



Marine Mammal Care Center Los Angeles

A 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Organization, EIN 47-5249182

"Saving the life of one animal may not change the world, but the world will surely change for that one animal."

Hospital & Education

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Los Angeles Police S.W.A.T. Tactical Waterborne Unit and Port Police Join Forces to Escort and Release Rehabilitated Seals and Seal Lions Back to the Sea

Divers and support boats release animals healed from injuries and illnesses

(San Pedro, CA, May 11, 2018) Working and training in and around the Los Angeles harbor, the S.W.A.T. Tactical Waterborne Unit has become all too aware of the human-induced injuries and illnesses afflicting seals and sea lions. Often, L.A.P.D. receives calls from the public notifying them of these animals, commonly suffering from fishing line entanglement, starvation, plastic products ingestion, shark bites, parasitism, disorientation from domoic acid (red tide) poisoning, pneumonia and gunshot wounds. This, in turn, sets into motion a professional life-saving network including Marine Animal Rescue and the medical and husbandry teams of Marine Mammal Care Center Los Angeles.

"The divers care immensely about the ocean and the well-being of these mammals and want to contribute to their safe return to their home. We want to help maintain the eco-system of the Port for the enjoyment of all. Our goal of creating this highly visual release event is to encourage support for the hospital's efforts. We hope the media will come on board (literally)," says Timothy McCarthy, S.W.A.T team member.

Media is invited to ride along on law enforcement boats provided by L.A.P.D. and Los Angeles Port Police for the **Wednesday, May 16th** morning release of the California sea lions and northern elephant seals. The route will begin at 10:00 AM when uniformed officers load the animals on to police vehicles at the sea lion hospital. Animals, media, and the release team will then travel a short distance to board the vessels at Berth 84, next to the Maritime Museum off 6th Street and Sampson Way in San Pedro. The release location is nearby.

"Most of the animals that will be released have doubled or even tripled their weight which provides a nutritional reserve for their return to the ocean. Right now, we are going through 1,000 pounds of fish per day. In addition to the fish, a cadre of highly trained volunteers who log in more than 30,000 hours each year, work year-round. With the addition of medications, supplements and necessary hospital supplies, we are grateful for the public's support in allowing us to serve these protected patients," says hospital veterinarian Lauren Palmer.

(more)

The National Marine Fisheries Service counts on Marine Mammal Care Center Los Angeles to carry out the goals of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972. The MMPA protects all marine mammals, including pinnipeds (seals and sea lions), cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises), sirenians (manatees and dugongs), sea otters, and polar bears within the waters of the United States.

“Historically, at least 75% of the hospital’s funding has come from the general public. Foundations have tended to want to pay for equipment and medical supplies. We have and continue to rely on the public to help support the needs of our patients and are grateful to the L.A.P.D. Police S.W.A.T. Tactical Waterborne Unit and Port Police in helping us raise awareness of our hospital and the medical needs of our seal and sea lion patients,” says Jeff Cozad, Executive Director.

Both law enforcement agencies kindly request a reply to ensure adequate room is provided on the vessels. Please respond directly to: Valerie Goodman, Media Relations at vgoodman@MarineMammalCare.org. **The release event begins at 10:00 AM and will conclude at 11:30 AM on Wednesday, May 16th.** It will begin at Marine Mammal Care Center Los Angeles is located at 3601 S. Gaffey, San Pedro. From there, media, release teams and officers will travel to Berth 84, next to the Maritime Museum off 6th Street and Sampson Way in San Pedro.

For information about MMCC LA visit: www.MarineMammalCare.org

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