

# North Slope Beach Survey Monitoring Program

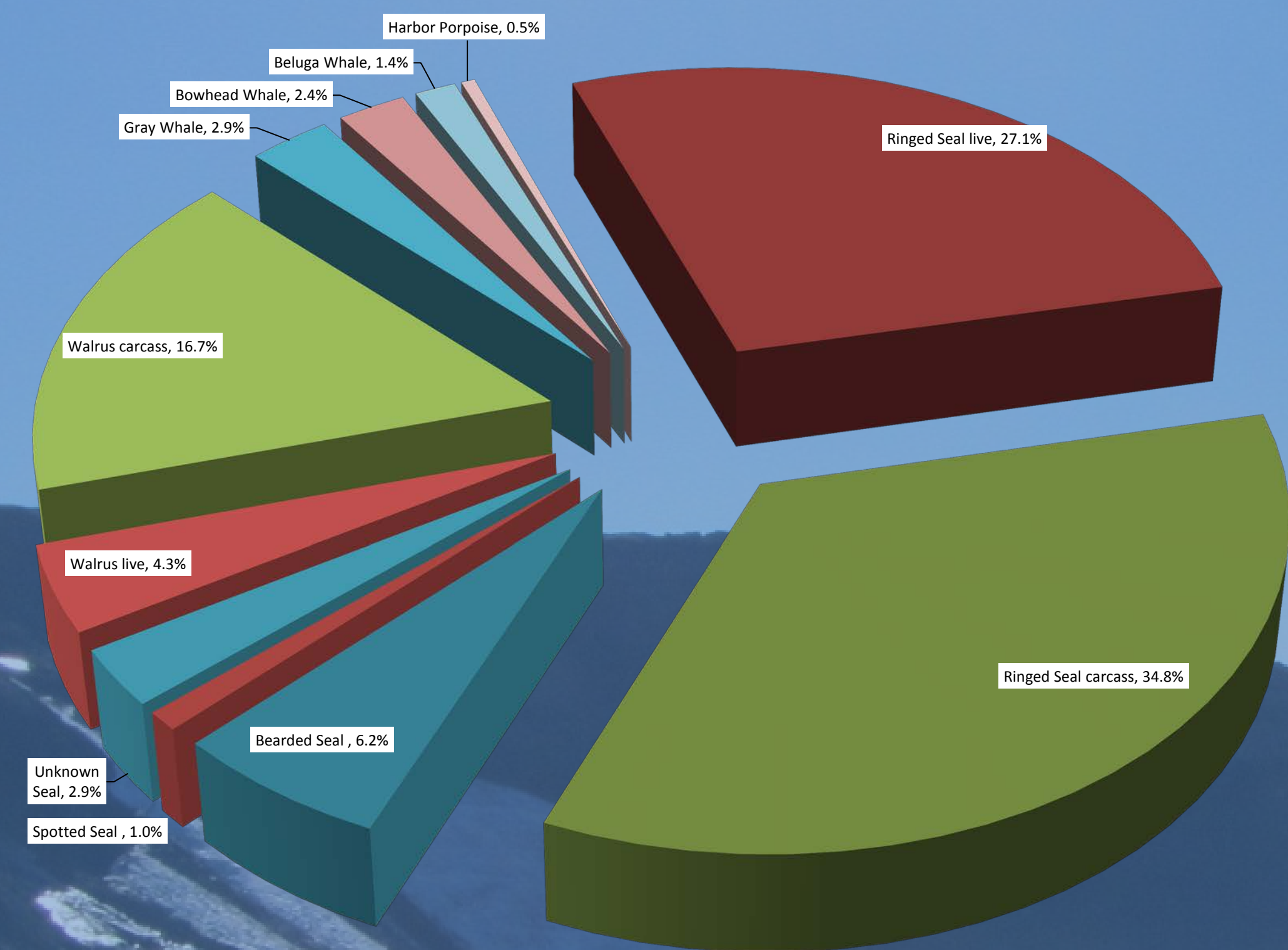
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In the interest of collecting baseline information on live and beach cast marine mammals, the NSB Department of Wildlife Management has been conducting weekly beach surveys near Barrow (2011-2014) during the open water period (June-October). A summary of 2011- 2014 beach survey live/carcass observation data (n=210) is provided and key benefits of the North Slope Arctic stranding program are discussed. Note: Bird, polar bear and other terrestrial species data is not included in the summary.

