The Pacific Marine Mammal Center Rescues, Rehabilitates And Releases Marine Mammals And Inspires Ocean Stewardship Through Research, Education And Collaboration.
The year 2020 will be remembered as a year of unprecedented challenges, but also a year where we all came together like never before. Pacific Marine Mammal Center’s animal care team, largely consisting of dedicated volunteers, continued the essential work of giving our marine mammals a second chance at life. In 2020, the organization rescued and responded to 143 marine mammal strandings, consisting of 91 sea lions, 21 elephant seals, 12 harbor seals, 1 fur seal and 18 cetaceans. Additional challenges arose when the center was forced to close to the public. PMMC’s education programs were canceled or postponed; however, we established free virtual educational events and live-stream video to uplift and unite the community as we all adapted to the new norm of physical distancing.

Pacific Marine Mammal Center looks forward to celebrating 50 years of marine mammal and ocean conservation. Beginning in 1971 as Friends of the Sea Lions, PMMC began as a small three person rescue team, and has grown into a leader in marine mammal rescue and rehabilitation and a top-level scientific hub and education center. PMMC has rescued over 10,000 marine mammals, all of which are federally protected species that contribute significantly to our ocean eco-systems. Additionally, the organization continues to educate the community and is now diving head first into forefront research projects including ones involving cancer in sea lions and crucial whale research in hopes to save the dwindling Southern resident killer whale population.

Throughout PMMC’s history, it’s been a collaborative effort. We continue to be a direct product of the remarkable passion and compassion from the community 50 years later, and that’s something we are extremely proud of. PMMC would like to thank every single volunteer, staff member, supporter, community member, donor, person who called an animal in, educator, collaborator, and everyone in between. Because of you, we are not only celebrating the past, we are looking forward to the future of Pacific Marine Mammal Center.

With Sincere Gratitude,

Peter Chang
CEO, Pacific Marine Mammal Center

2020 TOTAL RESCUES AND RESPONSES

91 sea lions
21 elephant seals
12 harbor seals
1 fur seal
18 cetaceans
= 143 marine mammal strandings
With enormous support from our volunteer teachers, we reached nearly 30,000 participants through our free online programs, group/classroom distance learning programs and Camp Pinniped @ Home!

And then...COVID-19 struck, forcing PMMC to cancel all on-site programs through March and beyond. The Education Staff immediately began giving free distance learning programs for the public during the first month, recognizing that many children were stuck at home with parents struggling for ways to keep them busy and learning. As COVID persisted, we continued offering free presentations about marine mammal life history, science, careers, and conservation.

In May, we adapted our on-site after school Ocean Heroes program into a new on-line after school program called Ocean Explorers, engaging kids across the country over the course of four days. As summer approached, we prepared an on-line and on-site version of Camp Pinniped, both featuring a variety of STEM discussions and hands on activities. Our on-line program included kits providing all activity materials for our participants at home. After hosting only a few Camp Pinniped and Marine Mammal Rescue & Rehabilitation Labs on-site, we were once again forced to shift completely on-line for the remainder of the summer. However, our on-line camp program was a HUGE hit with the kids and their parents! The high interactivity, interesting content, engaging instructors and mailed kits made for a great quality program.

2020 started off well as PMMC hosted on-site field trips and our Saving Seals and PPP programs. We also held our winter/spring Ocean Heroes after school program sessions which included collaborations with the Alaska Sea Life Center and National Marine Mammal Foundation who presented unique marine science content to our kids including content focused on noise pollution in the ocean, as well as marine mammals in the arctic.
An important part of marine mammal recovery is ongoing research. At PMMC, research is being done to find the pathological conditions that affect marine mammals. 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.

**SEA LION CANCER RESEARCH**

As if 2020 wasn’t unusual enough, PMMC saw a series of unusual health issues in marine mammals off the Orange County coastline. Most notably, PMMC rescued two female adult sea lions with urogenital carcinoma, a cancer thought to be caused by a virus that invades the animal’s tissues combined with exposure to environmental pollutants. It is highly aggressive and most often fatal. Previously, this cancer had not often been recognized in sea lions in Orange County.

