

RESULTS OF HUMPBACK WHALE POPULATION MONITORING IN GLACIER BAY AND ADJACENT WATERS: 2005

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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 2005, the twenty-first 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

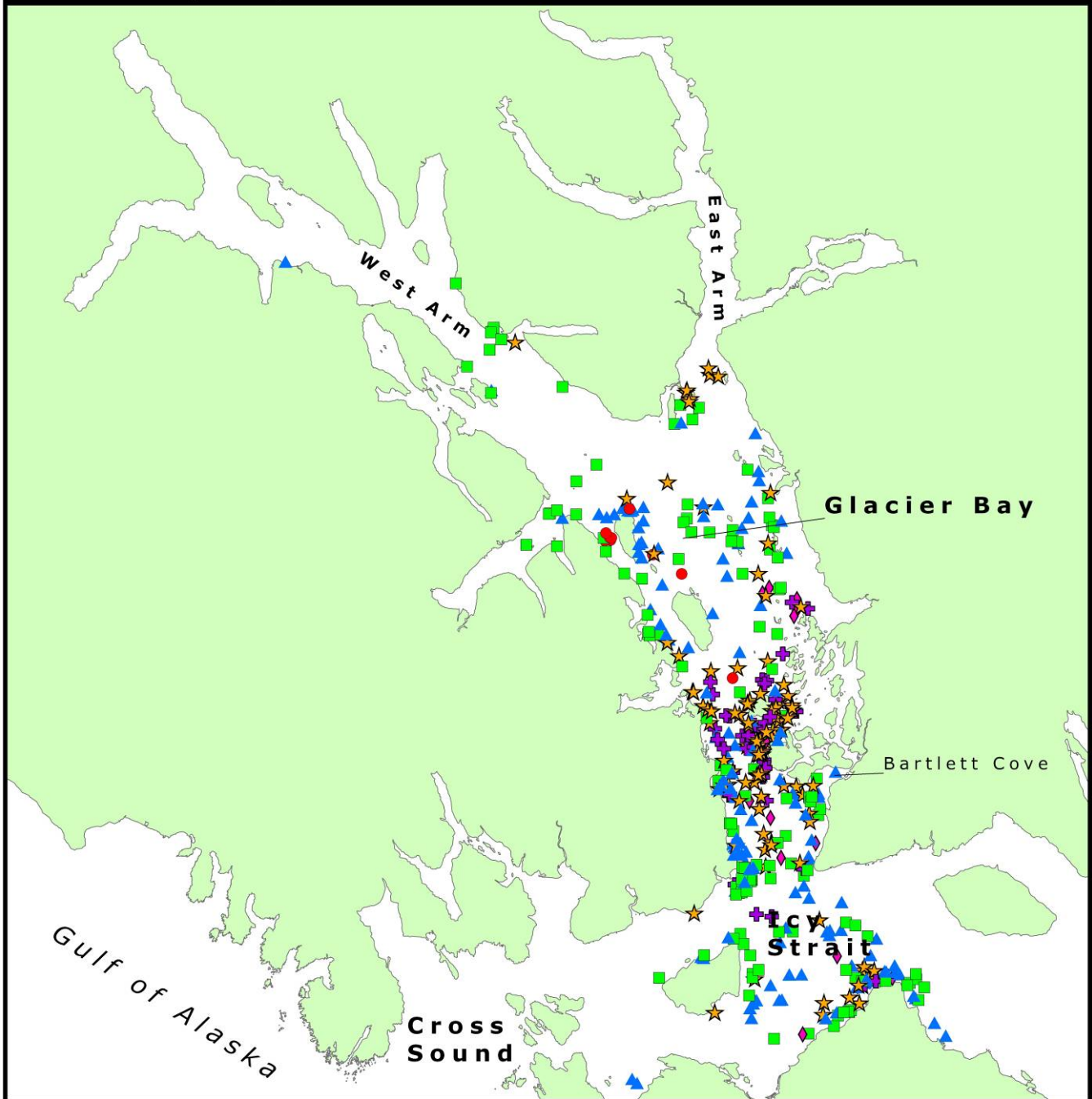
The methods used for population monitoring have been described in previous reports. The primary techniques have not changed significantly since 1985, allowing for comparison of data between years. The specific methods used in 2005 are outlined below.

