

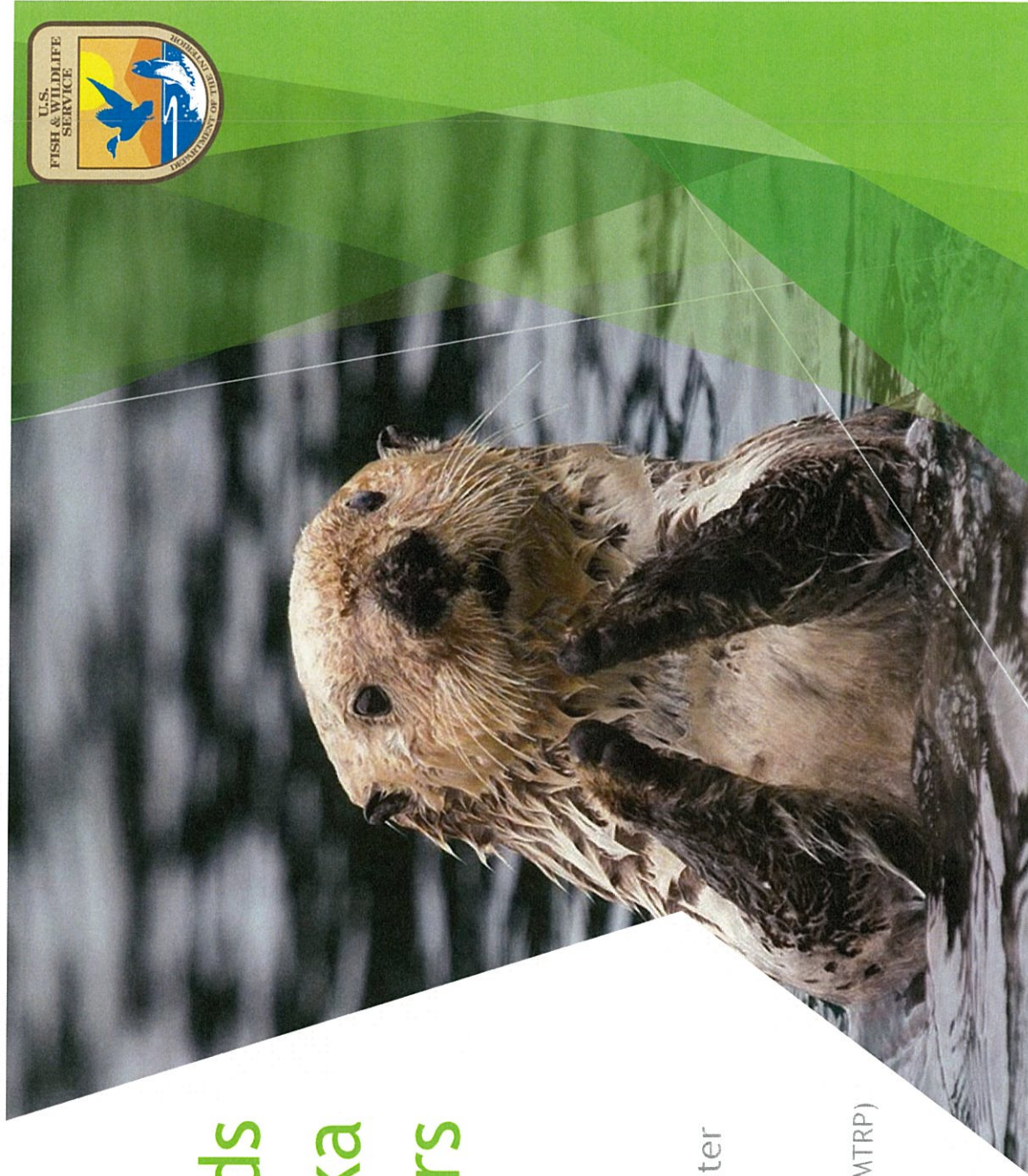


Harvest Trends in SE Alaska Sea Otters

September 24, 2021

By Sarah Hanchett and Brad Benter

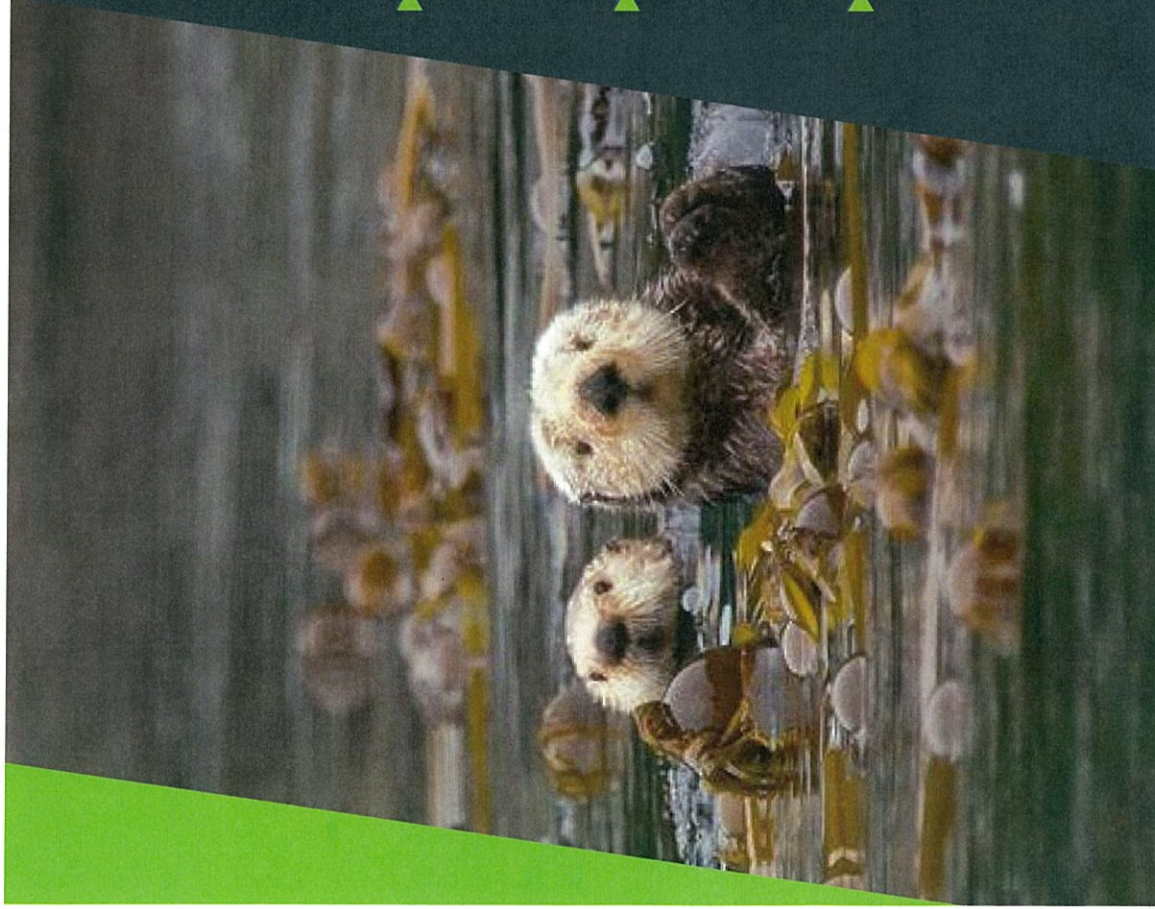
USFWS
Marine Mammals Management
Marking, Tagging, and Reporting Program (MTRP)



