



2012 Travel Writers Tip Sheet

SPRING PUPPING SEASON

(February – May) Pupping Season: In late winter through spring, The Marine Mammal Center fills up with elephant seals, Pacific harbor seals and some California sea lion patients. It is called “pupping season” because, at times, nearly 100 elephant seal and harbor seal pups may be on site. As part of a “Leave Seals Be” public education program, visitors during this period learn not to approach or pick up newborn seal pups on beaches, which many members of the public mistakenly believe have been abandoned by their mothers. The Marine Mammal Center takes in these orphaned baby seals to help nurture them until they are able to fend for themselves in the wild.

Expanded Docent- Led Tour Schedule for Spring Break: The Marine Mammal Center adds an additional tour at 1 p.m. to their daily schedule (11 a.m. and 3 p.m.) of docent-led tours during spring school breaks (exact dates are available in March and April).

March 10 – Run for the Seals: Each year, Run for the Seals attracts athletes from around the area to run a 4-mile course (or a separate 2-mile walk) through the beautiful Marin Headlands and along its scenic coastline. All proceeds support the animal care operations at The Marine Mammal Center. Last year, 1,100 runners participated with an astounding 70% of race participants visiting The Marine Mammal Center after the race for a free visit.

April 22 – Earth Day Event in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (Headlands) Come out to the Marin Headlands during Earth Day! Visitors at The Marine Mammal Center can learn about the importance of the ocean and its inhabitants, and about the delicate balance needed between humans and marine mammals in order to sustain our ecological system. Members of the public can get their “passport” stamped at the Center as well as many of the participating park partner facilities including the Headlands Center for the Arts, while taking in the beauty of the surrounding hillsides and the soothing ocean waves at Rodeo Beach.

SUMMER WITH THE SEALS

(Late May through October) Summer Animals: Summer season is a high point of tourism in the Marin Headlands as well as a peak season for patient viewing at The Marine Mammal Center, featuring mostly California sea lions as well as some northern elephant seals. The number of California sea lion patients tend to peak from July through October. Each year, The Marine Mammal Center rescues approximately 600-800 marine mammals that are malnourished, prematurely separated from their mothers, shark bite victims, entangled in marine debris, suffering from illnesses such as domoic acid poisoning and leptospirosis, or sadly, wounded by gunshot. In addition to helping these animals, information gathered by The Marine Mammal Center contributes to the knowledge on the state of our greatest resource – the oceans. Research findings add to our knowledge of the health of marine mammals, lead to new diagnostic tests and clinical techniques, determine the efficacy of rehabilitation and reveal human and other stresses on the marine environment.

Expanded Summer Tour Schedule: The Marine Mammal Center adds an additional tour at 1 p.m. to their daily docent-led tour schedule of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. during summer vacations (exact dates will be available in May).

June -- Family Fun Day: To kick off World Oceans Month (June) and World Oceans Day, The Marine Mammal Center hosts a day of fun for families including an author presentation and book signing, special tours, hands on activities for kids and a video screening.

September – Coastal Clean Up: Visitors are encouraged to come to help cleanup Rodeo Beach with The Marine Mammal Center then enjoy a free Family Fun Day at the Center. Not to be missed during your tour is the “wall of shame,” which shows examples of human causes of marine mammal injuries (garbage, fishing nets, etc.), before or after cleaning up the beach.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS THIS WINTER

(October through January) Winter Seasonal Highlights: Winter is very quiet in the animal rescue department at The Marine Mammal Center since many patients have been rehabilitated and sent “home for the holidays.” Rather than 100 patients on site, it is likely that you’ll see 10-12 – mostly larger California sea lions suffering from serious medical issues. This is a great time of year to learn about this particular species through information displays and tours providing insights into the working of the staff and over 900 volunteers and understanding animal nutrition in the fish kitchen, as well as handling techniques, hygiene and sanitation, housing, disease prevention, and stress reduction in the pens and pools. This quiet time is also a great time to come to The Marine Mammal Center’s gift shop to buy items that help to spread the word about marine mammal health while supporting marine mammal rehabilitation and research. Holiday gift items include the popular Adopt-a-Seal and select retail products, such as cute plush seals and marine mammal inspired jewelry and clothing.

Expanded Tour Schedule The Marine Mammal Center adds an additional tour at 1 p.m. to their daily schedule of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. during school holiday breaks (exact dates will available in November).

December - Holiday Open House Holiday Open House with a focus on shopping, kids programming and educational opportunities for all.

In addition, monthly **Members Only Night** events bring the world of marine mammals and science closer to the public through a series of lectures, presentations and even film screenings – all open to members of The Marine Mammal Center.