Sea Lion Miscarriages May Be Caused by Virus Tuesday, 15 May 2012

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/120515.dead_sea_lion_pups.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

relatively rare virus in Alaska is being looked at as the cause to an unusually high number of premature births among Steller Sea Lions around Kodiak Island. Marine mammal specialist Kate Wynne, with the University of Alaska's Marine Advisory Program, says she found four dead pups while on a routine trip to sea lion haulouts this spring.

-- (Sea Lions 1 27 sec "In the past 10 years or 15 years ... than I've ever seen before.")

She said samples from the dead pups revealed they were killed by a virus, and said further monitoring is needed:

-- (Sea Lions 2 29 sec "We were able to collect a ... important to get out there.")

http://www.kmxt.org Powered by Joomla! Generated: 18 June, 2013, 12:03



Western stock of the Steller Sea Lion somewhat stabilized, but not recovering very fast, Wynne says there are questions remaining on what could be holding them back.")

-- (Sea Lions 3 the future.")

13 sec

"One of those things could ... keep monitoring that in

She said

however that shrinking budgets will make monitoring to the extent desired difficult.

When there

are outbreaks of viruses that affect pinnipeds in places like California, Wynne said the mother sea lions often get sick too and haul out on the beach, but she has not yet seen evidence of that here.

The four

dead sea lion pups were found at two haulouts, Cape Ugat on the west side of Kodiak Island, and at Sea Otter Island just east of Shuyak Island.

###

http://www.kmxt.org Powered by Joomla! Generated: 18 June, 2013, 12:03

^{*}A previous version of this story stated the Calicivirus was the likely cause of the sea lion deaths, but preliminary results from the lab have not shown a positive connection at this point.

http://www.kmxt.org Powered by Joomla! Generated: 18 June, 2013, 12:03