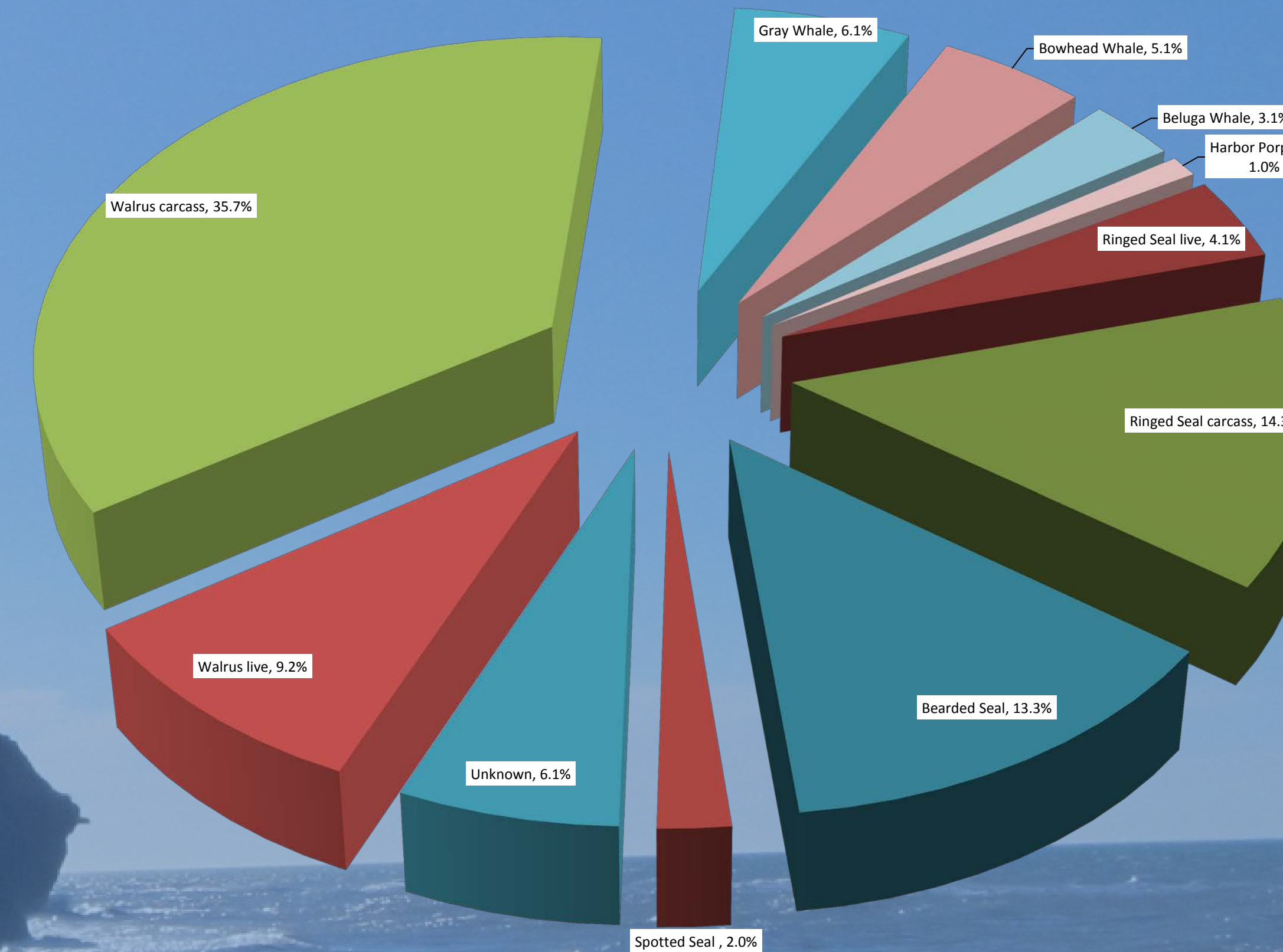
## Survey Program

- Survey Area: Barrow to Skull Cliff (~56 km south of Barrow); Barrow to Plover Point (~13 km north of Barrow)
- Mode of Transport: via ATV's along the coast or by boat
- Survey Methods: photo documentation and recording of live /dead animals observations. Carcasses are tagged with metal tags. Necropsy of fresh carcasses done at site or carcass transported to Barrow NSB wildlife facility.
- Hazard/Problems: machine breakdowns-- deep water crossings - polar bear encounters- adverse weather
- Permits: NMFS Stranding Response Program No. 932-1905-01/MA-009526-1 (cetacean and pinnipeds); USFWS MA 134907-2 (walrus and polar bear)

2011-2014 Beach Survey Species Composition (n=210)



2012-2014 Beach Survey Species Composition (n=98)



## Survey Benefits

- Working well – multi year stranding baseline data set
- Provides better understanding of natural causes of mortality
- Early detection tool for unusual mortality events
- Data shows ringed seals recovering from 2011 disease event
- Opportunity for baseline tissue sampling
- Access to animals that are not hunted here
- Complements aerial surveys
- Provides multi-year local environmental data
- Multi-species approach better reflection of Arctic food web
- Useful for extralimital sighting or range expansion
- Better understanding of ocean currents through carcass drifting
- Allows community feedback and information flow



Sampling Gray Whale carcass



Walrus afloat



Testing the creek depth for ATV crossing



Flipper tag on Seal carcass



Polar Bear encounter

Funding for this project is provided by Prescott, CIAP (Coastal Impact Assessment Program Marine Mammal Health), NSB Department of Wildlife Management, and USFWS Walrus Health. Thanks to the hunters and community members who provided additional information on strandings.

