



The Marine
Mammal Center

NEWS RELEASE

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The Marine Mammal Center's Newly Rebuilt Hospital and Educational Facility Opens to the Public Beginning Today

Rehabilitation hospital for seals, sea lions and other marine mammals ushers in a new era of scientific discovery in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area

(Sausalito, Calif. – June 15, 2009) – With its unprecedented makeover now complete, The Marine Mammal Center has officially opened the doors to its hospital for seals and sea lions, and educational research facility to the public. Beginning today, visitors can tour the new headquarters which are nestled in the Marin Headlands in Sausalito. Admission is FREE but donations are encouraged.

“Whether you’re a science enthusiast exploring the health of our oceans or a parent looking to share an inspirational view of a seal with a child, we encourage you to take advantage of our unique facility, which was designed so that the public can have an open view of scientists and volunteers at work with animal patients,” comments Jeff Boehm, executive director at The Marine Mammal Center. “We welcome the general public to our new educational research hospital, which has been a beacon for marine mammal care and research for the past 34 years.”

The Marine Mammal Center was recently honored with an award of appreciation from Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey’s (D) office and letters of celebration and praise from the office of House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi (D) of California and the office of U.S Senator Barbara Boxer (D).

Located near Rodeo Beach, The Marine Mammal Center is set in the stunning Marin Headlands with sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean and Rodeo Lagoon. The new hospital, built upon what was previously a Nike missile site, boasts brand new pens and pools, a state-of-the-art water treatment system built underground in one of the missile silos, viewing areas for the public to peer into windows to see fish meals being prepared and lab analyses conducted, as well as an observation area to view out over the patients’

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pens and pools. In addition, educational exhibits throughout the facility will bring the public closer to the work of the Center and show the connection humans have with marine mammals and the ocean. The \$32 million rebuild project began in November 2005.

Recommended Tour of The Marine Mammal Center:

1. **Exhibit Hall:** Start in the newly built Education Building's marine science discovery area with interpretive exhibit of a sea lion patient undergoing treatment and an adjoining classroom with skeletons and specimens for viewing. You can also shop at the gift store across from the exhibit hall.
2. **Veterinary Science Work:** Continue across the courtyard to the Animal Care Building, which houses state-of-the-art laboratories to study marine mammal health. Visitors can peer into observation windows to see the real behind-the-scenes work at the Center including food preparation stations, lab work and educational exhibits explaining the Center's work and connections humans have with the ocean.
3. **Post Mortem Lab:** Go past the laboratory and into the post mortem area where examinations are performed to determine cause of death in patients. The Center's researchers use this information to study important conditions affecting the health of the ocean, such as toxic algae poisoning, cancer, damage from exposure to contaminants, and the preservation of endangered species.
4. **Patient Viewing Areas:** Go to the upper level observation deck on the second floor of the Animal Care Building and look out over the patients in newly built pens and pools which are designed to meet the different physical and medical needs of seals, sea lions, and other marine mammal species. The modernized water treatment system, which is innovatively housed in a former underground Nike missile silo, reduces water consumption and provides a healthier environment for the patients.

Visitor Information:

The Center is open daily 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Parking is limited and carpooling is recommended. March – November is peak season to see patients. Visitors who want to make a day of it can hike the miles of park trails around the facility and picnic along the beach. Other attractions in the park include the Nike Missile Site and Cold War Museum, Point Bonita Lighthouse, Fort Cronkhite, Headlands Center for the Arts, and the Headlands Visitors Center (<http://www.nps.gov/goga/index.htm>). Visitors to the park can stay at the Youth Hostel or the new Cavallo Point hotel and spa at Fort Baker (<http://www.cavallopoint.com/>)

About The Marine Mammal Center: Since 1975, The Marine Mammal Center, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) registered organization headquartered in Sausalito, California, has rescued and treated more than 14,000 seals, sea lions, sea otters and other marine mammals that get stranded along 600 miles of California coast, and conducted research about marine mammal health conditions. Through staff and more than 800 volunteers, the Center rescues approximately 600 marine mammals each year. Animals are rescued for a variety of reasons, including malnourishment, separation, entanglements and human interactions as well as diseases. The Center's robust education programs teach nearly 30,000 students and adults each year, with the goal of inspiring ocean conservation. On the web at **MarineMammalCenter.org**.

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