

Marine Mammal and Seabird Observations Cruise Report  
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Sightings of marine mammals and seabirds were recorded from the United States Coast Guard Cutter Healy during its transit from Thule, Greenland to Barrow, Alaska from August 19-30, 2003. During this period, 147 hours of single observer watches were stood from the fully enclosed bridge of the Healy, approximately 60 feet above water level. Visual scans for animals were conducted by both the naked eye and with 7x and 10x binoculars from beam to beam as the vessel moved through a variety of ice and open water habitats. Sightings of marine mammals were recorded on NOAA, NMFS Platforms of Opportunity forms, and seabird sightings were recorded by species and grouped by two hours time blocks.

A list of sightings is provided in Table 1. One cetacean and four pinniped species, the polar bear, and 14 seabird and waterfowl species were recorded. The most frequently sighted marine mammal species was the bearded seal (31 sightings), followed by the polar bear (19 sightings) and the ringed seal (18 sightings). The most frequently sighted bird species was the thick-billed murre (989 birds), followed by the northern fulmar (769 birds), and the black-legged kittiwake (486). The largest number of marine mammal sightings occurred within the Parry Channel, whereas the largest number of birds was seen in Baffin Bay. Sightings of bowhead whale, harp seal and hooded seal all made well into the Parry Channel may represent additions to the knowledge of the range of these species in this area, and will be shared with interested colleagues.

The marine mammal sighting forms will be added to the NOAA National Marine Mammal Laboratory's database in Seattle, WA, which has data dating back to 1958. This data helps biologists to determine the distribution and range of marine mammals all over the world. Polar bear sightings, photographs and video will also be archived with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Marine Mammals Management in Anchorage, AK. Data of seabirds will be sent to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Migratory Bird Management in Anchorage, AK.

**Table 1. Marine mammal and seabird sightings data collected from the CGC Healy during its transit from Thule, Greenland to Barrow, Alaska from August 19-30, 2003.**

	Baffin Bay		Parry Channel			Pr of Wales Strait	Beaufort Sea				
<b>Marine Mammals</b>	<b>8/19</b>	<b>8/20</b>	<b>8/21</b>	<b>8/22</b>	<b>8/23</b>	<b>8/24</b>	<b>8/25</b>	<b>8/26</b>	<b>8/27</b>	<b>8/28</b>	<b>Total Sightings</b>
Bowhead Whale <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	5
Unidentified Whale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Bearded Seal	0	0	2	25	0	4	0	0	0	0	31
Harp Seal	1	4	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	13
Hooded Seal	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ringed Seal	0	0	4	3	3	4	2	2	0	0	18
Unidentified Phocid	1	0	5	7	1	1	3	0	0	0	18
Unidentified Small Phocid	3	1	7	10	3	3	5	0	0	0	32
Unidentified Medium Phocid	1	0	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Polar Bear <sup>2</sup>	0	0	2	5	2		6	4			19
<b>Daily Sightings</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Seabirds</b>	<b>8/19</b>	<b>8/20</b>	<b>8/21</b>	<b>8/22</b>	<b>8/23</b>	<b>8/24</b>	<b>8/25</b>	<b>8/26</b>	<b>8/27</b>	<b>8/28</b>	<b>Total Birds</b>
Pacific Loon	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	8	0	4	13
Northern Fulmar	156	241	370	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	769
Common Eider	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	125	126
King Eider	0	0	0	0	0	100	45	35	0	20	200
Unidentified Eider	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	256	0	57	338
Long-tailed Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Unidentified Waterfowl	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	25
Long-tailed Jaeger	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pomarine Jaeger	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Parasitic Jaeger	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Unidentified Jaeger	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6
Black-legged Kittiwake	79	107	293	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	486
Glaucous Gull	3	5	12	6	3	0	23	10	10	5	77
Thayer's Gull	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Unidentified Gull	0	2	0	1	3	1	0	6	0	0	13
Black Guillemot	47	6	96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	149
Thick-billed Murre	91	600	298	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	989
Little Auk	70	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	71
<b>Daily Totals</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>1069</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>3272</b>

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Five sightings of eight whales including three pairs

<sup>2</sup> Nineteen sightings of 27 bears including five females with cubs; three females had two cubs and two females had one cub.