CORNWALL SEAL GROUP RESEARCH TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 1162936

Details

Other names	Seal Research Trust
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2015-07-30
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

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Activities

Objects: THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION, AMONG THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE GREY SEAL AND ITS HABITAT IN CORNWALL BY THE PROVISION OF TALKS, WORKSHOPS, RESEARCH AND EVENTS

Activities: Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust: Research Engage Communicate Conserve. CSGRT gives seals a voice! CSGRT monitors and identifies seals in SW England using each seal's unique fur pattern and long term photo identification enables a picture to be built up about their lives. Research provides a foundation to inform the effective conservation of seals at the southernmost limit of their range.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Animals, Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

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Geography

- Cornwall
- Devon
- Dorset
- Somerset

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£97,880	£83,596	-	-
2024-03-31	£85,517	£78,983	-	-
2023-03-31	£63,310	£38,833	-	-
2022-03-31	£90,090	£80,177	-	-
2021-03-31	£186,875	£77,352	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
SUE SAYER	Chair	2015-07-29
DAN JARVIS		2015-07-29
KATE HOCKLEY		2015-07-29
PHIL KNIGHT		2015-02-27
RICHARD MORTON		2015-02-27

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CORNWALL SEAL GROUP RESEARCH TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1162936

Accounts

Seals SW

05/10/24 Lucky Bunting and her 4th pup in 5 years by Andy Hadfield

Annual Report 2024

Seal Research Trust's 'Seals SW' Annual Report

Funders (P3)
People (P7)
Charity Achievements and Activities (P10)
Feedback about SRT Activities (P24)
Seal Data Outputs (P26)
Hubdates (P36)
Volunteer Story (P66)
Policy and Conservation Actions (P68)
Highlights and Conclusion (P71)

SEAL
Research
Trust

Contents

Summary 3
Funders 5
Campaigns 6
People 7
- Marine Rangers and Science Advisor 7
- Strategy Team, Hubs, Volunteers and Photo ID Coordinator 8

Charity Achievements and Activities 10
- Summary 10
- Talks 10
- Workshops/Training 11
- Stalls/Events 12
- Field Engagement 13
- School Sessions and Exhibitions 13 and 14
- Photo ID Project (PIP) organised surveys 16
- Meetings 17
- Reports 19
- Seals SW Sessions, Seals SW Newsletters and Wild Seal Supporter Updates 19
- Resources and Media Coverage 20 and 21
- Planetary Technologies Marine Geoengineering Experiment 22
- Artificial Intelligence and Deep Learning Computer Vision Project 23 and 24

Feedback about SRT Activities 24
Seal Data Outputs 26
- Surveys and Volunteers 26
- Age and Sex Classes 26
- Grey Seal Pups 26
- Harbour Seals and Harbour Seal Pups 27
- Photos, Albums and Identifications 27
- Ex rescued, Rehabilitated and Released Seals 30
- Entangled Seals 31
- Disturbance 32

Hubdates 36
Volunteer story 66
Policy and Conservation Actions 68
- Consultations 68
- Practical Conservation Actions 68

Highlights of 2024: Seals and People 71
Conclusion 72
Appendix A: Feedback 73

Executive Summary

Funders

SRT are now self-financing thanks to our public, private and voluntary funders. Substantial grants and donations were received from Flotilla Foundation, LUSH, Derek Bryan Gray, Carbis Bay Hotel, Bare Kind, MoonSeals, Aspects, Bowgie Inn, Mungo Lils on the Hill, Robie, Smartie Lids on the Beach, Our Only World, Polzeath Marine Conservation Group and the Seal Protection Action Group.

People

Thank you to our Patron, Science experts, Hubs and Volunteers – this is a massive team effort.

Charity Achievements and Activities

In 2024 SRT delivered 894 activities (including 401 UK and 73 globally) involving at least 38,099 beneficiaries. We ended the year with 19,090 social media followers. Volunteers delivered 139 talks/workshops, 14 stalls/events, 164 field engagements, 1 6 month exhibition, 8 school sessions, 18 Photo ID Project (PIP) day long surveys, 422 meetings, 30 reports, 12 Seals SW Sessions, 10 Seals SW Newsletters, 4 Wild Seal Supporter updates, 5 new resources, 88 media coverage events. Working with partners, SRT have helped to prevent Planetary Technology getting a licence for their St Ives Bay Geoengineering experiment in 2024.

Feedback about SRT Activities

Thank you for all your kind words about your engagement with us. It spurs us all on!

Seal Data Outputs

260 survey volunteers completed 4,332 discrete surveys from 314 locations alongside our quarterly census and 18 PIPs. A mean of 10 seals were recorded up to a max of 458. 66% were adults of which 57.5% were males. There were 542 sightings of white coated pups at 43 locations (including 8 on the south coast) representing 1% of all seals. There were 72 harbour seal sightings with up to a max of 3 at 15 locations. 116,253 photos were processed into 1,427 albums for 11,694 IDs. 35 seals have been identified for at least 20 years. 3,217 unique seals were ID'd – 60 20+ times. 4 dead seals were ID'd. 164 different tagged seals (5%) were ID'd. 82 unique entangled seals were ID'd (3%). 6 hooked seals recorded. 160 serious disturbance incidents involved 930 seals (max 56 in a single disturbance incident).

Policy and Conservation Actions

53 consultations were submitted (24 for conservation, 8 on issues, 17 for developments, 7 on fisheries and 4 others). Wildlife and Countryside LINK membership increases our influence and reach. We continue to pursue the goal of making seal disturbance illegal. 2024 campaigns were Disturbance, Flying Rings, Climate Change and Geoengineering.

Highlights from 2024 and Conclusion

St Austell Bay and Lizard Hubs were 10 years old! 2 vagrant species recorded – Ringed & Hooded. Mum feeding 2 pups & pup birth. S30 still alive! SRT makes a big difference to marine conservation for seals with just 1.8fte paid rangers and hundreds of inspiring volunteers.

SRT 2024 Highlights

Jan

Pup weaned on Hampshire river visited by White Tailed Eagle

Persecution of seal 17/01/24 reported to MMO with investigation & interviews

Commuter Rescued from paint tin seal by SRT & BDMLR Volunteers

SRT prompted Whiskers feature on Winterwatch

Feb

Harbour seals Kraken & Kelpie released S.Devon appear N.Cornish north coast after 250km & 300km swims

Begin using stickers on social media

Harbour seal recorded in Coverack

St Austell Bay Hub 10 years

Paddle/Boat stickers & Photography Best Practice poster

Kurt Jackson Exhibition

Kettle (from 2003) ID'd

Ranger Karen joins the team

Flying rings petition launched

Mar

SRT 2023 Annual Report released

KOSCF Protest - swimmers & boat flotilla 12/04/24

Lundy Society Seals Field Course led by Rob Wells

Seal disturbance data update sent to Defra

Apr

STAPIP POLPIP CASPIP & census surveys

SWME Conference input on seals

Dan presented Wings' rescue film at the ECS

RNN! Restore Nature Now event in Truro

Presentation to White House Federal Scientific Committee

Bilberry (from 2001) ID'd

Operation Seabird event at Global Bird Fair in Rutland

Springwatch shared best practice on seal space & photography

May

Manifesto for seals ready for General Election

VOTE

SWW Meeting 3 about PT 02/05/24

Launched 1st schools creative competition

Jun

Field Studies Council

First of four FSC Courses of the year

Gnome returned to Porthtowan (ID'd from 2004)

Cudden Hub record in a new sensitive seal site

First Ringed seal recorded in Cornwall

Seal Alliance sign up in Dorset

Analysis of 1.5 hours of seal disturbance at Pentire by Andy, showing natural & disturbed behaviour contrasts

SRT input to Threatened Species Recovery Plans for Natural England

N Devon pupping site discovered

Jul

Seal data submitted to LNRS

WCL Briefing for Defra calls for seals to be added to WCA

Research with Cornwall FLOW on underwater seal vocalisations

Peak pupping season

Mum feeding two pups recorded by Martin Yelland

Seal Alliance limit damage of BBC programme

Aug

Sue & Dan become Mammal Society Science Committee members

SWME report published resulting in coverage by multiple media outlets

Wings & Jet pup rota by SRT & BDMLR. Av. feed 8.5 mins. Wings mated 11 times with 2 different males!

W Cornwall disturbance reported with excellent response & change in fishing behaviour

Sep

SRT hosted Natural England's National Enforcement Team visit

Pup birth photographed by Martin Yelland

5643 seals link West Cornwall to 42 other sites across Celtic Sea

Wiggins ID'd St Austell Bay since 2012

'High voltage' pupped at Porthtowan

Hooded seal seen by BDMLR in Falmouth Harbour

Oct

Mum 'Waves' had pup at 4th different site

SRT on Clean Catch UK Advisory Board

SRT input at Devon & Cornwall Police Wildlife Crime Conference

WCL Wildlife Crime Report Marine mammal crime is 2nd highest offence reported

Drone research with Natural England results in 110m min. flight height, min. flight path time & not on still, quiet days

Police & Crime Plan 2025 - 2029 includes Wildlife Crime

Chairlift's 27 year old teeth revealed

Nov

Pupping dates earlier this year, with more pups born in Aug than Oct

Visit from Defra Seals Policy Advisor

S30 Horned Caterpillar at W Cornwall. 1st ID'd in 2001. He's still alive!

Dec

SRT attend JNCC Marine Mammal Forum

SRT on Panel at KOSCF Documentary premiere in St Ives

Seal Research Trust (SRT) est. Cornwall 2000

Annual Report 2024

Funders

In 2024 SRT continue to be a self-funding charity, covering very low overheads from **public, private and voluntary donations**, through our **Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme, volunteer fundraising efforts,** multiple course deliveries for the **Field Studies Council** and all the **profits from our online shop**.

Our Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger, Sarah Millward, applied for a **LUSH Charity Pot** grant which has covered all our 2024 boat survey charter costs alongside two surveys funded by Polzeath Marine Conservation Group and Our Only World.

Our biggest donations of the year were from the Seal Protection Action Group and the Flotilla Foundation to whom we are hugely grateful. Corporate donations were also substantial in 2024 and we were delighted that **Scrumbles Pet Care** joined Aspects Holidays, Carbis Bay Hotel, Bare Kind, the Bowgie Inn, Mungo Lils on the Hill and Smartie Lids on the Beach chose to support us with their hard earned cash. **Charlotte Fitzgerald and Clare Sirman** from MoonSeals continued to donate their epic merchandise to sell on our 'one stop sealy shop'.

SRT 2024 Funders

The **Kurt Jackson Foundation** exhibition generated a substantial amount of donations, and more importantly broadened our reach and hugely increased our engagement with the public.

Wonderful generous individual donors continue to support our charity's mission and in 2024, three figure donations were received from the Caroline Bennett, Alistair Coetzee, Olivia Isaac, Rupert Kirkwood, Andrew Stott, Joyce & Barry Williams and Keith Wilson as well as from the Harry Acland Trust. We love that many of these people have donated for multiple years.

It is also wonderful when people support us with their Facebook birthday fundraisers – thank you to Martin Bone, Josette Fuller, Yeimi Garcia, Sarah Lancey, Manaymaryam Bidhendi, Hayley Relton and Peach Valles.

Thank you to **Hayley Mitchell our Seal Supporter Coordinator** who ran three Jumblebee fundraising auctions for seals raising nearly £700.

For the first time in SRT's history we were able to provide supporting grants to the Wildlife Safe Scheme (WiSe) during its transition to become a Community Interest Company (CIC) and the Looe Marine Conservation Group pioneering Marker Buoys Project.

As a highly agile, thrifty and economical charity, our 1.8 full time equivalent Rangers continue to be our charity's main outgoing expense, alongside boat charters, public liability insurance, some modest IT hardware/software application costs, survey kit for volunteers and subsidised printing costs from Attic Design and Print.

Seal Campaigns

Seal Disturbance – Getting seals added to schedule 5 all section 9 offences of the Wildlife and Countryside Act

Natural England's National Enforcement Team Visit to West Cornwall

Once again in collaboration with the Seal Alliance Executive members, SRT partnered with Wildlife and Countryside LINK (WCL) to make seal disturbance illegal as it is with Whales and Dolphins. WCL created a briefing that was shared with Defra outlining the rationale for this

vital legislative change. Defra's Seal Policy Advisor visited SRT HQ. WCL hosted a meeting with Detective Chief Constable Nigel Harrison, where Sue asked him to review England's Police Wildlife Crime Priorities to make them consistent with those in Wales. Throughout 2024, SRT engaged with the MMO MPA Summary team to set up a national, standardised marine wildlife disturbance online recording system. In September SRT hosted a visit by Natural England's (NE) National Enforcement Team to West Cornwall with the National Trust where Sue Sayer gave an hour long talk on the issue of seal disturbance. NE also collaborated with SRT on research to assess minimum drone flight heights for seal surveying. SRT provided a summary of their seal disturbance data to WCL for their Annual Wildlife Crime Disturbance Report along with other Seal Alliance members (Kent Wildlife Trust, St Mary's Island Wildlife Conservation Society and Yorkshire Seal Group. Shockingly it seems marine mammal crime was second only to fisheries crime and greater than badger, bat and bird crime combined. The year ended on a high as Sue Sayer and Andy Rogers presented at Devon & Cornwall Police's Wildlife Crime Conference to over 40 officers.

Flying Rings

Working alongside the **Seal Alliance Executive (Chaired by Sue Sayer) and lead by Jenny Hobson from Friends of Horsey Seals**, SRT participated in the launch of a **second Flying Rings Parliamentary Petition**. Sadly this was automatically closed the day the General Election was announced, but we learned important lessons that will be actioned when a new Flying Rings Petition is launched in 2025. We were delighted when **Gower Seal Group successfully engaged with Swansea Council who announced their support for Flying Rings to not be sold by retailers nor used on their beaches**. They **join Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn & West Norfolk and Tiverton Councils** who have banned these lethal toys. Other actions included **Beach Art by Yorkshire Seal Group, School Talks by Friends of Horsey Seals, Letters sent by Seal Alliance Group members including SRT**. These have resulted **in Asda, Tesco, Pets at Home, WH Smiths, The Entertainer Toy Shop and CVS Vets** removing flying rings from their shelves. Well done to all these major retailers!

People

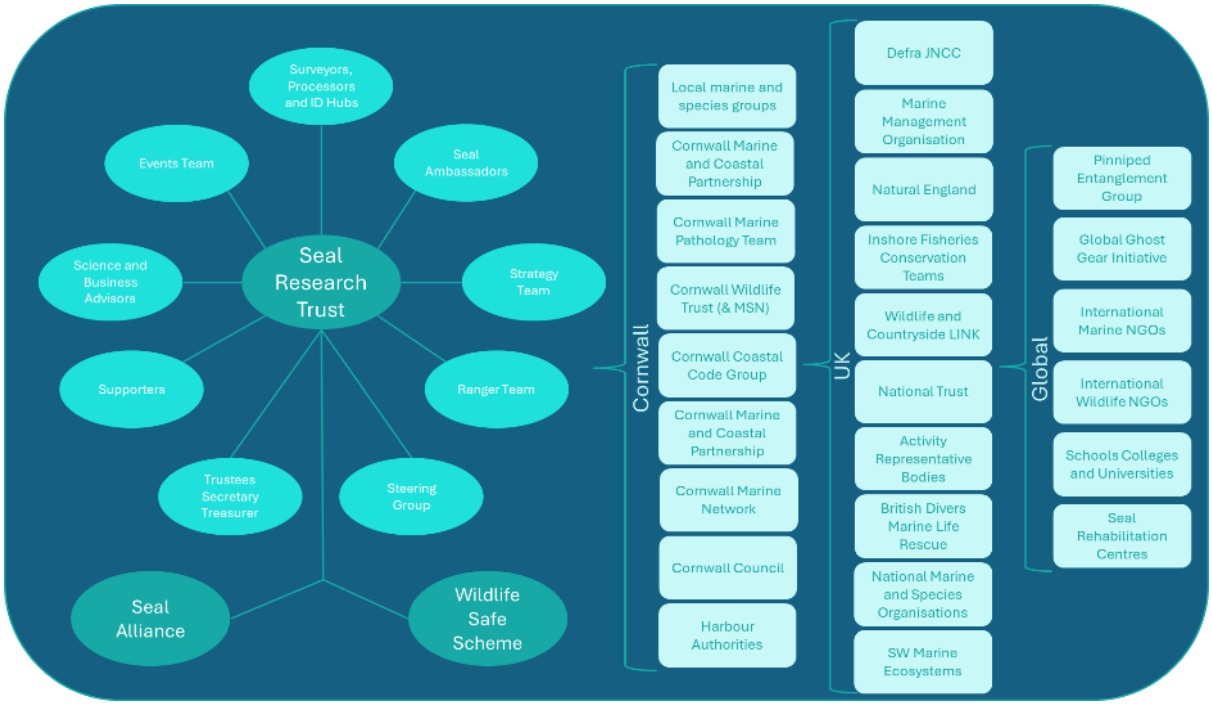
Patron, Marine Rangers and Science Advisors

2024 was a year where we increased our resilience and engagement. **Gillian Burke** (Springwatch) continues to be our charity's **Patron**. We began the year with **1.5 full time equivalent (fte) paid rangers** – Lauren McGregor (Activities and Administration Ranger) Karen Gaudern (Retail and Administration Ranger) and Sarah Millward (Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger). During 2024 our key volunteers - Founder and Director Sue Sayer and Photo ID coordinator Kate Williams needed more support so we added two more part timers – Niki Groves (Activity Transactions Ranger) in November and Milly Phipps (Research Ranger) in December bringing us up to **1.8 fte roles**. Rebecca Allen continues to be our volunteer **Science Advisor** and she represents us on the National Advisory Board for Clean Catch UK. In 2023 she was joined by **Dr Ian Hendy from Portsmouth University** and **Dr David Santillo from Greenpeace International**. These two experts continued to help advise us about our response to the Planetary Technology proposed geoengineering project (see page 22). We are thankful and

glad to have these wonderful people/experts to help and support our incredible volunteer network and conservation efforts.

Strategy Team

After joining the Wildlife and Countryside LINK in September 2023, Sue Sayer began attending their multiple group meetings, substantially increasing our network connections and audience. As our influence expanded, it soon became apparent that SRT needed additional support from super talented and active volunteers who were highly competent and capable of representing seals at a statutory and advisory level. So in September, SRT's Strategy Team was born. It now includes nine people including Sue Sayer; Bex Allen, Andy Rogers; Peter Perkins; Emma Woolfenden, Gareth Richards, Jeremy Gilson, Angela Wright and Kate Hockley. These fabulous volunteers represent us at the various Wildlife and Countryside LINK meetings and advise on SRT's current and future representations for seals.



SRT 2024 Organisational Structure

Hubs

SRT utilised and updated **51 Photo ID Catalogues** in 2024, mostly covering seals from the Isle of Man to France and S Wales. We have also encouraged others to set up their own Photo ID cataloguing system and these now exist independently in N Wales, the Channel Isles and Hampshire. In 2024, two additional teams were supported to get started with Photo ID work,:the wardens on Rathlin Island in Northern Ireland and in north Germany by Friends of the Earth in the Baltic (thank you Daisy May Harris and Lena Hohls for making this possible).

The catalogues are run by incredible volunteers led by our dedicated and wonderful **Photo ID Hub Coordinator** Kate Williams. These teams communicate with each other through our free **Facebook Workplace Platform.** This allows our volunteer network to share new seal IDs, so we can make matches between the different Photo ID catalogues. We also share engagement

wording, approach and tone, to help us with effective conservation actions which avoids us all duplicating effort by reinventing wheels. This internal communication platform makes us all more efficient and keeps us better informed. Sadly in 2024, we were informed that Meta was closing Facebook Workplace down, so we are now exploring and setting up a new Google Workspace to hopefully replicate our old comms platform with additional features.

Volunteers

Our charity makes a major contribution to marine conservation nationally. This is only possible thanks to the generous, ongoing and long term contributions made by **multiple hub, administrative and specialist key volunteers, data processors and surveyors**. We are hugely grateful to every single one of our amazing volunteers who are too numerous to name individually. Between them our volunteers:

- Survey from land and sea
- Process photos into survey albums
- Make IDs, confirm IDs and manage Photo ID catalogues
- Digitise, analyse and manage data
- Write reports
- Act as eyes and ears for change, issues or developments around their patch of coast
- Engage with members of the public as ambassadors for seals
- Inspire others with their ongoing knowledge, energy and enthusiasm
- Help upskill and empower others through ongoing support, training and shared resources
- Fundraise or support our charity financially to avoid us having to apply for grants
- Manage and verify our accounts and financial processes
- Advocate for seals at a huge variety of public, private and voluntary meetings
- Arrange and deliver a range of events at varying venues
- Take conservation actions, such as writing letters, public consultation responses or supporting campaigns to make the coast safer for seals.

POLPIP boat survey volunteer team

Charity Achievements and Activities

In total our extensive SRT team organised, delivered and participated in **894 activities** in 2024, which was up by 20% on 2023. This has been possible as more volunteers have taken responsibility for attending meetings, supporting events and delivering talks in addition to core team members. This enables us to give seals a louder voice and share key conservation messages with a much wider audience, both face to face and online.

Summary

Focusing more time online improved our 2024 engagement and reach. Whilst most activities were based in **Cornwall (422)**, we participated in almost as many **UK wide (401)** along with an impressive **73 global** activities! Sue has now presented in **6 continents** (Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North and South America), as well as having spoken to a volunteer in Antarctica!

In 2024, our **activity beneficiaries** total increased substantially to an amazing **38,099 people**. This included a minimum of 10,892 visitors to our 'A Seal's Story' exhibition at the Kurt Jackson Foundation in St Just between March and August. Our 2024 total included **1937 0 to 16 year olds**; **73 17 to 24 year olds** and **34,851 25+ year olds**. This is a massive achievement considering how small our paid team is (1.8fte). This shows just how much our volunteer team have stepped up, been empowered and taken on the role of public engagement. It has been wonderful to see key volunteers thrive, stepping out of their comfort zone to be fabulous ambassadors and advocates for the seals they love so much. Thank you to each and every one of them and we hope that seals supported all your health and mental wellbeing.

Our **social media** engagement continued to expand in 2024, with at least one post most days across all four of our online platforms:

- **Facebook** followers **9,209**, an increase of 493 on 2023
- **Instagram** followers **6,739**, an increase of 312 on 2023
- **Twitter/X** followers **1,898**, an increase of 49 on 2023
- **Linkedin** followers **1,244**, an increase of 300 on 2023

By the end of 2024 we had **19,090 followers**, an increase of **777** achieved without any paid marketing. Increasing social media and YouTube channel engagement will continue to be a key target for 2025.

SRT Charity Achievements and Activities in 2024 included:

Talks: 117 (over two a week)

We organised and delivered a gobsmacking **117 talks** for a wide range of different audiences from adults to 4 year olds. We made this possible by having more talks delivered in 2024 by Malcom Baker, Kerstin Hartmann, Carole Anne Lee, Peter Perkins, Gareth Richards, Andy Rogers, Sue Sayer, Rob Wells, Kate Williams and Zoe George Yelland. Talks were delivered to the **Pinniped Entanglement Group, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative** and at a screening of the Wings' Rescue Film at the **European Cetacean Society Conference** in Italy attended by our Trustee Dan Jarvis. In total SRT delivered **8 school talks** (some arising from our first ever

Schools Creative Competitions which we ran twice in 2024 in July and November) and **7 University inputs** (covering marine impacts, marine vertebrates and communication strategies). Talks were delivered to a range of statutory bodies, including 3 talks to the **Defra Marine and Fisheries Team**, **Welsh Police Rural Affairs and Wildlife Crime Marine Mammal and EPS Group** and at the **Devon and Cornwall Police Wildlife Crime Conference**.

Governing bodies such as **Paddle UK, Paddle Scotland and the SW Coastpath Association** requested presentations, along with multiple voluntary conservation organisations or events including: the **Wildlife and Countryside LINK** (WCL), **National Trust** (NT), **Seal Alliance MasterClass and SharePoint sessions**, **Cornwall Marine Liaison Group**, **Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group** (CMCCG) **Cornwall Wildlife Trust's** (CWT) **Marine Strandings Network Forum** (CWTMSN), **South West Marine Ecosystems** (SWME) **Conference** and **SWME Webinars** on plastics and seals, **Seal Rescue Ireland**, the **Cornish Seal Sanctuary** (CSS) staff, local conservation groups including: **Wild Roseland** and **Lundy** and community groups and businesses such as the **University of the 3rd Age** and **the WI**.

Devon and Cornwall Police Wildlife Crime Conference

Workshops/Training: 22

Our partnership with the **Field Studies Council** (FSC) had blossomed and Sue Sayer ran 4 Ecoskills courses online in 2024. As an FSC Associate Tutor, Sue ran 2 **'Discovering UK Seals (DUKS)'** (Beginner) and 2 **'Seal Field Skills to Inform Conservation (SFSTIC)'** (Intermediate). Participants spent a minimum of 2 to 3 hours a week online with a weekly zoom talk and Q&A sessions with Sue. The DUKS course lasted 4 weeks, covering **Biology, Ecology, Species ID and Conservation** and the SFSTIC also had 4 weeks of input on **Surveying Seals, Recording Seals, Using Field Evidence to Illustrate Issues and Influence Decision Making and Photo Identification**. In 2024 we had **89 course participants completing the courses,** bringing our total up to **230** people claiming their certificates on course completion**.** Sue is hugely

appreciative of the FSC's Ellen Monaghan and Dan Asaw supporting her to run these Ecoskills courses.

In 2024, Sue Sayer delivered online input for the **'Seals' and 'Seabird' modules** for **2 Wildlife Safe Scheme (WiSe)** courses across the UK in March and November. Sue also helped deliver a WiSe course for Peel Ports, a national harbour authority. Sue is one of 4 WiSe Directors taking over from its founder Colin Speedie as part of WiSe's 2024 transition to a Community Interest Company.

Our **ongoing, free, on demand, online volunteer training** continued to be popular. We had a total of **44 people signed up on the course** in 2024, bringing our total number of volunteers trained to **97**. As ever, we continued to deliver online PID sessions for Hub's support and skills training. We ran 4 online **PID Hub Sessions** (in March, June, September and December).

Many of our stalwart volunteers also delivered in-field training across a range of survey sites. Rob Wells and Carole Anne Lee delivered seal input for a 3 day **Lundy Field Society Field Trip**. Huge thanks to all our volunteers who have spread the word so effectively and recruited new Hub team members. You are a wonderful asset to our seal team!

SRT partnered with the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group, BDMLR, Cornwall Birds (CB) CSS, CWT to deliver two workshops for the **St Ives Bay Operators** covering key species they encounter and best practice messaging to keep these creatures safe and thriving.

Stalls/Events: 14

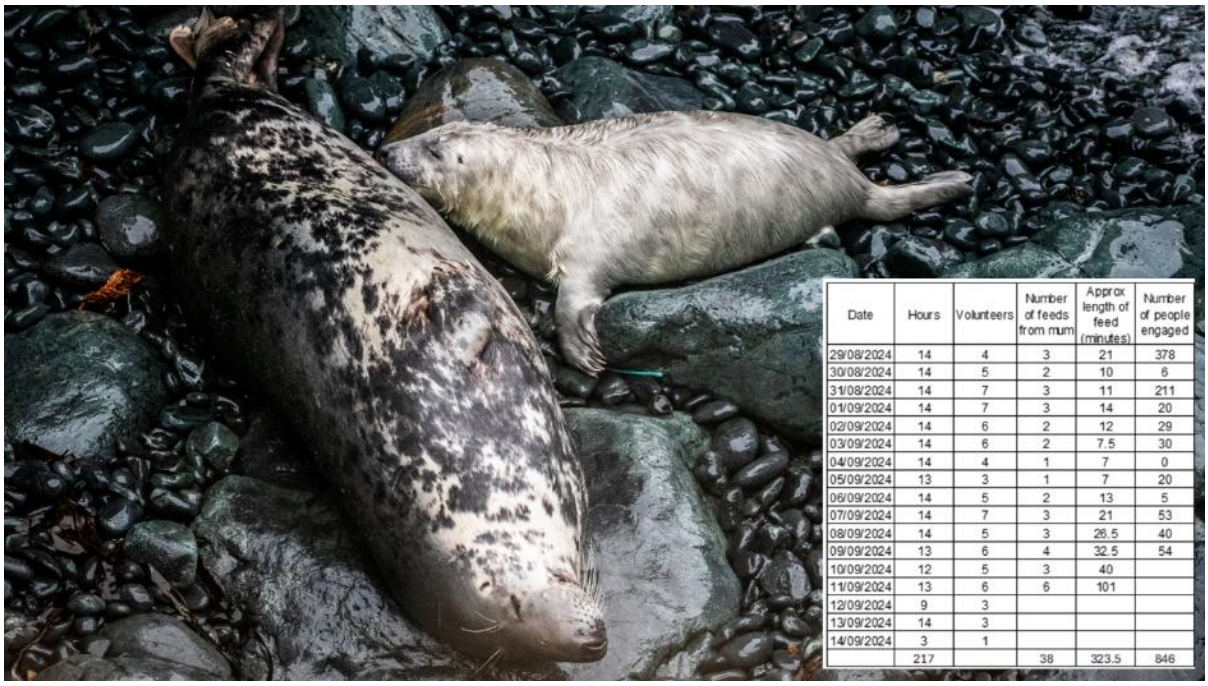
Our volunteers supported by Ranger Lauren, ensured SRT had stalls at **14** events. As part of the national **Operation Seabird** events SRT turned out in force at St Agnes, St Ives and Falmouth in 2024, as well as sending lots of resources up for the national **Operation Seabird Stand at the Global Bird Fair** in Rutland. We were delighted to attend a varied array of events from the **Screech Owl Sanctuary's British Wildlife Day**, to **Penpol School's Careers Fair**, CWT's **Wildlife Day** at Trebah Gardens and **Marine Recorder's Conference**, Looe Marine Conservation Group's **Wise up to Wildlife** event, the **Bowgie Inn Ale Festival** and the **Cornwall Marine and Coastal Partnership Conference**.

Cornwall Marine and Coastal Partnership Conference

Field Engagement: 164 (plus frequent conversations held by Claire, the Looe Island CWT Warden, that have not been included here).

Whilst out surveying, our enthusiastic volunteers frequently engage face-to-face with members of the public. These opportunities help to win hearts and minds to our shared seal conservation cause. People love hearing about the seals they are watching and celebrity seal stories. We began formally recording this in 2022 and, in total in 2024, **29 of our inspiring volunteers** had conversations with **2741 members of the public**. Thank you everyone for spreading the word at a time, and in a place, where people are interested and eager to learn.

Of particular note was the public engagement forced upon BDMLR and SRT's St Ives Hub Team when on **29/08/24** a small white coated pup was born to our celebrity seal 'Wings' on a popular beach near St Ives. Fearful that this pup would not be able to feed uninterrupted, so be too underweight to survive its first winter, SRT set up a schedule for monitoring mum, pup and their dominant male beachmaster. Volunteers from both organisations were asked to sign up to record progress and interactions, as well as manage people around them, by talking about the trio's need for space and peace to feed and rest. **Over 17 days, 25 different volunteers signed up to cover 210 hours** of shifts to keep these seals safe. Whilst on site, **volunteers engaged with at least 846 members of the public** visiting the site, asking them to keep back from the cliff edge, watch quietly and avoid access to the beach at low tide. We were all delighted to see a very fat moulted chonk pup wean from its mother on day 14. This was a miraculous team effort with a fabulous outcome for all. We even learned some new science: on average Wings fed her pup 'Jet' for 8.5 minutes during daylight hours and Wings mated with two different males ('Star line' at least 10 times averaging 27 minutes and 'Flipper eyes' once for 19 minutes.)



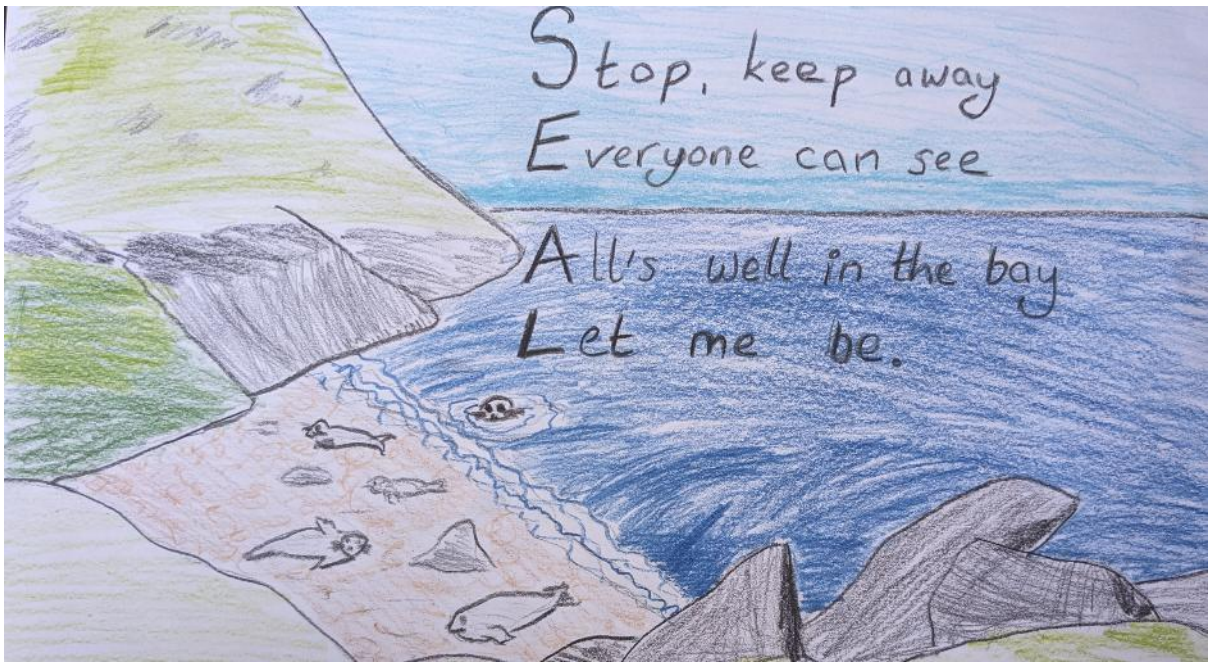
Date	Hours	Volunteers	Number of feeds from mum	Approx length of feed (minutes)	Number of people engaged
29/08/2024	14	4	3	21	378
30/08/2024	14	5	2	10	6
31/08/2024	14	7	3	11	211
01/09/2024	14	7	3	14	20
02/09/2024	14	6	2	12	29
03/09/2024	14	6	2	7.5	30
04/09/2024	14	4	1	7	0
05/09/2024	13	3	1	7	20
06/09/2024	14	5	2	13	5
07/09/2024	14	7	3	21	53
08/09/2024	14	5	3	26.5	40
09/09/2024	13	6	4	32.5	54
10/09/2024	12	5	3	40	
11/09/2024	13	6	6	101	
12/09/2024	9	3			
13/09/2024	14	3			
14/09/2024	3	1			
	217		38	323.5	846

Wings and Jet, day 9 by Martin Yelland

Then five days after the St Ives Pup Watch ended, on 19/09/24 we had another pup born on a highly accessible and public beach near Pentire. It was incredible that **31 different volunteers** still managed to cover **108 hours** over **16 days** focusing particularly over low tide. They successfully engaged with **616 members of the public**, outlining what mum and pup needed in order for the pup to successfully wean. These pup watches were an enormous commitment and a huge achievement, so thank you to everyone for taking part!

School Sessions: 8

For the first time ever, SRT ran Creative Competitions for all schools. The first ran until 28/06/24 and the second until 01/11/24. The aim was to help spread the word to 'Give Seals Space'. Pupils were challenged to design something creative to share any of the information in our new 'Enjoy Respect Protect Seals' leaflet. Incredibly we received 64 entries from across the UK and abroad. Winners won an adoption pack and a free online talk for their school.



