

Draft 2005 Alaska Region Marine Mammal Stranding Summary

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Summary

Strandings of cetaceans and pinnipeds that occurred in Alaska waters and were reported to the National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region (NMFS) are summarized here. Currently a total of 117 events are recorded, involving 126 individual animals. This data is subject to change as more information becomes available and with further review of the records; at this time level A reports are not yet available for at least 15 events (including one beach-cast Stejneger's beaked whale).

Stranding events include animals found dead (floating and beach-cast) and reports of live stranded, mass stranded, abandoned, sick or injured animals. Human interactions like collisions, fishery interactions and entanglements are included. Known subsistence takes are not included, but suspected subsistence animals are in some cases included here (e.g., animals reported shot). Fishery observer reports are not included unless the animal was observed outside of statistical reporting protocols (and thus would not be included by the observer program as part of their watch data set).

Stranding events where the animal(s) could not be examined are included in the numbers below as long as the animal was at least identified as either cetacean or pinniped. Both unconfirmed and confirmed reports are compiled here. Dedicated survey effort this year included Kodiak Island field work from June to September work performed by the Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Program, as well as a marine mammal morbidity and mortality study carried out by UAF [level A's pending].

Events involving two or more species are rare in the Alaska stranding data; this summer a harbor seal and harbor porpoise were found beachcast together soon after a storm. An elephant seal was reported beach-cast as well (only 8 other reports are of sick or dead elephant seals are found in the Alaska stranding reports from 1995 on).

Further stranding information and references are available at the NMFS Alaska Region webpage:
<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/strandings.htm>

Acknowledgements

This summary is made possible by the people who report stranding events and the efforts of the Alaska Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

Tables

Table 1. Draft 2005 Alaska Region Stranding Reports by Initial Sighting Month, Number of Events, and Number of Animals.

Month	Events	Animals
January	1	1
February	2	2
March	3	3
April	1	1
May	12	12
June	25	26
July	21	22
August	33	40
September	11	11
October	5	5
November	2	2
December	1	1
Total	117	126

Table 2. Draft 2005 Alaska Region Marine Mammal Strandings by Initial Condition, Species, and Number of Animals.

	Initial Condition			Total
	Alive	Dead	Unknown	
Beluga	8	9		17
Bowhead		1		1
Cetacean, unknown	1	2	1	4
Cetacean, unknown baleen		2		2
Cetacean, unknown large	1	2		3
Grey		5		5
Harbor porpoise	1	6		7
Humpback	28	13		41
Minke	1	1		2
Orca	1	2		3
Sperm		1		1
<i>Cetacean total</i>	41	44	1	86
Elephant seal		1		1
Harbor seal	11	12		23
Ringed seal	2	1		3
Sea lion, unknown		1		1
Steller sea lion	4	8		12
<i>Pinniped total</i>	17	23		40
Total	58	67	1	126

Large cetacean includes possible belugas, beaked whales, orcas, and the baleen whales.

Table 3. Draft 2005 Alaska Region Live Strandings Handled by the Alaska Sea Life Center for Rehabilitation by Species, Outcome, and Number of Animals.

Species	Outcome	Animals
Harbor seal	Released	8
	<i>Harbor Total</i>	8
Ringed seal	Died	1
	Released	1
	<i>Ringed Total</i>	2
Steller sea lion	Released	1
	<i>Steller Total</i>	1
Total		11

Table 4. Draft 2005 Alaska Region Stranding Events involving Human Interaction. These numbers should be treated as preliminary. They include both confirmed and unconfirmed reports; not all human interaction reports recorded evidence. There may be duplicate reports from the same event included in these numbers.

Human Interaction?	Details	Species	Animals	
<i>Suspected</i>	Entanglement:	Beluga	1	
	Fishery Interaction:	Steller sea lion	1	
	Collision:	Cetacean, unknown cetacean	1	
		Grey	1	
		Humpback	6	
		Steller sea lion	1	
	Possible shot:	Harbor seal	3	
		<i>Total Suspected</i>	14	
	<i>Yes</i>	Collision:	Cetacean, unknown cetacean	1
			Cetacean, unknown large	1
		Harbor seal	1	
		Humpback	3	
Entanglement:		Harbor seal	1	
		Humpback	23	
Fishery Interaction:		Harbor porpoise	1	
		Harbor seal	1	
		Humpback	1	
		Steller sea lion	1	
	<i>Total Yes</i>	34		
Total			48	

Table 5. Draft 2005 Alaska Region Marine Mammal Strandings by Area, Species, Initial Condition, and Number of Animals.

Area	Species	Initial Condition			Total
		Alive	Dead	Unknown	
Arctic	Ringed seal		1		1
	<i>Arctic Total</i>		1		1
Kodiak	Cetacean, unknown cetacean		1		1
	Humpback	4	6		10
	Minke		1		1
	Steller sea lion		1		1
	<i>Kodiak Total</i>	4	9		13
Southcentral Alaska	Beluga	8	6		14
	Cetacean, unknown cetacean	1	1		2
	Cetacean, unknown large	1	1		2
	Elephant seal		1		1
	Grey		1		1
	Harbor porpoise		5		5
	Harbor seal	6	4		10
	Humpback	5	4		9
	Minke	1			1
	Steller sea lion		3		3
	<i>Southcentral Total</i>	22	26		48
Southeast Alaska	Cetacean, unknown baleen		1		1
	Cetacean, unknown cetacean		1	1	2
	Cetacean, unknown large		1		1
	Grey		2		2
	Harbor porpoise	1	1		2
	Harbor seal	2	8		10
	Humpback	19	3		22
	Orca		1		1
	Sea lion, unknown		1		1
	Sperm whale		1		1
	Steller sea lion	4	3		7
	<i>Southeast Total</i>	26	23	1	50
Western Alaska	Beluga		3		3
	Bowhead		1		1
	Grey		2		2
	Harbor seal	3			3
	Orca	1	1		2
	Ringed seal	2			2
	Steller sea lion		1		1
	<i>Western Total</i>	6	8		14
Total		58	67	1	126