



The Marine
Mammal Center

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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From Missiles to Marine Mammals – The Marine Mammal Center Begins a New Era of Marine Mammal Care with Opening of Newly Rebuilt Facility

Facility Re-Opens for Public Viewing on June 15th, Cuts Ribbon on June 5th

(Sausalito, Calif. – June 2, 2009) The Marine Mammal Center will unveil its newly rebuilt headquarters during a private ribbon cutting and celebration on June 5 in Sausalito, California. In November 2005, the Center, which is one of the largest rescue and rehabilitation organizations for marine mammals in the country, began rebuilding its facility on a decommissioned Nike missile site in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The \$32 million transformation will improve the Center's ability to care for and study marine mammals, provide a collaborative work environment for staff and volunteers, and offer the public the opportunity to learn about the connections they share with marine mammals and the ocean through exhibits and open viewing of animal care and work areas.

“As we anticipate the upcoming celebration of World Oceans Day on June 8, we all reflect back to 1975 when our founders' vision was to build a rescue and rehabilitation unit for seals and sea lions in desperate need of help. They used what they had available, which was just a few bathtubs and pens made of chicken wire, and made great use of this space here in the Marin Headlands,” said Jeff Boehm, The Marine Mammal Center's executive director. “Now we have a state-of-the-art hospital, laboratories to support scientific research and dynamic public education exhibits designed to teach people about marine mammals and the ocean and inspire them towards greater stewardship.”

Highlights of The Marine Mammal Center's New Hospital:

- **Innovative Use of Space:** Among the most significant upgrades made to the Center is the transformation of one of the underground Nike missile silos into housing for a modernized water treatment system. The innovative system treats approximately 220,000 gallons of water in a closed system allowing for veterinarians to quadruple animal holding capacity. This was not possible in the previous system which could only handle 43,000 gallons of water, much of which was lost to evaporation and worn out pipes.
- **Improved Animal Care and Medical Analysis:** The new animal care building moves the veterinarians out of military shipping containers and into professional buildings that bring together all of the necessary functions of marine mammal diagnosis, treatment, and animal husbandry. The new on-site lab will reduce the time necessary for diagnosis and

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treatment of seal and sea lion patients. In addition, the new pens and pools were built with the needs of specific marine mammal species in mind, including the design of both in ground and above ground pools that aid in faster rehabilitation.

- **Expanded Education Outreach:** The newly rebuilt classroom will increase access to hundreds of the Center's programs taught on site to over 10,000 Bay Area school children each year.
- **Animal and Medical Care Viewing:** A 'transparent' design was incorporated into all of the buildings allowing visitors to see food preparation stations, animal care, and patient pools. Laboratories used for clinical medicine and research, as well as post-mortem examinations are on display and will bring the public much closer to the Center's work. Marine science discovery areas with interpretive exhibits and a patient observation deck on the second level of the facility will also provide the public with a deeper knowledge of the Center's work.
- **Reduced Energy Consumption:** The modernized water treatment system, which is innovatively housed in former underground Nike missile silos, reduces water consumption and provides a healthier environment for the patients. The use of photovoltaic shade panels over the pens provides the patients a shaded resting area and allows the Center to decrease its overall energy consumption by nearly 10 percent. Many elements of the buildings are constructed from recycled materials, and radiant floor heating reduces energy consumption and compliments the Center's overall "Green" footprint.

Private Ribbon Cutting Event – June 5:

Members of the media are invited to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony and celebration of the new hospital located at 2000 Bunker Rd., Fort Cronkhite, Sausalito, California. Contact Jim Oswald at (415) 289-7341 to arrange for media briefings ahead of the presentation.

- 5:00 – 8 AM – Live shots available
- 9:30 - 10:45 AM - Media pre-briefings by appointment
- 10:45-11:45 AM – Presentation and ribbon cutting. Presentations will be made by representatives from the offices of Speaker Pelosi, Senator Boxer and Congresswoman Woolsey and the National Park Service, as well as TMMC founder, Lloyd Smalley, TMMC Executive Director, Jeff Boehm, and TMMC Chair, Merrill Magowan. Media should arrive no later than 10 AM.
- 12:00- 2:00 PM - Guided Tours

Public Opening Beginning June 15:

Beginning on June 15, the public can visit the new hospital, research, and educational center, daily between 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 view animal patients. Visitors can go to **MarineMammalCenter.org** or call **415-289-SEAL** for additional information. Admission is FREE but donations are always welcome.

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. Animals are rescued for a variety of reasons, including malnourishment, maternal separation, entanglements and human interactions as well as diseases. The Center's education programs teach nearly 30,000 students and adults each year, with the goal of inspiring ocean conservation. For more information, visit www.marinemammalcenter.org.

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