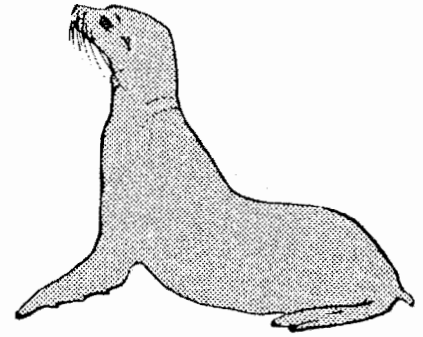
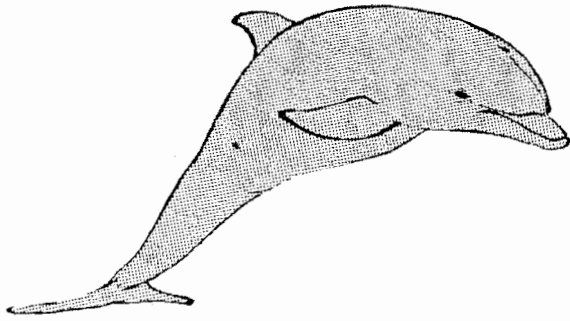


SPRING FOODS AND FEEDING OF PHOCID SEALS IN THE BERING SEA ICE FRONT. Kathryn J. Frost*, Lloyd F. Lowry, and John J. Burns, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Studies of the trophic relationships of phocid seals of the southeastern Bering Sea have been undertaken as part of the Alaskan Outer Continental Shelf Environmental Assessment Program. Specimens of spotted seals (Phoca vitulina largha), ribbon seals (Phoca fasciata) and bearded seals (Erignathus barbatus) have been collected during the months of March to June. Otter trawls were done concurrently for purposes of comparing food utilization by seals with prey abundance. Of 19 ribbon seals examined, 9 had food remains in the stomach or intestine. Primary food items were pollock (Theragra chalcogramma), eelpouts (Lycodes spp.) and octopus (Octopus spp.). Fourteen of 30 spotted seals examined had food in their stomachs. Capelin (Mallotus villosus) was the primary food item. Pollock were eaten occasionally, especially near the Pribilof Islands. Herring (Clupea harengus) were eaten in late May near Nunivak Island. Of 7 bearded seals examined, 4 contained food. Tanner crabs (Chionocetes opilio) and shrimps (Argis sp. and Crangon sp.) were the main food items. Prey utilization will be compared to availability as indicated by bottom trawls. The potential effects of food availability on the distribution of the various species will be discussed.



PROCEEDINGS
(ABSTRACTS)

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