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The Marine Mammal Center Names Wildlife Veterinarian to New Hospital Veterinary Role at Endangered Monk Seal Hospital

(KONA, HAWAII – August 17, 2020) – The Marine Mammal Center, the world’s largest marine mammal hospital, has named wildlife veterinarian Dr. Sophie Whoriskey as the new Hawaiian Monk Seal Conservation Veterinarian at Ke Kai Ola, its hospital for Hawaiian monk seals in Kona, Hawai‘i. Dr. Whoriskey is an emerging leader in marine mammal health issues and is passionate about translating her scientific work and research into the conservation of the endangered Hawaiian monk seal.

“The Marine Mammal Center is delighted that Dr. Whoriskey has accepted this critical role,” says Dr. Jeff Boehm, Chief Executive Officer of The Marine Mammal Center. “Dr. Whoriskey’s leadership will allow the Center to continue its important work to save this endangered species and engage with the community on matters of ocean conservation.”

The Marine Mammal Center operates the only hospital in the world dedicated to Hawaiian monk seals, Ke Kai Ola. Researchers from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimate that about 30 percent of Hawaiian monk seals are alive today due to the result of conservation efforts. Through direct animal care, community outreach, education and response, our dedicated staff and volunteers in Hawai‘i are working to save a species.

The Center is the only partner organization permitted by NOAA to treat and rehabilitate endangered seals. The Center’s partnership with NOAA is built on existing research in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands to identify seals in need, rescue and rehabilitate them, and give them a second chance at life in their ocean home. With over 40 years of experience working with marine mammals, the Center’s efforts in Hawai‘i are critical to saving this endangered species.

Dr. Whoriskey trained at the Center for two years as the Marine Mammal Medicine and Pathology Intern veterinarian, which provided her with a wide breadth of experience, including the clinical care of a variety of marine mammal species including endangered species, as well as rescue and response, wildlife rehabilitation medicine, stranding investigation, wildlife behavioral and population dynamics research, public education and animal care and welfare. Most recently she worked as a Clinical Veterinarian at The Marine Mammal Center and as Associate Veterinarian at Steinhart Aquarium at California Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Whoriskey has extensive field experience, including working with threatened Guadalupe fur seals in Mexico, Weddell seal pups in Antarctica, and a variety of marine mammals in California and Alaska. She has also been a lead or co-author on a dozen scientific research papers related to her work with marine mammals and other wildlife.

In addition to her background in aquatic animal medicine and research, Dr. Whoriskey has a great familiarity with the Center's program in Hawai'i and Hawaiian monk seals by virtue of the veterinary support she has provided to the program over the past several years as part of the Veterinary Science team at the Center.

Originally from Nova Scotia, Canada, Dr. Whoriskey is thrilled to be making her new home in Kona and connecting with the Center's partners in Hawai'i to best serve Hawaiian monk seals and the community.

The Marine Mammal Center is the lead responder for Hawaiian monk seals on Hawai'i Island. If a member of the public sights a monk seal, they can report it to the Center's 24-hour hotline at 808-987-0765. Hawaiian monk seals are endangered, so every sighting provides valuable information to researchers, and seals in distress may require emergency care. Please call immediately if you accidentally hook a Hawaiian monk seal.

Interviews

Please contact Media@tmmc.org to schedule an interview with Dr. Whoriskey.

About The Marine Mammal Center

Headquartered on the site of a former Cold War missile base, The Marine Mammal Center is a global leader in marine mammal health, science and conservation, and is the largest marine mammal hospital in the world. The Center's teaching hospital and training programs operate globally, with its headquarters in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, part of the National Park Service. Expert teams from the Center travel around the world to work with emerging first responders and has itself rescued more than 23,000 marine mammals from 600 miles of its authorized rescue area of California coastline and the Big Island of Hawai'i. The Center's mission is to advance global ocean conservation through marine mammal rescue and rehabilitation, scientific research, and education.

For more information, please visit MarineMammalCenter.org. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).