



# Seal News



The Newsletter of La Jolla Friends of the Seals

Summer 2000 Issue #3

P.O. Box 2016, La Jolla, CA 92038 • (619) 687-3588 • [www.lajollaseals.org](http://www.lajollaseals.org)

## News from the Casa Beach

### Bird Sightings Take Flight!

We are truly blessed with wildlife! Since the installation of the rope barrier in April 1999 bird activity has increased at the Casa/Children's Pool beach. In the last year more than 25 species of bird have been spotted and in the last month some rare sightings have occurred. By August migratory shorebirds are returning to "winter" along La Jolla's rocky shoreline – a unique habitat for specialty birds like the Black Turnstone, Ruddy Turnstone, Surf-bird, Wandering Tattler, Marbled Godwit, Whimbrel, Western and Least Sandpiper, black-bellied Plover, Royal Tern, Sanderling, Spotted Sandpiper and Willet. A Black Crowned Night Heron was spotted (at night) stalking prey along the cliff by Don

Reilly. He also spotted a very rare Orange Bishop in the small bush on the bluff. LJFS Docent Madhu Sugavanam discovered a Brants' Sea Goose near the breakwater wall.

Other common and uncommon birds sighted on the beach include the Brown Pelican, Snowy Egret, Great Blue Heron, Cliff and Barn Swallow, Western Grebe, Caspian Tern, Ruddy Turnstone, Black Turnstone, as well as Western, California, and Heermann's Gulls. Seven different species of gull have been seen in La Jolla but only Western Gulls breed here. The Brandt's Cormorant breeding colony above the La Jolla caves is the only colony in San Diego County.

Two Western Gulls were born on the roof of the Lifeguard Station last June and were

reared and fed by their mother on the beach. North America supports more than 900 bird species, 480 of which are found in San Diego County – the greatest number of species of any county in the United States. In the 3 square mile La Jolla area P7 of the San Diego History Museum, San Diego County Bird Atlas Project about 150 bird species have been sighted, almost 40 of which are confirmed to be breeding here.

### Seal Fun May – August

Late spring saw the annual molt. Harbor seals molt their fur in patches. The old fur turns a light brown, contrasting the new fur beneath. The mating season lasts from May through July. Harbor seals mate in the water (unlike Elephant seals

and Sea Lions). Signs of courtship are lively pairings, but similar playful behavior continues most of the year.

Harbor seals do not develop harems as do Elephant seals, nor are they territorial like Sea lions. Courtship and mating is a comparatively casual affair. It is thought that males attract females by slapping the water with their hind flippers, but in fact little is known about their mating behavior (other than by inference when a pup is born!).

Pinnipeds experience a period of delayed implantation. In the case of Harbor seals this is 1.5-3 months. The gestation period is 9-10.5 months, aligning birth dates to the spring of each year.

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Brown Pelicans

Robert Savannah, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



## Director's Notes

Dear Friends,

This is our third edition of Seal News. So much has happened in the past months that we have had to publish 12 pages! Let me start out by saying that the La Jolla Harbor seals appear to be a healthy, seemingly stable population. This newsletter contains the LJFS pup report for the February to April 2000 pupping season for your interest.

This year the seals have received unprecedented positive attention. The Friends of the Seals Docent Program is working! Projects like the SealCam and the Interpretive Sign (pg. 7) will help tremendously in keeping harassment incidents down and increase respect for wildlife. But there

is more work to do.

The dedication of our Docents is the basis for all the positive progress that has been made on behalf of the seals. LJFS Docents have conducted themselves with propriety and enthusiasm. We are now working to expand the Docent program to cover 7 days a week and are forming an education group to plan how best to develop our school program. Please contact us if you are interested in helping. We are also looking ahead to opening an Interpretive Nature Center and office. Other plans this year include more Docent trainings, a new public lecture series and a video about the Harbor seals and the Docent Program.

As you will see in Peter Had-dow's article (pg. 5), the threat to pinnipeds worldwide is real. The example we set here in San Diego with the Harbor seals telegraphs around the world. The message is simple: respect what natural treasures you have. All of our efforts have helped to improve the situation for the seals and it takes support from everyone at all levels. Contact us if you would like to help in any way. Remember LJFS survives and will continue to survive through your generous contributions. Thank you all for helping us get this far.

Patrick Lee Hord,  
Executive Director

## Calendar of Events

**SealCam Goes Live!**  
September 2000

**Updated website**  
launched  
October 2000

**Next Docent Training**  
October 7, 2000  
9:00 am – 3:30 pm  
La Jolla Recreation  
Center, Room 1

**Public Lecture Series**  
"Birds of San Diego"  
with Leslie and Mark  
Polinsky, Tuesday  
October 24, 6:30-8:00pm

### Putting Our Best Flipper Forward – Why the Docent Program is Important, by Naomi King

Encouraging a healthy respect and appreciation for nature and wildlife – for all life around us – can only bring good results.



