Sea ice loss and Arctic planktivorous seabird's post-breeding migration.

Alexis Will[1,2], Jean-Baptiste Thiebot[1], Akinori Takahashi[1], Alexander Kitaysky[2]

[1]*National Institute of Polar Research, Tokyo, Japan*
[2]*Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska*

In the Pacific Arctic, planktivorous seabirds forage in the Chukchi Sea prior to departing for their lower latitude wintering grounds. It is not clear what triggers their decision to head south. One possibility is that sea ice acts as a physical barrier to their access to food and the advancing of ice in the winter pushes these species out of the Arctic. An alternative hypothesis is that the timing of the southward migration is independent of ice extent and is instead triggered by day length, or food availability which may be determined by the ice cover in the previous year. We deployed geolocators on least (*Aethia pusilla*) and crested (*A. ctristatus*) auklets during the 2016 and 2017 breeding seasons. Here we compare post-breeding movements of least and crested auklets in a very low sea ice year (2017), to those in a more normal year (2016). We discuss what our results suggest about the future responses of these two species to predicted sea ice loss and what that may indicate about the state of the Pacific Arctic food web.