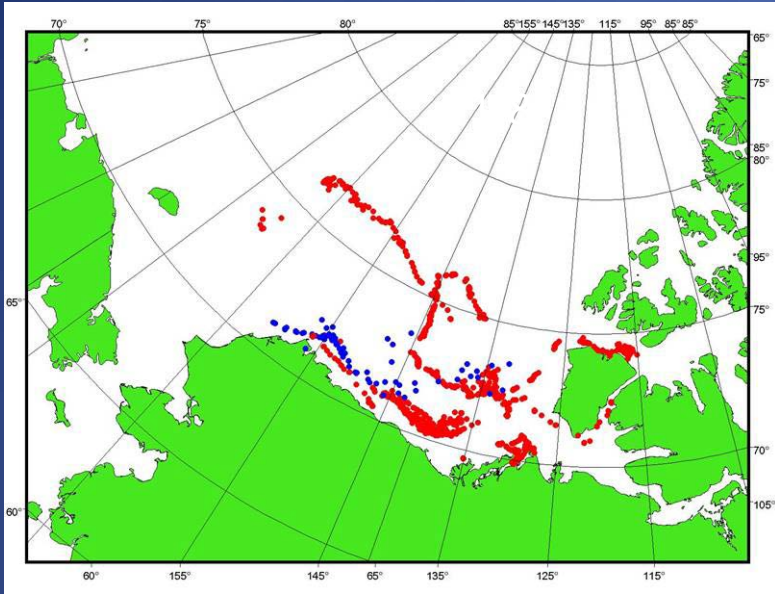
July locations of tagged beluga whales (blue –Chukchi; red –Beaufort)



