

San Diego Coastkeeper® Position on Harbor Seal Rookery at Casa Beach, La Jolla 03.09.10

San Diego Coastkeeper (Coastkeeper) is a local nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve, restore and enhance the region's waters and lands that affect our coastal areas for the people, plants and wildlife that depend on them. We are also committed to the protection of healthy coastal ecosystems.

Coastkeeper has been engaged in discussions and actions involving uses of the harbor seal rookery and Children's Pool at South Casa Beach, La Jolla, since 2004. Over the past six years we have met with a number of individuals and groups who are involved in efforts to secure Casa Beach as a marine mammal park and those who endeavor to keep the beach open to shared human and seal use year round. We respectfully offer our position and associated comments regarding the harbor seal rookery and haul-out at Casa Beach.

San Diego Coastkeeper supports the protection of the harbor seal colony and rookery at Casa Beach (Children's Pool) in La Jolla in the following manner:

- **We support closure of the beach rookery to human use during pupping season (December 1 – June 1) so as the seals may give birth and nurse their young with no disturbance.** A similar, successful form of management at Carpinteria State Beach has been implemented since the 1980s. We support a move away from the current shared use policy of Casa Beach during this timeframe because it does not serve the best interest of either the seals or public safety. Female harbor seals can become increasingly aggressive should they sense disturbance or intrusion on their newborns. Additionally, human interaction can cause seals to be separated from young leading to abandonment.
- **We encourage federal enforcement of the Marine Mammal Protection Actⁱ of 1972 at Casa Beach, which prohibits the hunting, harassing, capture or killing of any marine mammal or attempt to do soⁱⁱ.**
- **We support the permanent installment of educational signage about the harbor seals at Casa Beach, as well as the installment of a guideline rope during non-pupping season.** These measures would serve to educate and promote public safety and safety of the seal colony. We further encourage the City and citizen groups to engage in activities and behaviors that would help curtail confrontations between pro-seal and pro-beach advocates.
- **We support the prohibition of dogs on the beach at all times.**

ⁱ <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/laws/mmpa.pdf>

ⁱⁱ "The effect of this set of requirements is to insist that the management of animal populations be carried out with the interest of the animals as the prime consideration." - House of Representatives, No. 707, 92nd Congress, 1st Session, 18, 22 [December 4, 1971]