



NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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Five Dolphins Strand on Santa Rosa Island

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. – NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service responded yesterday with members of the Marine Mammal Stranding Network to a report of five northern right whale dolphins stranded on Santa Rosa Island, approximately 35 miles southwest of Santa Barbara, Calif.

With aerial assistance from NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, four of the five animals were found, all deceased, and recovered for analysis. The response team consisted of personnel from NOAA's Southwest Regional Office in Long Beach, Calif., the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the National Park Service and Channel Islands Marine and Wildlife Institute.

The Marine Mammal Center's Director of Veterinary Science, Dr. Frances Gulland, will lead the team in conducting necropsies on three of the animals at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. The cause of death will likely not be available for several months.

Northern right whale dolphins are approximately six to ten feet in length and weigh up to 250 pounds. They typically travel in herds of 100 to 200 and can swim in bursts of speed up to 22 miles per hour. They exist throughout the North Pacific Ocean and are believed to number about 68,000.

The Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program is a national volunteer network of marine mammal professionals authorized by NOAA under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to respond, investigate, monitor and study marine mammal strandings.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

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On the Web:

Marine Mammal Stranding Network: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/networks.htm>

Information on northern right whale dolphins:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/cetaceans/northernrightwhaledolphin.htm>