



The Marine  
Mammal Center<sup>®</sup>

## News Release

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**A REMINDER TO LEAVE SEALS BE: IF YOU SEE A SEAL PUP, DON'T PICK IT UP, CALL  
THE MARINE MAMMAL CENTER INSTEAD**

*Trained rescuers will offer new "I Helped Save a Seal – U Can Too!" bumper stickers to those who notify them of a seal in need of help.*

(SAUSALITO, Calif.) – The arrival of the pupping season's first patient, an elephant seal nicknamed Second Day, is a timely reminder to *Leave Seals Be* and give them a second chance at life. *Leave Seals Be* is **The Marine Mammal Center's** public education campaign to remind people along the California coast not to pick up or disturb harbor or elephant seal pups they spot on the beach. Instead, the Center encourages the public to keep their distance when they see what might be a sick or abandoned seal pup, and to call its 24-hour response line at **(415) 289-7325 or 289-SEAL**. The Center can then monitor the pup to see if the mother returns and if needed, dispatch a trained team to rescue the animal should no mother return.

This year the Center is handing out free *I Helped Save a Seal - U Can Too!* bumper stickers to citizens who alert them of a seal pup that may be in need of help. As a thank you for helping, each bumper sticker will have a number citizens can send a text to in order to receive a text back with a special 10% discount code good for tours at the Center, shopping at the Center's online and physical stores, and to be able to sign up for its eNewsletters and other updates.

"Since 1975, we've rescued more than 16,000 marine mammals along 600 miles of coastline," said Jeff Boehm, executive director of The Marine Mammal Center. "We depend upon the public to be our eyes and ears along the coast so that we can rescue these animals because in many cases they do become separated from their mothers as a result of human interference or worse, get entangled in ocean trash. Without our help, these animals very likely would not have a chance at survival."

### **Why Leave Seals Be?**

Unfortunately, sometimes members of the public mistakenly believe that they are helping a pup when they move it. The best way to help is to call the Center's response hotline to alert trained volunteers. Once on site, they can assess the situation to see if the pup needs to be rescued. In many cases, the pup may be put under observation on the beach for 24-48 hours to see if the mother will return. This observation period is critical as the mother may be nearby waiting for a chance to get back to her pup. There's nothing better for a pup than the antibodies and nutrition the mother's milk provides, and this is an extremely important time in a young animal's development. The Center never removes a pup from its mother during this critical nursing period unless it's apparent the mother is no longer available and the animal is weak and ill.

**More**

In addition, it is illegal and punishable by law to pick up, handle or disturb any marine mammal under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, and only trained, authorized responders, like volunteers and staff at the Center, are allowed to do so.

**Second Day is the first elephant seal pup rescued by The Marine Mammal Center in 2011.** Sporting a shiny black coat that signifies he is less than 28 days old, Second Day was rescued on a crowded beach in San Simeon. He was nicknamed Second Day because he was rescued on the second day of work for the Center's new stranding intern. The nearly 5-foot-long pup was alone with no mother in sight. He was malnourished and had an abrasion just under his chin. Second Day is currently at the Center, weighs approximately 73 pounds, and will continue to receive medical care by a team of veterinarians and volunteers until he is strong enough to be returned to the ocean.

**What to do if you come across a sick or abandoned seal on a beach:**

If you come across a harbor seal pup or any marine mammal that appears to be in distress in the Bay Area, Point Reyes National Seashore, Bolinas, Moss Beach, Richmond, Sausalito, and Pescadero areas, please call The Marine Mammal Center's 24-hour response hotline at **(415) 289-SEAL**. Once a seal pup is reported to the Center, trained volunteers and staff can be dispatched to monitor the animal. If needed, they will safely rescue the animal and transport it to the hospital for medical attention.

- \* Stay at least 50 feet away from it. The pup's mother may be nearby.
- \* Do not handle it and keep other people and dogs away.
- \* Call The Marine Mammal Center's 24-hour response hotline at **(415) 289-7325 or 289-SEAL**.
- \* In Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, call locally at **(831) 633-6298**.
- \* In San Luis Obispo County, call locally at **(805) 771-8300**.

To learn more about the *Leave Seals Be* campaign and how you can help marine mammal pups like Second Day, visit [www.MarineMammalCenter.org](http://www.MarineMammalCenter.org).

**About The Marine Mammal Center:**

The Marine Mammal Center is a nonprofit veterinary hospital, research and educational center dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of ill and injured marine mammals - primarily elephant seals, harbor seals and California sea lions - and to the study of their health. Since 1975, the Center has been headquartered in the Marin Headlands, within the Golden Gate National Parks and has rescued and treated more than 16,000 marine mammals. The Center's newly rebuilt headquarters in Sausalito gives visitors the unique opportunity to learn about marine mammals through viewing areas and educational exhibits. The hospital is open to the public daily 10 A.M.-5 P.M. except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. For more information and to sign up for the Center's eNewsletter, go to: [www.MarineMammalCenter.org](http://www.MarineMammalCenter.org)

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