Exhibitions: 1 Kurt Jackson Foundation Gallery in St Just

SRT's Director, Sue Sayer MBE, first met Kurt Jackson when she won her 'best contribution as an individual' Cornwall Sustainability Award in 2018. On meeting Sue, Kurt expressed an interest in studying seals, with the aspiration of a future exhibition featuring their form, movements, haunts and habits. Fast forward to 2024 and this became a reality between 16/03/24 and 10/08/24 **'SRT's A Seal's Story: Sharing our Seas'** at the Kurt Jackson Foundation in St Just. Our portrayal of our native, heritage, specialist Cornish seals filled Kurt's upstairs exhibition space, sharing SRT's citizen science endeavours to protect and conserve seals and their marine environment for future generations of seals and people. SRT's informational banners were displayed alongside Septimus and Augusta's immortal skeletons. These skeletons are spectacular, fascinating and informative creatures, illustrating what amazing marine mammals seals are. At the same time they act as sentinels, bringing stories and shocking secrets about the state of our seas to us on land.

SRT's 'A Seal's Story: Sharing Our Seas Exhibition'

Photo ID Projects (PIP) organised day long surveys: 20

We were delighted to complete **10 day-long, systematic, boat-based Photo ID transect surveys** (CASPIP, STAPIP and POLPIP) along a 115km stretch of the north Cornish coast, involving a total of **146** filled places taken by **44 different volunteers. 4 key volunteers** took part in all surveys with an additional **6 volunteers** taking part on at least half of the completed surveys. We are eternally grateful to Atlantic Diving/Newquay Sea Safaris and Fishing for enabling us to have substantially subsidised boat charter rates for these surveys. We also successfully completed **8 Looe Island Photo ID Project (LISPIP)** surveys included **69 filled volunteer slots** filled by **27 different volunteers**. **6 volunteers** attended at least half of these surveys. As always highlights of our PIP surveys include spectacular seals, cetaceans, nesting, feeding, loafing seabirds, other marine megafauna, great company and lots of yummy cake!

Meetings: 422

It is hard to believe that we could surpass the number of meetings SRT attended in 2023, but we did by almost a third! SRT have been seeking support from key volunteers who have formed the SRT Strategy Team including Andy, Dan, Gareth, Kate W and Peter in 2024 alongside SRT's Steering Group. Together we covered meetings with:

Wildlife and Countryside LINK (WCL) As members of WCL, SRT attended multiple group meetings including the following groups: Marine, Marine Mammals, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Bycatch, Animal Welfare, Nature Policy, Legal Strategy, Land Use Planning, Education and Learning, Planning huddle, Campaigns and Wildlife Crime. Additional events saw SRT attending inputs by the Office for Environmental Protection; the National Audit

Office, Defra as well as a discussion with Detective Chief Constable Nigel Harrison and Rob Taylor (England's and Wales' leads on Wildlife and Rural Affairs respectively.)

Statutory agencies

International: Centre for International Environmental Law (2), White House Federal Scientific Committee (1)

UK: Clean Catch UK (4), Defra (6), Environment Agency (1), International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (2), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (1), Marine Management Organisation (7), Marine Partnership Against Wildlife Crime (1), Marine Scot (1), National Wildlife Crime Unit (1), Natural England (5), Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership (1) and Welsh Police Mammals and EPS Group (3);

SW: Cornwall Council (1), Cornwall Marine and Coastal Partnership, Cornwall Local Nature Partnership (and Marine Nature Recovery Framework) Cornwall Marine Liaison Group, Devon and Cornwall Police, Hayle Town Council (1), St Ives Harbour Authority (1) and UNESCO Lundy Licencing Scheme,

Higher education institutes Cornwall College Newquay, University of Bristol, University of Exeter, Manchester University, Oxford University, Plymouth University, Portsmouth University;

Students We supported Aimee, Jeremy, Josh, Keely, Linn, Michelle, Milly, Sophie and Yizhuo;

Businesses Attic Design and Print, Biome Algae, Bowgie Inn, Carbis Bay Estate, Coral Covers, Cornwall Careers Hub, Cornwall Floating Offshore Wind, Cornwall Marine Network, Flowmo Co, GOBE, Lundy Island Operators, Peel Ports, Planetary Technologies, Primary PC, Seagen, South West Water, St Ives Bay Operators, White Cross Floating Offshore Wind;

Governing bodies Angling Trust, British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and Paddle UK;

Artists and authors Cornish Jewellery, Dan Eatherly, Elspeth Stevenson, Emma Taylor, Emily Barker, Gill Lewis, John Parkes and Barbara Pilkington from Animal Friends, Jamie Crawford, Karen Gaudern, Kurt Jackson, Lady Seagoat's Alice, Lucy Leach, Lucy Wraight, Melanie Godfrey, Michelle Costello, MoonSeals, Mungo Lils, Pat Johnson, Rob Wells, Sarah Ann Juckes, Sarah Bell, Sherry McMillan, Summer Porter, Tide and Country's Amelia, Zoe George Yelland;

Charitable organisations

International: Flotilla Foundation, Friends of the Earth Germany, Friends of the Earth US, Greenpeace, Pinniped Entanglement Group, Respect the Wildlife, Whale and Dolphin Conservation;

UK: BDMLR, East Marine Ecosystems, Field Studies Council, Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, Irish Whale and Dolphin Conservation, Marine Animal Rescue Coalition, Mammal Society, National Trust, RSPB, RSPCA, Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, Sea Changers, Seal Alliance Executive, Wildlife Safe Scheme (WiSe);

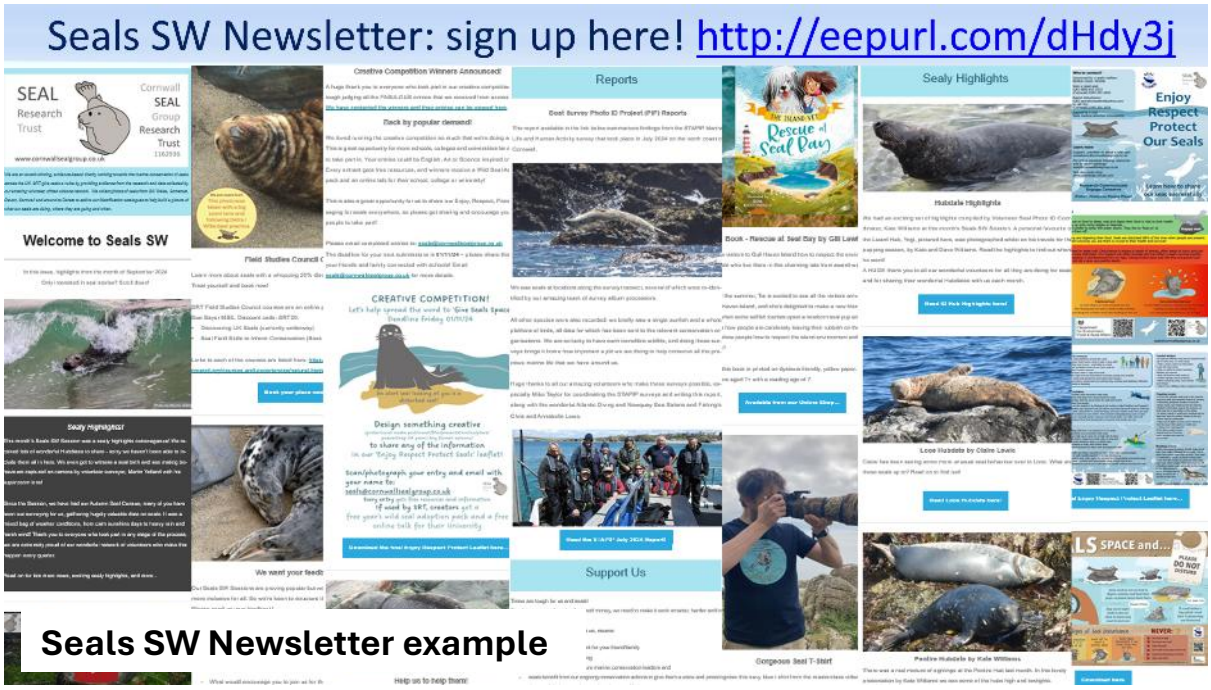
SW: Bottlenose Dolphin consortium, Cornish Pilot Gig Association, Cornish Seal Sanctuary, Cornwall Carbon Scrutiny Group, Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group, Cornwall Museum and Art Gallery, Cornwall and Devon Wildlife Trusts, Hayle Towans Partnership, Lundy Landmark Trust, Our Only World, SW Marine Ecosystems, Your Shore Network.

Reports: 30

Our amazing team collated data to write routine reports including **2 CASPIP reports** and **3 POLPIP reports** by Sarah Millward; **4 STAPIP reports** by Mike Taylor; and **12 LISPIP reports** (4 from 2023 and 8 from 2024) by Martin Gregory. In addition, we published our **SRT Annual report for 2023,** along with **the SW Marine Ecosystems Report on Seals for 2023**, both written by Sue Sayer. Sue also input to the **Cornwall Wildlife Trust Marine Strandings Network Report** for 2023 and **Cornwall Birds 2022 report**. Dr Mel Broadhurst (our Channel Isles volunteer) compiled our **2023 Census report.** The incredible Kate Williams produced Hub Summary reports for **North Devon 2023 and Mounts Bay 2022**. Two reports were written about **seal disturbance** for the **National Trust** at **Pentire and West Cornwall**. This is a massive achievement – well done everyone!

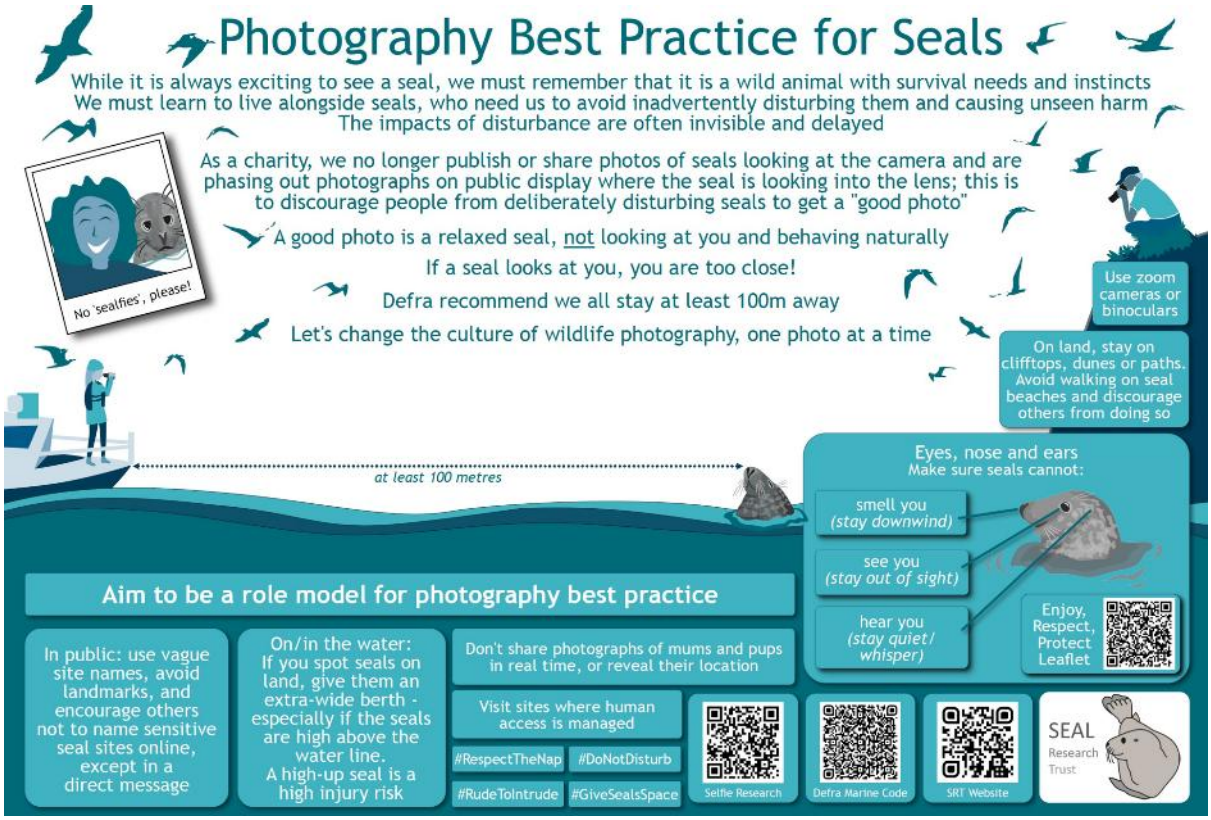
Seal SW Session: 12, Seal SW Newsletters: 10 and Wild Seal Supporter Updates: 4

Sue continues to host our monthly online **Seal SW Session for up to 508 people** with **566 attendees** in total. Our monthly online presentations are a vital archive of all our charity's ongoing activities. Ranger Sarah compiled and circulated **10 Seal SW Newsletters**. Our circulation list grew by 111 during 2023 to **1,263 subscribers**. Director Sue wrote **4 Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme Updates,** which went to **255 recipients (up by 50 supporters** compared to the end of 2023), summarising quarterly exclusive information about our adopted seals, for a scheme run by Karen Gaudern.



Resources: 5 New

After the release of the [Defra Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code] in May 2023, it was obvious that user friendly seal resources were required to communicate best practice messaging widely. SRT responded by creating our **'Enjoy Respect Protect' (ERP) leaflet**. Our biggest leaflet to date, this is A3 sized and includes information on: Why seals in the UK are important for us to look after, why seals need us to follow best practice and what best practice looks like for all the main coastal user groups from land, sea and air, as well as key contact details. **20,000** of these leaflets continue to make their way across the UK in collaboration with the Seal Alliance Network. This was designed inhouse by Lauren McGregor, our Activities and Administration Ranger who has extended her skill set to graphic design! Learning from our trial of watercraft stickers in 2023, a Looe Marine Conservation Group volunteer Cliff Davies used his great design skills to create **2 new 'Seal Code of Conduct' stickers for boat users and paddlers**. After sharing our leaflets and stickers with Defra Comms Team, **Defra offered to endorse them, allowing us to use the Defra logo on these new best practice resources**. To increase our reach with this best practice information, we **partnered with Whale and Dolphin Conservation** who have a similar sticker and flyer about cetacean best practice. So when sending our stickers out, we included theirs and vice versa. Great joined up efficiency. In total **9000** SRT stickers have been distributed.



SRT are also aiming to change the culture of seal photography, one photo at a time. To support this ambition, Lauren produced a graphic/poster **'Photography Best Practice for Seals'**. This A3 poster includes the reasons why seals need photographers to have good field skills in order to avoid disturbing seals during their vital rest times.

Mungo Lils on the Hill continue to support our Lizard Hub volunteers and all their seals by promoting seal information packs to their customers. To keep this fresh and encourage repeat sales, Jeremy and Lauren collaborated on an A5 insert **Lizard Seals Update** for the existing pack.

Our resources highlight of 2024, has to be our decision to **self-publish our first book ever…Rob Wells' 'Excuse me: Are you my Mum?'.** The story follows Lightning, a three-week-old grey seal pup, during her first year of life. She encounters 9 issues faced by all wild seals, but the story has a wonderful feel good happy ending! Our **first print run of 1000 copies** is being snapped up by purchasers all over the world. Well done and thank you Rob! You are a total inspiration.

All of our existing leaflets, double as posters in their centre (to save on design costs). In 2024, we realised it would be a great idea to get these made into **durable, all weather metal A2 signs** for use at public events. These have proved very practical and popular with volunteers.

Media Coverage: 88

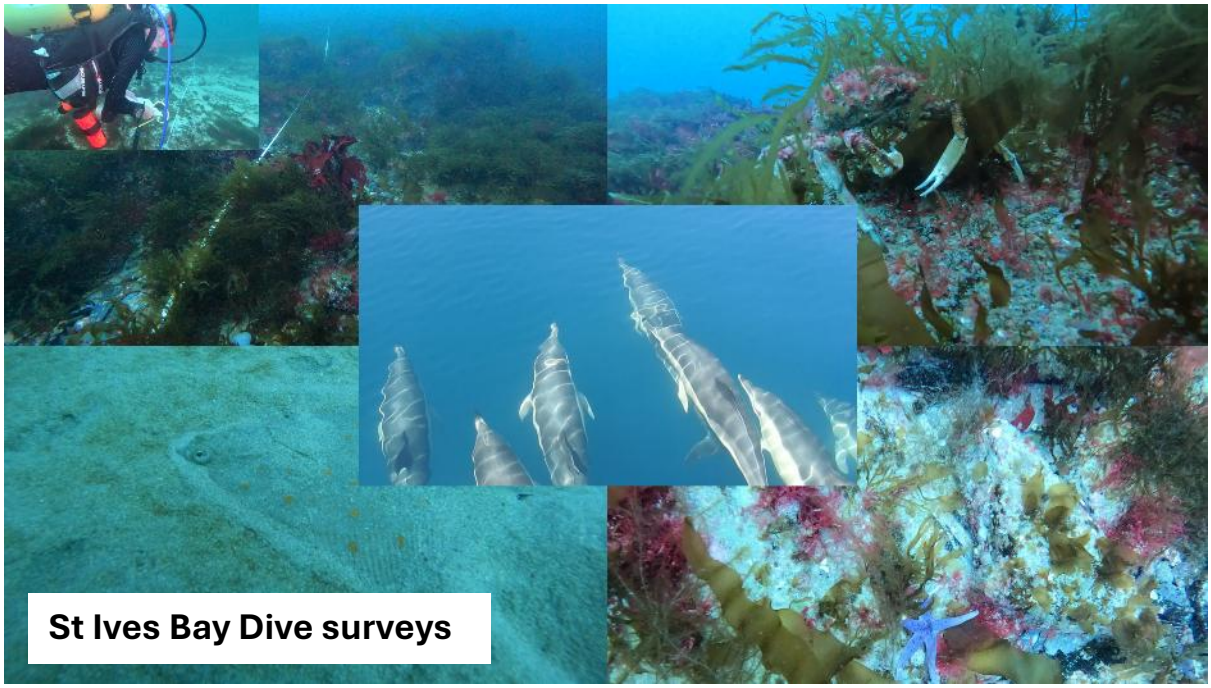
We increased our reach substantially by publicising our work through the media. Key highlights that attracted considerable attention began when **Springwatch** included two links on their website to our **Watching Seals Well** best practice leaflet and our new **Photography Poster**. Our team effort with British Divers Marine Life Rescue to cut entangled adult male **'Commuter'** free from his monofilament noose attracted a lot of good news interest. The **SW Marine Ecosystems Annual Report Press Release** coverage focused substantially on the worst seal disturbance stampede SRT have on record. This story appeared in the national press including the **Times Newspaper** and **Channel 5 News** as well as multiple regional media outlets. For the General Election, SRT created our first ever **'Seal Manifesto'** that was shared publicly on the **Wildlife and Countryside LINK website**. Along with the **Seal Alliance**, SRT engaged closely with the **BBC** about a **TV programme** shortly before it was aired which included **multiple breaches of the Defra Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code**. We were genuinely delighted to find how positive the BBC was, substantially editing the programme to remove much of the worst practice prior to it being aired. This was a huge damage limitation exercise for seals. Sadly, the greatest coverage we achieved followed the **Planetary Technologies Marine Geoengineering Experiment** (see page 22). We had multiple international press agencies and journalists cover this project including **Canadian TV News,** the **Canadian 'Walrus'** and **global 'Hakai' online Newsletters**. The April **'Keep Our Sea Chemical Free' second protest saw multiple regional coverage** and in December 2024, the **'Keep Our Sea Chemical Free' Documentary** by Senara Wilson Hodges was premiered at St Ives Cinema attended by a sell out crowd. Thanks to all the other multiple media outlets for covering a huge range of our other stories in 2024, including **Radio Cornwall, Cornish Stuff, Cornwall Life** and other newsletters including **Pinniped Entanglement Group, Cornwall Mammal Group & Cornwall Local Nature Partnership!**

SRT also supported a local author with content about best practice around seals for their new book **'Snorkelling Guide to the UK'** and for a children's book **'Beach Aliens'.**

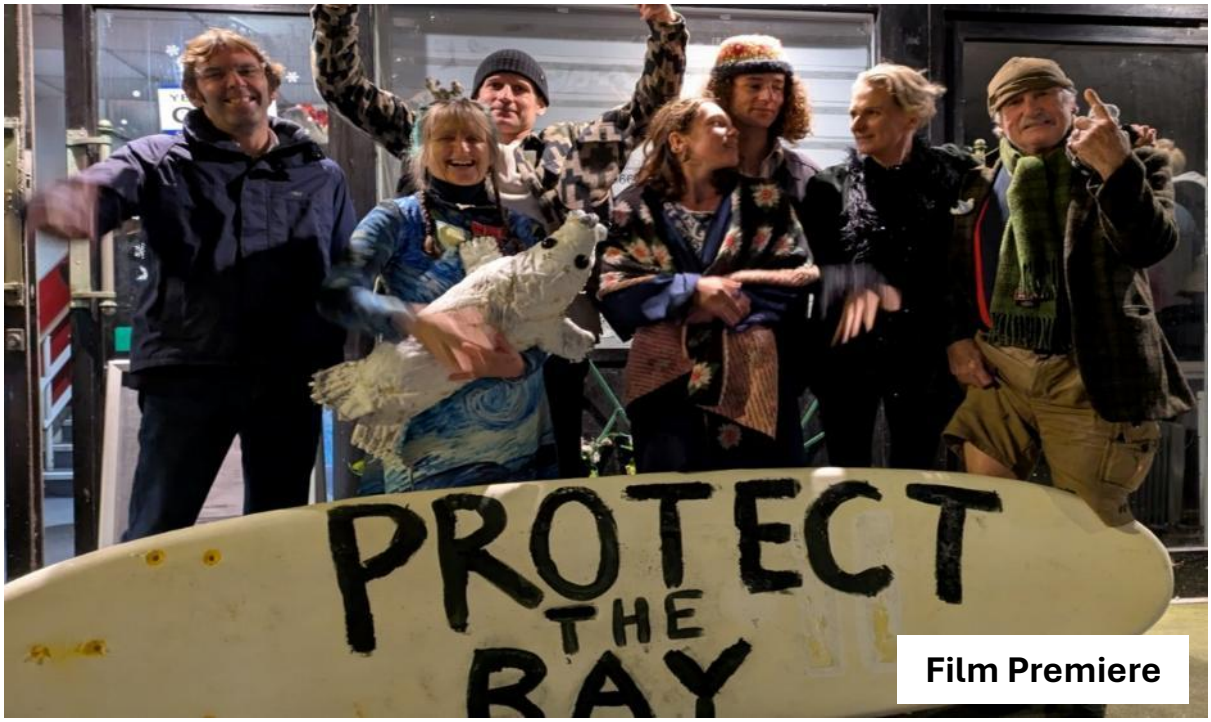
A Nova Scotia company has proposed a bold plan to fight climate change and is facing scrutiny over its safety. Avis Favaro reports.

Planetary Technology's (PT) Marine Geoengineering Experiment

SRT first heard about PT's Marine Geoengineering Project for St Ives Bay on 19/01/23. This is a Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement (OAE) experiment that could set a global precedent for this industry. This ongoing saga continued throughout 2024. We continued our dialogue with the licensing authority, the **Environment Agency**, who we thanked in Jan 2024 for their appreciation of the serious precedent this project set and for the internal team they had set up to ensure due diligence was done. In February the EA's commissioned **Water Research Centre (WRc)** Report on PT's plans was made publicly available; the media coverage for which we participated in. SRT's science advisory team on the project held **2 more meetings with South West Water's Chief Operating Officer**, but a pivotal point in this process took place on 15/03/24 when the **Cornwall Carbon Scrutiny Group met with 8 of PT's staff and other stakeholders to discuss the Baseline Survey Report they have produced**. During this recorded meeting PT's Chief Scientist Will Burt admitted this wasn't really a baseline study nor did they have an appropriate control site and that it was actually too hard, too costly in too challenging an environment to do a proper job! We summarised our activity in a blog post on our website. SRT submitted information to an **MMO licence application by Plymouth Marine Laboratory** for their sensor buoy deployment. In April 2024, SRT's Sue Sayer spoke at the **second community protest held by Keep our Sea Chemical Free (KOSCF) at Gwithian**. Another real silver lining outcome from this project has been our collaboration with **Dr Ian Hendy from Portsmouth University and David Jones from Just One Ocean** who **have planned, led and delivered two days of baseline surveys across 4 transect sites in St Ives Bay**. To add to these surveys, **Cornwall FLOW deployed an FPOD hydromoth and camera** to record cetacean and seal vocalisations in the bay. Thanks to the funding from the Flotilla Foundation to whom SRT has provided project updates to ensure that these surveys can continue for 3 years.



PT rejected **Cornwall Carbon Scrutiny Group's three requests for a meeting to discuss the WRc Report** throughout June and July. SRT began liaising with Laurie Waller from **Manchester University** to act as a gatekeeper to write a research paper about how communities can be involved in projects like these from the start. The year ended on a real high with the much acclaimed world premiere of the **KOSCF Documentary on 11/12/24 produced and directed by Senara Wilson Hodges**.



Artificial Intelligence Photo ID Challenge

Throughout 2024, we have been collaborating with **Dan Schofield and Horace Lee from Oxford University's Visual Geometry Group** to explore the possibility of developing a

bespoke Seal Photo ID software application. Whilst progress is inevitably slow, it is ongoing and there will be more updates on this in 2025.

Deep Learning Computer Vision Project

SRT are continuing to use the software application **'Seal Detector'** to **auto extract seal images** from our survey photos for including into PowerPoint albums, saving albumising volunteers lots of hours of manual processing, especially at the larger seal sites! Massive thanks to every student and volunteer for helping **Seb East (ex Bristol University)** to see this project through to such a successful outcome for us all! We have hooked Seb East up with Dan Schofield to progress this work.

Feedback about SRT Activities (don't just take our word for it!)

We always do our best to present exciting, interesting and informative input about seals in multiple ways. We deliver this to a huge variety of different audiences ranging from statutory agency consultations to schools. This is all aimed at promoting people's understanding about, and appreciation of, our native, heritage, speciality seals and their precious marine habitat. **We always ask for honest feedback from participants and organisers** about what went well and what we need to improve on. Our delivery team **got some lovely feedback in 2024, a short summary of which is listed below with more in Appendix A:**

Natural England's Enforcement Team visit to Cornwall

- I wanted to say a HUGE thank you to you all for your time and enthusiasm last Tuesday. I know that the whole Team found the day really informative and also had quite a lot of fun. We have all returned to our respective corners of England, inspired and reinvigorated to do all we can for those species at risk of disturbance. We have already set up a targeted working group to look at the issue, under the auspices of Op Seabird, so will certainly be in touch to continue to work with you all on this important issue.

MMO Disturbance talk

- This talk inspired me to keep sight of seal disturbance from recreational activities when working on potential management measures for non-licensable activities in the MMO.

Meeting with the Environment Agency about Planetary Technologies

- It's been a pleasure to work alongside you all on this issue so far. Whatever happens going forward from here, your tireless efforts and persistence and attention to detail in challenging PT have already had an impact in influencing not just PT's plans for Cornwall but for how the imposition of geoengineering field trials on local communities has been recognised as an issue much more widely. When you have such a well-organised and committed group of people, making very reasonable and well-founded arguments, it can have an impact far beyond the local...perhaps even at a global level, as many policy-makers around the world are already aware of your work and its wider relevance.

Devon and Cornwall Police Wildlife Crime Conference

- Off the back of your brilliant talk, I have had a number of officers who are keen to visit sites and do some 'on site' training, so maybe this is something we can do in the appropriate season and invite interested officers and Mrs Hernandez and her team if they wish to come along too.

DEFRA Talk

- I work for Defra and Sue held an interesting presentation to us last week. I appreciate your work as an individual and thought I would make a symbolic donation. Thank you for your hard work and dedication. Thank you for your letter and the goodies in response to my donation.

Kurt Jackson Exhibition

- I've bumped into several people who come to all the shows and, very gratifyingly, the general view is that it's been the best of the "upstairs" exhibitions, compared with Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, RNLI etc!!! You have some great material…..and great subject matter

Field Studies Council Seals Course Feedback

- Yesterday concluded the final 'Seal Field Skills to Inform Conservation'. During the past five weeks I have developed my seal surveying skills, recording techniques, and learnt how to use field evidence to drive impactful conservation decisions. While also attempting to master the art of photo ID. Not only have I developed my learning, but I also had the privilege of hearing from fellow participants who are deeply involved in seal conservation efforts. Hearing their stories and commitment to our seals has left me feeling so inspired.

Seal field visit with child

- Remember Francesco and Neil the Seal, adopted about 7 years in a row for his birthday? He has just been accepted at Exeter Uni, Falmouth campus, to do Marine Biology. I am so thrilled and believe that his interest stemmed from Neil, your day spent out on the cliffs with him aged 10 and identifying the seals when back at your office. Part of his Christmas present this year is adoption of Superman and the book Coastal - both just ordered.

Personalised guided tour

- An absolutely amazing afternoon with Sue seal surveying. An incredible experience with my whole family. If you ever see a Jumblebee auction item for a Personal Guided Tour of seals with Sue Sayer MBE, it's worth every pound you bid and then more.

SHOP Orders

- A big thank you for your help with Mia's gift. The book is perfectly pitched for her age and she'll love the seal and activity book. The leaflets are fascinating… so much to learn.

Defra Seals Policy Advisor Visit

Seal Data Outputs across the SW UK (Written Reports included above)

Surveys and Volunteers

In 2024 we received records from **260 different volunteers,** from which we were able to process **4,332 discrete surveys** (an average of **12 site specific surveys each and every day**) from **314 different locations**. Our Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger, Sarah, coordinated our **quarterly SW Seal Census,** of which all four were completed in January, April, July and October. Thank you to all our amazing volunteers who took part and made these possible.

Age and Sex Classes

On average 10 seals were recorded, ranging from a minimum of no seals observed to a **maximum of 454 seals** counted during a single survey (**down from 557 in 2021** and **519 in 2022 and 458 in 2023**). Of seals that we were able to classify according to their age, **66% were adults** and **34% juveniles, moulted pups or white coated pups** (exactly the same percentage as recorded in 2023!) Only adults can be reliably sexed, so of all adults that we could confidently sex, **57.5% were males** and **42.5% were females** (similar to **56% males and 44% females recorded in** 2021, 2022 and 2023) despite our huge survey efforts and datasets.

Lucky bunting with her 2024 pup

Grey Seal Pups

White-coated, maternally dependent, white coat pups (WCPs) were recorded on **542 occasions at 43 different locations** around the southwest. Most were recorded on the north coast, but WCPs were recorded at **8 different sites** on the **south coast** of Cornwall and Devon. WCPs represented just over **1% of all seals** observed. The maximum number of WCPs recorded at a single site in a single survey was **9** at both the **West and North Cornwall sites**. 5 or more WCPs were recorded **30 times** at **8 different pupping sites** at the **North Cornwall complex** (3 sites)**, West Cornwall** (2 sites), **West Cornwall East** (1 site), **Porthtowan** (1 site)

and Gurnards Head (1 site). **LP316 'Lucky bunting',** a seal rescued in 2016, was identified with a pup in 2024 (her **fourth in 5 years at 4 different sites**). Our world record breaking seal mum 'Ghost' was not identified at her normal pupping site, having had her 20th pup there in 2023, but she also missed returning in 2018, so we are hoping she will be back in 2025. We have everything crossed! **97% of the WCPs were born on north coast sites with 3% on the south coast.** Historically between 2010 and 2016, most pups were born in October followed by November. In 2022, most pups were born in September followed by August (but with only 4 more pups born in August than October). In 2023, most pups were born in September, but there were 23 more pups born across the SW in August compared to October. **Worryingly this trend continued in 2024 with almost as many pups born in August (37%) as in September (46%)** and far fewer in October (9%) with the remaining 8% born in other months between March and November. The **pupping season continues to move substantially earlier, creating temporal and spatial overlap with the peak tourist season,** which is problematic.

Harbour Seals and Harbour Seal Pups

Our observations included **58 records** with **72 harbour seal sightings** (down from 85 in 2021). **47 records were single individuals** up to a **maximum of 3 individuals** seen on 25/05/24; 29/06/24 and 27/07/24 in South Devon. Harbour seals were recorded **at 15 different locations.** This included **4 north and 11 south coast sites** at locations across **Cornwall, S Devon and Hampshire.** Harbour seals were not recorded on Cornwall's north coast in 2023. Two young harbour seals made incredible journeys. After being released by the RSPCA West Hatch in South Devon, one **(Kraken) swam 250km in less than 18 days** and a second **(Kelpie) swam 300km in 52 days** up to the north coast of Cornwall (W Cornwall and Camel).

Photos, Albums and Identifications

Our PID Hubs continue to be highly productive, processing an incredible **116,253 photos** in 2024 (up from 105,235 photos in 2023) into **1,427 survey albums** (including 353 historical

ones from 2018 and 2023). This enabled SRT to generate a total of **11,694 seal identifications,** (Up from 11,409 in 2023) of which **85% were re-identifications** (which is surprisingly consistent compared to 84% in 2023 87% in 2022 and 2021 and 86% in 2020). This included a maximum of **80 different individual seal identifications in a single survey** (which is substantially less than the 145 in 2023. We think this is because the big seal haul outs on the north coast now have fewer seals than historically). Each Re-ID was confirmed by two experienced volunteers. Over 75 different seals were identified on 3 separate surveys, at the Roseland and twice at the West Cornwall site.

Of all the seals re-identified in 2024, **36 have been identified for at least 20 years by the SRT Photo ID Hub Network**. This is a tremendous achievement by both seals and people! **4 were seals first added to our catalogues back in 2000** (1 male S7 and 3 females S4 / S5 / S31); **7** were seals that were **first identified in 2001** (2 males DP193 / S30 and 5 females S16 / S26 / S32 / S49 / LP12); **10** were seals **first identified in 2002** (2 males S80 / S92 and 8 females S38 / S46 / S49 / S54 / S60 / S62 / S74 / S84); **11** were seals **added to catalogues in 2003** (2 males DP122 / DP120 and 9 females NF4 / S88 / S89 / S94 / S100 / S107 / S111 / S114 / S123) and surprisingly only **4** seals **first identified in 2004** were resighted in 2024 (4 females S140 / S142 / S148 / SBF16).

In total, **3,217 different seals** were identified in 2024. **62 seals** from **8 sites were identified 20 or more times** from the **Lizard, Looe, North Devon, Pentire, Roseland, St Austell Bay, St Ives and West Cornwall Hubs.** This is a reflection of the frequent survey effort at these sites (all are surveyed on multiple days every week) and the utterly incredible ID processing hub team effort. Well done everyone and thank you for making these incredible records possible!

We continue to partner with the **Cornwall Wildlife Trust Marine Strandings Network** and in 2023 **4 dead seals were identified from their carcasses** (3 males and 1 females).

S1048 Praying snoopy feeding her 2019 pup

S1048 Praying snoopy was recorded dead on 08/01/2024 at Newquay by Em Gallagher. Her first live sighting was 25/10/2014 at West Cornwall by Dan Jarvis and Kev Metcalf likely around 3 years old. She was identified 35 times (every year except 2021) at 6 different sites in 4 different areas from West Cornwall to Trevose by 11 SRT volunteers and on 1 boat survey (STAPIP with 12 volunteers). Her last live sighting 13/11/2023 West Cornwall by Sue Sayer and Kate Hockley. She was dead 56 days later likely around 12/13 years old.

DP1244 Hanging eyes was recorded dead on 28/04/24 at Carbis Bay by Mick Dawton. His first live sighting was on 28/03/2015 at West Cornwall by Sue Sayer and Dan Jarvis when he was around 5 years old. He was identified 44 times in every year since at 4 different sites in 3 different areas from West Cornwall to Pentire by 15 SRT volunteers. His last live sighting was on 14/08/2023 at West Cornwall recorded by Sue Sayer and Angela Barsby. He was dead 198 days later on 28/04/2024 when he was likely around 14 years old and in his prime.