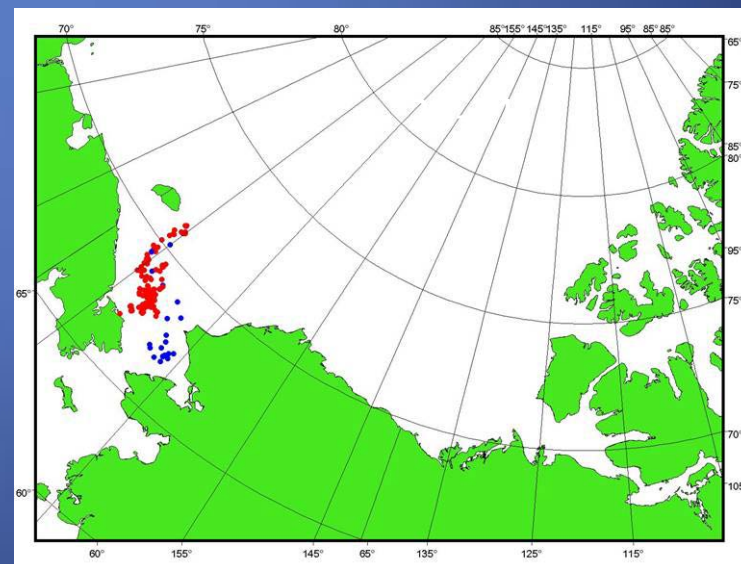
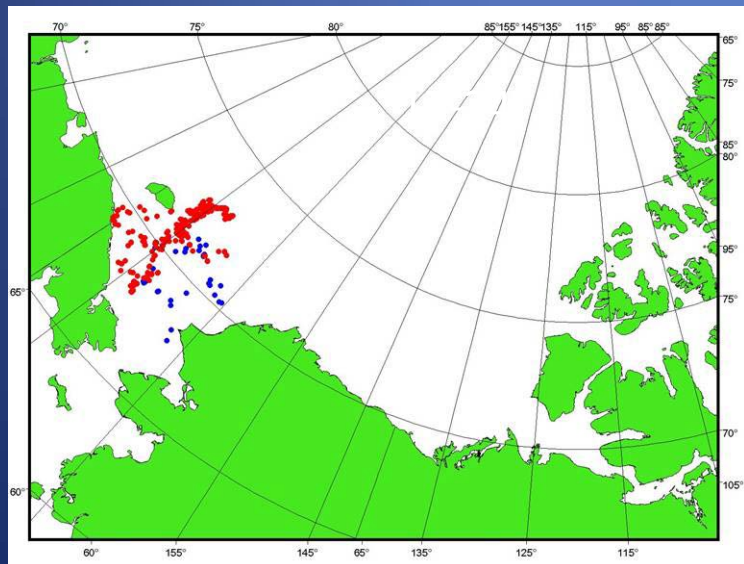
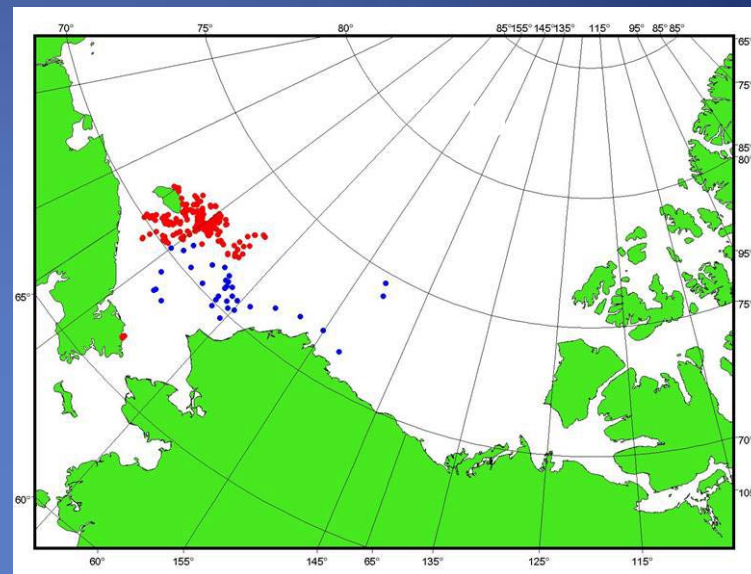
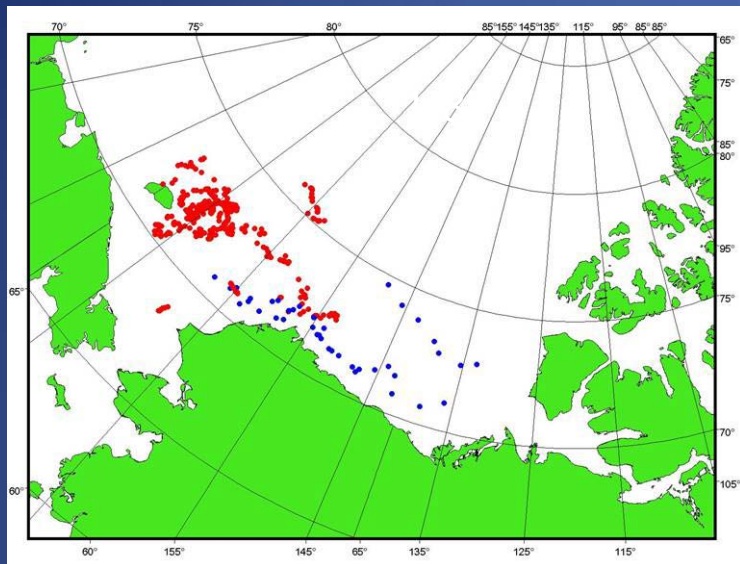
August locations of tagged beluga whales (blue –Chukchi; red –Beaufort)