Snowy Egret

Robert Savannah, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Nowadays more and more people are moving to California to enjoy its warm weather and way of life. The last hundred years has seen much development, no more so than along the beautiful California coastline. The coastal community of La Jolla, "The Jewel," is no exception. It has developed from a quiet seaside resort to the affluent community and tourist destination it is today.

The speedy development of this area and of San Diego as a whole has meant the destruction of many natural habitats and living creatures. Our present "confrontation" with nature – and it is a confrontation that poses ethical as well as practical questions

for the future – is rapidly bringing us to the point of no return. We are now confronted with the fact that space, as well as resources, including the oceans, have limits. The sustainability of the earth is the greatest challenge of our time as we continue to expand and exploit the earth's resources in the belief that this is the only way to find happiness and a better way of life. Our greed and dissatisfaction, it appears, knows no bounds.

The controversy regarding the use of the Children's Pool beach is a symptom of our time. It stems from the view that believes man is supreme and can control nature and this world,

(Continued on page 6)



### A Rare Interview with Edythe Scripps (a relative of Ellen Browning Scripps)

May 17, 2000

**Edythe, my first question is how do you feel about the seals at the Casa/Children's Pool beach?**

Well, I really feel we are blessed to have them. It's a wonderful open air schoolroom for the children and a learning experience for everyone that sees them. I feel so blessed personally that they chose this tiny scrap of sand to pull up on and to have their pups. They feel safe there and protected, and that's because of all the work that you young people, the Friends of the Seals have done. You saved them and I think it's a blessing for everyone.

**How do you think that Ellen Browning-Scripps would have reacted to the presence of the seals on the beach?**

I think she would have loved them. She was a great animal lover and she would have been just delighted I know, knowing that there are many beaches that the children of La Jolla and San Diego can use aside from the miniscule beach that the seals are on.

**I also want to ask how you feel about La Jolla Friends of the Seals and what we're doing out there at the beach.**

**We've been there a year now.**

I think it is heaven sent, believe me. You are all volunteers and you are doing a fantastic job. Without you it would have been a disaster, and we would not have these lovely seals. The seals would have been chased away. I think the La Jolla Friends of the Seals have been a blessing in every regard. I know that you are protecting them and doing everything you can do, and it's a great source of joy for everyone that loves the seals as I do.

**Yesterday I gave a presentation to about 30 moms with their babies in strollers. Thousands of kids visit the beach every month with their parents. How do you feel about keeping this situation for all the kids?**

Well I think it's wonderful that you give presentations for the children that come to the beach because they are not going to learn unless it's presented to them. As I say, the beach is like an outdoor schoolroom. It is wonderful for children to see these creatures close up and study all about them. It is absolutely wonderful and you are certain to be commended.

**What would your message be to the politicians and those who are soon to be voted into positions of power in our local government? What would your message to them be as far as the Casa Beach/Children's Pool beach is concerned?**

My message to the politicians would be to stand behind all of you young people, you volunteers, and protect these wonderful creatures. It's just such a joy and a privilege to have them. Why should they be chased away? It's such a wonderful gift that has been presented to us. They should be protected and I think we are very blessed to have them. The politicians should cooperate with you in every way, and help you to protect the seals. After all, there's no other beach around here that has any. It's a great tourist attraction (and they're always interested in that). But it's mainly an outdoor schoolroom as far as I'm concerned, for the children, it's wonderful.

**Thank you Edythe.**

### The Children's Pool – An Outdoor Schoolroom for Children

Throughout her life Ellen Browning Scripps demonstrated a love of learning and nature, and she emphasized the importance of education. Preserving and protecting wildlife can only be accomplished by educating our children about the need to respect, protect and love our natural world.

La Jolla Friends of the Seals is dedicated to marine and wildlife education and to preserving the unique natural beauty and richness of the La Jolla coast for future generations. In addition to its successful docent program, school tours and an interpretive nature center are planned. La Jolla has become a worldwide focus for education and research. A visit to the Children's Pool is a unique opportunity for the children of La Jolla, San Diego and the World to experience and enjoy nature first hand, and to learn about the need to protect and preserve the environment.



Robert Savannah, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



## The Legacy of Ellen Browning Scripps (1836-1932)



Born on October 18, 1836, Ellen Browning Scripps was seven years old when her father, a London book-binder, settled with his family in Rushville, Illinois. Even then, hers was a pursuit of education and knowledge. One of the first women to attend college in the United States, Miss Scripps completed her studies in 1858 at the Illinois Knox College. After graduation, she took a position as a schoolteacher in Rushville. Her monthly salary was \$9.00.

When her brother James began publishing the *Detroit Evening News* Ellen joined him, proof reading and writing a front page feature "Matters and Things," which included her thoughts on the yet unheard doctrines of women's suffrage and prohibition.

