



# COMMON SEALS

Also known as Harbour Seals (*Phoca vitulina*)

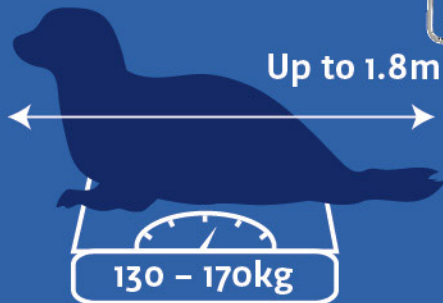
## Key facts:

### Distribution



Widespread around temperate and Arctic marine coastlines of the Northern hemisphere. Found all around the UK coastline; 85% of the British population is found in Scotland.

### Size



Weight around 130 - 170kg and can grow up to about 1.8m. Males are slightly heavier and larger than females.

### Diet



Common Seals eat a wide variety of fresh fish, shrimp, squid and octopus.

### Lifespan



20 - 35 years. Females tend to live longer than males.

### Conservation Status

Common seals are not currently a concern, however marine litter and pollution are threats. They are protected under the Conservation of Seals Act (1970).



# COMMON SEALS



Cornish Seal Sanctuary



Common seals are smaller than grey seals and are usually light - dark grey or tan in colour. Common seals are more elusive than grey seals but can be spotted hauled out on rocky beaches, often with their heads and tails in the air. They are identifiable by their V-shaped noses.

## Fun Facts

1

Common seals spend 85 % of their day under the water, which includes resting on the sea floor.

2

Female common seals give birth to a single pup during June or July.

4

Pups shed their white coat whilst still inside the uterus, so they are born with their adult coat.

3

Common seals will swim into estuaries and large streams in pursuit of prey.

5

The average heart rate of an adult seal is between 55 and 120 beats per minute. When underwater, the heart rate is slowed to between 5 and 15 beats which enables them to dive for up to half an hour.



# GREY SEALS (Halichoerus Grypus)

Also known as the Atlantic Seal and the Horsehead Seal

## Key facts:

### Distribution



Grey Seals are found in Eastern Canada and the northeastern United States, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, and Russia. However approximately 40% of the world's population of grey seals live in waters around the UK.

### Size



Weigh 150 - 250kg, Males are heavier and larger than females and could get close to 300kg. They grow to 1.6 - 3m in size.

### Diet



Grey Seals eat a wide variety of fish and occasionally squid or crustaceans. Sand eels and cod make up the majority of their diet.

### Lifespan



Females can live up to 35 years but males tend to have a shorter lifespan, only reaching around 25yrs in the wild.

### Conservation Status

Grey seals are currently not officially vulnerable. Threats however remain present and include fishing, marine pollution & litter and hunting.



# GREY SEALS



Cornish Seal Sanctuary



Grey seals are one of two native species of seal in the UK and can be distinguished from the Common seal by their size and features. They also have longer, straighter heads with fewer spots on their fur than Common seals. Grey seals give birth to pups in the winter during September - December. Mothers will nurse their pups for around 4 - 6 weeks, at which point the pups shed their fluffy white fur, develop their adult coat and go into the sea to fend for themselves. Grey seals are intelligent and curious and can often be seen investigating fishing boats and even surfers in the ocean.

## Fun Facts

**1** The scientific name for the grey seal is *Halichoerus grypus* which means 'hooked-nose sea-pig'!

Males and females have different patterned coats; males are darker and have a more solid colour all over, whereas females have a steely grey-coloured back and a mottled creamy colour belly. Each seal has a unique fur pattern which remains the same for their entire life.

**3**

**2** Grey seals will perform behaviours known as 'bottling' and 'logging'. This is when they bob around vertically or horizontally in the water with just their head or back above the surface of the water. This is how they rest at sea while out foraging for days at a time.

**4** Scent is really important to grey seals. They will sometimes greet each other by sniffing and mothers also identify their pups by smelling them. They are one of the few animals that are able to smell underwater!

