

***For Immediate Release
May 18, 2006***

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California Community Uses ScareCrow to Help Control Sea Lions

VICTORIA, CANADA (May 18, 2006) Those persistent sea lions have returned to California's Newport Beach, but this time harbor officials have devised a new way to help control them. Last year, groups of male sea lions in search of mates damaged boat cabins and decks, kept residents awake by barking through the night, and even swamped a vintage yacht. This year, harbour officials are testing a motion-activated sprinkler designed to help protect the boats without harming the sea lions.

At the heart of this strategy is the time-tested ScareCrow® motion-activated sprinkler. Used extensively by gardeners to protect their plants and ponds from cats, dogs, raccoons, deer and heron, the ScareCrow® motion-activated sprinkler is manufactured by Contech Electronics (www.contech-inc.com). Although boaters have used the ScareCrow to protect their boats from seagulls, geese and otters at the dock, the portable application at Newport Harbor uses a battery-powered pump and seawater to accommodate boats moored offshore. When sea lions try to board a boat equipped with the ScareCrow, the device responds with a harmless but startling burst of water.

And so far, it seems to be working, according to Chris Miller, the city's harbor resources supervisor. "Sea lions sunbathe to raise their body temperature and don't like being squirted with cold water," said Miller, adding that just the act of splashing water in their general direction is often enough to deter sunbathing seal lions.

With boat owners subject to fines for not keeping sea lions off their boats, the ScareCrow is shaping up to be a promising solution to a challenging situation. “It's hard to control nature,” said Miller, “but we're doing our best.”

For more information on the sea lion situation at Newport Harbor, see the City of Newport Beach website <http://www.city.newport-beach.ca.us/HBR/Sea%20Lions.htm>.

To learn more about the ScareCrow motion-activated sprinkler (and to see videos of the ScareCrow in action), visit <http://contech-inc.com/products/scarecrow/>.

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About Contech Electronics *Established in 1987, Contech Electronics is a designer and provider of advanced animal training, control and wellness products for pet owners and gardeners all over the world. Safe and effective solutions such as the ScatMat pet training mat and the ScareCrow outdoor animal deterrent have made Contech a favourite among pet owners and gardeners alike, and continue to reinforce the company's reputation as a leading innovator. Contech products are available online at www.contech-inc.com, through pet and garden stores, and from national retailers such as Lee Valley Tools and Home Hardware. For more information, visit www.contech-inc.com.*