



# 2020 ALASKA SEABIRD UPDATE



## One Health Group Quarterly Meeting 8 December 2020

*Robb Kaler, Kathy Kuletz, & Liz Labunski* – USFWS Migratory Birds Management

*Heather Renner & staff* – Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge

*Caroline Van Hemert & Matt Smith* – USGS Alaska Science Center

*Barbara Bodenstein & Bob Dusek* – USGS National Wildlife Health Center

*Gay Sheffield* – UAF/Alaska Sea Grant

*Brandon Ahmasuk* – Kawerak Inc.

*Stacia Backensto & Heather Coletti* – National Park Service

*Julia Parrish, Tim Jones & Jackie Lindsey* – COASST

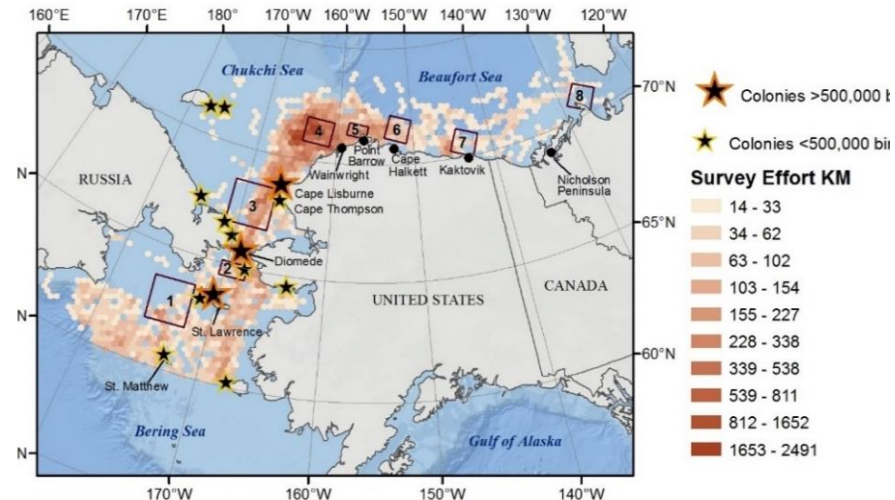


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## USFWS offshore surveys

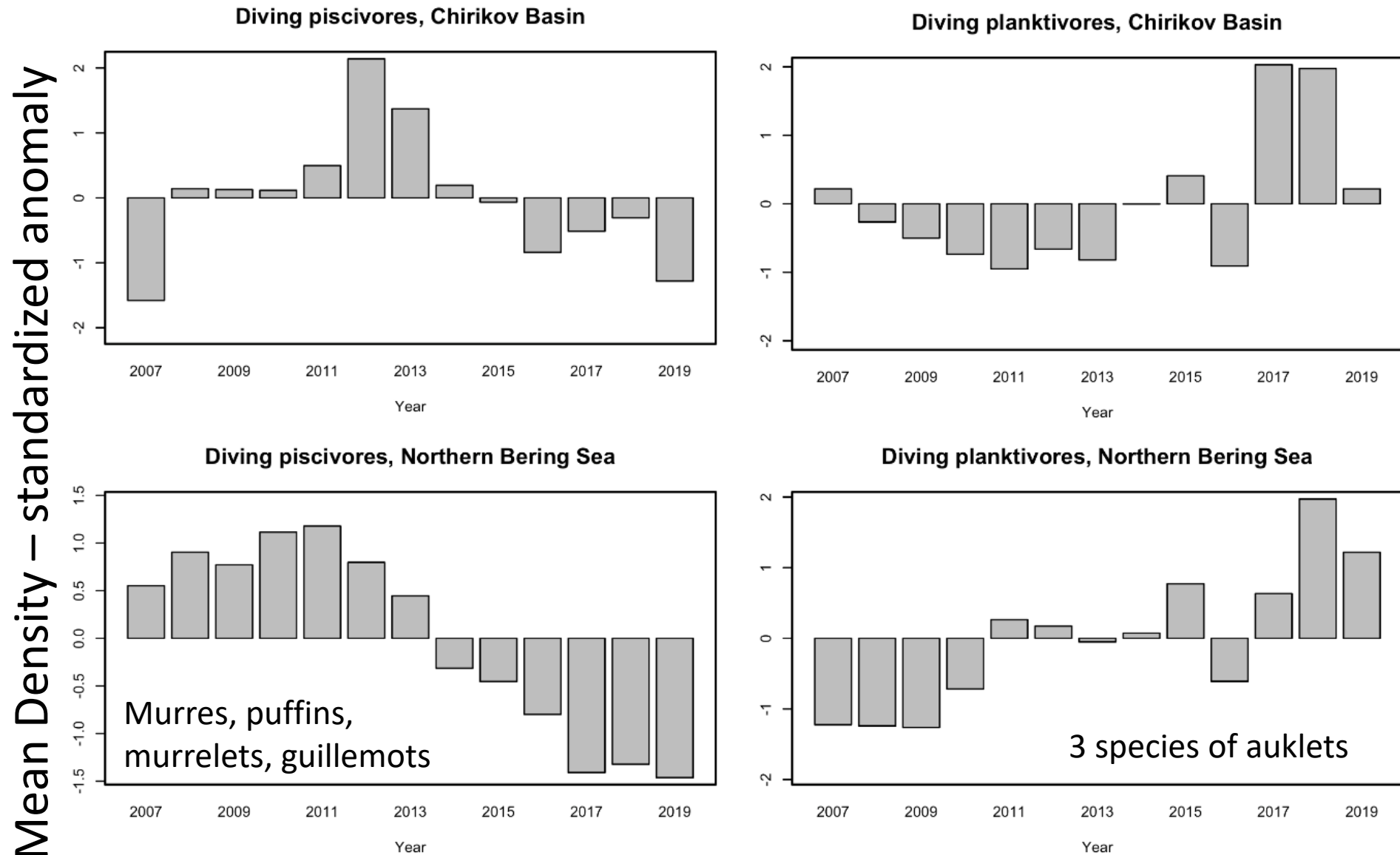
- Typically >20,000 km/year of offshore transects
- Most 2020 research/monitoring cruises cancelled due to Covid-19

AMNWR, UAF, USGS Colony-based research & monitoring **cancelled**



# In recent years, some species declined in the Bering Sea, others increased

(Based on at-sea surveys, 2007-2019)

