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For Immediate Release

SPECIAL TREATMENT
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SPECIAL CREATURES

***Pacific Marine Mammal Center Encourages Responsible Wildlife Viewing Practices
When Observing Group Of Dolphins Visiting Newport Beach's Back Bay***

Laguna Beach, CA – August 11, 2004 – Residents of Southern California have many opportunities to **view** multiple species of **wildlife** in their **natural habitats**. Within an hour's drive, people can view countless terrestrial animals in the mountains and deserts as well as an abundance of marine life along the coastline. A day at Orange County's many tide pools will reveal urchins, limpets, anemones, and sea stars. Various species of marine birds will be flying overhead, and farther out in the ocean is the home to many species of **marine mammals**. The most typical marine mammals to make an appearance along the Orange County coastline are California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals, Pacific bottlenose dolphins and common dolphins.

A **small group of Pacific bottlenose dolphins** has been making an extended appearance in the area under the **Pacific Coast Highway bridge in Newport Beach's Back Bay**. The color of the bottlenose dolphin varies considerably, but generally they are light to slate gray on the upper part of the body with lighter sides and pale, pinkish gray bellies. Their dorsal fins are high and curved and located near the middle of the back. They are typically observed nearshore. These animals are exhibiting the natural behaviors of their species and their appearance offers a wonderful opportunity for wildlife viewing for the general public.

As the sole marine mammal rehabilitation facility in Orange County, **Pacific Marine Mammal Center** would like to offer these helpful guidelines to those wishing to observe these special visitors in the Back Bay and other dolphins in the wild.

1. Observe wild dolphins from a distance of at least 50 yards as approaching any closer than that may alter the natural behavior of the animals which would be a violation under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). Use binoculars or telephoto lenses to get a good view of the animals.
2. If you are unexpectedly within close proximity, stop immediately and allow the dolphins to pass.
3. When viewing from a boat, operate at a slow speed. Always approach in a direction that is parallel to the movement of the animal.
4. Do not swim with, attempt to touch, or feed dolphins. Feeding marine mammal is prohibited under the MMPA
5. Help keep their environment clean and healthy by properly disposing of garbage. Go one step further by picking up several pieces of litter every time you are on or around the ocean.

It is important to view marine mammals in the wild to promote conservation and respect for the animals. It is even more important to act in a manner that will not result in any type of interference with the animals' life processes.

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