



Central Puget Sound Marine Mammal Stranding Network

SAY HELLO TO ELSIE MAY "OUR PARTY GIRL"

Issue #3



Hello All: This is the third in a series of newsletters about our Whidbey Island born elephant seal family of four. Issue #1 was a general history of Northern Elephant Seals (NES). #2 was the Story of Ellison.

Issue #3—The Story of Elsie May, born March 10, 2018

Elsie Mae was born on March 10, 2018 on Mother Ellie's favorite birthing spot/nursery on Whidbey. She was nursed for several weeks before Mom left. Then she spent another few weeks molting from her black baby coat and getting her streamlined elephant seal shape.

She was tagged on both rear flippers with the number 1285, so she can be tracked.



After leaving Whidbey, Elsie Mae was not seen again until October when she was reported on Orcas Island crashing a wedding. In mid April 2019, she had come to make mischief in Skyline. There she caused concern and many a headache when she would roam between the parking lot, streets, private property, the park. Many volunteers "babysat" to keep people away from her, but the problem really was Elsie Mae approaching and following them.



Thanks to many photographers for capturing Elsie Mae's personality. Jazz Morgan, Marlene Bocast, Spencer Andrich, Sammie Kempbell, Kristina Trowbridge, Sandy Dubpernell, Garry Heinrich, Jill Hein, and others.

Eventually the decision was made to relocate her to a remote beach on April 27. The Navy Sea Plane Base in Oak Harbor was chosen. That did not go well! She was taken by truck to the site, the ramp was placed, the cage was opened and she scampered down the ramp, went to the water's edge and promptly swam away.



Later that day she attended a wedding at Cama Beach State Park on Camano. The rangers kept her out of trouble until she had completed her molt. She left the area in mid May and was not reported again until October 17, 2019 at Rosario Beach.

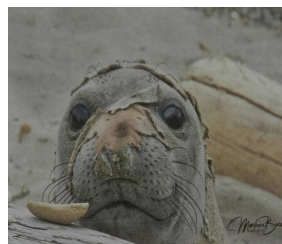


She remained at Rosario for about 24 days before being filmed pulling herself over the driftwood and disappearing into the water for parts unknown. But that was not before she posed for a great photo op at the Salish statue of Ko-kwal-alwoot.



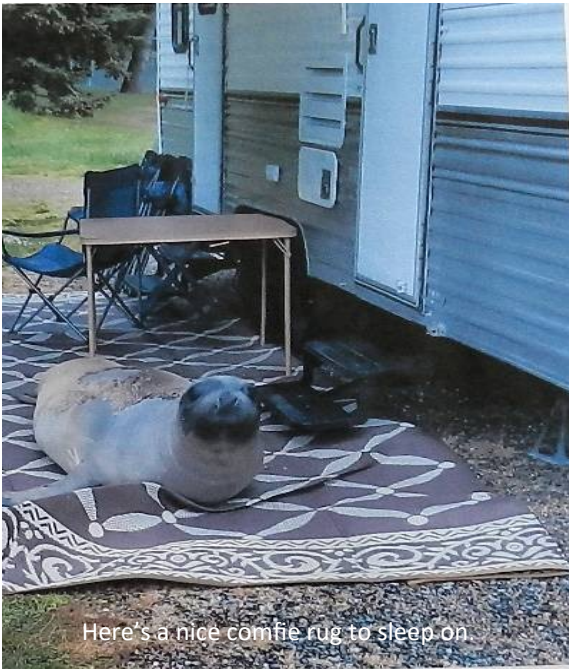
Now it is 2020. Elsie Mae came back to the west side of Whidbey on March 22, then passed through Rosario and arrived at Anacortes on March 31 ending up at Cabana Park and Tugboat Park in Skyline. She spent much of her time trying to get closer to people, especially recognizing her baby sitters. She got into lots of mischief again (see antics page) but the Covid19 pandemic at least prevented large gatherings. She completed her molt and was not seen after May 20.

If she keeps to her 2019 schedule, she won't return until late fall.



Elsie Mae's antics in Skyline 2020

Elsie Mae is part of a local elephant seal behavioral study. If there were ever a candidate for a behavioral study it is this little 2 year old with her bizarre behavior.



Here's a nice comfy rug to sleep on



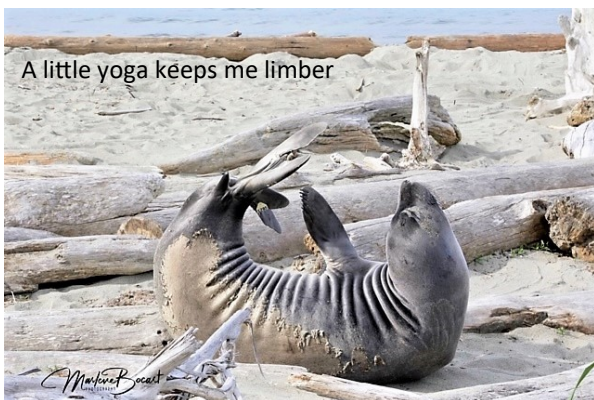
Hmm I wonder what's in here?



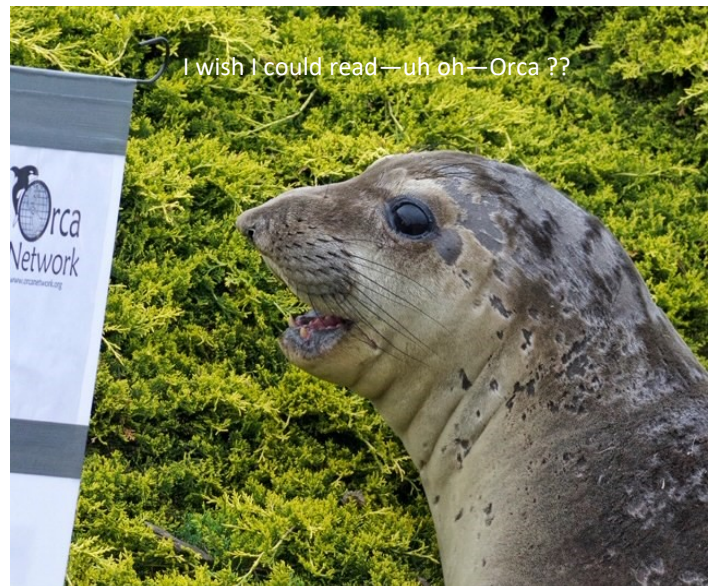
Helllooooo—is anybody in there?



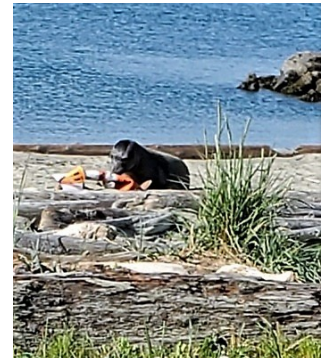
I have a new BFF to play with



A little yoga keeps me limber



I wish I could read—uh oh—Orca ??



I don't like this sign I think I will pull it off and then crush the cone.

All marine mammals are protected under the Federal Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 USC 1361-1407). Harassing these animals in any way that disturbs their natural behavior could face civil penalties of up to \$11,000 in fines and possibly one year in prison.

STAY 100 YARDS AWAY

We welcome your comments and questions. Please share this information.

Report any violations to one of the numbers below.

Thanks and enjoy... and please share your knowledge.

Orca Network: 1-866-ORCANET (1-866-672-2638)

NOAA Enforcement Hotline—1-800-853-1964

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Please note Orca Network's phone is 1-866-ORCANET
(not 1-800-ORCANET as previously posted)