MOVEMENTS AND BEHAVIOR OF SATELLITE TAGGED SPOTTED SEALS IN THE BERING AND CHUKCHI SEAS

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In August 1991, satellite linked tags (PTTs) were attached to four spotted seals (Phoca largha) captured near a coastal haulout at Utukok Pass in the northeastern Chukchi Sea. The locations and diving behavior of the seals were monitored for periods of 64-259 days. Usable position information was obtained for about 50% of the days that PTTs were operational. During August-October seals made long feeding trips southwestward into the southern Chukchi Sea and returned to haulouts at Kasegaluk Lagoon. Lengths of at sea periods ranged from 8 to 902 hours, and the four seals spent an average of 7% of their time hauled out on land. Three seals with still functioning PTTs began their southward migration in mid-October, and passed southward through Bering Strait in November. Two seals whose PTTs worked into March-April spent the late winter and early spring in the sea ice of the central Bering Sea. Haulouts on ice were also infrequent, with seals hauled out only 6% of the time, on average. The number of dives to depths greater than 10 m averaged 160 and 284 per day for two seals. All dives were to depths less than 100 m, and most lasted for less than 10 minutes.

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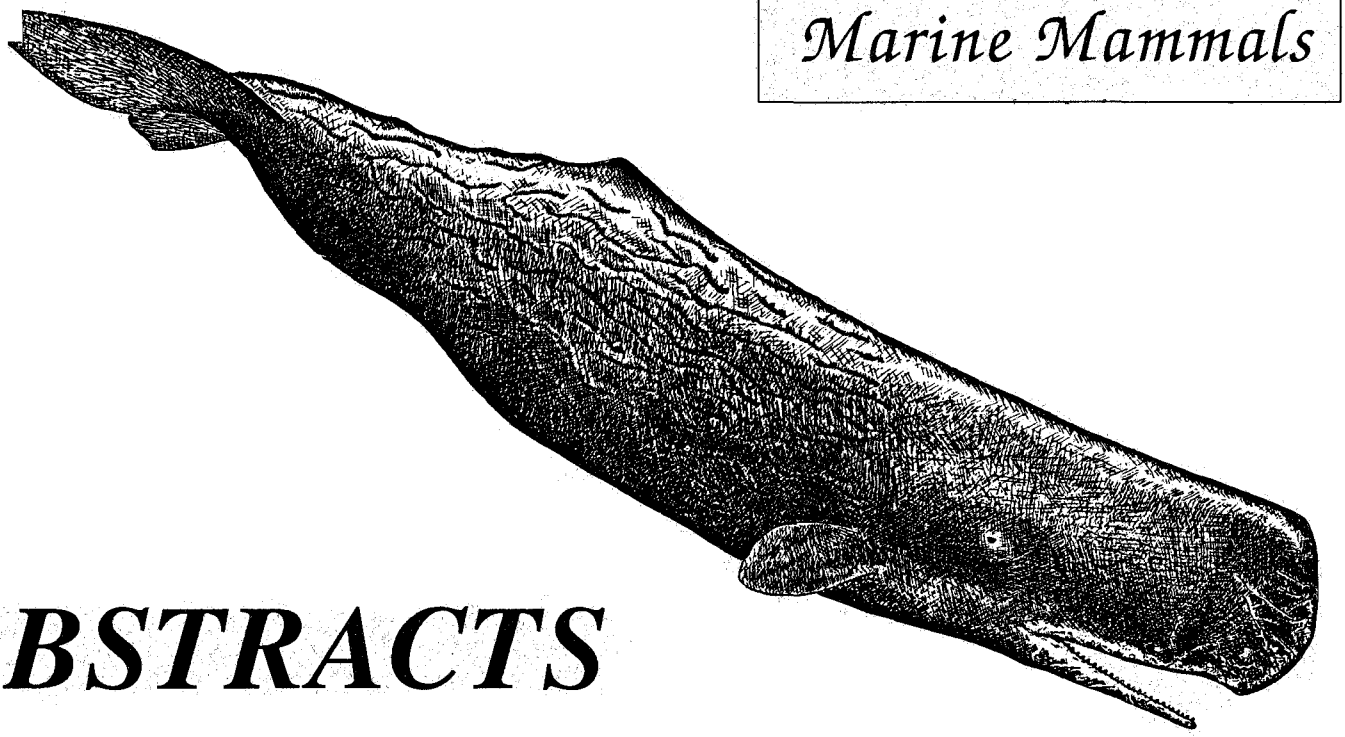

ABSTRACTS

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