

Rare Elephant Seals Visit Ano Nuevo

A visit to California's Ano Nuevo wildlife reserve is the next best thing to being with Jacques Cousteau on the Calypso.

According to Roger Werts, manager of San Mateo County state beaches, "This is the only known spot in the world where elephant seals regularly visit the mainland."

The seals live most of the time at sea and come ashore, usually on a remote island, for a few months in order to give birth, to breed, and to molt.

During this period, visitors to Ano Nuevo can see the mammoth mammals, photograph them close-up, and observe their habits and behavior. And they can share with scientists the pleasure of seeing the revival of a rare and endangered creature.

In the mid-1880s the northern elephant seal bred only on the Isla de Guadalupe. In those years, the massive animals were exploited by man to the extent that they were almost extinct by 1869.

The only known population was a herd of about 100 animals. In 1922, the Mexican government, followed soon by the United States, set up laws to protect the few that were left.

In 1935, the enormous fleshy nosed pinnipeds were first sighted on Ano Nuevo Island, a refuge off California's San Mateo coastline located

17 miles from Santa Cruz and 55 miles from San Francisco.

The elephant seal population then began to increase, and the mammals were observed by scientists in the area from Cabo San Lazaro, Baja California, to Point Reyes. Now the experts estimate there are about 30,000 northern elephant seals in existence.

Many of these creatures winter on inaccessible off-islands, including the Farallons off California. On Ano Nuevo, this year's elephant seal count totals about 600.

Other pinnipeds who share the rocks and beaches with the elephant seals include Stellar sea lions, California sea lions and harbor seals. The island itself is a totally wild sanctuary and has long been closed to all but a few scientists.

Last year the seals began to swim from Ano Nuevo Island across the channel to the mainland, where they hauled out on the beaches of the state preserve.

This year visitors to that area have been able to see another "first" — Blues, the first baby elephant seal ever born on the Pacific Coast mainland.

The mother, Berthan, who weaned the young female in February, has mated again and has returned to sea. Because elephant seals follow traditional patterns, she will return to Ano Nuevo again next year for the birth of her pup.



Bull elephant seal rests on the sands of Ano Nuevo Wildlife Reserve

The Mercury

Students Say Guerrillas 'Broke Their Promise'

STANFORD—Marxists guerrillas in eastern Zaire broke a promise to release Stephen Smith, a Stanford

us and our families caused by your actions, all four of us who were kidnaped have had considerable re-

ences to honor and discipline mere propaganda?"