**Harbor Seal Local Ecological Knowledge**

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

This protocol outlines interview questions to be conducted with [Interviewees] at [location/organization/site].

Participant Name(s):

Email:

Phone:

*(circle preference)*

Location:

Date:

Start Time:

End Time:

**Introduction:**

Thank you so much for taking time to participate in this interview with us. The purpose of this interview is to understand more about the local harbor seal population in Pacific Grove. We are conducting a series of semi-structured interviews with local experts that have experience observing this population.

We will keep your responses confidential. We will not share your name or identifying information if or when we report specific quotes within overall findings. Additionally, the information shared in this interview will not be directly shared with your employer.

The interview will last between 40-60 minutes and will be recorded and transcribed for later analysis. Can I have a quick verbal confirmation that this is okay with you? If you see me writing things down, I’m just taking notes on ideas or thoughts to follow up on. In the interview we will cover the following topics: your background, why you believe it’s important to monitor this population, and the behaviors of the seals themselves. Please feel free to take as much time as you need to think about your responses.

Do you consent to have this interview recorded?

[START AUDIO RECORDER]

Before we begin, do you have any questions for me?

**Topic 1: Personal Experience**

* Can you please tell me about your life?
  + Further Details:
    - Career
    - Places lived
* What kind of experience do you have with marine biology in general?
  + Further Details:
    - Formal trainng
    - Education
    - Time spent in/around the field
    - Other science volunteering
* Tell me about how you got started monitoring this harbor seal population.
  + Further Details:
    - Timing
    - How they heard about it or got started?
    - Experience with other populations?
* Tell me about a typical day spent monitoring these seals?
  + Further Details:
    - How much time do you spend in a day?
    - How many days in a week?

**Topic 2: Motivation**

* Why is it important to monitor this population?
  + Further Details:
    - What would happen without the monitoring?
    - Why did you decide to start monitoring the population?
* What does the community at large think about this population?
  + Further Details:
    - Do they value the monitoring you do?
    - What about the community beyond Pacific Grove?
* How would you describe the impact that the monitoring work has?

**Topic 3: The Harbor Seals**

* How would you characterize the overall status of this population?
  + Further Details:
    - What would you say your assessment is based on?
* Can you describe how the population has changed since you started monitoring it?
* What would you say is driving any changes in the population?
* How would you describe the way the population interacts with humans?
  + Further Details:
    - Positive AND Negative
    - Are they commonly disturbed
* What are some common disturbances that you’ve seen the seals experience?
  + Further Details:
    - How common?
    - How do the seals respond?
    - Are the responses consistent among individuals? Do some individuals respond differently?
* How do seasons seem to affect the disturbance responses?
  + Further Details:
    - Pupping season?
* How have these disturbances changes over time? Both in nature and in frequency?
* Describe what you’ve experienced to be the consequences of human disturbance.
  + Further Details:

**Final Questions**

Before we end, do you have any questions for us, or anything else you would like to share that we haven’t covered?

Additionally, **do you or any of your colleagues know anyone that may have a valuable perspective to share or may be interested in participating in this research? What is their contact information?**

Any additional resources relevant to our research topic?

Finally, are you willing to be contacted again if we have any follow up questions?

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your insights on this important ecological issue. We really value the expertise and experience you contribute to this important conversation.