Ellen Browning Scripps continued her career in journalism until the end of her days. In 1932, the year of her death, her column was one of the world's largest

newspaper features, distributed to approximately 1,000 newspapers in the country every day (*The Cleveland Press, St. Louis Chronicle, and Cincinnati Post*).

She joined her brother, E. W., in founding these newspapers, continuing to invest her savings in many of them. A keen business woman with a remarkable capacity for statements and figures, she studied the statements of the properties in which she was interested and knew that they were growing in value at a rapid rate. It was during this time that she began to realize that she was in the way of becoming a wealthy woman and put funds aside as "a trust for the benefit of humanity." Living modestly and never having married, she was able to accumulate quite a fortune in her own right before she became the recipient of a large legacy in the will of her brother, George H. Scripps, who died in 1900. When informed of her brother's gift, she expressed herself as regretting that such a large amount had been left to her and took it as a trust, which in the years that followed, she administered so wisely that her kind acts live in the hearts of thousands today.

Her move to La Jolla in 1896 set the stage for the philanthropic legacy that was to flow from this amassed wealth. Almost from her earliest days in the seaside community her generosity was felt - not only

throughout La Jolla, but also San Diego County and the rest of Southern California. In the final third of her life, she gave generously to projects that stimulated her intellect as well as her love of nature, medicine and humanity. Miss Scripps was admired and much loved by family and friends alike, and the example she set lives on as an inspiration for us today. She was a person who accomplished much quietly, without wishing to draw attention to herself.

In 1924, while recovering from a broken hip in a poorly equipped sanitarium in La Jolla, Miss Scripps determined to build the finest hospital she could for the part of the world she had come to love. Scripps Memorial Hospital was founded on a site on Prospect Street in La Jolla where it remained until 1964 when it was relocated to its present site on Genessee Avenue. She also founded Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation in 1924, and through contributions and inspiration, Ellen Browning Scripps was responsible for the establishment of institutions such as the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla Women's Club and The Bishop's School.

The Athenaeum Music and Arts Library, La Jolla Public Library, Scripps College, Ellen Browning Scripps Elementary School, Scripps Field and La Jolla High School also developed from her generous gifts. To pro-

*"The most important and beautiful gift one human being can give to another is, in some way, to make life a little better to live."*

-Ellen Browning Scripps,  
1924

tect the unique and rare Torrey pine tree for future generations, Miss Scripps purchased a tract of land and gave it to the state with the provision that the parcel - now called Torrey Pines State Park - remain undeveloped forever. Even Balboa Park benefited from her kindness. The world's largest aviary in the San Diego Zoo was a gift from her, as were the magnificent tower and carillon that still grace the entrance to Balboa Park.

More on the life of Ellen Browning Scripps and the history of Children's Pool will be covered in the next issue...





## Seal Conservation

### Seal Conservation from the desk of Peter Haddow of the Seal Conservation Society

As I sit at my desk writing this article there are, lying in front of me, two major news stories affecting seals. The first of these reports that a mystery disease has resulted in a mass mortality of Caspian seals, already a threatened species. An estimated 11,000 seals have died. Analysis is still being carried out on the dead seals but one possibility is that they died from a virus facilitated by lowered immunity as a result of pollution in the Caspian Sea.

The second news item reports that the east coast Canadian Harp seal hunt has been extended for a second time this year because sealers have only been able to kill fewer than 100,000 of their quota of 275,000 seals.

Lying beside these papers are additional reports that Irish fishermen have called for a seal cull and that the Finnish government has decided to issue licences to kill 100 Baltic grey seals (listed as endangered), over the next hunting year.

These articles arrived within a three or four week period – it is without a doubt a threatening world for the pinniped species that inhabit our oceans, seas and lakes.

Natural threats exist, of course, such as high pup mortality rates, hostile environmental conditions, and predation by animals such as sharks and killer whales, however it is the threats, both direct and indirect, presented by man that have already caused one species (the Carib-

**We are now starting to realize that the balance of nature is a very precious one...**

bean monk seal) and one subspecies (the Japanese sea lion) to become extinct within the last 50 years, and others to become endangered and threatened. Since man learned to hunt

*(Continued on page 10)*

### The Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito Launches "Seals Can Talk. Are You Listening?" Public Education Media Campaign

The week of May 1st, 2000 The Marine Mammal Center launched year two of a three-year public education media campaign designed to educate Bay Area and Northern California residents on the role of marine mammals as "sentinels" of ocean health, and the importance of monitoring marine mammal health. "Sentinel" means to guard a group against surprise.

