As we close in on our 50th Anniversary in existence, the Pacific Marine Mammal Center continues to take our role extremely seriously and with great pride as the only marine mammal rehabilitation facility in all of Orange County, California, licensed to rescue, rehabilitate, and release marine mammals that strand on local beaches. This responsibility to preserve such important contributors to the eco-system of our precious ocean waters compels us to do what we do and at the highest level of urgency, compassion, and skilled care that’s embedded into our organization’s culture.

The challenge that all of us continue to face is the changing demands of the rapidly-evolving climate. We’ve seen the impact in the last several years, and realize that this will only accelerate in the years to come. We know that we need to respond accordingly, and are thus extremely excited about our upcoming transformational expansion plans. These plans will extend to all three core areas of our operations, consisting of animal care, education and research. This “next chapter” of the organization will allow us to greatly increase our ability to make a broader impact and enhance our life-saving work. As we head into 2019, we look forward to sharing more about our progress.

In the meantime, please celebrate and reflect with us on the meaningful work that we all were able to do together as a community in 2018. Thank you for being part of our journey. We are only able to do this because of your support.

With Sincere Gratitude,

Jeff Meberg
Board Chair, Pacific Marine Mammal Center

Nothing is more joyful than watching our patients return to the sea. “Release day” means we have done our job and made a difference to an animal in need…”

2018 ANNUAL REPORT
Unlike whales and dolphins, seals and sea lions don’t have to remain in water in order to survive. The animals beach themselves to be warm and dry when feeling ill. They seek rest on land for a variety of reasons and are not always in need of intervention. Our staff is trained to recognize animals suffering from infections, malnourishment, pneumonia, gill net strangulation, etc., which can harm an animal’s chance for survival.

When a “patient” is admitted, our staff performs all necessary procedures under the direction and protocols set by the Animal Care Director and our Veterinary Medical Director. During the course of rehabilitation, animals require a variety of treatments such as administration of antibiotics and subcutaneous fluids, tube feeding, force feeding, wound care, etc. Most animals come in dehydrated and the most effective means to provide fluids and nourishment is through tube feeding. The process requires blending of fish, electrolytes, warm water, vitamins, and medication into a fish formula. This formula is fed to the animals by inserting a flexible tube into the stomach using large syringes. As soon as the animals are hydrated and stable, we wean them to eat whole fish.

Once an animal has regained an optimal weight and is competing for food, it’s ready for release. Prior to release, each animal is tagged with an identification number. The color-coded tags indicate the animal has been rehabilitated and helps identify the specific animal and care center in case the animal needs care in the future. We strive to return every one of our patients back to the wild once their care with us is complete.

RESEARCH
An important part of marine mammal recovery is ongoing research. Research is being done to find the pathological conditions that affect the marine mammals of Southern California. Only through this research are we able to discover the cause-effect relationships that can help us to understand the best means to rehabilitate our marine mammal patients.

PMMC strives to inspire ocean stewardship in all generations through sharing the stories of the animals we assist. Over 50,000 people learn about conservation by talking with our education docents and interacting with exhibits in our visitor yard each year. We welcome approximately 10,000 children annually, many through free programs for at-risk communities, in our on-site experiential-based education programs that teach the importance of marine science and Eco-friendly behavior. Our outreach team engages thousands of more people in off-site programs, which share the importance of community involvement. Additionally, through distance learning technology, our education department brings conservation messaging to children and adults all over the nation and internationally.
In 2018, PMMC started a period of transition, with the intent to better position the organization to fulfill its mission. Specifically, the organization created a new director-level position to lead our research and conservation efforts. In addition, we significantly elevated the sophistication level of our animal rehab and husbandry protocols to provide a higher quality of care for our patients. The result of this period of transition was an investment commitment where we saw our organization’s expenses exceed our operating income. We maintain a considerable reserve fund, and – although the markets were volatile in 2018, the organization has a formal Investment Policy that allows us to withstand such swings – so the impact was absorbed.