ROS1347 Paris key corkscrew was first live sighted on 15/04/2022 at the Roseland by Kerstin Hartmann as a juvenile male around 3 years old. He was subsequently identified 60 times in every year at 7 different sites in 5 different areas from West Cornwall to St Austell Bay by 15 SRT volunteers. His last live sighting was on 11/02/2024 Roseland by Kerstin Hartmann. He was found dead 42 days later on 24/03/2024 at West Cornwall by Andrea Hunt and Karen Gaudern aged 5 (a mere youngster).

G247 Shoulder Mitten was recorded dead on 17/11/2024 at Porthgwarra by Andy Cowrie. He was first live sighted on 13/08/2019 at W Penwith S by Terry Carne as an adult male at least 5 years old with an encircling entanglement scar around his neck. He was subsequently identified 8 times biannually and then in 2024 at a single site all at W Penwith S by 5 different volunteers until his death at a nearby site. His last live sighting was on 02/08/2024 W Penwith S by Malcolm Baker. He was dead 107 days later at the likely age of 10 years old, so in his prime.

ROS1347 Paris key corkscrew 20/01/23 St Austell Bay by Helen Hereward

G247 Shoulder mitten on 06/07/23 by Jeremy Gilson

It is worrying that none of these seals made it through to old age, which is a red flag for seal conservation. RIP beautiful seals – you have taught us so much.

Ex-rescued, Rehabilitated and Released Seals

SRT 2024 data included **910 sightings** of **164 different rear flipper tagged, rehabilitated seals** (around **5% of all seals observed**) from all around our southwest coast. The tagged seals recorded would have been released in **north and south Devon** or from the **northwest and southwest Cornish coast** but there were three notable exceptions. **'Sate'**, **'Christine'** and **'Elio'** were released in **France. 'Crater', 'Drago' and 'Elora'** were all released from **Courtown in SE Ireland**.) The longest identified, and so potentially longest surviving ex-rescued seals

traced back to their rehabilitation records, are **DP193 'Lewis'** (an adult male released in 2001) and **S123 'Puffa'** (an adult female released in 2003).

A maximum of **9 different ex-rescue, rehabilitated and released** seals were recorded on three surveys on 10/05/24; 17/06/24 and 17/06/24 at West Cornwall all by Andrea Hunt and Karen Gaudern. **22 different ex-rehabilitated seals** were **identified 10 or more times**, including **8 identified over 20 times** in 2024. These were **'Orion', 'Turtle', 'Pangolin', 'Drago', 'Prudie', 'Calimero', 'Snail octopus'** and **'Mayonnaise'.**

SRT continue to use the confidential Googlesheet created by Paul Oaten from **RSPCA West Hatch Wildlife Hospital** that logs all seal admissions and, in 2024, Katherine Thomas from the **Cornish Seal Sanctuary** has continued to deliver regular and excellent input at our monthly Seals SW Sessions. We are grateful to **British Divers Marine Life Rescue** who do the majority of seal pup rescues, then triage and treat most of the seals rescued at the **BDMLR Cornwall Seal Hospital**, before they are transported elsewhere for longer term rehabilitation.

Entangled Seals

To balance our resightings of rescued, rehabilitated and released seals, which reflect a positive intervention by people, were our observations of seals that have experienced entanglement at some point in their lives. SRT record entangled seals as 'currently entangled' or as 'ex-entangled' – the latter based on evidence of a healed wound and no visible entangling material. This can be harder to judge than might be imagined. Seals having experienced or still experiencing entanglement were recorded **719 times (3% of all seals observed)** during **393 surveys up to a maximum of 14 different individuals in a single survey** – recorded on 24/12/24 at West Cornwall by Sue Sayer and Kate Hockley. **10 or more different entangled seals were recorded on 2 surveys both at West Cornwall,** during the year. In total **82 unique entangled seals were identified** from our catalogues.

A new entanglement issue that emerged in late 2021 continued to be observed in 2024 – that

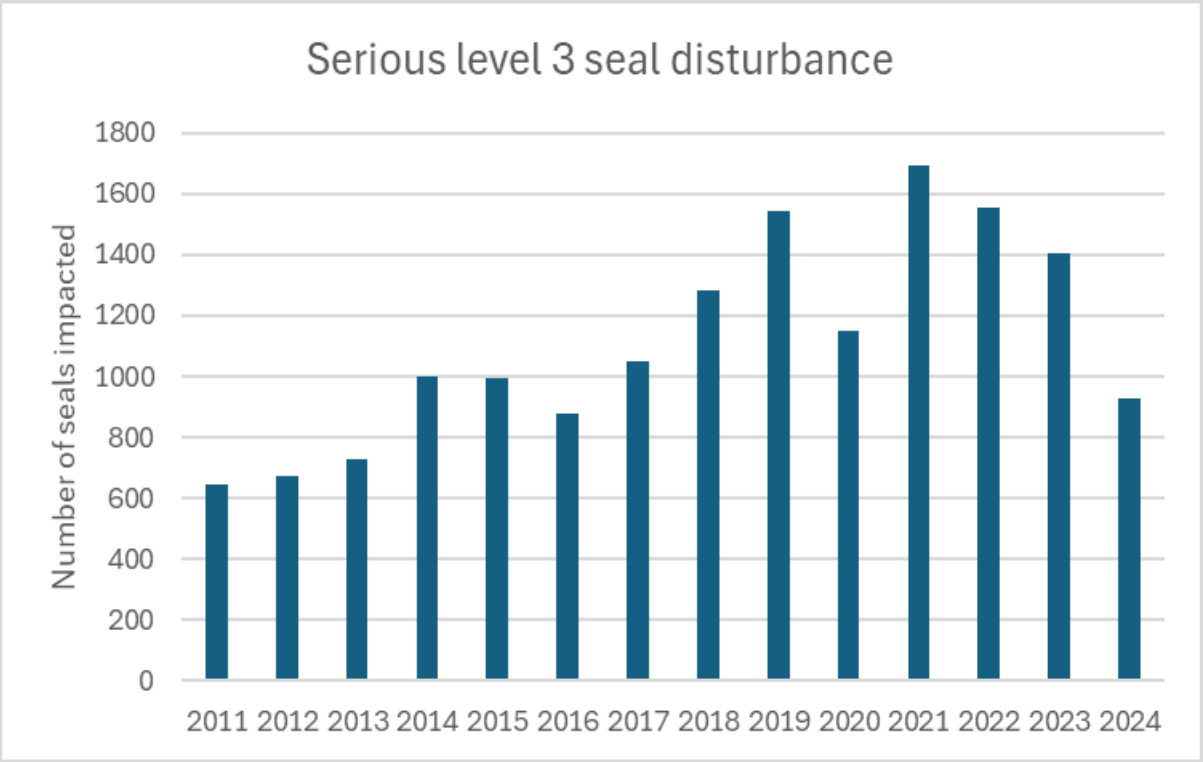
of seals being **hooked in line** mostly from our local sustainable inshore mackerel fishery. In 2024 **6 different seals were recorded as hooked,** ranging from apparently single to multiple hooked seals. We know from our long-term seal data that peak seal numbers have shifted earlier from March/April to December/January. In contrast, we have been told that the mackerel fishery has moved later in the year, from starting in the summer to commencing in November. This has created a **temporal and spatial overlap between the mackerel fishery and peak seal numbers** that never used to occur. This has presumably caused this **new and emerging issue of hooked seals**.

SRT continue to share data and entangled seal experiences as members of the **Clean Catch UK.** In the new Clean Catch contract, **SRT were omitted from the National Advisory Board** but after extensive engagement, **our position was reinstated. SRT remain members of the** global **Pinniped Entanglement Group** of which Sue and Dan Jarvis are members.

Bycatch includes the live entangled animals described above, who have most likely interacted with lost fishing gear. It also refers to dead seals accidentally caught up in live operational fishing gear. We were shocked to discover from the 2020 Special Committee on Seals report that **85% of all UK seal bycatch occurred in our southwest region** (ICES area VII).

Disturbance

From our routine data (not effort corrected) serious level 3 disturbance is described as seals leaving the land by tombstoning (leaping from height) or in a stampede (rushing over sand/rocks) into the sea; crash diving at sea; displacement from sea areas where humans were present or seals being fed. There were **160 serious disturbance incidents**. In total, **level 3 disturbance affected a total of 930 seals** in 2024.



Whist this is an increase in the number of serious disturbance incidents from 2023, it is a decrease in the number of seals seriously disturbed. Disturbance ranged from a minimum of 1 seal in 51 incidents to a **maximum of 56 seals on 11/01/24** stampeding into the sea at West Cornwall in a single incident. This resulted from an unidentified cause.

20 or more seals were seriously disturbed stampeding into the sea on **10 different occasions** at **9 different sensitive seals sites** in the **Lizard South, North Cornwall, Pentire** and **West Cornwall** areas.

Looking at all levels of disturbance from level 1 (being woken up and alert) to level 3 (leaving the land to enter the sea, there were **322 seal disturbance incidents** recorded at all levels on **8% of surveys impacting 2354** seals **(6% of all seals recorded).** This shows that disturbance is still a substantial issue that SRT and partners need to keep working on.

4 of the 322 incidents had sufficient evidence (including ID of individuals responsible) to be reported to the relevant enforcement agencies (Natural England and the Police).

- 24/06/24 W Cornwall offshore Fishing boat disturbed 2 of 18 hauled seals into sea (level 3).
- 18/07/24 W Cornwall mainland: The same fishing boat disturbed 1 of 3 hauled seals into sea (level 3). Action was taken by the St Ives Harbour master with excellent results as the vessel has not been recorded setting pots as close to either of the seal haul outs ever since
- 22/08/24 Lundy Island. A snorkelling safari shared a video of a customer touching a seal underwater. Action was taken by the Lundy Wardens and Natural England issued a letter to the operator
- 29/08/24 W Cornwall East. Night time party on clifftop above beach with 3 maternally dependent pups including a newborn. Reported to police and a crime number was issued DCP-20240829-0884.

2 additional incidents were reported to the Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority about pots set close inshore to Godrevy to St Agnes SSSI (20/05/24) and Boscastle to Widemouth SSSI 03/07/24. It is not known what action was taken if any.

Many disturbance incidents in SSSIs where seals are a monitored feature can’t be followed up as:

- The cause could not be identified.
- The cause involved disturbance potentially arising from climate change (coastal erosion rockfalls and extreme weather events such as hammering rain or hailstorms) or other seals.
- The person causing the disturbance could not be identified.

We hope that the apparent plateauing and decrease in seal disturbance across the southwest is a reflection of the extensive awareness raising work being done by SRT and partners including the Operation Seabird events.

Where possible, disturbance incidents are now routinely followed up by members of our newly formed volunteer **Conservation Team**. Case studies of disturbance and data continue to be shared with various statutory agencies, including the **Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Natural England, Operation Seabird** and **DEFRA**. In 2022, Natural England provided a specific email address for SRT to report serious disturbance incidents within designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. We continued to use this in 2024 to ensure audit trails and case studies can be built up as intelligence and evidence for potential action and future prioritisation.

In 2024 SRT have been liaising with **Operation Seabird**, the **Marine Management Organisation** and **Whale and Dolphin Conservation** to develop **a national online, standardised recording format for marine wildlife disturbance** (into which the existing Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code data set can be merged). SRT's disturbance data is routinely shared with statutory agencies, NGOs, governing bodies and landowners to inform the efficacy of mitigation strategies. Throughout 2024 SRT continued to fund and distribute the Defra-endorsed Seal Alliance 'Watching Seals Well' leaflets and 'Give Seals Space' signs across the UK as well as our new Enjoy Respect Protect leaflets and water craft stickers.

To build on our awareness raising letters to wildlife tour operators in 2022, working alongside the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group, SRT continued to meet with St Ives Bay operators to explore ways of raising the bar between current practice and Defra's new Code. This work is ongoing.

SRT took responsibility for organising three very successful Operation Seabird events in 2024 at St Agnes 28/06/24, St Ives 13/07/24 and Falmouth 30/08/24. Thank you to everyone taking part to make these events such a success.

Police, National Trust, BDMLR and 3 Activity governing bodies at the St Agnes Op Seabird Day

St Ives MP at the St Ives Op Seabird Day

Falmouth Operation Seabird Day

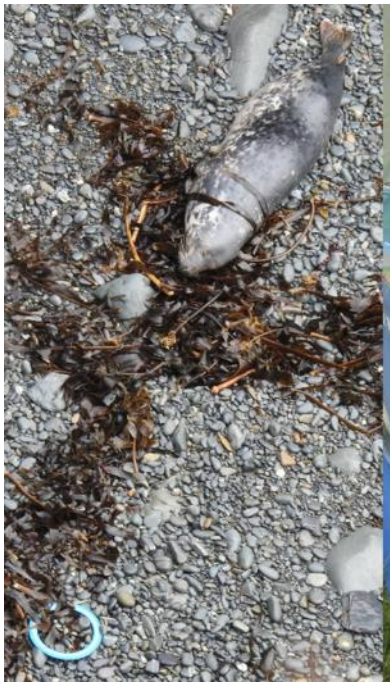
Injuring a seal offence

On 04/02/24 an incident was reported to the Marine Management Organisation of a seal being deliberately injured offshore by fishers on a fishing vessel. This was investigated by the Marine Management Organisation who conducted interviews with the people involved and the case was concluded with a written advisory letter. Given the evidence provided this was the best outcome that we could have hoped for. Thank you to the MMO.

Hubdates

Gower Seal Group: Gareth Richards

Lost or discarded flying rings floating in our seas have no borders nor boundaries…. they are free to roam wherever nature takes them. Here in South Wales just a short distance away from North Devon and South West of England, we also suffer from these hideous flying rings appearing in our seas and our shoreline. We have no idea where they came from, but we do know that the harm they cause to our curious seals is immense and heartbreaking to see.



An entrapped and entangled seal has been severely punished for just a few moments of playful curiosity. Inspired by Jenny Hobson from Norfolk who, since 2019, has passionately devoted her time to getting rid of these items, it was our turn to follow her incredible leadership. Gower Seal Group took on the challenge at every opportunity visiting local retailers, gathering public support and generally raising public awareness as we believe that nobody buys these items with the intention of harming seals. We achieved so much local support that it was quite emotional when retailers and prospective buyers showed their distaste by not purchasing them. Although Gower Seal Group were only founded in July 2019, our volunteers have been putting themselves out there giving our seals a voice and amassing a formidable network across South Wales.

BBC (Wales) and ITV news were quick to recognise our efforts along with many other local media outlets capturing much needed public support. Raising public awareness went one step further when we approached our local authority for their help. We had secured the support of local councillors through our membership of Swansea Local Nature Partnership so, it was time to see whether our efforts had paid dividends. In September 2024 at a full Council meeting, we secured a unanimous vote of support from Swansea Council Members for a voluntary ban on sales across the local authority area. This was a momentous result for us and paved the way for a much brighter future. If only all local authorities would do likewise so now, that's become our mission here in Wales.

In November 2024 we spoke with every Council Local Nature Partnership Coordinator across Wales and so far, we have secured over half of the coastal local authorities seeking to ban their sale and use. These bans are anticipated soon and certainly before the 2025 Summer season. There is still much to do but we are certainly going in the right direction. Flying rings have no borders, neither do we in Wales as we work alongside our colleagues at the Seal Research Trust and UK Seal Alliance.

This year, we have set our sights at banning these flying rings across the entire UK. Jenny is still pursuing her ambition and I'm pleased to be working alongside her and others as we continue our 'Mission Impossible Possible'.

Lundy Island: Joe Parker and Tara McEvoy-Wilding

Moth eaten cookie cutter with her pup by Ben Long

2024 on Lundy was another successful year for seal pups, with record numbers born around the island! 71 pups were born, compared to 66 in 2023. However, the mortality rate was estimated to be around 36%, which is higher than previous years. This is likely to be due to the adverse weather we had during early September, which is peak pupping season on Lundy. This, combined with some big spring tides likely caused an increase in pup mortality.

Our population monitoring was a success, with half island surveys taking place once a week from the beginning of August- end of October. The highest number of seals was recorded on 3rd September, where 207 seals were spotted!

Seal haul out of 53 at Brazen Ward by Ben Long

Sadly, we witnessed several disturbance events during 2024, most notably when a drone crashed into Brazen Ward, which is a popular haul out. The snorkeler who was flying the drone from a charter boat then swam over and climbed onto the rocks to retrieve the drone and flushed several seals into the sea. However, more positively since this event we have had discussions with the charter boat that had the snorkeler/ drone pilot on board and have agreed to create a 'no drones within the MPA' policy following feedback from skippers who said they would happily tell customers that they can't fly drones off their boats if the backing has come from us.

We are also trying to tackle the issue of social media posts which idolise 'snorkelling with seals' as these posts are only making the activity more popular. We hope to raise awareness of the damaging nature of these social media posts by talking to both the person who posted the image or video and, if necessary, to the charter boat they came to the island on. Overall, we believe good progress has been made and are excited for the 2025 summer season, where we hope to continue having regular contact with local charters and to further increase our disturbance monitoring. Lastly, I'd like to say a huge thank you to Ben Long, who was our volunteer Seal Fieldworker for 2024! He did a fantastic job of population and productivity surveying during 2024 and has put us in a great place for a successful 2025 season!

North Devon: Kate Williams

The North Devon team continued to survey throughout 2024 with surveys conducted on 52 days, mostly in the summer months when the seals arrive to haul out on the rocks.

Seals weren't seen hauling out until the start of May 2024 despite the team trying to survey at low tide. Usually, they start hauling out in April but in 2023 it was as late as June. In 2024, numbers increased through June and July, peaking at 34 on 25/07/24. Counts in the summer months were mostly double figures, with single figures on just 5 surveys. The number of seals dropped off as usual from September as the females moved away to have their pups.

88% of the seals seen and recorded were adult females. Over 377 re-identifications of seals from the catalogue were made and 98 different seals were identified. 36 new seals were added to the catalogue during the year, meaning 62 seals that were already in the catalogue at the start of the year, were re-identified in 2024. This shows high site fidelity and long may that continue.
Lots of regulars have returned year on year: of the top 10 regulars, 8 were first identified in the years 2009 to 2014 (returners for 10 to 15 years).

Lizzie Ford counted 9 on 19/04/24. All ID'd including the 4 above

Lorna Wake counted 13 on 29/05/24 including these 5 all squeezed up

North Cornwall: Louise Secker

Left: 27/08/24 by Mike Stephens. Pup 2024HH with mum NC26 Skinny trowel lollipop who has been known to us since 11/13. She has been recorded with 5 previous pups on the same beach in 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2023. Middle: NC299 Back F tree on 24/01/24 Mike Stephens. Only recorded once before in 03/15. Right: NC1487 Echidna taboo is an RSPCA left red taggie 80375. She was rescued from Cape Cornwall in 02/19, released in North Devon in 06/19 and first recorded in North Cornwall in 05/20. This dear little girlie is quite a regular visitor. 05 and 07/24 by Mike Stephens.

Left: NC294 Wave walker. First recorded in 03/15, this stunning girlie has also been seen at quite a few sites along the north coast including St Ives. This appears to be her first return visit to North Cornwall since 2015 on 21/05/24 Mike Stephens. Right: NC1719 LP582 Goonies

CSS right red taggie 326 on 06/06/24 by Mike Stephens. She was rescued from Holywell Bay in 11/18 weighing just 14.5kg, she was snotty and had nasty wounds. She was cared for and rehabilitated by the Cornish Seal Sanctuary and released at Porthtowan in 02/19. This is only her second visit to North Cornwall; the first was in 09/21.

Rumps: Jules and Dave Disbury

Our highlight of 2024 has to be finding out that BDMLR had been monitoring a site near to home. There is usually only one pup born here and in previous years that pup has been rescued or died. When mum pupped around 06/09/24, signs were put up asking people to give the beach area space. These signs were broken by person(s) unknown so BDMLR monitored the site as the pup was doing well.

However, on 12/09/24, a second pup (2024GGGG) arrived separated from its mum. Seal mothers with pups don't foster abandoned pups and with her own pup doing well, she repeatedly attacked this poor little newcomer who, with no mum and no way to feed, tried to engage.

JP when he was rescued by BDMLR

On 13/09/24, BDMLR removed the second pup to the Cornish Seal Sanctuary and named him JP Tag No SL306 Yellow. Having seen the video of the pup being attacked which was so sad and harrowing and then seeing him on a visit to Cornwall Seal Sanctuary, thriving and happily swimming with a pool mate was very emotional but joyful.

This little scrap of an abandoned pup grew into a healthy weaner who has now been released and with the new addition of a tag has become a real ocean traveller in the past twelve weeks. Long may he continue to demonstrate that where there is life, there is hope (with the assistance of some caring humans). UPDATE: JP was released by CSS staff on 13/12/24 at Perranuthnoe on Cornwall's south coast. He was photographed 02/02/25 by the Pentire Hub team where he looked to be thriving in the wild at least 85km away on Cornwall's north coast.

Pentire: Andy Rogers

The Pentire Hub team continued to be very active in 2024 and they achieved 99 surveys, evenly spread through the year. These surveys counted 3,247 seals; that's an average of 33 a survey, although surveys in the winter yielded higher counts than those in the summer (winter average 55, summer average 15 seals).

Commuter's epic rescue by BDMLR with SRT on crowd control

The year got off to a great start with the rescue of Commuter, a seal with a blue plastic ring entanglement. The team searched for him on every survey and alerted the rescue team whenever they considered a rescue might be possible – and it finally happened on 14/01/24.

The whole area continues to be a busy place for coastal visitors and prone to disturbance. The team worked hard with the National Trust to get fencing and signage in place and spoke to hundreds of members of the public to pass on the 'Watching Seals Well' message and explain how important it was for seals to have their rest.

Fencing and signage erected by the wonderful National Trust team

The summer saw the arrival of a harbour seal which delighted the team. He had a particular rock he liked to haul out on and, despite his small size, was prepared to defend his space! An ex rescue, rehabbed and released seal called Dwyane Johnson. He was rescued on 05/09/23 at Harlyn Bay and released on 15/11/23 at Lizard West on the south coast. He has become a firm favourite with the Pentire Hub, who were lucky enough to see him throughout 2024.

Harbour seal Dwayne Johnson resting on the offshore site

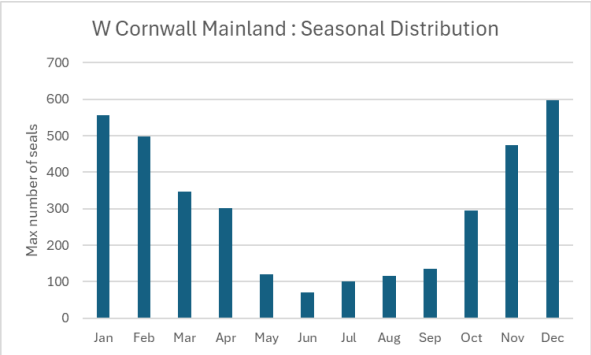
Regulars returned including Lucky Bunting, Sid and K gun and in September, a pup was born on the cove. This resulted in a big volunteer effort to monitor the pup and it's mother to

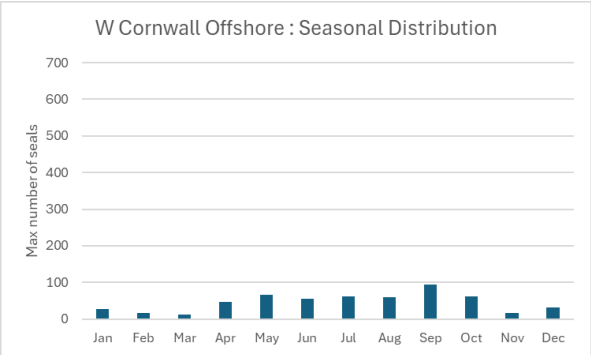
ensure they were not disturbed by the public. This was highly successful, the only disturbance to feeds coming from the attendant male seal who was keen to mate. (See page 14 for more details.) The Hub team routinely spent many hours in 2024 acting as seal ambassadors. We spoke to 100s of people offering advice on how watch seals well and discussing seal life cycles.

Pentire Hub volunteer Peter engaging with the public

West Cornwall: Sue Sayer

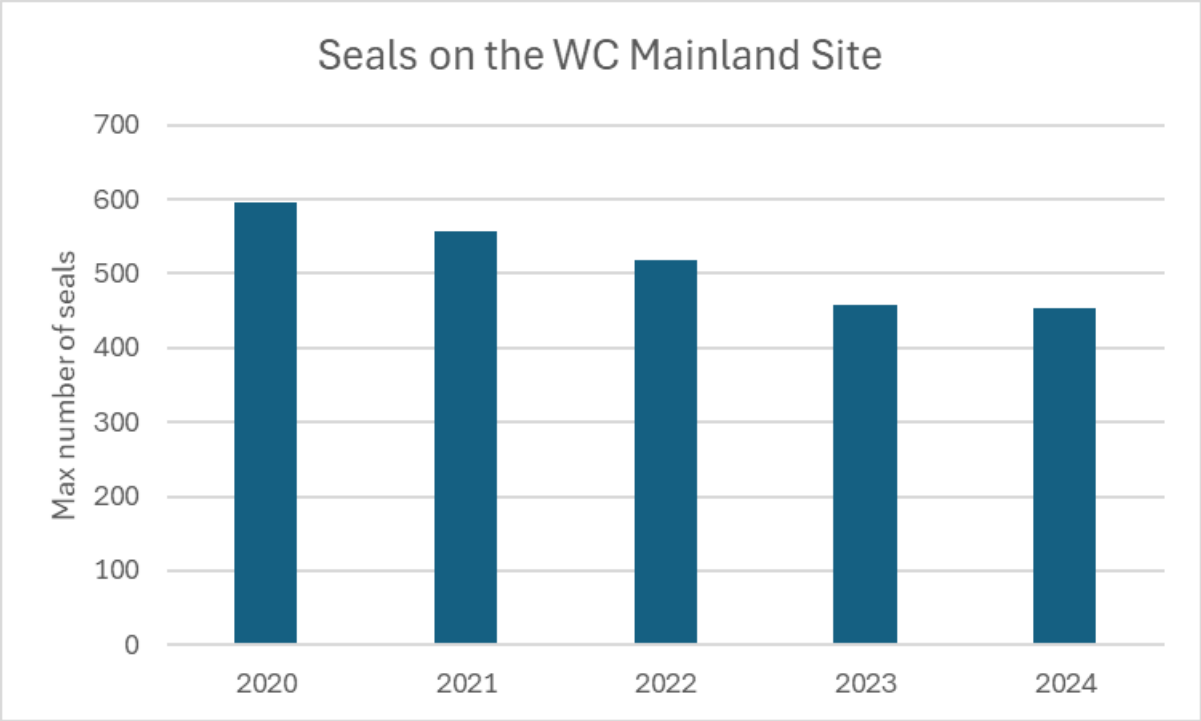
The seasonal distribution of seals (2000 to 2024) at each of the 2 West Cornwall sites differs. On the mainland site seal numbers peak in December and January and at the offshore site the much smaller number of seals peak in September.





Since 2020, the maximum number of seals on the mainland haul out site has gradually decreased for reasons unknown. These could include coastal erosion, anthropogenic disturbance, shifting access to prey species or the shift to an alternative haul out nearby. This site was used for the very first time 10 weeks after the secret release of magnesium hydroxide into St Ives Bay just west of the West Cornwall offshore site.

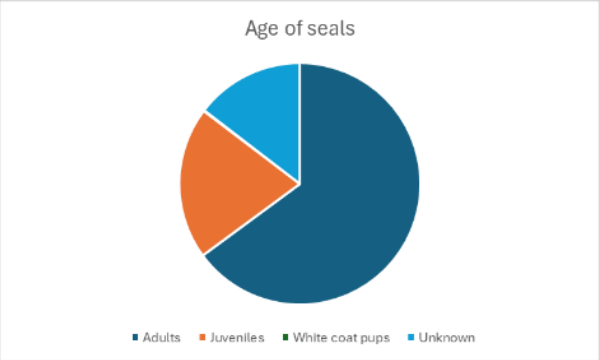
138 surveys were done at the W Cornwall mainland site in 2024 by 51 different volunteers.

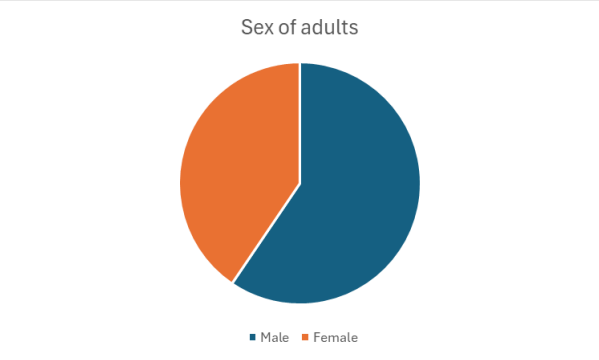


Most seals recorded were adults (65%).

There were 13 surveys with white coated pup sightings in 2024 (less than 1% of the seals seen at this site).

Of the adults that could be sexed, most were adult males (59%)



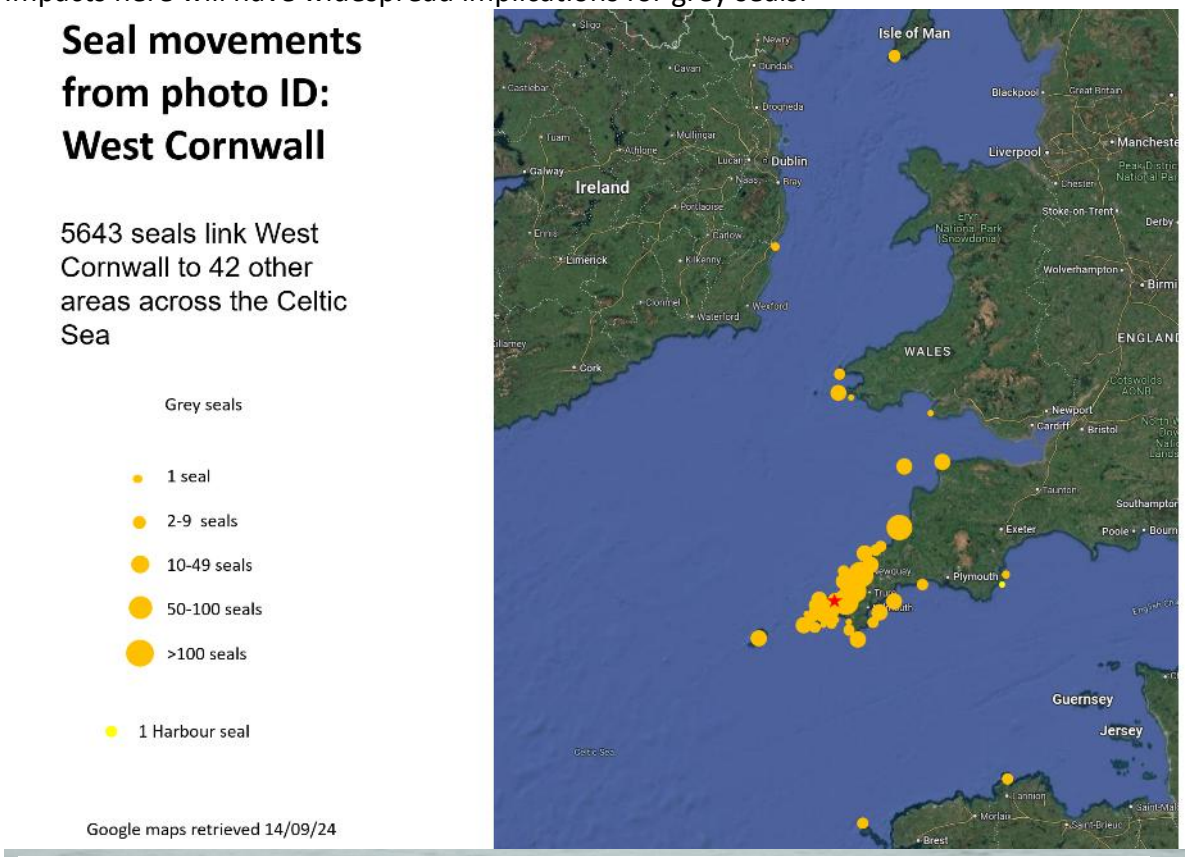


Of all the seals recorded 22% were identified. Of these 2472 were Re-IDs (85%) and 427 were New IDs (15%). There were 271 sightings of entangled seals (2% of all seals recorded) and 222 ex rescue, rehabbed and released seals (2%). There were 50 disturbance events.

Drone surveys were done with Cornish Lithium and Natural England

Drone surveys were undertaken with Cornish Lithium and Natural England with permission from the National Trust. The best practice advice that was developed collaboratively is that drones should be flown at a minimum flight height of 110m, for the shortest flight path and time and not at all in quiet weather conditions.

Seals from this site now link to 42 sites across the Celtic Sea from the Isle of Man in the north, to SE Ireland and N France in the south making this site an important hub for Celtic Sea seals. Impacts here will have widespread implications for grey seals.



St Ives: Louise Secker

The Wings Family: On the 28/08/24 Peter Nason discovered that our St Ives celebrity seal, Wings had given birth to a pup, named Jet in a very conspicuous place, close to a public beach and the South West Coast Path. A massive monitoring exercise was undertaken by 26 amazing SRT and BDMLR volunteers from dawn until dusk for a period of 16.5 days (see page 13).

Our volunteers engaged with hundreds of people, most of whom were very interested and happy to keep away. There were however, 22 recorded disturbances including 2 failed feeds caused by kayaks, SUPs, ribs, jetskis, tripper boats, people on the cliff, drones and a coasteering group. Jet had 39 recorded feeds of varying lengths and times but generally 2 or 3 a day. The last 2 days before Jet weaned, the length of feeds increased significantly and on the final day, 10/09/24, he had 6 feeds, totalling 101 mins! Jet was enjoying the water at 4 days and swimming confidently at 7 days. He was weaned by the 11th September at approx. 17 days. He still had his white coat with only the tiniest loss of fur around his mouth and eyes.

Jet aged 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,12,13,14,15,21 days (from top down and across to bottom right) by Billy, Louise, Martin, Tash, Chris & Kam

Wings is at least 25 years old and has been known to us since 2003. She has been recorded at 5 different sites, mainly around West Cornwall and St Ives Bay however she has also visited Mounts Bay and Skomer Island. Since 2007 she has spent her summers in St Ives Harbour begging from boats.

In 2009 she pupped on Skomer but sadly her pup was lost to stormy weather. She had another pup, Ruby in West Cornwall in 2010 and 2 at the St Ives site in 2018 (born 07/09/18) and 2022 (born 28/08/22). Wings was the subject of an epic rescue in St Ives Harbour in 2023 when she had a flying ring caught around her neck.

We assumed adult male Star Line X was Jet's dad as he maintained a constant presence. He has been recorded around West Cornwall and St Ives Bay since September 2019. He is young and very feisty and constantly pestered Wings. We imagine this behaviour was from inexperience. He was recorded mating with her at least 10 times over a period of 5 days.

On the 11/09/24 Chris Webber and Kirk Russell photographed a different, older male mating with Wings! Right Flipper Eyes had previously been recorded in West Cornwall just 4 times since January 2020. Sadly, he was monitored by BDMLR on the 04/11/24 and 05/11/24 having hauled out on one of St Ives' beaches. He had lost weight and was in a very poor state. We don't know what happened to him but he hasn't yet been re-sighted. Fingers crossed he's OK.