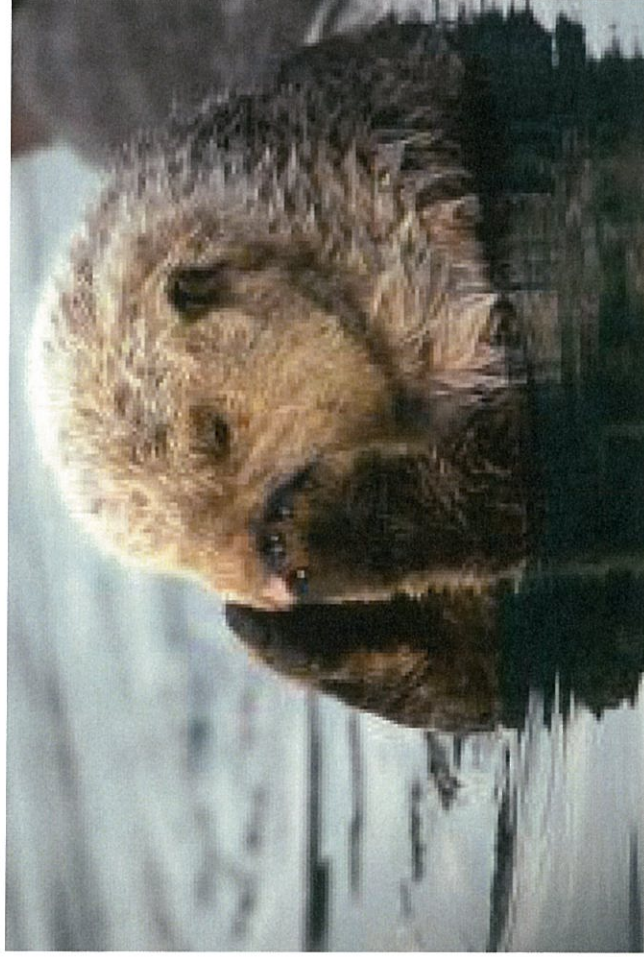


Program History

- ▶ Marine Mammal Protection Act 1972.
 - ▶ 1981 Amendment -> Marking, Tagging, and Reporting (MTRP)
- ▶ Purpose:
 - ▶ 1. Monitor subsistence and handicraft harvest
 - ▶ 2. Obtain biological data
- ▶ Data collection 1989 - present



How Tagging Works

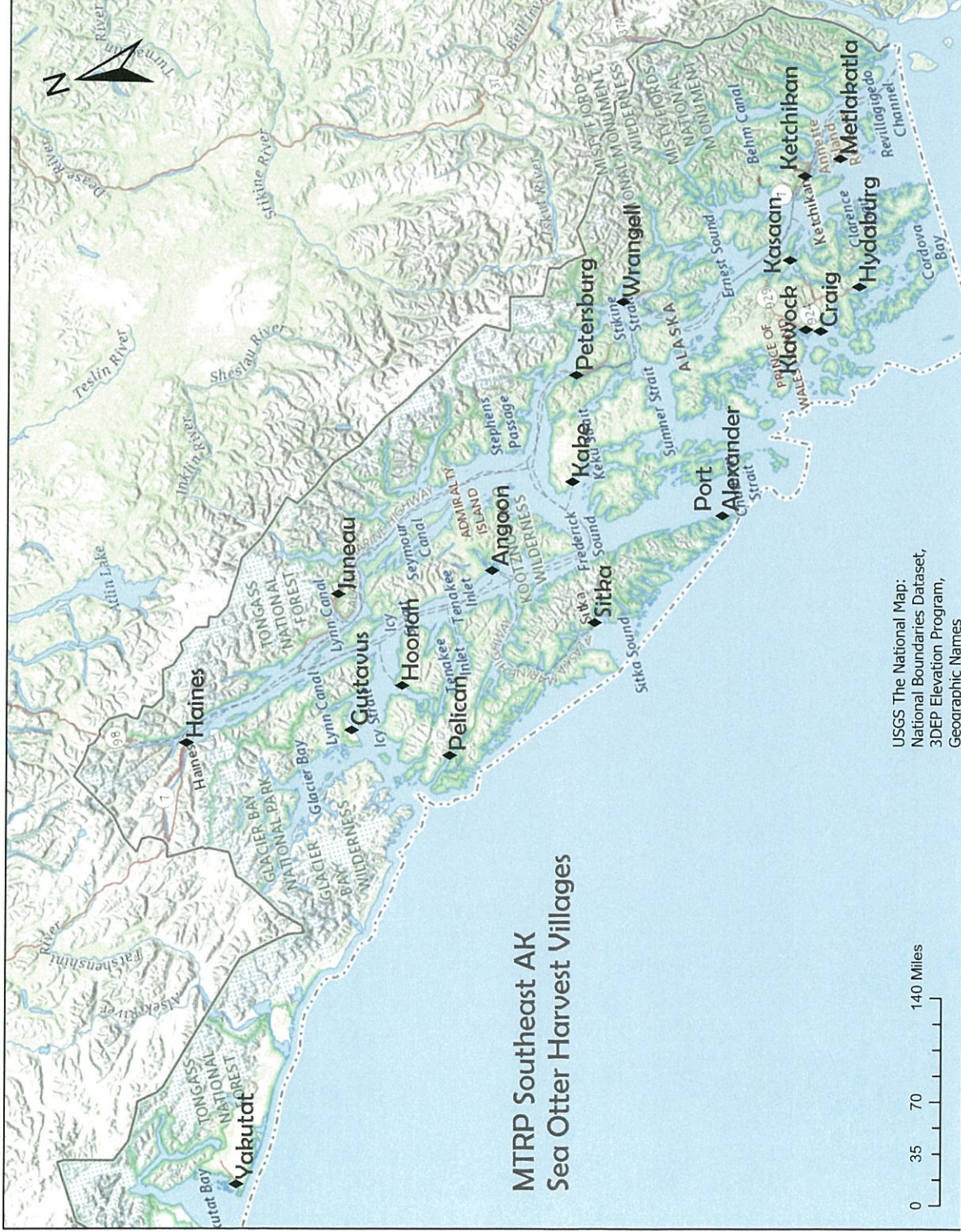


- ▲ Network of taggers in villages
- ▲ 30 days to tag
- ▲ Approved tanneries or home tanning
- ▲ Harvest data
 - ▲ # animals harvested
 - ▲ Sex & sex identifiers
 - ▲ Group/raft size
 - ▲ Harvest location



