



California Sea Lion
Zalophus californianus

Geographical Range: California sea lions live in eastern North central Mexico north to British Columbia, including the Gulf of California.

Habitat: You'll find California sea lions in coastal and continental shelf waters, bays, harbors and river mouths. Occasionally they can be found up to several hundred kilometers offshore.

Exhibit Location: Part of our new master plan, Sea Lion Cove is located just west of our Elephant House.

Physical Characteristics: Sea lions have large powerful front flippers, a dog-like muzzle that is slightly tapered and long with a blunt end. A prominent sagittal crest, creating a high peaked crown, is present in full-grown males. The coat of the sea lion varies from a dark brown to sandy brown sides to a tan underbelly. They possess between 34-38 teeth used for grasping and tearing.

Diet: Their main menu is fish, which include hake, opaleye, herring and northern anchovy. Occasionally they may also dine on squid and octopus.

Did you know?

- Sea lions can hold their breath for up to ten minutes.
- Their swimming speed can reach as fast as 20 miles per hour.
- They are very vocal and produce loud barking noises.

Status: Sea lion population has risen substantially this century. Following passage of the Marine Mammal protection Act in 1972, their numbers have steadily increased at an annual rate of over 5%. California sea lion population is estimated at between 167 and 188,000, but they have not yet reached their optimal sustainable population level.