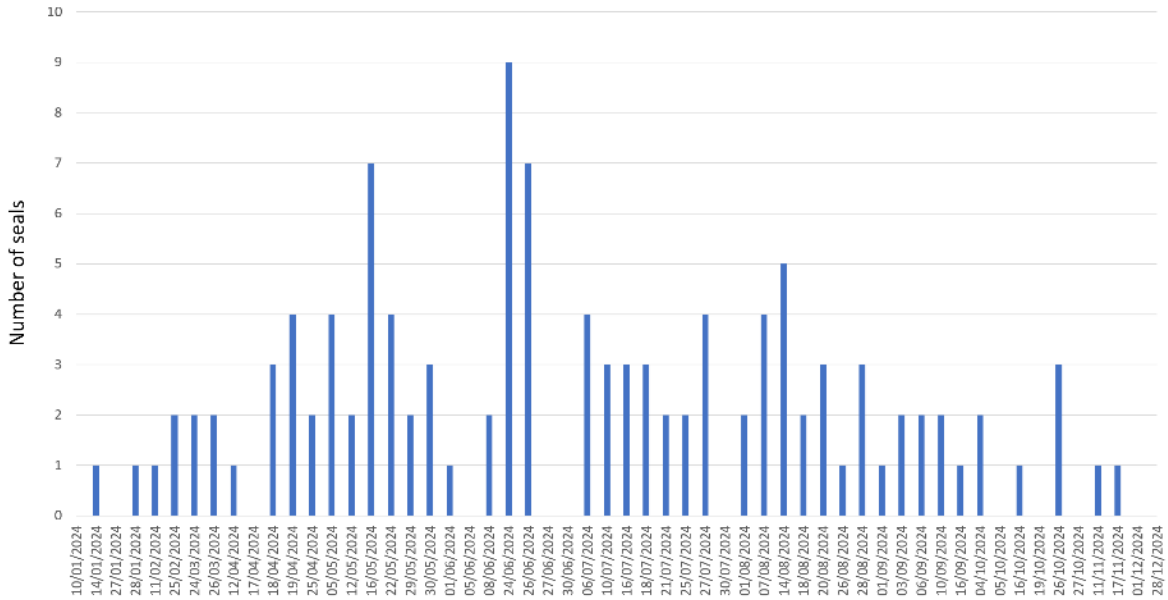
29/08/24 Wings feeding Jet: fat mum skinny pup by Billy Nason

28/08/24 Wings, 3 days after giving birth to Jet, looking fat and healthy. As Jet feeds and grows, Wings becomes thinner. She is unable to leave and hunt for herself as she is on constant watch. Jet will have gained approx. 30 kg by the time he has weaned.

11/09/25 Wings feeding fat pup with Flipper eyes sleeping nearby to protect them from intruders from the sea by Chris Webber

Cape Cornwall: Kate Williams

Cape Cornwall is a small headland in West Cornwall. It is 4 miles north of Land's End near the town of St Just. There five survey locations: three are coves, one is the tip of the cape and the fourth are the offshore rocks. Surveys undertaken on 56 days, evenly through the year, weather permitting. Most surveying was done by Malcolm Baker. Seal numbers peaked with a maximum on 09/06/24 and 24/06/24. Not high numbers but analysis shows that 61% were adult females so an important resting and feeding location for pregnant adult females in the summer months. 64 re-identifications were made of 33 different seals. 16 new seals were added to the photo ID catalogue during the year meaning 17 seals had been seen in the area in previous years. There were some regulars including CPCF10 Yarrow, who Malcolm finds easy to identify, but the most frequent visitors were CPCF23 Babycham (first seen 2019) and CPC45 Mushroom cloud (first seen 2020).

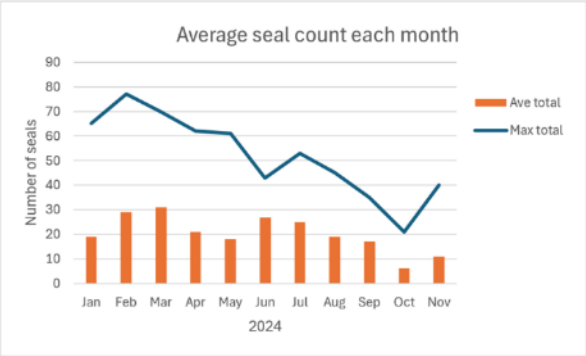


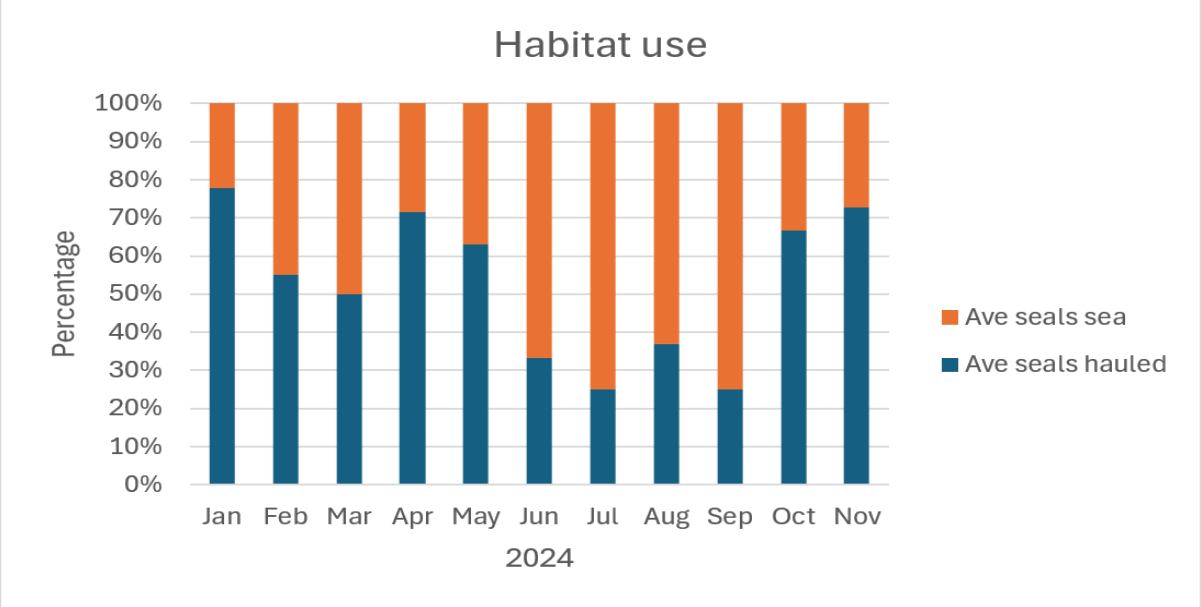
Top visitors

ID code and name	Age/Sex	Visits in 2024	Year of first sighting
CPCF23 Babycham Eye glass	AF	8	2019
CPC45 Mushroom cloud pistol	AF	5	2020
CPCF28 Black fish	AF	4	2019
CPCF10 Yarrow	AF	4	2018
CPC60 Thin bracket	AM	4	2021

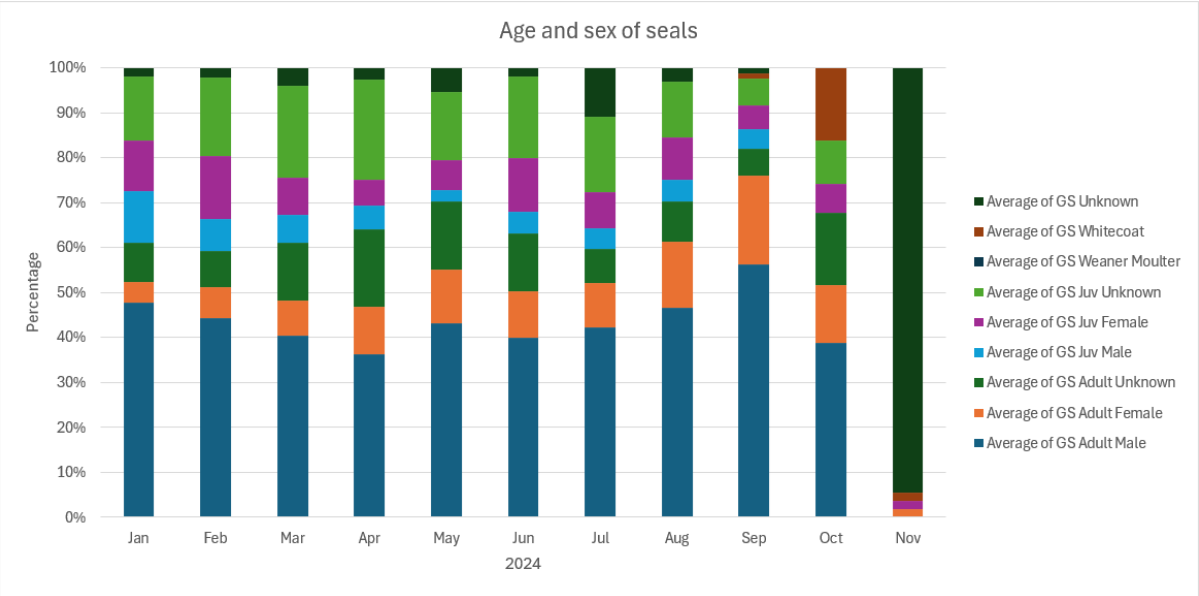
Lizard: Sarah Millward

Survey Effort from Jan to Nov 2024: Total recorded surveys for the year: 130.

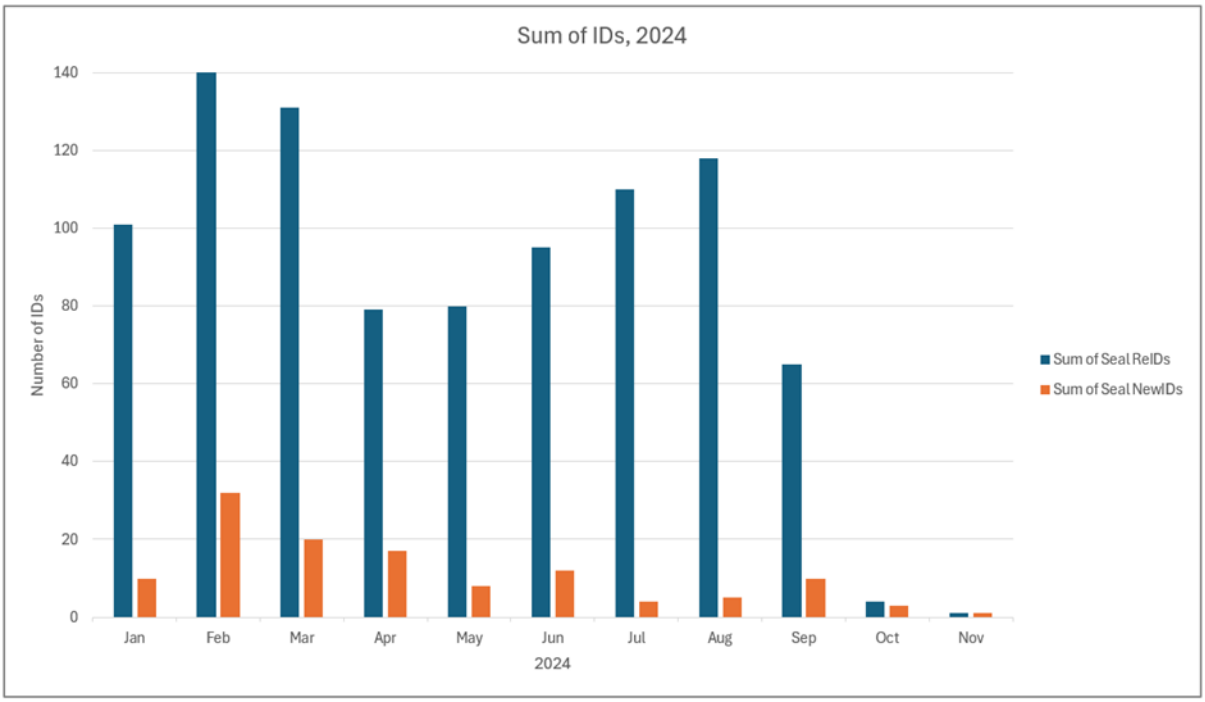




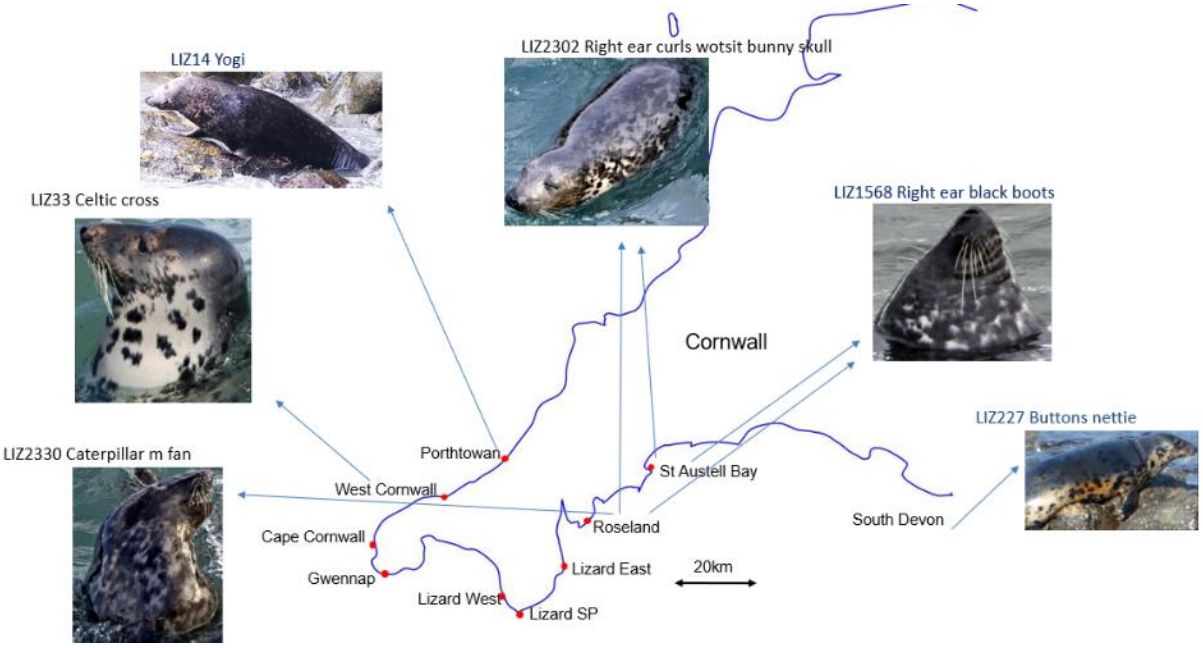
As usual, seals were seen all year, peaking in February and troughing in October. Most seals were seen in the sea during the summer and hauled out in the autumn, winter and spring.



Adults made up around 50% of all seals seen in most months, except August and September when they exceeded 60% and 70% respectively. Over 40% of the seals seen most months were adult males. The smallest proportion of juveniles was seen in October.



A large number of seals were identified in most months. Over the years, seals identified on at Lizard S have also been linked to Skomer, N Cornwall, Trevose, Porthtowan, W Cornwall, W Penwith N, Pendeen, Cape Cornwall, Isles of Scilly, W Penwith S, Cudden, Fal, Lizard W, Lizard E, Roseland, St Austell Bay, Looe and S Devon.



A few examples of seals from Lizard S linked to other sites across the SW

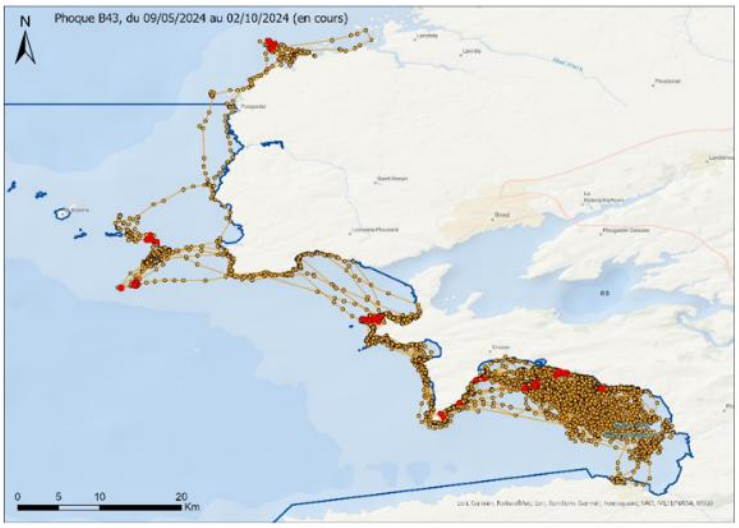
After surprising everyone in January 2023 when she visited a different site at West Cornwall, LIZ15 Key has been back at the Lizard. She has not been identified in other areas since.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		2024	Grand Total
Jan			4	6	6	6	7	2	6	3	4	1	1	4	50
Feb			8	8	15	16	9	9	16	5		6		4	96
Mar			20	21	27	14	18	13	18	10		6			147
Apr			14	24	26	18	17	24	27	15		6			171
May		1	20	19	25	24	25	26	27	22	16		2	6	213
Jun			14	21	26	25	29	29	28	28	11		9	6	226
Jul			23	25	29	29	1	26	30	21	11		10	6	211
Aug			20	18	27	25	28	18	14	20	13		11	3	197
Sep			7	18	17	17	26	12	19	18	7		12	2	155
Oct			12	17	14	23	11	1	6	8			4		96
Nov					3	2	2	4					1		12
Dec			2	3	2	2	1		1		5		3		19
Grand Total		1	98	167	202	221	177	167	173	184	96		76	31	1593

LIZ14 Yogi once again went off around the coast to Porthtowan to pursue his Beachmaster role on the north coast. Yogi usually returns with a new scar or two from his encounters with the female seals. This year he hasn't been recorded returning to the Lizard.

LIZ14	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
Jan		1		11	2	8	10	10	2	2	3	49
Feb		9	3	7	1		8	4	3	10	1	46
Mar		1	14	14	14	17	11	15	8	9	4	107
Apr		6	8	14	10	15	9	7	12	4	3	88
May	1		7	12	18	23	16	6	14	3	3	103
Jun	3	8	15	20	22	16	13	17	13	5	3	135
Jul	9	25	12	18	1	16	19	16	10	4	1	131
Aug	2	13	17	13	1	13	7	11	9	7	2	1	96
Sep	5	6	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	25
Oct	2	2	6	7	8	2	1	3	1	2	4	38
Nov	3	5	7	14	19	13	9	11	1	5		87
Dec	1	4	7	12	5	12	7		3	3		54
	26	80	98	145	115	130	103	99	77	53	20	959

On 14/10/24 we had an exciting visitor from France. LIZ2457 Highland cow moose was added as a new seal. She has a white flipper tag numbered 951, and she had a satellite tag telemetry device. LIZ2457 Highland cow moose had been captured in the Molene archipelago on 09/04/24 for tagging by CEBC (CNRS/La Rochelle Université). They commented that she 'wasn't a very big female: 155 cm, 102 kg... we call her B43'. LIZ2457 was tracked heading north of Brittany where her tag was working fine. However, her tag seemed to stop working sometime around 02/10/24, and her trip to the Lizard was not recorded on her satellite map.



LIZ2457 showing her satellite tag and her movement map in NW France

St Austell Bay: Emma Woolfenden

The St Austell Bay hub covers a stretch of the south Cornish coastline between the Lizard and Roseland and consists of six sites for surveying with one main haul out site. We have four regular surveyors, Rob Wells, Helen Hereward, Pat Lee and Dermot Lee. Between them they cover two surveys a week, usually on a Monday and a Friday. This hub is also very fortunate to include land owned and managed by Cathy and Charles Swingland, both of whom are keen conservationists and big supporters of SRT. Cathy and Charles have kindly constructed a viewing pod on a private section of the clifftop above the main haul out, which affords a great view of the haul out site without alerting the seals to the surveyor's presence. They have also undertaken, with the assistance of Rob and various other community minded volunteers, the erection of a double fence along the clifftop and have been rewilding the area leading up to the fence with native trees and shrubs, which are slowly becoming established and also afford a great area for harvest mice to nest. The fence has been erected for two main reasons: firstly for safety reasons as the cliff is prone to rockfalls and, secondly, to reduce the risk of disturbance to the seals from visitors along the clifftop. The fence is proving so successful that other hub coordinators have been to see it with a view to erecting something similar along their own hub patches, if appropriate.

Seal Alliance signs have been positioned beyond the rewilded area giving information about seals and advising the public to give seals space and to keep noise to a minimum when approaching the fence. Our surveyors are also brilliant at educating members of the public they meet about the seals and other wildlife. The main haul out site was also used by a student to do a comparative psychology project on seals and their behaviour in 2024, with guidance from one of the hub's surveyors. The research and information obtained was supplied to the charity for their database. This particular haul out site also has 13 visiting taggies. Some come more regularly than others. Where possible, we advise the relevant rescuers when a taggie has been sighted and what bodily condition they are in at the time of sighting.

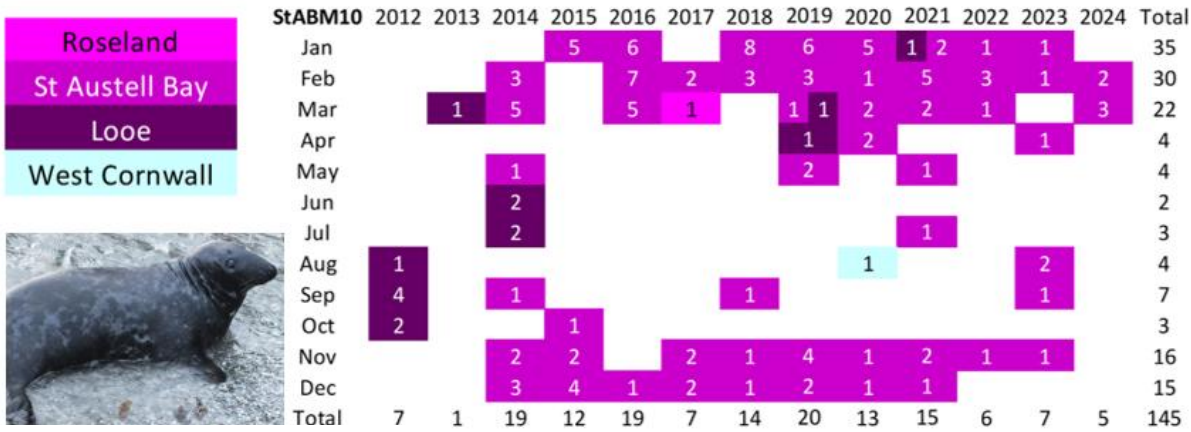
A bit further along the coast, also under the St Austell Bay hub area, is a small cove where for the last five consecutive years we have had five seal pups born and successfully reared by the same Mum, Ladle. Her last pup, Echo, was born on or around 06/11/24 on our usual pupping beach and was last seen on 13/12/24 fully moulted at our usual haul out site.

Echo fully moulted

On a not so happy note we have an entangled seal called 'Nettie short strands' who has been recorded at our usual haul out site since January 2015 and continued to be a regular visitor through the autumn/winter season for 2024. He remains entangled and is a fair bit smaller than other males his age, presumably due to his entanglement. He is also missing one claw from his left flipper and two claws from his right flipper and has a number of scars both on his face and his body. He continues to survive though and is in my mind a real legend. In fact, he was one of two seals to appear on our first survey of the 2024/25 season on 30/09/24 and continued to haul out regularly until the end of 2024 and beyond.

Nettie short strands

Another seal of note is our famous, or should I say infamous, Wiggins wish bone. He was first sighted in 02/14, so has been a regular visitor to our usual haul out site for ten years. He is well known in Mevagissey harbour, where he goes by the name of Nelson. Sadly, his frequenting of the harbour in the hope of finding easy pickings from the fishers, means he has been in contact with too much diesel fuel and has lost the sight in his right eye. We keep hoping he will avoid the harbour for his own safety but he is a creature of habit so continues to pop up there regularly, particularly through the spring and summer months. He starts hauling out again in the autumn at our usual site and I am always so pleased to see him return.



StABM10	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Jan				5	6		8	6	5	1 2	1	1		35
Feb			3		7	2	3	3	1	5	3	1	2	30
Mar		1	5		5	1		1 1	2	2	1		3	22
Apr								1	2			1		4
May			1					2		1				4
Jun			2											2
Jul			2							1				3
Aug	1								1			2		4
Sep	4		1				1					1		7
Oct	2			1										3
Nov			2	2		2	1	4	1	2	1	1		16
Dec			3	4	1	2	1	2	1	1				15
Total	7	1	19	12	19	7	14	20	13	15	6	7	5	145

Wiggins ID calendar

The Channel Isles: Dr Mel Broadhurst Allen

Several organisations across the Channel Islands actively record seals through the 'Channel Island Network'; a collaborate project which aims to assess seal abundance and distribution (primarily grey seals), headed by the Groupe Mammalogique Normand. Information from surveys completed during August was also passed onto Sea Mammal Research Unit (University of St Andrews), for annual population assessments. Seal sightings and other notable highlights, such as strandings for each island (Alderney, Guernsey and Jersey) are given below.

Alderney: Seal sightings and notable highlights: The Alderney Wildlife Trust (AWT) completed two boat-based marine mammal observation surveys (May and October) during 2024. These were completed within the island's Ramsar Site, which grey seals are known to frequent. Combined, a total number of 99, mostly adult grey seals, were recorded on these two surveys. They were hauled out on offshore rocks.

Adults hauled on offshore rocks by Alderney Wildlife Trust

The AWT also collated 49 sightings of grey seal individuals recorded opportunistically by members of the public across Alderney. In general, sightings were of one or two individuals, with the majority of the records located at the north east of the island.

Alderney BDMLR call outs: Only one young grey seal weaner was attended to on 08/03/24 at Longis Bay. This individual was deemed healthy by on-island BDMLR medics and left to leave the bay naturally, which happened 24 hours later.

Guernsey seal sightings and notable highlights: Volunteers within the marine biology section of La Société Guernesiaise (an NGO based in Guernsey), completed three boat-based marine mammal observation surveys along the east coast of Guernsey.

Surveys were undertaken across a number of offshore rocky islets, collectively known locally as 'the humps' area, which is within one of Guernsey's designated Ramsar Sites. Surveys were completed in the months: July, August and October, 2024.

Combined, these surveys recorded a total number of 79 grey seal individuals. A high proportion of the sightings during each survey were of adult seals, with a small number of juveniles also observed. Two grey seal pups were spotted during the October survey.

Guernsey BDMLR call outs: A small number of live grey seal pups were attended by the GSPCA on Guernsey in 2024 and rescues were undertaken.

Grey seal pup rescued on Jersey by BDMLR. Photo by Steve Walker

South Devon: Sarah Greenslade The Seal Project

We've been monitoring and recording the grey and harbour seals around South Devon since 2017, conducting regular surveys to gain insights into these fascinating creatures.

This winter was a busier year for us, and the seal dynamics were fascinating. Our main survey location is not only a marina, but a DWT County Wildlife Site, making it crucial to record all sightings and activities.

Through our continued surveys, our insights into individual seals increases. Each sighting of a returning seal fascinates us, builds up their individual life stories, and encourages us to continue doing all we do. The more we learn, the more we can share, bringing these seals to life for others to better understand and appreciate and respect.

New young seals appear alongside the returning winter seals. To the youngsters it's not about moulting and resting, it's about learning life skills and socialising, though this is a haul out location with no easy access for the youngest seals. To haul out on a pontoon requires significant skill and propulsion, so juveniles have to find low lying girders to haul out on, or move on to other locations along the coast.

Over the winter, our largest haul-out site encountered significant storm damage, making some areas inaccessible. The seals took advantage of these new spaces, with a well known female seal leading the way. Others followed her, including our famous 'Sammy,' who reappeared after being absent for two pupping seasons, and another adult female 'Starfish' who was almost always nearby.

As human activity around our coastline increases, our seal pup numbers have decreased. Pregnant seals no longer have the space around our shores in which to have their pups without disturbance. So where did they go? And will we see any of them return this year?

Consultation & Engagement: Our relationships with local marinas has been beneficial to us both, we've provided MMO (Marine Mammal Observer) cover during piling works to MDL Marinas, and they've supported us with 'meet and engage' events throughout the summer for their berth holders . We are always happy to provide advice with queries from berth holders, and attend calls of concern for seals. Dart Harbour Authority very kindly reciprocate our time with boat surveys, which is incredibly appreciated.

Awareness: We've held numerous talks and presentations throughout the year, including 3 talks in Agatha Christie's boathouse at Greenway, (National Trust). It's an amazing and iconic location, and has been so well received we've already been back in 2025.

Rescue rehab & Release: Again, we've assisted the RSPCA with seal releases in South Devon. It's been a privilege to be part of the journey for these lucky seals. Whilst some haven't been since release, a few have been seen locally, and others have been sighted in Cornwall. BRX445, Yellow Taggie 3125 Kraken, did all three! He was released 2024 02 15, and seen further up river a month later, yet two weeks later he was seen in West Cornwall. This is a fascinating part of seal identification, as many of us never get to see the rear flippers of a seal, so knowing they're tagged or not is never easy. We often only realise we've encountered a

tagged seal once the photos are uploaded onto a large screen. Then the fun begins as you try to work out if a number or sequence on the tag is visible, and can be used for identification. At this point, having a prior knowledge of released seals is invaluable. Once we know a seal and their markings the tags are useful, but not always necessary, more of a massive tick in the box!

Our most frequently seen tagged seals were both rescued and released from CSS in 2020 & 2021 respectively. Yellow Taggie SL131 Pippi Longstocking & Green Taggie SL130 Basil, are seen at least annually. Pippi has been one of our highlights this year, her 'I'll go where I want to go' attitude has been fascinating to watch this winter, and she clearly has something about her as others love to follow her lead!

2024 Highs and lows: We received a grant from the Devon Environment Foundation for our second remote access camera. We are even going solar powered for this one! Monitoring an inaccessible offshore location, recording seal numbers, disturbance and possible identifications with the help of a team of volunteers, who can monitor this site from their own homes will be invaluable, and we are incredibly excited about this.

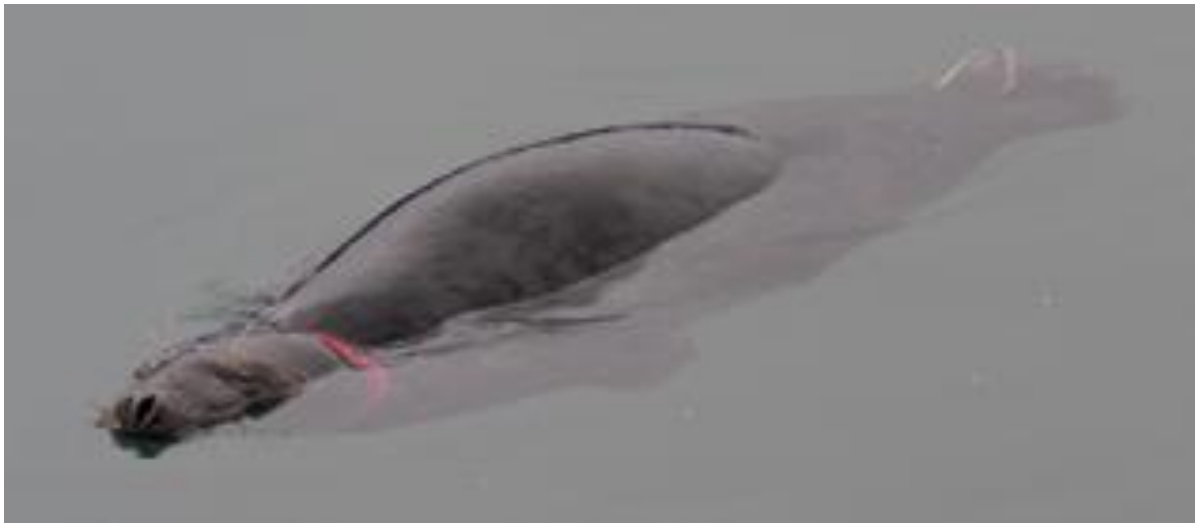
We were so excited about the birth of a harbour seal pup in 2024, yet despite monitoring by ourselves, the Harbour Authority and the Navy, this beautiful pup was found deceased at three weeks of age. This was heartbreaking, but as volunteers for the DWT Marine Strandings Network we were able to record her details.

Harbour seal mum and pup by Sarah Greenslade

Entanglement Issues: A year on we are still having to say there is no change in the situation for BRX361 'Tangled'. We've known of her entanglement since March 2022 when it was clear this was far from a recent issue. Whilst she otherwise thrives and grows, this life limiting injury gets worse. Ourselves, the BDMLR and Dart Harbour Authority are monitoring her regularly, but her haul outs only ever being on manmade structures aren't giving us options to help her. We wait in hope that we might get the opportunity we need, whilst appreciating this is never going to be an easy rescue, if at all possible.

On Boxing Day this seal was the most heartbreaking sight to see. This red 'festive banding' is a dangerous entanglement from a brand of marine anti fouling paint. This was the worst Christmas gift ever. We'd seen this juvenile male seal hanging out with the other juvenile seals on our Christmas Day survey. Living his best life. Yet in 24 hours this seal went from free to entangled.

We monitored him whilst he was in the area, but he soon moved on and there have been no sightings since. The saddest part was onlookers thought he was ‘‘wearing a collar’’. ☹



Entangled seal by Sarah Greenslade on Boxing Day

Photo Identification: Our photo identification is something we are very proud of, we’ve added around 50 new identifications to the South Devon catalogue this year, and have seen many seals return again and again. The winter haul out period is always the best – to see seals we’ve not seen in many months return, is so rewarding.

Our favourite seal is without doubt BRX139 Easter Bunny. He’s now 4 years of age and thriving. As an ex entangled seal he stole our hearts, and he keeps returning, showing off his sub adult life skills. We have massive faith in him living a wonderful life! And then adult female BRX96 Fingers Crossed, she spends most of her non pupping year here, often on her own girder – she’s been doing this here longer than we have!

Fingers crossed by Sarah Greenslade on Boxing Day

Every sighting is fascinating. Every seal is amazing. Every return sighting makes us smile. We just would love to know where these creatures go when they’re not here!

We do all this as volunteers, and we are proud of all we do. One these amazing creatures capture your heart, they take over your lives!

Dorset Seal Project by Dorset Wildlife Trust: Sarah Hodgson

The Dorset Seal project was set up by Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) in 2014. By recording casual seal sightings data and photo identification work, we have been learning more about the grey and harbour seals that visit the Dorset coast. Alongside this research, DWT has been raising awareness of these iconic marine species and promoting codes of conduct to reduce anthropogenic impacts.

Seal sightings & species: During 2024, a total of 266 seal sightings were reported to DWT, a 23% increase on 2023. The data comes from casual sightings, so don't necessarily reflect changes in abundance.

Grey seals accounted for 63% of the sightings. 10% of the reports were harbour seals and the remaining 27% were recorded as species unknown. Seals were spotted along the Dorset coast throughout the year, however, most sightings were recorded during April, May and August. Fewer sightings were recorded during December and January.

Seal census: During 2024, the first ever Dorset-wide seal count was carried out as part of the SRT's autumn census. 44 volunteers gave up a combined 78 hours to conduct seal surveys along nearly the entire length of the Dorset coastline from Lyme Regis to Highcliffe. In total, 16 seals were observed. This information contributes to a wider dataset, helping to improve our understanding of these mobile marine mammals across the southwest region.

Photo ID: A female grey seal, "Fiver" is a frequent visitor around the Weymouth and Portland area. She was spotted further east along the Purbeck coast for the first time. Since 2014, she has been recorded 66 times, but only ever around the Weymouth and Portland area.

Juvenile with circular face and flipper lesions by Phil Cheeseman

During the seal census, a juvenile grey seal was observed with circular lesions around its face and neck. Subsequent photos sent in by a member of the public showed that the condition was also affecting its front flippers, although it was seen feeding and appeared to be in an otherwise healthy condition. It has been recorded several times since, but not hauled out so it is difficult to fully assess its overall condition.

Key Issues: Disturbance is one of the biggest issues seals face in Dorset. This seems to particularly affect pups and younger seals that haul out in easily accessible and sometimes busy locations.

