



MARINE MAMMAL STRANDING CENTER

P.O. Box 773, 3625 Brigantine Blvd. Brigantine, NJ 08203

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Attention All Coastal Law Enforcement & Public Works Departments Of New Jersey

To Whom It May Concern:

The 2012-2013 seal season is coming up in New Jersey and we wanted to take this opportunity to remind everyone that all marine mammals are protected by federal law. Although these animals may appear healthy to the untrained eye, they may in fact be suffering from serious illnesses. It is imperative that the Marine Mammal Stranding Center be notified of all sightings to properly assess the health of the animal and closely track their location. There is a potential health and safety risk to anyone who may come onto the scene of a stranding. Seals can be very dangerous, inflicting a severe bite and may pass on very serious diseases to humans.

We would also like to remind you that there are Federal regulations for the response to Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle sightings and strandings. It is crucial that these regulations be followed for the safety and well being of the public as well as the animals in question. Federal and State permits are required to respond and rescue these animals and the Marine Mammal Stranding Center is the only facility in the state of New Jersey that possesses these permits.

Ignoring these Federal and State regulations is a direct violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and may result in civil penalties of up to \$10,000 or criminal penalties of up to \$20,000 plus IMPRISONMENT and/or SEIZURE OF VESSEL and other personal property.

Upon any sightings it is crucial that the Marine Mammal Stranding Center be contacted *immediately* at (609) 266-0538 with the location and physical description of the animal. What may seem like a "healthy" animal, to the untrained eye, may in fact be one in need of medical treatment. Please note we are a 24-hour, 7 day a week on call response, rescue, and rehabilitation center for the entire state of New Jersey.

Marine Mammals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). It is against the law to touch, feed, or otherwise harass these animals. Harassment occurs when YOUR behavior changes THEIR behavior.

As per the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, it is unlawful for any individual to:

- REMOVE
- HARASS
- MUTILATE

any **Marine Mammal** or **Sea Turtle** whether **alive** or **dead**.


Once again, the Marine Mammal Stranding Center is the *only* facility in New Jersey licensed by NOAA Fisheries to handle Sea Turtles and Marine Mammals, which includes Seals, Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises.

Any Marine Mammals or Sea Turtles sighted should be reported immediately to:

The Marine Mammal Stranding Center, Brigantine, NJ

24 Hour Emergency Response Facility

Phone (609) 266-0538


Robert Schoelkopf
Founding Director