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NOAA offers reward for information on injured Harbor Seal

NOAA Office of Law Enforcement is offering up to \$2,500 for information leading to the successful conviction of the person or persons responsible for injuring a Harbor Seal Nov. 28 in Crescent City, Calif. The wounded 50-pound seal, which was found on the floating dock behind the Chart Room restaurant, appeared to have been shot.

"As a society we cannot tolerate such violent actions against these animals," said Special Agent in Charge Don Masters of NOAA OLE's Southwest Division. "Our agents and officers are doing all they can to bring those responsible to justice."

Harbor Seals are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. The MMPA prohibits, with certain exceptions, the "take" of marine mammals in waters or on lands under the jurisdiction of the United States and by U.S. citizens on the high seas, as well as the importation of marine mammals and marine mammal products into the U.S.

The MMPA defines "take" as "harass, hunt, capture, kill or collect," or the attempt to do so. Violations can result in a civil penalty up to \$11,000 as well as criminal penalties up to \$100,000, imprisonment of up to a year or both.

The mission of NOAA OLE is to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations enacted to conserve and protect our nation's marine resources. Those with information about the shooting should contact the NOAA OLE national hotline at 1-800-853-1964, Special Agent David Reilly at 707-826-9248 or Special Agent Tim Broadman at 707-826-9247.