#### **Seals Can Talk. Maybe it's time we started listening.**

What can marine mammals possibly have to tell us? A lot more than you may realize. In fact, if you share their penchant for seafood it's possible the message these animals bring could one day save your life. It was only a cou-

ple of years ago that California Sea lions were found stranded along the San Luis Obispo and Monterey County coastlines showing signs of neurological disorders. Within two weeks seventy of these creatures filled the pens and pools at The Marine Mammal Center, where veterinary staff teamed with pathologists and scientists to find the cause. Two thirds of the animals didn't survive. It was soon discovered that the cause of their deaths was a harmful algal bloom which had produced the neurotoxin domoic acid. Sardines and anchovies feed on the toxic algae. Although the fish showed no clinical signs of disease, many of the sea lions that ate these fish succumbed to the effects of the toxin. While domoic acid had

previously caused human deaths on the east coast of Canada, in this instance our ability to monitor marine mammal health gave us a warning of potential danger. Marine mammals also inform us of potentially deadly climate shifts. In the fall of 1997 a record number of malnourished northern fur seal pups stranded far from their Southern California rookery, alerting us of the oncoming El Niño event, which ultimately caused extensive loss of life and property. In addition, seals and sea lions warn us of contaminants in our oceans. Sea lions with cancer have high levels of PCBs and DDT in their blubber layer which means these chemicals, which have been banned in the U.S. for years, are still pre-

sent in coastal waters. Since 1975 The Marine Mammal Center has rescued, studied, rehabilitated, and released back to the ocean thousands of sick, injured and orphaned marine mammals that stranded along the California coast.

Our marine mammals have a lot more to tell us. Are you willing to listen?

For more information on The Marine Mammal Center and marine mammal health visit their website at [www.tmmc.org](http://www.tmmc.org)



© Jon Eilenberg,  
The Marine  
Mammal Center



Our Docent program is working thanks to Friends of the Seals volunteers. Their many hours of dedication have been recognized by the Federal Government. Our message of respect through education has reached the people of San Diego, 39 states and 46 countries.

LJFS Docents have collected valuable data that will help to preserve the seals and advance our understanding of pinnipeds. Over time our data will become the most thorough and comprehensive information on the La Jolla seals. We will be developing our data collection methods to provide even more insight into the seals and the people who come to see them. All of the information gathered is a result of the inspiration of those who have given the

most precious gift - their time. The Friends of the Seals Docent program is truly one of the most rewarding volunteer opportunities in San Diego. FOS volunteers see the results of their efforts during every shift.

**NEXT DOCENT TRAINING**  
**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7**  
**9:00 am - 3:30 pm**  
**La Jolla Recreation Center**

Our next training will be a **one day intensive**. Every-thing from LJFS Docent pro-

ocols, marine mammals of the area, site history and all about Harbor seals will be discussed. We must take advantage of all the time we have so please bring a lunch and refreshment. We will spend some time on site at the Casa Beach. The training is open to those who wish to volunteer. Please call 619-687-3588 to register.

All new docents will be paired with a veteran docent for their first two docent shifts.



## More Ways to Help

### Join our education action group and:

- Help prepare mailings
- Help organize the public lecture series
- Help with Docent trainings
- Help develop the School Program
- Help man booths at Street Fairs and other community events

Please call Patrick or Marjane if you would like to participate in any of these activities:  
(619) 379-7325

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but if we check we will find that the opposite is the case. It is clearly man's ignorant interference with nature and the environment that is devastating the planet. If we were truly in control we would not make mistakes and life would be perfect. Moreover, ownership is by nature an elusive and transient phenomenon. There is very little we can hold onto - if anything - and call it "ours" everlastingly, no matter how much legislation we pass.

A City Engineer's Survey of La Jolla in 1887 and an 1894 map of the area mark some interesting features. The large, flat rock upon which the sea wall was later built is

called "Seal Rock" and the bluff overlooking it is called "Seal Rock Point." The Children's Pool was formed on the site of a natural beach and pool by building a wall across a small channel from the bluff and onto the rock.

All USGS maps of San Diego dating from the early 1930's up to the present label the same rock as Seal Rock. The currently named, much smaller Seal Rock of the Seal Rock Marine Mammal Reserve is not labeled. The implications are that the original Seal Rock is a traditional pinniped haul out site and rookery. Harbor seals can be loyal to their haul out sites for hundred of years. A first hand account describes Harbor seals hauled out on rocks immedi-

ately to the north of the Children's Pool beach in 1936. A bounty was placed on seals from 1947 to 1960. The Marine Mammal Protection Act was passed in 1972 in recognition of the fact that marine mammal populations had been severely affected by man over the last century. Harbor seals were listed as depleted.

By some accounts the Harbor seals have been hauling out on the beach since the late 1970's. All studies of the seals to date indicate that the population in La Jolla has not increased significantly in the past five years. The Harbor seal population in California has also not increased significantly during this time.

La Jolla continues to thrive as a visitor destination. Many thousands of visitors come every month to watch the Harbor seals and enjoy nature. Friends of the Seals Naturalist-Docents are there to answer questions about the Harbor seals and other wildlife in the area. They are tremendously important because good education makes us better people.