Vessel Surveys: We conducted surveys in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait from May 27 through October 19, 2005. We searched for, observed and photographed humpback whales from the *Sand Lance*, a 5.8-meter motorboat 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. Survey hours include our transit time to and from Bartlett Cove.

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). 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. Several Icy Strait surveys included Dundas Bay, Idaho Inlet, Lemesurier Island and Pleasant Island. 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.

Humpback Whale Distribution Glacier Bay & Icy Strait 2005

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Humpback Whale Locations by Month

- May (n=9)
- ▲ June (n=148)
- July (n=139)
- ★ August (n=106)
- ✚ September (n=42)
- ◆ October (n=17)



Glacier Bay National Park Resource Management



0 1 2 4 6 8 Nautical Miles
1 inch equals 9 miles

Figure 1. Study area in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait showing humpback whale distribution in 2005.

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 have 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 film and digital cameras. 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 2005. We also printed and catalogued the best 2005 identification photograph (fluke or dorsal fin) of each individual.

Whale Counts: We analyzed the 2005 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) 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 and sent the other half to the National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) for DNA amplification and archiving. The SWFSC sends the DNA to the University of Auckland in New Zealand for mitochondrial DNA haplotyping and sex determination.

Prey Identification: We used field guides (Hart 1988; Mecklenburg *et al.* 2002; Pearse *et al.* 1987; Smith and Johnson 1977) to taxonomically identify sample prey items that we collected opportunistically at the surface.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vessel Surveys: We searched for, observed and photographed humpback whales for a total of 349 hours in the combined Glacier Bay/Icy Strait study area (Table 1). This total is comparable to the overall average for the study area for the period 1985 – 2004 but lower than in 2004 when effort was at a record high. In 2005, survey effort in Glacier Bay was above average and survey effort in Icy Strait was below average. For the second year in a row the high number of whales in park waters necessitated extra survey effort in Glacier Bay compared to Icy Strait for us to stay abreast of where whales were concentrated so that we could make appropriate whale waters management recommendations. 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, distance of whale aggregations from Bartlett Cove, 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).

Table 1. Monthly & Annual Survey Effort, 1985 – 2005.

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	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	19	5	19	3	15	3	5	3	53	11	293	57	349	
1985-2004 average survey effort:												45.4	15.7	259.4	88.3	347.7

Note: Total # survey hours are not available for 1986 & 1987

Whale Counts: For the third year in a row we documented a record number of whales in the study area as a whole (Fig. 2, Appendix 3). The number of whales in Icy Strait (n = 88) was the highest on record and the number of whales in Glacier Bay (n = 103) was the second highest on record. Overall the humpback whale population in southeastern Alaska is growing and the current rate of increase in the Central North Pacific stock of humpback whales is estimated to be 7% per year (Mobley *et al.* 2001).

Twenty-two of the whales that we documented in the study area in 2005 had not been sighted previously in Glacier Bay or Icy Strait. Two whales had been sighted elsewhere in southeastern Alaska, one had been sighted in British Columbia and 18 whales had never been documented. The percentage of “new” whales in the study area (15%) was slightly above the 1985 – 2004 average (11%). This was the fourth time that we have documented the movement of a whale between the study area and British Columbia.

