

East Jefferson County Marine Mammal Stranding Network Newsletter

Included in this newsletter:

- Summary of the stranding data from 2010
- Future directions for EJCMMSN: Prescott Grant
- Unusual Strandings in Our Region
- Notes from the NWMMSN Regional Meeting at NOAA



End of Year Report

December, 2010

EJCMMSN: 2010

Hello to all the wonderful EJCMMSN Volunteers! Due to bad weather and busy schedules, many of you were unable to attend our end-of-season meeting in November. As a result, we've prepared a detailed newsletter covering much of the information shared in the meeting as well sharing more recent developments.

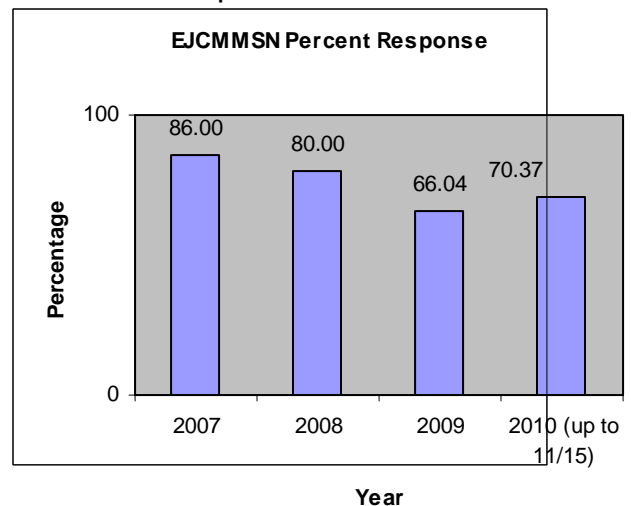


Photo by Janice Longstreet

2010 EJCMMSN Data

This year we had a total of **75** calls reporting **54** animals of **6** different species. We had **25** active volunteers and filled out **14** Level A reports.

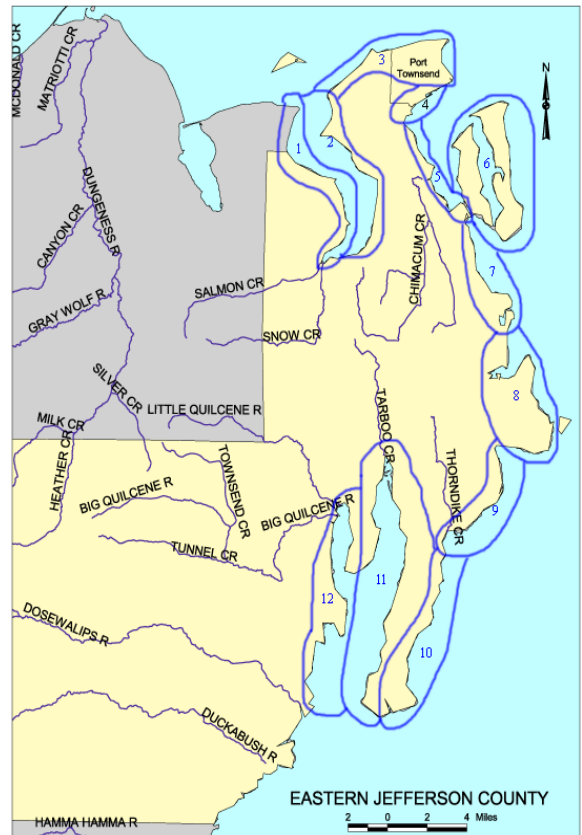
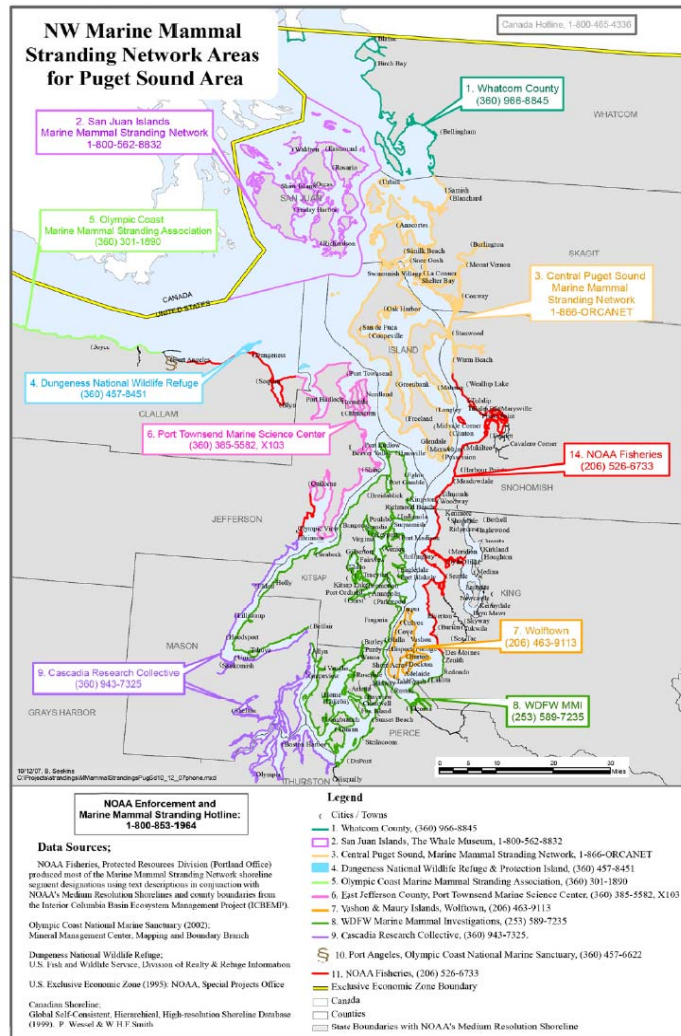
The "percent response" shown at right indicates how many calls about strandings were actually responded by a trained volunteer. While it initially appears as if our response has declined throughout the years, the number of calls has been *increasing* every year which naturally increases the difficulty of responding to every call. The growing number of calls is likely due to enhanced awareness of the network.



