

How you can help

Seals *do* face many problems, but look at how YOUR donation to Orkney Seal Rescue could make a real difference:

Just	75p.....	rubber gloves protect hands when handling a seal
	£1.....	milk for 1 pup's meal
	£5.....	multi-vits for 1 pup
	£10.....	1kg of hydration salts
	£25.....	vet bill for 1 sick seal
	£125.....	20kg tub of milk powder
	£300.....	1 tonne of fish

You can help Orkney Seal Rescue care for seals....

Please complete the form overleaf and send your donation to us. You won't just get a feeling of satisfaction and involvement. Every supporter of Orkney Seal Rescue receives a seal window sticker and a copy of Orkney Seal Rescue News.

If do you find a seal needing help....

Don't touch! Keep a safe distance. Seals have sharp teeth and may bite if they feel threatened. Try to ensure the seal is safe. Is it thin? Is it alert? Is its mother in the sea nearby? Try & place a marker to help us locate the seal, then ring us at Orkney Seal Rescue and report your encounter. We will treat each call as a matter of urgency.

"Seals are magical, mystical, inquisitive and compelling creatures."

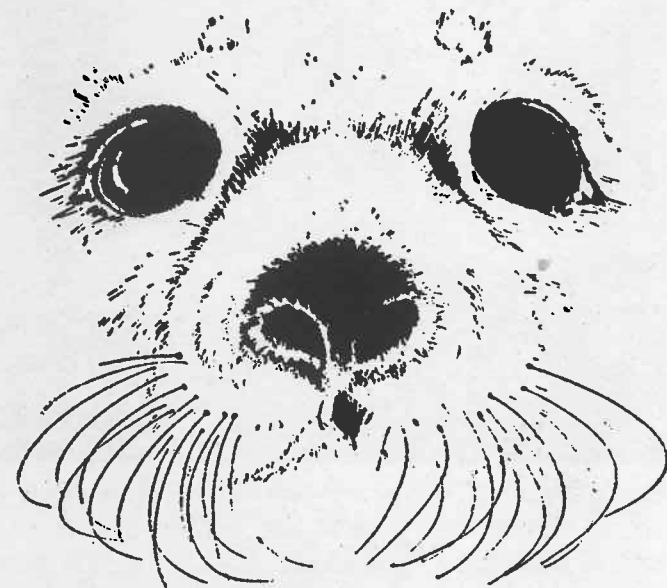


Ross Flett, chairman of Orkney Seal Rescue, says goodbye to a rescued seal returning to the wild.

For more information contact Orkney Seal Rescue, Dyke End, South Ronaldsay, Orkney KW17 2TJ tel: 01856 831463 email: selkiesave@aol.com Registered Charity No SCO 04488



Leaflet produced by the Wildlife Agency 01189 266467
Leaflet funded by  www.bornfree.org.uk 01403 240170



Legend has it the Orkney islands are inhabited by a magical race of seal people or 'selkies', so beautiful that anyone who sees them will instantly fall in love...



ORKNEY SEAL RESCUE



When the haunting sound of seals' song echoes across the mystical landscape of Orkney's lonely beaches, we can almost believe the legends....

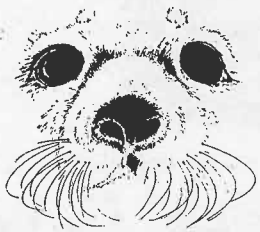
Seals are of course wild animals, who face an array of environmental pressures in their struggle for survival. Orkney is one of the most important breeding sites of two species of seal, the common and the grey.

The work of Orkney Seal Rescue

Seals face many dangers, often as a result of human activities. Seals suffer injury due to discarded fishing nets & rubbish; illness due to polluted seas and starvation due to over-fishing.

Orkney Seal Rescue works to protect seals, rescuing sick, injured and abandoned animals. We are a registered charity founded in 1988 to cope with a virus which killed over 18,000 common seals. We fight to save seals and raise awareness to their plight. We rely on public support and business sponsorship.

We need your help.



Why seals need our help:

The seals' environment is under constant threat.



Entanglement: Discarded fishing nets inflict serious and often fatal injuries when seals become entangled. As the seal grows the inflexible line cuts into the flesh. Injuries impede the seal's ability to hunt and it gradually starves. Or is the seal is entangled and cannot reach the surface to breathe it will drown.