PMMC’s Dr. Alissa Deming, VP of Conservation Medicine and Science, is working in conjunction with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other subject matter specialists, including the Sea Lion Cancer Consortium, to provide samples and perform research that will aid in a better understanding of this disease and the impacts of anthropogenic and environmental factors on ecosystem health.

**ORCA RESEARCH**

Understanding the health condition of killer whales is crucial in the effort to save them! Dr. Hendrik Nollens, PMMC Scientific Advisory Committee Member, along with a team of veterinarians and biologists, are evaluating new methods to assess the health of the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) in the Pacific Northwest. The team will evaluate the feasibility of remotely assessing metrics that are indicators of changes in the health of SRKW while in the Salish Sea. These metrics and assessments will enhance the early identification of declining or improving health of whales. They will also lead to insights regarding the mechanism(s) underlying declining body condition, reduced fecundity and survivorship of SRKW. Remote health assessments have been developed in other free-ranging cetaceans and have been shown to result in rapid, tangible management decisions to improve recovery.
Pacific Marine Mammal Center could not operate without its great system of volunteers. Our volunteers provide unparalleled support to our organization and they are the backbone behind our mission.

Animal Care - 119,

Education - 81,

Board of Directors - 12,

Treasure Trove - 19

Number of Volunteer Hours in 2020: 14,134

The financial support that we received from the community during this historic COVID-19 pandemic year was monumental. While earned revenue sources were devastated by the closure of our visitor and education center in early March, we were able to withstand and even continue to invest in our Animal Care Medical Team through the help of the individual donors, grant funders, Federal Paycheck Protection Program and our quasi-endowment.

### Expenses 2020

- **Program Services**: $1,824,792.00
- **Fundraising**:
  - $473,571.00
- **General and Administrative**: $249,050.00

*Excluding Capital Campaign Fundraising Expenses (Non-operating)*

### REVENUES AND SUPPORT 2020

- **Individual Contributions and Gifts**: $981,599.00
- **Grants**: $815,453.00
- **Special Events, net**: $277,237.00
- **Gift Shop**: $75,336.00
- **Education**: $70,487.00
- **Bequests**: $193,282.00
- **2020 PPP Loan (Forgiven)**: $223,800.00
Late one evening in February 2020, PMMC received a report about a small seal stranded at Irvine Cove in Laguna Beach. The animal had been heard calling out in distress for hours. When our team arrived, we discovered a newborn Pacific harbor seal pup who had been separated from her mother. The pup was born prematurely as evidenced by her white lanugo coat (see photo at left), which is usually shed in utero. Weighing less than 15 pounds, she was estimated to be only hours old, as her umbilical cord was still attached. Team PMMC named her “Sidney”, after the young girl who found her.

Sidney required continuous 24/7 around the clock care for the first few weeks. Her demanding care required that she be fed every few hours, as harbor seals normally nurse and learn from mom the first four weeks of life. She also received subcutaneous fluids, and the animal care team continued to monitor her output. Neonates like Sidney require specific nutrients and supplements that are measured down to a certain number of grams. She was weighed at the same time every day and she continued to steadily gain weight on her special formula.

As Sidney gained weight and became re-hydrated, her feedings were decreased and at 4 weeks of age, a small amount of capelin was added to her milk formula. Her output was monitored to make sure she was digesting the new mixture. The PMMC team knew she was interested in fish because when they went to insert her tube, she would try to eat it!

Because she was abandoned so young, she was deemed non-releasable, and the PMMC team worked hard to find Sidney a forever home with the New York Aquarium. Despite COVID-19-related delays, Sidney took a non-stop flight to her new home across the country in late November. Before her flight, she weighed in at a healthy 115 pounds!

Patients like Sidney remind us how every contribution makes a difference in the lives of these precious animals.