

STRANDED OR INJURED MARINE MAMMALS

Within the Rookery

The rookery is a natural habitat for elephant seals and we do not interfere with the animals unless they have been injured by human behavior. An animal entangled in plastic or other man-made debris is an example of when we should call for assistance. A shark-bite is an example of the natural order of life at sea and, while we would make note of it in the journal and leave word in the FES Office, we would not call for a rescue. Do leave a note in the FES Office to assure that Brian Hatfield, US Geological Survey Biologist, is notified.

If you spot an elephant seal with a human-caused problem, be prepared to:

Describe the animal: the size, condition, nature of injury, gender, and tags.

Behavior of the animal: Does the animal appear to be thin? Are there any visible injuries? Is there a visible tag? Have you seen the animal move around? Is there mucus present in the nostrils? Are the eyes tearing and moist? Are the front flippers being held next to the body? Has the animal gone near the water or is the animal staying on the beach? Is it alone or in a group?

Locate the animal: where in relation to the boardwalk and/or other features, how isolated is it from other seals. Note the boardwalk measurement number.

Consult with other docents on duty

Call Marine Mammal Rescue at **(805) 771-8300**

Beyond the Rookery

If you spot a stranded or injured marine mammal beyond the boundaries of the rookery, the procedure is different. Marine Mammal Rescue will want to assess the situation and determine if they can provide assistance.

If you spot an elephant seal, California Sea Lion, Pacific Harbor Seal, California Sea Otter, Dolphin, Porpoise, or whale in distress:

Don't touch the animal

Identify the species. Note physical characteristics such as size, presence of external earflaps, fur color and flipper size. This helps determine the species and what rescue equipment and volunteers are needed.

Location of the animal. Is it on a sandy beach, rocky shore, dock, in the water, or on a ramp? Determine the nearest road name and mile marker. Try to get very specific directions to the animal, as the rescuers must be able to find the animal to help the animal.

Condition Take note of visible injuries; are the eyes tearing, moist, clear, gummy, crusty or closed. Does the animal appear thin? How is the animal behaving?

Call Marine Mammal Rescue

In San Luis Obispo County, call **(805) 771-8300**.

In Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties call (831) 633-6298.

The Marine Mammal Center Headquarters in Sausalito - (415) 289-SEAL (7325)

Rescue Hotlines operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.