

Rescuers hopeful about new marine facility

New Harpswell center may fill void for Maine coastal sea mammal strandings

BY WALTER WUTHMANN
THE FORECASTER

HARPSWELL — On a sandy beach in Phippsburg last June, Lynda Doughty swaddled a 1-week-old harbor seal pup in a pink towel and guided it into a dog crate.

After checking for the tell-tale signs of abandonment — such as gum color, the presence of an umbilical cord, and weight — Doughty had determined the pup had been abandoned by her mother, and would starve to death if left to fend for herself.

Almost more sausage than animal, the young seal wriggled a bit and then lay calmly as Doughty drove her 155 miles to the parking lot of the Naked Fish restaurant in Waltham, Massachusetts.

There, after again checking the pup’s vitals, Doughty passed her on to representatives of Mystic Aquarium in Mystic, Connecticut, to drive her the rest of the way to their rehabilitation facility.

Doughty got an email Monday, Sept. 21, that the pup had made a full recovery and would be released back into the wild in the next couple of weeks.

That seal is an increasingly rare success story in Doughty’s work.

Doughty is the executive director and co-founder of the nonprofit rescue agency Marine Mammals of Maine. Her organization used to bring their rescued seals and sea turtles to the marine animal rehabilitation center at the University of New England.

But since that facility unexpectedly closed in 2014, Doughty estimates that the mortality of stranded animals she attends to has rocketed up by 80 percent.

“The number of animals we had to put down just really rose,” she said Sept. 15.

Many animals are not in a state to survive the marathon road trips to far-away rehab centers such as Mystic. These centers are also often too full with their own animals to take more from Maine.

“With the amount of human interaction there is now (on the beaches), we’re not there to only protect the animals but to protect people as well.”

LYNDA DOUGHTY

“When you have an animal that is unresponsive, really labored breathing, and having a really difficult time ... you’re not going to put an animal like that into a transport,” Doughty said Monday.

Reflecting on the harbor seal rescue in June, she said if Mystic or the National Marine Life Center in Buzzard’s Bay, Massachusetts, did not have space, they

would’ve had to put that pup down.

Unlike dolphins, she said, harbor seals will not step in as surrogate mother’s for abandoned pups.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, mothers will abandon their pups if disturbed on the beach by humans.

In an effort to chip away at the high mortality rate, MMoMe leased an old warehouse on Farr Lane in Harpswell to establish a temporary rehab facility.

The warehouse’s owner, Jenny Bichrest, is leasing the facility to the organization at no cost. MMoMe just pays utilities, Doughty said.

At the new center, MMoMe staff and volunteers can “at least stabilize the animals before transport,” Doughty said, by monitoring them and putting them on IV.

She said volunteers had been working on renovating the space for months, and stabilizing some rescued animals on a case-by-case basis. The facility is set for an inspection in October by the National Marine Fisher-



THE FORECASTER

Lynda Doughty, executive director of Marine Mammals of Maine, swaddles an abandoned harbor seal pup on Head Beach in Phippsburg in June.

ies Service in order to bring it into full compliance.

Doubling down

In the meantime, MMoMe, which has only two paid staff and about 65 volunteers, is trying to bolster its ranks.

“After the UNE rehab center closed, people think we did too,” Doughty said earlier this month.

She wants people to know they’re here to stay.

On Sept. 15, Doughty stood on Head Beach in Phippsburg after working on setting the route for an upcoming fundraising 5K race.

The beach is important to her: Not only was it the site of the June rescue, but it’s where she responded to her first stranding at age 14.

“My grandmother had a cottage down the beach,” she said. She found an abandoned harbor seal pup while walking one morning, and

then “did all the wrong things,” she said.

“I was touching it, sitting next to it, which is very stressful for it,” she said. “At least I didn’t put it in my bathtub.”

She sat with the seal until it was picked up by staff from the Boston Aquarium.

“After that, I always knew I wanted to work with marine mammals,” she said. She studied marine science at Maine Maritime Academy and then worked for the state Department of Marine Resources’ marine mammal rescue program.

That program’s funding was cut in the fall of 2011, she said.

She founded MMoMe within two months to fill the void.

“Some people ask me, why even do this?” she said. Harbor seals, the species MMoMe most frequently responds to, are not listed as endangered.

“(But) with the amount of human interaction there is now (on the beaches), we’re not there to only protect the animals but to protect people as well,” Doughty said.

“And we may have even caused some of the things that these animals are dealing with,” like strandings, she added.

As the only response agency left in southern Maine, with a new facility on the way, MMoMe is looking for a boost of capital to fund its rescue operations.

Doughty says she hopes to raise between \$20,000 and \$30,000 at the upcoming 5K.

The event is on Oct. 24, and the run will circle Hermit Island in Phippsburg before ending on Head Beach.

“This just seemed like the right place to do it,” she said. “This is where the story all began.”

Elton John gets call from Putin, for real this time

After prank, leader makes offer for face-to-face

BY DARYA KORSUNSKAYA
AND ANDREW OSBORN
REUTERS

MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin phoned Elton John on Thursday to say he would be ready to meet up for a chat after the British singer requested a meeting to discuss his concerns about gay rights in Russia.

