



ARTICLE

Elephant Seal Harem Appears Overnight at Drakes Beach

Point Reyes National Seashore (<https://www.nps.gov/pore/>)



Harem on Drakes Beach in front of the Ken Patrick Visitor Center.

NPS / Marjorie Cox, NMFS Permit No. 21425.

January 2021 - The elephant seals are taking over beaches in Point Reyes National Seashore to birth their pups and mate before returning to the open ocean. The first pup was spotted on Drakes Beach on December 21st. As of January 29th, 1,232 adult females were recorded and that will likely be the peak count of the season, which is similar to last year. So far, 946 pups have been born, but more pups will be born during the first two weeks of February. Big surf and our first large storm of the year resulted in some pup loss and caused the seals to move around the different breeding sites.

Park researchers were deterring females from establishing a harem in front of the Kenneth Patrick Visitor Center. However a large group of females showed up overnight, and one gave birth! Nursing is a sensitive time for seal pups, so to prevent any disturbance, park staff closed the beach and concluded that hazing efforts would cease. As of January 31, there was a harem of 19 cows and six pups in front of the visitor center. Drakes Beach will likely remain closed until April.

For more information

- Check out the [Weekly Elephant Seal Monitoring Update](https://www.nps.gov/articles/weekly-elephant-seal-monitoring-update.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/articles/weekly-elephant-seal-monitoring-update.htm>).
- San Francisco Bay Area Network: [Pinniped Monitoring](https://www.nps.gov/im/sfan/pinnipeds.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/im/sfan/pinnipeds.htm>).
- Point Reyes: [Viewing Elephant Seals](https://www.nps.gov/pore/playourvisit/wildlife/viewing_elephantseals.htm) (https://www.nps.gov/pore/playourvisit/wildlife/viewing_elephantseals.htm).
- Pacific Coast Science & Learning Center: [Elephant Seals](https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/elephant-seals.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/elephant-seals.htm>).
- Contact Marine Ecologist [Sarah Codde](https://www.nps.gov/common/utilities/sendmail/sendemail.cfm?o=5884C9BA95ECACB390BF168FF707B8E3419250&r=/articles/000/elephant-seal-harem-appears-overnight-at-drakes-beach.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/common/utilities/sendmail/sendemail.cfm?o=5884C9BA95ECACB390BF168FF707B8E3419250&r=/articles/000/elephant-seal-harem-appears-overnight-at-drakes-beach.htm>).



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[See more from the Bay Area Nature & Science Blog](https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/blog.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/blog.htm>).



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