



To provide shelter, treatment and rehabilitation for rescued marine wildlife found in difficulty around Ireland's coast

What do you do if you find a seal?

- NEVER put a seal or a pup back into the water
- Seal pups often come ashore to rest and Grey Seal pups cannot swim for the first three weeks
- Always observe from a distance, at least until the next full tide, the mother may be watching in the sea
- Create a safe zone around the seal ensuring no other people or loose dogs can interfere with it
- Check for any obvious signs of injury or illness
- Call the Irish Seal Sanctuary giving as many details as possible **01835 4370 (24 hours)**
- Only move a seal if it is imminent danger

When are you most likely to find a seal?

Grey Seal pups are usually born during September / October, and they have a white coat. The pups normally stay with their mother on the beach for about 3 weeks; once she leaves they have to search for food on their own

Common (Harbour) Seal pups are usually born May / June, the pups can swim within hours of being born. They come ashore to rest and feed. The mother will normally stay with her pup for about 6 weeks.

How old is the pup?

The age of a seal pup can be roughly estimated by the state of the umbilical chord:

Wet: Younger than 3 days

Dry: About 3 – 4 days

Absent: Older than 7 days

Less than 3 foot (90cm) long: This years pup

More than 4 foot (1.2m): Last years pup

Grey seals are unweaned if the white coat (lanugo) is still complete or only partially moulted, if the coat is grey/black it is probably weaned and more than 3 weeks old.

If a pup is unweaned then the mother is normally nearby, returning every 4 – 6 hours to feed their young

Is it healthy?

Newborn pups appear thin because they have not yet laid down blubber, malnourished older pups have a prominent pelvis bone, an obvious neck and their skin looks loose.

Healthy seals breathe by a series of forceful breaths followed by breath holding. If the seal breathes continuously it may indicate over-heating, stress or respiratory disease. The breathing noise made should be minimal.

A small amount of watery discharge from the eyes and nose is normal in seals but check if there is any mucous or blood discharged from the mouth. A healthy seal will have no signs of an obvious neck and there should be no visible bones. Seals do tend to favour one fore flipper when moving along. Healthy seals will often hunch along on their sides

How do you move a seal, or pup, if it is danger, injured or sick?

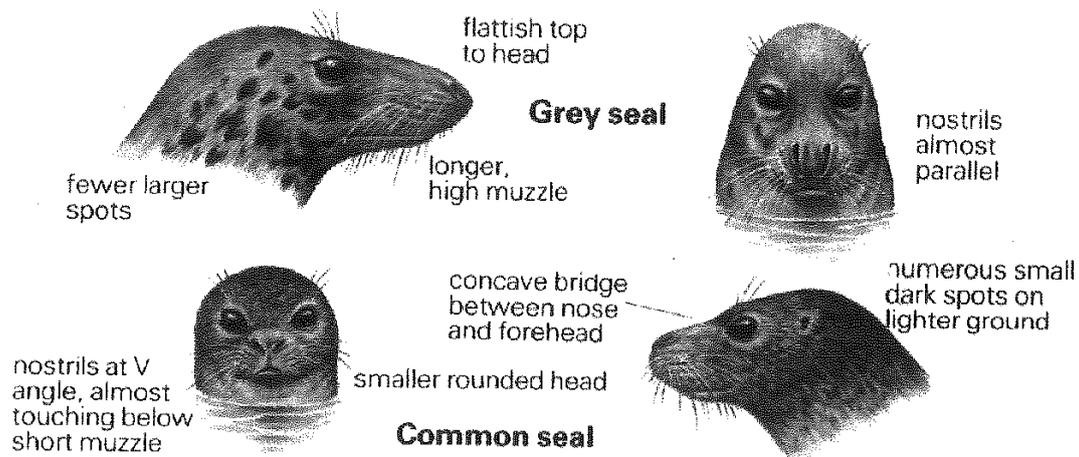
Adult seals can be very dangerous; No attempt must be made to catch them without experienced help and proper equipment

- Always wear gloves, if none available then use plastic bags
- Pregnant women should not handle seals (brucellosis)
- Seal pups can be caught by grasping it from behind, covering their head with a towel or coat, grasp the neck with both hands, roll the pup on its stomach then straddle it for examination, making sure that you grip the chest and fore flippers with your knees, be careful not to kneel on its fore-flippers
- To transfer it onto a blanket, roll the seal onto it, never lift a seal by the flippers, unless you are trained and experienced
- The seal must be kept, or transported, in a well ventilated box. Do not cover the seal with blankets or provide loose bedding. If the seal seems hot, wet the hind flippers and occasionally spray the seal with water. Do not transport the seal in water. If the seal seems cold then dry off the hind flippers and do not provide a heat source i.e. heat lamp.



How to identify the two main species of seal found in Ireland?

There are two main species of seal found in the waters around Ireland. There is the Grey Seal and the Common Seal, also known as the Harbour Seal.



Grey Seal

- The Grey Seal is larger than the Common Seal, and is generally the most common found in Ireland.
- Colours can range from black to blond, with various reds and browns. The upper surface is darker and the body tends to have a splash pattern.
- The male Grey Seal is larger and heavier than the females; adult males can reach up to 330kg in weight compared to 150kg for the female.
- The males tend to be darker than the females and have a pronounced Roman head
- Males can live up to 35 years and the females up to 45 years
- They are normally found on rocky shores and islands
- Their diet is primarily fish although they will also eat shrimp, crab, squid and octopus
- They move very clumsily on land, tending to hunch their bellies to move occasionally using their flippers.

Common (Harbour) Seal

- The Common Seal tends not to be as common as the Grey Seal and are smaller.
- The Common Seal have coats that browner than the Grey Seal and spotted, rather than the slashing
- They have stubby noses and the nostrils form a "V".

For more information please visit our web-site: www.irishsealsanctuary.ie

There are ways that you might like to get involved with the work that we do, there are several options that you may wish to choose:

Membership	Volunteer
Fund raiser	Writer
Merchandise	Donations

Further details are available on our website

Contact Information

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