Putin’s call came just a week after a pair of Russian comedians tricked John, 68, into thinking he was talking to Putin on the phone in a stunt that the entertainer laughed off, while saying he hoped it would highlight discrimination against gay people.

This time, Dmitry Peskov, Putin’s spokesman, said the Russian leader really had phoned John, who has used his status as one of the world’s most famous gay celebrities to push for equal rights for homosexuals around the world.

“Putin phoned him,” Peskov told reporters. “He said: ‘I know some guys played a trick on you on the phone, but don’t get offended. They

are harmless people, though that of course does not justify what they did.”

Putin told John that since he was a popular performer

he would be ready to meet him and discuss any subject which interested him, if their schedules coincided, Peskov said.

Western states and human rights activists have criticized Russia for its treatment of gay people, and John has previously spoken out against a 2013 law banning the dissemination of “gay propaganda” among young people.

Putin has said he is not prejudiced against gay people, but has made comments which activists have criticized as being ambiguous and insulting towards homosexuals.

John, who plays to vast audiences in Russia when he tours, could not immediately be reached for comment.



John

BY JULIA CARPENTER
THE WASHINGTON POST

First things first: Ryan Adams’s “1989,” his album of Taylor Swift covers, is really good.

The record, highly anticipated by Swift and her legions of Twitter fans, dropped Sunday. That means we’ve had a full four days to listen and feel our feelings about it — feelings which have largely been positive. Swift herself has been retweeting praise and even appeared on Beats 1 Radio with Adams, gushing about the album.

Swift also stands to benefit financially from Adams’ covers, procuring enough money for years of girl squad gatherings.

So why does this week’s wave of gushy tweets, serious music criticism and side-by-side reviews feel a little icky?

“Yesterday the New Yorker wrote a review/ evaluation of the Ryan Adams cover album. Just to be crystal clear, they NOT review 1989,” tweeted Kelsey McKinney.

As McKinney points out, the New Yorker reviewed Adams’s version of “1989,” but not Swift’s. Write-ups from other publications have verged on the condescending (at Uproxx: “This project shows what a strong songwriter Swift is”), the hedging (the Atlantic headline: “Ryan Adams’s 1989 is the Vindication of Taylor Swift”) and yes, the man-splainy (the New Yorker wrote: “These songs, rearranged by Adams, might sound to some ears more authentic, raw, or genuine — suddenly more his than hers”).

Ah. The ickiness. At issue here is not Adams’s covers themselves, or even his decision to cover Swift’s album. (Have you heard his “Wildest Dreams”?)

As Christina Cauterucci wrote over at Slate: “The music industry has a history of dismissing the musical contributions of women, people of color, and purveyors of certain music genres (notably pop and rap — often the domains of women and people of color, wouldn’t you know) until they’re covered

by a more palatable artist.”

Is Adams that other artist?

His covers of Taylor songs have already been heralded as deeper, more emotional versions of Swift’s hits.

The conversation surrounding the two albums is just the latest iteration of an ongoing problem in pop criticism.

With “1989,” Swift cemented her move from sweet-girl country roots to stadium tour-selling pop icon. As website The Mary Sue points out, pop is a musical genre largely consumed by women and defined by female experience — one that doesn’t require validation from a male artist to be “serious music.”

As popular as Swift is, having her most popular album covered by a man — specifically a man like Ryan Adams who inhabits a genre so divorced from Swift’s own popitism — has allowed her songs to be described in a



Swift

way that they never were before.

Again, both albums are good. You can listen to both, and enjoy both, and it’s great that we have both to listen to (unless you’re on Spotify).

But Swift is still chained to a certain public perception. She’s a millionaire, and she’s friends with Lena Dunham, but there are also a lot of things that she can’t do. Her friendships are scrutinized as “cliquey” collections. She has a reputation as an “earnest,” “try-hard,” “crazy,” “emotional” woman. It’s the persona she skewered in the “Blank Space” video, and one Adams doesn’t have to deal with. He’s the indie darling, and he and his ilk will always be heralded for bringing a depth to superficial pop tracks — no matter that they were already emotionally deep and good songs.

In the world of “1989” reviews, Adams is lauded for feeling feelings, and for making music about feeling feelings. That’s a privilege Swift is still earning, it seems.

EXAMPLE:
(actual size)

In Honor of
DAVID ANDERSON

Who is overseas, serving our county. We can't wait for your safe return. We love you, Mom & Dad

10 lines of text for
\$30.00

(Photo additional \$12, each additional line - \$2 extra.)
Each line 4-5 words

Bangor Daily News

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Each message includes one photo. Please choose from the following:

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For more information, call 1-800-432-7964, ext. 8110 or 990-8110. You may also email lgeorge@bangordailynews.com.

Send to:
ATTN: Laura/Veterans Day Tribute
PO Box 1329, Bangor, ME 04402-1329

Please complete this form and return it along with payment by Noon, Wednesday, October 21, 2015.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Please select type of message: ☐ IN MEMORY OF ☐ IN HONOR OF

Write your message here (about 20 words):

☐ Check ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____ 3-digit CVV code: _____

Signature: _____