


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, AP and SSC Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke
Executive Director 

DATE: January 8, 1992

SUBJECT: Marine Mammals

ACTION REQUIRED

- A. Receive status report on MMPA amendment proposed by NMFS
- B. Receive status reports on Amendment 17/22 (Walrus Islands portion) and Amendment 20/25 (marine mammal protective measures)

BACKGROUND

A. Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendment

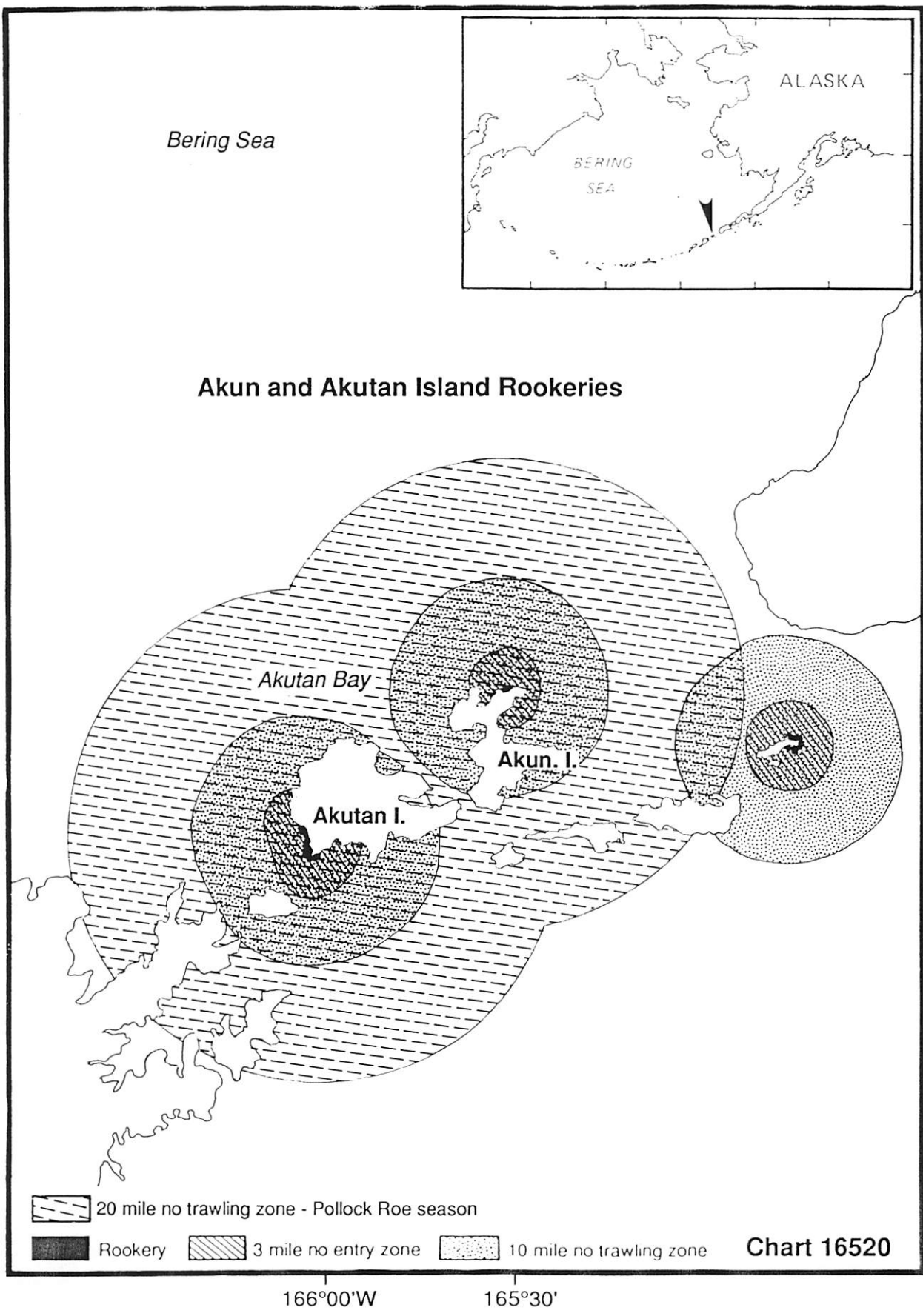
In December the Council reviewed the Revised Proposal to Govern Interactions Between Marine Mammals and Commercial Fishing Operations. Based on Council, SSC, and AP review a letter was sent to Charles Karnella summarizing the concerns which still remain regarding the proposed regime. Due to the magnitude of comments received on the revised proposal, the originally proposed filing date of January 2 has been set aside; instead, there will be a delay of between 30 and 60 days while the drafters revise the proposed regime to take into account comments received on the second draft. The final version will likely go directly to Congress without a further review period.