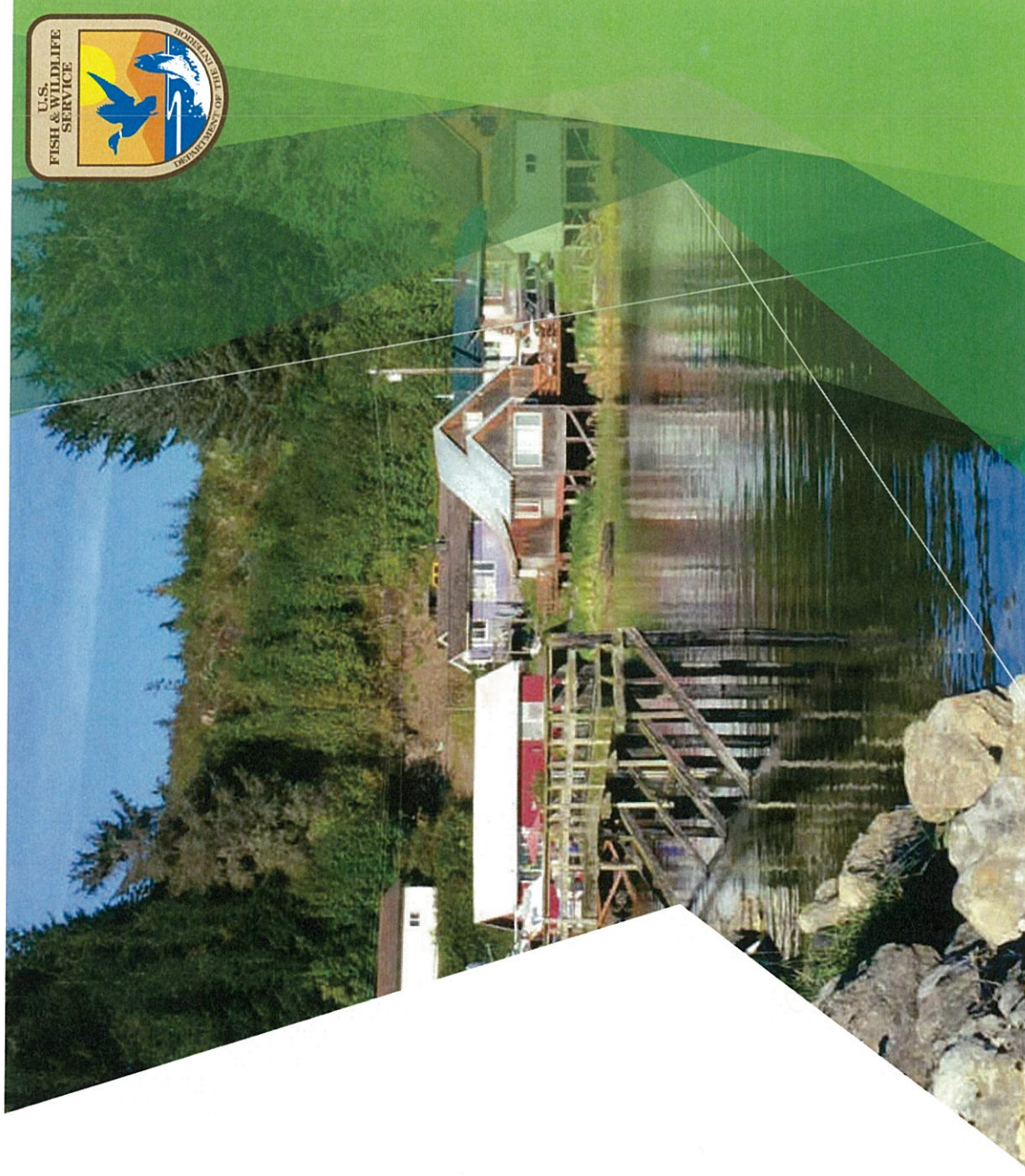


Tagger Locations



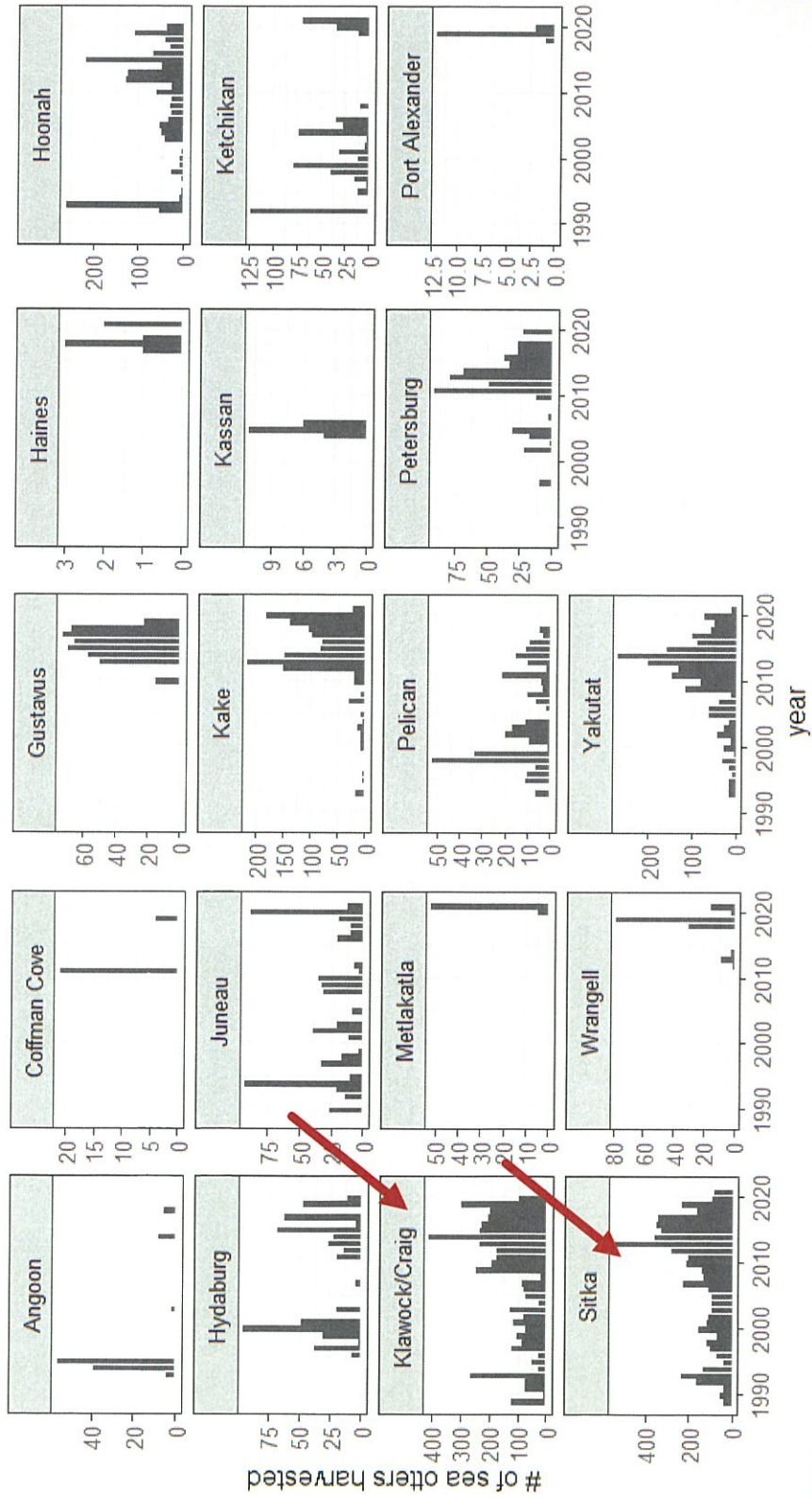
Community Involvement

- ▶ Visit villages several times a year
- ▶ Meet with taggers and hunters
- ▶ Coordinate with village events/presentations