The Naturalist-Docent Program has provided a positive and rewarding solution for the seals, visitors and countless children to the area. It brings enduring benefit to the community for this and future generations.



## New Briefs

### La Jolla Friends of the Seals receives NOAA's "Environmental Hero Award" at our one year anniversary celebration, July 26, 2000.

La Jolla Friends of the Seals was presented with the Environmental Hero award on July 26<sup>th</sup> at its first year celebration at the Grand Colonial Inn, located on Prospect St. in La Jolla, just up from the Casa Beach. The award was presented by Special Agent Michelle Zetwo and Special Agent in Charge, Michael Gonzales of the National Marine Fisheries Service before more than sixty docents and supporters of La Jolla Friends of the Seals. Docent Coordinator Marjane Aalam accepted the award for LJFS after a heartfelt speech by Mr. Gonzales where he reminded us of the need to protect marine mammals. He thanked us for our dedication on behalf of the Pacific Harbor seal. Special Agent Zetwo told the audience how the complaint level has dropped almost to nothing since docents have been on the site. The award was accompanied by a letter from Vice President Al Gore. It is one of only two such awards given in the state of California this year. We are very excited and proud to receive national recognition for our efforts.

Of the 72 nationwide awards, two organizations were recognized. The remainder of the recipients were individuals.



Docent Marjane Aalam accepts the Environmental Hero Award 2000 on behalf of La Jolla Friends of the Seals from Special Agent in Charge Mike Gonzales of the National Marine Fisheries Service,

### La Jolla Seals go live on the Internet September 2000: Camzone donates Sealcam

A 24 hour live video of the La Jolla Harbor seals is now available on the internet at [www.lajollaseals.org](http://www.lajollaseals.org) and <http://outstream.camzone.com>.

Following weeks of waiting for a high speed DSL connection to the Lifeguard Tower (DSL users will be familiar with this!), weeks of negotiating with the City Manager, Lifeguard Service and City Attorney and several technical delays, LJFS and CamZone have successfully installed the SealCam. Tim Sears, owner of CamZone has donated all the equipment - the DSL connection, service, and upkeep for this important project. SealCam is another educational tool that will help pique the interest of all wildlife enthusiasts. It will also provide a measure of security for the seals, and people from across the globe will have the opportunity to see how San Diego treats its wildlife. SealCam also offers an opportunity for those who are unable to travel to participate in the joy of our natural treasure.

"It's good to see that you've developed a website for the very worthy cause of our big-eyed, whiskered friends. I think your program is fulfilling a very pressing need to raise awareness about marine life, off La Jolla and in general. I read recently about SealCam in the La Jolla paper...very nice as well. Thank you for doing such important work."

Best regards, Jeffery."

### The San Diego Foundation and Hattie Ettinger Conservation Fund donate an Interpretive Sign for visitors

In June the San Diego Foundation and Janie De Celles, executor of the Hattie Ettinger Conservation Fund, offered to fund an interpretive sign for the Casa Beach area. Mrs. Ettinger had spent the last years of her life at the Casa De Manana across the street from the Casa Beach. She was a frequent visitor to see the seals and left a trust for coastal conservation projects. The idea and the need for a comprehensive interpretive sign was always present. In late July artist Monica Edwards, formerly of the Cabrillo Aquarium in San Pedro, prepared a preliminary drawing. The rendering was presented at our One Year Celebration on July 26 with enthusiastic response. The concept is to show the Harbor seals in all aspects of their life cycle, other pinnipeds in the area, birds, whales and dolphins. The preliminary drawing will be on display in the near future at a location to be announced.

We will be having a get-together so that everyone has the opportunity to give input on the sign. Please call if you are interested in attending. (619) 687-3588 or (619) 379-7325.



## New Briefs

### Births and Deaths May 1999 - May 2000

on La Jolla's Casa/Children's Pool Beach, San Diego, California.

#### Still Births and Deaths

December 2, 1999 Still birth on the beach - underdeveloped; white lanugo coat  
January 31, 2000 Still birth on the beach - well developed; white lanugo coat  
April 19, 2000 Adult male passed away on the beach. No external signs of injury  
April 26, 2000 Still birth on the beach - fully-developed  
May 2000 A dead seal pup is reported. It is thought to have been Shadow.

#### Live Births

The majority of pups were born after dark or early in the morning (5:00 - 8:00 am).

