For Immediate Release – October 12, 2021

Vancouver Aquarium Welcomes Newest Resident, Rescued Harbour Seal Donnelly

Vancouver, BC. – The Vancouver Aquarium is thrilled to welcome its newest resident, rescued harbour seal Donnelly. Due to the severity of Donnelly’s injuries, she has been deemed non-releasable by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The Aquarium will now be her home and the public are encouraged to visit her.

Donnelly was rescued from the waters of Indian Arm after being struck in the head by a boat. She arrived in critical condition, and staff at the Marine Mammal Rescue Centre worked hard to stabilize her. Her prognosis was poor, but the veterinary team performed surgery to repair her severe head injuries and were unable to restore her sight. During her surgery, diagnostics were also completed, and staff were shocked to discover that Donnelly was pregnant. After surgery her condition continued to improve and on July 20, 2021 Donnelly gave birth to a healthy female pup - Dory.

“Donnelly is an inspiration and a survivor. We are thrilled her care will continue at the Vancouver Aquarium where she will be an important ambassador for our rescue program,” said Marine Mammal Rescue Centre Manager Lindsaye Akhurst. She said that Dory will be released in the coming days.

Dory is the first harbour seal pup to be born at the Marine Mammal Rescue Centre. She weighed 8.4kg at birth and stayed with her mom until she was weaned at about 7 weeks old. Dory continued through the rehabilitation program and is now ready to be released.

The Marine Mammal Rescue Centre is Canada’s only dedicated marine mammal rescue facility and one of the largest in the world. The Centre has rescued and rehabilitated marine mammals for over 60 years. The facility allows for on-site rehabilitation of seals, sea lions, sea otters, sea turtles and small cetaceans, such as harbour porpoises. The Centre also responds to off-site marine mammal emergencies including disentangling sea lions along the coast.

“Our 60-year marine mammal rescue program remains a core commitment of the Vancouver Aquarium and this important work continues. We are incredibly proud of this work,” said Vancouver Aquarium Executive Director Clint Wright.
About Vancouver Aquarium

Since opening in 1956, the Vancouver Aquarium has connected more than 40 million people from around the world to our oceans and inspired them to take action to address key threats. Located in Stanley Park, the Vancouver Aquarium is home to hundreds of incredible species. The Vancouver Aquarium is a fully accredited member of Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA), Canada’s Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA), and Humane Conservation Certified by American Humane.

About Vancouver Aquarium Marine Mammal Rescue Centre

The Vancouver Aquarium Marine Mammal Rescue Centre is a hospital for sick, injured or orphaned marine mammals. The Rescue Centre rescues stranded marine mammals and rehabilitates them for release back into their natural habitat. www.mmrpatients.org