



**USFWS Alaska Region,  
Migratory Bird Management  
1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage AK 99503**

**Phone: 1-866-527-3358  
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## What's Happening?

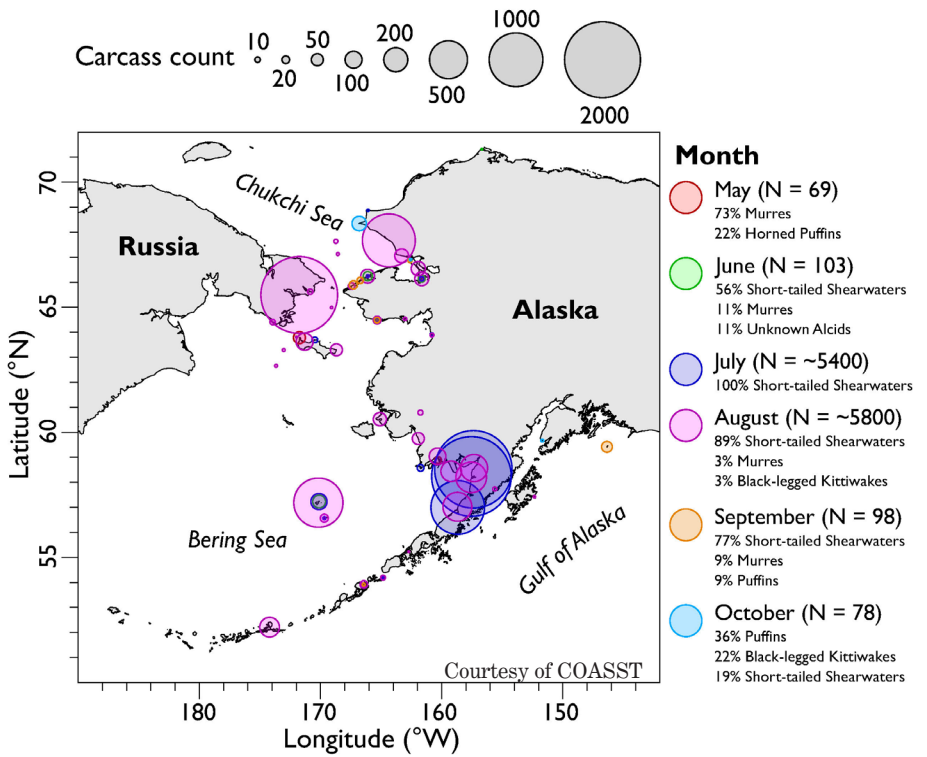
Beginning in May 2019, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) began receiving reports of dead and dying seabirds from the northern Bering and Chukchi seas, followed by reports in late June to early August of thousands of short-tailed shearwaters washed up on beaches in the Bristol Bay region. By mid-August, the shearwater die-off had extended along coastal Alaska north to the Chukotka Peninsula of Russia. Additional seabirds affected include puffins, murres, and auklets, but at much lower numbers than shearwaters.

## What's Being Done?

The USFWS is coordinating with federal, state, tribal partners, and communities to collect reports and track the number of birds involved, geographic area affected, and duration of the die-off event. Seabird carcasses are being collected from multiple locations and sent to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center for examination and testing. Initial results indicate starvation as the cause of death in the Bering and Chukchi seas. However, in southeast Alaska exposure to saxitoxin (a biotoxin associated with Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning) was linked to a localized die-off of breeding terns in June. Saxitoxin has not been detected in samples analyzed from Bristol Bay north to the Bering Strait region. Tissues sampled during examination will be analyzed by the USGS Alaska Science Center for harmful algal

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# 2019 Alaska Seabird Die-off



bloom toxins and those results will be shared as they become available.

## What Can I Do?

**Report observations of sick or dead birds to regional partners:**

- **North Slope:** Taqulik Hepa (907) 852-0350
- **Northwest Arctic:** Cyrus Harris (907) 442-7914
- **Bering Strait Region:** Brandon Ahmasuk (907) 443-4265 or Gay Sheffield (907) 434-1149
- **Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta:** Jennifer Hooper (907) 543-7470
- **Bristol Bay:** Gayla Hoseth (907) 842-6252
- **Pribilof Islands:** Lauren Divine (907) 891-3031
- **Unalaska:** Melissa Good (907) 581-1876
- **Aleutians:** Karen Pletnikoff (907) 222-4286
- **Or report by phone or email to the USFWS:**  
1-866-527-3358 or AK\_MBM@FWS.GOV



**Participate in monitoring efforts on your local beaches:**

COASST provides training. Visit [www.coasst.org](http://www.coasst.org).

**Information to report includes:**

- Location, Time & Date observed
- Size of area observed (e.g. length of beach)
- Type & number of birds (count or estimate)
- Photos of sick/dead birds
- Video of unusual behavior (approachable, drooping wings)



Updated November 6, 2019