Wednesday February 16, 2000 5:00 AM - "Valentine" (silver-gray in color).  
Wednesday March 1, 2000 - "Negrita" (black in color).  
Thursday March 2, 2000 - "Tiger" (gray-brown in color, with markings on his head)  
Tuesday March 7, 2000 - "Midnight" (black in color with some dark gray marks)  
Tuesday March 7, 2000, 7:30 AM - "Hidey" (gray-brown in color)

Little Hidey was separated from his mom 50 minutes after birth by rough water and they were unable to reunite. Due to this, the critical bonding between mom and pup was not established. Hidey went from seal to seal but was rejected. Two days later he was found washed up on the South Casa beach (6:45 AM on Thursday, March 9). He was rescued four hours later (10:50 AM) by Sea World Beached Animal Rescue, the local marine mammal rehabilitation facility. He was rehabilitated and released 2 miles offshore in early June but has not reappeared at the Casa pool.

Thursday March 9, 2000, - "Thursday" (silver-gray in color with black spots)  
Sunday March 12, 2000, - "Silver" (silver-gray in color with black spots)  
Monday March 13, 2000, - "Swimmer" (dark-colored)  
Tuesday March 14, 2000 - "Shadow" (black on head & shoulders, light tail and underside)  
Tuesday March 21, 2000 - "Gordi" (black with gray markings on back & underside)  
Gordi was named by La Jolla Elementary School. The name Gordi is their school mascot.  
Saturday March 25, 2000 - "Fin" (black in color)

Harbor seal pups swim soon after birth. Their back flippers are disproportionately large in relation to their bodies, presumably an adaptation for survival. When swimming they move their whole body from side to side, rather like a tadpole - very cute! Mothers and pups stay together for approximately 4 - 6 weeks during which time the pups nurse on their mother's milk which contains 40% fat. This enables them to more than double their birth weight (20-24 lbs.) - vital for survival when they are weaned. Mothers are very attentive and will initially push pups down with their flippers to encourage them to nurse. They take them swimming every day and pups will often "ride" on their mothers' back. The bond between mother and pup is essential for survival, the seal pup mortality rate being upwards of 50%. Causes range from starvation and separation from their mothers (sometimes by humans), to predation in more remote haul-outs. The close proximity of this particular colony to human beings gives us a priceless opportunity to observe seals in their natural home. The Harbor seals are a very special gift to San Diego.

#### Docent Data Comes to Life!

A complete Harbor seal report is being prepared based on Docent data collected June 1999 to June 2000. It will be available soon and will cover Harbor seal population, haul-out trends, disturbances and other valuable information.

### A Personal Thank You

"I was recently up enjoying the seals, their pups and all the space they have on the beach. It actually brought tears of joy to my eyes to see them free from the constraints of people. I remember when they took the (temporary) ropes down (in 1997) and I sat there and cried as the people harassed the seals. Now I watch the seals and their pups, and they're relaxed, happy and peaceful. Thank you for what you do."

Melissa Thomas

### Drawing Contest

We are holding a seal drawing contest!

#### Specifications

The drawing must be either a line drawing or dots, black and white, and preferably show the breakwater wall and the beach as scenery.

Absolutely NO AGE RESTRICTIONS!!

The winning picture will be used on all our stationery and in future LJFS publications. All other entries will be featured in Seal News.

Entries will be accepted until December 1, 2000. The winner will be announced at the Docent Christmas Party.

### Share Your Vision

Share your thoughts, ideas and experiences as a docent with others. Send in your newsletter article, poem or quote to:

La Jolla Friends of the Seals  
P.O. Box 2016  
La Jolla, CA 92038



## Reserve News Briefs

### Seal Rock Marine Mammal Reserve (SRMMR) Update

Despite a recommendation to the City Council by the Natural Resources and Cultural Committee in August 1999 that the reserve be renewed, the SRMMR was allowed to expire on September 17, 1999 with no sign of renewal. On November 1, 1999 the matter was brought before the San Diego City Council, due in part to more than 500 letters and phone calls to the Mayor from citizens in support of its renewal, and a petition of 3,000 signatures. The Council voted 6-3 to renew and make the SRMMR permanent with a 5 year review. The City Council is obliged to send the proposed ordinance to the State Lands Commission, the California Fish & Game Commission and the California Coastal Commission for their input and approval before it can be passed into law.

The State Lands agency has not given approval for a permanent reserve, nor has the Fish & Game Commission. The main reason they gave was that the area is trusted to the City of San Diego for public use (including fishing) in accordance with the State constitution, and that by proposing a permanent reserve for the exclusive use of seals the City may be in violation of its own laws as trustee of the area. However, the State Lands Commission indicated that a change of use for the area to seal viewing as a recreational activity is permitted through the California State Legislature. As far as seals using the area is concerned, the seals are protected by Federal law, and this takes full precedence over both State and local government.

Neither agency was informed by the City that the beach is now an official Federal natural Harbor seal haul-out site and rookery. The ordinance will come before the California Coastal Commission in LA some time in November.

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### Friends of the Seals and supporters meet with the candidates: results of continuing forums with local candidates to find out their position on the Casa/Children's Pool beach and to educate them about the Harbor seals and the educational activities of La Jolla Friends of the Seals.

