



This map illustrates proposed critical habitat for the Beringia distinct population segment (DPS) of the bearded seal. For clarification of the proposed critical habitat designation, please refer to the narrative description found in the revised proposed rule published in the Federal Register.

*Essential features.* The proposed essential features for the conservation of the Beringia DPS are:

(1) Sea ice habitat suitable for whelping and nursing, which is defined as areas with waters 200 m or less in depth containing pack ice of at least 25 percent concentration and providing bearded seals access to those waters from the ice.

(2) Sea ice habitat suitable as a platform for molting, which is defined as areas with waters 200 m or less in depth containing pack ice of at least 15 percent concentration and providing bearded seals access to those waters from the ice.

(3) Primary prey resources to support bearded seals in waters 200 m or less in depth: Benthic organisms, including epifaunal and infaunal invertebrates, and demersal and schooling pelagic fishes.

(4) Acoustic conditions that allow for effective communication by bearded seals for breeding purposes within waters used by breeding bearded seals.