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## **SeaWorld San Antonio and The Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network Announce an Expanded Partnership at a Critical Time**

***The partnership shores up rescue resources to assist marine mammals as the annual stranding season begins along the Texas Coast***

SAN ANTONIO (December 19, 2016) – The Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network (TMMSN) and SeaWorld San Antonio announced today a significant expansion of their partnership in helping to rescue and assist marine mammals along the Texas Coast. Over a three year period, SeaWorld San Antonio is committing approximately \$1.1 million in additional funding and resources, including: SeaWorld animal care professionals and veterinarians dedicated to work with TMMSN; as well as a new state of the art facility at SeaWorld San Antonio to provide 24-hour care for sick and stranded animals that need long term rehabilitation. This facility will ease the burden on TMMSN’s resources when rescued animals are in need of long term care.

In its 50-year history, SeaWorld has rescued more than 29,000 animals in need, and this expanded partnership will support much needed efforts in the Gulf of Mexico, and continues the company’s commitment to be the largest marine animal rescuer worldwide.

“TMMSN is one of the nation’s most dedicated animal rescue organizations, relentless in its work to help marine mammals in the wild,” said Chris Bellows, Vice President of Zoological Operations, SeaWorld San Antonio. “I am personally and professionally moved by the many volunteers who tirelessly donate their time and energy. It is a pleasure to work alongside the TMMSN and offer our professional resources as we join together to help rescue and rehabilitate stranded animals with the shared goal of returning them to the wild.”

This announcement comes at a critical time, as January marks the beginning of the annual stranding season which is triggered by winter weather, changing water temperatures and the calving season. The TMMSN typically can see up to 150 stranded or injured marine mammals each year along the Texas coast, with the most common being the bottlenose dolphin.

State Senator Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood) commended the partnership between SeaWorld and TMMSN as an example of the private and non-profit sector working hand-in-hand for the betterment of Texas wildlife. “Protecting our marine mammals and the beautiful natural habitat of the gulf coast is important to the quality of life for all Texans,” said Taylor. “I commend TMMSN for its commitment to assist and rehabilitate injured animals. With the resources that SeaWorld provides, we are helping to ensure that our marine mammal populations will continue to thrive for generations to come.”

The Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network is a non-profit organization created in 1980 to further the understanding and conservation of marine mammals through rescue and rehabilitation, research and education. TMMSN is dependent on grants as well as public and private donations. “SeaWorld has been a friend and partner for more than 30 years sharing our passion for protecting wildlife,” said Heidi Whitehead, Executive Director, TMMSN. “This additional commitment from SeaWorld allows us to continue our high level of animal care, research, and education. SeaWorld never hesitates to answer our call for assistance, making its animal care staff and veterinarians available 24/7 when we have an animal in distress,” added Whitehead.

### **About SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment**

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment™ is a leading theme park and entertainment company providing experiences that matter and inspiring guests to protect animals and the wild wonders of our world. The company is one of the world’s foremost zoological organizations and a global leader in animal welfare, training, husbandry and veterinary care. The company collectively cares for what it believes is one of the largest zoological collections in the world and has helped lead advances in the care of animals. The company also rescues and rehabilitates marine and terrestrial animals that are ill, injured, orphaned or abandoned, with the goal of returning them to the wild. The SeaWorld® rescue team has helped more than 29,000 animals in need over the last 50 years.

The company owns or licenses a portfolio of recognized brands including SeaWorld, Busch Gardens® and Sea Rescue®. Over its more than 50-year history, the company has built a diversified portfolio of 12 destination and regional theme parks that are grouped in key markets across the United States, many of which showcase its one-of-a-kind zoological collection of over 800 species of animals. The company’s theme parks feature a diverse array of rides, shows and other attractions with broad demographic appeal which deliver memorable experiences and a strong value proposition for its guests.

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment is a wholly owned subsidiary of SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc., a publicly traded company. Visit [www.seaworldentertainment.com](http://www.seaworldentertainment.com) for more information.

For more information about Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network visit: [www.DolphinRescue.org](http://www.DolphinRescue.org)

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