

SHARE THE SHORE

Guidelines for watching Marine Mammals

The West Coast provides many opportunities to observe seals and sea lions as they swim, rest, or tend to their young. For your safety and the animals' health, never approach or interact with a marine mammal.

- **Give animals space. Move away at the first sign of disturbance or agitation.**

Seals and sea lions on land are easily disturbed and may change position, move away, flee, trample or abandon pups. Animals may become stressed and repeated interruptions by you and others may be harmful to their health. Even if you don't see these reactions, keep yourself a safe distance to make sure you are not disrupting their behavior.

- **Be considerate of mothers and pups.**

Seals and sea lions come ashore to rest, regulate their body temperature, and nurse their young. It is normal for mothers to leave pups behind while they are feeding offshore (up to 24 hours). Keep your distance so mom can return to care for her pup.

- **Keep pets away and on a leash.**

Pets can disturb or harm wildlife, or may separate mothers from their pups. These are wild animals that can injure or spread disease to pets and humans.

- **For your safety and the health of the animals, we recommend staying 100 yards away from all marine mammals on shore.**

If you see a dead, injured or stranded marine mammal call
(866) 767-6114

You will be asked to provide the location and a description of the animal.

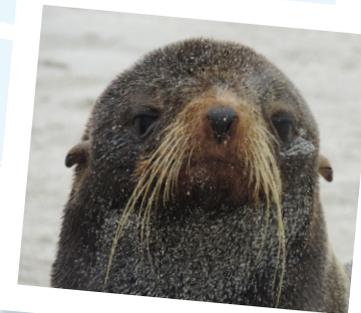
For information on regulations for boaters: www.bewhalewise.org

For more information: <http://bit.ly/SharetheShore>

Front panel photos, NOAA: from top, California sea lion, Kristin Wilkinson; Pacific harbor seal, Dave Withrow; northern fur seal, Kristin Wilkinson

SHARE THE SHORE

with Seals
& Sea Lions



Watch marine mammals in a safe, responsible way.

- 1** Sea lions and seals are protected by federal law.
- 2** It's illegal to disturb them or to do anything that might make them change their behavior.
- 3** Enjoy watching them in a safe, responsible way.



with Seals
& Sea Lions

Watch for these Marine Mammals

Bring your binoculars, find a safe distance, and enjoy spotting seals and sea lions on the West Coast. For your safety and the animals' health, never approach or interact with a marine mammal.

All marine mammals are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. It is against the law to feed or harass them, which includes disrupting important behaviors, such as resting, feeding, nursing, or breeding.



California Sea Lions

Adult females average 220 lbs, and are blond-tan with a slender body. Males may reach 800 lbs, with large shoulders and neck, a pronounced forehead, and are light brown to dark brown. Pups have a brown-black coat. California sea lions haul out on sandy beaches, rock reefs, ledges, breakwaters, buoys, and docks, and on offshore islands from Baja California to British Columbia. Pups are born during the spring and summer.

Left: California sea lions with pups in the foreground. Photo by Tony Orr, NOAA

Pacific Harbor Seals

Adults can weigh up to 250 lbs. Their fur is light tan-silver with dark spots, or black with light spots. Coats are darker in the southern range than in the northern range. Pacific harbor seals haul out year-round on nearshore beaches and mudflats, and along bays and estuaries, in coastal areas from Baja California to Alaska. Pups are born late winter to mid-fall, depending on location.

Right: Pacific harbor seals. Photo by Robin Lindsey



Northern Fur Seals

Adult females average 140 lbs, with brown-gray fur that becomes lighter along the lower chest. Males average 600 lbs with a massive chest, stiff mane, and brown-black fur. Both have large hind flippers, a stocky body, small head, and a pointed snout. Pups have a black coat. Northern fur seals are found in the North Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea, including islands off of California, only coming ashore to breed. Pups are born late in the spring.

Left: northern fur seal male and pups. Photo by Rolf Ream, NOAA

Northern Elephant Seals

Adult females weigh 900-1,800 lbs. Males weigh up to 5,000 lbs, and may have a heavily calloused and scarred chest. Both have a fleshy nose and light to dark brown fur. Pups have a black coat. They are found from Baja California to the Gulf of Alaska/Aleutian Islands, traveling widely in the Northern Pacific and along the Northwest coast, hauling out on beaches, offshore islands, and the mainland to breed and molt. Pupping and breeding take place during the winter.

Right: male elephant seal and harem. Photo by Chris Yates, NOAA



Steller Sea Lions

Adult females average 800 lbs. Males average 2,500 lbs and have a large head, chest, and neck area with a thick mane. Both sexes have a blonde to reddish body with a dark chest and flippers. Pups have a dark brown-black coat. Steller sea lions haul out on rock reefs, ledges, and beaches along the North Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea, as far south as central California, traveling widely during the non-breeding season. Pups are born late in the spring.

Left: male Steller sea lion and harem. Photo by Vladimir Burkanov, NOAA