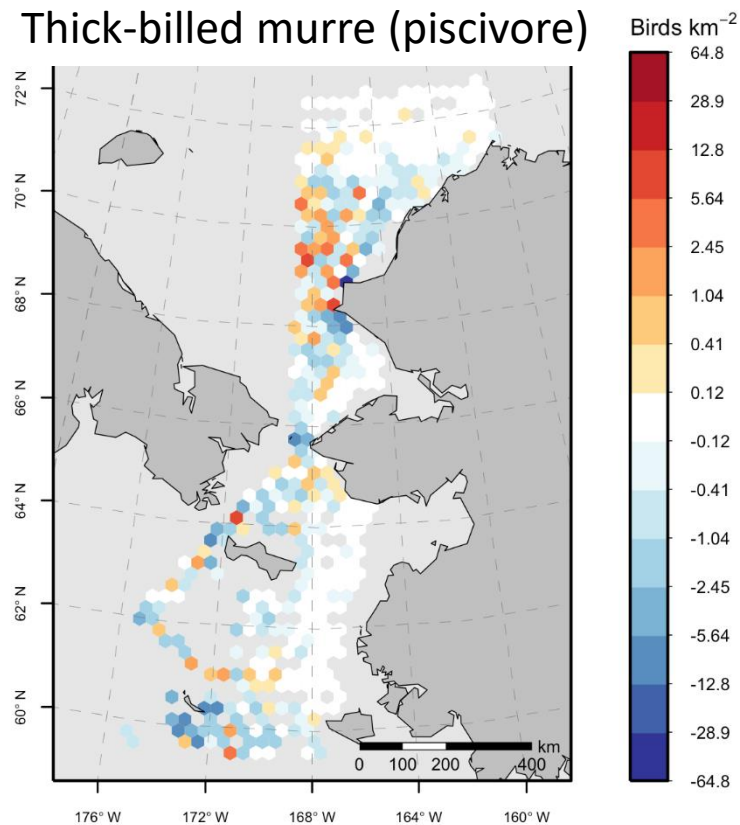




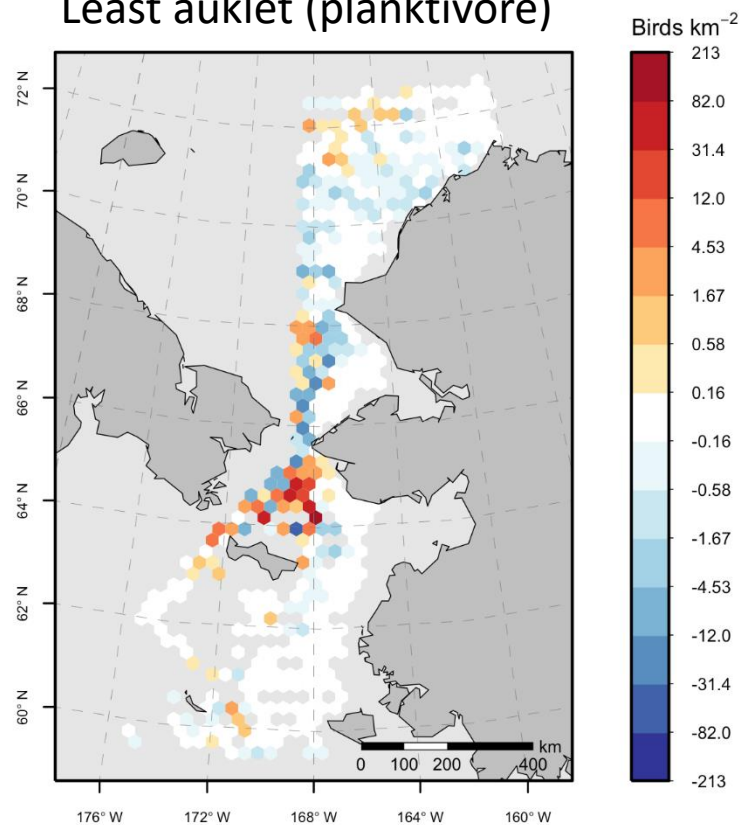
# Mostly northward shifts in distribution of seabirds