



SR³

SEALIFE RESPONSE + REHAB + RESEARCH

2017-2018
Impact Report



Our Mission: Promoting the health and welfare
of marine wildlife in the Pacific Northwest.

*This aerial image of a pregnant Southern Resident killer whale
foraging with her offspring was captured during our health
assessments in September 2018.*

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

It has been just over two years since SeaLife Response, Rehabilitation and Research (SR³) was formed. This publication marks our first report to the community—an exciting milestone we are proud to share with you! Though we are still a young and growing organization, we already have much to celebrate thanks to supporters like you.

Response to marine animals in distress is one of three pillars of SR³'s work. In 2017, we created Washington's only marine wildlife ambulance and formed the region's first collaborative large whale entanglement response team. Since then we have helped many animals receive emergency care in the field—a first in the Pacific Northwest—from stabilizing and transporting threatened fur seals to assisting whales entangled in fishing gear.

Research is another area of focus and a vital part of creating positive, widespread change.

Many of our efforts have centered around the critically endangered Southern Resident killer whales, monitoring their health to inform recovery efforts and studying similar populations to seek insights into their decline.

Rehabilitation is the last critical gap in marine mammal protection around the Pacific Northwest, and one which we are still striving to fill. With your help, we are currently laying the groundwork for a facility which will enable the rehabilitation of sea otters, harbor porpoise, sea lions, adult seals, and several endangered species for the first time in our region.

At a time when entanglement reports and strandings are at record highs—and Southern

Resident killer whale populations continue to decline—there has never been a more urgent need for our efforts. The health of marine wildlife is closely linked with our own, and every partner like you is critical to creating a healthier future for us all. Thank you for helping us chart a new course for marine mammal protection in the Pacific Northwest.

With gratitude,



Casey McLean
Casey McLean
Executive Director



Merideth Tall
Merideth Tall
Board President

THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST'S

MARINE ANIMALS ARE IN DISTRESS

ONLY 75 Southern Resident killer whales remain

950

Marine mammals strand on regional beaches every year

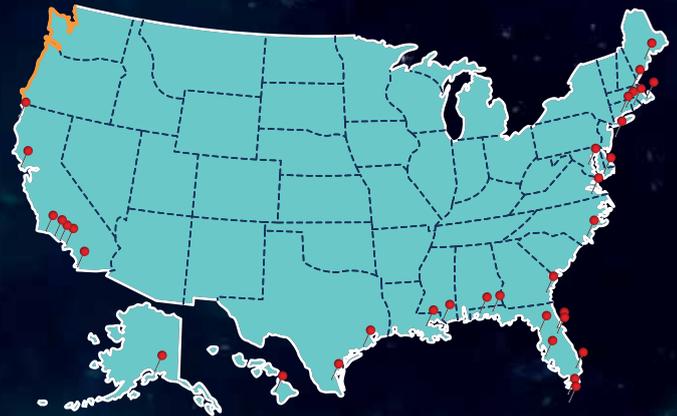
5x

Increase in Washington's entanglement reports

70%

Of whales become entangled at some point in their lives

Washington and Oregon lack a facility dedicated to marine wildlife rehabilitation



SR³ PROTECTS MARINE WILDLIFE

WITH EMERGENCY RESPONSE, RESEARCH AND OUTREACH



151 FLIGHT HOURS
COLLECTING CRITICAL HEALTH DATA

112

EVENTS

Outreach and
response training

424

POUNDS

Garbage removed
from local beaches

13,248
MILES

Traveled for emergency
response missions

EMERGENCY RESPONSES BY ANIMAL

18



Whales

19



Sea Lions

2



Sea Otters

24



Seals

1



Sea Turtle



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RESPONSE

SR³ deploys skilled emergency response teams on both land and water to help marine animals in distress.



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SR³'s Entanglement Response Specialist, Doug Sandilands, working with collaborators to free a humpback whale from a life-threatening entanglement in fishing gear.

Entanglement

From sea turtles and seals to dolphins and whales, marine animals today face great risk of becoming entangled in fishing gear or debris. In fact, entanglements are the leading source of human-caused death for many species of marine wildlife. Yet until SR³ was formed, the Washington and Oregon Coast did not have a year-round dedicated team available to respond to and help these animals.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, SR³ made great strides in filling this gap in marine animal services, including:

- ▶ **Established the region's first collaborative, year-round large whale entanglement response team**
- ▶ Successfully located and **assisted three whales entangled in fishing gear**, giving them a much greater chance of survival
- ▶ **Collected data to identify equipment with the greatest potential for entangling animals**, guiding joint efforts to find large-scale solutions
- ▶ **Delivered entanglement identification and response training to over 700 individuals**—from fishermen and boaters to tribal members and first responders

Stranding

When marine animals are sick, injured or even lost, they can wash ashore and become unable to return to the water, known as stranding. Marine animals are important indicators of ocean health and often strand due to human impacts on the environment. We have seen an increasing number of animals, including threatened fur seals and sea otters, stranding on Pacific Northwest beaches in recent years.

