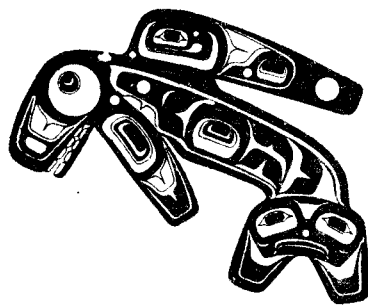


RESULTS OF LONG-TERM STUDIES OF REPRODUCTION IN FEMALE BEARDED SEALS, ERIGNATHUS BARBATUS, FROM THE BERING AND CHUKCHI SEAS. John J. BURNS* and Kathryn J. Frost, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

Reproduction in female bearded seals was most recently studied from 1975-1978. Examination of 261 reproductive tracts showed that ovulation occurs in a small percent of 2-year-olds, in about 93 percent of 4 and 5-year-old animals and 100 percent of 7-year-olds. First pregnancy was not before age 4; 2 years after first ovulation in some females. The incidence of pregnancy in 4-year-olds was 17 percent, increasing to 100 percent by age 8. Most females become reproductively mature at age 6. The incidence of ovulation in sexually mature females was 96 percent while the incidence of pregnancy based on examination of ovaries and uteri obtained during summer was 83 percent (N=127). In mid-August through early April, when implanted fetuses are obvious, 14 of 17 females (82%) were pregnant. A pregnancy rate of about 83 percent was found in samples taken from the study area in 1959-1961 and 1962-1966.

ABSTRACTS FROM PRESENTATIONS AT THE
THIRD BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF
THE BIOLOGY OF MARINE
MAMMALS



October 7-11, 1979

The Olympic Hotel, Seattle, Washington