**5** Grey seals can stay under water for up to 45 minutes at a time! Unlike humans, when grey seals dive they don't take a big breath of air, they actually breathe out most of the air in their lungs so it doesn't make them float. Instead, they have specially adapted circulation and respiratory systems that allow them to hold lots of oxygen in their blood and muscles!



# OUR STORY

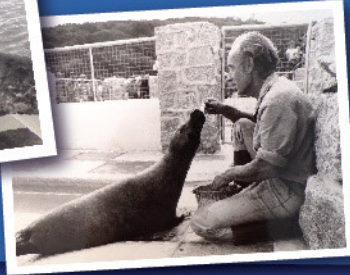


# Cornish Seal Sanctuary

1958

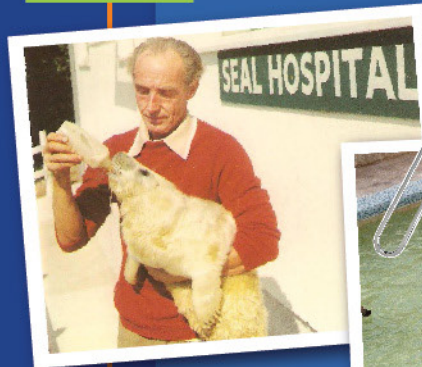


The Sanctuary's beginning can be traced back to 1958 when a seal pup was washed up on St. Agnes beach and was taken in by a local man called Ken Jones. Ken lived near the beach with his wife and daughter and decided to take the pup back to his home to care for it.

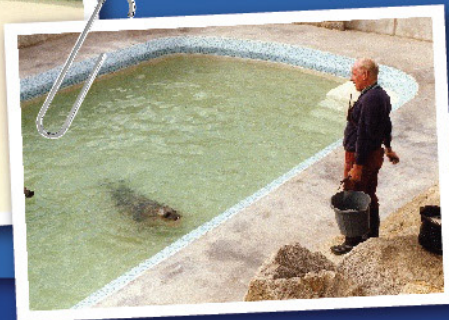


This encounter eventually led Ken and his family to establish a wildlife rescue centre for seals and oiled birds from his home, initially using a pool in his own back garden. The rescue centre gained popularity and Ken was soon inundated with calls from the public about seals in need!

1975



In 1975, Ken set off to find a site to build a larger more permanent haven for rescued seals, this new centre would become the Cornish Seal Sanctuary in Gweek.



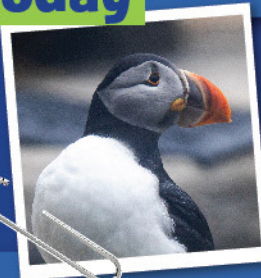
The Sanctuary has rescued many seals over the years and has successfully released most back into the wild. Seals with ongoing health problems are provided with a permanent home at the Sanctuary.

2018

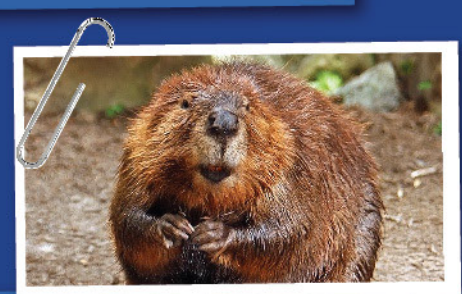
In 2018, the SEA LIFE TRUST charity took over the Cornish Seal Sanctuary. The charity works globally to protect the world's oceans and the amazing marine life that lives within it.

**SEA LIFE TRUST**  
Protecting Our World's Oceans

Today



In addition to the resident seals and rehabilitation programme for seal pups, the Sanctuary also homes a variety of other animals, including rescued puffins from our sister Beluga Whale Sanctuary in Iceland, goats and rare breed sheep.



We also partner with the Beaver Trust by acting as a home for beavers in need; working together to ensure a future for the species in the UK.

