

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pacific Marine Mammal Center Witnesses Surge in Patients, Highlights Epic Rescue of Tad the California Sea Lion

Laguna Beach, CA - May 2, 2024 - Pacific Marine Mammal Center (PMMC) is experiencing an unprecedented influx of seal and sea lion patients, with the current count to 81 animals: 52 Sea lions and 29 Northern elephant seals. This surge, more than double from previous years,



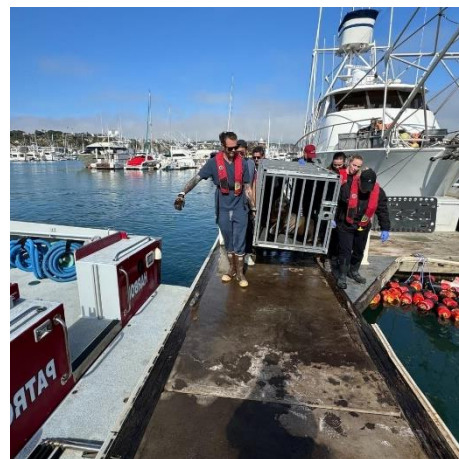
One of the many sightings of California sea lion Tad on a dock in Dana Point Harbor, CA before he was successfully rescued.

emphasizes the urgent need for conservation efforts and highlights the exceptional dedication of the PMMC rescue and animal care teams.

Among the remarkable accounts of rescue and recovery is the unique case of Tad, a subadult male California sea lion with severe entanglement around his neck. Even injured, Tad was extremely elusive to capture but our team outmaneuvered him, and he was finally rescued from a Dana Point dock on April 17, 2024.

Dr. Alissa Deming, Vice President of Conservation Medicine and Science at PMMC, expressed concern over the challenges facing marine life, stating, “entanglements pose a dual peril to marine mammals: a physical threat from immediate harm and a systemic danger to their habitats, but Tad's case exemplifies the resilience of marine life and the unwavering commitment of our rescue team. His successful rescue undoubtedly saved his life.”

Tad's journey to recovery took a critical turn when it was discovered that his airway was compromised due to the extreme entanglement. Dr. Tammy Da Costa Gomez, known for her previous successful surgery on another PMMC sea lion patient named Loki, performed a delicate surgical repair on Tad.



PMMC's Rescue Team carrying Tad back to the Field Hospital.



Dr. Tammy Da Costa Gomez performing surgery to repair Tad's airway severed by fishing gear entanglement.

Dr. Deming emphasized, "Tad's case underscores the vital role of collaboration in marine mammal rehabilitation. Through the expertise of Dr. Tammy and the dedication of our veterinary team, Tad has been given a fighting chance for survival."

We will continue to monitor Tad closely, recognizing the challenges ahead in his recovery journey. With the support of animal care volunteers and the veterinary staff, PMMC remains committed to providing Tad with the care he needs to heal.

The swell in patient numbers at PMMC reflects broader environmental challenges facing

marine mammal populations. Dr. Deming noted, "The increase in rescues and responses this year underscores the urgency of our conservation efforts. As stewards of marine life, it is our collective responsibility to protect and preserve these valued creatures and their habitats. Even small changes in our behavior now can create a ripple effect, safeguarding the well-being of both wildlife and people alike."

To learn more about Pacific Marine Mammal Center's conservation efforts, please visit our website at www.pacificmmc.org. To stay updated on Tad's journey follow us on social media @pacificmmc or contact Kathleen Biermeier, 949-228-4033 or kbiermeier@pacificmmc.org.



Tad, post-surgery, recovering at the PMMC field hospital.

About the PMMC

The Pacific Marine Mammal Center rescues, rehabilitates and releases marine mammals and inspires ocean stewardship through research, education, and collaboration. The only center in Orange County, California, licensed to rescue, rehabilitate, and release marine mammals that strand on local beaches. PMMC is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization. Tax-ID #: 95-3680896