**Number of Animals Rescued in 2018**
- Total Rescues – 134
  - Sea lions – 84
  - Elephant seals – 42
  - Harbor seals – 3
  - Fur seals – 3
  - Sea turtles – 1
  - Live dolphins – 1
  *The highest amount of patients we had in house of one time was 77*

**Number of Volunteers in 2018**
- 191 (total)
  - Animal Care – 84
  - Education/Outreach – 67
  - Board of Directors – 9
  - Gift Shop – 18

**Number of Volunteer Hours in 2018**
- 21,499.58

**Total Education and Outreach Programs in 2018**
In 2018, we offered a total of 277 Education Programs through the following:
- **Healing Seals**, an interactive program with pediatric hospitals
- **Saving Seals**, a program designed for disadvantaged youth
- **Sea Lions for Service Members**, a program for post-combat veterans transitioning out of the military
- **Pinniped Pollution Project**, a program with Title I schools focused on ocean stewardship and STEM
- Field Trips
- Girl Scout Programs
- Summer Campers
- Distance Learning Programs

**Revenues and Support 2018**
- Contributions and Gifts: $761,309
- Bequests: $59,697
- Grants: $565,130
- Special Events, net: $270,517
- Education: $113,582
- Gift Shop: $171,627

**Expenses 2018**
- Program Services: $1,590,445
- Fundraising: $471,812
- General and Administrative: $238,317

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CONSERVATION EFFORTS:

Teaching Conservation
Teaching Conservation has always been a cornerstone of education at PMMC. Since 2013, PMMC has invested many resources in becoming a leader of conservation practices, leading by example. We are walking the walk and talking the talk of conservation.

PMMC is committed to keeping our beaches and the environment we share with our marine mammal patients clean. We team up with local organizations, companies and other ocean lovers and host beach clean-ups periodically. You can even host your own clean-up and submit it to our site to add to how our community is making a difference.

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Seafood Watch
The Pacific Marine Mammal Center is a proud member of the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch® program. As a conservation partner, it is our responsibility to ensure that the seals, sea lions and sea turtles are being fed sustainably caught fish. We are also a partner with other Laguna Beach businesses aimed at raising local consumer, restaurateur, and seafood industry awareness of the importance of acquiring seafood from sustainable sources.

National Wildlife Foundation Certified Wildlife Habitat
PMMC is committed to conserving nature and habitats for our terrestrial friends. The organization’s visitor yard, creek, and habitat surrounding our center has been deemed a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Foundation. Being certified is all about helping wildlife survive through the essential habitat components of food, water, cover, and places to raise juvenile wildlife species. This designation allows us to also be part of a national effort to restore critical habitat for pollinators.

Disentanglement
Are marine mammal human interactions on the rise? This is a question that researchers at PMMC are looking to answer. We are starting a retrospective analysis of human interaction (HI) cases here at the center. We are looking at orange county HI cases specifically to:

- Determine if HI cases are on the rise or if we are putting more effort into looking for these types of cases.
- Analyzing the type of human interaction to see if one is more common than other types.

PMMC plays a key role in the Orange County Large Whale Entanglement Response and Pinniped Response Teams. Sometimes the patients are just too big to bring back to the center. Explore PMMC’s key role in the Orange County Large Whale Entanglement Response and Pinniped Response Teams.

Butterfly Garden
More than just a butterfly garden and as important as copepods in the marine environment, the garden, cared for by the UC Master Gardeners assists all pollinators, bees, hummingbirds and butterflies, the habitat to utilize for all life cycles. Bees in particular, are at risk with diseases affecting their population. PMMC goes beyond and embraces conservation practices for all species, not only marine mammals and sea turtles. Come in and explore beyond the marine environment.
2018 IN REVIEW

JANUARY

Yellow-Bellied Sea Snake
On Thursday, January 11th, PMMC joined scientists from the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles to announce the discovery in Newport Beach of a rare, 25-inch-long adult female, venomous yellow-bellied sea snake. “The discovery of the rare pelagic snake is only the fifth ever recorded in the history of California,” said Greg Pauly, associate curator of herpetology at the museum. “But it is the first discovered outside an El Niño year.”

FEBRUARY

OWCN Training at PMMC
In February, the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN) held a training at PMMC. OWCN focuses on four core areas to offer the best rehabilitation methods for oil-affected wildlife: Readiness, Response, Research, and Reaching Out. PMMC has been registered with the OWCN as a member organization since 1995. We are actively sending staff and volunteers to trainings through the OWCN, in order to better prepare for oil spill response.

