

examine habitat use patterns. Seals were tracked for 46-272 days during August-June 1991-1994, and average daily locations were calculated for 1,293 days. Alaska seals were located mostly nearshore during August-October and 100-200km offshore in January-May. Russia seals were almost always located within 40km of land. Alaska seals showed a broad distribution relative to the 200m isobath, with locations becoming more concentrated in the region 100-200km to the north in March-June. Russia seals were usually located within 100km of the 200m isobath. During August-October, all seals were usually more than 200km south of the sea ice edge. In January-June, most Alaska seal locations were 0-200km north of the edge, and Russia seals were mostly 0-100km north of the edge. During November-June, Alaska seals were most frequently located in areas with extensive ice coverage (7-9/10s), while Russia seals used open water and a variety of ice coverages. We estimated habitat availability by determining how frequently a randomly moving seal would have been located in each of several habitat categories, and compared that to habitats used by the tagged seals. Throughout the tracking period Russia seals selected for areas <25 km from shore. During January-June, Russia seals also selected areas within 25km of the 200m isobath, while Alaska seals selected areas >25km from shore and >25km north of the shelf break. Biological processes associated with the highly productive "Green Belt" may have influenced habitat use of Russia seals, but probably not Alaska seals. Contrary to previous observations from ships and aircraft indicating that during spring spotted seals occur mostly in the ice front of the Bering Sea, this analysis found that they frequently used areas further north in the pack ice.

HABITAT USE AND HABITAT SELECTION BY SPOTTED SEALS (*PHOCA LARGHA*) IN THE BERING SEA

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Location data from satellite-linked tags attached to twelve spotted seals (*Phoca largha*) in western Alaska and eastern Russia were used to

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ABSTRACTS

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