



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Walrus Resting on Local Beaches

The shallow continental-shelf waters of the Chukchi Sea have again experienced a rapid and complete retreat of sea ice during the summer of 2008.

Walrus may begin coming ashore in late September or October and may appear exhausted. They will typically spend 1 to 3 days resting on the beach, before going back out to sea to feed again. There is the potential for large haulouts to form along the northwest coast of Alaska.

### Please Do Not Disturb!

It is important that these walrus are allowed to rest undisturbed. Disturbances during this critical time may jeopardize the animals' survival. Large groups of resting walrus are particularly sensitive to disturbances from passing aircraft, boats and people. If disturbed, walrus may stampede into the water. When this happens, walrus calves are particularly vulnerable to trampling injuries.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) prohibits the harassment or disturbance of any marine mammal. Examples of harassment include but are not limited to: throwing rocks or other objects, touching the animal, chasing the animal around the beach or back into the water. Any human behavior which alters the animal's behavior is considered harassment.

### Alaska Native Subsistence Harvest is Allowed

The MMPA provides an exemption for Alaska Coastal Natives to harvest marine mammals for subsistence purposes. Subsistence harvests must be



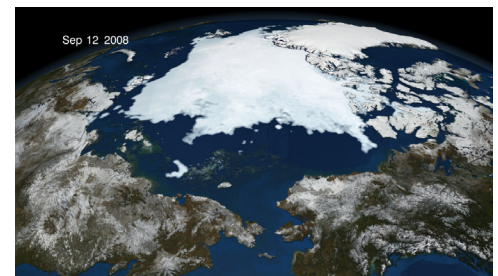
accomplished in a non-wasteful manner and the harvest must be reported to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service within 30 days.

Subsistence harvests must comply with all local laws concerning the discharge of firearms. The City of Barrow Ordinance states: "It is unlawful for any person to discharge any firearm, within one hundred yards of any residential structure, any business, any area used for storage of equipment or vehicles, or any city playground, softball field, or cemetery, except in case where such is done justifiably in defense of oneself, of another person or of property."

### If You find a Sick or Injured Walrus

If a walrus appears sick or injured, please do not approach or pick it

up. Please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at 1-800-362-5148. After hours, please call The Alaska SeaLife Center at 1-888-774-7325. You may also contact the North Slope Borough Wildlife Department at 852-0350. If you have public safety concerns please contact the North Slope Borough Public Safety Department at 852-6111.



*Sea ice retreat in 2008 was the second greatest in recorded history*

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
1 800/344 WILD  
<http://www.fws.gov>

September 2008

For more information please contact:  
Jonathan Snyder 907/786 3800  
[Jonathan\\_Snyder@fws.gov](mailto:Jonathan_Snyder@fws.gov)

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Marine Mammals Management Office  
1011 East Tudor Road  
Anchorage, AK 99503

North Slope Borough  
Department of Wildlife Management  
907/852-0350

Alaska SeaLife Center  
Stranding and Rehabilitation Hotline  
888/774-7325