

Alaska Region

Radio collars have been installed on 50 reindeer in four separate, Native-owned herds at the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve as part of a long-term radio tracking project, designed to provide needed information with regard to herd movements, reindeer interactions with indigenous wildlife, and the herds' use of park grazing lands.

Seven major lakes in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are being studied by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for baseline fisheries information.

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Resource managers at Noatak National Preserve are collecting information on wolves and bears, using radio collars on many of the animals. One of the wolves is equipped with a collar that allows tracking via satellite and computer.

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Two teams of archeologists are at work – one at Cape Krusenstern National Monument, the other at Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. The Krusenstern study, led by NPS Regional Archeologist Doug Gibson, began in summer 1987 and will consist of one more year of field work plus a year of analysis. The Bering Land Bridge study, headed by Regional Archeologist Jeanne Schaaf, began in 1985 and is winding up its year of analysis.

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In late May and June, approximately 42 humpback whales were individually identified in the Glacier Bay-Icy Strait area by Dr. C. Scott Baker, marine biologist for Glacier Bay NP. Of this total, 16 individuals (including one calf) have entered the boundaries of the park. By comparison to most previous years, this is a large number of whales in the area.

Ken Krieger of the Auke Bay Laboratory, National Marine Fisheries Service, reports that the whales are feeding primarily on small schooling fish. Although fish have been the predominant prey of humpback whales in Glacier Bay during the 1980s, feeding on euphausiids or krill was reported to be more common in the 1970s. Many of the whales currently in the bay have summered there during past years and a few individuals have sighting records extending back at least 15 years. According to Resource Management Specialist Gary Vequist, this is one of the longest time-series of data in existence on a population of naturally marked baleen whales.