

Guide to Identification of Dead Pinnipeds of Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

Steller Sea Lion (SSLI)



General Description: body robust with long neck; ear pinna present; facial bones fuller and rounder; gap between upper 4th and 5th post-canines; color light tan to reddish brown; vibrissae smooth and beige (adult) or brown/beige (juvenile); adult males have full, furry neck/chest and a small sagittal crest. Very uncommon on mainland.

Northern Fur Seal (NOFS)



General Description: body form long and slender with a long neck; ear pinna present (longer then sea lions); brown fur; buffy underparts; long guard hairs with very dense light-colored underfur (similar to sea otter); fur is soft and pliable and can lay in any direction; snout short, down-curved and pointed; head is football-shaped; vibrissae smooth and beige-colored; juveniles uncommon and adults very rare on mainland.

Guadalupe Fur Seal (GUFS)



General Description: body long and slender with long neck; ear pinna present (longer then sea lions); dark brown fur, buffy underparts; long guard hairs and very dense light-colored underfur (similar to sea otter); fur is soft and pliable and can lay in any direction; snout long and pointed with up-turned nose; juveniles uncommon and adults very rare on mainland. Does not breed in region, rare throughout CA.



Foreflipper: Long and broad (compared to CSLI and fur seals) extending to the end of the ribs; fur on top of flipper; bottom bare; no nails.



Foreflipper: long and narrow, extending to end of ribs; fur on top of front flipper stops at wrist (see arrow); top and bottom bare: no nails.



Foreflipper: long and narrow, extending to the end of ribs; fur extending onto top surface of flipper (see arrow); bottom bare; no nails.



Hindflipper: nails on digits 2-4; nails set back from tips by ½ the total length of flipper; fur on top of flipper, bottom bare.

Size, Age, Sex: sexual dimorphism (males larger); 100 cm (neonate/pup); 100 –200cm (immature); 220 – 290 cm (adult female and sub-adult male); 240 – 330 cm (adult male).



Hindflipper: extremely long and narrow; nails on digits 2-4; nails set back from tips by 1/5 the total length of flipper; "finger" tips of flipper extremely long (longer than both GUFS and CSLI); top of flipper furred, bottom bare.

Size, Age, Sex: sexual dimorphism (males larger); 60 cm (neonate/pup); 100 cm (immature); 100 – 165 cm (adult female and sub-adult male); 190 – 230 cm (adult male).



Hindflipper: long and narrow; nails on digits 2-4; nails set back from tips by 1/5 the total length of flipper; "finger" tips of flipper long (similar to CSLI but shorter than NOFS); top of flipper furred, bottom bare.

Size, Age, Sex: sexual dimorphism (males larger); 60 cm (neonate/pup); 100 –150 cm (immature); 150 – 170 cm (adult female or sub-adult male); 180 – 240 cm (adult male).





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California Sea Lion (CSLI)

Immature



General Description: body form slender with long neck; ear pinna present; fur course and stiff with growth towards tail; color varies from honey to dark brown (based on age, sex, molt, and individual variation); vibrissae smooth and white (adult) or black (juvenile); yearling to adult common year-round.

Harbor Seal (HASE)



General Description: body rotund; short thick neck; pinna absent; snout blunt: color variable (white, silver or black with contrasting spots); fur coarse and stiff with growth towards the tail; vibrissae white and beaded; pups (Feb – April) and all age classes occur year-round in and around rookeries.

Northern Elephant Seal (NESE)





General Description: body large and rotund; short thick neck; pinna absent; color gray to brown (black in pups) with no markings; fur coarse and stiff with growth towards the tail; vibrissae black and beaded. Adult males possess prominent proboscis and cracked, scarred chest. Common in or near rookeries from December - March. Molting season late Spring – Fall.



Foreflipper: long, extending to the end of the ribcage; fur on top surface of flipper; no nails; bottom surface bare.



Foreflipper: short and paddle-like, extending a few ribs past pit, back and front surfaces fully furred; nails present; digits similar in length.



Foreflipper: both sides of flipper fully furred, extending only a few ribs past pit; nails present; digit 1 is longer than others.



Hindflipper: nails on digits 2-4; nails set back from tips by 1/5 the total length of flipper; "finger" tips of flipper long (longer than GUFS but not longer than NOFS); bottom surface bare.

Size, Age, Sex: Sexual dimorphism (males larger at maturity). 70 –90 cm (neonate/pup); 95 – 150 cm (immature); 150 – 180 cm (adult female or sub-adult male) 180 cm - 260 (adult male). Sexually mature males with prominent sagittal crest on top of skull; neck muscular and thick.



Hindflipper: nails present on all digits; both front and back of flipper furred and webbed; digits 1-5 rounded.

Size, Age, Sex: No sexual dimorphism. 70 – 90 cm (pup); 90 – 150 cm (immature); 150 – 180 cm (adult).



Hindflipper: no nails on digits, both sides of flipper fully furred and webbed; digits 1 and 5 are much larger, longer and angled toward digits 2-4.

Size, Age, Sex: Extreme sexual dimorphism at maturity (males much larger); 120-140 cm (neonate "blackcoats"/pups 4-6 wks); 140-200 cm (immature); 200-320 cm (sub-adult male or adult female) ; 320-440 cm (adult male).