during 2017-2019

Increases (reds) vs Decreases (blues)

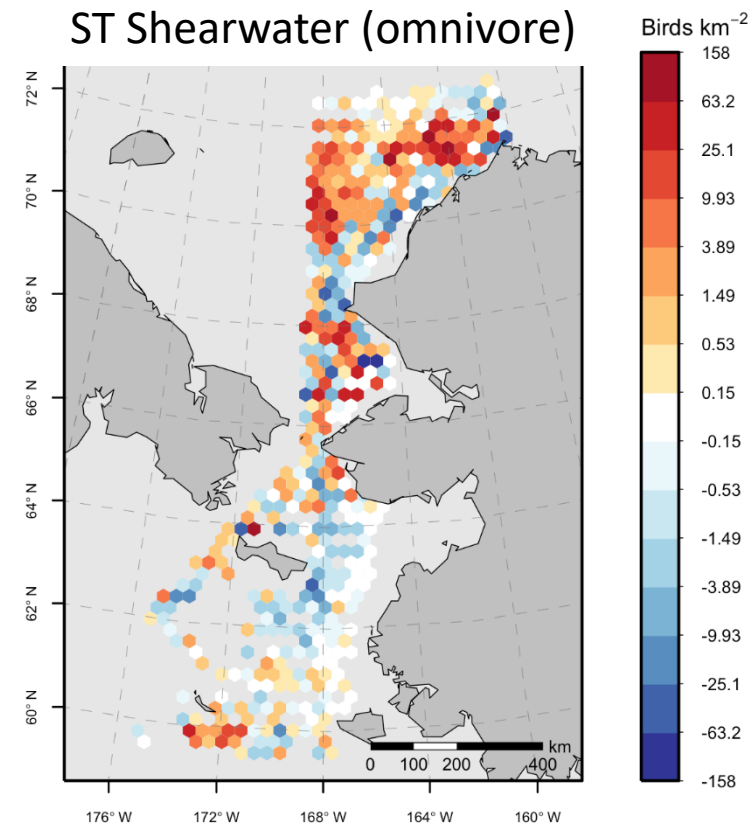
Thick-billed murre (piscivore)



