

### What to do if you see:-

- ✓ **A seal pup**
  - Please don't touch it, as much for your own safety as that of the pup!
  - Never put a seal pup back into the sea.
  - Observe from a distance and out of sight.
  - Look for the mother, ideally for a full tide cycle if you have time. Mothers often rest in the sea and only return to their pups if they see it is safe to do so!
  - If you are concerned in any way, ring the National Seal Sanctuary (NSS) or British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) - they will send out an observation or rescue team.
- ✓ **A net entangled, injured, sick or malnourished seal**, ring the NSS or BDMLR
- ✓ **Seals being disturbed in any way**, immediately ring BDMLR.
- ✓ **A dead seal**, report it quickly to Cornwall Wildlife Trust's Marine Strandings hotline on 0845 2012626 - trained volunteers take records on the seal in detail.

**NSS : 01326 221361**

**BDMLR : 01825 765546 (24 hours)**



### What to do with seal bites:-

Seal bites that have broken the skin, even superficially must be treated at hospital or by your GP. If possible, take a copy of the 'Seal bite treatment letter' downloadable from <http://www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk/Sealbiteletter.pdf>



### Other ways to help seals:-

- ✓ **Take your litter home** – a 2 week old white coat seal pup was seen struggling in a high tide with a big swell, only to be bashed by numerous floating plastic bottles, an oil drum and a wooden plank. Adult seals have been observed eating carrier bags and crisp packets and swimming into see-through plastic bags.
- ✓ **Join a beach clean** to remove storm damaged or discarded fishing net from our shores. If you go out on the sea, take part in 'Fishing for Litter' schemes if they exist in your area; if not, campaign for one to be started!
- ✓ **Keep dogs and seals apart** to avoid infection transfer between species.
- ✓ **Ask for 'seal friendly salmon'** that has been farmed without seals being shot.
- ✓ **Adopt a wild seal** for yourself or a friend at [www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk](http://www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk) in the knowledge that your money will go to help provide free public information about seals, conservation and campaigning work on behalf of seals and pioneering in-depth research into their lives!
- ✓ **Become a Marine Mammal Medic** trained by BDMLR – ring them for more details.

How to get the most out of seal watching!



How you can help seals in the wild!

Helpful information if you see a seal!



**S** : Stay quiet and calm  
**E** : Eye contact to be avoided  
**A** : Always watch the seal's reactions  
**L** : Leave space between you and the seal  
**S** : Stay still or move slowly away!

### Contacts for information, help & advice

**National Seal Sanctuary** : [www.sealsanctuary.co.uk](http://www.sealsanctuary.co.uk)

**British Divers Marine Life Rescue** : [www.bdmlr.org.uk](http://www.bdmlr.org.uk)

**CWT Strandings Network** : [www.cwtstrandings.org](http://www.cwtstrandings.org)

**Seals Protection Groups** :

<http://www.protectourseals.org.uk>

**Cornwall Seal Group**

[www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk](http://www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk)

[sue@cornwallsealgroup.co.uk](mailto:sue@cornwallsealgroup.co.uk)



## How to watch seals that are relaxed enough to hang around : Avoiding seal disturbance!

Information for anyone who sees a wild seal around our coast, including anglers, canoeists, coasteers, conservationists, divers, fishing crews, harbour masters, kayakers, photographers, the public, researchers, sailors, snorkelers, skippers, surfers, swimmers, walkers & wildlife enthusiasts.



### Seals on land

- Seals need to haul out every few days to moult, breed, rest and digest their food. Disturbing them back into the sea creates a double energy loss for the seals.
- Stampingeding seals scare other seals around them and are less careful rushing over rocks, gashing their bellies and ripping out claws caught between stones.
- Seals are disturbed most by what they can hear and see even across large distances! Unnatural sounds (E.g. human voices & dog barks) and changing sounds (E.g. slowing boat engines) may alert a seal to potential danger.
- Equally seals spook when silent sea craft suddenly appear. Canoeists and kayakers, being low to the water and with 2 eyes, look like potential predators and scare seals the most!
- At all times, watch the seals' reactions and respect them by acting accordingly. Disturbance is an interaction between you and the seal and it is your responsibility to manage that interaction on behalf of the seal.
- Disturbing seals into the sea, compromises the seal's health and spoils everyone's enjoyment – now and later in the day.



### Seal Disturbance 1, 2, 3!

- 1 Seal looks at you : stay still and quiet, avoid eye contact.
- 2 Seal moves towards the water : move slowly out of sight, you are already too close!
- 3 Seal enters the sea (any seal rushing into the sea has been compromised and disturbed.)



### Seals in the sea

If you see one seal, be careful and look out for others! Disturbed seals will look at you and crash dive, creating a splash. The seal will often resurface in the area again to check you out! If you are in the water close to a seal, always let the seal make the first curious move towards you. Sit back, wait and observe. Seals will explore you with their fore flippers, whiskers and mouths. Remember that seals have strong claws and sharp interlocking teeth. So, if you are not in a wet suit, your skin can easily be scratched by a seal's curious behaviour. Seals are very big and can be very intimidating underwater. Aim to avoid eye contact, lower your gaze, stay calm, quiet and move slowly to avoid spooking the seal and provoking an aggressive response. Be confident that seals are gentle creatures unless they feel threatened. If you are sea angling, avoid fishing where seals are seen and use corrodible hooks.



### Most importantly, never feed a wild seal!

Feeding wild seals creates really big problems for seals and people. Seals are quick learners and just one feed can lead to a lifetime of dependant, habituated behaviour. In their minds, food becomes linked with humans and boats. This reduces their natural fear of humans and brings them into conflict with the fishing industry. In the winter, the only boats for the seals to follow tend to be fishing boats, where seals are unwelcome visitors.