Pollution: Oil spills and dumped waste have devastating effects on seals. Oil fumes are poisonous and irritate the seals' eyes, ears, nose and throat causing ulcers, sores and breathing problems. Toxic waste such as lead, mercury, PCB's and DDT contaminate sea life and accumulates in predators such as seals. Immunity to diseases is reduced and female seals (cows) can have fewer, more sickly pups.



Natural perils: Nature can be unpredictable. Seals, especially pups, are vulnerable to extreme stormy weather. Plus diseases can strike and availability of food can fluctuate. Seal populations *could* cope with these natural problems, but with the added pressures we humans inflict, the seals desperately need Orkney Seal Rescue's help.



Case history: This young pup was born on a beach badly contaminated by oil. She was carefully cleaned at the OSR Centre. 4 weeks later she moulted her white coat, completely removing the oil. After 10 weeks we released her back to the wild, fit & healthy.

Overfishing: Both common and grey seals are 'opportunists' and eat a wide variety of fish and sea animals. Their diet can bring them into conflict with the fishing industry. Over-fishing can cause shortages in a seal's food supply, resulting in poor physical condition, and increased susceptibility to parasites and illness. This can eventually lead to death.



Suited to the sea: seal natural history



Seals are intelligent, warm-blooded creatures that spend most of their lives at sea, coming ashore only to bask, breed and moult. Seals may look slow and clumsy on land, but in the vast ocean they are swift and graceful swimmers. Their streamlined bodies slice through the water with ease as they catch fish. Their thick layer of fat (blubber) and a covering of dense fur ensures they keep warm in the cold sea.

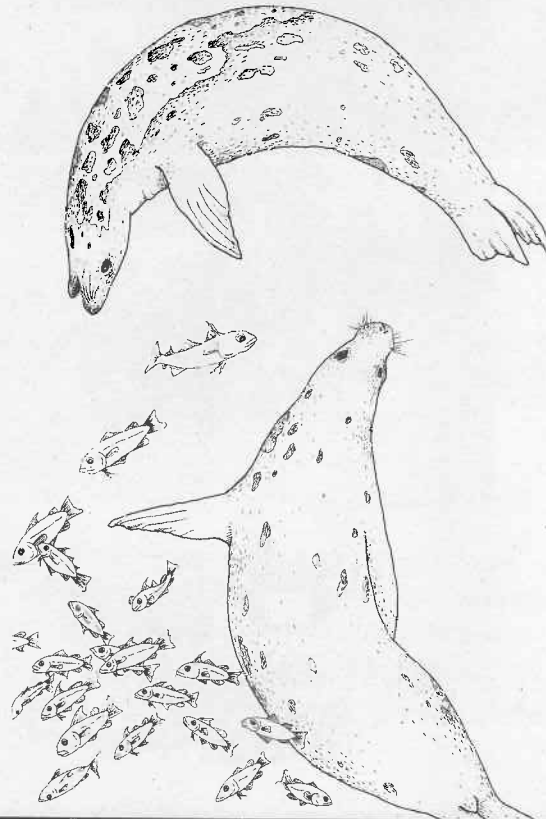
Seals are well adapted to life at sea and their flippers are perfectly shaped to propel and steer. When you see a seal 'flying' through the water, it becomes clear why the group of animals to which the seal belongs are known as 'pinnipeds', which means 'winged feet'.

Seals breathe air, but can dive for up to an hour, reaching depths of up to 500m. They carry three times as much oxygen in their blood as a similarly sized land mammal.

Seals are formidable hunters, perfectly adapted to their marine environment. Their large eyes ensure superb vision under water, even in poor light.

Acute hearing allows them to pinpoint prey and their ears have adapted to allow them to hear well under water. Sensitive whiskers detect vibrations of moving prey in the water, so that even blind seals have been known to survive in the wild. When diving, a seal shuts its nostrils, and strong throat muscles prevent water from entering their wind-pipe, this allows them to feed underwater.

Among seals' favourite foods are sand eels, cod and saithe. Both grey and common seals eat a variety of prey including shellfish, squid and octopus. Their diet is determined by the availability of prey species in any given area. During mating and pupping seasons, grey seal bulls and cows do not feed, losing up to 25% of their body weight.



What is the difference between a grey and a common seal?

Grey and common seals can be difficult to tell apart, especially in the water. Grey seals are much bigger than common and are Britain's largest carnivore.

