MOVEMENTS AND DIVING BEHAVIOR OF FEMALE STELLER SEA LIONS IN SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA

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Movements and diving behavior of female Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) were investigated using satellite-linked time-depth recorders (SLTDRs). Fourteen SLTDRs were deployed during 1992-1993 at two rookeries in Southeastern Alaska and one haulout in the eastern Gulf of Alaska - 12 on adult females in summer, 1 on a yearling female in summer, and 1 on an adult female in winter. Data were received from all 14 SLTDRs for 21-113 days. During summer, adult females with pups made relatively short foraging trips (mean 32 hrs), most within 25 km of the rookery. In contrast, a yearling female and an adult female without a pup ranged 80-360 km along the outer coast of Southeast Alaska, using several different rookeries and haulouts. Mean trip durations for these sea lions were 22 hrs and 40 hrs, respectively. In winter, foraging trips by an adult female were longer in distance (> 200 km offshore) and duration (mean 70 hrs, max 169 hrs). More than 60% of all dives were under 2 min and less than 20 m. The percentages of dives under 1 min was 66% for the yearling, 53% for the winter female, 48% for the summer female without a pup, and a mean of 46% for the females with pups. Maximum dive depths for individuals ranged from 120 to 424 m. The winter adult dove deepest and had the greatest percentage of dives > 100 m. The yearling dove deeper (maximum depth 220 m) in June and July than in August and September. For all sea lions with one exception, dive frequency was higher at night (2100-0300).

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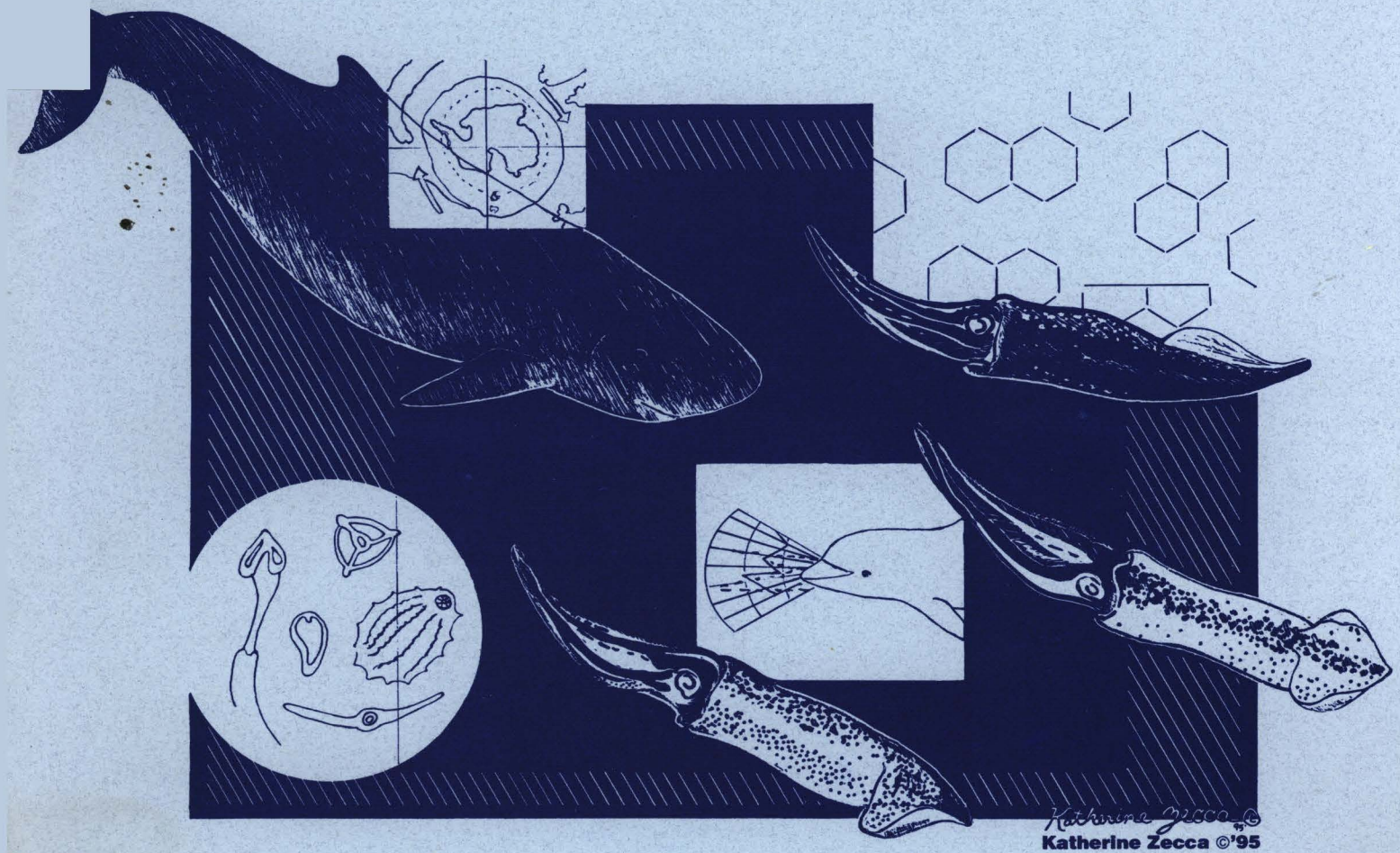

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ABSTRACTS

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