

FRIENDS OF THE SEA LION MARINE MAMMAL CENTER
UNVEILS NEW NAME...
PACIFIC MARINE MAMMAL CENTER

***Longtime Laguna Beach Marine Mammal Rehabilitation Facility
Changes Name, Mission Remains The Same***

Laguna Beach, CA – Friends of the Sea Lion Marine Mammal Center announced today that they are changing their name to **Pacific Marine Mammal Center** effective March 15, 2004. “With the expansion of our responsibilities to include **cetacean rehabilitation**, as well as the expansion of our education programs to include a **broader curriculum**, we have made the decision to take a leap and give ourselves a name that more fully reflects what we do,” says Michele Hunter, Director of Operations/Animal Care, “We are excited about the new name, as it is more reflective of our work with **all** marine mammals, as well as of the ever-expanding scope of environmental education programs we offer.”

Friends of the Sea Lion Marine Mammal Center, the first marine mammal rehabilitation center in the state of California, was founded in 1971. The Center’s story began with a Newport Beach lifeguard named Jim Stauffer and a small Pacific harbor seal pup. On a trip to up the coast of California in the early years, Stauffer paid a visit to Friends of the Sea Otter. The name struck him and he returned to christen the organization Friends of the Sea Lion. “From Jim’s backyard to our current location in Laguna Canyon, we have made great strides over the years. We would like to thank all of our founders, Jim Stauffer, John Cunningham, Bill Ford, and Dr. Garnet Rose Ekeberg for making the original efforts to make our organization the institution that it is today. It is with pride that we continue their legacy as the Pacific Marine Mammal Center,” says Hunter.

Pacific Marine Mammal Center is a non-profit organization with a mission to rescue, medically treat, and rehabilitate pinnipeds and cetaceans that strand along the Orange County coastline due to injury or illness; to release healthy marine mammals back to their natural habitat while preserving species diversity; and to increase public awareness of the

marine environment through education and research. Each year PMMC treats an average of 150 marine mammals (with that number well over 200 in the past several years) including California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals, Northern elephant seals, Northern fur seals, and various small cetaceans. The annual number of “patients” varies depending on weather and other environmental conditions, and the Center boasts a success rate of approximately 80% depending on species and other mitigating factors. In addition to providing care for marine mammals, PMMC also provides a variety of educational and outreach programs to the general public.

“We are very proud of our history, founders, board members, staff, and volunteers, included. Who would have thought that the rescue of that first tiny harbor seal pup 33 years ago would have such an impact on the lives of the thousands of marine mammals that we have given a second chance at life?” says Emily Wing, Director of Development/Marketing, “We are so grateful to our long-time supporters and to our new friends. It is their support that has allowed us to build our solid foundation and to provide our quality animal care and education programs over the years. The core values and mission of our organization will always remain the same.”

Pacific Marine Mammal Center is located in the large red barn at 20612 Laguna Canyon Road in Laguna Beach. The Center and gift shop are open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. For more information about memberships, volunteer opportunities, or to make a donation, please contact Michele Hunter or Emily Wing at 949.494.3050. For more information about educational programs, please contact Beate Litz at 949.494.3050 or visit Pacific Marine Mammal Center on the web at www.pacificmmc.org.

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