

Victory for Seals on Cornwall's Coast

Victory for Seals as Cornwall Council Passes Motion to Discourage Sale of Dangerous Flying Rings.

The Cornish Seal Sanctuary welcomes the news that Cornwall Council has passed a motion to discourage the sale of hollow flying rings, a simple yet significant step toward protecting Cornwall's precious marine wildlife.

Flying rings, often sold for as little as £1, pose a serious threat to seals when lost or discarded near the coast. These lightweight plastic toys can become lodged around a seal's neck, cutting into the skin and causing severe injury, infection, or even death. While some seals can be rescued and rehabilitated, the cost of care can reach up to £15,000 per individual, and not all can be saved.

"We are pleased that Cornwall Council has recognised and addressed this serious issue by considering a voluntary ban on the sale of hollow flying rings within Cornwall," said Grace Jones, Conservation Coordinator at the Cornish Seal Sanctuary.

"We strongly support this motion as a vital step in protecting our coastal wildlife, particularly seals, from preventable injury and suffering. Over the years, our Animal Care team has witnessed first-hand the devastating consequences these toys can have on seals. Despite our efforts to treat and rehabilitate injured seals, prevention is always better than cure. By restricting access to these products at their point of sale, we

can directly reduce the risk to wildlife before harm occurs. Taking this step shows leadership and a deep commitment to protecting the natural environment that makes Cornwall so special."



The Sanctuary also recognises the enormous efforts of the many dedicated volunteers who monitor and protect seals around the Cornish coast, in particular, the tireless work of Sue Sayer MBE and volunteers for the Seal Research Trust, as well as the British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR), whose frontline response has saved countless marine animals in distress.



Their data, advocacy, and rescue efforts have been instrumental in bringing the dangers of flying rings to public and political attention.



In addition, the Sanctuary would like to give heartfelt thanks to Joyce and Barry Williams, volunteers and lifelong supporters of the Sanctuary, who have championed this campaign with unwavering passion and determination. Their commitment to protecting Cornwall's seals has played a key role in helping bring about this important step forward.

"We're delighted that Cornwall Council has unanimously voted in favour of a voluntary ban on flying rings. We now hope that shops across Cornwall will follow suit by removing flying rings from sale and offering safe alternatives, such as solid frisbees.

This isn't about stopping people from enjoying the beach; it's about making a small, simple change that has a huge impact. Solid flying discs are just as fun, but unlike flying rings, they don't pose a deadly risk to seals, dolphins, and other marine wildlife.

By making the right choice, we can all help prevent the needless suffering of our coastal animals" said Joyce Williams, long-standing volunteer and true Seal Ambassador.



The Sanctuary has long campaigned for greater awareness of the risks posed by hollow flying rings and encourages both retailers and the public to switch to solid disc-style frisbees, ideally made from sustainable, non-plastic materials, which do not pose the same dangers to wildlife.

Cornwall now joins a growing number of local authorities across the UK, including Swansea, the Vale of Glamorgan, Great Yarmouth and North Norfolk, that have taken action on this issue.

"This campaign has been a true community effort," Grace added. "We're proud to stand alongside organisations and individuals who are so passionate about protecting Cornwall's marine life.

We commend the Council for its consideration of this important matter, and we urge others to follow Cornwall's example. Together, we can set an example for other coastal communities to follow."

This week the campaign was featured on BBC Spotlight, with filming at the Sanctuary.





Cornish Seal
Sanctuary

Say **NO** to flying Rings

Flying rings have a detrimental impact on
our marine environment... especially for the
seals living on our coast.

These rings can be dangerous and even deadly,
which is why we're now encouraging the public to
only use solid discs near the water.



Press Release issued by the Cornish Seal Sanctuary

For more details, please contact Jazz Chater, Marketing & Fundraising Coordinator, on 01326 221361

Issue Date: 24th July 2025