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The Marine Mammal Center to be Featured on Animal Planet's *New Breed Vets* Program

The Crocodile Hunter – Steve Irwin - Learns Veterinary Science from The Center

(SAUSALITO, Calif. – November 7, 2005) The Marine Mammal Center, a Sausalito-based, nonprofit rehabilitation and research hospital for seals, sea lions and other marine mammals, will be featured in the premiere of **Animal Planet's** new weekly program called *New Breed Vets* on November 10, at 10pm ET. In this first episode, The Marine Mammal Center's veterinarian, Dr. Marty Haulena, and Dr. Kenneth Laxer, from California Pacific Medical Center, conduct an electroencephalogram (EEG) on two sea lions with domoic acid toxicity poisoning, to measure brainwave activity brought on by seizures because of the disease. Domoic acid toxicity stems from harmful algal blooms eaten by some fish, which in turn, are eaten by California sea lions. Irwin interviewed Dr. Haulena, about The Center's use of innovative advances in EEG technology to help detect high brainwave activities in sea lions afflicted with domoic acid toxicity. If undetected, the effects of the poisoning can be fatal.

"It was great to meet Steve Irwin and his crew and to share with them some of the serious work we do to save patients here at The Center," said Dr. Marty Haulena, Veterinarian at The Marine Mammal Center. "Without these modern technologies and equipment, many of our patients would not receive the proper care they need in order to be returned back to the wild."

Hosted by Steve Irwin, better known as The Crocodile Hunter, *New Breed Vets* shows viewers advancements in veterinarian medicine. Vets are pioneering new techniques and pushing the boundaries in the animal kingdom, which is having significant impact on human medical science as well. Steve Irwin travels the world, seeking vets working on outstanding projects and using cutting-edge techniques that are making inroads into the realm of veterinary science. Irwin explores everything from heart transplants on animals, brain scans on sea lions, and even contact lenses for fish. Irwin is the director of the Australia Zoo in Queensland, Australia. The idea for filming a series about veterinary techniques around the world stems from the work done at the zoo's veterinary hospital.

The Marine Mammal Center is a nonprofit hospital headquartered in Sausalito, California. Staff and volunteers are dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of ill and injured marine mammals, to research about their health and diseases and to public education about marine mammals. Since 1975, more than 11,000 California sea lions, elephant seals, porpoises, and other marine life have been treated, rescued along 600 miles of coastline from Mendocino County to San Luis Obispo County. Staff and volunteers uniquely combine rehabilitation with scientific discovery and education programs to advance the understanding of marine mammal health, ocean health and conservation.

On the Web: www.marinemammalcenter.org

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