

# Guide to Identification of Male Elephant Seals at Piedras Blancas



This guide can be used to estimate the age of Male elephant seals using sub-adult and adult male categories at the Piedras Blancas(PB) rookery.

- This guide was developed to engage docents as Citizen Scientists, collaborating with scientists and professionals on research projects, surveys, and rescues.
- With training, your observations as a docent can play a key role in data collection and advancing knowledge of the elephant seals in our rookery.
- Each of the following pictures provide representative images of sub-adult/adult categories to help you approximate the age of male elephant seals on the beach.
- Each sub-adult/adult category has a short explanation of what to look for by category, including age estimates.

# Sub Adult 1

- Age = 4-5 years
- Smaller than SAM 2
- Beginning of proboscis
- Nose does not yet touch the ground



## Sub Adult 2

- Age = 5-6 years
- No chest shield
- Nose begins to droop and touches the ground



# Sub Adult 3

- Age = 6-7 years
- Partial chest shield (wrinkles)
- Small slit/crease for a notch
- Nose will touch ground with definite droop



## Sub Adult 4

- Age = 7 years or greater
- Full nose with notch
- Chest shield not yet above the eye



# Adult

- Age = 8 years or greater
- Chest shield close to or above the eye
- Very big nose with notch



# Your feedback is welcomed

- As docents you are encouraged to use the guide and provide feedback. Is it easier to identify males especially sub-adults? Any questions on criteria for categories? Any suggestions for changes in categories ? Contact Bill Goodger([wgoodger@wisc.edu](mailto:wgoodger@wisc.edu)) with feedback or questions.(608-770-1448)
- Also, I am willing to go out on the bluff with any docents who want to get jump started on identifying males using the pictures attached to this power point.
- Finally I have been able to get the 5 picture categories on one sheet for your album for ease of use on the bluff.