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ABSTRACTS
Helminths of Northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus* L., 1758) on St. Paul Island, Alaska, USA

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Northern fur seals (NFS) (*Callorhinus ursinus* L., 1758) are parasitized by more than 20 species of helminths of four groups – Nematoda, Cestoda, Trematoda and Acanthocephala. The studies performed during July–August 2011 and 2012 were aimed to examine the abundance and biodiversity of helminths parasitizing the Northern fur seals on St. Paul Island, Alaska. In total, 502 NFS males (3–4 years old) were examined during the annual Aleut subsistence harvest. Gastro-intestinal tracts were collected from 406 NFSs. All helminths collected from skins and gastro-intestinal tract (in total, 3,827 specimens of nematodes, 6,183 cestodes, 578 trematodes, 483 acanthocephalans) were fixed in 70% ethanol and identified by their morphology.

All NFSs examined were infected with gastrointestinal helminths. The prevalence of NFS infection by gastric nematodes was 71.9%; intensity – 10.5±14.2. Four species of three genera – *Anisakis* (*A. simplex*), *Contracaecum* (*C. osculatum*) and *Pseudoterranova* (*P. decipiens*, *P. azarasi*) were found. Prevalence of NFS infection with cestodes was 98.3%; intensity – 15.7±13.9. *Diphyllobothrium pacificum* was the dominant species (prevalence=97%); *Diplogonoporus violettiae* was found in 6.6% NFSs. The prevalence of NFS infection with acanthocephalans was 39.4%; intensity – 3.1±3.2. Seven species of genera *Corynosoma* (*C. strumosum*, *C. alaskensis*, *C. serverme*, *C. similis*, *C. validum*, *C. villosum*), and *Bohbozoma* (*B. hippocunicum*) were found. Trematodes were found in 36.2% of the NFS examined; *Phocitremena dauiforme* was the dominant species (prevalence=78%); *Proricrema zalophi* and *Stictodora* spp. were observed in 5.5% and 6.4% of NSF infected respectively. The filarial nematode *Acanthocheilonema odendahli* was found in 18% of NFSs with an average intensity of 1.32±0.83.

A comparison of current data with that of previous researchers reveals changes in the gastrointestinal parasite community structure in NFSs during the last decades which, in our opinion, are connected with changes in NFS diet. Further studies are necessary to confirm the relationship between parasite community structures and changes of NFS foraging behavior.