You can read more about the animals in our care at [sealsanctuary.sealifetrust.org](https://sealsanctuary.sealifetrust.org)

# Rescue, Rehabilitate & Release

## CASE STUDY

## Coral the Seal Pup

On 15th September 2021 a seal pup named Coral was rescued by members of the British Divers Marine Life Rescue group from Millook beach in Bude, North Cornwall.

She was approximately 3 weeks old and was suffering from wounds to her body and a nasty eye injury.

After a few days in the seal hospital, a decision was made for Coral's eye to be removed and the operation was carried out by the Sanctuary's vets. Coral spent just over three months recovering at the Seal Sanctuary before being released alongside four other pups.

Since her release, Coral has been spotted on numerous occasions and most recently was seen sunning herself in the beautiful Isles of Scilly! Coral's flipper tag ID number is SL100 (white) ... let us know if you spot her!



## How YOU Can Help!

The SEA LIFE TRUST Cornish Seal Sanctuary is a charity that rescues and rehabilitates grey seal pups from around the Cornish coastline.

Each pup season (September - March), the Sanctuary rehabilitates around 60 seal pups that have been rescued for various reasons, from malnourishment to being separated from their mum.

Depending on the treatment required, caring for these pups costs the Sanctuary around £2500- £3000 per seal pup.

Can you help us on our mission to return seal pups like Coral back to the sea where they belong? Join our S.O.S Squad and set up a regular donation to 'Save Our Seals'. For just £5 a month you can support our Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release programme.

Or why not sponsor a nursery pool at the sanctuary to help with seal pup swimming lessons!

You can find out how to help by scanning the QR code



# THE ATLANTIC PUFFIN

(*Fratercula Arctica*) Also known as the Common Puffin

## Key facts:

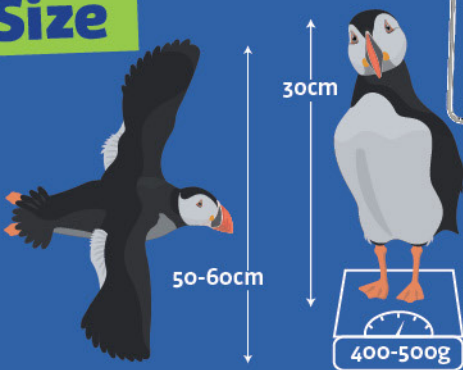
### Distribution



**SEA LIFE TRUST**  
Protecting Our World's Oceans

Atlantic puffins breed on islands and sea cliffs along the coasts of north-western Europe, The British Isles, Iceland and north-eastern North America. They also live in scattered colonies in Greenland and the eastern Canadian Arctic.

### Size



Adult puffins are an estimated 20-30cm high and normally weigh approx. 400-500g (14-17oz). This about the same as a can of soda or small loaf of bread

### Diet



Puffins live on a mostly small fish-based diet, normally made up of species like capelin, sprats and krill. However, they are known to eat crustaceans and molluscs in more coastal waters.

### Lifespan



Puffins can live for up to 30 years+ The oldest recorded was 41yrs old!

### Conservation Status

**VULNERABLE**

The key threats include population overfishing, pollution & climate change.





## THE ATLANTIC PUFFIN

The Atlantic puffin is a species of sea bird in the Auk family. It is the only puffin native to the Atlantic Ocean and is most commonly found in the Westman Islands, Iceland.

These birds spend most of their lives at sea, returning to nest in colonies for breeding. They make nests by digging a shallow burrow or hole and will lay just one egg per year (usually around late April/early May). Each year, they select the same mate and breeding site, with pufflings hatching later in the summer months.

### Fun facts:

- 1** Puffins are also known as 'sea parrots' due to their colourful beak that resembles a parrot's beak, which gets its colour during breeding season.
- 2** Puffins are monogamous and typically mate for life. They return to the same nesting site each year and engage in elaborate courtship rituals. This includes a behaviour called 'billing', which is when the potential pair will rub their beaks together.
- 3** Both parents take care of incubating the egg for 39-45 days. They share responsibility for feeding their baby puffin, also known as a puffling.
- 4** They can dive up to 200 feet underwater in search of food. Their wings are adapted to work like flippers, allowing them to swim and manoeuvre through the water.
- 5** While puffins are excellent fliers and can reach speeds of up to 55mph, they have a somewhat clumsy take-off and landing - often crashing into the water or ground before getting airborne.
- 6** One little puffin can carry up to ten fish in its beak at any one time!







