

## 2023 MMSN End of Year Project

### Marine Mammal Stranding Network:

Since 2005, PTMSC has had an agreement with NOAA to serve as the Marine Mammal Stranding Network Coordinators in east Jefferson County. Through the aid of a vast network of dedicated volunteers, PTMSC helps monitor the shoreline for stranded marine mammals from Sequim to Brinnon. This monitoring consists of: protecting and providing distances for resting seals and sea lions, collecting relevant data from dead marine mammals, and tracking levels of human interaction found associated with the stranded. This data is then entered into a national database.

### 2023 MMSN Highlights:

One of the most significant events of 2023 was an outbreak of Avian Influenza (H5N1) that killed over 1600 Caspian Terns and Glaucous-winged Gulls on Rat Island. Due to a significant increase in area harbor seal strandings, and with concerns of the disease jumping to seals that haul out on Rat Island, starting in July 2023 all harbor seals (dead or alive) found stranded at Fort Flagler/ Marrowstone Island were tested for H5N1. Of the 17 (usually there are only 2-3) stranded harbor seals in the area, 8 were tested for H5N1 and 5 came back as non-negative. This was the first recorded case of a marine mammal testing positive for H5N1 on the west coast.

Although highly contagious amongst birds and between members of the same species, human infection is very rare. Still, the Department of Health recommended keeping your and your pet's distance from sick or dead animals.

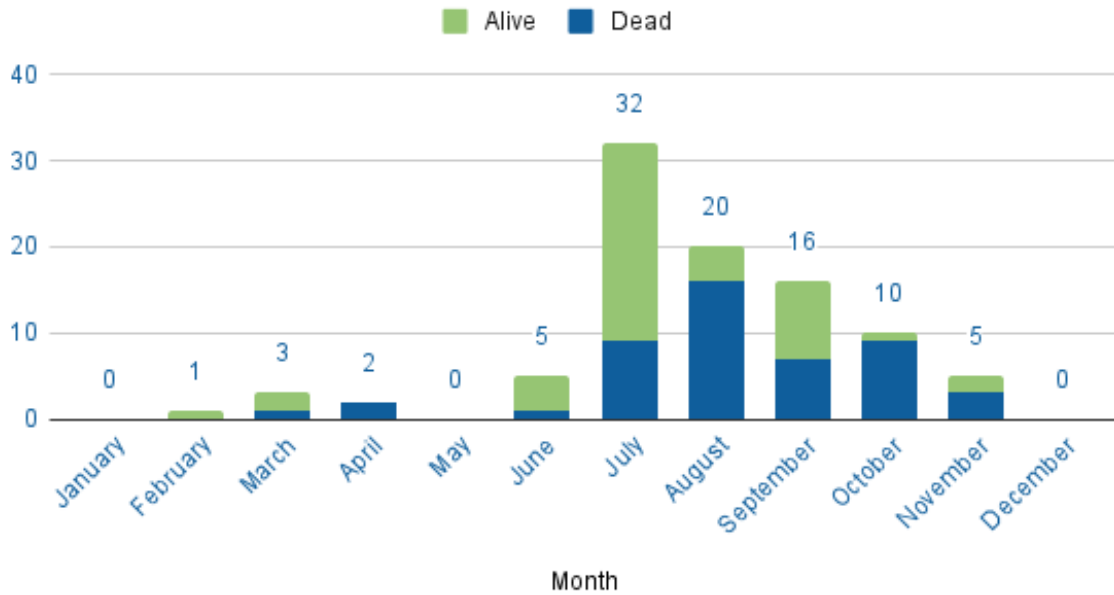


Another exciting and positive development with our stranding network is an agreement established between The Port Townsend Marine Science Center and the **Center Valley Animal Rescue (CVAR)**. CVAR will now help respond to **live stranding** calls to the hotline that come in after 5:00 pm and before 8:00 am, outside of PTMSC office hours. And they will continue assisting with live strandings and short-term care for animals that are candidates for rehabilitation.