B. Amendment 17/22 and Amendment 20/25

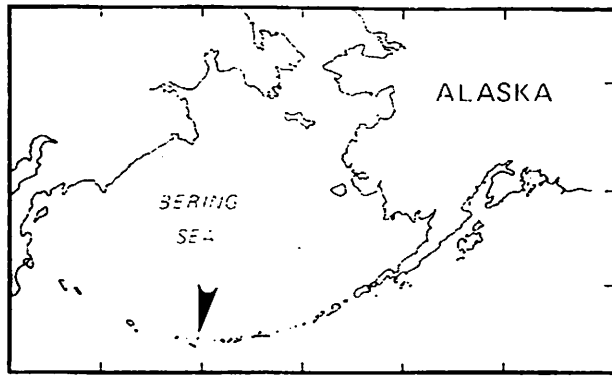
At the December meeting the Council revisited the issue of the Walrus Islands 12-mile closures to groundfish fishing. A majority of Council members felt that there was not a strong enough link between fishing operations and changes in walrus usage of the haulout sites to justify the continued closures. Because the amendment package is under Secretarial review, the Council voted to recommend to the Secretary to partially disapprove Amendment 17/22, specifically that portion dealing with the continued closures around the designated haulout sites. The comment period for this amendment ends on January 13, with final action by the Secretary to occur by the end of January.

In September 1991, the Council approved the marine mammal protective measures included in the Amendment 20/25 package. This included 10-mile closures to all groundfish trawling around designated rookery sites in the Gulf of Alaska and in the Bering Sea. For the Aleutian Islands area, the Council recommended that the closure apply only to directed trawling for pollock. In December the Council reviewed the Proposed Rule to implement this action which included a closure to all groundfish trawling (not just pollock) in the Aleutian Islands area. The Council commented that they recognize the importance of the enforcement and conservation concerns which prompted this action and urged NMFS to implement the amendment without delay. It is still scheduled to be in place on January 20, consistent with the Council's action to delay the trawl fishery openings until that date.