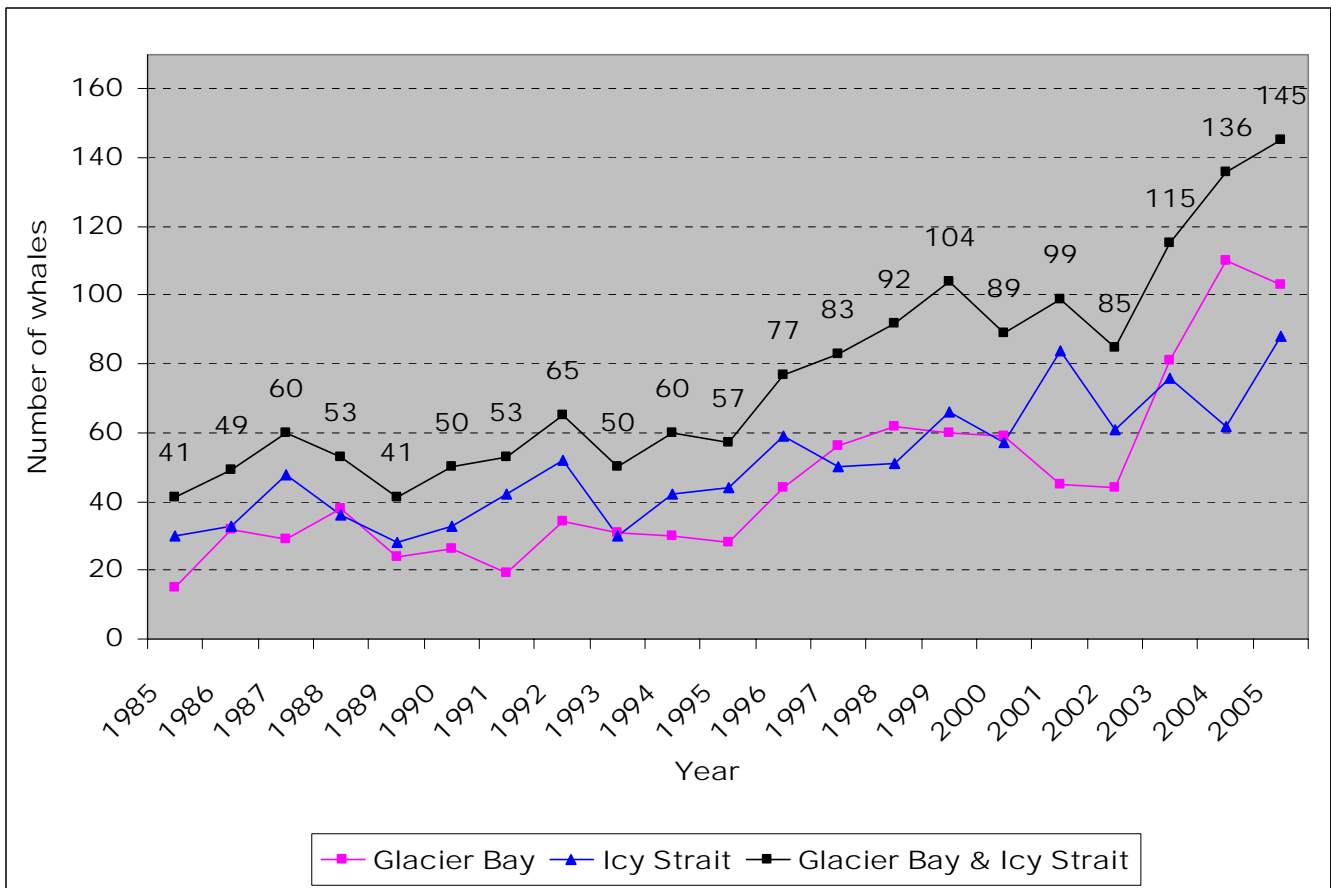


Figure 2. Number of individual whales documented in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait, 1985 – 2005.

Eight of the new whales were small to medium-sized and are presumed to be juveniles. Three of the eight resembled past years’ calves from the study area but the matches could not be confirmed due to a lack of suitable photographs in their calf year. In July we documented whale #826 in Icy Strait. This whale had not been documented in southeastern Alaska since 1985.

Seasonal Distribution: Beginning in late May and continuing throughout the summer we observed whales throughout Glacier Bay, with the highest numbers concentrating in the mid and lower bay (Fig. 1). We received the first report of a humpback whale sighting on April 1 when a whale was observed near Boulder Island (A. Andrews, pers. comm.). By late May, 12 – 18 whales were distributed widely between Point Carolus and northern Drake Island. Throughout the summer, we observed a high level of whale activity in lower Glacier Bay that was typical of recent years; however the fact that it persisted until early October was unusual. The low number of whales in Beardslee Entrance prior to early August was unexpected compared to previous years. From late May until late June an unusually high number of

whales concentrated near Drake Island, with up to 12 individuals feeding within one-half mile of the northeastern shore of the island. From mid-July through early August, we also documented an unusually large aggregation of whales around Point Carolus, with as many as 14 individuals identified there on July 13, 2005. Interestingly, the only other record we have of a comparably large aggregation at Point Carolus was in 2001 at the same time of year (July 16, 2001) when we identified 18 individuals on one day. Unlike some past years when whale activity in Whidbey Passage is fairly consistent, we only documented two pulses of activity there in 2005: the first in June and the second from late July through early August.

