



# Flippers & Fins

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2009

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- View current patients during daylight hours at the NMMC
- Gift shop open Tuesday through Saturday
- Volunteers needed in the gift shop and hospital
- Make a "Meals for Seals" contribution

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- New Staff 2
- Meet our Interns 2
- New Website Coming Soon 2
- Director's Message 3
- New Membership Structure 3
- T-shirts Available 3
- Meet Stella our Steller 4

## Record Breaking Year!

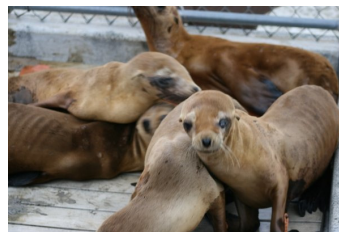
This has been a record breaking year at the Northcoast Marine Mammal Center. We recently admitted our 95th patient for the year, and we are only in August! During a normal year, the Center treats between 30-50 animals.

In July, we had more patients than had ever been at the Center at one time. With 32 patients and only 9 pens, things were pretty interesting.

Volunteers and staff have been responding to dozens of calls each day. During June and July, we were admitting between two and four animals each day.

What is causing the recent influx in animals being reported along the Humboldt and Del Norte coast? While there isn't one direct answer, there are two probable causes that may be

working together. A record number of California sea lion pups (59,000) were born last year and are now weaning from their mothers. Additionally,



**Chester (right) and four other emaciated California sea lion yearlings at the Center in July.**

warming waters off the California coast are causing shifts in prey availability and location. In short, there are a lot of young animals out there right now that are learning to compete for food, but

the food has moved and they are having a hard time finding it.

With this year recently designation as El Niño by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the increase in strandings and deaths of marine mammals may persist. Joe Cordero, a wildlife biologist with NOAA, said "Usually it takes three to five months before California sees the full effects of an El Niño season. If it continues to develop, what we're seeing right now could be the tip of the iceberg. It could go on for six months."

While we hope the high occurrence of stranded marine mammals is short lived, please remember to stay away from any animals you may see and report them to the Center at 707-465-6265.

## Successful Releases



**Shirley Larson and Janet Dickey releasing Teddy**

We successfully raised and released eight of the twelve harbor

seal pups admitted to the Center between March and May of this year. Seamus, Baloo, Neptuna, and Precilla were released on June 27th and Teddy, Magellan, Royce, and Isabella were released on July 9th. While it is bitter-sweet for the volunteers who have spent so much time caring for them, it is exciting to see them enter a world that is all new to them!

The first two emaciated California sea lion yearlings admitted to the Center (Shasta and Tonka,) were also released on July 9th.

Pebbles and Bam-Bam, two subadult California sea lions admitted to the Center on the 4th of July because of human interaction were released on July 30th.

Thanks to all who helped or came out to show your support!

# NMMC Welcomes New Staff



Monica and Pebbles before his release on July 30th

This year has been one of change at the Northcoast Ma-

rine Mammal Center. Long-time Director Lanni Hall left the Center in January to work for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Paul Schaeffer was hired in January as Office Manager. His role at the Center has been to maintain order during the interim of Directors.

Monica Hiner was hired as the new Director of Operations in May. She is a Humboldt County native and has worked

as a Fisheries Biologist for the Yurok Tribe for the past nine years. She earned her Master's Degree from the University of Idaho in Fisheries, focusing her studies on animal disease and epidemiology. She has a strong background in grant writing, personnel management, and initiating research projects and is excited to join the NMMC!

Stop by and meet both Paul and Monica if you are in the neighborhood.

## Meet our Interns Kaitie and Kelly

The NMMC is excited to introduce this year's interns Kelly Eastund and Kaitie Kessler!

Kelly is a recent graduate of Arizona State University (B.S. in Biology) who hopes to attend vet school in the future. She also completed a previous internship at the World Wildlife Zoo and Aquarium in Litchfield Park, AZ.

Kaitie graduated from Coastal

Carolina University in 2005 with a Bachelor's degree in Marine Science. Kaitie has previously interned with both the John G. Shedd Aquarium in Chicago and the Turtle Hospital in Marathon, FL. Kaitie is working towards a future career in rehabilitating marine animals.

Needless to say, the interns have been busy! They have learned about animal handling, feeding, how to take blood,

and even assisted the Coast Guard on a call! Stop by to meet them before they leave in September!



Kaitie restraining Stella for a feeding



Kelly and Pumpken

## New Website Coming Soon!

Our new website [www.northcoastmmc.org](http://www.northcoastmmc.org) will be up and running shortly with many new features!

We will have all of our current patients listed on the site as well as their picture and updates on their progress.

We will also have an online gift shop and will be able to accept donations online. Membership forms will also be available.