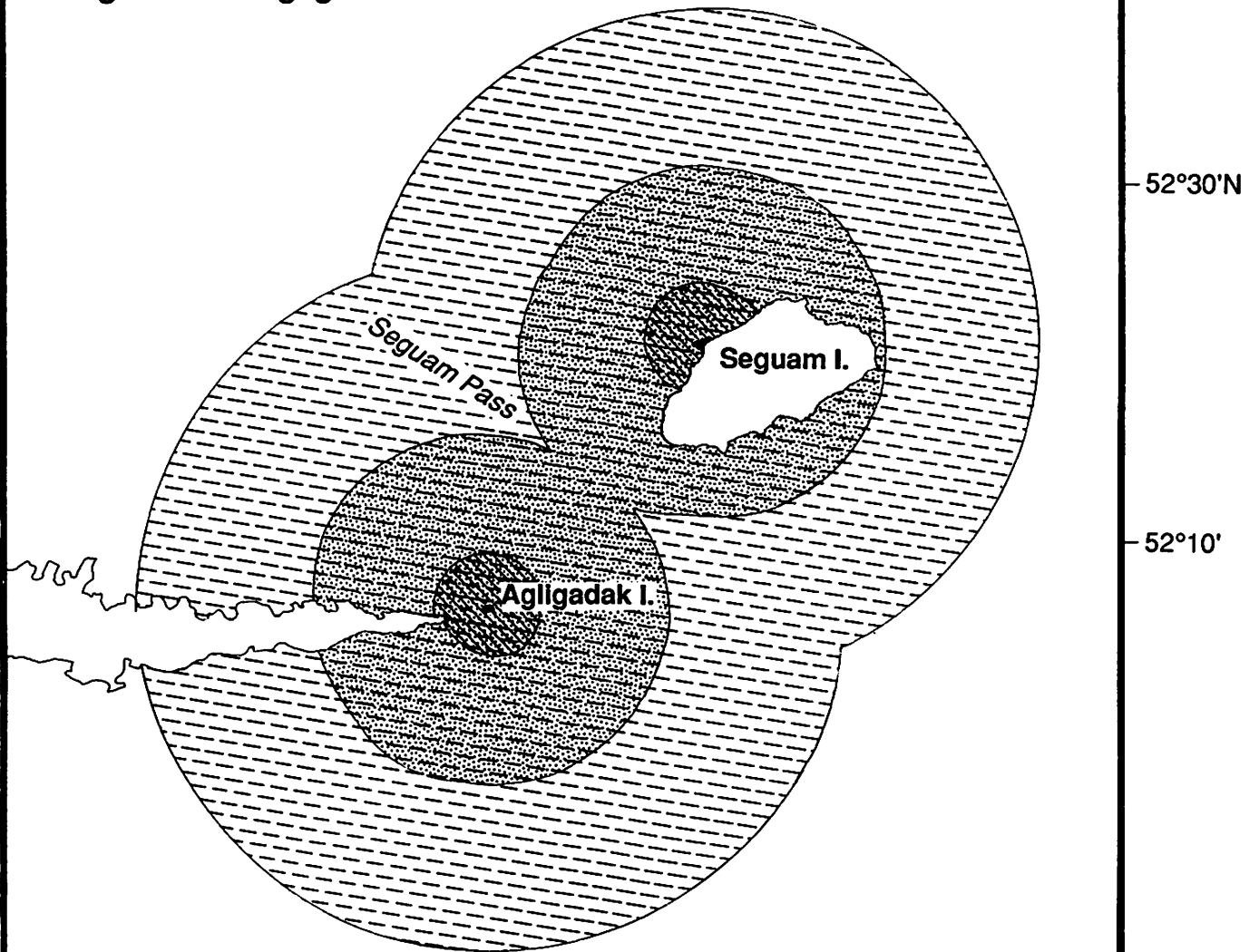
The Final Rule to implement this amendment was submitted to the Central Office on December 31, 1991 and contained one other change from the Council's recommendation. The Final Rule includes a 20-nautical-mile trawl closure around five sea lion rookeries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands area: Sea Lion Rocks, Akun Island, Akutan Island, Seguam Island, and Agligadak Island. These rookeries are east and west of the Bogoslof District and are considered necessary due to increased fishing effort on roe-bearing pollock caused by the closure of the Bogoslof District. When the 'A' season closes, the 20-mile closures will revert back to 10-mile closures.