Whale numbers in the West Arm were low compared to some previous years, with only 2 – 3 whales sighted intermittently, mostly near Blue Mouse Cove and Tidal Inlet. One exception was the regular reports of a single humpback feeding in and near Reid Inlet throughout June. Overall, the amount of activity on the east side of the mid-bay seemed appeared to be below average although there were several whales scattered there throughout the summer. Conversely, whale numbers in the East Arm appeared to be above average compared to previous years. On July 11 at least three individuals were observed in Wachusett Inlet (J. Smith, pers. comm.; A. Milner, pers. comm.) and a few days later a visitor reported six whales between McBride and Riggs Glaciers. On August 1 we documented five whales at the entrance to the East Arm, but we do not know if these were some of the same whales that had been reported farther north in the East Arm.

Throughout June and most of July a large number of whales were distributed throughout the middle of Icy Strait, especially off the eastern shore of Lemesurier Island. By late July most of the activity had shifted to the Chichagof Island shoreline between Point Adolphus and Mud Bay, which is more typical of whale distribution in Icy Strait in previous years. Unlike in some years, we documented very few whales in western Icy Strait.

Whale Waters: The length of whale waters restrictions in lower Glacier Bay (124 days) was the second longest since 1985 and the restrictions remained in effect later into the fall than in previous years. A high number of whales in Whidbey Passage warranted temporary vessel speed restrictions in this area during two periods in the summer (June 3 – July 8, July 29 – August 13). In addition, an unusually high number of whales around Point Carolus warranted temporary whale waters from late July until mid-August.

Residency: Thirty-eight (37%) of the 103 whales that entered Glacier Bay between June 1 and August 31, including one cow/calf pair, remained 20 or more days, long enough to be considered resident (Appendix 2). The proportion of whales that were considered resident in Glacier Bay appears to be lower than in most previous years. Twenty-seven (31%) of the 88 whales that we identified in Icy Strait, including two cow/calf pairs, remained long enough to be considered resident, which is a typical proportion for Icy Strait. An additional 21 (14%) of the 145 whales that we sighted in Glacier Bay/Icy Strait, including two cow/calf pairs, were resident in the combined Glacier Bay/Icy Strait study area. Eight whales were resident in more than one area (*e.g.*, resident in Glacier Bay and then resident in Icy Strait).

We identified 40 of the whales (28%) that entered the study area, including three mother/calf pairs, on just one day: 19 in Glacier Bay and 21 in Icy Strait. However, we documented three of these 40 whales on additional days outside of the June 1 – August 31 monitoring period. The proportion of whales sighted only once in the study area is comparable to the proportion from 1994 through 2002 (23% – 43%), but higher than the proportion in 2003 and 2004 (16% – 18%).

Reproduction and Juvenile Survival: We documented 10 mother/calf pairs in the study area (Table 2). The crude birth rate of 6.9% in 2005 is somewhat lower than average for previous years (Table 3) but well within the documented range of values for this extremely variable parameter.

Table 2. Mother-Calf Pairs, 2005.

	Mother ID#	Calf ID#	Documented in:
1.	161	1892	GB & IS
2.	219	1893	IS
3.	232	1894	GB
4.	539	539_calf_2005	IS
5.	801	801_calf_2005	GB
6.	965	965_calf_2005	IS
7.	1019	1019_calf_2005	IS
8.	1042	1890	IS
9.	1233	1891	GB & IS
10.	1593	1593_calf_2005	GB & IS

Notes:

- GB = Glacier Bay; IS = Icy Strait

- Only calves whose flukes were photographed received an identification number.

Table 3. Reproduction and known age whales in Glacier Bay and Icy Strait, 1982 – 2005.

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	10.8	17	83
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	11.8	35	136
2005	10	5	50	6.9	35	145
1982-2004 average:	6.9	4.8	67.4	10.5	14.2	71.3

Notes:

- 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.