For those of you interested in volunteering in either the gift shop or caring for our patients, you will be able to submit

volunteer applications online. Additional features on our website will include information on the species of marine mammals that we care for, educational materials for children, and tons of great photographs taken over the years.

# Director's Message

As you have been reading in this newsletter, the local newspapers, or been seeing on local television stations, this has and continues to be a very busy year for us at the North-coast Marine Mammal Center.

Having only been here for a short time, I am truly impressed by the level of compassion and care present in all of our volunteers. While everyone volunteers for different reasons, it all comes down to caring for the animals and their wellbeing. Sometimes in our work, we have to witness unpleasant sites and deal with

the sadness of not being able to save every animal. Our organization would not exist without the many long hours put in by the volunteers—thanks!

The outreach that I have observed from the public during this busy time has also been impressive. I recently received a letter from a young girl in Michigan that was celebrating her twelfth birthday. In lieu of birthday gifts, she requested that donations be made to our Center to help support the care of the many animals here at the Center when she visited in July. Thanks Sara!

There are also heartbreaking things that I've seen during my short time here. I've seen the aftermath of dog attacks on harbor seal pups and animals that have been injured by humans as well. While these cases are infuriating, it is a reminder that we need to increase public awareness in hopes that more people will learn to respect nature.

I look forward to the coming months and am honored to be working for such a great cause.

*Monica Hiner*

## New Membership Structure

We are please to announce that we have a new membership structure starting in August! There are now four levels of membership which range between \$35 and \$500.

**Harbor Seal** membership level is only \$35 and includes a membership card, copies of our newsletters, and a personalized magnet.

**California Sea Lion** membership

costs \$100 annually and includes all of the membership benefits listed above and a one-time \$20% off coupon for our gift shop.

**Elephant Seal** membership is \$250 annually and includes a membership card, newsletter subscription, logo magnet, and 10% off all gift shop purchases during the membership period.

**Steller Sea Lion** is the highest level

of membership at \$500 annually. Benefits include membership card, newsletter subscription, logo magnet, NMMC logo t-shirt, and 20% off all gift shop purchases.

**We appreciate the continued support of our members. Please call us if your renewal is approaching or to purchase a membership for a friend or family member.**

## Class of 2009 T-shirts Now Available

Get your t-shirt commemorating the graduating class of 2009! Celebrate the success of this year's harbor seal pups Seamus, Isabelle, Baloo, Teddy, Precilla, Neptuna, Magellan, and Royce!

T-shirts are available by special order only. Adult sizes (S-3XL) can be ordered in black, bluestone, or charcoal heather for \$19.50. Youth t-shirts are

available for \$17.50 in light blue, pale pink, and deep navy in XS (2-4), S (6-8), M (10-12), L (14-16), AND XL (18-20). All t-shirts are Hanes 100% cotton. Call or email today to order yours! Shipping also available.

Remember that all proceeds go to help rescue and rehabilitate animals along the coastline of Humboldt and Del Norte counties.



**Class of 2009**



**Crescent City, CA**

The Northcoast Marine Mammal Center is a 501 (c) Non-profit Organization dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of orphaned, sick, or injured marine mammals.

To report an injured or stranded marine mammal, please call (707) 465-6265 or (707) 951-4722 after normal business hours.

424 Howe Drive  
Crescent City, CA 95531

Phone: 707-465-6265

Fax: 707-465-6265

E-mail: [rescue@northcoastmmc.org](mailto:rescue@northcoastmmc.org)

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE AT  
[www.northcoastmmc.org](http://www.northcoastmmc.org)

## Meet Stella our Steller Sea Lion Pup

On June 19th we received a report of a stranded sea lion pup from a family vacationing in the area. Unfortunately, the animal was located in Gold Beach, Oregon, which is outside our stranding network.

After spending the afternoon on the phone talking to the Oregon Stranding Network and our stranding coordinator for the Southwest Region, it



**Dr. Wood examining Stella upon arrival from Oregon**

was agreed that the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation would rescue the sea lion pup and it would be transferred immediately to our Center. There was a sense of urgency since it was clear that the animal was a Steller sea lion, which is listed as "Threatened" on the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife. In addition, the animal still had an umbilical cord and had been observed alone on the beach for three consecutive days.

Upon admission into the Center, Dr. Wood conducted a complete animal exam and determined that the female sea lion, which we named Stella, was approximately four to six days old. Although she had no injuries or illnesses, her care will be extensive and will last many months. She will need to be tube fed sea lion 'formula' four

times per day until she is old enough and interested in eating fish, which will probably be this fall. She will most likely stay at the Center until next May when animals return to the rookery site at Point St. George Reef.

Stella is only the fourth Steller sea lion to have been admitted into the Northcoast Marine Mammal Center. The last Steller, Galadrial, was successfully released in May of 2005 at Point St. George Reef .



**Stella, one month old**