Sub adult male at Durdle Door. Photos by Lulworth Rangers

A sub adult male grey seal was recorded hauled out at Durdle Door on and off over a period of weeks, coinciding with the Easter break. This is one busiest beaches in the region, so his behaviour attracted a lot of attention from visitors. At times they prevented him from hauling out, were getting too close or trying to touch him, and there were some reports of people throwing stones. These situations are very challenging to manage, requiring a huge amount of resources from BDMLR volunteers, the Lulworth Ranger team, HM Coastguard and even the Police stepping in to help. Cordons were set up, leaflets were distributed and funds were secured to install a couple of Watching Seals Well signs to promote best practice before people got to the beach. The seal was identified as 'Sammy', a habituated seal who spent several months displaying similar behaviour in Weymouth in 2020-2021. Although he has been spotted regularly since, it was hoped that he had grown out of this behaviour.

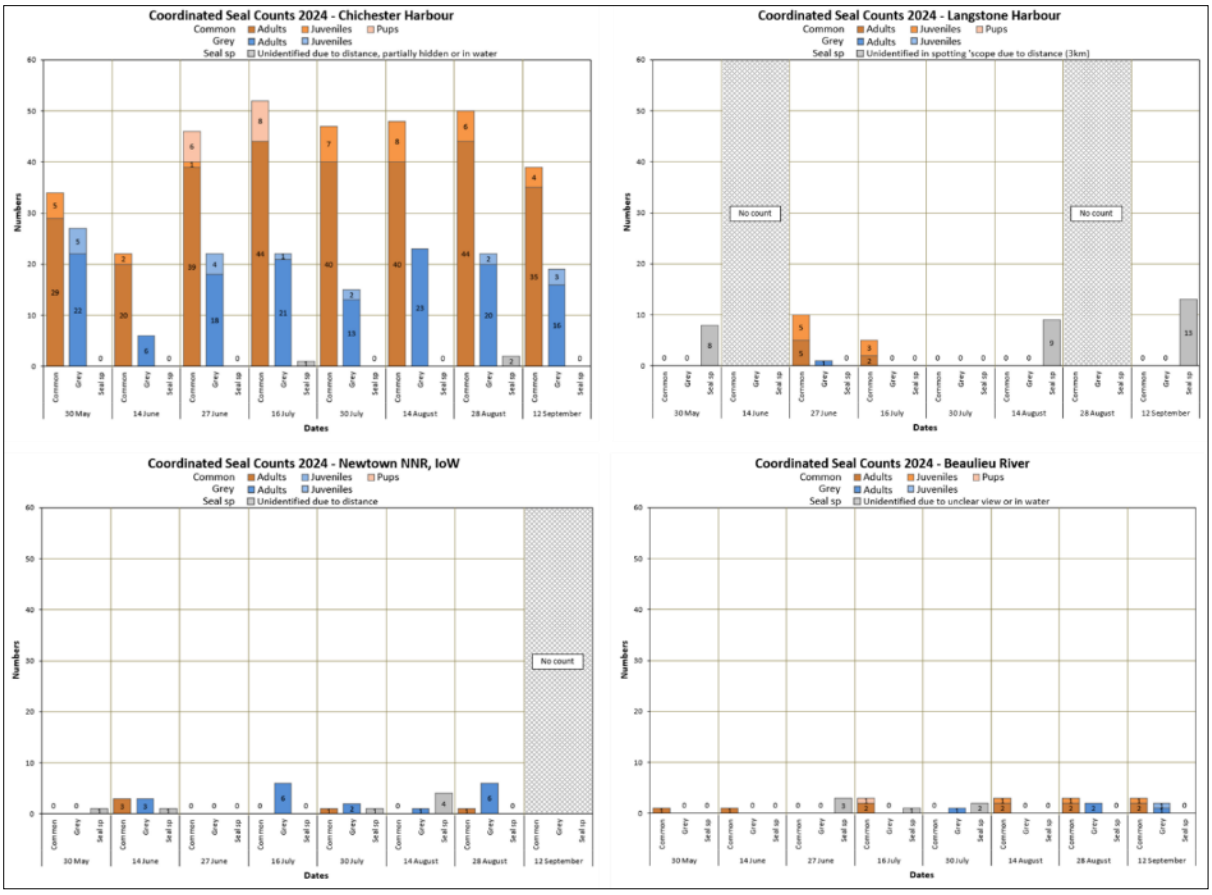
Awareness raising: Paddlesports users are one of the groups most likely to encounter seals and we were keen to reach out to them to promote codes of conduct. The Seal Research Trust, were kindly able to provide us with some watersports stickers for our campaign. Ahead of the summer school holidays, we emailed 30 paddlesport operators and activity providers across Dorset. In total 350 stickers were sent out to 6 providers. Although a fairly low response, it was good engagement. One person who was contacted as part of the campaign was able to direct a colleague to BDMLR when they encountered a young seal in distress.

Strandings and PMEs: A small harbour seal pup washed up on Chesil beach in January 2024. Upon investigation, we found that the pup had a tag on its rear flipper which was traced back to RSPCA East Winch in Norfolk. The pup was admitted to RSPCA East Winch in July weighing just 7kg. She was released in November at 35kg and would have travelled approximately 400 miles around the coast from The Wash to Chesil. Unfortunately, the tide took it back out to sea before it was recovered, so we won't know any further details. It's still fascinating to learn how far these animals can travel at such a young age – it would have only been around 6 months old.

Solent: John Arnott

Seal counts in Chichester Harbour continued in 2024. These have taken place every two weeks during low neap tides from the end of May to the start of September since 2019. Slightly fewer counts were made in 2016 to 2018.

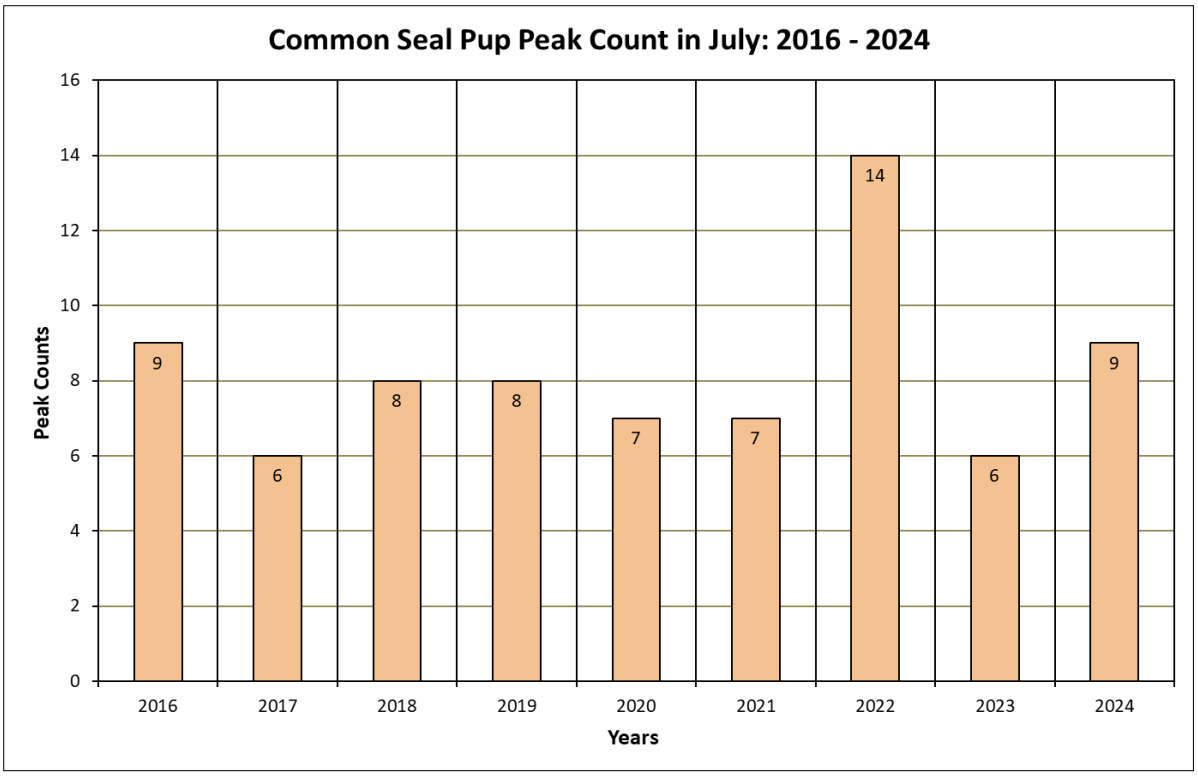
These counts were coordinated with Langstone Harbour counts, then in 2023 with counts in Newtown NNR, Isle of Wight and in 2024 with the addition of the Beaulieu River, Hampshire. These counts provide a glimpse into the Solent resident breeding population of common seals as well as visiting grey seals.



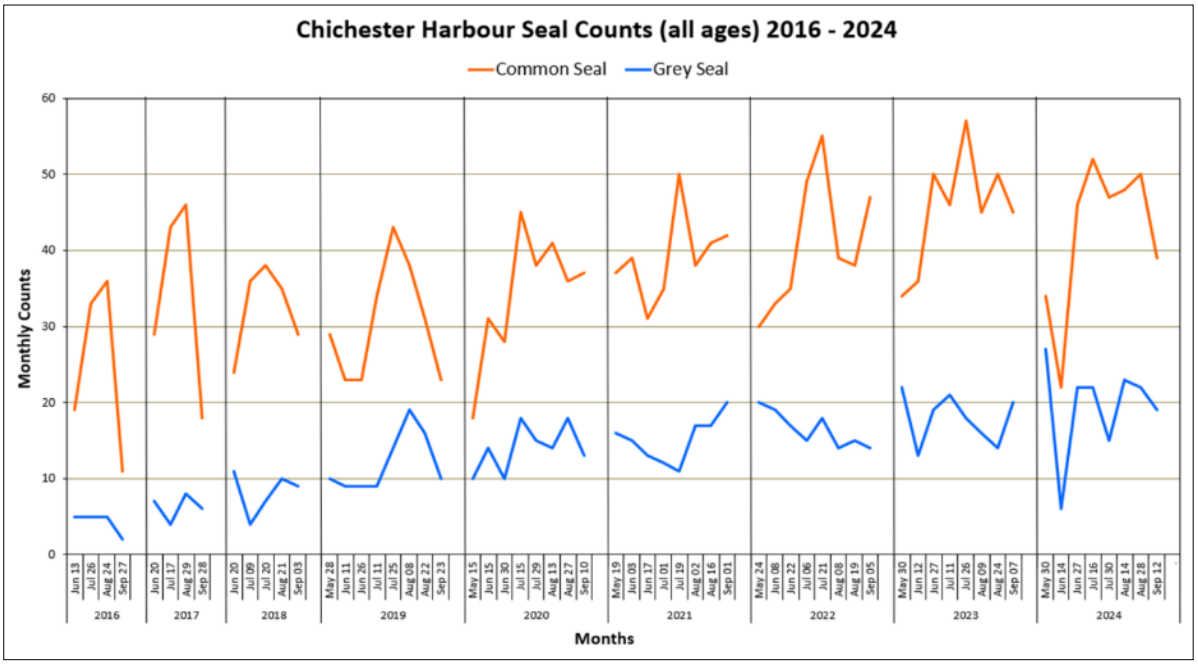
Common (orange) and grey (blue) seal counts in the Solent sites

Chichester Harbour provides the main haul out areas but the other three sites (all in Hampshire) are just as important for the seals that use them. Figure 1 shows the relative numbers recorded in 2024 and uses the same abundance scale on the y-axis for the four locations.

Six common seal pups were counted on 27/06/24, four more than on the same date in 2023. In 2024 the peak count in Chichester Harbour was eight plus one other in the Beaulieu River, Hampshire, on the same date (16/07/24).



Peak counts of common seal pups (all Chichester Harbour except 2 in Langstone Harbour in 2022 and 1 on the Beaulieu River in 2024)



Counts of common and grey seals in Chichester Harbour since 2016

The numbers of common seals in Chichester Harbour have shown a slight but steady increase over the years with a plateau being reached in 2024.

Grey seals reached a record maximum count for Chichester Harbour of 27 on 20/05/24. They don't breed in Chichester Harbour though breeding age adults are present in the first half of September which may indicate that they are part of the later breeding populations in the North Sea or possibly across the English Channel on the French north coast rookeries.

Seal haul outs in Chichester Harbour are vulnerable to boat disturbance, though they are protected from disturbance by walkers by around a quarter of a mile of mudflat between the nearest footpath and the seals.

In 2024 there were five wildlife tour boat operators providing public visits to the main haul out, one of which was Chichester Harbour Conservancy's solar powered catamaran. A visiting boats survey over the August Bank Holiday in 2023 indicated that the worst disturbance incidents were linked to small private craft approaching too close to hauled out seals.

They best way to watch seals is from a distance with good binoculars or a camera with a big zoom lens.

28/08/24 An undisturbed mixed group of common and grey seals taken with a 700mm zoom lens

Hampshire: Martin Gillett

In 2024, the Hampshire region experienced a rise in seal call-outs through the BDMLR hotline. In January, a young seal pup embarked on a journey across the UK after being rescued on the Isle of Wight. It made a ferry trip to the mainland and had a brief overnight stay before heading to the BDMLR Seal Hospital in Cornwall for rehabilitation. Once its recovery was complete, it was released at Combe Martin in Devon! Additionally, we welcomed our first recorded seal pup born in the Beaulieu River and are hopeful there will be many more.

12/01/24 Mum SOL3 Comedy face and her 2024 pup by Martin Gillett

In February, Martin had the opportunity to visit the Coastguard Headquarters to promote awareness of the BDMLR and the SRT. The interactions were positive, and Martin enjoyed a tour of the headquarters, which allowed him to observe how calls are managed. During 2024, Martin hosted over 10 events and presentations throughout Hampshire, including an Environmental Awareness day at Beaulieu.

Event to raise awareness with Martin Gillett

In June, an article was published in Hampshire Life about the BDMLR's work in the local area, including an interview Martin completed whilst on site at a call out to an adult seal who had hauled out for several days in a row at Hayling Island.

Hayling Island adult female by Martin Gillett

A Volunteer's Story

Rob's Wells' SRT story:

Born Scarborough 1948. Loved the sea. Saw no seals. No wildlife qualifications except Cubs Nature badge. Retired to Cornwall 2009. Could do more marine stuff. 08/10/13 he attended a seal talk by Sue Sayer. Mighty interesting. On 01/02/14 he met Septimus and bought a camera to do a photo ID survey. On his first camera outing he discovered the St Austell Bay seal haul out which he has routinely monitored ever since. In 04/14 he adopted the Roseland haul out to survey and was joined by Kerstin 2019 onwards. From his first survey day Rob was hooked. He found out that he could send his photos into the Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust for identification and so began a decade of sealy love and involvement. A number of people have been part of the St Austell Bay Hub over his ten year period but he now has a core group of volunteers, which consists of Helen, Pat and Dermot as well as Jules Disbury as our album checker and Emma Woolfenden as the Hub Coordinator and Catalogue Manager. The Hub is also ably assisted by Kerstin Hartmann of the Roseland Hub with ID work because a number of our seals are regular visitors to both sites. By 2024 St Austell Bay had established 91 seal links with other sites across the Celtic Sea - see Movement map page 61.

In 2024, Rob led a four day seal course on the island of Lundy. It was for members of the Lundy Field Society so the participants were all wildlife enthusiasts and had many and varied wildlife passions. Rob's introductory talk included a request for them to enrich our visit by sharing any interesting sightings with the rest of us. Rob divided their time between seal walks and seal talks. Despite taking place at a poor time for Lundy seals, they saw some and were able to watch and study their behaviour. The weather was good and the magical island of Lundy worked its charm on everyone. We had a lovely few days there.

Also in 2024, SRT published Rob's first children's book "Excuse me, are you my Mum?" The idea came from Septimus. He was a plain grey, grey seal that Rob saw around St Austell Bay and whom he found dead one day. After decomposition, SRT had his skeleton professionally rebuilt. The skeleton showed that Septimus had really suffered in his lifetime and SRT's then ranger, the artistically talented Emily Pollitt, worked Rob's notes and photos into a booklet about Septimus. Rob realised that the booklet was all about Septimus' death, with his life completely overlooked, so Rob decided that Septimus should "Get a life!" and wrote up a life story for Septimus to include all of the injuries and problems that his skeleton had recorded.

After a Septimus talk by Sue and Rob, a lady, Liz, came up and chatted. She loved what the group did but feared that her lifetime in the book industry had given her little to offer to us - unless we were ever doing a book?

Well, thinking back to the Septimus booklet, the tough life of a young seal pup seemed to Rob to be worthy of a children's book and he put a proposition to Liz to do it. Her reply was that Rob appeared well able to write it himself and she would mentor him.

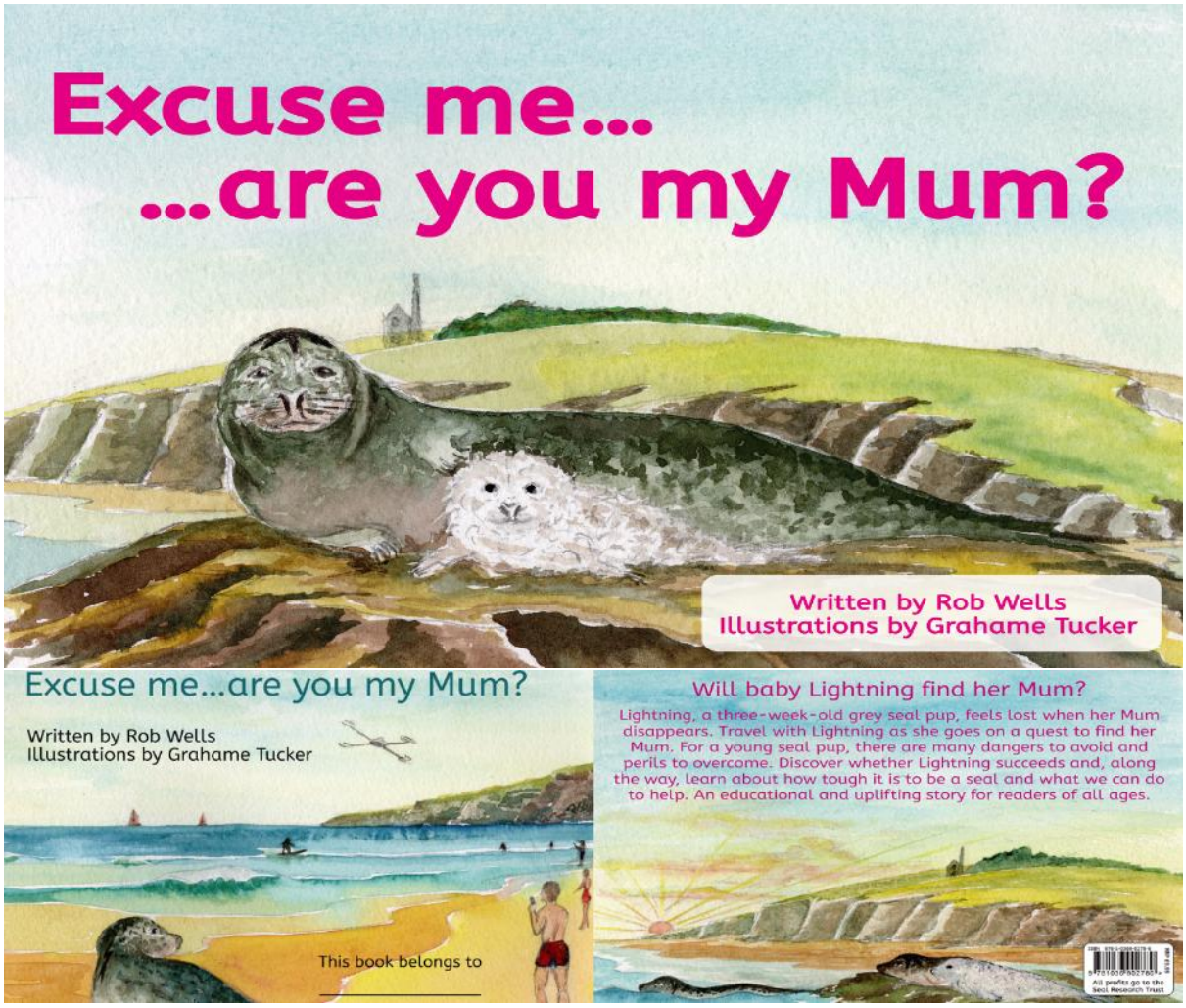
Writing it was the easy bit but SRT really struggled to get an illustrator at a reasonable low price. After several false starts, Rob asked an old (Head of Art) teaching colleague, Grahame. They had kept in touch and on his two previous visits to Cornwall, Rob had, most fortuitously,

taken Grahame on a common dolphin stranding call-out and a Risso's dolphin retrieval for post mortem. Grahame was delighted and excited to be invited to become involved in SRT's marine work via the book. Grahame has produced beautiful water-colour illustrations at a very low price. A couple of publishers were not interested, so, as Rob had decided that the book would be for the SRT, it was decided to self-publish.

Lauren McGregor, SRT's Admin Ranger learnt new skills to fabulously marry story script, seal facts and the illustrations. The seal facts had been put together by Sue, Lauren and Rob to give the reader more insight into the lives of seals. Lauren then added the title page, ISBN, copyright stuff etc. etc. and we had it printed here in Cornwall.

A generous donation from friends plus a Facebook Fundraiser generated funds which paid for a large chunk of costs. SRT provided the rest but within weeks this money had been covered by sales. From now on, the book will spread the word about how tough it is to be a seal pup and will also raise funds for SRT.

Have you got your copy? Do you have children within your extended family or your friends and neighbours? All copies signed by the author! "Excuse me ..... are you my Mum" and the Septimus booklet are available via the SRT online shop. Do you have a friendly bookshop or Wildlife Group that might wish to take some books to sell and keep part of the profit?



Policy and Conservation Actions

Consultations: 53

SRT used data from our amazing volunteer citizen science network to submit evidence to **53 policy and planning consultations**. These varied hugely but could be classified into 5 categories: **Conservation** (**6 plus 16 WCL input sign ups** including the Important Marine Mammal Area creation around south coast of England; Badger cull petition; Cuttlefish conservation; EU trade in seal products; Marine routemap; Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Marine Nature Recovery Framework; NE stakeholders; HRA guidance x 2; Convention on biological diversity national biodiversity strategies and action plans; UNECE Aarhus Convention; MPA assessments; Protected landscapes; World species congress; Biodiversity net gain; ASCOBANS to Defra; Global biodiversity framework; Environmental promises; Digital sequencing information; Ecological doomsday survey; Sandeel fisheries closure in N Sea); **Developments (10 and 7 WCL input sign ups including** White cross wind farm; Harland and Woolf ferry x 2; SWW desalination plant; Loch fleet golf course; California tin cannery hotel; Brixham breakwater; Cornish lithium; Sealink in Kent; Severn Barrage; Wilder by design; Offshore petroleum licencing bill; GB energy bill; Crown estate bill; PM letter scapegoating nature; Rosebank; Banner review); **Issue specific policies** (**4 plus 4 WCL input sign ups;** White House Geoengineering community engagements; PML Monitoring buoy, Bycatch data for Defra; Impact of visitors on natural places; Police commissioner crime priorities; Bovine TB; Japanese whaling; Clean Catch UK letter) **Fisheries and Aquaculture (3** Stage 4 MPA fishing and marine mammals; Port Quin Seaweed farm; CIFCA stakeholders) and **Other (4 WCL input sign ups** including Education Policy; Access to nature in all education settings; Curriculum review; Human right to healthy environment).

Writing consultation submissions is the most challenging and most mundane aspect of our charity's work but it is undoubtedly the most important thing we do. It means all the data and expertise stored in our scientific database created by our huge volunteer team effort is communicated to decision makers where its influence counts, **helping to give seals and the marine environment a voice to make a difference in planning and policy at a national and international decision making level**. All this is done monthly during or between our monthly **Steering Group Meetings**. In 2024 SRT were co-opted to participate in the **Wildlife and Countryside LINK** (WCL), providing **seal expertise to the Marine Mammal, Marine and Bycatch Groups**. It quickly became apparent that joining this well established voice for nature group would substantially increase our conservation efforts and impact, so a decision was made to pay their membership fee (albeit at a vastly reduced rate, negotiated to be sustainable for our small charity over the long term). This has substantially increased our expertise, influence and reach.

Practical Conservation Actions

We worked with a range of partners to make the southwest a safer place for seals. Examples of the very varied kinds of action taken included:

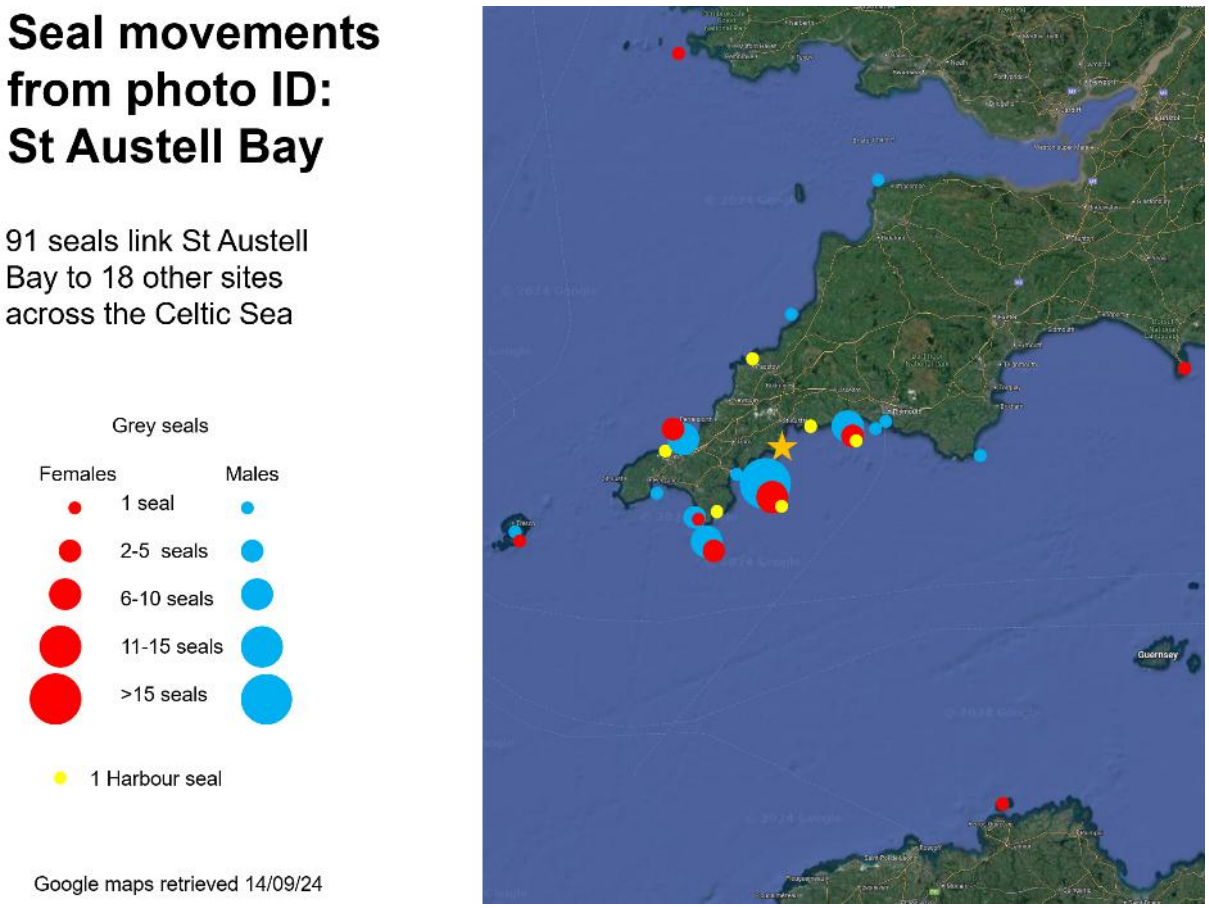
- Supporting input to the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- Essex Handford Water Development Mitigation advice
- Bycatch mitigation in Cornwall
- Footpath closure to sensitive seal site
- Following up social media posts naming sensitive seal sites or showing disturbance
- Volunteers sending multiple letters to retailers about flying rings
- Seal in Looe Harbour advice
- Looe and St Ives fisheries and angling advice
- Seal Alliance sign put up in St Ives and on the St Aubyn estate
- Following up the naming sensitive seal sites on google
- Engaging with dive company using seals inappropriately to promote their business
- Advice to leaders of underwater photography course
- Best practice photography captions, stickers, collages
- Support for Girl Guides Sea Savers Badge
- Field engagement follow up with interested members of the public
- CIOS LNRS Species Priorities advice at meetings
- Supporting local teams in Dorset for a seal hauled out on a public beach
- Advice on seal disturbance mitigation for SUPERCommunities meeting in S Devon
- Following up on the use of SRT logos without permission
- Reporting lost fishing great near sensitive seal sites
- Advice on rockpooling near sensitive seal sites
- Boat operator quayside advertising showing inappropriate behaviour around seals
- Advice to Cumbria Wildlife Trust safe seal watching distances
- Responding to complaints from fishers about seals on east coast
- Input to Defra Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code review
- Best practice advice for paddlesports operator very close to vital seal site
- Reporting to CIFCA about fisheries activities close to haul outs causing disturbance
- Thank you to operator for being at least 100m+ away from the seals in a SSSI
- Sensitive seal site people management and mitigation – fencing and signs
- Reporting campers on a sensitive seal site
- Advice to teams in NW Germany about seal disturbance
- Reporting commercial operators ignoring chough nest site signage
- Reporting sand eel mass stranding
- Sensitive seal site disturbance case study delivery
- Pots close in to sensitive seal site reported to CIFCA
- Film crew disturbing seals in the sea reported to NT
- Large number of kayakers landed on sensitive seal site reported to National Trust
- Cetacean Disturbance to MMO/Police
- Seal disturbance reported to local Harbour Master for action
- Two photography competitions given advice on photography best practice
- Feeding seals in multiple harbours reported to relevant Harbour Masters
- Writing letters to multiple operator about how to improve their practice around seals
- Following up disturbance videos on social media, by raising awareness of page admins

- Advising on new Lundy Code of Conduct for visiting operators
- Facilitating signage at Cape Cornwall put up by National Trust
- Engaging with local paddle operators when photo shared of seal on board
- Feedback to author about the seal content of their new book: Snorkelling in Britain
- Follow up about an event apparently given our seal of approval – we do not do this
- Follow up seal disturbance by tripper boat
- Fisher off SSSI seriously disturbing a seal reported to Natural England
- Input about Mounts Bay West no landing signage with local marine group
- Satellite tagging advice given to Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- Advice about Kent tripper boat reported to be disturbing seals
- Action letter about Tik Tok live coverage feeding seals
- Feedback to National Trust about W Penwith N fence rewilding well
- Operator touching seal followed up with Lundy Wardens and UNESCO Biosphere
- Advice about a seals in the Fal seal hauling out on a boat and a buoy
- Request to retrieve a lost buoy by local fisher
- Thank you to ferry company staff promoting best practice
- Pupping site party reported to Natural England
- Letters to operators visiting SSSIs
- Helicopter disturbance reported to MOD at two key haul out sites resulted in SRT providing seal data. MOD created air avoidance areas for all sensitive seals sites in SW.
- Advice about a seal interacting with swimmers
- National Trust updated fencing and signage
- Multiple drone reports to National Trust when being flown by the public on their land
- Padstow Harbour signage letters
- Hilbre seal disturbance advice
- Engagement with Decathlon about them providing stickers/leaflets in paddlecraft boxes
- Cornwall FLOW Acoustics deployment advice
- Advice on the discovery of a new pupping site
- Advice on pup timings to Natural England enabling them to erect temporary signage
- Advice to Parish Magazine about best practice around their local haul out
- Advice about Spearfishers in proximity to sensitive seal sites
- Yorkshire Seal Group public engagement advice
- Cornish Lithium Drone Surveys
- NE Letter to Snorkel Operator with ERP leaflets about ‘in water’ activities best practice
- BMC best practice around seals advice for new climbing guide
- Pollution Incident reported
- Best practice shared with NCI
- Letter proposing flying ring ban sent to Cornwall Council
- Advice on Release Protocol Framework with BIAZA
- Advice provided for Isle of Man Wildlife Act and signage
- Engagement with low flying survey plane, who decided to avoid seal sites completely
- Ringnetting engagement and writing a Seal Code of Practice as a result.

Highlights of 2024: Seals and People

St Austell Bay hub was 10 years old. In that time, there were 729 surveys at the haul out beach with 5 sub sites also checked. Rob Wells completed 77% of all these surveys – at first it was just Rob and now he has a team of surveyors including Pat and Dermot and Helen. The maximum seal count was in 2022-2023 – 96 seals perhaps because there were very few at the neighbouring haul out on the Roseland that year? The previous highest count had been 53 seals. In total there were 2268 Re-IDs thank you to Emma, Kerstin, Marion and Sue. This included 221 entangled seals. There had been 8 pups including 1 stillborn with the others apparently successfully weaning. 91 seals from St Austell Bay linked this habitat to 18 other sensitive seal sites across the Celtic Sea (shown on map below).



Map of St Austell Bay seal movements

Vagrant seal species. Two vagrant seal species were recorded in Cornwall in 2024. We had our first ever Ringed Seal visit the Hayle Estuary on 28/07/24. Whilst being monitored by BDMLR Medics, this young seal had a seizure and sadly died. On 06/09/24 a juvenile Hooded Seal was photographed on a tender in Falmouth Harbour. Shortly afterwards it disappeared and its whereabouts remain unknown.

Incredible encounters with mums and pups. On 01/09/24 volunteer Martin Yelland recorded mum 'Fat 4' feeding her own pup, only to be interrupted by a second pup who she also fed. Just 14 days later on 15/09/24, Martin was again in the right place, at the right time, with the

right photography kit in the right weather conditions to take an incredible sequence of photos of a grey seal pup being born to a previously unidentified mum.

Old friend. On 28/11/24 S30 Horned Caterpillar (known since 2001) put in unexpected appearance at West Cornwall after only visiting there once since October 2018. These experiences motivate us to continue researching our native, heritage, speciality grey seals.

S30	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Jan					1	2		2	1	2			1	2		1									12
Feb				1	1			1		2			3												8
Mar					1		1	2	1	2	1	2		3	1										14
Apr		1	1	9	9		2		2	5	1				2								1	1	34
May			1	4	2	1	1						1					1							11
Jun					1																				1
Jul														1											1
Aug			2	1	2					1		1	1												8
Sep			1	2	1	3	2	2					2		4			1							18
Oct		3	3	4	4	4	1	2		2		2	3	4	3		2	2			1				40
Nov		1	3	2		2	2	1			2	3	2	7							2			1	28
Dec	2		1		1		1	3	1	1	2														12
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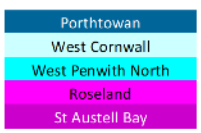
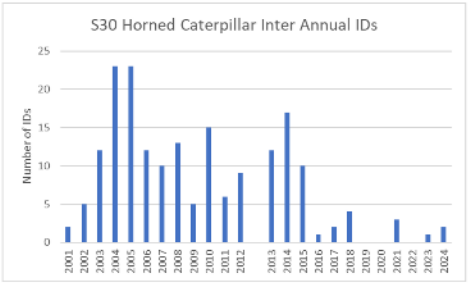
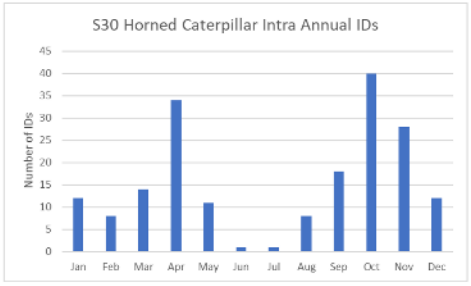






S30 Horned caterpillar's calendar, annual and seasonal visit

Conclusion

It is hard to believe that a small charity in terms of funding and paid staff (1.8fte) can make this huge contribution to marine conservation, only made possible by our amazing volunteers!