A Refresher Course: “What’s a Response Zone?”

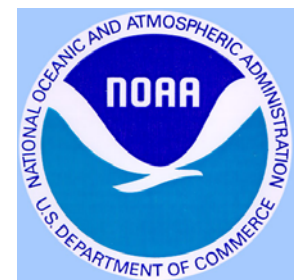
As you may know, the entire Northwest Marine Mammal Stranding Network (below left) is divided into smaller areas, each of which is managed by a specific stranding network (of which we are one). Within our area (below right), we’ve divided up our shoreline into 12 distinct zones. This demarcation allows for clearer data analysis and division of volunteer effort. Some of the zones are served by a large number of volunteers, while the more remote areas tend to suffer from a lack of volunteer presence. The effort and cost of traveling to these zones often outweighs the need for a responder. As a result, we have several “underserved” zones where we’re hoping to improve our response percent-

ages in the future via enhanced outreach and training (see section on the Prescott Grant below). Eliza Dawson is also working on creating a specialized map using GPS coordinates to display the precise geographic distribution of our strandings within the zones.



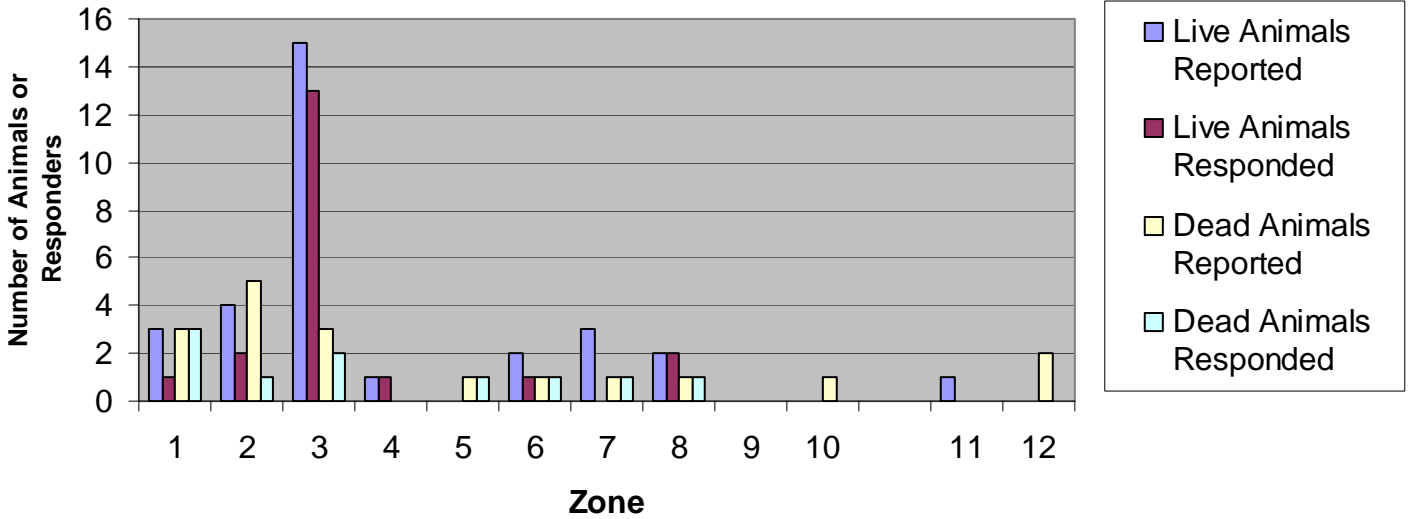
Prescott Grant

EJCMMSN has applied for Prescott Grant Funding which would begin in August 2011. If we receive the grant, there will be funding to create and install informational signs at 10 beaches, create and print a brochure, improve the marine mammal stranding information on our website, plan additional trainings outside of Port Townsend, and perform and analyze samples from 5 necropsies (under the supervision of Pete Schroeder, DVM). We will let you know as soon as we find out about this exciting opportunity.



2010 EJCMMSN Response Data

Number of Animals and Response by Zone



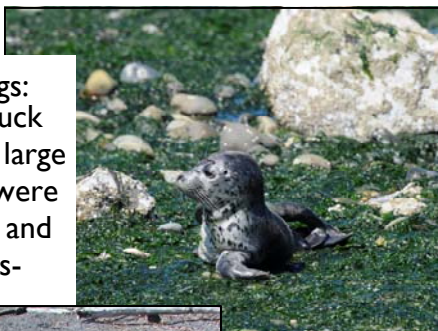
Analyzing the Data:

While the data depicted in the graph above seems to indicate that Zone 3 has an unusually high number of strandings and an exceptional response rate, it must be noted that the bulk of our responders live within this zone as well (it encompasses the majority of the city). Additionally, Fort Worden and the Marine Science Center are within this zone, further increasing the likelihood of an animal being reported and of a responder being available (staff are on duty 7 days a week).

Unusual Strandings in Our Region

This year we had two fairly unusual strandings:

1. A harbor seal pup at Fort Flagler that stuck around from 7/24 – 7/30, necessitating a large contingent of dedicated volunteers that were willing to remind inquisitive park visitors and their canine companions to keep their distance from the pup.



2. A Steller Sea Lion carcass was found by Kateri Schmerler on 8/28/10 near Gardiner. We are in the process of collecting this skeleton. Unfortunately, the skull has gone missing, but the PTMSC “C.S.I. Team” is hot on the trail!

Regional NWMMSN Meeting, October 2010

Unusual Strandings in Puget Sound 2010:



Stomach contents of the Gray whale at the ferry dock.

Bryde's Whale, January 16. This is the first confirmed sighting or stranding of this species in the Pacific Northwest that Cascadia Research Collective is aware of. Due to a thin blubber layer, cause of death is thought to be starvation and resulting cold exposure.



Another highly unusual **Bryde's Whale** stranding occurred on December 4. This was an immature male that was the victim of severe vessel-strikes.

Three PTMSC Staff (Chrissy, Jess and Heather) and one EJCMMSN volunteer attended a 24hr HAZWOPER training that focused on **oiled wildlife response**. Due to the enormous complexity of oil spill response, it was determined that if a spill occurred locally, EJCMMSN and PTMSC would predominantly act within our current role and capacity as a stranding network in spill assessment and volunteer coordination.

Finally, we'd like to extend our profound gratitude to all of our volunteers. As always, it is your hard work and dedication that makes our work possible.

- Total **gray whale** strandings: 7 whales, 4 in Puget Sound
- Gray Whale at Fautleroy ferry dock: most ingested trash of any species of whale in P.S.

Increased number of male **Steller Sea Lions** stranding on the outer coast



Guadalupe Fur Seals are continuing to strand, despite being markedly outside their range.

Sea Lion deaths on the Oregon Coast:

More and more sea lions have been dying of leptospirosis, a contagious bacterial disease that causes kidney failure and is present in the animals' urine. Since leptospirosis can be transmitted to humans and other animals, Oregon State University marine biologists are recommending that beach visitors maintain at least a 50 foot distance from any beached animal while keeping dogs on a leash.

Any questions about this newsletter?

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