Bering Sea




Seguam and Agligadak Island Rookeries



 20 mile no trawling zone - Pollock Roe season

 Rookery

 3 mile no entry zone


 10 mile no trawling zone

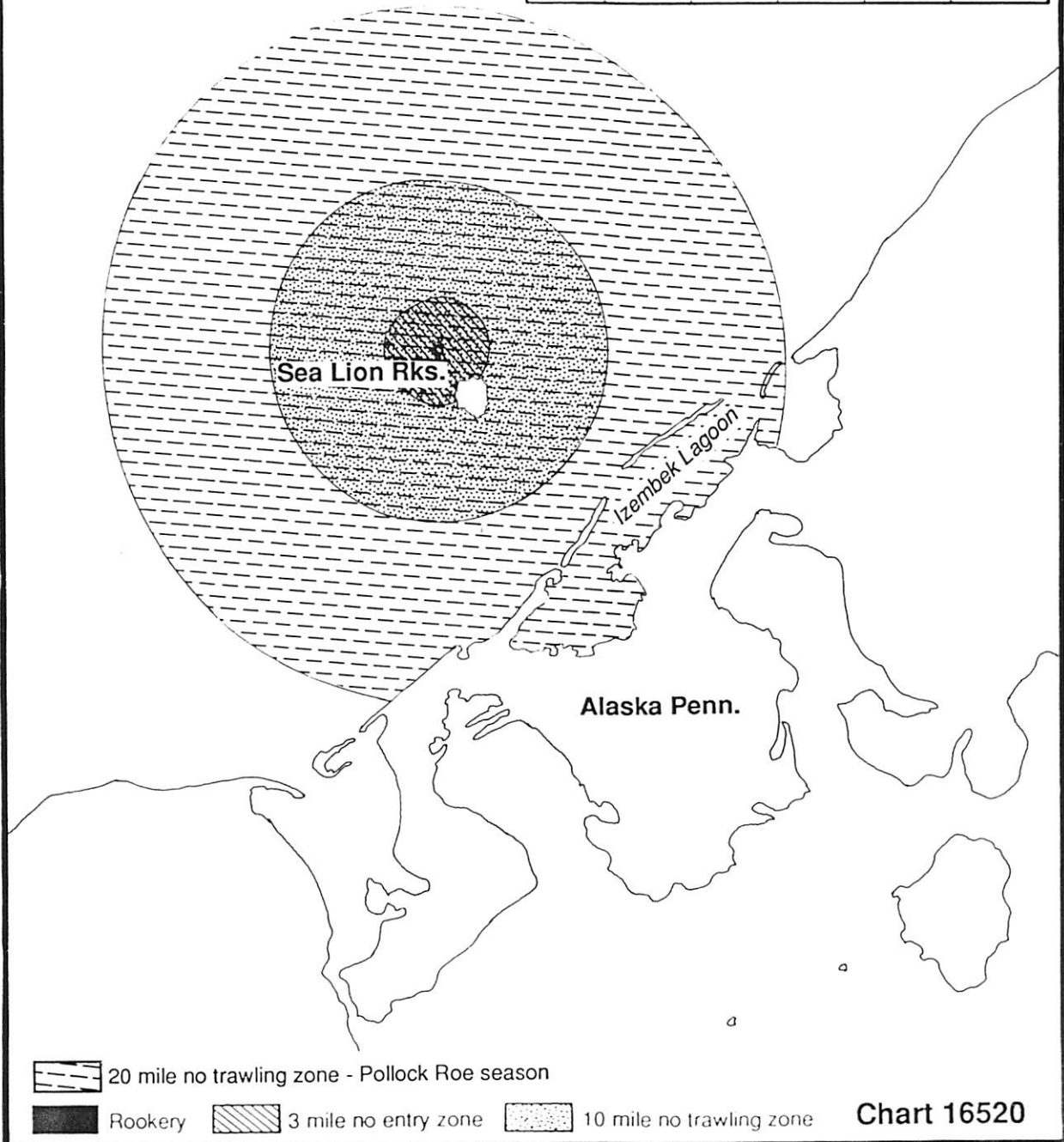
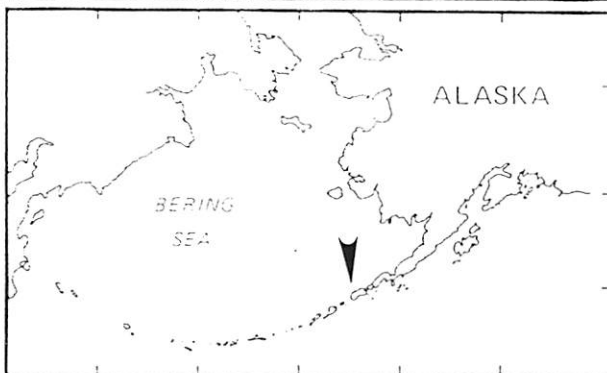
Chart 16480

