



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Marine Mammals of Maine

YEAR IN REVIEW

April 12, 2022 marked ten years since Marine Mammals of Maine (MMoME) received our stranding permit, a significant milestone in the timeline of our organization. As we reflect on the past year we celebrate ten years of response activity in addition to another year of organizational growth. We also acknowledge the challenges that we've faced in our vision to support thriving marine mammal populations in the Gulf of Maine and beyond.

Recognizing that rehabilitation space for seals in need continues to exceed the space available in our region, this past spring we amended our permitting to increase the number of harbor seal pups we are authorized to care for at one time at our triage and rehabilitation facility. As summer approached, we had become the largest capacity rehabilitation facility in New England.

Concurrently, we took our volunteer program to the next level by establishing the FOAMM Program (Fundraising, Outreach, and Awareness for Marine Mammals). This program aims to uphold and expand upon a pillar of MMoME's mission to provide education and outreach to Maine's youth, coastal communities, and tourists.

Then, the unexpected happened. For the first time in the U.S. we began responding to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza crossing over into seals. MMoME's coverage area is the epicenter of this event and with no treatment options available for this infectious disease, we were responding to very ill and deceased seals in high numbers. This upended nearly every aspect of our operations and forced us to close our rehab facility to new admits during the height of the summer to protect the seals in our care.

These successes and challenges highlight the incredible efforts of our team of volunteers and staff that work tirelessly and compassionately to support our ocean ecosystem by responding to, rehabilitating, researching and educating the community about marine mammals and sea turtles in the Northeast US. Our wide community of supporters helps us to work toward a future where the public recognizes the significance of thriving marine mammal populations and collectively works to protect them.

Thank you for being a member of our community.



Lynda Ada Doughty, Executive Director

SUCCESS AND GROWTH

Pups Galore!



This past May, soon after we increased our permitting to be able to care for up to 15 harbor seal pups at a time we reached capacity in our rehabilitation facility with a lot of little mouths to feed! Despite closing to new admits for a period of time during the height of the Unusual Mortality Event linked to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, we admitted the highest number of pups in the history of our organization.

We are honored to be able to offer compassionate care and a second chance at life for these seals in need. Thanks to the support of some key grants and foundations, we are able to make critical investments in our facility to support this growth.

Expanding Outreach



Earlier this year we expanded our outreach and community-based education and fundraising efforts by launching our FOAMM (Fundraising, Outreach, and Awareness for Marine Mammals) volunteer program. FOAMM volunteers are dedicated to outreach and allowed us to participate in more events than in any previous year. Not only are we focused on attending more events, we also made a concerted effort to reach new and different audiences by broadening where and how we engage with the community.

As outreach grows we hope to reduce the inappropriate human interactions that lead to many of our rehabilitation cases and to teach and inspire the next generation of ocean stewards.

Board of Directors

David Shultz, President
Kristina Cammen
Samantha Caola
Scott Edmunds

Sam Frankel (outgoing)
Joanna Leary
Jeff Musich (incoming)
George Sharrard

CHALLENGES

Responding to HPAI

On July 20, 2022 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) declared an Unusual Mortality Event for elevated harbor and gray seal strandings linked to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). An Unusual Mortality Event is “a stranding event that is unexpected, involves a significant die-off of any marine mammal population, and demands immediate response.” This event represents the first time that HPAI has been documented in seals in the United States and MMoME was the first organization to recognize that seals in our response area, which has emerged as the epicenter of the event, were succumbing to HPAI.

In July, call volume to our hotline was nearly three times the average and our volunteers contributed over 3,500 hours of time in response to the event from June through August. Our ongoing research efforts, as well as our past experience, with a UME allowed us to quickly identify that the strandings we were observing were unusual. Staff, interns and volunteers worked diligently to collect samples from live and dead stranded seals, which led to many long and taxing days in the summer's heat. These data are contributing to ongoing and collaborative research, including a publication to be released in 2023, to understand this emerging threat to marine mammals. While there's still much to learn about HPAI, we're committed to participating in the investigation of this event and develop and implement creative solutions that best serve the seals in our care and our coastal communities.



BY THE NUMBERS

Stranding Response

Stranding response from Rockland, Maine to the New Hampshire border remains the foundation of our work and drives the rest of what we do. In a typical year we field over **3,000 calls** to our 24/7 hotline, which represents **approximately 400 individual animals**. Closely monitoring strandings and Unusual Mortality Events, like HPAI, contributes to our holistic understanding of environmental health in complex, unique, critical and sensitive ecosystems like the Gulf of Maine, and beyond.

