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NOAA's Fisheries Service awards \$1 million to partners in 10 states to rescue stranded marine mammals and investigate health problems

NOAA's Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) announced today the award of 12 grants to partner organizations totaling more than \$1 million to respond to and rehabilitate stranded marine mammals and collect data on their health.

The federal John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program allows funding to be given to academic institutions, nonprofit organizations and state agencies that are members of the National Marine Mammal Stranding Network and that apply for assistance. A detailed list of the 2013 round of annual grants awarded is found below.

"The Prescott grant program helps support our stranding network partners and their life-saving rescue work to help provide humane care to whales, dolphins, seals or sea lions that are sick, injured or in peril," said Dr. Teri Rowles, NOAA Fisheries' lead marine mammal veterinarian and coordinator of the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program. "Marine mammals are important indicator species of ocean health since they are top-level predators that eat many of the same fish that we do, and several species live in coastal areas utilized by people. When marine mammals show signs of illness, they may be signaling changes in the marine environment that might have significant implications for the overall health of our ocean ecosystems, so monitoring the health of marine mammals provides vital information on the impacts of, and to, humans."

The Stranding Network is comprised of trained professionals and volunteers from more than 100 organizations that partner with NOAA Fisheries to investigate marine mammal strandings, rehabilitate animals, and assist with research on marine mammal health issues. NOAA Fisheries relies on its long-standing partnership with Stranding Network members to obtain the vital information about marine mammal health needed to develop effective conservation programs for marine mammal populations in the wild.

Since the Prescott program's inception, NOAA Fisheries has awarded 471 Prescott grants to 93 recipients in 25 states and 2 U.S. territories, totaling more than \$41.8 million. Over the years, Prescott grants have enabled network members to make improvements to their operations such as: expanding response coverage; enhancing response capabilities and data collection; and improving rehabilitation of marine mammals.

Prescott Grants are made under Title IV of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which authorizes NOAA Fisheries to fund eligible members of the national stranding network through grants and cooperative agreements.

For more information about the Prescott Grant Program, details on each 2013 grant, eligibility requirements, and funding opportunities, please go to:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/prescott/>

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and

marine resources. Join us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/noaa>, Twitter and our other social media channels.

Prescott Grant Awarded in FY13

State	Applicant	Project Title	Federal Funding
Northeast Region			
MA	International Fund for Animal Welfare	Improved Stranding Response and Data Collection through Collaboration	\$71,518
ME	College of the Atlantic	Maintenance and Enhancement of the Marine Mammal Stranding Response Program (MMSRP) for the Mid-Coast/Downeast Region of Maine, 2013-2014	\$79,996
NY	Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation	Continued support for the development and deployment of the Specially Trained Animal Response Team (S.T.A.R.T)	\$99,313
Southeast Region			
FL	Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute	Supporting Marine Mammal Stranding Response Along the East Coast of Florida and Continuing Comprehensive Guidance for Public and Network Response	\$99,996
TX	Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network	Support for Operational and Enhancement Needs of the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network for the Recovery and Investigation of Live and Deceased Marine Mammal Strandings	\$99,778
Southwest Region			
CA	California Academy of Sciences	Expanding Response to and Data Collection from Dead Stranded Marine Mammals in Northern California, Specifically in Sonoma County	\$99,945
CA	The Regents of the University of California, Santa Cruz	Enhanced Stranding Response and Expansion of the Marine Mammal Anatomy and Pathology Library	\$80,494

		(MMAPL) at U.C. Santa Cruz	
Northwest Region			
OR	Oregon State University	Oregon Marine Mammal Stranding Network	\$100,000
WA	Cascadia Research Collective	Marine Mammal Stranding Response in Puget Sound and Washington Outer Coast, and for Large Cetaceans throughout Washington State, 2013-2016	\$88,802
Alaska Region			
AK	North Slope Borough	Enhanced Stranded Marine Mammal Response in Northern Alaska	\$85,992
AK	Seward Association for the Advancement of Marine Science	Alaska Region Stranding Network Enhancement 2013-2015	\$72,683
Pacific Islands Region			
HI	The Marine Mammal Center	Support for a Hawaiian Monk Seal Health Care Facility: A Critical Tool to Enhance Survival of Critically Endangered Seals	\$67,900