

Marine Mammals – Northern Fur Seal Pup Habitat

description

The northern Fur seal (*Callorhinus ursinus*), a member of the eared seal family (*Otariidae*), is the second smallest pinniped found on the west coast of Canada. Adult males average 2.1 metres in length and can weigh up to 275 kilograms, while adult females are much smaller weighing 30 to 50 kilograms. Northern fur seals occur from southern California north to the Bering Sea and west to the Sea of Okhotsk and Honshu Island, Japan. During the summer breeding season, most of the worldwide population is found on the Pribilof Islands in the southern Bering Sea, with the remaining animals on rookeries in Russia, on Bogoslof Island in the southern Bering Sea, and on San Miguel Island off southern California. At the rookeries, adult males set up territories in May, females arrive in June and give birth to one pup a few days later. Most pups are weaned in November. After the breeding season, all animals leave the Pribilof Islands. Adult females and juveniles migrate through the Aleutian Islands into the North Pacific Ocean, often as far south as the Oregon and California offshore waters. Many pups may remain at sea nearly 2 years before returning to their rookery of birth.

The pup habitat on this atlas page was estimated by tracking 166 tagged pups over two winters (Figure 1). The high use areas tend to be the west coast of Vancouver Island along the shelf and around Haida Gwaii from December through April. It is estimated that up to half of the population that breeds at Russian rookeries passes through BC during migration. The majority of animals using the British Columbia coast were tagged at San Miguel Island in California (24 animals over two years). Other pups were tagged at the Pribilof Islands and Bogoslof Island. A few Alaskan pups did make it over to Haida Gwaii in spring. Hecate Strait supports a large overwintering population.



PHOTO: TOM KONESTABO

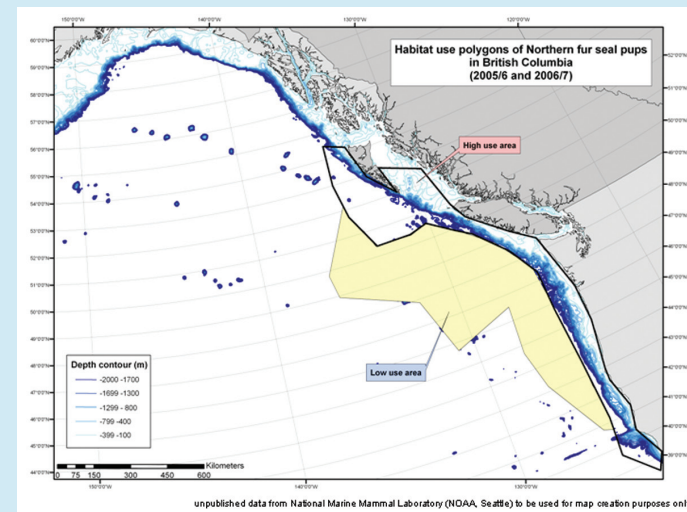


FIGURE 1. ORIGINAL DATA ILLUSTRATION PROVIDED TO BCMCA BY NOAA, WHICH SHOWS THE FULL EXTENT OF OBSERVED HABITAT USE.

data sources

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (National Marine Mammal Laboratory)

data resolution

- Habitat areas were digitised from the polygons illustrated in Figure 1.

date collected

- Winters of 2005/2006 and 2006/2007

reviewers

- Dr. Mary-Anne Lea, formerly National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NOAA)

reviewer comments

- None provided.

caveats of use

- Gaps in the extent of this feature should not be inferred to be an absence of the species.
- Recommended date of expiry for use of these data in a marine planning context: None provided.

map, feature data and metadata access

- Visit www.bcmca.ca/data for more information.

references

Species description contains material from:



- Alaska Fisheries Science Center. National Marine Mammal Library. Northern Fur Seal (*Callorhinus ursinus*) www.afsc.noaa.gov/nmml/species/species_nfs.php
- Source for description: www.afsc.noaa.gov/nmml/species/species_nfs.php

Please see these references for additional information:

- Call KA, RR Ream, D Johnson, JT Sterling and RG Towell. 2008. Foraging route tactics and site fidelity of adult female northern fur seal (*Callorhinus ursinus*) around the Pribilof Islands. *Deep Sea Research II-Topical Studies in Oceanography* 55:1883-1896.
- Kenyon KW and F Wilke. 1953. Migration of the Northern Fur Seal (*Callorhinus ursinus*). *Journal of Mammalogy*, 34:86-98. www.jstor.org/pss/1375947
- Lea, M-A., D. Johnson, R. Ream, J. Sterling, S. Melin, and T. Gelatt. 2009. Extreme weather events influence dispersal of naive northern fur seals. *Biol. Lett.* 5:252-257.
- Ream RR, JT Sterling, and TR Loughlin. 2005. Oceanographic features related to northern fur seal migratory movements. *Deep Sea Research II-Topical Studies in Oceanography* 52(5-6):823-843. www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09670645
- Robson BW, ME Goebel, JD Baker, RR Ream, TR Loughlin, RC Francis, GA Antonelis, and DP Costa. 2004. Separation of foraging habitat among breeding sites of a colonial marine predator, the northern fur seal (*Callorhinus ursinus*). *Can. J. Zool.* 82(1):20-29.

BCMCA Atlas
Marine Mammals
Northern Fur Seal
Pup Habitat

Legend

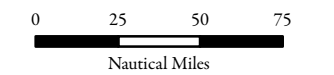
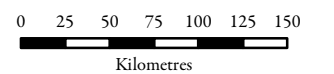
-  High Use Habitat Areas
-  Low Use Habitat Areas

Data Sources:
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (National Marine Mammal Laboratory)

Base Data:
 ESRI Base Data, GeoBase, GeoBC, NOAA, Natural Resources Canada, USGS, Washington State Government

Thematic Data:
 For more information on data sources and methods please refer to the facing page to this map

Projection: BC Albers NAD83



1:4,250,000 *

* Written scales are approximate and are based on a 11 x 17 inch paper size.

Prepared for:



Map template by Caslys Consulting Ltd.
 June 3, 2010

