

Pinniped Monitoring

The harbor seal pupping/breeding season began in early March with the first pups reported at Drakes Estero. Around 30 volunteers participated in monitoring harbor seals at 10 colonies ranging from Tomales Point to San Francisco Bay on nearly 200 surveys between March and July. The combined maximum pup count for all sites during the breeding season was 1,107 pups. Drakes Estero and Double Point contributed the largest percentage of pups (56%) and the majority of seals during the molt season (55%). The overall maximum count for all sites during the pupping season was 3,474 and for the molt was 4,242. Most disturbances occurred at Bolinas Lagoon and Drakes Estero/Limantour Estero complex, and contrary to expectation, most disturbances occurred during weekdays rather than weekend days.

The elephant seal pupping/ breeding season ended in mid-March 2005 but weaned pups remained on the beaches until around May. The population grew again in 2005 to an estimated pup count of around 620 and a low mortality before weaning of <25% due to the mild winter. Again, no new sub-colonies were formed in 2005; however, the Chimney Rock colony continues to grow with 83 pups documented in 2005 compared to 55 in 2004.



© Jamie Hall



© Jamie Hall

