

WHAT DO I DO IF I FIND A STRANDED ANIMAL?

1. Call for help. If the animal appears to be injured or dead, notify the appropriate authorities. The names and contact numbers of authorized organizations are on the back panel of this brochure. Do not touch the animal or push it back into the water. Doing so can cause the animal to



re-strand and die. If it goes back into the water on its own, do not follow it or try to swim with it.

2. Monitor from a safe distance. Remain 100 yards or more away from marine mammals and sea turtles, as marine mammals are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act.

- Do not get too close or crowd around the animal, for the safety of you and the animal. Remember that these animals are wild and will try to defend themselves, even in a weakened state. They may bite, and you may scare them back into the sea, possibly putting them at even greater risk.
- Protect yourself by not touching the animal. Wild animals can carry many diseases, parasites, and bacteria. Some of these can be transmitted to humans, even if the animal is no longer alive.

3. Watch carefully. Observe the position of the animal (whether or not it is alive) and monitor its breathing. If possible, wait for members of the Northeast Region Stranding Network to arrive so that you can quickly direct them to the animal. They will provide the best possible care for the stranded marine mammal or sea turtle.

HOW DO I CONTACT THE NORTHEAST REGION STRANDING NETWORK?

To report a stranded marine animal, call the closest Stranding Network member and follow the instructions inside this brochure.



MAINE
Allied Whale, College of the Atlantic
207-288-5644 or 207-266-1326



Maine Department of Marine Resources
800-532-9551



University of New England
Marine Animal Rehabilitation Center
207-580-0447



MASSACHUSETTS
Cape Cod Stranding Network
508-743-9548



New England Aquarium
617-973-5247



Whale Center of New England
978-281-6351



Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
508-349-2615



CONNECTICUT/ RHODE ISLAND
Mystic Aquarium Marine Mammal
and Sea Turtle Stranding Program
860-572-5955 ext. 107



NEW YORK
Riverhead Foundation for
Marine Research and Preservation
631-369-9829



NEW JERSEY
Marine Mammal Stranding Center
609-266-0538



DELAWARE
MERR Institute
302-228-5029



MARYLAND
National Aquarium in Baltimore
Marine Animal Rescue Program
410-408-6633 or 800-628-9944



Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Stranding Program
800-628-9944



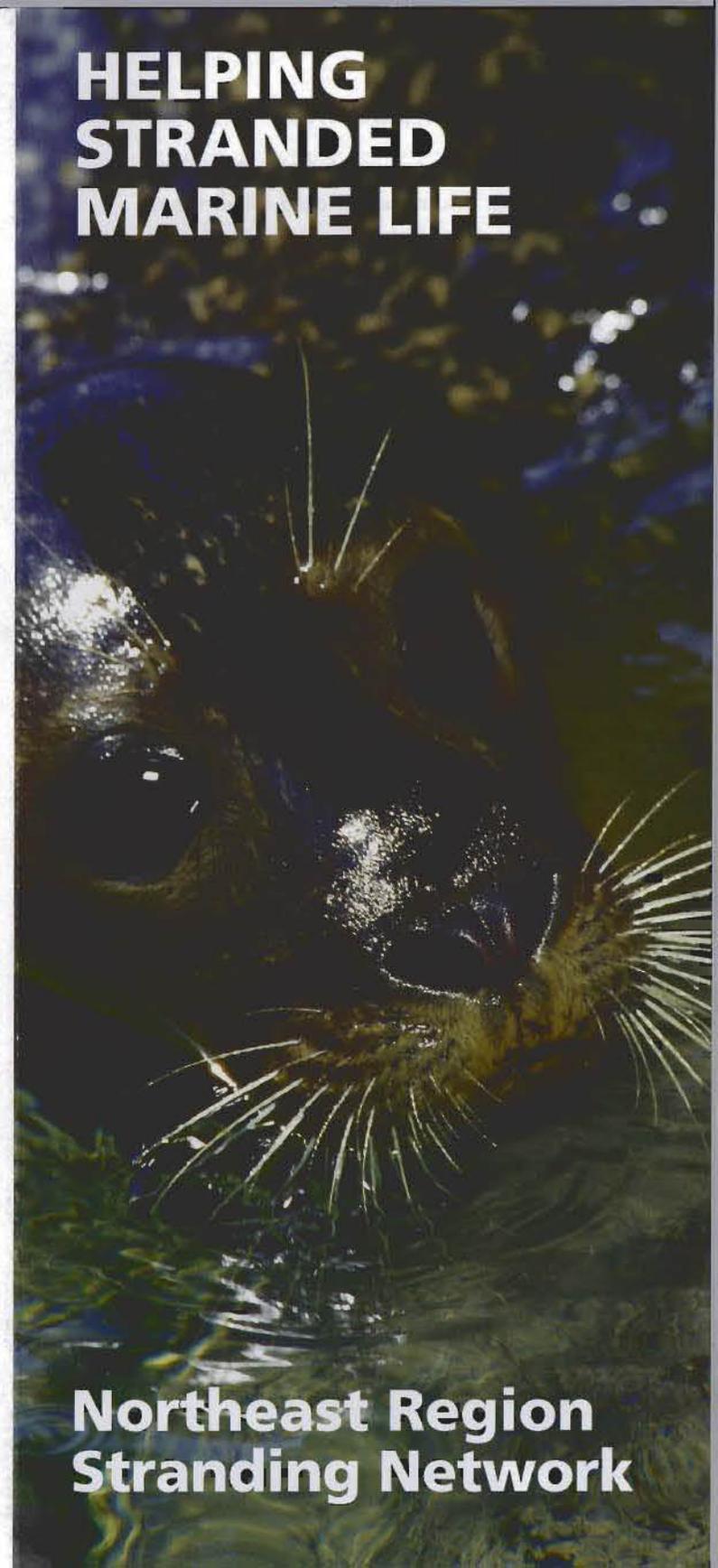
VIRGINIA
Virginia Institute of Marine Science Sea Turtle
Stranding and Research Program
866-493-1085



Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center
757-437-6159

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HELPING STRANDED MARINE LIFE



Northeast Region Stranding Network

WHAT IS A STRANDING?

Marine mammals and sea turtles sometimes end up on our shores sick, injured, or dead. Other times, they become entrapped or disoriented and unable to return to their natural habitat without assistance. These events are known as strandings. In some cases, live stranded animals can be rescued, rehabilitated, and returned to the wild. In every case, whether alive or dead, stranded marine mammals and sea turtles reveal valuable information about their lives.



WHY DO ANIMALS STRAND?

Strandings occur naturally, but may also be caused by human behaviors. Natural causes include inability to find adequate food, disorientation in rough waters, or sickness. Human-related causes include fishing, pollution, and boating. Unfortunately, human actions—whether caused by accident or negligence—are responsible for half of all strandings in this region.



WHAT KIND OF STRANDED ANIMALS MIGHT YOU FIND ON OUR BEACHES?

Sea turtles: Most sea turtles are unable to regulate their internal body temperature and may 'cold stun' in frigid waters, a condition similar to hypothermia in humans. Sea turtles also strand due to injuries caused by boat strikes, fishing gear interactions, illness, ingestion of marine debris, and other natural and human-related causes.



Seals: Since seals spend much of their time out of water, stranding network members may watch a seal for 24 – 48 hours to see if it returns to the water on its own. Ice seals, such as harp and hooded seals, often strand with sand or rocks in their stomachs; they mistake these items for ice and consume them. Seals have been found with injuries caused by disease, fishing gear interactions, and gun shot.

Large whales: The Northeast Region experiences an average of 26 large whale strandings per year. Ship strikes are the leading identifiable cause. Entanglement in fishing gear and man-made debris also contributes significantly to large whale strandings.

Small whales, dolphins, and porpoises: These animals may be struck by boats, become entangled in fishing gear, or simply become ill. Some small whales and dolphins will mass-strand (when two or more animals strand together).

If you find a stranded animal, seek immediate assistance.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM STRANDINGS?

Each marine animal stranding gives scientists an opportunity to learn more about strandings, animal health, successful rehabilitation, and the animals themselves. Some marine mammal species are known only from stranded specimens. The samples and physical information collected provide valuable scientific information to help prevent future strandings.



WHAT IS THE NORTHEAST REGION STRANDING NETWORK?

The Northeast Region Stranding Network is made up of 15 organizations from Maine to Virginia authorized by Federal law to respond to strandings. This network plays a vital role in marine mammal research, and ultimately strives to rescue, rehabilitate, and release stranded marine mammals and sea turtles.