Whale #1233, first documented in southeastern Alaska as an adult in 1992 (J. Straley, unpublished data) and seen nearly every year since then, returned to the study area for the first time with a calf (Fig. 3). Whale #1233's sighting history is intermittent with no sightings documented in 1993 or 1996, so it is possible that she had a calf in a year when she was not sighted and/or prior to 1992. Two female whales already known to be grandmothers (#219 and #539) returned to the study area with new calves. We



Figure 3. Whale #1233 with her 2005 calf.

identified six whales (#1654, born 2002; #1803, born 2003; #1836, born 2004; #1838, born 2004; #1840, born 2004; and #1846, born 2004) that had not been sighted in the study area since they were calves.

In 2005 we documented a record number of known-age juveniles ($n = 7$) 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 since 2001 (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 changes in prey availability or other habitat characteristics of the Glacier Bay area have made the habitat increasingly attractive to juvenile whales. In addition, we speculate that the increase may be partially attributable to our conversion from a film camera to a digital camera in 2003. Calves and juveniles are small and their erratic behavior often makes them difficult to approach and photograph. While a 300mm lens on a Nikon film camera magnifies the subject 6x, the same 300mm lens on a Nikon digital camera magnifies the subject 9x (Nikon, Inc. 2003). This enhanced magnification with the digital camera effectively increases our ability to collect adequate quality identification photographs of all whales, but the effect may be disproportionately beneficial when photographing calves and juveniles.

Genetics: We collected 18 sloughed skin samples from 16 unique individuals, including three calves. Since 1996, we have collected 138 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. Continued genetic analysis of sloughed skin samples from our study area will help elucidate the genetic relationships among whale populations worldwide (e.g., Baker et al. 1998, Vant 2002). The only other practical ways we are able to determine a whale's sex are if the whale returns to the study area with a calf (then we assume it is female) or in the infrequent event that we obtain photographs of the whale's genital area.

Feeding Behavior and Prey Identification: Between July 22 and August 5 we observed three adult humpback whales (#1313, #159 and #1432) independently perform a variation of typical vertical lunge feeding near Point Carolus and Rush Point. The behavior involved a single whale lunging vertically through the surface of the water, then pausing for several seconds at the surface with its mouth agape before snapping its head slightly backwards and rapidly closing its mouth to engulf the prey.

On October 3, we observed three partially digested birds coated with whale feces floating in the water near adult whales #1302 and #1486. We collected the birds, cleaned them (Fig. 4) and attempted to identify the species. We were unable to obtain positive species identifications due to the advanced state of decomposition of the carcasses. On gross examination one of the birds resembled a marbled or Kittlitz's murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus* or *Brachyramphus brevirostris*), one resembled a common murre (*Uria aalge*) and the third bird could not be identified (G. Streveler, pers. comm.). Although we occasionally observe whale feces at the water's surface, this is the first time that we have observed birds or other whole animals in the feces. We frequently observe humpback whales and birds feeding on the same prey patches (GBNPP unpublished data) so it is not surprising that occasionally some birds might be engulfed by feeding humpback whales. We are aware of one other observation of birds in humpback whale feces in southeastern Alaska. In July 2004 two murrelets (species not identified) were found in humpback whale feces in upper Lynn Canal. These two birds' carcasses were in better condition than the ones that we collected, with the feathers and appendages still intact (S. Lewis, pers. comm.).

We positively identified two species of fish in association with feeding humpback whales in 2005: capelin (*Mallotus villosus*) and sand lance (*Ammodytes hexapterus*) (Table 4). The prey type most commonly identified was capelin, with multiple observations of this species from mid-June through late September. In addition, on June 1 we received a report from a researcher conducting hydroacoustic