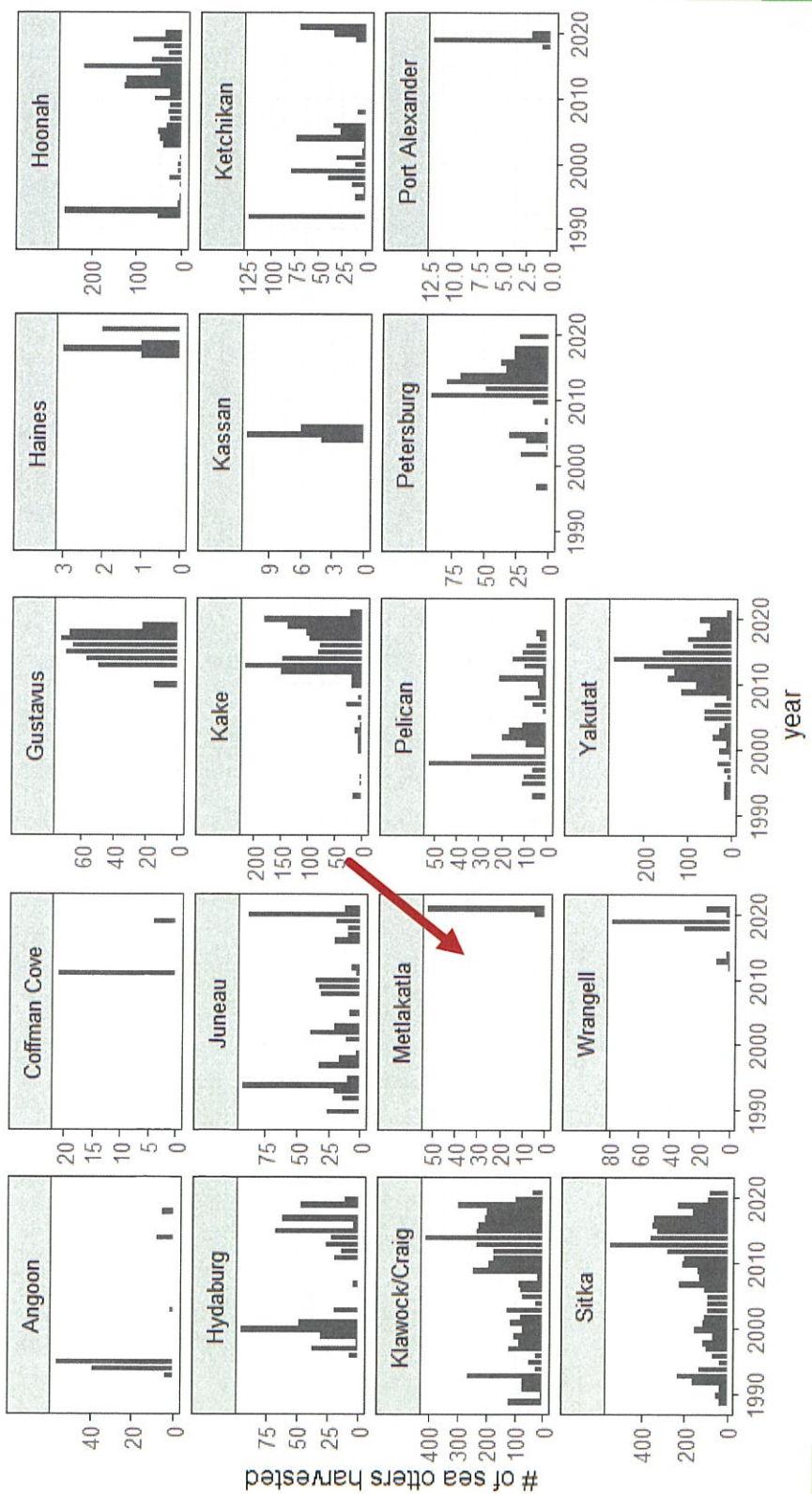


Harvest Trends



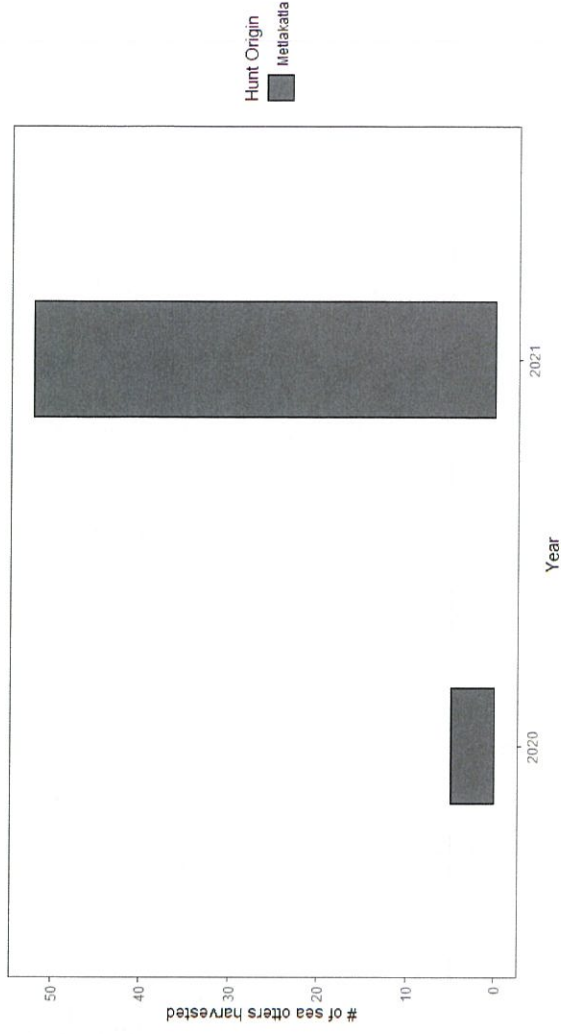


Harvest Trends

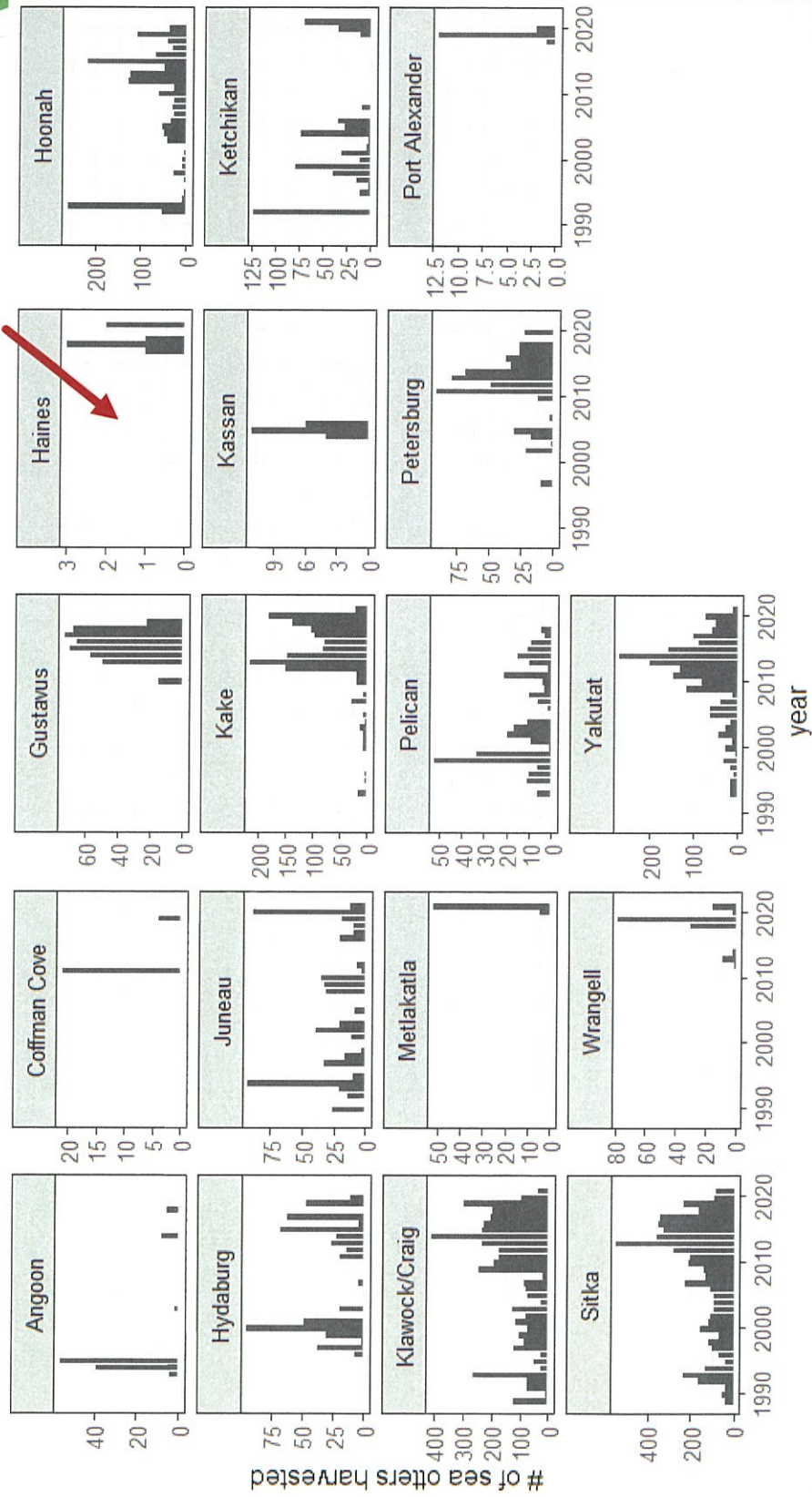


