

In an average year, 25% of harbor seal pups rescued by The Marine Mammal Center suffer from maternal separation as a result of some form of human interaction, including illegal pickup or harassment. To work toward reducing this occurrence, The Marine Mammal Center issues an annual [press release](#) to remind the public of the importance of leaving harbor seal pups alone on the beach during the spring pupping season. In addition, we post [information](#) along popular beaches warning the public to leave these fragile pups alone. Through education and communication efforts we hope to increase the public's awareness of the importance of not disturbing harbor seal pups and calling The Center at 415.289.SEAL whenever they see an animal they believe to be in distress.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Active dates: Through May 2003

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Jim Oswald 415.289.7341

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **Harbor Seal Pupping Season**

*Please Do Not Disturb Harbor Seal Pups On The Beach*

Spring is pupping season for Pacific harbor seals. Harbor seal pups and their mothers can be found up and down the California coastline including areas that are frequented by humans. While we encourage you to enjoy viewing these beautiful mammals in their natural habitat, please do not pick up or disturb harbor seal pups on the beach.

After giving birth, seal mothers will leave their tiny pups on beaches and rocks as they forage offshore. Tragically, some mothers return to find their pup missing. Well-meaning coastal residents and visitors who attempt to help these pups by taking them home, returning them to the water, covering them with blankets or approaching them too closely are actually doing more harm than good. In an average year, 25% of harbor seal pups rescued by The Marine Mammal Center suffer from maternal separation as a result of some form of human interaction, including illegal pickup or harassment.

A seal pup's best chance for survival is to remain with its mother because the seal mother's milk contains important antibodies no substitute formula can provide. The Marine Mammal Center monitors pups that are reported "orphaned" for at least 24-hours on the beach, to provide an opportunity for mother and pup to reunite. You can help these fragile pups survive by staying back at least 50 yards, keeping dogs and other disturbances away, and reporting the pup to The Marine Mammal Center at 415.289.SEAL or 831.633.6298.

The Marine Mammal Center, a non-profit rehabilitation hospital, rescues marine mammals that are ill, injured or orphaned along 600 miles of northern and central California coastline. The Center uniquely combines its rehabilitation program with scientific discovery and education programs. The year 2002 marks The Center's 27th year of conserving marine mammals and their habitat.