Appendix A: Feedback summary of comments received in 2024

Natural England's Enforcement Team visit to Devon Cornwall VISIT

- I wanted to say a HUGE thank you to you all for your time and enthusiasm last Tuesday. I know that the whole Team found the day really informative and also had quite a lot of fun . We have all returned to our respective corners of England, inspired and reinvigorated to do all we can for those species at risk of disturbance. We have already set up a targeted working group to look at the issue, under the auspices of Op Seabird, so will certainly be in touch to continue to work with you all on this important issue.
- A huge thank you to you all for kindly giving up the time to share your passion and knowledge with our team. I know I speak for all of them when I say we thoroughly enjoyed the day and came away having learnt a lot. As we're all no doubt aware, genuine partnership working is crucial to achieving successes in wildlife protection – perhaps even more so against the current backdrop of diminishing resources across the sector – so it was fantastic to see that a demonstration of that work in action during our time together.
- Looking at the team's feedback, the day spent with you all has come out miles ahead of our other activities, so it has obviously had a very positive impact!
- On behalf of D&C Police I would like to thank you all for putting on such an informative and inspiring day. It was a great learning opportunity and we had some really positive discussions with quite a number of attendees from all the different organisations. Knowledge and networking are everything these days and any event that improves working relationships between us all is definitely a good thing.

MMO Disturbance talk

- This talk inspired me to keep sight of seal disturbance from recreational activities when working on potential management measures for non-licensable activities in the MMO.
- It was very informative in a short space of time
- The talk Inspired to renew my BDMLR medic certification so help with strandings.
- Please consider doing this event again as it was very useful to get some on the ground info on conservation work.
- This talk inspired me to support work to protect seals as far as we can by using our comms channels
- Please consider doing this event again as I would love to hear from CSGRT about seal
- The good points were connecting us with individual seals at the start, stats on seal disturbance

Interesting points - Marker buoys to show distance boats should be from seals, great idea.

Meeting with the Environment Agency about Planetary Technologies

- It's been a pleasure to work alongside you all on this issue so far, and I will continue to give what time I can going forward, however limited that is sometimes. Whatever happens going forward from here, your tireless efforts and persistence and attention to detail in challenging PT have already had an impact in influencing not just PT's plans for Cornwall but for how the imposition of geoengineering field trials on local communities has been recognised as an issue much more widely. When you have such a well-organised and committed group of people, making very reasonable and well-founded arguments, it can have an impact far beyond the local...perhaps even at a global level, as many policy-makers around the world are already aware of your work and its wider relevance.

Feedback about Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029

- Off the back of your brilliant talk, I have had a number of officers who are keen to visit sites and

- do some 'on site' training, so maybe this is something we can do in the appropriate season and invite interested officers and Mrs Hernandez and her team if they wish to come along too.
- The Commissioner shares your concerns regarding crime within rural areas and is aware that rural crime is a serious, complex and evolving problem that affects the communities of Devon and Cornwall and requires a dedicated and proactive response from the Police. The Commissioner and OPCC team are currently developing the Police and Crime Plan for the next term, and I can assure you that rural crime is being considered for inclusion as a key priority and your comments will help us to develop a strategy to address this.

Police Devon and Cornwall Police Wildlife Conference

- I know that we as a Rural Team have a good working relationship with Cornwall Seal Group, but want to emphasise how important working with you is when it comes to seals, and also what future protection might be afforded with any changes in legislation etc.

DEFRA Talk

- I work for Defra and Sue held an interesting presentation to us last week. I appreciate your work as an individual and thought I would make a symbolic donation. Thank you for your hard work and dedication. Thank you for your letter and the goodies in response to my donation.

Kurt Jackson Exhibition

- Your exhibition was so good, so informative and in our case, so educational. Seals are a bellweather species – we have to clean the waters that they swim in and the beaches where they haul out.
- I've bumped into several people who come to all the shows and, very gratifyingly, the general view is that it's been the best of the "upstairs" exhibitions, compared with Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, RNLI etc!!! You have some great material…..and great subject matter
- Your displays upstairs were really interesting - especially the story of Septimus - and the leaflet gave so much background to his story. We'll take our little grandsons up there next week.
- It was brilliant! I loved it, so did my friends who also loved your exhibit upstairs too!
- It was all very good and our six year old grandson was transfixed by the seal info.
- I was at the Kurt Jackson Foundation the other day, and was really impressed by your exhibition upstairs (as well as his paintings!). I noticed that your organisation is supported by volunteers, and I was wondering what opportunities you had at the moment, as I think I could be interested.
- A friend of mine, a local artist, always visits the shows upstairs. She told me it was the best she had seen!

Principal Adviser, Marine, Marine Strategy & Government Advice Team, Natural England

- I just wanted to say huge congratulations for your MBE – so very well deserved for so many years of service and dedication.

Flotilla Foundation

- Thank you so much for putting this together for us, the board will be very interested to hear what you have been up to both as SRT and re Planetary Technologies. We really appreciate your effort to do this and for all the ongoing work you are doing.
- Thank you so much for taking the time to put together the video, it went down so well at the board meeting and the board are so pleased with everything you have achieved. We are all also amazed at how much you manage to do in such a short space of time, it really is incredible!

Biodiversity Learning Development Officer, Field Studies Council Biodiversity Team

- Thank you again for hosting the webinar with our Young Darwin scholars last week. It was brilliant to attend and we've received some really great feedback on the session. Thanks also for sending across the talk.
- Sue was fantastic! A really enthusiastic and inspiring speaker, she also introduced me to some interesting new terms and concepts and gave some really insightful and interesting thoughts!
- Liked learning new facts about seals, and about all the work the charity does. I really enjoyed learning about seal behaviour, I think there could have been more information about this. Maybe the webinar could have been longer.

Field Studies Council Discovering UK Seals Feedback

- Yesterday concluded the final 'Seal Field Skills to Inform Conservation' course webinar where I had the privilege of being taught by the remarkable Sue Sayer, founder of the Seal Research Trust.
- During the past five weeks I have developed my seal surveying skills, recording techniques, and learnt how to use field evidence to drive impactful conservation decisions. While also attempting to master the art of photo ID. Not only have I developed my learning, but I also had the privilege of hearing from fellow participants who are deeply involved in seal conservation efforts. Hearing their stories and commitment to our seals has left me feeling so inspired.
- A huge thank you to Sue Sayer for this learning experience. I'm already looking forward to applying these newfound skills in future projects.

What did you like most about the course?

- Sue's enthusiasm!
- Learned a lot about seal identification
- How connective and relevant the course is to local areas and specific interests, covers a wide basis
- Lots of fun and interactive activities in the workbooks
- I loved all of it but particularly the anatomy part of the course. It was fascinating. The tutor was amazing and so enthusiastic.
- I loved Sue's enthusiasm for the course. Her passion for seals is contagious. I couldn't help but info dump my mother on seals facts. The level was unexpectedly high, in a good way, with very appropriate and enriching activities. Frankly, this course was infinitely better than my three year university course.
- The tutor. Passionate, informed, enthusiastic, a great communicator.
- I learnt so much! I've had such a huge interest in seals for the past few years in particular, so having such a great insight into their behaviour, their lives and everything else about them has been amazing - I wouldn't have gained so much knowledge in any other way.
- The weekly activities that were set, took time and effort as you'd have to research in your own time. Active learning which I find you learn most from.
- Having the activities alongside the workbooks to test our knowledge and skills
- The course shows how research evidence can be used to campaign effectively for conservation and legislation
- Relaxed atmosphere which encouraged participation, questions and ideas. Presentation was clear and packed with information. Activities were not only learning experiences but also fun.

Head Veterinary Consultant

- As always I think they were blown away by your enthusiasm and charisma Sue, your love for seals is truly infectious (spending time with you genuinely gives me a motivation boost!)

SWCP Talk on Iconic Seals

- The talk was really informative and made me think more about how to minimise disturbance on the National Trail. I passed on some of the information I learnt to the rest of the team during our weekly team meeting as wildlife disturbance is an important issue
- I think the best bits of your talks are the stories of the individuals. The facts are amazing but to hear the stories of the characters swimming on epic journeys around the coast is quite magical
- I'd love to volunteer, I'm going to look into it further. I loved the passion with which Sue spoke and she was so knowledgeable and engaging. I will also share information with participants on the walks I lead.
- Sue was amazingly engaging and I was hooked for the whole hour! I will look at Seals in a whole different light now, I didn't realise just how interesting and amazing they are
- Please consider doing this event again as there are other Coast Path volunteers who might be interested but were unable to attend this time
- Good explanations to science data
- Excellent amount of information given in a straightforward way that most people would understand. Something for everyone

Planetary Technology research by Manchester University for the CO2RE Hub

- That is fabulous to have your voice heard at those levels. I am so glad Planetary stumbled into this community of ours who are emboldened and equipped to make their voices heard. Imagine if they had done this in a less well informed and organised community

Boat Charter

- The SWME Webinar a great help, as all of your correspondence and suggestions have been :) I couldn’t do this without the ongoing support you’ve given me from the off . And it’s hard to really put that across in writing

Water Users Talk Responses

- I'm not writing this because I know you, but I just wish that there were more of you. All the stories were amazing, your knowledge is amazing, all the work that all the volunteers do was amazing. It was brilliantly put together, a wonderful mix of chats, questions, video and factual info. I loved that no question was too little, with so much enthusiasm and passion delivered into it. Thank you so very much.

Paddle Scotland Talk

- Thank you so much for your time this evening, it was a brilliant talk and I thoroughly enjoyed it! Lovely to meet you as well. If you would like to share the feedback form you mentioned I can send that out to those in attendance.
- I just wanted to send you a huge Thank You for your presentation to Paddle Scotland last night. It was absolutely fascinating and has certainly whet my appetite to learn more.
- Really important for policy and evidence leads to understand the rigour behind citizen science and how it is used as a valid data collection tool
- It was really interesting to see how heavily CSGRT invests in individual volunteers

Media coverage of serious disturbance incident in Cornwall

- I’ve just clocked the online report and it looks like a helpful article to shine a light on what is a really important issue. I’ve also not previously seen a photo of blood trails included in a newspaper article on disturbance before - I think it’s great to include the reality of things and really drive the message home. Always good to keep the conversation going so big thanks to you and Dan as usual

SRT TV Coverage

- And many thanks for pointing out to the authorities that increasing the level of exploitation of the sea is not a sensible thing to do. As also repeatedly demanding effort from objectors when there is neither additional evidence to be obtained nor resources, whilst not subjecting exploiters to the same level of scrutiny

Roskear School Key Stage 1

- This talk inspired me to do non fiction writing with the children (school)
- At home I will change the washing up sponge we use and I am going to be checking where I get my toilet roll from!
- This is our third year of doing the talk with Sue. The children absolutely LOVE learning about seals, and they listen to all of the facts that Sue tells them. They sit and listen for the whole hour! It matches our Geography learning on plastic pollution and the children go onto write information texts about seals
- Sue is amazing and informative! The children are always buzzing after the talk.
- Thank you so much for another fantastic talk. You are amazing

St Erth School Seal Assembly

- There were 101 children and 4 adults in attendance all fully engaged with some now saying that seals are their favourite animal! There were quite a few keen to take part in the competition so I have put the competition poster back up in the newsletter this week! They linked the assembly to their school value 'kindness'

Nancledra School Talk

- This inspired me to look into seals more
- Please consider doing this event again as it was very knowledgeable and interesting
- Lots of good facts - Ghost is Sue's favourite seal
- To help me to help seals please hold more talks for other classes in future

Redruth School Awards Eventing Talk

- Thank you for being our guest. It was an inspiring talk and I have had some lovely feedback from parents that were there.
- I just wanted to say a huge thank you for not only inspiring the children of Redruth school last night, but also us in the audience! I absolutely loved your talk. It was motivational, full of wisdom, funny and inspiring. Just perfect! I did want to come and meet you to say thank you in person but had to dash off.

Seal Alliance Share Point

- Many thanks for this. I really enjoyed the talk last Thursday evening and it's inspired me to set up a Seal Alliance in Kent. I will be speaking with Nina at Kent Wildlife Trust soon and have been speaking with Stephen at Sussex Seal project to see whether it may be feasible and how I go about it. My aim is to contribute to the conservation of seals around the Kent and East Sussex coast. I am a long-term seal rehab volunteer in Sussex and a BDMLR medic in Kent.

Seaweed farms applications.

- I am sure that your informative, balanced and powerful submission to the MMO helped the applicants realise the importance of being accurate when making statements about seals

Student Response

- This talk inspired me as I am interested in Marine Biology as a profession, so it was nice to see a potential future career option
- This is a good event to consider doing again as it is a great way to inspire and motivate young people with similar interest

Talk to Coastwise Chair, Coastwise North Devon

- Thank you for a wonderful double-act presentation today - really awe inspiring how much you all do! Very interesting to have an update on 'our' local seals as well as an overview of other recent developments. And great to have Dave there too.

Port Isaac and Port Quin Voluntary Marine Conservation

- So lovely to see you, even just on a screen! You calm me down, which is an extraordinary skill.

Annual Report 2023

- It is a brilliant report and to be honest brought tears to my eyes as I got to the last pages. What an amazing charity you have founded and chair. I am truly honoured to know you.

Lundy Seal talks

- Rob's leadership was exemplary. I learned some new things, particularly during the "Septimus" talk about seal anatomy, and how seals are equipped to deal with their astonishing lifestyle, and all the trials we humans throw at them and the wider environment
- I hope to be able to advance what I can do to help further the study of Lundy's seal population.
- I would like to get something happening to co-ordinate ID of individuals (without encouraging the general flow of visitors to behave badly to get a "nice picture").
- One chap said "When they said you would talk for an hour about a dead seal ..... I feared the worst. But it was fabulous!"

SWME Conference - Associate Professor of Marine Ecology

- I'm attending SWME today. I just wanted to say that I loved your talk and find everything you do so amazing and inspiring. Huge congratulations on the well deserved MBE - and excellent choice of fascinator - amazing

NWCU

- Thanks Sue! Great work as ever. We will share on our UK NWCU cops only site to promote
- Love the links in your email signature, great way to promote.

Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust Talk

- This talk inspired me to up my efforts in learning more about ID and recording in order to hopefully be able to provide some useful work in that regard. Also to review some of the content of my own "seals talks" to update some of the information, and maybe try to extend the audiences to whom the talks are delivered.
- Please consider doing this talk again as not only was it information packed, hard hitting where it needed to be, and amusing where the mood benefited from a little light relief, it was also entertaining and inspiring.
- Enthusiastic presentation, comfortable atmosphere.

Engagement clifftop

- I met you last Friday at West Cornwall and you spent time telling me about the seals and lent me your binoculars so I could have a closer look. Thank you it really made my day.

Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme

- Thanks for your message, we continue to be so impressed with both your work and dedication to our Cornish seals. They are lucky to have you looking out for them!
- Loving your updates, they are just right and prove how in touch you are with your environment and the animals living in it. We're happy to be supporting you again.
- I have never had such in depth updates from any other adoption programme I purchased. I have learned so much about seals and feel much more involved. Thank you.
- I would recommend it to anyone who cares about the future of seals (which should be EVERYONE). I often think that seals are too pure for humans (that we don't deserve them). Thank you so much for continuing to care for them!
- There's always something interesting to learn especially if you love seals but also other wildlife and eco tips too

Seal SW Sessions

- Great meeting as usual
- Lovely meeting
- Thank you everyone. Wonderful updates. Such a knowledgeable group - feels like coming home to be in such company.
- Thanks for hosting a terrific meeting this evening. It was just what I needed, to restore sanity!!

Personalised guided tour

- An absolutely amazing afternoon with Sue from Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust seal sighting along the coast. An incredible experience with my whole family. If you ever see a Jumblebee auction on their website for a Personal Guided Tour of seals with Sue Sayer MBE, it's worth every pound you bid and then more. We truly had an unbelievable day, saw over 50+ seals throughout the afternoon, bottling, logging, playing, sleeping, resting, new pups feeding and so much more. The memories will last a lifetime. Absolutely loved the Seal day out. Then Sue took us back to the seal HQ and we saw an adult male skeleton and a 3 day old seal pup skeleton. Thank you so much for such an amazing day, we loved it all and learnt lots too

Seal field visit with child

- Remember Francesco and Neil the Seal, adopted about 7 years in a row for his birthday? He has just been accepted at Exeter Uni, Falmouth campus, to do Marine Biology. I am so thrilled and believe that his interest stemmed from Neil, your day spent out on the cliffs with him aged 10 and identifying the seals when back at your office. Part of his Christmas present this year is adoption of Superman and the book Coastal - both just ordered.

SHOP Orders

- My order arrived yesterday, so happy with it! My boyfriend loved the socks and we've got one of the artworks hanging on the living room wall. It's so unique and quirky!
- A big thank you for your help with Mia's gift. The parcel with all its goodies has arrived . The book is perfectly pitched for her age and she'll love the seal and activity book. The many leaflets are fascinating… so much for us to learn. I can't wait to see her face when she opens her gift. She'll be so happy to be helping wild seals.

999999

Seal Research Trust

Registered charity number:1162936
www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk
www.sealresearchtrust.com

Let sleeping seals be 😊

This is Chairlift who we first met in 2000. Taken on 01/08/24. Will he still be around in 2025?

Revenue and Expenditure

Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust
For the year ended 31 March 2025

	2025	2024
Revenue		
Adoptions - Private WSS	6,908	7,542
Online Fundraising - Amazon Smile income	-	165
Donations - Boat	2,985	1,705
Donations - Corporate (inc' Corporate Sponsorship)	8,021	14,523
Donations - Private	31,921	18,858
Online Fundraising - Facebook income	-	569
Activity generated income - Fundraising income	213	229
Income from Projects/Report writing	350	1,050
Interest Income	291	-
Online Fundraising - Just Giving income	348	392
Activity generated Income- Merchandise sales	13,361	8,155
Activity generated income - Talks and Training fee income and expenses claimed	1,275	1,070
Online fundraising PayPal Giving Fund income	1,889	1,804
Jumblebee fundraiser income	636	819
Total Revenue	**68,198**	**56,881**
Cost of Sales		
Merchandise Purchases	7,811	4,808
Postage charges for merchandise	2,198	1,758
Shopify costs	-	252
Flotilla grant spend	6,789	-
FSC course fees collected, paid over to FSC	-	1,050
Total Cost of Sales	**16,798**	**7,867**
Gross Surplus	**51,400**	**49,014**
Administrative Costs		
Boat charter	7,150	5,200
Professional fees - Insurance.	991	966
IT, hardware and software	5,983	14,520
Marketing & Promotional Resources	878	10,828
Office supplies	1,596	1,023
Other Miscellaneous costs	1,488	493
Paypal fees	118	113
Printing	1,951	349
Ranger - Sanctuaries at Sea (Sarah Millward)	18,905	18,456
Survey equipment	1,496	1,008
Training costs for Rangers and Volunteers	100	60
Travel and expenses	251	-
Ranger - Niki Groves	1,386	-
Ranger - Reearch - Milly Phipps	869	-
Ranger - Activities & Admin' Lauren McGregor	13,872	11,298

Revenue and Expenditure

	2025	2024
Ranger - SRT RMSR - Polly Ford	-	500
Grants given	3,000	4,788
Ranger - Karen Gaudern	6,763	1,468
Total Administrative Costs	**66,798**	**71,070**
Surplus	**(15,397)**	**(22,056)**
Other Income		
25th Anniversary special event	400	-
Course fees collected for Field Studies Council	-	154
Gift Aid income	4,282	3,483
Seal Alliance fund - ringfenced	25,000	-
Flotilla grant - ringfenced	-	25,000
Total Other Income	**29,682**	**28,636**
Surplus	**14,285**	**6,581**
Surplus	**14,285**	**6,581**

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name: Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust
On accounts for the year ended	31st March 2025
Charity no (if any)	1162936
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
   - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

   have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: **Date:** 06/08/25

Name: Mr J K Shepherd

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA, CTA
Address:	11A Kimberley Park Road
	Falmouth, Cornwall
	TR11 2DA

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	

CORNWALL SEAL GROUP RESEARCH TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1162936

Accounts

Seals SW

Annual Report 2023

Seal Research Trust's 'Seals SW' Annual Report

Research Communicate Inspire Conserve
Protecting Pinnipeds People Planet

Funders (P4)

People (P6)

Charity Achievements and Activities (P7)

Feedback about SRT Activities (P20)

Seal Data Outputs (P25)

Policy and Conservation Actions (P32)

Seal Research Trust

Registered charity number: 1162936
www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk
www.sealresearchtrust.com

Contents

Summary 3

Funders 4

People 6

Marine Rangers and Science Advisor 6
Hubs, Volunteers and Photo ID Coordinator 6

Charity Achievements and Activities 7

Summary 7
Talks 8
Workshops/Training 9
Stalls/Events 11
Field Engagement 12
Exhibitions and School Sessions 13
Photo ID Project (PIP) organised surveys 13
Meetings 14
Reports 15
Seals SW Sessions, Seals SW Newsletters and Wild Seal Supporter Updates 16
Resources and Media Coverage 16
Planetary Technologies Marine Geoengineering Experiment 18
Deep Learning Computer Vision Project 19

Feedback about SRT Activities 20

Seal Data Outputs 25

Surveys and Volunteers 25
Age and Sex Classes 25
Grey Seal Pups 25
Common Seals and Common Seal Pups 26
Photos, Albums and Identifications 26
Ex rescued, Rehabilitated and Released Seals 28
Entangled Seals 28
Disturbance 30

Policy and Conservation Actions 32

Consultations 32
Legislation 33
Campaigns 33
Practical Conservation Actions 35

Highlights of 2023: Seals and People 37

Conclusion 37

Executive Summary

Funders

SRT are now self-financing thanks to our public, private and voluntary funders. Substantial grants and donations were received from Natural England, LUSH, the Humane Society International, Derek Bryan Gray, NovaTomato, Carbis Bay Hotel, Bare Kind, MoonSeals, Isabella White Studios, Aspects, Bowgie, Mungo Lils on the Hill, Smartie Lids on the Beach, Our Only World, Polzeath Marine Conservation Group and the Seal Protection Action Group.

People

Thank you to our Patron, Science experts, Hubs and Volunteers – this is a massive team effort.

Charity Achievements and Activities

In 2023 SRT delivered 740 activities (including 245 UK and 80 globally) involving 29,183 beneficiaries. We ended the year with 18,313 social media followers. Volunteers delivered 69 talks, 20 workshops, 11 stalls/events, 217 field engagements, 1 8 month exhibition, 8 school sessions, 20 Photo ID Project day long surveys, 322 meetings, 27 reports, 12 Seals SW Sessions 12 Seals SW Newsletters, 4 Wild Seal Supporter updates, 2 new resources, 63 media coverage events. Working with multiple partners, SRT have helped to prevent Planetary Technology getting a licence for their St Ives Bay Geoengineering experiment in 2023.

Feedback about SRT Activities

Thank you for all your kind words about your engagement with us. It spurs us all on!

Seal Data Outputs

252 survey volunteers completed 4,567 discrete surveys from 328 locations alongside our quarterly census and 20 PIPs. A mean of 9.2 seals were recorded up to a max of 458. 66% were adults of which 56% were males. There were 581 sightings of white coated pups at 39 locations (including 11 on the south coast) representing 1% of all seals. Ghost had her 20th pup in 21 years. There were 44 harbour seal sightings with up to a max of 4 at 8 locations. 105,235 photos were processed into 1,899 albums for 11,409 IDs. 34 seals have been identified for at least 20 years. 3,175 unique seals were ID'd – 58 20+ times. 6 dead seals were ID'd. 126 different tagged seals (2%) were ID'd. 81 unique entangled seals were ID'd (2%). 13 hooked seals recorded. 156 serious disturbance incidents involved 1,328 seals (max 163).

Policy and Conservation Actions

35 consultations were submitted (7 for conservation, 6 on issues, 10 for developments, 7 on fisheries and 5 others). SRT drafted the Seal Protection Parliamentary Debate and joined Wildlife and Countryside LINK. We continue to pursue the goal of making seal disturbance illegal. 2023 campaigns were Disturbance, Flying Rings, Climate Change and Geoengineering.

Highlights from 2023 and Conclusion

2 adult females re-ID'd after a 16 and 20 year absence. Sue Sayer's MBE for everyone at SRT! SRT make a huge contribution to multiple aspects of seal and marine conservation with just 1.5fte paid rangers and hundreds of incredible and amazing volunteers. Thank you all!

Seal Research Trust (SRT) est. Cornwall 2000

Annual Report 2023

Funders

In 2023 we achieved our ambition to transform SRT into a self-financing charity, funding our low overheads from **public, private and voluntary donations**, through our **Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme, volunteer fundraising efforts** and with **profits from our online shop**. Our Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger, Sarah Millward, applied for one funding grant to support our boat survey charter costs. We were delighted when this was successful, as our costs were again covered by the **LUSH Charity Pot.** Our biggest donation of the year was a legacy from the estate of **Derek Bryan Gray**, to whom we are hugely grateful. Thank you to Derek's family.

As our datasets grow they become increasingly useful for marine conservation, so SRT were honoured to have two reports commissioned and funded by Natural England. The first SRT's **'Boat-based Photo Identification Project: Marine Life and Human Activity Surveys 'Other' Species 2011 – 2022'** by Sarah was 44 pages long and covered cetaceans, seals and other marine megafauna. The second was a 46 page **'Network of Sensitive Seal Sites in the SW UK'** report by Sue Sayer MBE. As the latter contains multiple references to sensitive seal sites (SSSs), this has not been made publicly available.

The **Humane Society International (HSI)** approached SRT to create 6 **'Post Release Monitoring' seal stories about ex rescued, rehabilitated and released'** built up from our extensive Photo ID sightings. Collated by our wonderful volunteer Joyce Williams, these case studies provide an inspiring insight into the second chances made by seals that needed a helping hand. HSI also funded the creation of a new SRT/BDMLR film outlining why more rehabilitation capacity is required as a result of the impacts of climate change, called **Sea Change: Seals.**

To ensure efficient use of critical funding, SRT created a **public call to action version of this film too**, showing how we can all make daily decisions to reduce our climate emissions. Huge thanks to SRT's Media Team: Barry Williams, Polly Ford and George S Jones.

We were completely surprised when NovaTomato approached SRT in July offering to run a 3 month fundraising campaign for us entitled **'Protect Baby Seals'**. NovaTomato are an on-demand, waste free, fashion platform, that includes polo shirts made from recycled plastic bottles. Huge thanks to NovaTomato and everyone who supported us, raising $3617.45!

On 23/04/23, the Carbis Bay Hotel ran a **'fundraising funday'** event for SRT. It was a hugely enjoyable experience with displays, a wild swim, children's activities, a seal talk, book reading and raffle. Led by the lovely Harriet Tatlow, Emily Barker (artist), Sarah Walsh (Cornish Kelpie) and Sue Sayer, the day raised £803, which was a massive achievement, doing justice to a great team effort by the hotel staff, SRT volunteers and supporters.

Lucy Jefferies from Bare Kind became our new corporate sponsor, donating money from every pair of eco seal socks sold, whilst **Charlotte Fitzgerald and Clare Sirman** from MoonSeals donated a substantial amount of their epic merchandise to sell on our 'one stop sealy shop'. Thank you all! Isabella White found us through the **'One Percent for the Planet'** network, leading her to make her first, much appreciated, donation to our charity.

Of course, SRT remain hugely grateful to those organisations who repeat funded us in 2023. It is these ongoing donations that help our charity's sustainability over the long term. These businesses, large and small, included Aspects Holidays, Bowgie Inn, Mungo Lils on the Hill and Smartie Lids on the Beach, as well as charitable organisations Our Only World, Polzeath Marine Conservation Group and the Seal Protection Action Group.

Thank you to **Hayley Mitchell our Seal Supporter Coordinator** who ran two Jumblebee fundraising auctions for seals in August and December 2023. They were a great team effort – thank you! As a highly agile, thrifty and economical charity, our 1.5 full time equivalent Rangers continue to be our charity's main outgoing, alongside boat charters (funded by LUSH Charity Pot) and some modest IT hardware/software application costs.

Thank you to our current funders for paying our critical 1.5fte Marine Rangers

SRT 2023 Funders

People

Patron, Marine Rangers and Science Advisors

2023 was a year of exciting opportunities and consolidation. **Gillian Burke** (Springwatch) continues to be our charity **Patron**. We began the year with **1.3 full time equivalent (fte) paid rangers** – Sarah Millward (Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger) and Lauren McGregor (Activities and Administration Ranger). By the end of 2023 it had become apparent that we were in need of more administrative support, so Lauren added more hours to her working week and Karen Gaudern (Administration and Retail Ranger) joined our team, bringing us up to **1.5 fte roles**. Rebecca Allen continues to be our volunteer **Science Advisor** helping us with numerous data analyses for the Natural England reports. In 2023 she was joined by **Dr Ian Hendy from Portsmouth University** and **Dr David Santillo from Greenpeace International**. These two experts have been helping advise us about our response to the Planetary Technology proposed geoengineering project (see page 18). We are thankful and glad to have these wonderful people/experts to help and support our incredible volunteer network and conservation efforts.

Hubs

SRT now have **47 Photo ID Catalogues,** which were all utilised in 2023, covering seals from the Isle of Man to France and South Wales, as well as the Channel Isles to Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The catalogues are run by incredible volunteers led by our dedicated and wonderful **Photo ID Hub Coordinator** Kate Williams. These teams communicate with each other through our free **Facebook Workplace Platform.** This allows our volunteer network to share new seal IDs, so we can make matches between the different Photo ID catalogues. We also share engagement wording, approach and tone, to help us with effective conservation actions which avoids us all duplicating effort by reinventing wheels. This internal communication platform makes us all more efficient and keeps us better informed.

Volunteers

Our charity makes a major contribution to marine conservation nationally. This is only possible thanks to the generous, ongoing and long term contributions made by **multiple hub, administrative and specialist key volunteers, data processors and surveyors**. We are hugely grateful to every single one of our amazing volunteers who are too numerous to name individually. Between them our volunteers:

- Survey from land and sea
- Process photos into survey albums
- Make IDs, confirm IDs and manage Photo ID catalogues
- Digitise, analyse and manage data
- Write reports
- Act as eyes and ears for change, issues or developments around their patch of coast
- Engage with members of the public as ambassadors for seals
- Inspire others with their ongoing knowledge, energy and enthusiasm

- Help upskill and empower others through ongoing support, training and shared resources
- Fundraise or support our charity financially to avoid us having to apply for grants
- Manage and verify our accounts and financial processes
- Advocate for seals at a huge variety of public, private and voluntary meetings
- Arrange and deliver a range of events at varying venues
- Take conservation actions, such as writing letters, public consultation responses or supporting campaigns to make the coast safer for seals.

STAPIP boat survey volunteer team

Charity Achievements and Activities

In total our extensive SRT team organised, delivered and participated in **740 activities** in 2023, to give seals a voice and share key conservation messages with a much wider audience by delivering more events online than ever before. Our charity Founder and Director, Sue Sayer MBE, is passionate about urgently mitigating the impacts of climate change. She has committed to being 'flight free' and made the decision to only attend events online wherever possible. This will reduce our charity's carbon footprint and ensure that we can fit in the maximum amount of conservation action possible. This wastes less time travelling and creates fewer emissions.

Summary

Focusing our time online improved our 2023 engagement and reach. Whilst most activities were based in **Cornwall**, we spread our influence further online with **257 UK** and **80 global** (more than double that of 2022) activities! Sue has now presented in 6 continents (Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North and South America). Her next target is Antarctica!

In 2023, our **activity beneficiaries** total increased again to an impressive **29,183 people**. This included **1894 0 to 16 year olds**; **371 17 to 24 year olds** and **26,918 25+ year olds**. This is a massive achievement considering how small our paid team is (1.5fte). This shows just how much our volunteer team have stepped up, been empowered and taken on the role of public engagement. It has been wonderful to see key volunteers thrive, stepping out of their comfort

zone to be wonderful ambassadors and advocates for the seals they love so much. Thank you to each and every one of them! Seals support all our health and mental wellbeing.

Our **social media** engagement continued to expand in 2023, with at least one post most days across all four of our online platforms:

- **Facebook** followers 8,716, an increase of 528 on 2022
- **Instagram** followers 6,427, an increase of 610 on 2022
- **Twitter/X** followers 1,898, an increase of 215 on 2022
- **Linkedin** followers 944, an increase of 291 on 2022

By the end of 2023 we had **18,313 followers**, an increase of **1,654** achieved without any paid marketing. Increasing social media and YouTube channel engagement will continue to be a key target for 2024.

SRT Charity Achievements and Activities in 2023 included:

Talks: 69 (over one a week)

We organised and delivered **69 talks** for a wide range of different audiences from adults to 4 year olds. This is exemplified by talks for the **Pinniped Entanglement Group and Respect the Wild;** two global NGOs organised from N and S America, the **Centre for International Environmental Law**, a **Moroccan University** on marine mammal bycatch, **Seal Society of San Diego Docents** and 60 first graders at the **Pace Academy in Atlanta Georgia.** In total SRT delivered **7 school talks** and has ambitions to increase these in 2024. Talks were delivered to a range of statutory bodies, including 3 talks to the **Defra Marine and Fisheries Team**, **Welsh Police Rural Affairs and Wildlife Crime Marine Mammal and EPS Group**, UK **MPA Officers** and the **Welsh Police Marine Partnership Against Wildlife Crime**.

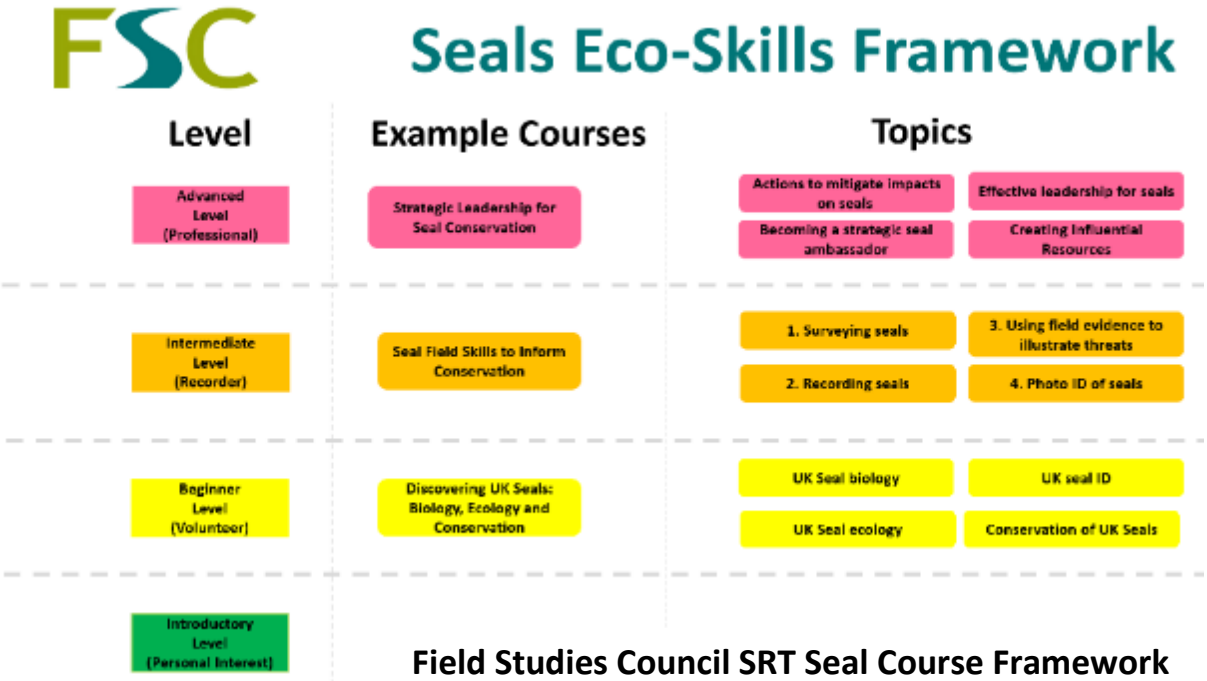
Peter Perkins giving a U3A talk in Penzance

Governing bodies such as **British Canoeing** and the **Cornwall Pilot Gig Association** requested presentations, along with multiple voluntary conservation organisations or events including: the **Wildlife and Countryside LINK** (WCL), **National Trust** (NT), **Seal Alliance MasterClass and SharePoint sessions**, **Whale and Dolphin Conservation** (WDC) **ShoreWatch team**, **Operation**

Seabird, **Cornwall Marine Liaison Group**, **Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group** (CMCCG) **Cornwall Wildlife Trust's** (CWT) **YourShore Conference**, **CWT Marine Strandings Network Forum** (CWTMSN), **South West Marine Ecosystems** (SWME) **Conference** and **SWME Webinars** on plastics and seals, **Hayle Health and Wellbeing Festival**, **British Divers Marine Life Rescue** (BDMLR) multiple MasterClasses for vets and interns, the **Cornish Seal Sanctuary** (CSS) staff, the **Cornwall Plastic Pollution Coalition** (CPPC); **Plastic Free Penzance Group**, **Hayle Towans Partnership** (HTP), local conservation groups including: **Wild Roseland** and **Lundy** and community groups and businesses such as the **University of the 3rd Age** and **Carbis Bay Hotel**. In addition, several Universities requested input such as the **University of Exeter** (Entanglement and Disturbance), **Plymouth University** (Marine Issues) and **Halesowen College** (Careers). Huge thanks to our amazing volunteer speaker team who delivered SRT's talks: Jeremy Gilson, Carole Anne Lee, Kerstin Hartmann, Peter Perkins, Sue Sayer MBE and Rob Wells.

