



Office of Spill Prevention and Response

Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center (MWVCRC) provides the best achievable treatment for marine mammals and birds affected by oil spills in marine waters.

Facility

- Built in 1997
- Physical address is 1451 Shaffer Road, Santa Cruz
- Located on California's central coast on the University of California Santa Cruz campus
- 18,000-square-foot center
- First of its kind in the United States dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and research of oiled marine wildlife, with emphasis on sea otters

Equipment and features

- Sea water pools and pens
- Wildlife washing and drying rooms
- Veterinary treatment and rehabilitation rooms
- Indoor and outdoor facilities to facilitate clinical care of up to 125 sea otters
- Flexibility to care for other marine mammals and birds, as needed

Occupancy

The MWVCRC is the primary location for the CDFW's Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) oiled wildlife response unit, and is a key component of the statewide Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN). When it is not being used as an oiled wildlife care center, the facility is shared with UC Santa Cruz to facilitate collaborative research on marine wildlife health.

During non-spill times, OSPR staff at the facility are primarily engaged in research on southern sea otters, including population counts, capture and tagging studies, postmortem examinations of stranded sea otters and extensive research on sea otter biology and disease. This research is conducted jointly in an alliance with the US Geological Survey, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, UC Santa Cruz, UC Davis and numerous other collaborators and stakeholders.

History

- Lempert-Keene-Seastrand Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act (Act) required the Administrator of OSPR to establish rescue and rehabilitation stations for sea birds, sea otters, and other marine mammals.
- The legislation specified that these facilities be established and maintained in a state of preparedness to provide the best achievable treatment for marine mammals and birds affected by an oil spill in marine waters.
- Required MWVCRC to be built and maintained within the California sea otter range along the central coast.