Harbor Seal Pup Assessment

MMoME Veteran Volunteer Training
5/16/2015
In-Depth Assessment-Using the Case of MMoME’s First 2015 Harbor Seal Pup

-4/25/2015 around noon the hotline rings
  -a young female is hiking with her dog at Plummer’s Point Preserve in South Bristol and came across a small seal that is crying (audible even in background through hotline!)

-Instructed the reporter to keep dog leashed, and take a few pictures of the pup, it’s surroundings, and a map of the trail to access the stranding site.

-Eventually, enough info on location came in to dispatch the closest available volunteers
Here’s What the Reporting Party Sent Dispatch for Photos and Location Information
Use the opportunity of animal not knowing your presence to see what it is doing, how it is acting (if possible)
Before Reporting to Hotline Dispatch...

Identify species and age class

vs.

vs.
Before Reporting to Hotline Dispatch...

Dependent pup (May-June) or a weanling (July+)?

- crying/vocalizing
- suckling
- unafraid by close approach
- may follow you around

- larger teeth
- scrappy appearance
- growling/lunging
- tries to escape
Body Condition
Before Reporting to Hotline Dispatch...
What is the Posture and behavior? Before and After Animal Knows Your There
Eyes, Ears, Nose

- Coughing?
- Sneezing?
- Discharge coming from eyes, nose, ears?
Before Reporting to Hotline Dispatch...Injuries?
Shark vs. Propeller Injuries
If You Responded to This Animal, What Would You Report to Dispatch?
If You Responded to This Animal, What Would You Report to Dispatch?

- What is species? Age class?
- Dependent or weanling?
- How would you classify body weight?
- What is its posture?
- What is its behavior?
- How do the eyes look? Ears? Nose?
- Is there any coughing or sneezing?
- Are there any obvious signs of injury? If so, what kind?
More In-Depth Assessment

After initial assessment to establish important basic information, a more detailed assessment may be necessary, depending on the situation:

- If it is a dependent pup, does it have an umbilicus? If so, what color is it? Is it dry or wet?

- If it does not have an umbilicus, what does the area look like? Is there any discharge coming from the umbilical area?
Umbilical Assessment

Is umbilicus present?

What color is it? Dry or moist? Discharge? Color?
Gum color can be very informative:
- Salmon pink is generally indicative of healthy blood flow
- Pale pink/white can mean anemia from disease or blood loss, poor circulation, dehydration, (dry and tacky), or shock
- Bright red can mean systemic infection
- Yellow/orange is associated with jaundice-liver related issues
In-Depth Assessment

-How do the gums look? What color are they?

-Are the gums dry and tacky? Moist and wet?
A Review of Level A Data

- ALWAYS collect a length measurement when possible! If exact measurement is not attainable, record your best guess.

- Best guess as to weight measurement

- Enter your data at www.mmome.org/volunteer password: sealdata
A Review of Carcass Codes

Code 1 - live animal       Code 2 - fresh dead carcass

- Fresh dead (usually within 24 hours)
- Little to no scavenger damage
- Little to no odor
- No bloating
- +/- rigor mortis
Code 3

- Moderately decomposed
- Organs still recognizable
- Beginning to smell bad
- Usually has minor scavenger damage
• Extremely decomposed
• Organs unrecognizable
• Strong foul odor
• Often has extensive scavenger damage
• Mummified or skeletal remains

• Skin may be draped over bones

• Very desiccated