Least auklet (planktivore)



ST Shearwater (omnivore)





# Alaska Seabird Die-offs: 2015 to Present

**May 2015-June 2016:** Gulf of Alaska *Common Murres*

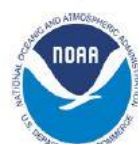
**Oct-Nov 2016:** St. Paul Island *Puffins & Auklets*

**May-Oct 2019:** Bering/Chukchi, East Aleutians & Bristol Bay *Shearwaters, Murres, Puffins, Auklets*

**Jun-Sep 2017:** Bering/Chukchi *Fulmars & Shearwaters*

**May-Oct:** Bering/Chukchi & East Aleutians *Puffins, Murres, Kittiwakes*

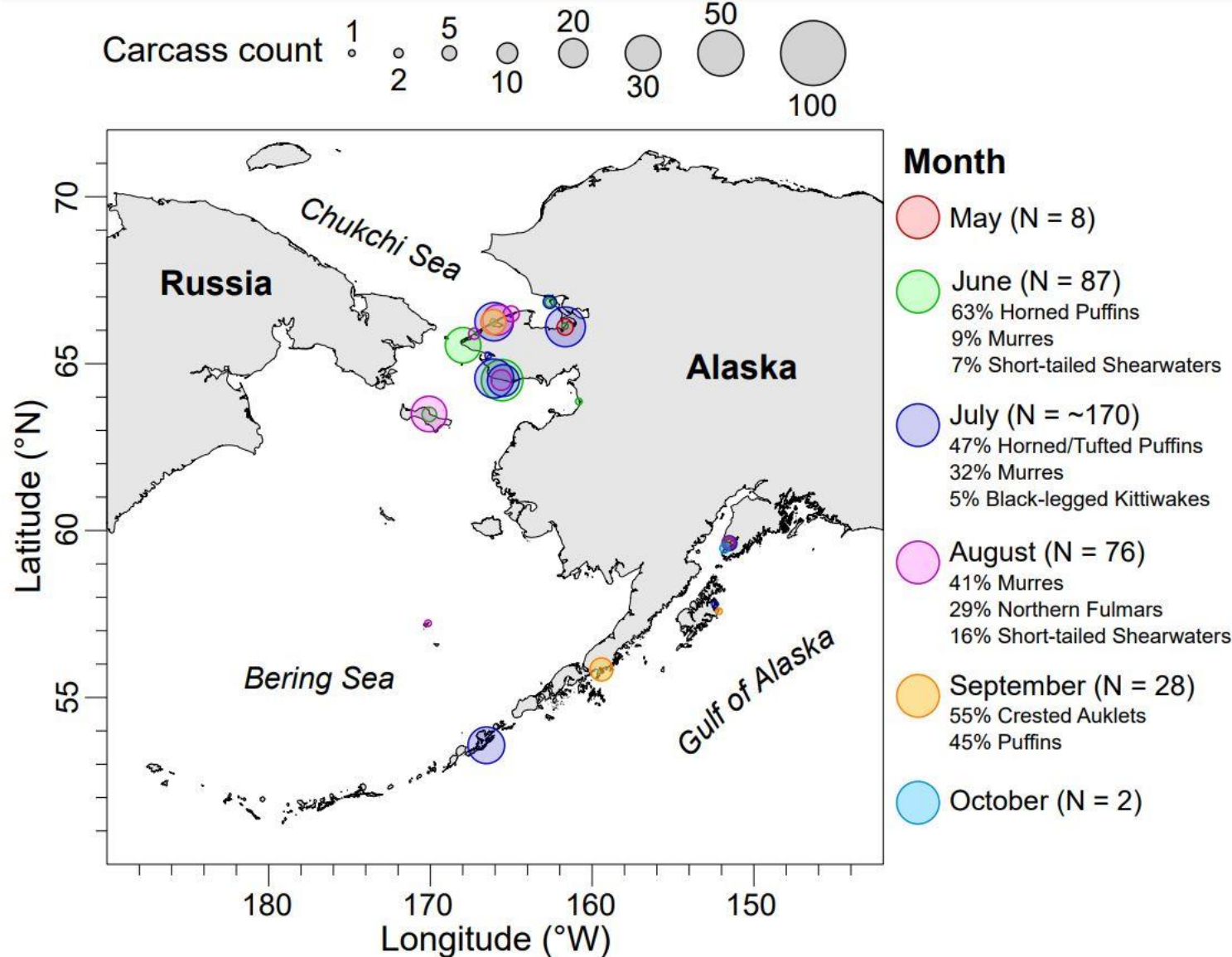
**May-Aug 2018:** Bering/Chukchi, St. Paul, Utqiagvik, Lower Cook Inlet *Murres, Fulmars, Shearwaters, Puffins, Auklets*