In 2017, **SR³ created Washington's first marine wildlife ambulance**, partnering with several government and non-profit agencies to be on call for emergency response. Now for the first time in our region, stranded marine animals can receive stabilizing medical care in the field, and we have:

- ▶ **Conducted 64 emergency response missions**—from performing health assessments on elephant seals to stabilizing harbor seal pups and transporting endangered animals
- ▶ **Created specialized sea otter equipment and emergency oil spill response plans** in partnership with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ▶ Collaborated to accomplish the **first successful rescue of a stranded young gray whale in the Pacific Northwest** (pictured below)

After three days of veterinary and supportive care, high tides and a pulley system the team created returned this stranded gray whale safely to the ocean.



RESEARCH

By building scientific understanding and sharing our knowledge, SR³ works to protect the Pacific Northwest's iconic marine life.



Seeking to better understand the decline of the Southern Resident killer whales, SR³'s Marine Mammal Research Director, Dr. Holly Fearnbach, studies bottlenose dolphins due to their population's close similarities.

SR³'s scientific research projects are largely centered around vulnerable whale and dolphin populations. Currently several of our efforts are focused on the region's critically endangered Southern Resident killer whales.

Twice each year, our marine mammal experts conduct health assessments on every Southern Resident killer whale present in the area. The data we collect not only helps inform emergency response efforts for ailing individuals, such as our collaboration for the emaciated juvenile known as J50 in the summer of 2018, but it also informs policies which benefit the entire population.

SR³ recognizes that collaboration and community education are essential to improving marine animal health. Only by partnering with other non-profit and government agencies on research and conservation efforts—and showing people how human health is intricately linked to the marine environment—can we identify and address the root cause of marine health issues.

From scientific research projects to community outreach events, key projects and successes in 2017 and 2018 included:

- ▶ **Influenced public policy with our health data on the Southern Resident killer whales**, helping preserve their precious food resources and ensure extra protections for sick and pregnant whales



- ▶ **Uncovered core insights about respiratory health and relative body condition in large whales** along the Pacific Northwest and Antarctic coasts
- ▶ **Contributed to eight scientific research publications** in peer-reviewed journals, helping drive the field of knowledge around marine mammal conservation efforts
- ▶ **Engaged the public in marine health issues at 112 community events**, educating people about the challenges marine animals face and how they can help

Using a drone, SR³ collects aerial photographs to assess the health of marine wildlife. These images allow us to monitor the body condition of Southern Resident killer whales.

