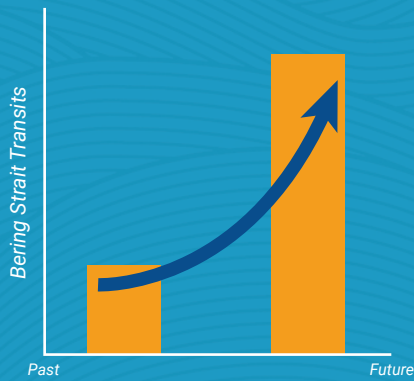


Bering Strait Routing Measures





As Arctic sea ice continues to decline, more ships are traveling through Arctic waters—and vessel traffic is projected to continue to increase. With increasing ship traffic comes increased risk of accidents, oil or fuel spills, and conflicts with other waterway users like subsistence hunters in small craft.

The Bering Strait is the only marine gateway between the Arctic and Pacific oceans leading to bottlenecks due to high vessel traffic. Vessels traveling from the Pacific to the Arctic must pass through the Bering Strait.

Bering Strait waters provide habitat for an abundance of fish, birds and marine mammals and are vital for the food security of many indigenous residents of Western Alaska.



The Bering Strait routing measures include three components:



Two-way routes encourage ships to travel predictable pathways as they transit the region. These routes are charted to modern standards so vessels will not encounter navigational hazards and are placed well offshore so that if a vessel experiences problems, responders have more time to intervene and prevent an accident.



Precautionary Areas alert mariners to places where they must navigate with particular care.



Areas to be avoided (ATBAs) encourage vessels to steer clear of places that are dangerous for navigation, environmentally sensitive, frequented by subsistence hunters, or otherwise merit special protection. ATBAs protect St. Lawrence, Nunavik and King islands in the Bering Strait region.