#### Meeting with Judge Dick Murphy, candidate for Mayor. August 7, 2000:

Mayoral Candidate Judge Dick Murphy met with 26 LJFS members at an informal get together. Seal supporters listened to some of Mr. Murphy's ideas for the future of San Diego and asked him about his stand on the seals. Mr. Murphy told us that he had spoken with three La Jolla residents for one and a half hours to arrive at his position that the beach is for people and the rock is for seals. He was personable and willing to hear our views, and left with new insights about Harbor seals. Ron Roberts, the other mayoral candidate, has not shown any interest in meeting with us.

#### Meeting with Linda Davis, candidate for City Council District 1. August 22 2000:

Ms. Davis came to meet 30 LJFS members with the firm position that the Harbor seals should make way for the children. After avoiding answering most all questions and lauding her credentials repeatedly it became apparent that she was intransigent in her view about the seals. She thanked us for the opportunity to meet with us and acknowledged our dedication. While admitting that she knew nothing about pinnipeds she declined to ask us for any information about them.

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### Pollution Prevention Begins at Home

In addition to sewage spills, large quantities of industrial chemical pollutants, pesticides, herbicides and hazardous waste enter the ocean through the watershed. Even such things as pesticides in our own yard affect the oceans, as well as careless littering with glass, plastic, cigarette ends and so forth. The list goes on. All of these pollutants are extremely harmful to the marine ecosystem – to all marine life. We need to remind ourselves to be responsible: this is affecting us too through the food chain. Call (619) 687-3588 for a copy of the LJFS brochure on How to Have a More Environmentally Friendly Home.

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### Our Actions Have Consequences

Over the past 18 months a number of seals have been observed with fishing wire, lures and hooks attached to their bodies. One adult male in particular has had fishing line wrapped tightly around his neck for more than 6 months. SeaWorld rescue assessed the seal but has been unable to help so far due to the presence of other seals on the beach and because he is still in pretty good shape and difficult to rescue. However, over time entanglement such as this clearly endangers the seal's life. Lures and fishing hooks obviously cause pain to the seals, but appear to dislodge over time. In July 2000 one of this year's pups was observed with a large boat propeller wound to his rear. SeaWorld rescue is authorized to rescue Harbor seals at the Casa/Children's Pool beach that have sustained life threatening, man-made injuries such as these.



# The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972

The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA) was most recently reauthorized in 1994. In passing the MMPA in 1972, Congress found that:

- certain species and population stocks of marine mammals are, or may be, in danger of extinction or depletion as a result of man's activities;
- such species and population stocks should not be permitted to diminish beyond the point at which they cease to be a significant functioning element in the ecosystem of which they are a part, and, consistent with this major objective, they should not be permitted to diminish below their optimum sustainable level;
- there is inadequate knowledge of the ecol-

ogy and population dynamics of such marine mammals and of the factors which bear upon their ability to reproduce themselves successfully; and

- marine mammals have proven themselves to be resources of great international significance, aesthetic and recreational as well as economic.

The MMPA established a moratorium, with certain exceptions, on the taking of marine mammals in U.S. waters and by U.S. citizens on the high seas, and on the importing of marine mammals and marine products into the United States.

For more information go to [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/mmpahome.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/mmpahome.html)

There are probably fewer than 400 left in remote and undisturbed areas around the Mediterranean Sea and the northwest African coast. Formerly found all over the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, and the northwest African coast, they were killed by fishermen who saw the seal as a competitor (a convenient scapegoat for their own overfishing). They also accused the seals of destroying their fishing gear. In fact monk seals became entangled in fishing gear and died, and were affected by disturbance and loss of habitat caused by commercial development and tourism. Heavy pollution in the Mediterranean Sea also caused problems. Some countries are making efforts to save the small pockets of monk seals that remain, but it may already be too late.

Other pinniped species and subspecies currently listed as endangered include the Hawaiian Monk seals and the Steller's Sea lion. Yet others are listed as vulnerable or near threatened. The protection and safeguarding of these species must be seen as a priority. We are now starting to realize that the balance of nature is a very precious one and that to upset that balance causes repercussions and knock-on effects that affect us all. We must therefore find ways to reduce our negative impacts on the planet and its wildlife.

At this point I would like to sound a positive note! Each of these man made threats to pinnipeds is solvable. We can work to reduce the pollution and marine debris that enter our waters, we can develop methods and gear for fishing that minimize the entanglement of marine creatures. We can recognize the intrinsic value of pinnipeds in themselves rather than the value of their skin as a coat or of their genitalia as an aphrodisiac in an eastern market. We can find more humane ways of generating our income than shooting or clubbing seals. We can work to protect pinnipeds from disturbance or loss of habitat, and we can find ways of carrying out aquaculture that prevent the shooting of pinnipeds. We must also work to fish our waters in a far more sustainable manner.