Harvest Trends

- ▲ Otters harvested in novel locations

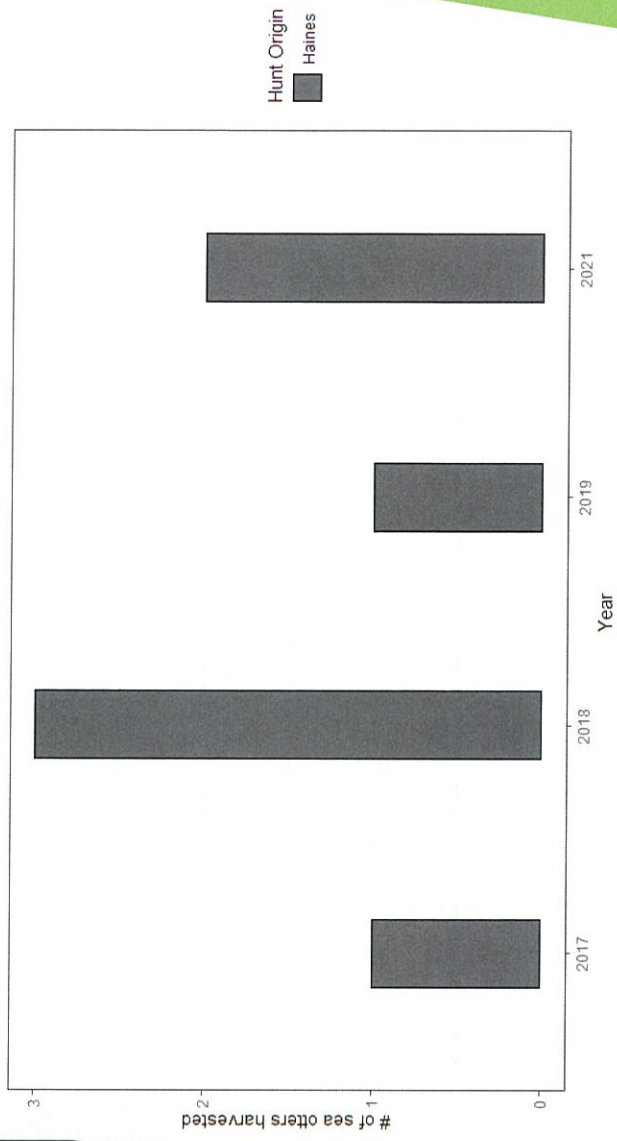


Harvest Trends

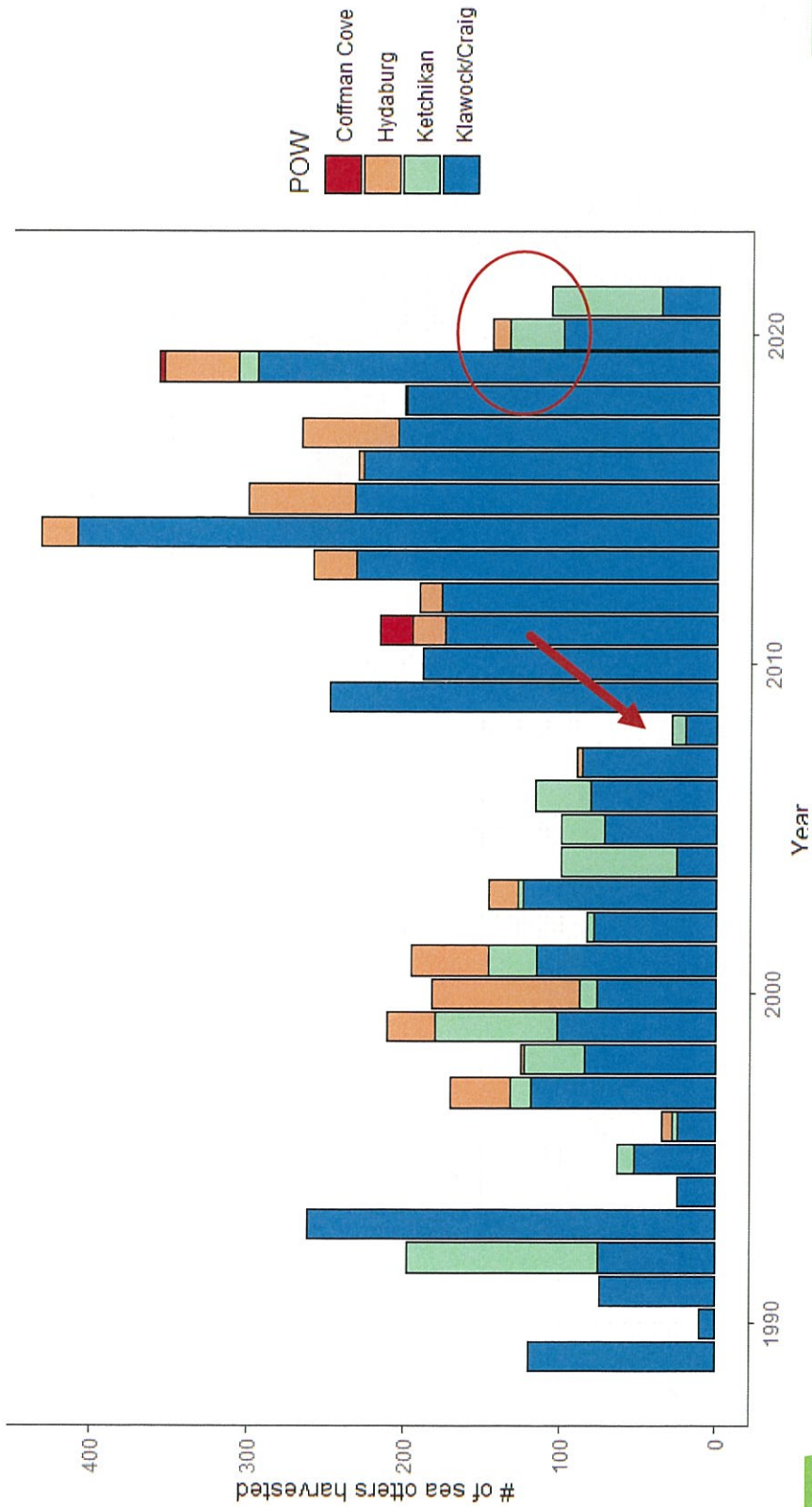


