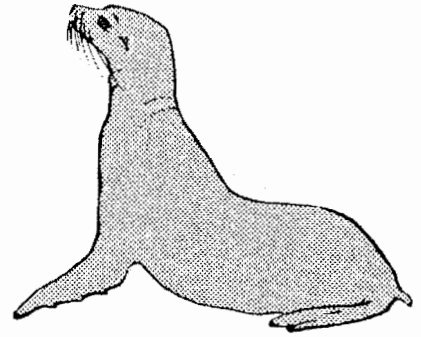
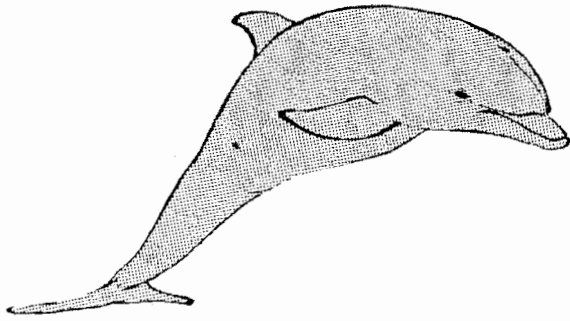


SURVEYS OF SPOTTED SEALS, PHOCA VITULINA LARGHA, IN THE ICE FRONT OF BERING SEA. John J. Burns*, M.S., and Samuel J. Harbo, Jr., Alaska Department of Fish and Game and University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Twenty-five individual survey flights were flown in the ice front of eastern Bering Sea during March and April of 1976 and 1977. Survey aircraft were a Lockheed P-2V (8 flights) and a Bell 206 helicopter launched from the NOAA vessel SURVEYOR. Data were analyzed on the basis of sectors within the total area surveyed. Density of spotted seals, as determined by helicopter flights ranged from 0 to 6.75 seals per nautical mile square in 1976 and 0.5 to 6.72/NM² in 1977. Spatial distribution of seals throughout the front was generally similar in both years. A large concentration of sub-adult seals (1 to 5 years of age) occurred in western Bristol Bay in both years. Outside of this area densities were low and seals were mainly adults with pups. Less than 14 percent of the seals in areas of high density were on the ice when surveys were conducted. Twenty-five to 50 percent were hauled out in those areas occupied mainly by adults and pups. Pups were present throughout the area surveyed in April. Annual differences in the location of the ice front did not result in significantly different patterns of seal distribution within the front during spring 1976 and 1977.



PROCEEDINGS
(ABSTRACTS)

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