

DISEASE OUTBREAK - SEALS

November 2011 Update

Over 100 sick or dead pinnipeds with diseased patches of skin have been discovered in the Arctic in recent months. The cause is unknown but is being studied. During July near Barrow, ringed seals were reported with blisters on flippers and face as well as hair loss. This condition is now being reported in the Bering Strait / Norton Sound region.



PLEASE REPORT UNUSUAL SEALS!

If you find an unusual seal in the Bering Strait region, contact:

- Eskimo Walrus Commission: **1-877-277-4392** (Nome)
- Gay Sheffield: **1-800-478-2202** (UAF-Marine Advisory Program, Nome)
- NMFS **1-877-925-7773** (Marine Mammal Stranding Network – Juneau)

PUBLIC HEALTH / SAFE HANDLING

It is generally recommended to not eat seals or walruses that look sick.

Until we know more, if you harvest or find a sick seal you should:

- Wear gloves
- Wash your hands
- Cook meat before eating it
- Wash your equipment. Rinse it with a bleach solution.