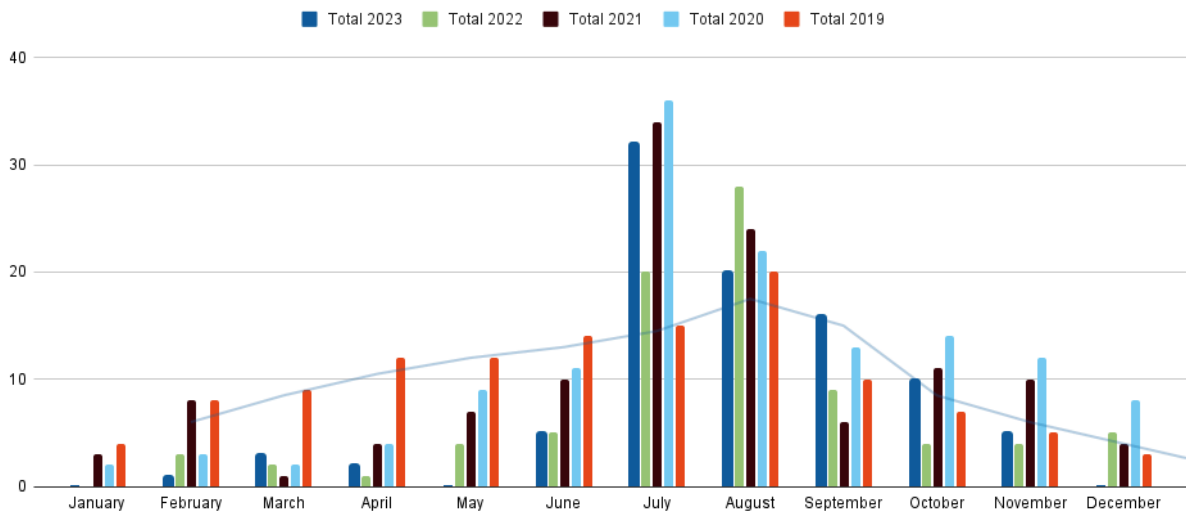
### Response numbers:

The total number of calls made to our marine mammal stranding network hotline was 100, of which 94 were marine mammals. Of which 48 were dead animals, and the other 46 were live animal responses. 81% of the calls were for harbor seals.

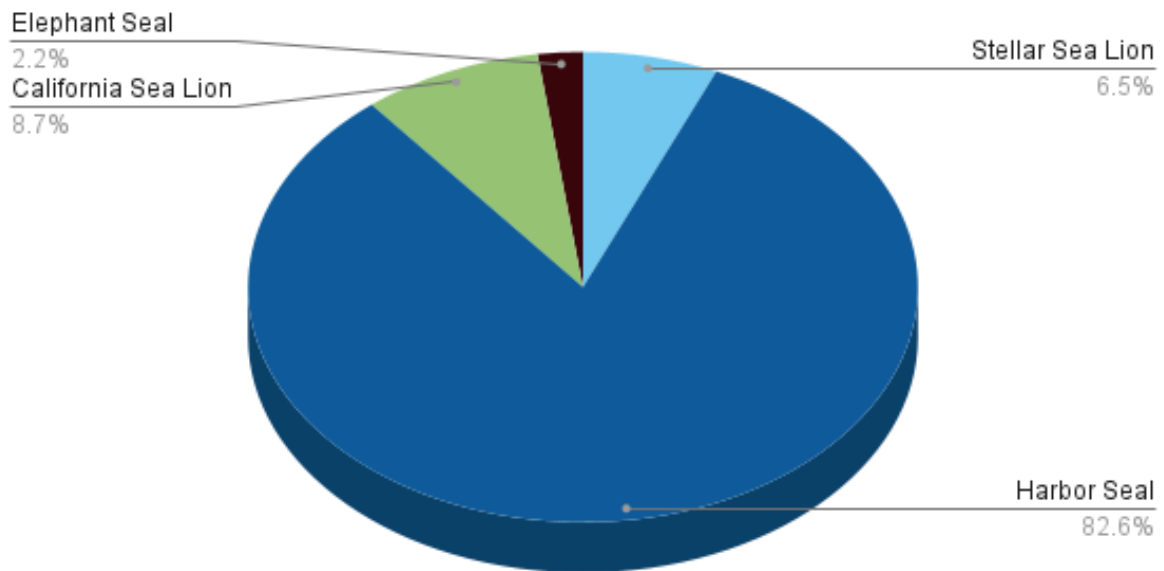
## Month by Month Responses



## Total Monthly Responses 2019-23



## MMSN Live Animal Responses



## MMSN Dead Animal Responses