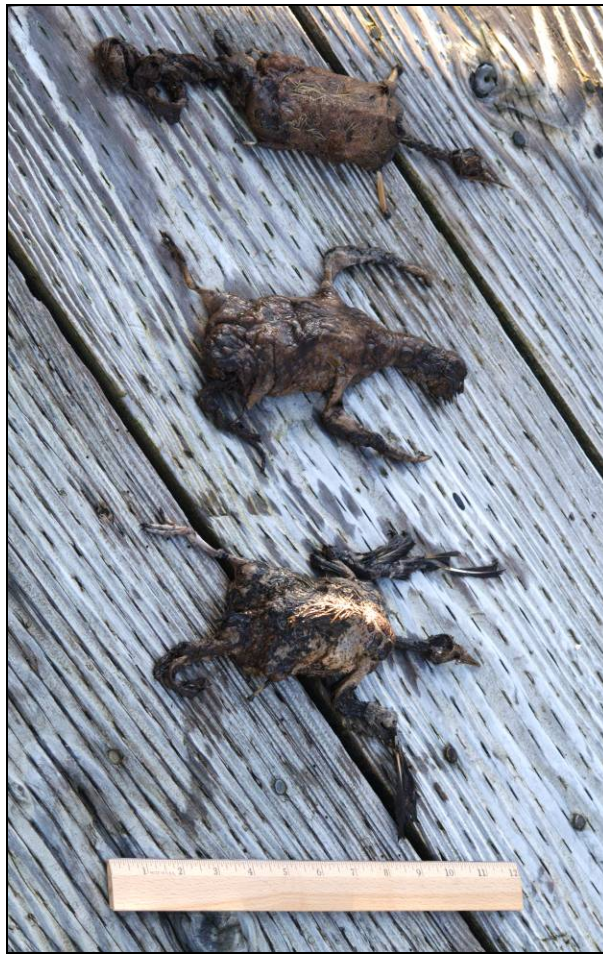


Figure 4. The three birds after being cleaned.

Table 4. Humpback whale prey type determinations.

METHOD:	PREY SPECIES (# of cases):	
	<i>capelin</i>	<i>sand lance</i>
Collected specimen with dip net	1	1
'Cucumber' smell in air	14	
Fish observed near surface	4?	

surveys in Sitakaday Narrows that there were dense balls of capelin at a depth of approximately 30 m (D.

Csepp, Auke Bay Laboratory, pers. comm.). Unlike in past years, we did not observe any schools of herring near feeding whales at Point Adolphus.

Whale/Human Interactions: The number of whale/human interactions that we documented in the study area in 2005 was lower than in 2004 but similar to previous years. In early June we observed a private motor vessel and a commercial fishing vessel approaching well within ¼ mile of a conspicuous tail-slapping whale in Sitakaday Narrows (Fig. 5). Both vessels were transiting within one mile of the



Figure 5. Vessels approaching whale in Sitakaday Narrows.

shore in whale waters, in violation of Park regulations. When we contacted the private vessel on VHF radio, the captain indicated that his navigational path was intended to avoid the whale, despite the outward appearance of a deliberate close approach. In contrast, the commercial fishing vessel appeared to be simply in transit on a consistent course and speed, perhaps even unaware of the whale's presence.

In early July a local resident reported that a humpback whale became entangled in his 80 lb test fishing line while he was sport fishing for halibut near Bartlett Cove. The incident occurred while the fisherman fished from a skiff anchored at the mouth of Bartlett Cove. When the whale snagged the fishing line, the fisherman cut the line and observed the line, lure and bait lying across the whale's back but the animal did not appear to be badly entangled (D. Waguespack, pers. comm.).

In early July a humpback whale calf was struck by a 26 ft fiberglass cabin cruiser that was in transit between Pinta Cove and Point Adolphus in Icy Strait (G. Nelson, pers. comm.). Upon seeing the calf surface directly in front of the vessel, the captain immediately reduced speed and shut off the engine. The calf struck the starboard bow of the vessel with its tail as it flipped its tail to avoid the vessel and dive. The captain reported that the impact was "not that hard" because the boat was "barely moving". A short time later, he saw the calf surface several hundred feet away, breathing and behaving normally. There were no photographs with which to determine which calf was involved in the collision. We did not detect any calves with visible injuries in the study area subsequent to this incident and presume that the calf was not seriously injured.

On August 9 we observed a man paddling a dinghy to within 20 yards of whale #157 while the whale slept at the water's surface near Point Adolphus. We contacted the man after he returned to his nearby sailboat and advised him of the 100 yard approach regulation for humpback whales in Alaska and of the danger of startling a sleeping whale.