Workshops/Training: 20

We were very excited to expand our partnership with the **Field Studies Council** (FSC) to create a second new course in 2023 for their **online Ecoskills programme**. As an FSC Associate Tutor, Sue re-ran her course **'Discovering UK Seals'** twice in 2023, in May and September. Participants spent a minimum of 2 to 3 hours a week online with a weekly zoom talk and Q&A sessions with Sue. The course lasted 4 weeks, covering **Biology, Ecology, Species ID and Conservation**. Sue also wrote her second course **'Seal Field Skills to Inform Conservation'** (4 weeks of input on **Surveying Seals, Recording Seals, Using Field Evidence to Illustrate Issues and Influence Decision Making and Photo Identification**), which ran for the first time in November 2023. In 2023 we've had **139 course participants** add to their knowledge base about seals. Sue thoroughly enjoyed delivering these three courses and cannot thank the FSC's Ellen Monaghan and Dan Asaw enough for supporting her to run these Ecoskills courses.



Field Studies Council SRT Seal Course Framework

In 2023, Sue Sayer delivered online input for the **'Seals' and 'Seabird' modules** for the **Wildlife Safe Scheme (WiSe)** across the UK. This included delivery on the WiSe Adventure and Top Up courses, a WiSe Standard Boat Operator course and a Harbour Commissioner course for the Falmouth team.

Units from SRT's **Ecology and Conservation Course** (for the 'Not in Education and Training' cohort of students) have been delivered by **Cornwall Marine Network's Cornwall Marine Academy (CMA)** team during 2023.

Our **ongoing, free, on demand, online volunteer training** continued to be popular. We had a total of **109 people signed up on the course** by the end of 2023. As ever, we continued to deliver online PID sessions for Hub's support and skills training. We ran 4 online **PID Hub Sessions** (in March, June, September and December) with additional input for the St Austell Bay and Lizard Hub teams, as well as in-field training by our volunteer team across a range of survey sites. Huge thanks to all our volunteers who have spread the word so effectively and recruited new Hub team members. You are a wonderful asset to our seal team!

SRT partnered with the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group, BDMLR, Cornwall Birds (CB) CSS, CWT to deliver a workshop for the **St Ives Bay Operators** covering key species they encounter and best practice messaging to keep these creatures safe and thriving.

We still run **Crowdfunder training** about how to run a successful campaign. In 2023 this was shared with **Cornwall Climate Care's Ellie Bearcroft**.

Funded by the **National Wildlife Crime Unit**, Sue, Colin Speedie and Abby Crosby trained as 'Expert Witnesses' for marine wildlife crime cases. Thanks to Gareth for setting this up.

2023 also saw Sue being asked by George Bevan to write a new online training course on seals for **Conservation Diver**. The course content and resources has been completed and will run for the first time in 2024, so watch this space.

Stalls/Events: 11

Our volunteers Charlotte and Terry Carne supported by Ranger Lauren, ensured SRT had stalls at 11 events. As part of the national **Operation Seabird** events SRT turned out in force at St Ives, Godrevy, Looe and Falmouth in 2023. We were delighted to attend the **Screech Owl Sanctuary's two British Wildlife Days**, as well as appearing in the crowds at **St Piran's Day**, Redruth and at **Butterfly Conservation's** AGM. Thanks to Andrea, Andrew, Billy, Charlotte, Emily, Peter, Jasmina, Kate, Malcolm, Rob, Terry and Vanessa for facilitating these events.

St Ives Operation Seabird Day

It was an honour when Harriet Tatlow asked if she could run another fundraising event on behalf of the **Carbis Bay Hotel** for SRT. Of course we jumped at the chance. There were lots of different fundraising elements, from a wild swim with Sarah Walsh the Cornish Kelpie, a marine plastic art activity led by Emily Barker, a cake competition, a raffle, an SRT stall with leaflets and merchandise, a book reading for children and our 7 Wonders of the Seal World talk by Sue. It was such a great day. Thank you to Harriet for making this possible!

Carbis Bay Hotel fundraiser

Porthtowan Film Festival

Another highlight of the year was the **Porthtowan Film Festival** organised by the **St Agnes Marine Conservation Group** in November 2023. SRT attended with Septimus, our seal skeleton, exhibition banners, ghost gear seals and display items to support and engage people after they had watched SRT's film about Septimus: Some Seal's life and immortality story.

Field Engagement: 217 (plus frequent conversations held by Claire, the Looe Island Warden, that have not been included here).

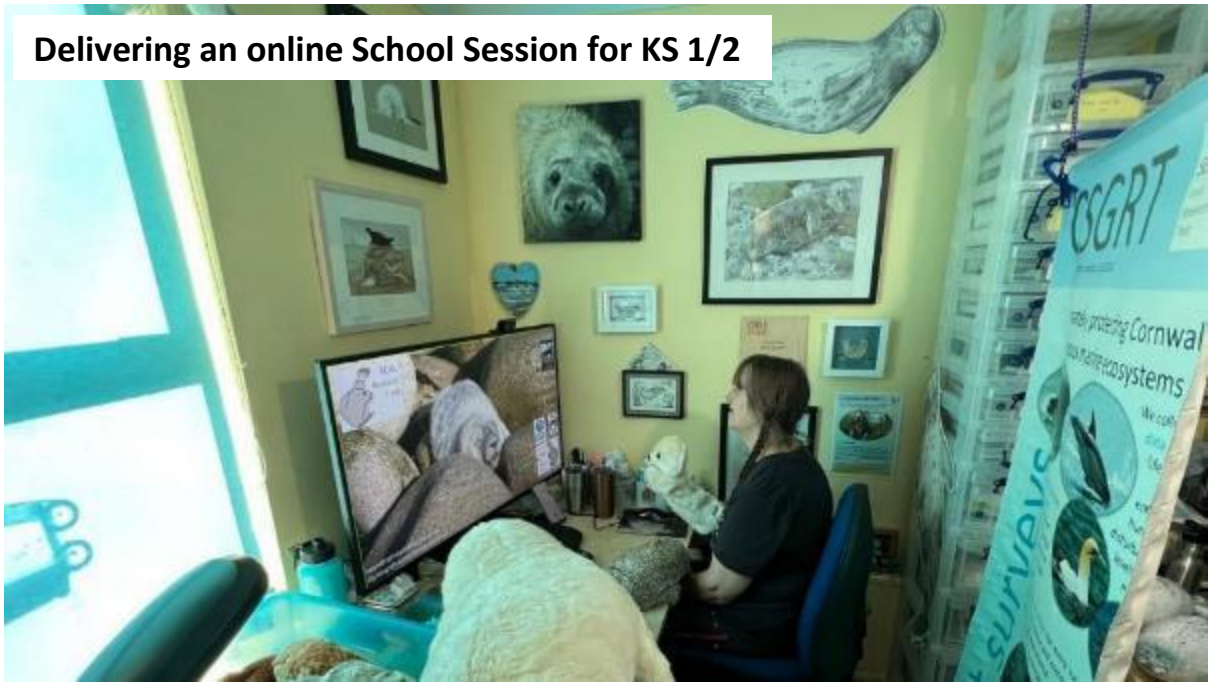
Whilst out surveying, our enthusiastic volunteers frequently engage face-to-face with members of the public. These opportunities help to win hearts and minds to our shared seal conservation cause. People love hearing about the seals they are watching and celebrity seal stories. We began formally recording this in 2022 and, in total, **33 of our inspiring volunteers** had conversations with **2662 members of the public**. Thank you everyone for spreading the word at a time, and in a place, where people are interested and eager to learn.

Of particular note was the public engagement forced upon BDMLR, CWT Seaquest and SRT's Pentire Hub Team. On **11/09/23** a small white coated pup was born to a previously unidentified dark mum on a publicly accessible beach. Fearful that this pup would not be able to feed uninterrupted, so be too underweight to survive its first winter, SRT set up a schedule for monitoring mum, pup and their dominant male beachmaster. Volunteers from all organisations were asked to sign up to record progress and interactions, as well as manage people around them, by talking about the trio's need for space and peace to feed and rest. **Over 15 days, 35 different volunteers signed up for 75 shifts, covering 232 hours** to keep these seals safe. Whilst on site, **volunteers engaged with at least 837 members of the public** visiting the site, asking them to keep back from the cliff edge, watch quietly and avoid access to the beach at low tide. We were all delighted to see a very fat moulted chonk pup wean from its mother on day 15. This was a miraculous team effort with a fabulous outcome for all.

Mum and pup Day 1, 13 & 15

Exhibitions: 1 Wight Biodiversity at Carisbrook Priory

In January Septimus travelled by land and sea to the Isle of Wight, accompanied by Augusta (SRT's 3 day old pup skeleton), to be the focus of an exhibition organised by Martyn Ridgley from **Wight Biodiversity**. They were complemented by multiple display banners to raise awareness about our incredible, native, heritage and globally rare grey seals. SRT's exhibits were visited by several SRT volunteers and Sue even gave an online talk for visitors present at the priory. Septimus and Augusta finally returned in September to be skeletons in Sue's lounge in Cornwall.



Delivering an online School Session for KS 1/2

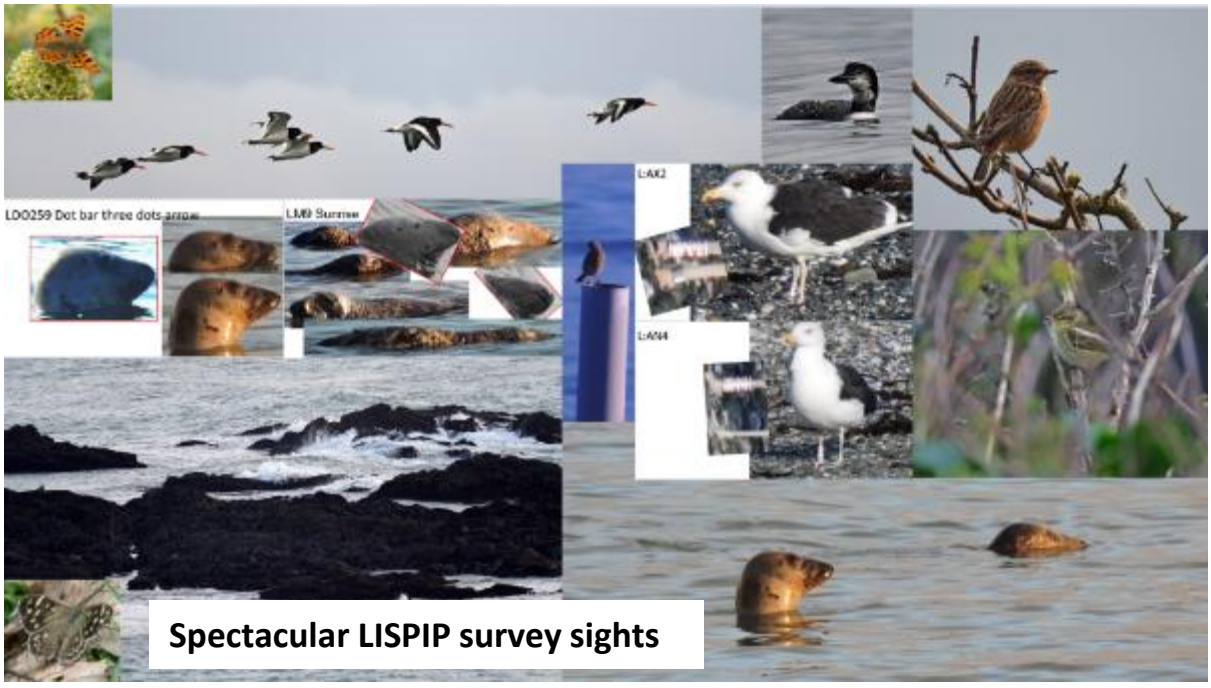
School Sessions: 8

In September Lesley Fitt stepped up and offered to promote our schools' sessions. Educating the next generation in all things 'seals and marine conservation' is key. SRT's Vice Chair Kate Hockley, attended a face to face careers session for **Penpol School.** Sue covered the online sessions for home schoolers, as well as schools including **St Columb Major, the Rainbow Academy, Roskear, Mount Hawke and Crofty Mat;** but the biggest session was for 60 6 year olds at the **Pace Academy in Atlanta Georgia, USA**. Fortunately Sue had multiple seal friends with her that day in the form of grey and harbour seal puppets, Emily Barker's life sized seal pup, juvenile and adult as well as numerous artefacts to keep everyone's attention. Sue was blown away by the children's amazing confidence and questions. The feedback was wonderful (last on page 23). Do tell your local schools that SRT can do online talks and please guide them to our **website for more information** and how to contact us!

Photo ID Projects (PIP) organised day long surveys: 20

We were delighted to complete **9 day-long, systematic, boat-based Photo ID transect surveys** (CASPIP, STAPIP and POLPIP) along a 115km stretch of the north Cornish coast, involving a total of **96 volunteers**. We are eternally grateful to Atlantic Diving/Newquay Safaris and Fishing for enabling us to have subsidised boat charter rates for these surveys. We

also successfully completed **10 Looe Island Photo ID Project (LISPIP)** surveys undertaken by **92 volunteers**. We were very sad to say goodbye to our long-term boatman, Dave Butters, RIP. As always highlights of our PIP surveys include spectacular seals, cetaceans, nesting, feeding, loafing seabirds, other marine megafauna, great company and lots of yummy cake!



Meetings: 322

It is hard to believe that we could surpass the number of meetings SRT attended in 2022 but we did, partly because Sue had additional support from key volunteers Andy, Dan, Kate H, Kate W and Peter. Together we covered meetings with:

Dignitaries **King Charles III** (see page 37);

Politicians **George Eustice** twice and **Sarah Olney.** Sue was asked to draft a script for a Seal Protection Parliamentary Debate delivered by Sarah on 26/06/23;

Statutory agencies Cornwall Marine and Coastal Partnership Planning, Cornwall Marine Liaison Group, Clean Catch UK, Defra, Devon and Cornwall Police, Environment Agency (Natural Capital Ecosystems Assessment), Falmouth Town Council and Harbour Authority, Hayle Town Council, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Marine Management Organisation, Marine Partnership Against Wildlife Crime, National Wildlife Crime Unit, Natural England, Office for Environmental Protection, Operation Seabird, Operation Seabird Cymru, Sea Mammal Research Unit, South West Coast Path Association, UNESCO Lundy Licencing Scheme, Welsh Police Mammals and EPS Group and Wildlife and Countryside LINK;

Higher Education institutes Cornwall College Newquay, University of Bristol, University of Exeter, Oxford University, Plymouth University, Portsmouth University, University of Morocco, University of Southampton and the University of the West of England;

Students Eden, Ellie, Jeremy, Laura, Mathilde, Milly, Poppy and Scarlett;

Businesses Coral Covers, Angling Trust, Attic Design and Print, Bowgie Inn, Brian Leith Productions, British Canoeing, Carbis Bay Estate, Cornwall FLOW, Cornwall Live, Easy Fundraising, Field Studies Council, Nick Cunard, NovaTomato, Padstow Sealife Safaris, Planetary Technology, Primary PC and multiple St Ives Bay Operators;

Artists Cornish Jewellery, Elspeth Stevenson, Emily Barker, John Parkes from Animal Friends, Karen Gaudern, Kurt Jackson, Michelle Costello, MoonSeals, Mungo Lils and Sarah Bell;

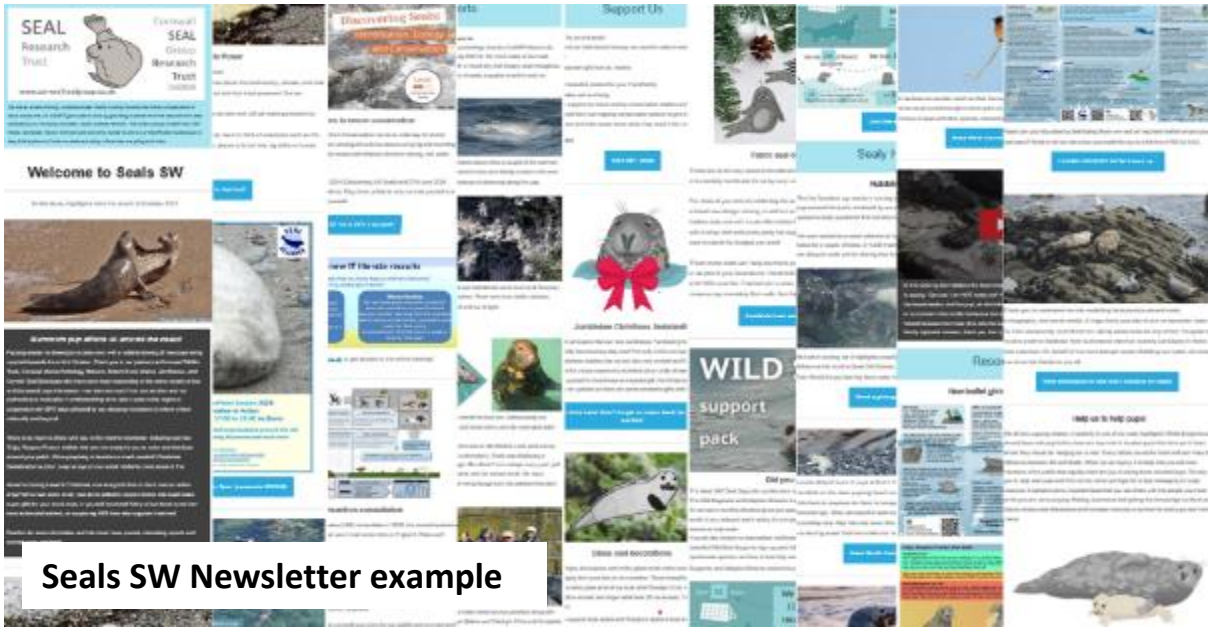
Charitable organisations BDMLR, Centre for International Environmental Law, Conservation Diver, Cornish Pilot Gig Association, Cornish Seal Sanctuary, Cornwall Carbon Scrutiny Group, Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group, Cornwall and Devon Wildlife Trusts, East Marine Ecosystems, Flotilla, Friends of Horsey Seals, Hands Off Mother Earth, Hayle Towans Partnership, Marine Animal Rescue Coalition, Mounts Bay Marine Group, National Trust, Pinniped Entanglement Group, Respect the Wildlife, Sea Changers, Seal Alliance Executive, SW Marine Ecosystems, Team Walrus, Wales Wildlife Trust, Wight Biodiversity, Wildlife and Countryside LINK (11 Groups), Wildlife Safe Scheme and Wight Biodiversity.

Reports: 27

Natural England commissioned 2 reports from SRT in 2023. One **'Marine Life and Human Activity 'Other Species'** Report by Sarah Millward and the second **'Network of Sensitive Seal Sites in the SW UK**' Report by Sue Sayer MBE. Our amazing team collated data to write additional routine reports including **4 CASPIP reports** by Sarah Millward; **3 STAPIP reports** by Mike Taylor; **2 POLPIP reports** by Sarah Millward and **11 LISPIP** reports by Martin Gregory. In addition we published our **SRT Annual report for 2022,** along with **the SW Marine Ecosystems Report on Seals for 2022**, both written by Sue Sayer. Sue also input to the **Cornwall Wildlife Trust Marine Strandings Network Report** for 2022. Dr Mel Broadhurst (our Channel Isles volunteer) compiled our **2022 Census report.** The incredible Kate Williams produced Hub Summary reports for **North Devon 2022, Mounts Bay 2021 and Pentire 2022**. This is a massive achievement – well done everyone!

Seal SW Session: 12, Seal SW Newsletters: 12 and Wild Seal Supporter Updates: 4

Sue continues to host our monthly online **Seal SW Session for up to 50 people.** Our monthly online presentations are a vital archive of all our charity's ongoing activities. Ranger Sarah compiled and circulated **12 Seal SW Newsletters**. Our circulation list grew by 125 during 2023 to **1,152 subscribers**. Director Sue wrote **4 Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme Updates,** which went to **205 recipients (up by 26 at the start of the year),** summarising quarterly exclusive information about our adopted seals, for a scheme run by Karen Gaudern.



Seals SW Newsletter example

Resources: 3 New

We were very excited at the start of 2023, as **Sue's book 'Seal Secrets'** was re-printed for the 3rd time as a bumper edition, because it included a substantial update and extra content. Climate Change is a topical and key issue affecting all seals. Consequently SRT decided to create new resources, summarising the impact of climate change on our native seals in the form of **'Sea Change: Seals'** films (edited by Barry Williams) and a leaflet (designed by Milly Hall), as described on page 4. **The Seal Alliance Watching Seals Well leaflets** and **Give Seals Space signs** were re-ordered in 2023 and sent out nationally. As they are Defra backed, they have proved extremely popular across the UK for a second year running. Our **'Good Neighbours' toolkit** was developed as part of our 'Space for Seals' project, forming a new part of our best practice social media messaging. The wonderful Mungo Lils on the Hill continue to sell SRT's **Lizard Seal Pack and Stickers.** Volunteer Cliff Davies from the Looe Marine Conservation Group designed SRT's **Watercraft Stickers,** outlining best practice around seals and these continue to be distributed nationally. Volunteer Aidan Botha's **wonderful poster and social media graphic** for our Flying Rings campaign continued to be shared widely in 2023.

Media Coverage: 63

Our media coverage was extensive and began early in 2023, as **All About Animals Radio** interviewed Sue to create a podcast about our wonderful seals. Olivier Vergnault from **Cornwall Live** did a comprehensive interview with Sue which was aired in February as an

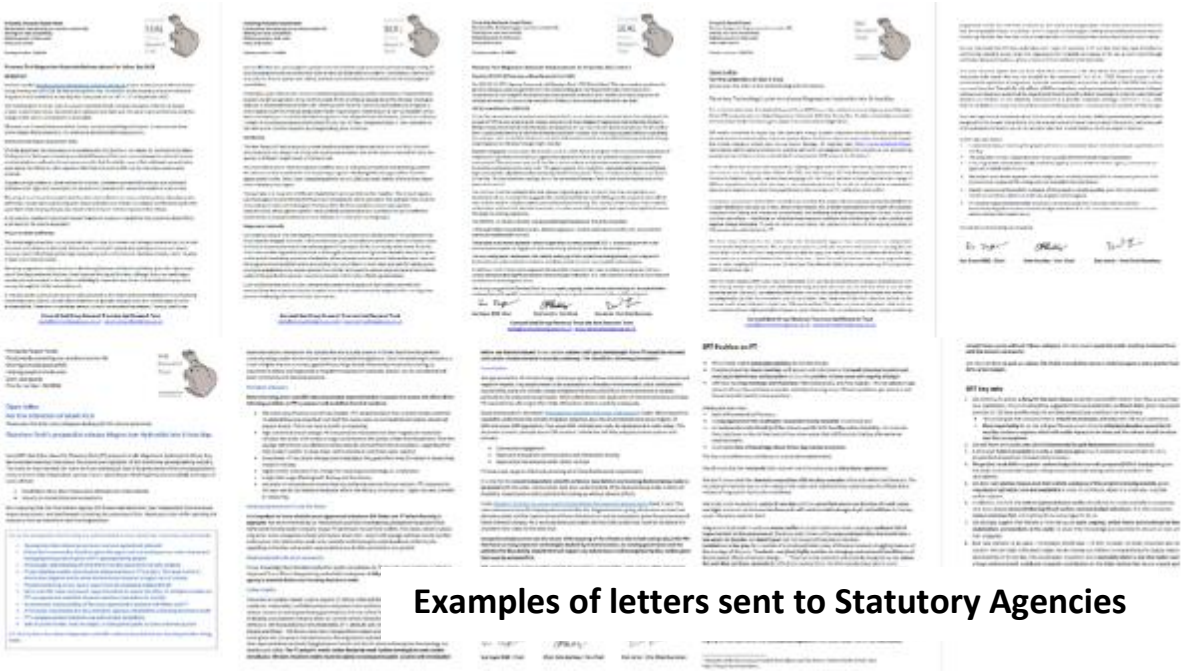
article and on their YouTube channel. The **SW Coast Path Association** released a Podcast interview with Sue in March. As the **Defra Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code** was released in April 2023, Sue was asked to create a short film to publicise this on social media, working to their script. Thanks to Polly Ford for helping with the filming. Coverage appeared nationally on **BBC Breakfast News,** as well as on **regional news channels**. **Julie Skentelbery from BBC Radio Cornwall** interviewed Sue in July to hear about the sad story of adult male 'Commuter', who had been trapped in a plastic ring since 2017. This was swiftly followed by **BBC Radio Cornwall's James Dundon,** who shared the story of BDMLR's epic rescue of adult female 'Wings' from her flying ring in St Ives Harbour (see page 34). This story went viral with over 1 million hits on BBC Radio Cornwall's social media channels alone! Next came interviews with **James Churchfield and Mel on BBC Radio Cornwall** about the impacts seals face around our coastline. In September Liz Howell created an audio recording about the impacts of climate change on coastal communities for a new exhibition called **Storm Warning,** featuring in both the **Focal Point Gallery in Southend-on-Sea** and at **Newlyn Art Gallery**. We were hugely grateful to **BBC Radio Cornwall's Julie Skentelbery** for creating a proactive piece for the start of the pupping season, about what pups need and how we can all best help them. In October our subscription payment providers, **Paywhirl**, requested an interview which was published as an online blog, covering our Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme. SRT also provided content, graphics and photos for an article outlining best practice around seals for **COAST magazine**. By far the most extensive media SRT was involved in during 2023 was coverage of the controversial marine geoengineering experiment planned by Planetary Technology, to release thousands of tonnes of Magnesium Hydroxide into St Ives Bay as a climate change solution (see page 18). Coverage of this began in March 2023 and continued throughout the year. Various elements of the story were covered by The **Times Newspaper, ITV Westcountry, BBC Spotlight (x3), St Ives Times and Echo, the Cornishman, the Guardian, the Sunday Post and the BBC SW Politics Show,** where Sue appeared live with Defra minister Rebecca Pow and two UK MPs**.** In addition, Sue was interviewed by Canadian Journalist Avis Favaro (shared by **CTV News**) and at the end of the year by Yannic Rack for the **Hakai Magazine**.

BBC Politics Show SW : Water Special

Thanks to our partners at the **Pinniped Entanglement Group** who continue to cover our stories, **tracking entangled seal wounds** over the long term in their biannual newsletters. Articles containing input by SRT about seals and seal conservation appeared in **Launceston Life**, **the Guardian** (in a piece featuring CWT's Nature Reserve on Looe Island), a blog for **Wildlife and Countryside LINK** on the EFRA Committee recommendations, **BBC Wildlife Magazine** (written by our patron, Gillian Burke), the **Sunday Post** about Unmanned Aerial Vehicle impacts on seals, as well as the **Mammal Society's News and Updates** about seal pups and the pupping season.

Planetary Technology's (PT) Marine Geoengineering Project

SRT first heard about PT's Marine Geoengineering Project for St Ives Bay on 19/01/23. This is a Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement (OAE) experiment that could set a global precedent for this industry. 2023 proved quite a roller coaster ride as we engaged deeper with this project. A **summary of SRT's engagement and scrutiny of this project** can be seen here. To cut a very long story short, by the end of 2023 **Sue had over 2100 files on her PC amounting to 10+ GB of data** about this experiment. It has proved to be an extremely time consuming and stressful distraction from our routine seal conservation work and we are hugely grateful to **NGO Hands Off Mother Earth** and the **Centre for International Environmental Law** who helped us at SRT get our heads around the big picture of carbon credit projects of this kind. As a result of connections with partners, SRT became a founding partner of the **Cornwall Carbon Scrutiny Group** (CCSG) working alongside the **Keep Our Sea Chemical Free** (KOSCF) campaign group. In addition to all the media coverage summarised above, SRT attended a **public consultation meeting in Hayle** and wrote **4 letters to the Environment Agency** and copied to multiple statutory agencies.



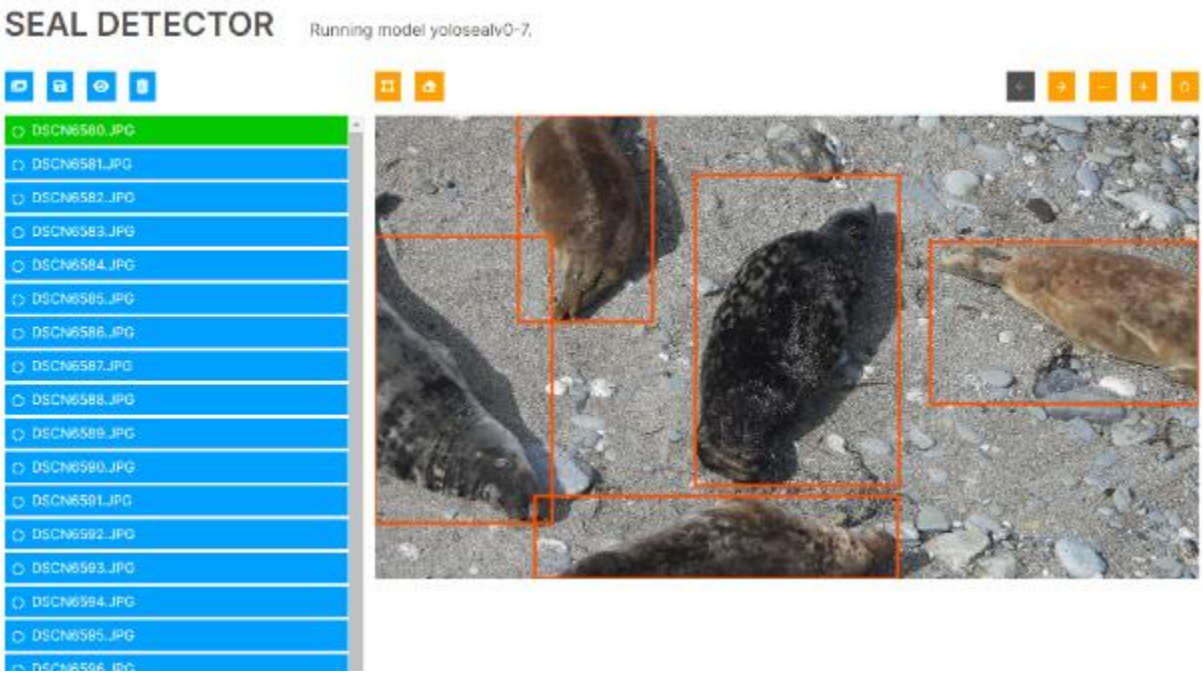
Examples of letters sent to Statutory Agencies

In addition, SRT **commissioned a science report from a local volunteer geochemist**, held **2 face to face meetings with PT's CEO and PR representative**, consulted with the **University of Exeter**, read numerous **journal papers** on the topic of CDR and OAE, **briefed our local MP**

about the project, **spoke at a KOSCF Protest** (the 2nd highest attended in Cornwall in recent years), provided PT with **marine mammal monitoring protocols**, submitted an **input to the United Nationals consultation about 'Removal activities under Article 6.4 mechanism'**, met multiple times with **SRT's new science experts on this issue** – **Dr Ian Hendy** from Portsmouth University (a blue carbon and habitat restoration expert) and **Dr David Santillo** from the International Greenpeace Lab at Exeter University (a geoengineering expert), **presented at Hayle Town Council and Hayle Towans Partnership meetings**, wrote **2 letters to South West Water,** whose infrastructure was being used to diffuse the Magnesium Hydroxide (MH), **requested a literature review from PT** about the science around the project which they refused to undertake, **developed a nature based alternative proposal** to restore blue carbon habitat in St Ives Bay to achieve the same outcome but with multiple additional biodiversity benefits, **attended a meeting with SWW's Chief Operating Officer and two colleagues**, as well as engaging with the **Water Research Centre** to provide science and data about St Ives Bay seals and seal senses. By the end of 2023, the Environment Agency had still not issued a marine licence for the pilot geoengineering experiment to go ahead. This saga is set to continue into 2024 and beyond.

Deep Learning Computer Vision Project

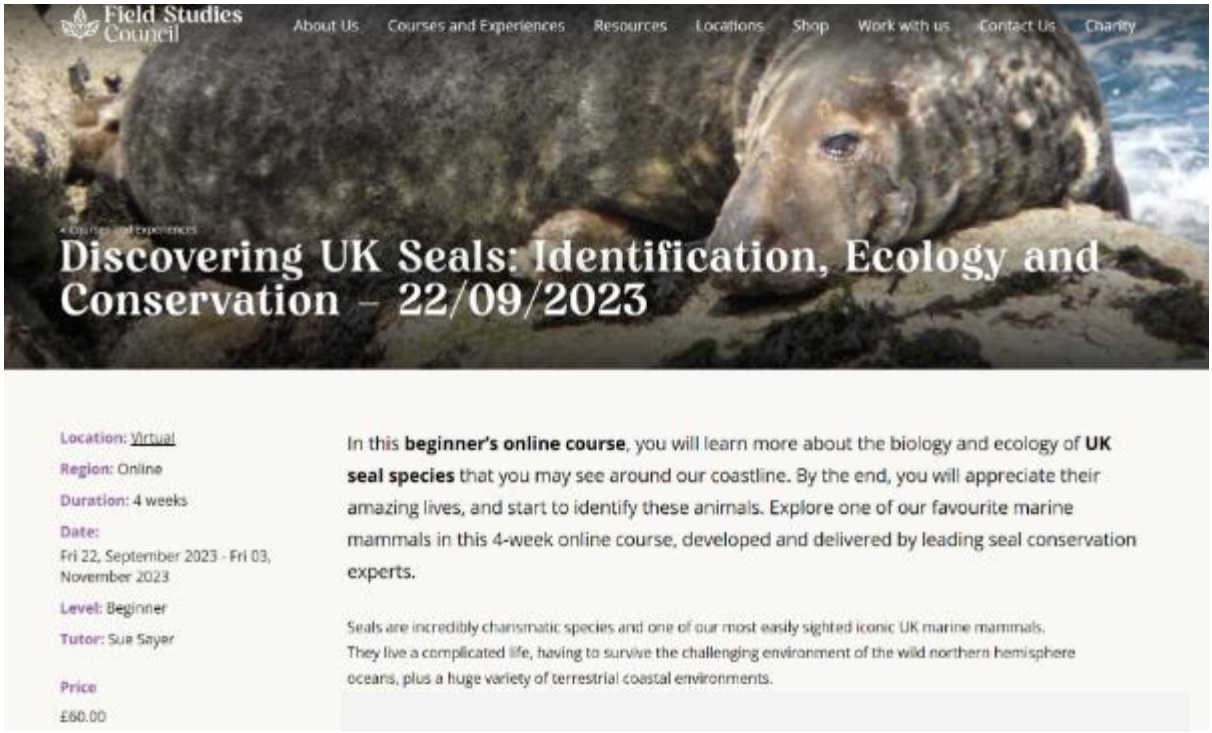
This project that we began in 2022 with **Seb East from the University of Bristol** is part of a long term, three-phase project aimed at the development of **bespoke automated photo ID software** for SRT. Phase 1 was completed very successfully in 2023 and SRT volunteers now have access to **'Seal Detector'** software to **auto extract seal images** from our survey photos for including into PowerPoint albums, saving albumising volunteers lots of hours of manual processing, especially at the larger seal sites! Massive thanks to every student and volunteer for helping Seb East to see this project through to such a successful outcome for us all!



