



The Marine  
Mammal Center

## News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ELEPHANT SEAL PATIENTS MOVE INTO NEW DIGS AT THE MARINE MAMMAL CENTER**

*The Center announces the Dollar-a-Pound challenge to help feed this year's seal pups*

(SAUSALITO, Calif. – March 11, 2009) – The Marine Mammal Center celebrated a milestone this week by introducing the first of its elephant seal patients into the hospital's newly rebuilt pens and pools. The seal pups were rescued due to malnourishment and will be cared for at the Center by staff and volunteers until they are healthy and have developed the strength needed to survive back in the wild. In the fall of 2005, the Center embarked on an ambitious project to rebuild its Sausalito headquarters in order to accommodate the medical needs and demands of its patients as well as upgrade facilities that were over 30 years old. Photos of the elephant seals in their new pens and pools will be available upon request.

“Our new hospital features pens and pools that were built for the distinct needs of our marine mammal patients,” said Jeff Boehm, Executive Director at The Marine Mammal Center. “It’s wonderful to know that these elephant seals, along with the hundreds of other patients we will see this year, will receive the best veterinary care possible in our new facilities as we work to rehabilitate them and return them to the ocean.”

The Marine Mammal Center’s new hospital and research facility will be better equipped to accommodate the serious medical needs of its patients, provide a collaborative work environment for staff, volunteers and researchers, and afford visitors an educational opportunity to see animal care and research as it’s conducted. The facility consists of three buildings, the first being the Community Education Building which will be the primary visitor entry point and includes a marine science discovery area with interpretive exhibits, a classroom, a retail store on the ground level, and an observation deck on the second level. The Marine Mammal Medical Center building will bring together all of the necessary functions of marine mammal diagnosis, treatment, and animal husbandry. A third building, the Veterinary Science and Research Center, will house staff work areas and a commons area.

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**Some key features of the new Marine Mammal Center hospital include:**

- New pens and pools designed to meet the different physical and medical needs of seals, sea lions, and other marine mammal species
- An on-site lab that will reduce time for diagnosis and initiating treatment
- A ‘transparent’ design, so visitors can see the real behind-the-scenes work at the Center
- Classrooms and meeting space for our visiting students and public
- Green design elements including the use of solar shade panels over the pens and pools to reduce energy consumption and provide shade for the patients, radiant floor heating in the buildings, and use of recyclable building materials throughout the complex
- An innovative adaption of the former underground Nike missile silos to house a modernized water treatment system that will reduce water consumption and provide a healthier environment for the patients

**Dollar-a-Pound Challenge:**

During the past decade, the Center has been called upon to respond to and treat more marine mammals than any time in its 34 year history and now has an average patient load of approximately 500-700 animals each year. Between the months of February and early June, volunteers and staff are busy caring for young elephant and harbor seal pups – approximately 200 animals – and feeding them 60,000 pounds of fish during that four-month long season alone. This year the Center needs help in providing food for these young pups. It is launching the *Dollar-a-Pound* challenge, so named because one dollar is approximately how much the Center spends to purchase one pound of fish for its patients. The Center is inviting the public and school groups to participate in the challenge and help meet its fundraising goal of \$60,000 during this year’s pupping season. To learn more about the challenge, go to [marinemammalcenter.org](http://marinemammalcenter.org) and click on the Dollar-a-Pound link on the homepage.

**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 14,000 marine mammals. In late June 2009, the public will be able to visit the Center’s newly rebuilt headquarters in Sausalito, which includes animal rehabilitation viewing areas and educational exhibits. For more information, visit [www.marinemammalcenter.org](http://www.marinemammalcenter.org).

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