Harvest Trends

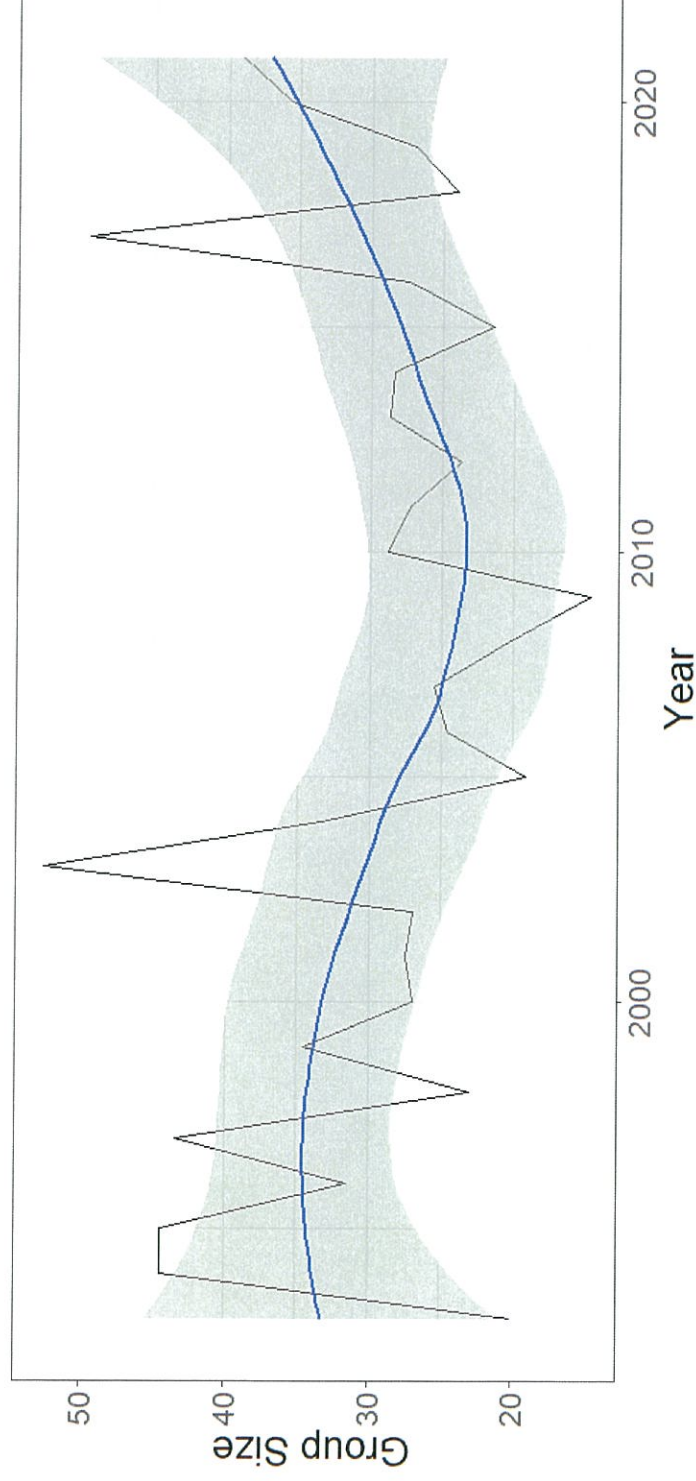
- ▶ Previous to 2017 there was no harvest
- ▶ Possibly some relation to overall change in distribution/abundance