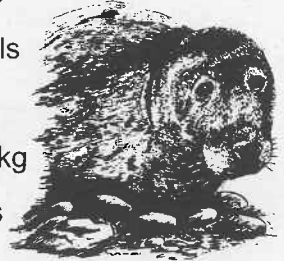
Grey seal characteristics

'Roman nose', parallel nostrils

Male = 3m Female = 1.8m

Male = 220kg Female = 150kg

Colouring: grey with blotches of black & darker grey



Pups born Sept - Nov. Birth weight = 14kg. Pup's coat = white & silky. Dependent on mother, staying on shore till weaning. Suckles for 4 weeks. Weight at weaning = 45kg.

Lifespan up to 45 years

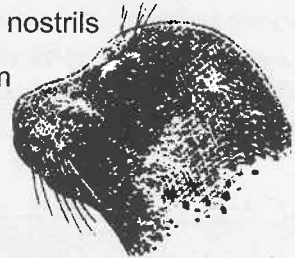
Common or 'harbour' seal characteristics

Dog-like muzzle, 'V' shaped nostrils

Male = 1.8m Female = 1.5m

Male & Female = 80-100kg.

Colouring: Grey or brown with spots



Pups born June - July. Weight = 10kg. Pup's coat = adult-like. Not so dependent, can swim within hours of birth. Suckles for 8 weeks. Weight at weaning = 20kg.

Lifespan up to 30 years

Orkney Seal Rescue - we're here to help

Rescue

Every seal casualty is assessed individually. When an animal is reported we first establish the problem. Seals naturally spend some time ashore and healthy animals normally return to the sea immediately when approached. If a seal is reluctant to move, it could be ill.

Unless the seal is obviously ill or injured, or is an extremely thin and undernourished young pup, we first observe it with minimum disturbance for up to 36 hours. Wildlife belongs in the wild and rescuing an animal that does not need help would cause unnecessary stress. If the seal does need help, our team will take it to our Rescue Centre.



A needy seal is rescued

Case history: 'Sue Ellen' had been shot in the eye, and didn't respond to our treatment. Fearing the worst, we tried a homeopathic treatment - 'Silicea'. Both bullet & a blood clot were expelled & Sue Ellen made a miraculous recovery. Half-blind seals can survive well in the wild & she was returned to the sea.



Treatment

On admission to our Centre, a rescued seal is weighed, measured and examined. It will stay in our isolation unit for two weeks, to prevent 'cross infection'. The seal then moves to our rehabilitation area and finally to water pools, where it can swim and build up muscle in preparation for release back to the wild.

Severely underweight animals and those suffering infections require intensive care. This involves tube-feeding of specialised diets, plus antibiotics, vitamins and minerals.

Injured seals have wounds cleaned and are given antibiotics and analgesics. Seals are wild animals and don't like being handled, so we keep stress to a minimum. Seals can be in our care from 3 weeks to 6 months.

Our Centre is often home to seal pups, abandoned by their mothers or separated during storms. For their first weeks pups rely on their mother's milk, so orphans are tube-fed a substitute that is more than 50% fat. This ensures they put on weight and build up a thick layer of blubber to keep them warm in the cold sea. Pups are weaned to a 'fish soup', before graduating to whole fish.



A seal's weight is checked

BECOME AN ORKNEY SEAL RESCUE SUPPORTER



YOUR support is vital

Running Orkney Seal Rescue and caring for seals is expensive. Our voluntary staff are dedicated, but the cost of food and medicines, and the upkeep of our Centre and rescue vehicles is extremely high.

With YOUR support, Orkney Seal Rescue will continue to:

- Rescue sick and injured seals
- Care for orphan seal pups
- Buy milk powder, medicines and vital equipment
- Run our education centre
- Raise awareness to the plight of seals

PLEASE COMPLETE THE COUPON (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Title Initials Surname.....
Address.....
Postcode.....Daytime tel:.....

YES! I'd like to help Orkney Seal Rescue care for seals and I enclose a donation of (please tick)

£5 £10 £15 £25 £100 other £.....

..... I enclose a cheque / postal order
(Please make payable to 'Orkney Seal Rescue')

..... I wish to pay via Access / Visa

Credit card no: / / /
Expiry date: /

Please send to:

Orkney Seal Rescue, Dyke End,
South Ronaldsay, Orkney KW17 2TJ

Thank you