173°00'W

172°30'

Bering Sea

Sea Lion Rock Rookery







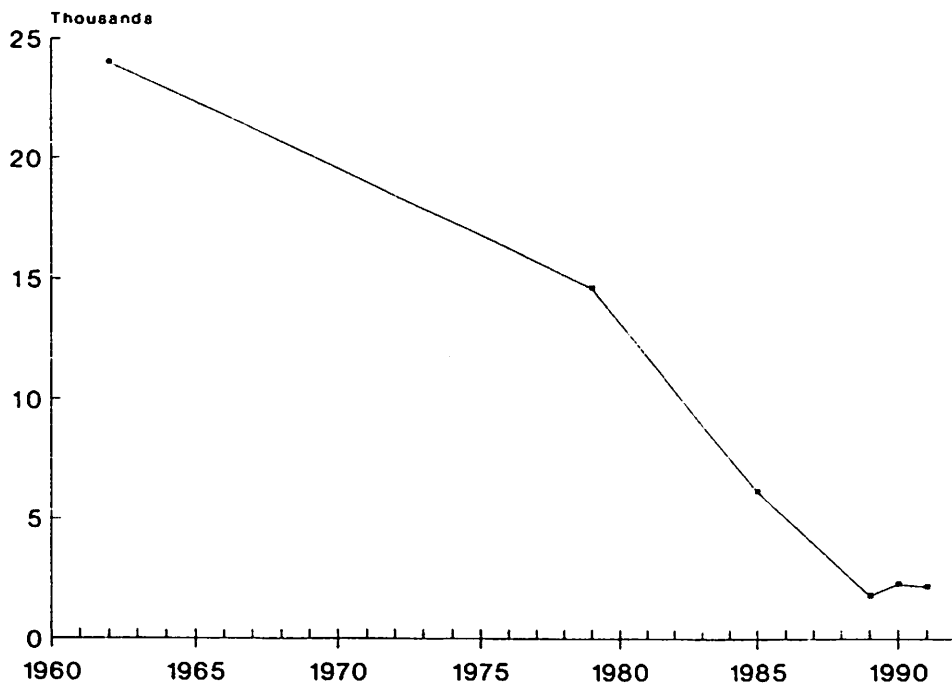
-  20 mile no trawling zone - Pollock Roe season
-  Rookery
-  3 mile no entry zone
-  10 mile no trawling zone