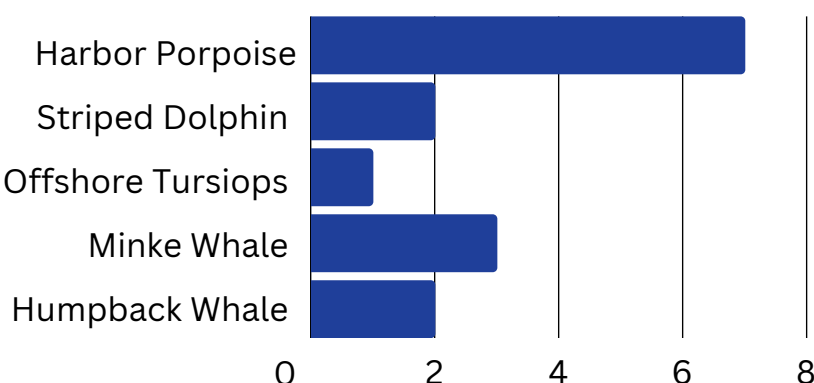
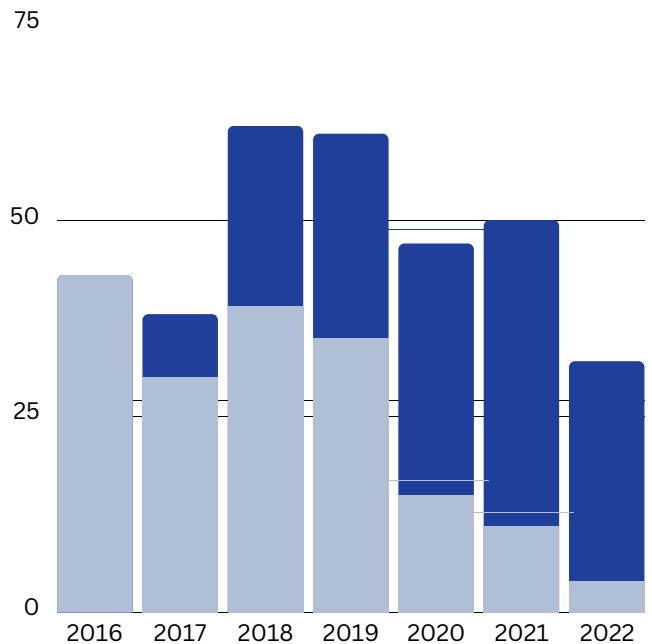
4 The number of active UMEs in our response area- 3 impacting large whales (minke, humpback and north Atlantic right) and 1 pinniped (HPAI).

50 The percentage of admits to our rehab facility that are due to human interaction.

Seal Triage and Rehab

Since our triage center was established in 2016 we've provided short term critical care (**triage, represented in light blue**) and long term care (**rehab, represented in dark blue**) to 333 seals in our facility.

As we increase our rehab capacity our triage numbers decline because we can care for more animals at our facility rather than transferring them to an out of state facility, minimizing stressful travel. We strive to offer compassionate and supportive care to animals who strand in Maine, with the ultimate goal of releasing healthy animals back into the wild.



Cetacean Response

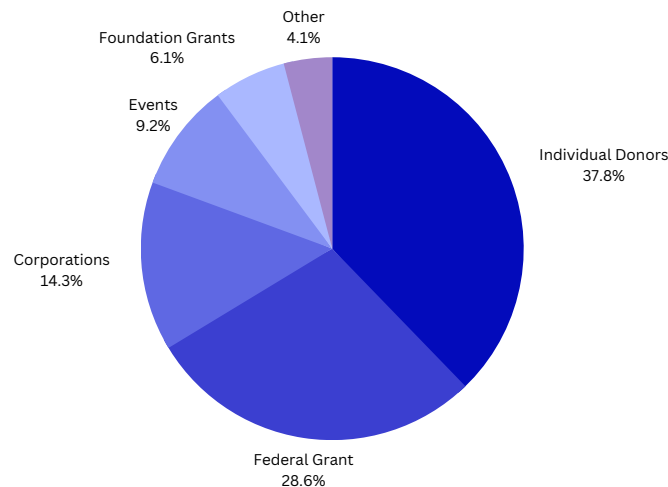
While seal response makes up the vast majority of calls to our stranding hotline, we also respond to stranded porpoise, dolphins and large whales year round; always seeking to objectively determine cause of death and learn as much as we can about these amazing animals. These are the species and numbers of cetaceans we responded to in the past year.

Revenue

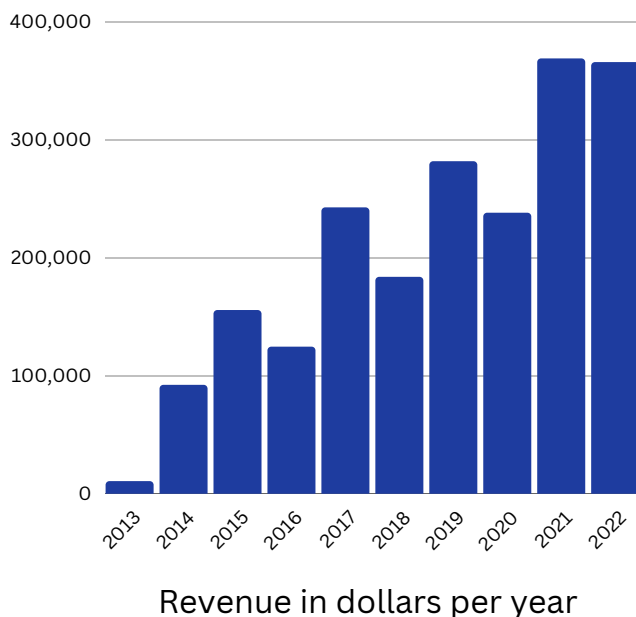
Sources of Revenue

Our impact and work over the past year was largely supported by individual donors, followed by one large federal grant that we apply for each year, business support, our annual 5K fundraiser and other events and family foundations. We're grateful for this community of support, which continues to grow.

This past year was punctuated by a large corporate matching gift honor of Lynda's CNN Top 10 Hero recognition in 2020 and 2021. This was made possible because of the generosity of individual donors in 2021, many of whom learned about the organization for the first time as a result of the national coverage offered by CNN and have continued to support our efforts since that time.



Growth Over Time



As our capacity to care for more animals increases, so do our costs. Just a few years ago, one federal grant made up 60% of our annual revenue. That percentage has dropped as Individual donors, foundations and businesses have stepped up to the plate to support marine mammals in need. MMoME receives no state or federal funding for our work. Instead, we apply for grants, appeal to individuals and foundations and host fundraising events.

We continue to diversify and grow our revenue sources so that we can meet the increased need for rehabilitation space in our region, ensure the hotline is available 24/7 year round, engage in cutting edge research and bolster our community outreach and education.



mmome.org / reporting hotline: 1-800-532-9551
