

If you Find a Seal Pup in the Wild

In late August / beginning of September - it's time for grey seals to begin their breeding and pupping season - which for the Cornish Seal Sanctuary signals the busiest time of the year for the Animal Care Team.

For over 60 years the Sanctuary have been rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing those pups from our local coastline that find themselves in trouble, whether it be eye problems, respiratory infections and malnourishment to broken bones, pollution-related problems and being separated from their mother too soon.



The team here provides round-the-clock care throughout the "pup rescue season" (usually September - March) to get them back to full health so they can go back out into the wild where they should be.

Grey seals are amongst the rarer of the world's seal species, with approximately 350,000 spread out across the North Atlantic, North Sea and into the Baltic Sea.



However, it is estimated that close to half the world population could be found around the UK!

As we are home to such a significant habitat and ecosystem that the grey seals find here, it seems logical that this country should try to do more to lead the way in terms of their conservation.



So what can you do to help?

There are a few local, national and international organisations that you can join to help campaign, sign petitions and spread the word, but for us at this time of the year there is some advice we do like to spread when it comes to seals pups.



Mums usually give birth on secluded beaches or in caves, but if you do come across a "whitecoat" pup on a beach then please keep your distance! Nearby humans and dogs will easily scare the mother away, abandoning the pup before it can fend for itself.



Mums come back to feed their pup every 4 - 6 hours and may not always be obvious so, as above, don't approach and encourage others to do the same. If the mum doesn't think it's safe to return then she probably won't come back.



Seal pups finding their way around the coast in their first few weeks will sometimes come out to rest in public places, so try not to disturb them as they may be exhausted.

If you discover a seal pup that is in distress or alone, please call the Cornish Seal Sanctuary on 01326 221361 and/or the British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) team on 01825 765546 during office hours and then after 5pm on 07787 433412. BDMLR volunteers are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



If you have seen a seal disturbed in to the sea as a result of human activity or a dead seal, please call the Cornwall Wildlife Trust's marine hotline : 03452 012626.