Pinnipeds are an indicator species of the health of our oceans and of man's attitude toward the rest of nature. We have a long haul ahead of us but if all of us who care about the marine environment and its inhabitants do just a little to help we can begin to redress our mistreatment of the marine environment. You never know, one day I may even be able to look down at a clear desk! My best wishes to you all.

Peter Hadow  
Seal Conservation Society  
[www.greenchannel.com/tec/seals.htm](http://www.greenchannel.com/tec/seals.htm)

(Continued from page 5)

pinnipeds have been a part of the diet of coastal communities, but the 18th and 19th centuries saw massive commercial exploitation of marine mammals around the world and the populations of many species plummeted as a result. One example of this is the Northern Elephant seal, whose blubber was used for oil and which was hunted almost to extinction. Numbers dropped as low as 100-1,000 (the population has now recovered to more than 115,000). Another example is the Steller's Sea lion, or Northern fur seal. Like

many other species it was hunted primarily for its fur, and millions were killed following the discovery of the species in the 1700's.

Fortunately, many pinniped species were saved from extinction by pockets of animals that were able to survive in remote and inaccessible places, and because their numbers dropped so low that hunting them became uneconomical. With protection in the 20th century the numbers of many species began to recover, but not all. The Mediterranean Monk seal is on the brink of extinction.



## Thank You To Our Supporters

### SPECIAL THANKS GO TO:

Tim Sears (Camzone Networks) - SealCam  
The Hattie Ettinger Conservation Fund – Interpretive Sign for Visitors  
Edythe Scripps and Friends – Generous Donations  
Jane Cartmill – San Diego Animal Advocates  
James Hudnall – Founding Member of LJFS  
Sylvia Stevens – “Seals of the World” presentation  
Curb Graphix – LJFS banner  
The Grande Colonial, La Jolla – venue and staff for our anniversary party  
The French Gourmet – catering for our anniversary party  
Trader Joe's, - non-alcoholic beverages for our anniversary party  
Jay Berman – Piano music for our anniversary party  
Cat Espinoza-Miesel – Harp music for our anniversary party

**A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DOCENTS.  
YOU'RE THE ONES MAKING ALL THE DIFFERENCE!**

## Join Us ... You Can Make a Difference

Become a member of La Jolla Friends of the Seals and help protect the La Jolla Harbor seal colony. By making a financial contribution of \$10, \$15 or \$25 you are helping to ensure that these animals are protected. You will receive a free quarterly newsletter and notification of upcoming lectures and events.

### Your donation will help:

- ◆ Support the Naturalist-Docent Program (docent equipment, manuals and postcard handouts).
- ◆ Assist with newsletter production and mailing costs.
- ◆ Support our Public Lecture Series which encourages the preservation of our coastal environment through an understanding of marine mammals, coastal wildlife and pollution prevention.
- ◆ Assist with the publishing of the LJFS Annual 'State of the Seals' Report.
- ◆ Help develop the LJFS School Program.

Yes! I want to help the seals. Enclosed is my contribution to help protect and preserve the La Jolla Harbor Seals and educate the community about our coastal marine environment.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$10 Student/Senior – Pelican Friends

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(Make checks payable to La Jolla Friends of the Seals)  
P.O. Box 2016, La Jolla, CA 92038



# Seal News

## The Newsletter of La Jolla Friends of the Seals

P.O. Box 2016,  
La Jolla, CA 92038  
(619) 687-3588



**Live SealCam at  
[www.lajollaseals.org](http://www.lajollaseals.org)**

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fine work you are doing."*

- Edythe Scripps  
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## About La Jolla Friends of the Seals



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### Preserving a Unique Natural Treasure

La Jolla Friends of the Seals (LJFS) is an all volunteer non-profit organization that was established in 1999 to offer protection to the La Jolla Harbor Seals by way of education and respect through its Naturalist-Docent Program. Our 56 volunteer Docents ages 16 to 80 are from all walks of life. They answer visitor's questions about the Harbor seals and other wildlife in the area, inspire them, and educate them about Harbor seal biology, behavior and characteristics. Docents also collect valuable data about the seals. Upwards of 100,000 visitors – local, national and international – visit the seals every month. Families are amazed at being able to view Harbor seals "up close," which is indeed very rare. Since the Docent Program was implemented in June 1999, LJFS Docents have spoken with more than 11,000 visitors and volunteered more than 1,100 hours of their time. La Jolla Friends of the Seals was recently awarded the Environmental Hero Award 2000 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), one of only two such awards given in the state of California this year. We are proud to have received national recognition for our efforts.

LJFS is funded by small grants and donations.  
To volunteer please call: (619) 687-3588 or email: [phoca@lajollaseals.org](mailto:phoca@lajollaseals.org)  
Don't forget to visit our website! [www.lajollaseals.org](http://www.lajollaseals.org)

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