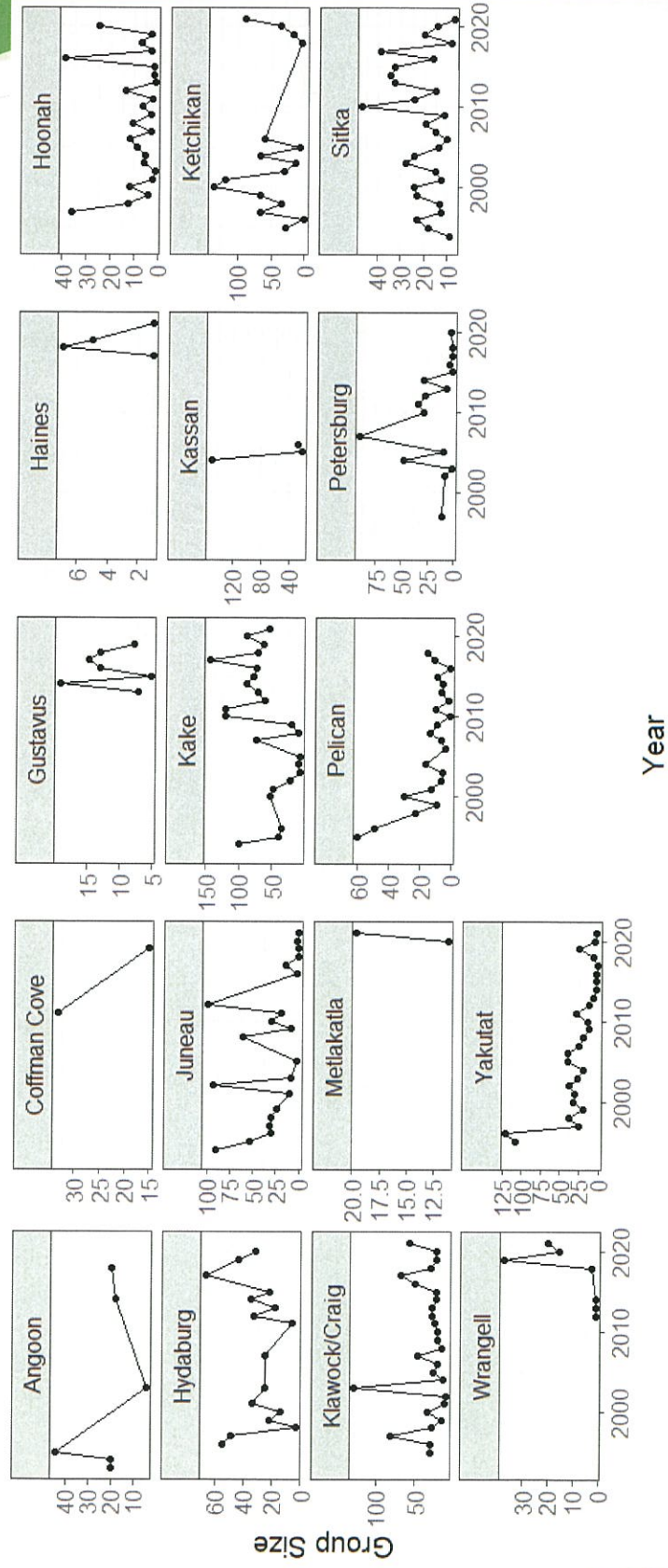
Harvest Trends



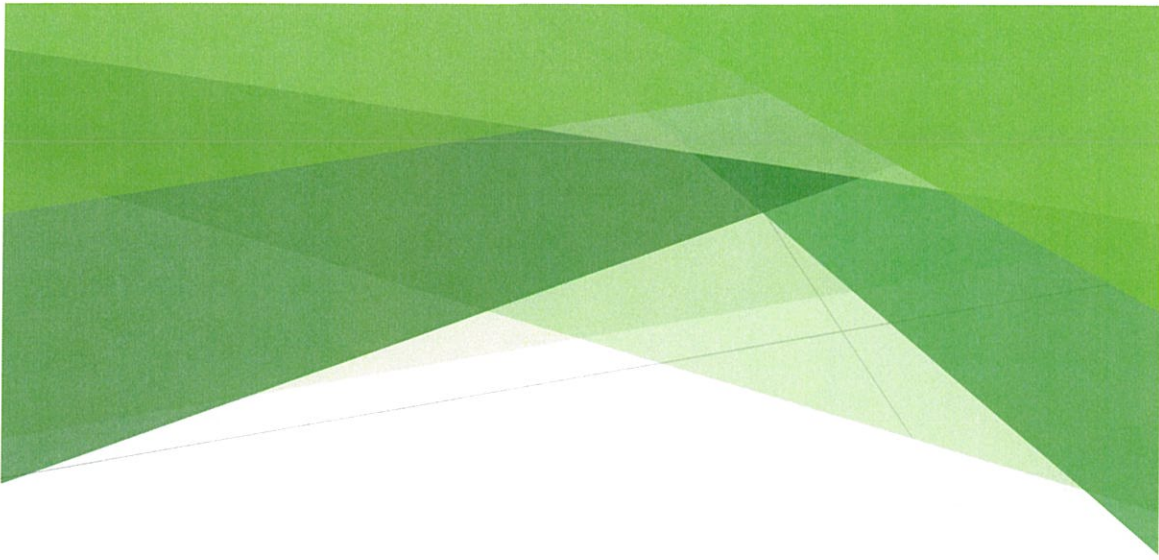
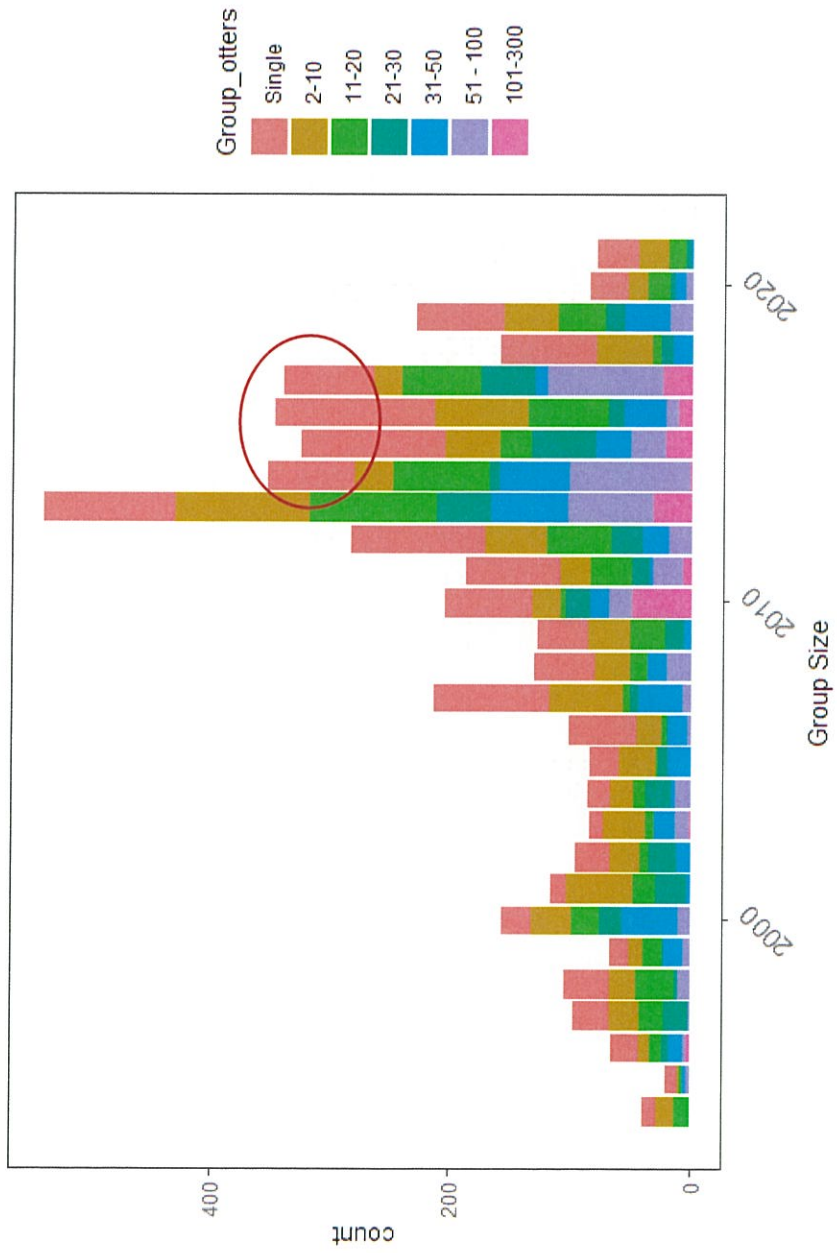
Changing group size for harvested otters?



