

My environmental-reporting entry comprises seven stories written over the course of the year about climate change in the Bering Sea and the Chukchi Sea, which are connected by the Bering Strait. These selected stories were part of my Bering-Chukchi beat coverage for Arctic Today.

The stories, in chronological order:

1. Warmer waters, animal die-offs and toxic blooms are among the signs that a new Arctic is here. Published on Feb. 6, 2020. This story summarizes impacts of climate change in the Bering and Chukchi marine systems, and it wound up serving as a roadmap for other reporting through the year.
2. Why signs of ultra-rare right whales are showing up in farther-north waters -- and why that's worrisome. Published on Feb. 24. The story shows how eastern North Pacific right whales, among the most endangered marine mammals in the world, are moving north into the Bering Strait region, where they are at risk in waters now more crowded with vessel traffic.
3. Russia is poised to open the first-ever commercial pollock fishery in Chukchi Sea. Published on June 25. This was, I believe, the first story in a U.S. general news outlet that reported the Russian plans for commercial pollock fishing in an Arctic area where it had never been conducted before, the Chukchi Sea. It is evidence that boreal fish species like pollock are moving north.
4. Alaska's first shellfish toxin death in 10 years comes amid signs of spreading harmful algal blooms. Published on July 21. This story puts breaking news into a climate and health context.
5. Warming conditions are making northern Bering Sea more friendly for pink salmon. Published on Sept. 21. Pink salmon, more common to southern Alaska, are moving north as the marine climate changes. This is another story about boreal fish species making their way into the Bering Strait region, and it touches on economic impacts.
6. Yukon River, beset by salmon woes and mercury threats, signals broader Arctic climate change. Published on Sept. 29. The Yukon River, one of the world's major Arctic rivers, is connected physically and ecologically to the Bering, so it is part of this selection. The story blends news developments with environmental context, and it discusses health and food-security impacts of climate change.
7. Bite wounds confirm it: Killer whales are attacking bowheads in Alaska's Chukchi and Beaufort Seas. Published on Nov. 11. The story explains new scientific evidence that confirms an earlier hypothesis that killer whales moving north from the Gulf of Alaska and southern Bering Sea are preying on marine mammals in Arctic waters above the Bering Strait.