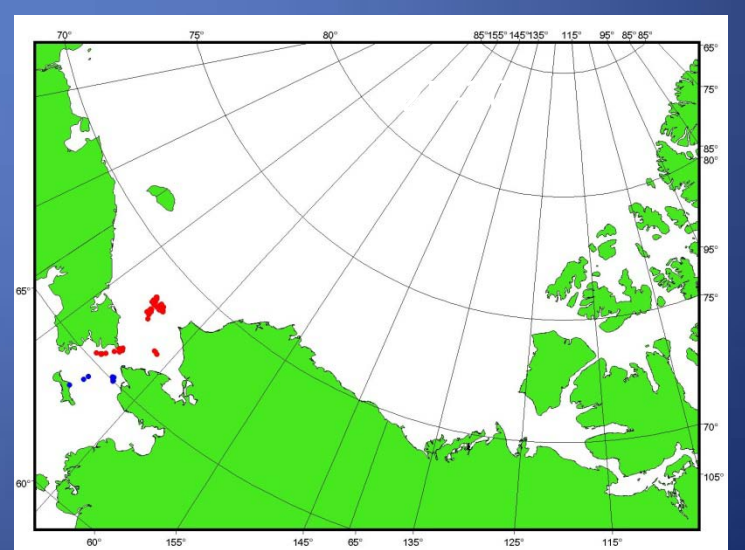
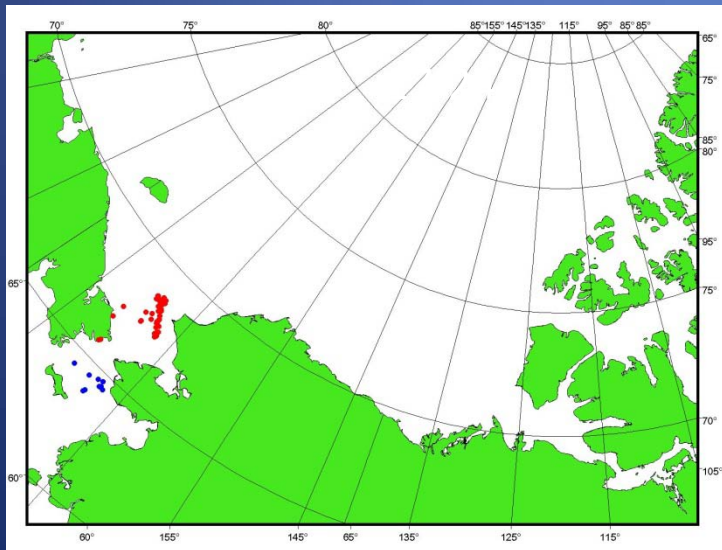
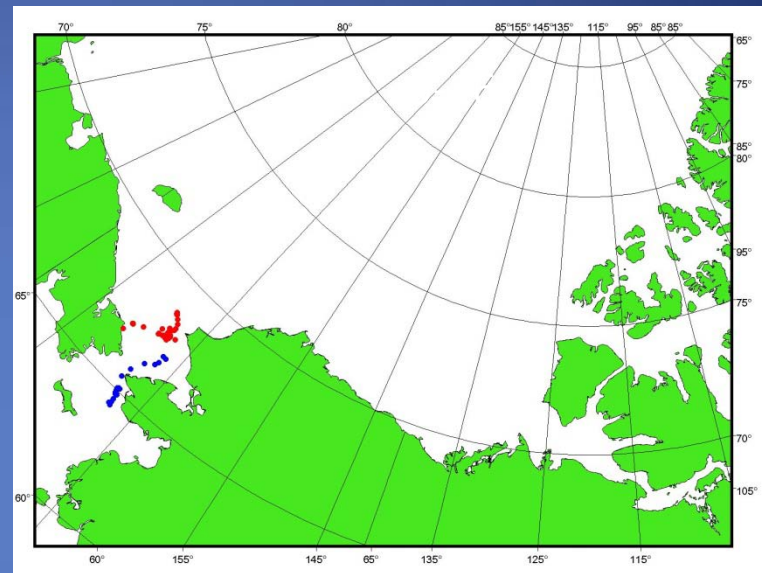
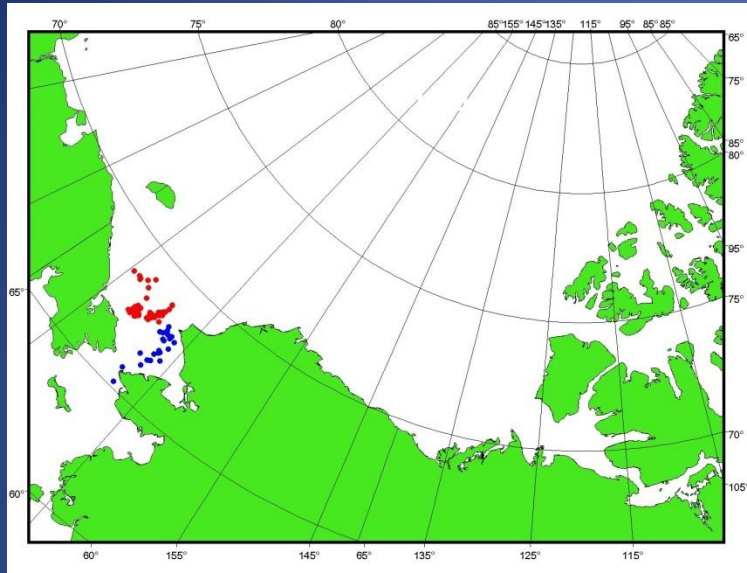
September locations of tagged beluga whales (blue –Chukchi; red –Beaufort)



October locations of tagged beluga whales (blue –Chukchi; red –Beaufort)



November locations of tagged beluga whales (blue –Chukchi; red –Beaufort)



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-Industry vessels interrupted a beluga hunt in 2007 and 2009
- Impacts on beluga health or prey items