



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Potential Methods for Detering Seals and Sea Lions from Private Property and Fishing Activities

This guidance applies to the following species of seals and sea lions:

- **Pacific harbor seals**
- **California sea lions**
- **Northern fur seals**
- **Eastern U.S. Stock of Steller sea lions**
- **Northern elephant seals**

General Information

- The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) generally prohibits the harassment, hunting, capturing, or killing of marine mammals, or any attempt to engage in such activities. However, Section 101(a)(4) of the MMPA allows for the non-lethal deterrence of nuisance animals under certain circumstances. For more information, see [Detering “Nuisance” Pinnipeds](#).
- When attempting to deter these animals, you are **not allowed** to seriously injure or kill them (e.g. no open wounds, avoid impact to the animals’ eyes and face, avoid blunt force trauma and aiming pyrotechnics directly at animals, etc).
- These “**Potential Methods**” are **not** “approved” deterrence methods by NOAA Fisheries. They are examples of methods that are known to have been effective at detering pinnipeds in the past.

Methods to Avoid

The following methods/devices have an increased likelihood of causing injury or death and *should be avoided*.

- **NO** firearms with “live” (lethal) ammunition (including metallic, glass, or sharp projectiles: e.g. BBs, marbles)
- **NO** devices with injurious projectiles (e.g., archery gear, crossbows, spear guns, bangsticks)
- **NO** sharp/pointed objects (e.g., harpoons, spears, gaffs, nail studded bats/poles/clubs/docks)
- **NO** entangling devices (e.g., loose webbing, snares, concertina wire)
- **NO** aggressive tactile methods (e.g., striking animals with bats, hammers, etc.; impact with vehicles or boats)
- **NO** tainted baits or poisons
- **NO** guard dogs

If you have questions about protecting your property and/or fishing gear and catch from nuisance pinnipeds, please contact our marine mammal specialists:

Seattle, WA - Lynne Barre (206) 526-4745
Portland, OR - Robert Anderson (503) 231-2226
Long Beach, CA - Dan Lawson (206) 526-4740

Potential Methods for *Private Property Owners*:

Barriers & Exclusion Devices:

- fencing (e.g., plastic construction/snow fence, chain link), closely spaced posts
- bull rails
- electric livestock fencing
- netting
- swim step protector

Visual Repellents:

- flags, pinwheels, or streamers
- flashing lights or strobes
- human attendants/monitors

Physical Contact:

- high or low pressure water hoses
- sprinklers, sprayers
- crowder boards
- bull poles (blunt tip), brooms
- cattle prod (these products produce only a mild electric shock designed for handling livestock and are in no way related to “stun guns” designed for self-defense)
- toy water guns (e.g., “Super Soaker®”)
- non-toxic and water soluble paint ball or air soft guns (no metallic/glass/sharp projectiles)
- slingshot (no metallic/glass/sharp projectiles)
- chemical irritants (e.g., non-toxic pepper spray, mace) used for animal control (note: *there are municipal and state ordinances managing the use and possession of these irritants*)

Noise Makers:

- horns, whistles, bells
- music
- clapping, banging pots, pans, drums; empty aluminum cans on a string banging together
- electronic acoustic devices/ acoustic harassment devices
- pyrotechnics (e.g., bird screamers, bangers, firecrackers, propane canons) (*there are municipal and state ordinances managing the use and possession of these products*)

Additional Potential Methods for *Fishermen*:

Visual Repellents/Noise Makers:

- boat hazing, circling
- pounding on hull
- horns, bells, whistles
- pyrotechnics (e.g., bird screamers, bangers, underwater firecrackers, cracker shells)

Physical Contact:

- slingshots (no metallic/glass/ sharp projectiles)
- non-toxic and water soluble paint ball guns
- non-lethal ammunition (e.g., rubber bullets)