# Beluga Whale & Puffin Sanctuary

## About the Puffin Rescue Centre at the Beluga Whale Sanctuary

The Beluga Whale Sanctuary is home to Iceland's only Puffin Rescue Centre, which takes in pufflings (baby puffins) and puffins found in Vestmannaeyjar which need some extra care.

Most of these birds are rescued by the local Puffling Patrol, which works in cooperation with the Beluga Whale Sanctuary.

Some are brought in by local residents for review, treatment and possibly release if they are fit and ready.

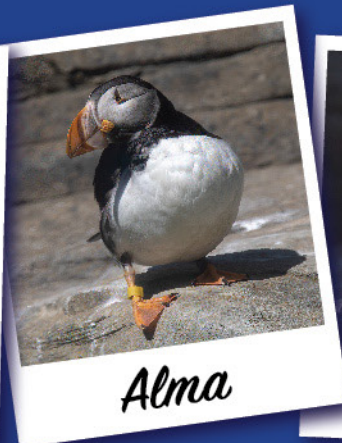
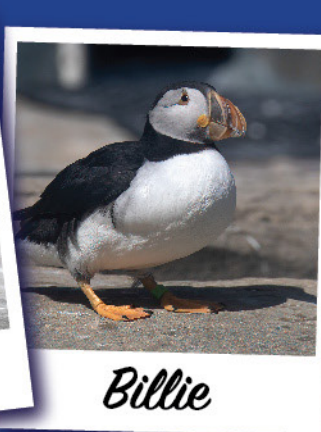


## Our Resident Puffins

We currently have a number of long-term resident puffins at the Beluga Whale Sanctuary. Some of which have been rehomed to our sister Seal sanctuary in Cornwall, UK. Several have vision impairments and life-long injuries, while others spent too long under human care to be released.

Today, each puffin in our care eat an average of 3kg of capelin fish and krill per month, being fed around 3-6 times per day. Their diet is similar to what they would find in the wild, and is largely made up of krill, sprats or capelin. They also receive daily vitamins and go through weekly health checks, including being weighed voluntarily.

The Beluga Whale Sanctuary provides a variety of enrichment each week for the puffins to keep them engaged and to imitate their natural behaviours.



Follow their adventures on social media: [@BelugaWhaleSanctuary](#) and [@CornishSealSanctuary](#)

# Puffins on Vestmannaeyjar

The Vestmannaeyjar archipelago is home to Iceland's largest breeding colony of Atlantic Puffins during the summer months, with more than 700,000 pairs of puffins migrating to the islands to raise their young.

At the end of the summer, when the pufflings are leaving their cliff side burrows for the first time to fly to the ocean, they can become disoriented by lights or blown off course into the town, where they need a bit of help to get safely back to the sea.

Each summer, the town of Vestmannaeyjar, along with the Beluga Whale Sanctuary team, volunteers from Naturastofa Sudurlands and bekkingarsetur Vestmannaeyjar, work together to find as many birds as possible in the town or harbour, assess their health and get them back to the ocean as soon as possible.

Some of the pufflings found are oiled or injured and need extra care. The team takes in any oiled or injured birds for care and rehabilitation during this time. Care can range from a few days of feeding underweight or downy birds, to weeks of medical care and oil cleaning.

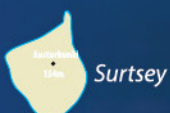
However, while we endeavour to release as many as possible, not all puffins can be released back to the wild, and now have a permanent home at the Sanctuary.

We've also rehomed ten puffins at the Cornish Seal Sanctuary in Cornwall UK

• Geirfuglasker



## Beluga Whale & Puffin Sanctuary



Surtsey

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