REPRODUCTIVE PARAMETERS OF BELUKHA WHALES IN NORTHWEST ALASKA

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Preliminary results of belukha investigations in northwest Alaska have already been reported. Additional information obtained in 1980 to 1983, combined with previous data, indicate the following reproductive parameters: a sex ratio of 1:1, first pregnancy at age 4 to 7, first birth at age 5 to 8, reproductive activity throughout life in females, a pregnancy rate (early pregnancy) of 0.335, a rate of calf production estimated at 0.104, and a population structure that includes 32% to 33% sexually mature females. The birth period is prolonged, extending from April to perhaps August with a peak in mid-June to late July. Peak period of breeding is not presently known.

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