

Northern Elephant Seal



Mirounga angustirostris



MOLTING- Please DO NOT Disturb Keep pets away and on leashes

Juvenile elephant seals haul out and go through their molting process in Washington State. Molting is a natural condition that takes 4-5 weeks to complete. Some animals will have skin lesions covering their body, this condition is called scabby molt. This condition attracts birds; they will peck at the lesions making the condition of the animal look even worse. Elephant seals are vulnerable during molting and some will not survive.

You can expect to see this seal haul out along the shoreline for several weeks, occasionally entering the water and returning to the same area again. Hauling out allows the skin to warm up and help speed up the molting process. Please do not attempt to pour water on the animal or feed it, it has the ability to return to the water and forage for food as necessary.

Elephant seals are the largest seals in the northern hemisphere! This species migrates twice a year to sandy beaches in California or Mexico to mate and give birth and then returns to food-rich waters for feeding. Northern elephant seals have the ability to dive to 5000 ft. and remain underwater for up to 80 minutes while feasting on a variety of sea creatures. This includes squid, octopus, small sharks, crabs, fish, and other species.

Differences between Elephant Seals and Harbor Seals

Elephant Seal	Vs.	Harbor Seal
Black	Whisker Color	White or Gray
Males: 12-16 ft. 2.5 tons Females: 7-12 ft. 1 ton	Size	4-6 ft. & 110-310 lbs. Males and Females are the same size
Light Brown	Color	Gray with black spots
Extended snout	Face Shape	Flat face and snout

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the local Northwest Marine Mammal Stranding Network at: _____ or 1-800-853-1964
To report harassment or a violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act call the NOAA Office for Law Enforcement at: 1-800-853-1964