# 2020 Alaska Seabird Die-off

- From May to October 2020, >330 seabird carcasses were reported in Alaska
- 2020 die-off was smaller than die-offs in summers 2017–2019
- Birds examined from St. Lawrence Island in June were emaciated, however, the cause of death was also associated with a non petroleum oil (vegetable, fish, or cooking oil)
- The U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center examined 18 carcasses, all were emaciated and tested negative for Avian Influenza.
- USGS harmful algal bloom lab (USGS):  
52 samples from 18 of 21 carcasses tested for STX with no detectable levels.



<https://www.fws.gov/alaska/stories/2020-alaska-seabird-dieoff-update>







# ALASKA SEABIRD MORTALITY EVENTS 2017-2020

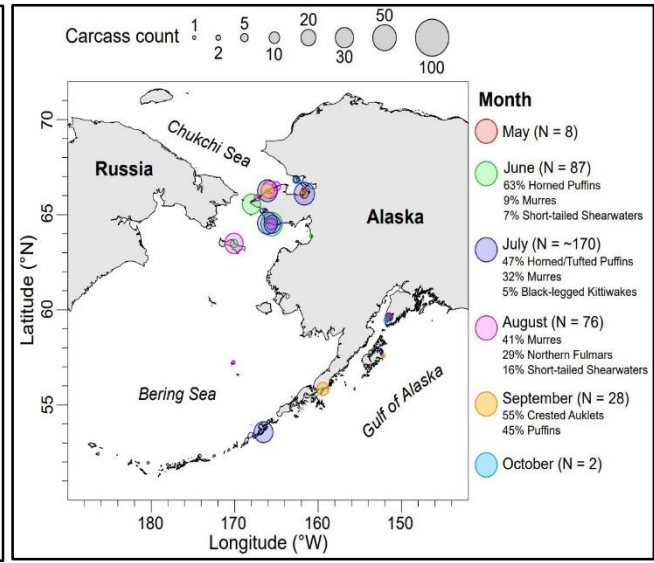
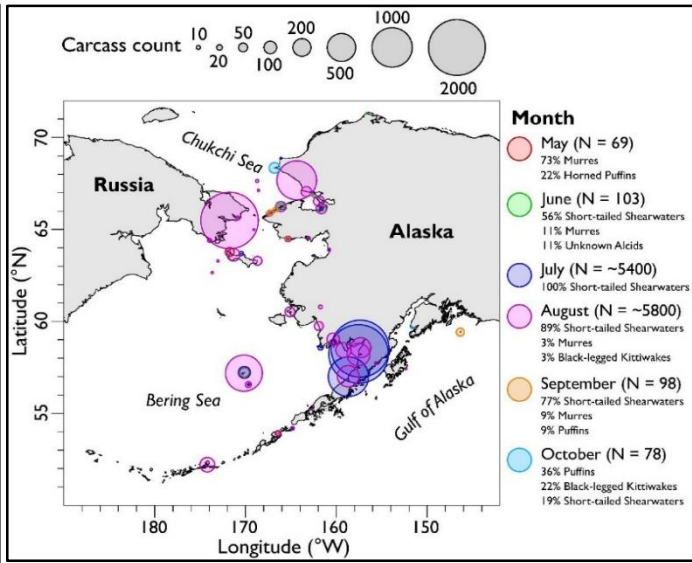
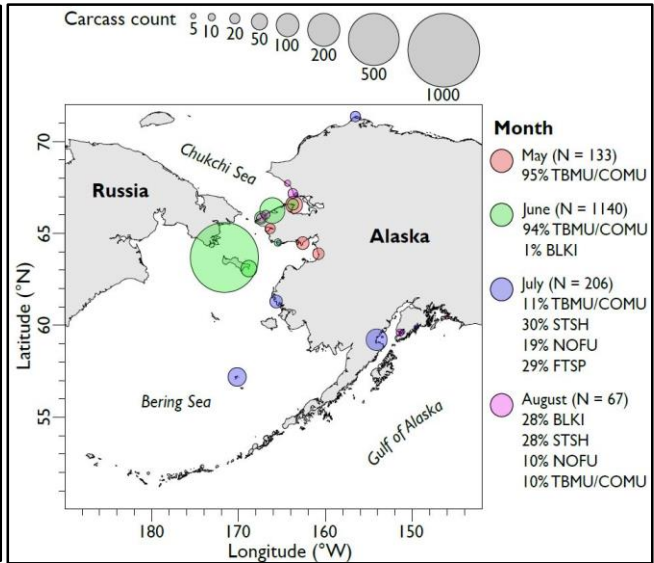
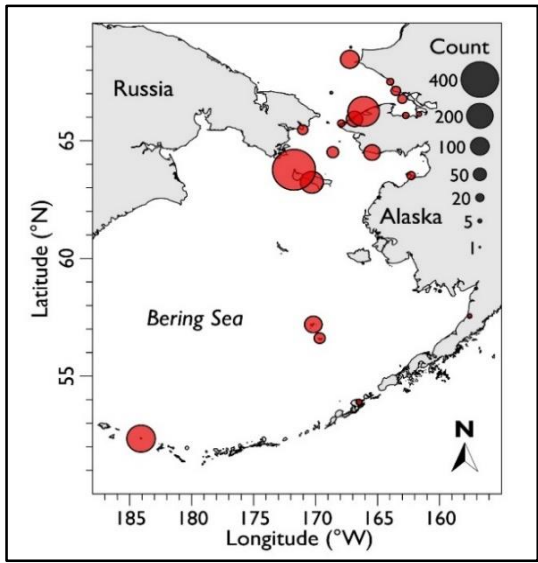


2017

2018

2019

2020



	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Reported	>1,600	>1,200	>9,000	>330
NWHC submitted	22	26	63	25
NWHC examined	17	17	43	18
Emaciation	17	14	35	18
AI	0	2	0	0
STX	Positive	Negative	Negative	Negative (18 of 21 carcasses tested)
Other	1	1	6	2





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## Contact Info

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