

Northcoast Marine Mammal Center

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June 16, 2011

Dear Friend and Neighbor,

The NMMC responds to reports of distressed, injured, and maternally separated marine mammals along the coastline of Humboldt and Del Norte counties. There was a time when injured and sick marine mammals were either left to die slowly on public beaches or destroyed as threats to human health and safety. Thanks to the existence of the Northcoast Marine Mammal Center (NMMC) and the efforts of its volunteers and staff, these beautiful and intelligent creatures are now given a second chance.

Our most common patients are Harbor seal pups that are separated from their mothers and California sea lions suffering from leptospirosis (disease) and Domoic Acid poisoning. However, we occasionally respond to calls on whales, dolphins, and even porpoises. In addition, the NMMC staff and volunteers are trained to respond in the event of an oil spill along our scenic coast. The overall goal of the NMMC is to rescue and rehabilitate all of these animals so that they may be released back into the wild.

As you may have read in the newspaper or seen on the news recently, marine mammals up and down the California coastline are in distress. Over the period of one 'normal' year, NMMC may admit between 30 and 60 marine mammals. **Since January 1st we have admitted 104 animals.** With so many animals in rehabilitation this year, especially after having a record-breaking year of rehabilitating 116 animals last year, the Center could use your support now more than ever.

On average the cost to feed and medicate each 'short-stay' patient is \$10.00 per day. Caring for so many patients has been overwhelming to the volunteers who provide all of the animal care and rescue activities, and will undoubtedly strain our budget in the coming months.

In addition to a record number of stranding calls and rescues over the past two years, our Center did not receive funding to maintain operations of the NMMC during this fiscal year. We were recently awarded a grant for \$100,000 to renovate our Center and renovate it as outlined by National Marine Fisheries Service in their Standards for Rehabilitation Facilities. As you may have seen in local papers, we have also applied for \$7 million dollars to build a state-of-the-art rehabilitation and education facility in Crescent City. We are also in the process of submitting a new grant application for our day-to-day operations, which includes hiring a full-time Director, all feed, medications, diagnostic testing, and utilities needed to operate the Center.

The increased hospital population coupled with a 100% cut in our limited grant funding for this fiscal year have put us in a position of having to ask for your help and support.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Make a tax-deductible donation to the Northcoast Marine Mammal Center.
- Volunteer at the NMMC in the following areas: 1) Animal Rescue; 2) Animal Care at the Center; 3) Gift Shop.
- Donate household products that the NMMC uses such as bleach, towels, animal carriers, garbage bags, etc. Please call the Center if you are able to donate these items.
- Make purchases from our physical Gift Shop when the opportunity arises— all proceeds go directly to support the animals. If you do your shopping online, you can visit our online gift shop through Café Press (<http://www.cafepress.com/sk/NorthcoastMMC>), which offers a wider variety of items such as framed prints of patients, coffee mugs, clothing, and children's items (10% of proceeds go directly to the NMMC).
- Become a NMMC Member. Please see the attached information sheet for details.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and please contact me at the NMMC at any time with any further questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Monica Hiner
Board Member and former Director of Operations