Chart 16520

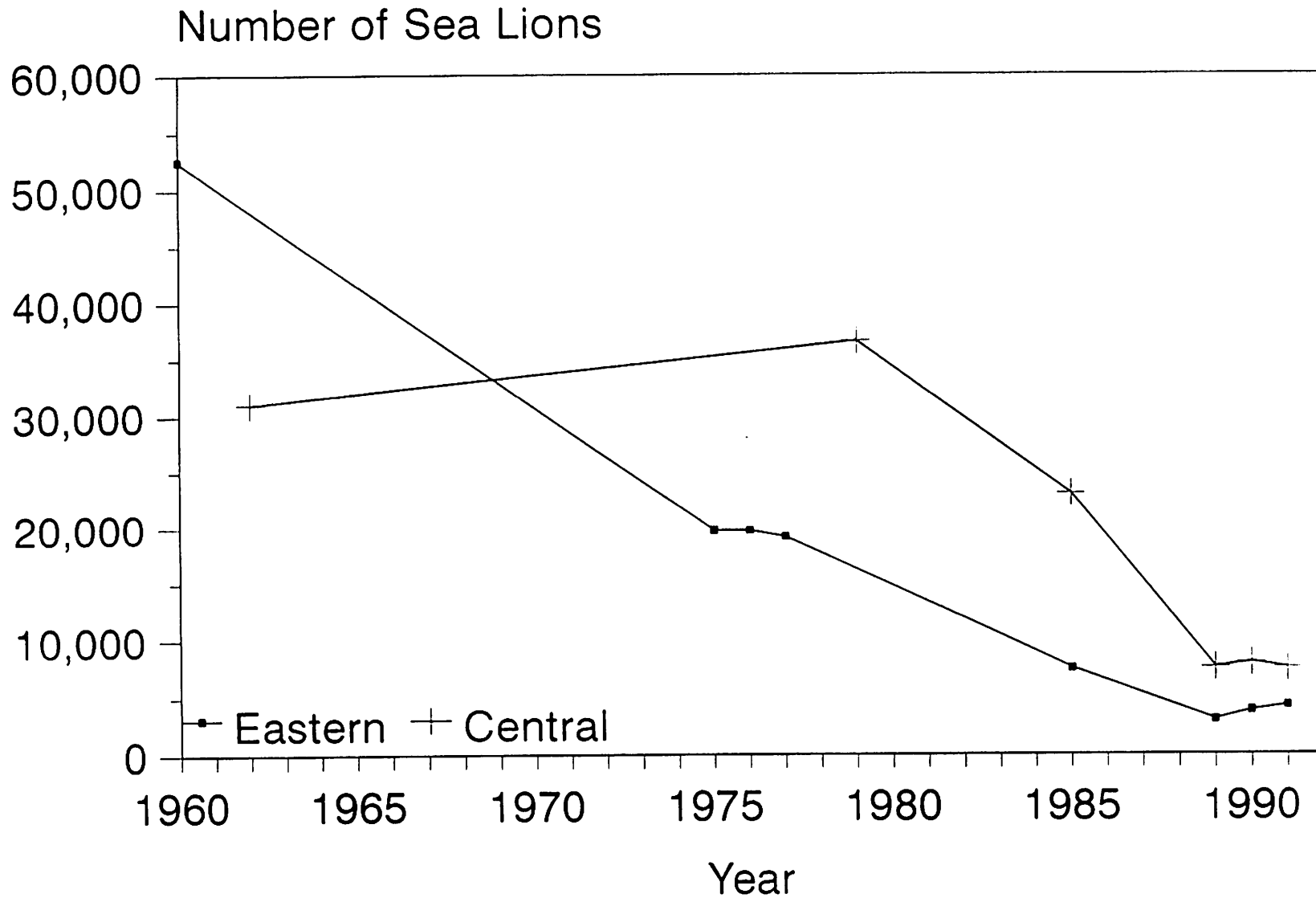
Count of Steller sea lions at the five rookeries in the Aleutian Islands where 20 nm buffer zones are suggested during the pollock "A" season.

Year	Sea Lion Rock	Akun	Akutan	Seguam	Agligadak	Total
1962	2,000	2,000	15,720	1,275	3,000	23,995
1979	2,076	1,050	4,019	6,493	993	14,631
1985	538	435	1,710	2,942	514	6,139
1989	344	150	578	602	132	1,806
1990	286	118	765	833	274	2,276
1991	300	156	818	684	231	2,189

Total count plotted against year.



Eastern and Central Aleutian Islands Rookery and Haulout Trend Sites



Steller sea lion prey items ranked by frequency of occurrence in stomachs (n=61) for four studies conducted in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands during 1981-86. n= stomachs with contents. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of stomachs with such contents.

Prey	1981 Central BS (n=32)	1981-82 Eastern AI (n=5)	1985 Central BS (n=13)	1985-86 St. Paul (n=11)
Walleye pollock	1 (32)	1 (4)	1 (10)	3 (3)
Pacific cod	2 (9)	4 (1)	5 (1)	2 (5)
Cephalopods	3 (6-12)	2 (3)	nd	3 (3)
Flatfish	4 (6-9)	3 (2)	-	1 (6)
Herring	5 (2)	-	3 (6)	-
Sculpins	5 (2)	4 (2)	2 (8)	-
Rockfish	6 (1)	-	3 (6)	-

(Atka mackerel have been identified as a food item but in low frequency in both stomach samples and scat analysis)

1st Quarter Observed Pollock Catches Per Square Mile of Zones, 1990-91

