

Supervisor Horvath Joined Marine Mammal Care Center to Release Four Sea Lions and Announce the End of the Worst Domoic Acid Bloom in Recorded History

The release marks the end of the most recent domoic acid bloom, as the Center works to prepare for the next bloom

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (June 10, 2025) – Last week, The Marine Mammal Care Center Los Angeles (MMCC) was joined by LA County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath for the release of four young sea lions, signaling the end of the current domoic acid bloom and marking the launch of a preparedness campaign for future blooms.

Their release was a bright spot after months of heartbreaking scenes in which hundreds of animals suffering from domoic acid poisoning, including sea lions and dolphins, were found sick or dead on LA County beaches. This year's bloom, which started in February, was the worst in recorded history. In the first five months of the year, the Center had responded to more than 550 sea lions and dolphins. The Center's annual budget is based on 300 animals in care. This bloom stretched Center resources thin.

During the height of this year's domoic acid toxicosis event, LA County Supervisor Horvath spearheaded a motion that delivered critical support to MMCC as the frontline responders rescuing and caring for stranded marine mammals in Los Angeles County.

“Watching the sea lion pups return to the ocean today was a powerful reminder of what’s possible when we show up for each other — across species, agencies, and communities. We were especially happy to see Sprinkles and Brownie, and all of the pups, go back home where they belong,” said Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath. “The Marine Mammal Care Center has done extraordinary work under incredibly challenging conditions, and LA County will continue to show up for them — and for the wildlife and coastline we all share.”

Sea lions with domoic acid often suffer from seizures, dehydration, severe vomiting, aggressive behavior or lethargic unresponsiveness, miscarriages, and even death. Treatment for patients with DA involves keeping animals hydrated with fluids given subcutaneously or orally, administering anti-seizure medication, and supporting them nutritionally.

Typically, algae blooms start in late spring to early fall, rather than in February like this bloom, so being prepared for future blooms – including the potential for another bloom later this summer – is of paramount importance.

“We are deeply grateful to Supervisor Horvath, LA County Lifeguards, and the Department of Beaches and Harbors for their incredible support during this recent crisis,” said MMCC CEO

John Warner. “Their support and the support of our donors represent the power of a true public/private partnership that makes this critical work possible.”

In addition to the LA County funding, the Center has also received help from a number of coastal cities, including Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Long Beach, and most recently Manhattan Beach. MMCC continues to work to create a coalition of cities to help the organization prepare for the inevitability of the next mass stranding event.

“You don’t wait until there’s a fire to build the fire station,” Warner said. “The same is true for environmental emergencies, especially those with major implications for public safety, public health, and animal welfare.”

The Center is the only year-round hospital for marine animals in Los Angeles County, and more than 10,000 animals have been treated by its dedicated team of staff and volunteers since 1992. Its annual budget is based on 300 animals in care over 12 months, but MMCC has already surpassed that number during the first five months of 2025.

Causes of strandings include toxicity from harmful algal blooms, malnutrition, infectious diseases, and entanglements, among other threats. On average, MMCC responds to 750 to 1,000 reports of marine mammals in distress, and rescue and rehabilitate anywhere from 250 to 500 animals each year.

A non-profit 501(c)3 organization, MMCC depends on grants and individual contributions to meet the needs of marine mammal patients. Donations can be made at: <https://marinemammalcare.org/donate/>.

Please report any animals in need of rescue to the MMCC Rescue Hotline at 1 (800) 39-WHALE.

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