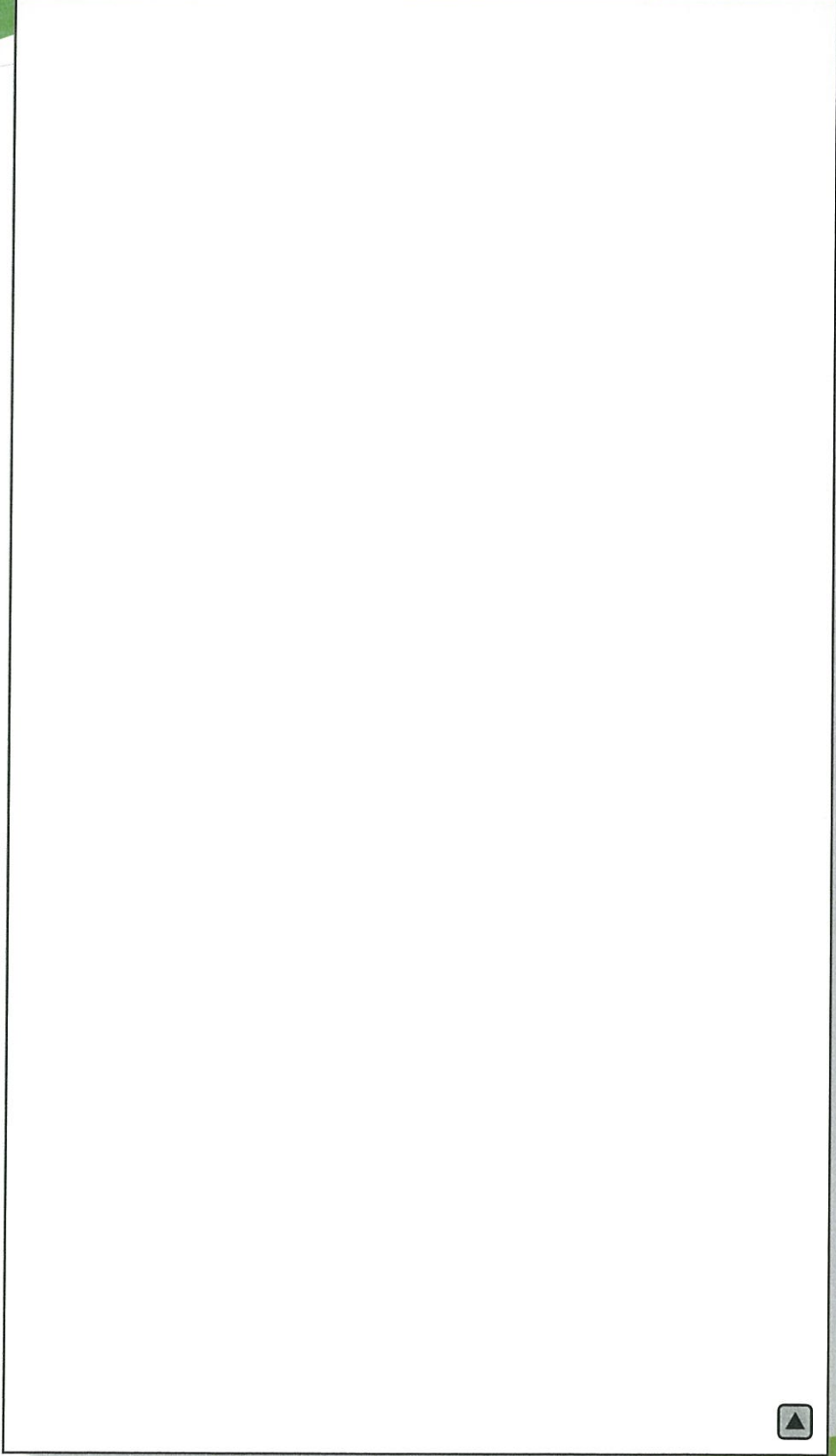
Changing group size for harvested otters?



Otter Group Size in Sitka

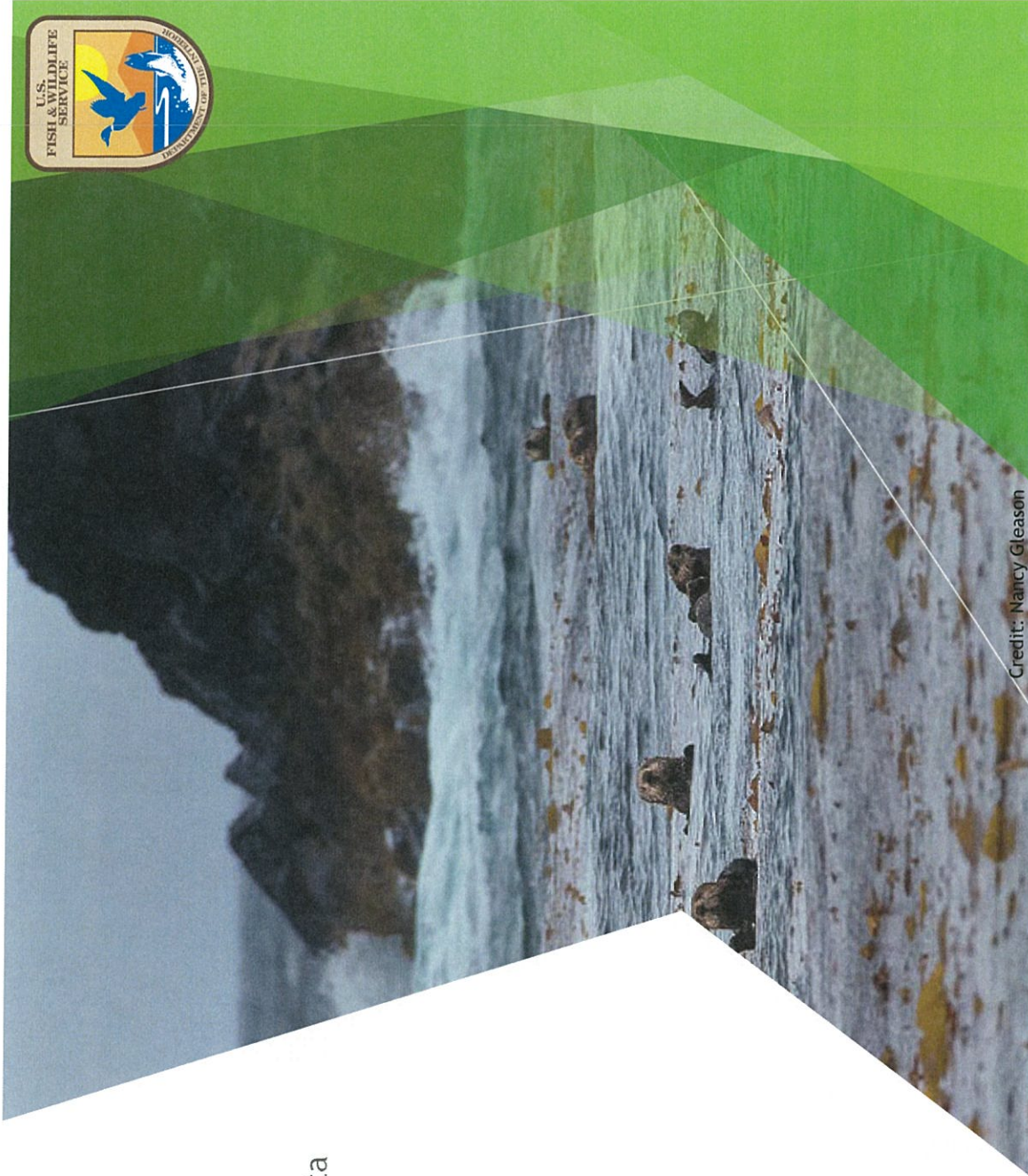


Harvest Trends



Looking Forward

- ▶ Obtain more precise location data
 - ▶ Aid in understanding change in distribution/abundance
- ▶ Offer information to ensure clarification of existing regulations (i.e., significantly altered handicraft)
- ▶ Continue to provide information on current tannery operations
- ▶ Maintain dialogue with taggers/hunters in uncertain times - ways to connect without personal visits



Credit: Nancy Gleason