MARCH

Swing for the Sea Lions
Pacific Marine Mammal Center raised approximately $29,000 during the second annual “Swing for the Sea Lions” Golf Tournament on Monday, March 28, 2018. 80 golfers participated in the tournament at the private Aliso Viejo Country Club, par-72 course. Known for some of the best holes of golf and best views in Orange County:

APRIL

“Crowded House”
In April 2018, PMMC had 77 animals in house of any size (highest number all year). PMMC saw a spike in elephant seal rescues too. We were going through over 200 pounds of fish per day and 20 bottles of Pedialyte (unflavored pedialyte is a key ingredient used to hydrate critical patients).

MAY

In May, our rescue team responded when a weak and malnourished harbor seal was found near 32nd Street in Newport Beach. The 23-pound male pup, the center’s first harbor seal of the season, was taken to our critical care room, given emergency fluids and fed six times a day.

Stardust was released back to his ocean home on Friday, July 27, 2018 at a healthy 55 pounds. As he raced across the sand a few “local” harbor seals papped their heads out of the waves to welcome him back to his ocean home!

JUNE

Raptor, a California Sea Lion, was rescued by Huntington Beach Life Guards on June 13, 2018. She was reported to have a fish hook in her mouth. When the team was able to get a better look at her mouth, it was apparent that she was in pain and because the hook had been obstructing her eating, she was severely underweight and dehydrated. Raptor’s right upper jaw was extremely swollen due to trauma caused by a large 3 pronged hook and 1 single hook embedded in her tongue, roof of her mouth and two areas of her lower jaw. She was sedated and the hooks were removed without causing any more damage.
The Pacific Marine Mammal Center Board of Directors announce the hiring of Peter Chang as PMMC’s Chief Executive Officer,” says John Kinney, PMMC Board Secretary. “Peter brings extensive non-profit experience and will enable PMMC to fully realize its mission to improve research and collaboration with other stranding organizations and the scientific community.”

I’m very much looking forward to building upon these principles the organization was founded on.

Peter Chang

The relationship PMMC shares with local lifeguard and marine safety agencies is crucial to the success of our mission. Animal Care Coordinator, Wendy Leeds, and her team, were able to expand on that relationship. In total they educated over 600 junior guards in San Clemente and Laguna Beach! It is a priceless opportunity to capture these young beach and ocean enthusiasts! The junior guards were educated on different marine mammals they may come across as well as ways they can help make the ocean a better place for the all of us to share and enjoy!

The “Gala at Sea” fundraiser was held on Sunday, September 9, 2018, at The Ranch in Laguna Beach. The annual event raised nearly $300,000 for PMMC, its marine mammal patients, education and conservation mission. The night also honored Philanthropist of the Year Sand Cloud and Junior Philanthropist of the Year Audrey Kim. Over 260 patrons were in attendance celebrating, laughing and dancing to the smooth style of “Yachty by Nature” the captains of 70’s and 80’s classic rock.

The Pacific Marine Mammal Center (PMMC) and six other rescue organizations (The Marine Mammal Center, NOAA, The Marine Mammal Care Center, Marine Animal Rescue LA and Sea World San Diego) participated in a multi agency remote dart sedation training under the NOAA stranding permit. This adds a critical resource to help rescue our larger animals in difficult locations from life threatening entanglements.

Lumiere was rescued on April 6, 2017 after he was found dehydrated and malnourished at just 1 month old. After months of rehabilitation, he still did not forage or eat fish easily. As a result of his abnormal eating and swallowing behaviors the US government deemed Lumiere non-releasable and the Aquarium of Niagara was chosen as his home. After a four-and-a-half hour flight Monday, Nov. 12, Lumiere was driven from the airport to the aquarium under police escort. Lumiere had slept most of the flight and only became curious on take-off and landing. By Tuesday, Lumiere had already become a hit with the aquarium staff and trainers.

After 2 ½ months of rehabilitation, Pacific harbor seal “Triscuit” was medically cleared to be released. Before sending her home, PMMC staff equipped Triscuit with a satellite tag, allowing us to monitor her movements after her release. Triscuit was released at Irvine Cove, Laguna Beach, California on December 7th, 2018, weighing 64 pounds (see left). Six weeks after release, Triscuit had traveled nearly 800 miles – at first staying close to Irvine Cove then heading north to explore Anaheim Bay, Long Beach Harbor, and Rancho Palos Verdes before heading back south to return to her home range near Children’s Pool/Seal Rock in La Jolla. We alerted our partners to be on the lookout for her, and she was resighted looking healthy and active (see photos attached).
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