

The First Record of Spotted Seals – *Phoca largha* Pallas, 1811 (Phocidae) in the Nature Reserve (Zakaznik) “Zaliv Vostok”

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Abstract

In the communication pictures of spotted seals on the ice in the creek Tikhaya Zavod (Nature Reserve Zakaznik “Zaliv Vostok”, Vostok bay) are presented. This is the first documented record of spotted seals in this area.

Key words: spotted seal, larga, *Phoca largha*, Vostok bay, reserve “Zaliv Vostok”, Peter the Great Bay, Primorie

Spotted seal – *Phoca largha* Pallas, 1811 (Phocidae) is a common pinniped in the coastal waters of the Russian Pacific [Burns et al., 2009; Mizuno et al., 2002; Boveng et al., 2009]. In the Primorye region spotted seals were observed along the whole coastline from north to south [Trukhin, 2002; 2005]. Unfortunately in the papers dedicated to the spotted seal distribution in the Peter the Great Bay, which includes the Vostok Bay, no any data on the Vostok Bay is presented [Nesterenko, Katin, 2013; 2015]. There were only fragmentary communications on spotted seal sightings in the the Vostok Bay [Nechaev, 2014]. Nearest observation point where spotted seals were detected during dedicated survey is in the bay next to Vostok Bay – Nakhodka Bay, Krasnyi Cape [Trukhin, Mizuno, 2002; Trukhin, 2005].

In the present communication the first record of spotted seal in the creek Tikhaya Zavod (Vostok Bay, the Sea of Japan) is documented. Pictures were taken from the shore in the Avangard village on the 31th December 2018, camera – Canon Rebel XTI, lens Sigma 17-125 mm (Fig. 1). The estimated distance to the animals was 300-350 m. There were 7 or 8 individuals lying on the edge of ice (Fig. 2; Fig. 3). In a couple minutes seals got into the water and stayed near the ice field. No further observations were conducted.

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Figure 1. The area of survey: white arrow – direction of shooting; red square – the place where spotted seals were sighted



Figure 2. Spotted seals on the ice (wide angle view)



Figure 3. Spotted seals on the ice (narrow angle view)