We are unaware of any incidents in which humpback whales nearly collided with vessels transiting in Glacier Bay, although several such close calls were documented in 2004. It is unlikely that the decrease is attributable to a decline in the reporting rate from NPS park rangers onboard these types of vessels because the rangers are aware that such incidents should be reported. Instead, this change likely reflects differences in the distribution of whales in Glacier Bay in 2004 and 2005. Unlike in 2004 (Doherty and Gabriele 2004), in 2005 whales did not congregate in high numbers at the entrance to the West Arm where vessel traffic is common. In addition, the unusually long period of time in which lower Glacier Bay whale waters vessel course and speed restrictions were in place in 2005 may have reduced the overall number of instances in which whales and vessels were in close proximity to each other in this part of the bay.

Elsewhere in southeastern Alaska, in mid-May a juvenile male humpback whale drowned after becoming entangled in a king salmon drift gillnet near Wrangell (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data). In early June a humpback whale calf was reported entangled in gillnet near Juneau but the entanglement was assessed to be non-life threatening and no attempts were made to disentangle the animal (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data). In early September a humpback whale calf was reported entangled in line and a buoy from sport red king crab pot gear near Juneau. Efforts by

the Alaska marine mammal stranding network, including Park staff, to disentangle the calf were unsuccessful; however, five days after the initial report, the whale shed the gear on its own (NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region, unpublished data). In October a juvenile or calf male humpback whale was found floating dead in Peril Strait. A necropsy revealed that the probable cause of death was severe blunt trauma with mandibular and cervical muscle damage (Alaska SeaLife Center 2005). The frequency of whale/human interactions in southeastern Alaska in 2005 is likely attributable in part to increases in the overall size of the population. The predominance of incidents that involved calves and juveniles is not surprising because in other areas young whales have been found to be more susceptible than adult whales to entanglements and vessel strikes (Heyning and Lewis 1990, Lien 1994, Laist et al. 2001, Robbins and Mattila 2001, Knowlton *et al.* 2005).

Notable Behavioral Observations:

On June 7 we observed a minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) in Icy Strait that appeared to be feeding near the water's surface below a large flock of gulls. We observed male humpback whale #1299 (age 8) approach the area, surface underneath the same group of birds and the minke whale rapidly departed. Whale #1299 surfaced several times in the vicinity of the apparent prey patch and then also departed the area. It is uncommon for us to detect behavioral interactions between minke and humpback whales such as this apparent displacement of a feeding minke whale by a humpback whale.

For the third year in a row we observed whale #1809, a small to medium-sized animal of unknown age that has appeared unhealthy since we first documented it in the study area in 2003 (Doherty and Gabriele 2004). This year we noted a distinct hollow/wheezing sound when this whale inhales which may be an indication that its health is deteriorating.

On June 27 killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) researchers Volker Deecke and Michael deRoos observed adult whale #1795 follow and remain in close proximity to four transient killer whales while the killer whales attacked a harbor seal for over one hour near North Marble Island (Fig. 6) (V. Deecke, pers. comm.). They observed several tail swipes from whale #1795 and it appeared that some of them were directed at the seal. We are aware of at least four similar incidents in the study area in which humpback whales closely interacted with killer whales during predation events on other marine mammals (Doherty and Gabriele 2003, V. Deecke pers. comm.); thus this type of interaction, although difficult to interpret, may not be uncommon.



Figure 6. Whale #1795 (right) near a transient killer whale (left) that is attacking a harbor seal with a head-mounted VHF tag (circled in left foreground). Photo by Michael deRoos.

On October 17 we detected a singing humpback whale on a portable hydrophone deployed off the whale survey vessel *Sand Lance* in Sitakaday Narrows. There were two whales nearby, #1012 (sex unknown) and #1083 (male, based on genetic analysis of skin sample collected in 1998). However, on several occasions we observed whale #1012 at the surface while we heard singing on the hydrophone, thus it is unlikely that this whale was the singer. We presume that male whale #1083 was the singer based on the volume of the song as we drifted in close proximity to where whale #1083 dove.

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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, 1985-2005**

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	17	38	29	36	40	53
1989	20	24	20	28	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	42	56	33	50	67	83
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	84	110	38	62	109	136
2005	66	103	50	88	95	145