

Alaska Crime Scene Investigations



"Stella" the Steller sea lion - Juliana Kim
NMFS OPR Permit #14324.

Profile: Stella, the Steller Sea Lion

Real (scientific) name: Eumetopias jubatus

Alias: Northern sea lion

Missing: Steller sea lions have declined by 75 percent worldwide from 300,000 animals before 1970 to 75,000 in recent years. While there is no corpse, Stella and many of her kind are missing and presumed dead. Because marine mammals live in remote areas where no one sees what might happen to them, they are simply assumed to be dead if they are never seen again.

Distribution: Northern California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia (Canada), Southeast Alaska, the Gulf of Alaska, the Aleutian Islands and the Bering Sea to the Kamchatka Peninsula and the Sea of Okhotsk and Japan

Crime Scene: Prince William Sound, Alaska
(From the Central Gulf of Alaska to the West, including the Aleutian Islands)

Status: Endangered under the Endangered Species Act
(Western stock; Central Gulf of Alaska, and to the West)

Threatened under the Endangered Species Act
(Eastern stock: Eastern Gulf of Alaska and to the South)

Weight: Pups: about 23 kg at birth (roughly 50 lbs)
Adult Males: can weigh up to 1200 kg (as much as a small car)
Adult Females: around 300 kg (1/4 the size of the male)

Length: Pups: 1m average length
Adult Males: maximum 3.3 m
Adult Females: maximum 2.5 m

Color: Pale yellow to light tan above, brown to rust below

Prior Criminal Record: Eats other protected animals such as salmon, competes with humans for fish in fisheries.

Evidence: Observed eating salmon at dams and eating fish off fisherman's lines.

Eats: Generally fish, squid and octopus; diet may include herring, pollock, Atka mackerel, Pacific mackerel, hake, sandlance, salmon, sturgeon, flatfish such as halibut and various flounders, skates, lampreys, capelin, eulachon, rockfish and various species of squid and octopus.

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Stella, the Steller Sea Lion profile continued...

Maximum Life Expectancy: Males: 18 or 19 years, Females: 25 and beyond

How Many Reach Reproductive Age: Probably less than 30% of females born reach the age at which they could have their first pup, though accurate numbers are not known.

Known Predators: Transient killer whales, Man, Sharks

Use this temperature profile below along with the information under Temperature Profiles to determine what happened to Stella and likely other juvenile Steller sea lions in Prince William Sound, Alaska.

