



Phil Adams

**History:** In 1990, northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*) appeared on beaches north of San Simeon, California. In 1992, a breeding colony developed. In 2010, more than 4,000 pups were born. This wildlife phenomenon makes San Simeon one of the best places in the world to view northern elephant seals.

**Friends of the Elephant Seal** is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating people about elephant seals and other marine life. Formed in 1997, our goal is to instill a sense of stewardship for the ocean and this special place.

**How To Find Us:** The Friends of the Elephant Seal Visitor Center is located in the Plaza del Cavalier in San Simeon, in northern San Luis Obispo County along scenic Coast Highway 1. The Elephant Seal Viewing Site is located 8 miles north of the Visitor Center. Look for the large parking area, signs, and handicap-accessible viewing boardwalks. Friends of the Elephant Seal volunteers, wearing blue jackets, provide information and answer questions.



## Who We Are, Why We Are Here

### Interesting Facts About Elephant Seals

**Size:** Elephant seals are the largest seals in the northern hemisphere.

Adult males reach 14-16 feet (4.3 – 4.8 m) and weigh 3000 to 5000 pounds (1360 – 2267 kg). Pups weigh about 60 pounds (27 kg) at birth.

**Migration:** Elephant seals migrate further than any other seal – on average 15,000 – 20,000 miles (25000 to 32000 km) each year.

**Diving:** Elephant seals are the deepest divers of all the seals. Average dives are 1000 – 2000 feet (300 – 600 m), while some can reach 5000 feet (1.5 km).

**Ecosystem Role:** Elephant seals prey on fish, octopus and squid; they are prey to great white sharks and killer whales.



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### Elephant Seal Viewing Calendar

**November:** Mature males arrive at islands and beaches along coastal California and Baja California, Mexico. They battle for dominance and establish mating territories.

**December:** Pregnant females arrive. The first birth usually occurs mid-month.

**January:** Pregnant females continue arriving and bearing pups, with the pupping peak in mid-January.

**February:** Females wean their pups and mate. Mating peaks in mid-February. Once mated, females depart for feeding areas in the north Pacific, leaving their pups behind.

**March:** By the end of March, adult seals have left the colony. Weaned pups (called weaners) learn to swim and feed on their own.

**April - May:** Females and juveniles return from feeding grounds to molt their fur. Females complete the molt by the end of May and depart.

**June - July:** Subadult and adult males arrive to molt, departing in August.

**August:** Young-of-the-year and juveniles arrive.

**September - October:** Young-of-the-year and juveniles remain.

Visit us at: [www.elephantseal.org](http://www.elephantseal.org)



Nancy McKarney