The ocean is in trouble. From the depletion of fish stocks to increasing ocean temperatures, human activity threatens marine ecosystems that are vital to the health of our ocean and all life on earth. As a critical first responder to these threats, The Marine Mammal Center is leading the field in ocean conservation through marine mammal rescue, veterinary science, and education. Marine mammals are ecosystem indicators, and their health provides insights into human and ocean health. Marine mammals also fulfill key, ecological roles in the ocean ecosystem, upon which the world depends. Working with partners and supporters across the globe, the Center is taking action to support a network of scientists and stewards to protect our shared ocean environment for future generations.

OUR GOALS

Goal 1: Advance the field of marine mammal health and care.
Goal 2: Strengthen conservation and protection of marine mammals.
Goal 3: Inspire and equip people to take actions that protect marine mammals and the ocean.
Goal 4: Enhance organizational health, culture, and effectiveness.

OUR PLAN FOR ACTION

Given the increasing threats to marine mammals and the ocean, The Marine Mammal Center is expanding the scope and scale of its work and amplifying its voice to take a stand for the planet. The Center’s impact strategy focuses on three ambitious strategic initiatives, each of which is outlined below: 1) Global Response, 2) Teaching Hospital and 3) Public Awareness and Education.

The success of these initiatives requires committed, meaningful partnerships with individuals, corporations, government agencies, academia, and other nonprofits. Working together, we can inspire future ocean stewards and promote action to save marine mammals and the ocean, upon which all life on earth depends.

I. Global Response Initiative

The ultimate vision for this initiative is to ensure every marine mammal in need is responded to and cared for, and that marine mammal populations worldwide can thrive.
Three years ago, the Center began taking steps to address new and emerging threats to cetaceans on the West Coast. Since then, the Center has been expanding its entanglement response program for large whales and pinnipeds (seals and sea lions). It also brought on an extremely qualified cetacean field research team focused on studying and protecting whale and dolphin species. This team’s work is increasing knowledge of cetacean movements and preferred habitat and informing management of safe areas for whales while minimally impacting the economics of maritime and other industries.

To meet the needs of marine mammals at this critical moment, the Center is seeking additional resources to strengthen conservation and protection of marine mammals with a specific focus on:

1. Eliminating threats, especially ship strikes and entanglements, to marine mammals. This work includes leading a cohort of world-class partners, with start-up funding from the Benioff Ocean Initiative and others, to launch a new ship strike prevention tool and strategy off the coast of San Francisco.

2. Advancing marine mammal protections through advocacy and policy.

3. Furthering scientific inquiry and discovery of marine mammal health and ecology.

II. Marine Mammal Veterinary Teaching Hospital Initiative

The goal of this initiative is to build a pipeline of highly skilled marine science and veterinary professionals able to address the increasing global marine mammal and ocean conservation challenges.

No other organization in the world treats such an extraordinary number and variety of marine mammal patients and medical conditions as the Center does. The Center currently provides intensive, hands-on experience and training to approximately 100 visiting students, professionals, and paraprofessionals from around the world. Alumni of the Center’s training programs go on to become leading contributors to the field of marine mammal conservation in the United States and internationally.

This initiative will strengthen and support the field of marine science and marine mammal medicine by:

- Educating and training current and emerging leaders in marine mammal biology, veterinary medicine and pathology, laboratory sciences, research, and rescue and response.

- Inspiring and encouraging high-performing undergraduate and graduate students, DVM students, and recent graduates, including those who have been historically underrepresented in the sciences, to pursue careers in marine science and marine mammal medicine.
Serving as a *community of practice* for the exchange of marine science and marine mammal medicine.¹

### III. Public Awareness, Engagement, and Education Initiatives

*The goal of this work is to inspire and empower people to take action to protect the ocean and marine mammals.*

#### A. Public Awareness and Engagement

The Center recognizes that to conserve the ocean environment, it is critical to engage communities to become part of the solution for ocean health. The Center is committed to being an advocate and champion for ocean health — a voice for the patients it cares for — and to inspiring a sea of change to protect the ocean’s future. These goals can be achieved with the understanding, commitment, and participation of the public. In the coming year, the Center intends to amplify several targeted conservation calls-to-action and communications campaigns designed to inspire and empower people to take action to protect our ocean and marine mammals.

#### B. Education Programs

*The vision of the Center’s innovative and award-winning student, teacher, and informal public learning programs is to build enthusiasm for science and responsibility for ocean health.*

U.S. schools and teachers need support preparing youth who are literate in STEM, interested in pursuing science careers, and able to see the power of science to solve some of the most pressing problems facing our planet today. To meet these needs, we aim to expand our next-generation science standards-aligned programs for middle and high school youth and their teachers. We also will continue to offer inspiring education programs that engage thousands of children and adults, inspiring them to care for the health of the ocean and planet.

### ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1975, The Marine Mammal Center is a global leader in marine mammal health, science, and conservation, and is the largest marine mammal hospital in the world. As a leading contributor to the global body of research and knowledge about marine mammal medicine and ocean health, the Center generates research findings and scientific outputs at volumes comparable to top academic institutions and provides research data that is accessible to the scientific community and others. The Center’s work with endangered and threatened species such as the southern sea otter and Hawaiian monk seal is critical to their survival. Each year, the Center answers more than 10,000 calls from concerned individuals reporting marine mammals in distress and trains and shares its resources with groups all over the world. With headquarters in Marin, California, and three additional locations in California and Hawai‘i, the Center’s reach and impact are global.

A team of 100 staff and 1,400 volunteers (whose contributions are equal to that of another 70 full-time staff), make the Center’s impact possible. As a 501c3, 90% of the Center’s $17M annual operating budget is supported by donations.

¹ A *community of practice* is a group of people who interact regularly in service to improving their common interest area, or field.
By supporting the Center, you are contributing to the health of marine animals, to an increased understanding of the ocean, marine science, and conservation, and to the next generation of wildlife veterinarians, scientists, and environmental stewards. Together, we can ensure a vibrant and healthy ocean for animals and people alike.

For more information about the Center and these initiatives, please contact Director of Institutional Giving, Jennifer Morrow at (415) 754-4033, or morrowj@tmmc.org.