

Welcome to the Pacific Mammal Research September 2017
Newsletter.



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Welcome to Pacific Mammal Research!



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September 2017 Newsletter

Summer Wind-Down

It may still be warm and sunny here in Washington, but we're definitely feeling that cooler air in the mornings which can only mean one thing - September is here! Fall is always exciting for us at PacMam as our harbor porpoise sightings typically increase during this season, and we also start to see an increase in the number of new calves present. Watching them try to

keep up with the adults and practicing their surface breathing may look sweet, but serves as a reminder of the many challenges there are for small cetaceans living in the ocean and how well they have adapted to this environment.

The intensity of the Summer season is finally starting to die down, with the last month being one of our busiest periods. Keep reading to find out what we've been up to and what exciting things we have coming your way!



Harbor seals taking a nap while hauled out on some rocks.

Anacortes STEM Foundation's STEM Camp 2017

PacMam researchers had a great time teaching middle schoolers about marine biology during the Anacortes STEM Foundation's "Summer STEM Camp" last month. The Camp was offered to 6th-8th grade students and gave them the opportunity to choose two workshops which they participated in over a 5-day period. PacMam hosted an "Intro to Marine Biology" class, teaching students about the marine ecosystem and its inhabitants all the way from plankton and algae to marine mammals. Tide-pooling, plankton-building and water quality testing were just some of the hands-on activities the students were engaged in, and by all accounts had a great time doing it!

You can read more about the Camp and our participation in [this great article](#) by the Anacortes American!



Dr. Elliser plays a predator-prey game with STEM Camp students, teaching them about natural selection and how selective pressures can influence predators and their prey.

Marine Biologist For A Day Experience

Being a marine biologist is something that many people dream of, yet often the reality is very different from what they imagined. One great way to share what we do and encourage the next generation of scientists is by having young people come work with us directly. And we had the chance to do just that this month, hosting the winner of our "marine biologist for a day" experience.

As one of the prizes up for grabs at the Anacortes STEM Foundation annual dinner auction, this experience offers the winner the chance to come work with PacMam's researchers for a day, giving them a real-life insight into the world of marine mammal research. We had a great time working with our winner this month, and would like to thank him and his family for their support and for being part of this experience - it is always a pleasure and a privilege to share our knowledge and excitement for what we do, especially with such fantastic research assistants!

If you or someone you know is interested in coming to volunteer with us at PacMam, or would like us to talk to your group about what we do, drop us a line! You can reach us via email at cindy.elliser@pacmam.org or give us a call at (360) 202-2860.



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Our newest identified harbor porpoise Prowler, named by our "marine biologist for a day" winner.

Thanks To Our Volunteers!

We are incredibly thankful to have a dedicated network of volunteers who share our love for the local marine life, providing us with support and resources that are an essential component to continuing our work here in the Salish Sea. We have been fortunate to work with one such volunteer this summer: Sanne, a student from the Netherlands visiting Washington with her family, who kindly offered to contribute photos of marine mammals observed during her travels around the area. Sanne is a volunteer with [SOS Dolfijn](#), a cetacean rehabilitation center based in the Netherlands. She contributed many fantastic photos and has provided us with additional data, as well as some possible resightings of known harbor porpoises from our existing catalogue.

We would like to express our thanks to Sanne, and to all our volunteers, who are willing to share their time and talent with us to further our work on these enigmatic creatures.



© Sanne Hessing

One of the photos contributed by our volunteer, Sanne. A little blurry, but if you look closely you can see the size of the fish this harbor porpoise is trying to eat - he may have bitten off more than he can chew this time!

Coming Up: Society for Marine Mammalogy Conference, Halifax 2017

The biennial Society for Marine Mammalogy (SMM) conference is a highlight for marine mammal scientists, attended by our peers from all over the world, and is a fantastic opportunity to network, learn about cutting-edge research in our field, and share our own work with like-minded individuals. This year's conference will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia in October and our PacMam researchers are looking forward to attending and presenting our work on harbor porpoises here in the Salish Sea. You can learn more about the conference and the events [here](#).

Coming Soon...



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Normally graceful, this great blue heron struggled to ride out a boat's wake on the kelp bed!

Our social media outlets are a fun way to stay up to date with the happenings here at PacMam and learn interesting facts and information about other marine topics. We're on [Facebook](#) (search for "Pacific Mammal Research - PacMam"), [Instagram](#) (under "PacificMammalResearch"), and now on [Google+](#) (under "Pacific Mammal Research - PacMam"), so make sure you get connected! And, as always, our [website](#) is there for you to read more about what we do, donate, see any upcoming events, and learn how YOU can get involved with PacMam.

Enjoy this first taste of Fall, we'll be back in October with more news!

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