

# Sea lion decline linked to climate change

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The recent decrease in the Alaskan sea lion population is linked to the changing ocean climate, a report says.

The report was published in "Fisheries Oceanography."

The study said climate change caused the creation of a new fish system around Alaska, had the new fish system's lower energy value has led to the dramatic fall in the area's sea lion population, the Anchorage Daily News reported.

By combining research from 28 scientists, the study found that since the dramatic climate shift began in the North Pacific back in 1976-77, regional fish populations have varied and that variance has proven detrimental to sea lions.

While the National Marine Fisheries Service recognized the efficacy of the new research, officials there are not willing to alter regulations to benefit the sea lions without further evidence, the report said.

"Oceanographic changes can change the distribution of fish, as can man's activities," agency biologist Lowell Fritz told the Daily News. "Lots of things affect sea lion energy."

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