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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Marine Mammal Center Successfully Rehabilitates Bottlenose Dolphin

Young cetacean named Baker D. is released into Monterey Bay

(SAUSALITO, Calif. – November 17, 2004): Today, The Marine Mammal Center, a hospital for ill and stranded sea lions, harbor seals and cetaceans, along with Long Marine Lab in Santa Cruz, successfully rehabilitated and released a young, male, bottlenose dolphin named Baker D., to join a pod of dolphins in the Monterey Bay. The process to release him began on November 12, when veterinarians attached a satellite tag on the eight foot long juvenile's dorsal fin. The tags will help marine biologists monitor his travels, diving patterns and give them an alert should he re-strand. This is a significant achievement for The Center because less than 10 percent of dolphins and harbor porpoises it rescues survive.

“We believe that Baker D. may have been injured by some other animals, perhaps even other dolphins, which eventually caused him to strand, said Dr. Martin Haulena, The Center's veterinarian. “Unfortunately, stranding can result in a number of problems in an animal such as shock, muscle damage, as well as potential damage to other organs such as the heart and kidneys. Once we helped him overcome those obstacles, it was also apparent that he needed a bigger pool to finish out his rehabilitation, so we transferred him to a larger pool at Long Marine Laboratory at UC Santa Cruz on October 6,” said Haulena.

Baker D., as he was named by rescuers from The Center as well as local life guards, was rescued on September 15 at Baker Beach in San Francisco. At the time of Baker D's rescue, the three- to four-year-old cetacean was underweight, suffered from dehydration and he had a puncture wound on his rostrum. When he was transported to a rehabilitation pool at The Marine Mammal Center, he didn't have the strength to swim on his own and was put into a floating support sling to prevent him from drowning. Through antibiotics, medications to help stabilize his heart, and weeks of round-the-clock care and feedings from volunteers and veterinarian staff at The Center, Baker D. regained his health and could swim on his own.

The Marine Mammal Center celebrates its 30th anniversary in January, 2005. The non-profit hospital is dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of marine mammals that are found ill, injured or orphaned, along 600 miles of northern and central California coastline. Since 1975, The Center has treated over 10,000 California sea lions, elephant seals, sea otters, and other marine life. It uniquely combines its rehabilitation program with scientific discovery and education programs throughout the Bay Area and the world, to advance the understanding of marine mammal health, ocean health and to promote conservation.

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