

Gulf of Alaska - Marine Mammals

Movement and Haulout Patterns of Female Harbor Seals (*Phoca vitulina*) in Prince William Sound, Alaska

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In 2003, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game initiated a multi-year study in Prince William Sound, Alaska, to investigate movement and haulout patterns of harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*). Harbor seals were captured and implanted with subcutaneous multi-year VHF transmitters. From 2003-2005 transmitters were implanted into 136 animals (2003 n=48, 2004 n = 46, 2005 n=42). The majority of the transmitters were implanted into females (n=87). Remote data logging stations were erected near six haulout sites and were equipped with continuously scanning receivers to record the presence of seals with transmitters at each location. The majority of the animals (n=131) were resighted post-capture. The number of days of resights per individual averaged 23 (ranging from 1-250). Preliminary analysis of ten females with >50 resights showed the use of 1-4 haulout locations with the majority of their time spent at one or two specific sites. The highest numbers of resights per individual were recorded in July and August. Results from this study indicate that the use of multi-year VHF transmitters may provide insight into haulout usage patterns through detailed time series data.



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