



Media Tour Guide

Animal Overview

The Marine Mammal Center's hospital, the largest marine mammal hospital in the world, serves sick and injured marine mammals rescued along 600 miles of the California coastline. The number (between 500 – 800 yearly) of patient species rescued varies by season, and may include California sea lions, harbor seals, Northern elephant seals, Southern sea otters, bottlenose dolphins, harbor porpoises, Guadalupe and Northern fur seals, and sometimes even sea turtles and whales. Most recovering patients are in view, which offer rare viewing of these wild animals. However, some sensitive animals are placed outside of public viewing areas to limit impact of human activity. In addition, the science team at The Marine Mammal Center gathers valuable information during animal care and post mortem (known as a necropsy), which assists in treating other animals and understanding the things that threaten our oceans.

The Marine Mammal Center updates its patient roster online at <http://www.marinemammalcenter.org/patients/current-patients/>

Here's what you'll experience when you come to see these animals and the work done by at The Marine Mammal Center in their recently rebuilt hospital, research and education facility:

Education Building and Public Entrance

Visitors are greeted by volunteer hosts who provide them with guidance on how to sign up for tours and learn more about the patients currently onsite. The education building and exhibit hall features a life-like California sea lion on a gurney along side a computer monitor that displays EEGs, ultrasound, and x-rays when the sea lion replica is touched. A classroom along side the entry hall is a meeting point for tour groups but also houses displays of animal skulls, skeletons and pelts for public viewing. Opposite the education classroom is the gift store.

Center Courtyard

Visitors pass through the entry hall into a central courtyard, which connects the three main buildings of The Marine Mammal Center. The life-sized sculpture of a giant, full-grown sea lion makes for a great photo opportunity. The courtyard leads to a picnic area that overlooks the beautiful hillsides and ocean vistas of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Animal Care Building

The animal care building is located straight across from the education building and exhibit hall, which is the public entrance. The fish kitchen is where hundreds of pounds of fish are prepared for the animal patients each day. If you come in the later morning or early afternoon during the height of pupping season (March – June), you'll stand a good chance at seeing the kitchen volunteers making fish milkshakes and other meals for the patients. Across from the kitchen is the laboratory, where the researchers study blood and tissue samples to get a better understanding of marine mammal health and even some of the illnesses that humans also get, such as cancer, pneumonia, and toxic algae poisoning. If you look up to the ceiling in this

corridor, you'll see a 3D sculpture that illustrates the ocean food web, which illustrates who eats whom and how humans are connected to this food web.

Post Mortem

The pathology laboratory is where necropsies on animals that have died are performed, which assists in treating other animals and understanding the things that threaten our oceans. The Marine Mammal Center is the only rehabilitation hospital in the U.S. that opens its pathology lab to the public to watch veterinarians investigate cause of death for these animals. This is where the medical science discoveries begin and how the Center is able to document important information about marine mammal health in order to help future patients, including endangered species like the Hawaiian monk seal.

Upper Viewing Deck for Pens and Pools

Visitors on the upper viewing deck can see the veterinarians and volunteers caring for and feeding wild animal patients. The 21 in-ground and above ground pools, circulate approximately 253,000 gallons of salt water that is made on site and has been carefully filtered and balanced in order to provide the best medical environment for specific marine mammal species and make rehabilitation faster. During public hours, feeding times are usually in the early afternoon between 1 and 2 p.m. but times vary due to changing patient load throughout the year.

Lower Viewing Area

The displays on the first level of the animal viewing area explain the steps in caring for a sick marine mammal, from rescue to rehabilitation to release back into the wild. The display shows some of the nets, boards and other tools used in this process. The ocean trash exhibit, also known as "the wall of shame," illustrates some of the ocean trash that approximately 8% of the marine mammal that present to the Center became entangled in, or, digested. These items include things such as balloons, fishing nets, plastic water bottles, and packing straps.

About the Buildings

The Marine Mammal Center was rebuilt in 2009. The facility was built LEED certified inspired and includes photovoltaic shade structures that reduce energy consumption by about 10% and provide shade for the patients. The buildings and animal care pools sit above two Nike missile silos which houses a state-of-the-art water filtration system that keeps pools clean while conserving water as well as a storage area with specialized freezers that contain more than 20 years of tissue, blood and DNA samples from marine mammal patients. Much of the facility was built with recyclable materials.

The Marine Mammal Center welcomes visitors to their hospital and research facility every day from 10 a.m. through 5 p.m., except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Visitors are asked to be considerate of the recovering animals while on site by keeping their noise levels low as well as being careful not to interfere with volunteers and staff who are caring for the animals. Admission is free and visitors can partake in self-guided tours. Docent-led and audio tours are a must-do and can be reserved ahead or on site for a nominal fee. An onsite shop is the perfect way for visitors to find interesting gifts. Proceeds from purchases help the Marine Mammal Center's patients. **More at MarineMammalCenter.org.**