FINANCIALS & SUPPORT

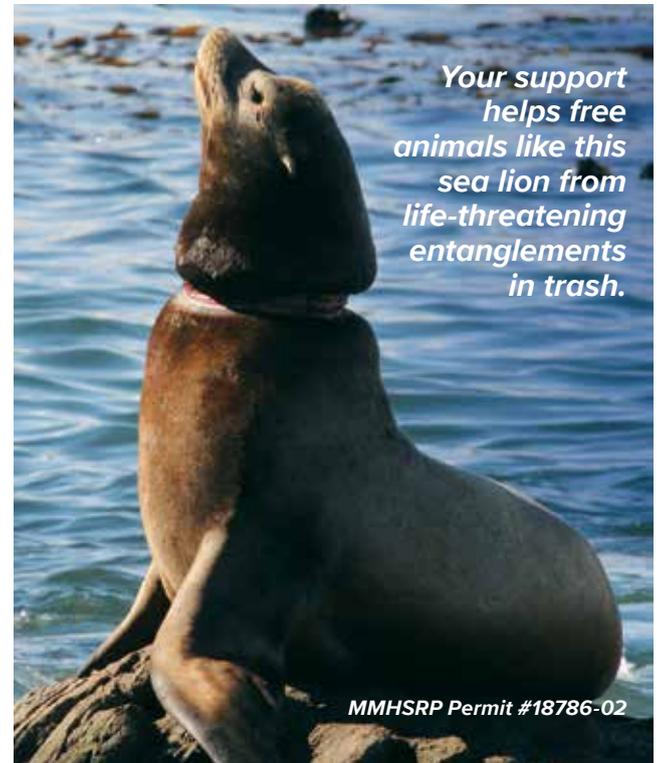
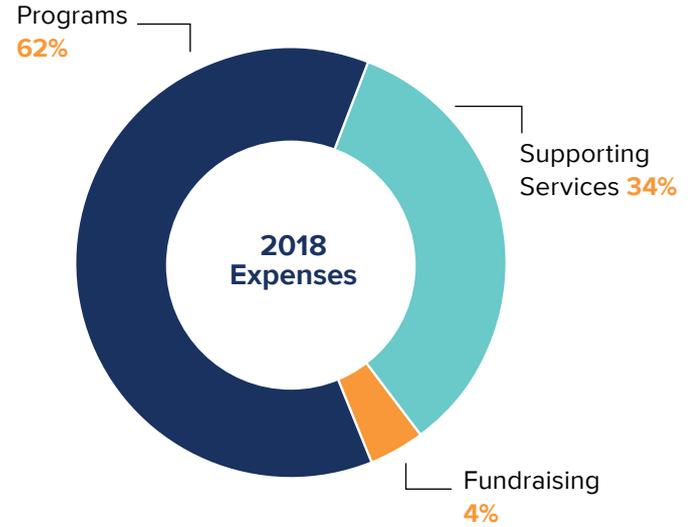
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOME	2017*	2018
Contributions and grants	\$1,509,677	\$793,220
In-kind donations	6,494	9,379
Other income	16,413	2,390
Total Income	\$1,532,584	\$804,989
EXPENSES		
Programs	\$727,594	\$589,491
Supporting services	487,872	324,816
Fundraising	137,926	39,726
Total Expenses	\$1,353,392	\$954,033

*SR³ conducted a capital fund drive to purchase essential equipment, which significantly increased the amount of contributions and expenses in 2017.

BALANCE SHEET

	2017	2018
Total Assets	\$791,815	\$776,974
Liabilities	180,000	120,000
Net Assets	611,815	656,974
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$791,815	\$776,974



Staff

Casey Mclean, Executive Director & Co-founder—Casey is a marine biologist and licensed veterinary nurse with 15 years of experience in marine mammal, sea turtle and wildlife rehabilitation. An active member of the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network, Casey is also a trained oil-spill and whale entanglement responder.

Holly Fearnbach, PhD, Marine Mammal Research Director—Dr. Fearnbach has worked with government, NGO and academic research groups on studies to support the conservation of whales and dolphins for more than two decades. A leading researcher in the field of marine mammal health, Dr. Fearnbach's work has been highlighted in 24 scientific publications.

Doug Sandilands, Entanglement Response Specialist—Doug has nearly 20 years of experience in whale entanglement research and response. Certified by NOAA Fisheries as a Level Four Primary Disentangler, Doug has worked on more than 75 entanglement response missions and trained nearly 60 other whale entanglement responders.

2018 Board of Directors

Jody Allen
Deborah Franco
Greg Masten
Raven Skyriver
Elaine Spencer
Merideth Tall
Dylan Vecchione



SR³ is honored by the contributions of many dedicated volunteers like these—who collected 150 pounds of garbage during a beach clean-up event in 2018—thank you!

2018 Scientific Advisory Board

Dr. Joseph K Gaydos, VMD, PhD
Dr. Martin Haulena, DVM, MSc, DACZM
Dr. Christopher Mah, PhD
Dr. Peter Rabinowitz, MD, MPH
Dr. Karrie Rose, DVM, DVSC
Dr. Claire Simeone, DVM
Dr. Michael Ziccardi, DVM, PhD

Field Partners

Cascadia Research Collective
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
SeaDoc Society
The Marine Mammal Center
U.S. Coast Guard
Vancouver Aquarium
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network

Corporate and Foundation Partners

Barefoot Eco Outfitters
Clipper Vacations
McCaw Family Foundation
Lindblad Expeditions—National Geographic Conservation Fund
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Pacific Life Foundation
Patagonia
Sea Otter Foundation and Trust
SeaWorld
SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund
Shell Oil Company Foundation
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Two Herons Foundation
Wags and Menace Foundation
Wild Lives Foundation

Photo Credits

Julia O'Hearn
Wendy Szaniszló
The Whale Museum



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Many animals like the ones pictured in this report were helped because of support from people like you. ***Thank you!***



SR³
SEALIFE RESPONSE + REHAB + RESEARCH

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