Seal Detector Software in use, auto extracting seal crops

Feedback about SRT Activities (don't just take our word for it!)

We always do our best to present exciting, interesting and informative input about seals in multiple ways. We deliver this to a huge variety of different audiences ranging from statutory agency consultations to schools. This is all aimed at promoting peoples' understanding about, and appreciation of, our native, heritage, speciality seals and their precious marine habitat. **We always ask for honest feedback from participants and organisers** about what went well and what we need to improve on. Our delivery team got some lovely feedback in 2023, some of which is listed below:

- *Although I am quite knowledgeable about wildlife and the impact we have on it, I still learnt a lot from this talk. I spend a lot of time with wildlife! There are many people who will get a lot out of these talks. Your work is very worthwhile. Thank you. Keep spreading the knowledge*
- *I have just listened to Sue's fantastic talk at the MPA network meeting*
- *I will certainly be more aware of seal disturbance and share this important message. I will also read more about the subject*
- *Can I just add my hearty thanks and congratulations following your talk yesterday. It was really outstanding - fascinating, informative, wonderfully enthusiastic, superbly organised, varied, and a masterclass in presentation (I say this as a retired Uni geography lecturer!) - nicely informal and friendly, yet so clear, orderly, authoritative and authentic*
- *I watched your wonderful Zoom talk this evening. Thank you so much. Most informative*
- *I really admire the work you do, dedication, your energy, positivity and devotion. You are my role model*
- *I am absolutely in awe of everything you do and I learned so much*
- *I have learnt so much on the FSC course with you and can only thank you for passing on your knowledge and enthusiasm!*
- 

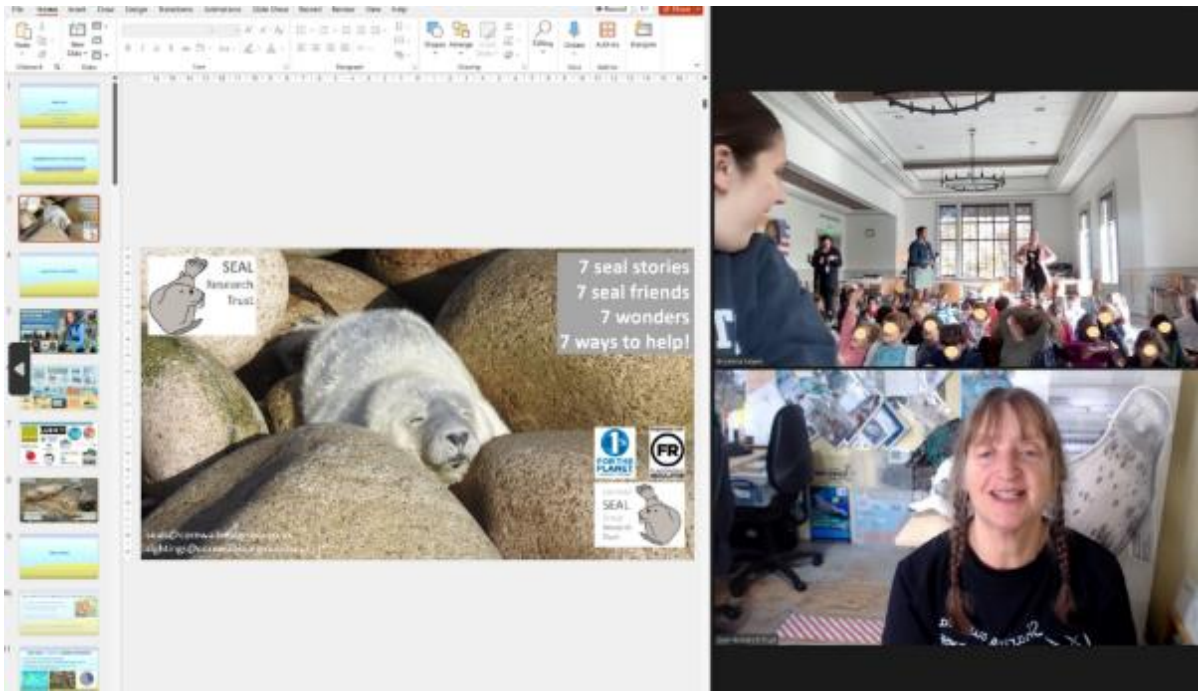
- *I've just watched your seal video and it is superb – a great watch, super informative and so supportive of good behaviour traits around our wildlife. I am pretty humbled to be honest and you've set a very high bar for the rest of us*
- *That was your best ever presentation tonight – absolutely spot on!*
- *That was a very interesting Talk Rob and I know that our members enjoyed it very much. It was a pleasure to meet you all and I hope you enjoyed your visit as much as we enjoyed seeing you all*
- *Brilliant talk thank you for all the amazing work you and your team do!*
- *Thank you so much for your inspiring and informative presentation today. Really fantastic. I really enjoyed your presentation and appreciate all your work for Cornwall and our amazing seals*
- *Thank you so much for your valuable input today - you sell yourself short, you raised such important points today and without your guidance we wouldn't have been able to have the discussions and progress that we did*
- *Thank you so much for the amazing workshop you did for you. The children learnt lots and have enjoyed sharing their knowledge with their friends and family. You have certainly inspired them – my daughter would now like to rescue seals when she is older*
- *Sue was brilliant at speaking to and engaging with our young children age 3-6. It's important that knowledge and the motivation to help wildlife is passed on to the younger generation and the talk and photos were exciting and inspiring*
- *Super interesting and engaging for children, with the right balance of information and activities to keep them hooked in, and plenty of ideas for us to follow up with. Sue was so child-friendly and fun. (Have to admit I expected someone with an MBE in something sciencey to be serious and stuffy but she was anything but!!)*
- *With all you have going on, you still are kind enough to think of others. How much kinder and richer this world would be with more people like you*
- *I will be more aware of my own plastic consumption: The example of the flying ring made me think a lot. But also how to approach seals in the right way, preferably not at all. And the effects of disturbing seals when they flee into the water was also something I was not aware of before. I immediately had the urge to pass on the new knowledge so that everyone is aware of this*
- *Very insightful, and has also included some of the research findings on their individual behaviours in pupping and mating, and the seal calendars had marked their individual differences – all very interesting!*
- *It was a completely new take on a topic that has been heard many times before. And it leaves a different impression to see certain disturbing images of the effects we humans can have on seals rather than just being told to be more careful. Keep going!*
- *Great images, good connection with Science and local people, explained everything well!*
- *I wanted to mention is that the activity booklet ('Sharing Our Seas') you sent us is BRILLIANT! Both Hannah and Henry are really enjoying working through it. It's both fun and educational, and pitched at the right level for children their age*
- *I just wanted to thank you both for such a wonderful presentation last night. It was so professional, brilliantly delivered, with humour and care, with a superb selection of*

photographs, charts and information. The concentrated interest and response of the largest audience I think we have ever had was great. There were 84 people present! And comments after the event were so positive about what SRT are doing as a group and you two as individuals have been really quite moving. Rob and Kerstin, your empathy for seals came through and your far reaching knowledge was much appreciated

- *I especially enjoyed the first few talks by Sue and Dan about seals and the walrus in Europe, and their approaches to people management/social science thinking to mitigate disturbance*
- *You are definitely my hero! You do such amazing work, thank you*
- *You are very inspirational and I left feeling that I wanted to do more and also how cool seals are!*
- *Thank you for the minutes and an excellent meeting as usual. I have really enjoyed the insight to the national picture regarding our lovely seals and wish to personally thank you for your knowledge and enthusiasm which is a major factor in the success of the group*
- *I just received this Pentire summary from Kate. Wow, it's fantastic. Some really interesting findings. I'm going to have a good read through it over the next couple of days but just wanted to say a huge thank you to you all for the support and guidance we get as a Hub*
- *The seal pillow was a big hit with my son and is now called 'Bartholomew Jerome Jeremiah Gerald Binchilling … the 3rd'!*
- *Really inspiring and great to see some successes with local communities and retailers on the flying rings*
- *Really interesting, nice to see actual example bones as well, rather than just the photos, as we can get a better idea of them by turning them around*
- *Learnt a lot on seal skeleton which I can share with folk who visit our seals*
- *Loved your Wild Seal Supporter Update and annual report. Both really good reading, interesting and informative*
- *Your talk was absolutely brilliant. Thank you once again for agreeing to do this for us, it helps us inspire the next generation of animal conservationists*
- *I am thoroughly enjoying the course and am astounded at how much of a positive impact volunteering has had on my mental health and wellbeing*
- *Excellent course with some challenging activities*
- *I liked the mixture of ways of learning - reading and activities and online webinars*
- *I want to congratulate you all, you are doing a wonderful in depth job. I can tell from all the newsletters and exchanges that I have that you are super professional and very passionate*
- *Massive well done and thank you for your involvement in the broadcast media yesterday and today. The BBC Breakfast piece was brilliant*
- *The students were incredibly engaged throughout the talk and found it very interesting*
- *Thank you great course. Will see you on the next one!*
- *Thank you so much for the amazing 4-week course, on our beautiful seals. You're full of so much knowledge, which really inspires me on your work*

- *I just wanted to get in touch to once again thank you for your support during my project, your experience and knowledge really helped support my dissertation which has now been marked and I managed to achieve an A*!*
- *The boat surveys are fantastic days with inspiring people. The amount I learn every trip is awesome*
- *Your report is a great piece of work! We can't wait to share it ourselves*
- *Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with the children. They really enjoyed seeing the different seals and learnt lots of new facts!*
- *Peter did absolutely brilliant today and certainly knows how to pull a crowd. This talk was informative and entertaining, a clear message well illustrated and delivered, by a speaker who showed genuine enthusiasm and compassion for the seals and their welfare*
- *I mean every word about how awesome you are, and it is not just me! There are so many in PEG that think you are the greatest and are so impressed with all that you do. You are absolutely amazing and wonderful and I feel very lucky to know you*
- *Many thanks for all your huge amounts of hard work - there is so much unseen behind the scenes too. Brilliant!*
- *Thanks so much for reaching out, the seal has safely been delivered, as well as the information leaflets. I am so incredibly impressed with this group and all the work everyone is putting in to bring awareness to the Grey seals, it really shows! Since I've received the pamphlets all of my friends have learned many facts about seals. I only wish there was more I could do for them from Oregon, USA!*
- *This particular couple spent an hour quietly watching and chatting and asking loads of questions over 2 days when they walked all the way to the cove to check on the pup before they started their long journey home. To me this is why public engagement on the cliff top is so important and enjoyable*
- *You are an incredible host, organiser and catalyst for us all and seals*
- *Nature needs all the friends it can get – your work at SRT has meant so many more people are involved in conservation so hats off to you all*
- *I've just read your annual report from 2022 and can't believe how active you've been and your outreach figures are amazing*
- *Today's boat survey was the most amazing day and Sarah is absolutely brilliant, actually everyone was lovely, no egos just helpful, caring, kindfulness*
- *The course was well explained yet a scientifically sound approach. Plain English but great evidence and knowledge!*
- *I liked the way the workbooks were set out. Easy to follow and interesting material*
- *Thank you for a wonderful day! Such a privilege to learn from you and listen to you talking about the seals. I could listen to you all and every day! I loved hanging off the edge of the cliffs with you, what a treat it was*
- *I loved the course, it's the tutor that really made it for me. Her passion really just is infectious! Loads of information, I learnt so much than I thought I was going to! It's a must course for anyone interested in seals or working within the ecology sector!*
- *I would like to give you a HUGE thank you for yesterday. I cannot believe that you were able to capture our student's full attention for almost an hour. You have some magic*

powers! Your presentation was incredibly engaging, witty, and a great learning experience for our young ones. It was the talk of the entire grade throughout the school day



- *I liked the gentle humour enthusiasm, knowledge & experience that Sue conveyed in the webinar. The wealth of course content that l could download to use after the course is finished*
- *Just want to say a big thank you for the leaflets you put in the parcel today. I ordered seal socks for my wife which were great, but the leaflets were absolutely loved by my 7 year old daughter who loves seals*
- *My son loves the pack, and the book I'm hoping to read at the weekend. He knows more about seals than me. He tells everyone what he has in common with Lucky bunting (after we adopted her) as he was born in 2016 the year she was rescued*
- *Thank you so much for your support, enthusiasm and expertise. It makes my life so much easier*
- *The furry seal is gorgeous, I am tempted to keep it rather than give it as a Christmas present to my grand daughter! It was lovely to meet you, your courses have helped & inspired me a lot. I feel a little more confident when l volunteer. Plus l am now more aware of the wealth of information & resources that is open to me to explore so I have a little more understanding about seals and marine conservation work*
- *I liked the information about the analysis of the data collected and it's use in making maps of the movements of the seals over time*
- *Heartiest congratulations on getting your award. So proud of you. You most certainly deserve it. Well done.*

Seal Data Outputs (reports included above)

Surveys and Volunteers

In 2023 we received records from **252 different volunteers,** from which we were able to process **4,567 discrete surveys** (an average of **13 site specific surveys each and every day**) from **328 different locations**. Our Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger, Sarah, coordinated our **quarterly SW Seal Census,** of which all four were completed in January, April, July and October. Thank you to all our amazing volunteers who took part and made these possible.

Age and Sex Classes

On average 9.2 seals were recorded, ranging from a minimum of no seals observed to a **maximum of 458 seals** counted during a single survey (**down from 557 in 2021** and **519 in 2022**). Of seals that we were able to classify according to their age, **66% were adults** and **34% juveniles, moulted pups or white coated pups**. Only adults can be reliably sexed, so of all adults that we could confidently sex **56% were males and 44% females,** which is exactly the same proportion as recorded in 2021 and 2022, despite our huge survey effort and datasets.

White-coated pups by Sue Sayer

Grey Seal Pups

White-coated, maternally dependent, grey seal pups (WCPs) were recorded on **581 occasions at 39 different locations** around the southwest. Most were recorded on the north coast, but there were **32 sightings** of WCPs recorded at **11 different sites** on the **south coast** of Cornwall and Devon. WCPs represented just over **1% of all seals** observed. The maximum number of WCPs recorded at a single site was 15 at North Cornwall. 5 or more WCPs were recorded 37 times at 10 different pupping sites at the **North Cornwall complex** (4 sites)**, West Cornwall** (2 sites), **West Cornwall East** (3 sites) and **West Penwith North** (1 site). **LP316 'Lucky bunting',** a seal rescued in 2016, was not seen with a pup in 2023 (this would have been her fourth). Our world record breaking seal mum **'Ghost'** had her **20th pup in 21 years**, back at her normal

pupping site having breached her site fidelity tradition in 2021. She was photographed on 20/10/23 mating with her current beachmaster male 'Snake' for pup 21, should she survive another year. We have everything crossed! **94% of the unique WCPs were born on north coast sites with 6% on the south coast.** Historically between 2010 and 2016, most pups were born in October followed by November. In 2022, most pups were born in September followed by August (but with only 4 more pups born in August than October). In 2023, most pups were born in September, but there were 23 more pups born across the SW in August compared to October. **Pupping season has moved substantially earlier, creating temporal and spatial overlap with the peak tourist season,** which is problematic.

Harbour Seals and Harbour Seal Pups

Our observations included **25 records** with **44 harbour seal sightings** (down from 85 in 2021 and 29 in 2022). **12 records were single individuals** up to a **maximum of 4 individuals seen on 04/02/23 in South Devon.** Harbour seals were recorded **at 8 different locations** all at south coast locations across Cornwall, Devon and the Solent.

After 2 successfully weaned harbour seal pups, observed with their mother Serena in 2021 and 2022, there was a potential sighting of **'Serena'** and a pup in 2023 but this couldn't be confirmed**.** There were no sightings of the legendary, routinely sighted, adult male common seal called **'Ellis'** after February 2022. He was the suspected father of Serena's 2021/22 pups.

Ellis (adult male harbour seal) 20/07/20 by James Broughton

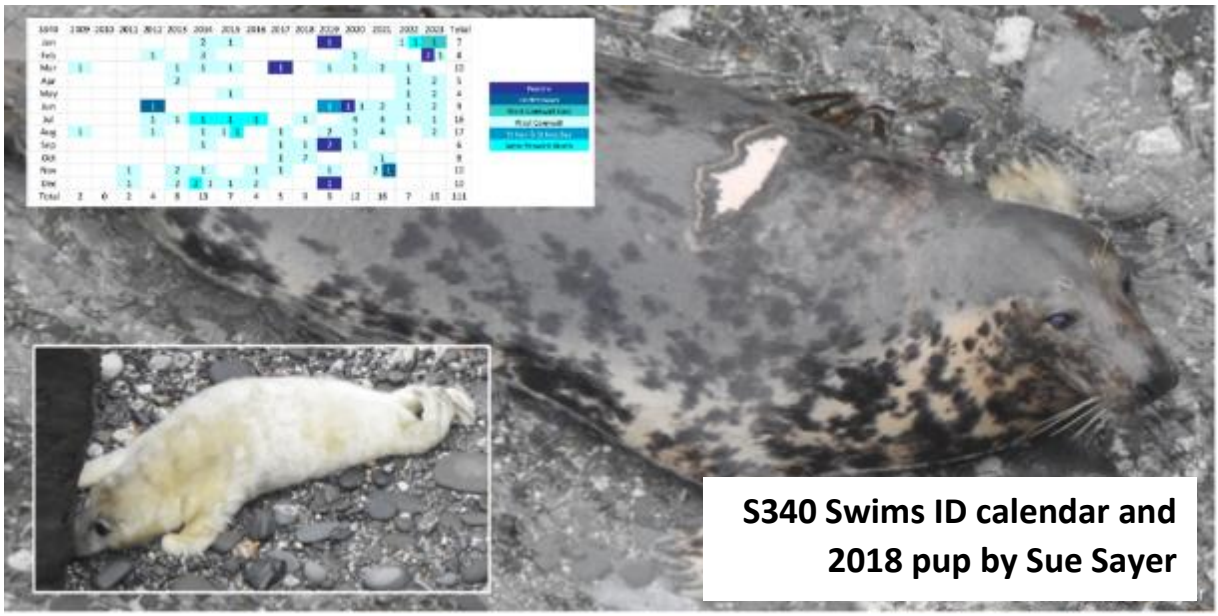
Photos, Albums and Identifications

Our PID Hubs continue to be highly productive, processing an incredible **105,235 photos** in 2023 into **1,899 survey albums** (including 416 from 2021 and 2022). This enabled SRT to generate a total of **11,409 seal identifications,** of which **84% were re-identifications** (which is surprisingly consistent compared to 87% in 2021/22 and 86% in 2020). This included a maximum of **145 different individual seal identifications in a single survey** (5 less than our previous maximum in 2022) that were confirmed by two experienced volunteers. Over 100

different seals were identified on 3 separate surveys, all at the West Cornwall site. Of all the seals re-identified in 2023, **34 have been identified for at least 20 years by the SRT network**. This is a tremendous achievement in itself! **5 were seals first added to our catalogues back in 2000** (1 male S7 and 4 females S3 / S4 / S5 / S31); **6** were seals that were **first identified in 2001** (1 male DP193 and 5 females S16 / S26 / S32 / S49 / LP12); **9** were seals **first identified in 2002** (2 males S80 / S92 and 7 females S46 / S54 / S60 / S62 / S74 / S84 / S891) and **14** were seals **added to catalogues in 2003** (2 males DP122 / DP120 and 12 females NF4 / S88 / S89 / S100 / S104 / S107 / S111 / S112 / S113 / S114 / S119 / S123).

In total, **3,175 unique seals** were identified in 2023. **58 seals** from **7 sites were identified 20 or more times** from the **Lizard, Looe, North Devon, Pentire, Roseland, St Ives and West Cornwall Hubs.** This is a reflection of the frequent survey effort at these sites (all are surveyed on multiple days every week) and the utterly incredible ID processing hub team effort. Well done everyone and thank you for making these incredible records possible!

We continue to partner with the **Cornwall Wildlife Trust Marine Strandings Network** and in 2023 **4 dead seals were identified from their carcasses** (1 male and 3 females). **DP2004 'Watermark alien'** adult male (First live sighting 28/12/17 West Cornwall Sue Sayer and Jes Hirons; Identified 71 times all at West Cornwall by 17 different SRT volunteers; Last live sighting 01/12/22 West Cornwall Sue Sayer and Karen Gaudern; Dead 08/02/23 Mounts Bay Constance Morris); **S2931 'Three bars'** adult female (First live sighting 24/02/21 St Ives Peter Nason and Eli Kalcikova; Identified twice at West Cornwall and in St Ives Bay by 4 different SRT volunteers; Last live sighting 13/12/21 West Cornwall Sue Sayer and Kate Hockley; Dead 04/03/23 Carbis Bay Dan Jarvis); **ROF124 'Tulip placeholder'** adult female (First live sighting 30/08/12 Fal Jes Hirons; Identified 102 times at 3 locations on the south coast by 24 different SRT volunteers; Last live sighting 09/01/23 Roseland Kerstin Hartmann; Dead 14/06/23 St Michael's Mount CWTMSN) and **S340 'Swims' adult female** (First live sighting 25/11/07 West Cornwall Sue Sayer; Identified 111 times across 6 north coast sites by 42 different SRT volunteers; Last live sighting 31/08/23 West Cornwall Sue Sayer; Dead 19/11/23 Perranporth CWTMSN). RIP beautiful seals – you have taught us so much.

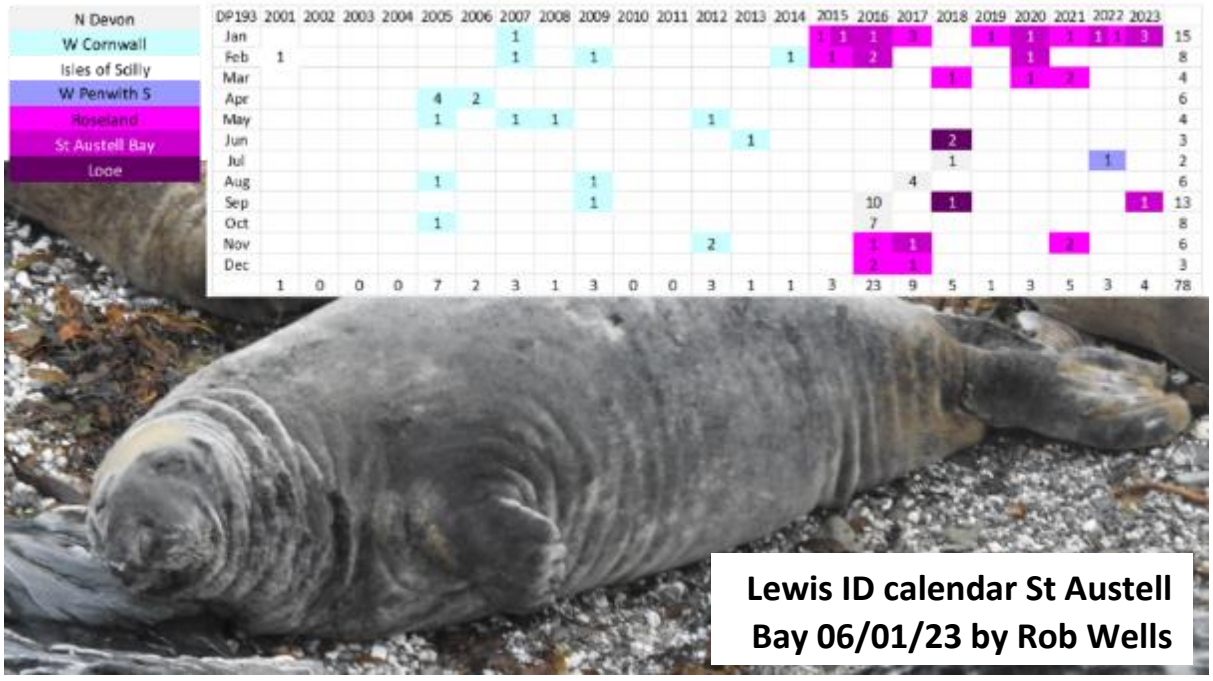


S340 Swims ID calendar and 2018 pup by Sue Sayer

Two additional dead, tagged ex-rescue, rehab and released seals were also identified as '**Wasabi'** (released in 2023) and **'Jonesy'** (released in 2018).

Ex-rescued, Rehabilitated and Released Seals

SRT 2023 data included **732 sightings** of **126 different rear flipper tagged, rehabilitated seals** (around **2% of all seals observed**) from all around our southwest coast. Most of our tagged seals would have been released in **North Devon** or from the **northwest/southwest Cornish coast** but there were three notable exceptions. **'Sate'** and **'Christine'** were released in **France** and **'Crater'** who was released from **Courtown in SE Ireland**.) The longest identified, and so potentially longest surviving ex-rescued seals traced back to their rehabilitation records, are **DP193 'Lewis'** (an adult male released in 2001) and **S123 'Puffa'** (an adult female released in 2003). Lewis' IDs are fascinating, as he has defected from the north to the south coast.



Lewis ID calendar St Austell Bay 06/01/23 by Rob Wells

A maximum of **10 different ex-rescue, rehabilitated and released** seals were recorded on one survey on 20/10/23 at West Cornwall by Sue Sayer and Kate Hockley. **16 different ex-rehabilitated seals** were **identified 10 or more times**, including **5 identified over 20 times** in 2023. These were **'Orion', 'Pangolin', 'Prudie', 'Snail octopus', 'Crater'** and **'Archer lady'**.

SRT continue to use the confidential Googlesheet created by Paul Oaten from **RSPCA West Hatch Wildlife Hospital** that logs all seal admissions and, in 2023, Katherine Thomas from the **Cornish Seal Sanctuary** has continued to deliver regular and excellent input at our monthly Seals SW Sessions. We are grateful to **British Divers Marine Life Rescue** who do the majority of seal pup rescues, then triage and treat most of the seals rescued at the **BDMLR Cornwall Seal Hospital**, before they are transported elsewhere for longer term rehabilitation.

Entangled Seals

To balance our resightings of rescued, rehabilitated and released seals, which reflect a positive intervention by people, were our observations of seals that have experienced

entanglement at some point in their lives. SRT record entangled seals as 'currently entangled' or as 'ex-entangled' – the latter based on evidence of a healed wound and no visible entangling material. This can be harder to judge than might be imagined. Seals having experienced or still experiencing entanglement were recorded **732 times (2% of all seals observed)** during **407 surveys up to a maximum of 15 different individuals in a single survey** – recorded on 19/01/23 at West Cornwall by Kate Hockley. **10 or more different entangled seals were recorded 3 times, all at West Cornwall,** during the year. In total **81 unique entangled seals were identified** from our catalogues.

A new entanglement issue that emerged in late 2021 continued to be observed in 2022 – that of seals being **hooked in line** mostly from our local sustainable inshore mackerel fishery. In 2023 **13 different seals were recorded as hooked,** ranging from apparently single or multiple hooked adult seals to moulted pups in need of rescue. We know from our long-term seal data that peak seal numbers have shifted earlier from March/April to December/January. In contrast, we have been told that the mackerel fishery has moved later in the year, from starting in the summer to commencing in November. This has created a **temporal and spatial overlap between the mackerel fishery and peak seal numbers** that never used to occur. This has presumably caused this **new and emerging issue of hooked seals**.

Hooked seals
09/02/23 W Cornwall Sue Sayer (adult male)
26/10/23 W Penwith S BDMLR (pup's bottom!)
Photos by Sue Sayer & BDMLR Medics (Inset)

SRT continue to share data and entangled seal experiences as members of the **Clean Catch UK National Steering Group** and the global **Pinniped Entanglement Group** of which Sue and Dan Jarvis are members.

Bycatch includes the live entangled animals described above, who have most likely interacted with lost fishing gear. It also refers to dead seals accidentally caught up in live operational fishing gear. We were shocked to discover from the 2020 Special Committee on Seals report that **85% of all UK seal bycatch occurred in our southwest region** (ICES area VII). One bycaught seal in 2023 was found in St Ives Harbour in unfortunate circumstances. It died after

becoming entangled in loose gear wrapped around a fishing boat's propellor before the skipper could release the gear at low tide.

Juvenile bycaught in St Ives by CWTMSN

Disturbance

From our routine data (not effort corrected) serious level 3 disturbance is described as seals leaving the land by tombstoning (leaping from height) or in a stampede (rushing over sand/rocks) into the sea; crash diving at sea; displacement from sea areas where humans were present or seals being fed. There were **155 serious disturbance incidents**. In total, **level 3 disturbance affected a shocking total of 1,328 seals** in 2023. This ranged from a minimum of 1 seal in 51 incidents to a **maximum of 163 seals on 17/12/23** stampeding into the sea at West Cornwall East in a single incident. This was caused by people accessing the beach.

During & after 17/12/23 by SRT

This incident occurred within a Site of Special Scientific Interest where seals are a monitored feature. This makes it an offence to disturb seals here. As a result of SRT reporting this incident to Natural England (the enforcement agency) action was taken against the perpetrators.

20 or more seals were seriously disturbed stampeding into the sea on **14 different occasions** at **9 different sensitive seals sites** in the **North Cornwall, Pentire, Roseland, West Cornwall and West Cornwall East** areas.

Where possible, disturbance incidents are now routinely followed up by members of our newly formed volunteer **Conservation Team**. Case studies of disturbance and data continue to be shared with various statutory agencies, including the **Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Natural England, Operation Seabird** and **DEFRA**. In 2022, Natural England provided a specific email address for SRT to report serious disturbance incidents within designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. We continued to use this in 2023 to ensure audit trails and case studies can be built up as intelligence and evidence for potential action and future prioritisation.

In 2023 SRT have been liaising with **Operation Seabird**, the **Marine Management Organisation** and **Whale and Dolphin Conservation** to explore the possibility of **a national online, standardised recording format for marine wildlife disturbance** (into which the existing Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code data set can be merged). SRT's disturbance data is routinely shared with statutory agencies, NGOs, governing bodies and landowners to inform the efficacy of mitigation strategies. Throughout 2023 SRT continued to fund and distribute the Defra-endorsed Seal Alliance 'Watching Seals Well' leaflets and 'Give Seals Space' signs across the UK. We were delighted when, in May 2023, **Defra launched their new Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code** (a recommendation of our 2022 People Protecting Precious Places research report). SRT were asked to deliver the **online and live press coverage for the launch**.

Defra's Marine & Coastal Wildlife Code

To build on our awareness raising letters to wildlife tour operators in 2022, working alongside the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group, SRT met with St Ives Bay operators to explore ways of raising the bar between current practice and Defra's new Code. This work is ongoing.

Policy and Conservation Actions

Consultations: 35

SRT used data from our amazing volunteer citizen science network to submit evidence to **35 policy and planning consultations**. These varied hugely but could be classified into 5 categories: **Conservation** (**7**: Defra Environment and Rural Affairs Inquiry on Marine Mammals; Defra Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code; Defra 30 by 30; Parliamentary Debate on Seal Protection; Office for Environmental Protection on Nature Recovery; Cornwall Council's Nature Recovery Strategy and the Mounts Bay Charter of the sea); **Issue specific policies** (**6**: Parliamentary Plastic Pollution Debate; Environment Agency Storm Outflows; Charity Commission on Trustee Roles; Oceana Oil and Gas licences; Defra Plastic Free Wet Wipes; Defra Lead pollution); **Developments** (**10**; Ardesier Port; Arcardis Polperro; MMO Marine Spatial Plan SW; Dean Quarry; White Cross Wind Farm; SeaLINK in Kent; N Devon Seaweed Farm; Kingsbridge Estuary netting; Gerrans Bay Seaweed Farms x 2), **Fisheries** (**7**; Marine Protected Areas bottom trawling; Sandeel closures in the North Sea; Crab and Lobsters Fisheries Management Plan; Remote Electronic Monitoring; Finfish Licencing; Discards) and **Other** (**5**; Charity publicity; Charity Commission; Citizen Science; OCR Natural History GCSE; Defra Stakeholders).

UK Seal Protection Debate drafted by SRT

It was an honour to be asked to draft the **Seal Protection Parliamentary Debate** speech for Sarah Olney MP delivered on 27/06/23 in Westminster Hall. [You can watch this here.]

This is the hardest and most mundane aspect of our charity's work but it is undoubtedly the most important thing we do. It means all the data and expertise created by our huge volunteer team effort is communicated through the proper channels, where it counts, **having a difference in planning and policy at a national and international decision making level**. All this is done monthly during or between our monthly **Steering Group Meetings**. In 2023 SRT were co-opted to participate in the **Wildlife and Countryside LINK** (WCL), providing **seal expertise to the Marine Mammal, Marine and Bycatch Groups**. It quickly became apparent that joining this well established voice for nature group would substantially increase our conservation efforts and impact, so a decision was made to pay their membership fee (albeit at a vastly reduced rate, negotiated to be sustainable for our small charity over the long term). SRT now routinely input into 10 different WCL group forums.

Legislation

SRT continue to use our unique disturbance dataset to campaign to get **seal disturbance made an offence** (as it is with whales and dolphins), either by **adding seals to the Wildlife and Countryside Act** or by adding the word **'disturbance' to the Conservation of Seals Act.** We were delighted when the **EFRA Committee Inquiry on Marine Mammals Report** in June made a clear recommendation that **'in the short term, seals should be added to the list of species in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act as soon as possible'.** This confirmed what the **Joint Nature Conservation Committee** had already advised. We assumed we were close. However, at the final stage all the EFRA Committee recommendations were blocked by the then Environment Minister Therese Coffey, a week before she resigned. Despite this, we remain positive and determined to get seal disturbance made illegal. We are not going anywhere and will continue to campaign with the Seal Alliance to make this a reality. It is just going to take longer than we hoped.

Campaigns

SRT's 2023 leaflet

SRT added a third key campaign to our portfolio for 2023 – **Climate Change** mitigation was added to our pre-existing work on **Disturbance and Flying Rings**.

Our new Sea Change: Seals films were outlined on page 4. In addition, we worked with Falmouth University student, Milly Hall, to produce a brand new accompanying 'Sea Change: Seals' leaflet summarising the multiple, shocking impacts of **climate change on seals,** as a new motivation for members of the public to commit to taking action at home, work and play to reduce their personal emissions. This was summarised by the acronym TEEMS (see page 33).

In July 2023, we created an open group on our **Facebook Workplace** platform to enable volunteers to share their actions and successes of the **Flying Rings campaign**. This was kick started by a highlight of 2023, which was the **rescue of local celebrity 'Wings' from her flying ring in St Ives harbour by British Divers Marine Life Rescue and the Cornish Seal Sanctuary**. SRT's Photo ID work showed Wings had been trapped in her flying ring for **less than 2 weeks** but, despite this, rescuers discovered it was firmly stuck around her neck and could not be pulled off. This made us realise that the **water resistance** when swimming must wedge the ring further back and deeper into a seal's neck tissue. Also their **telescopic neck action** (as they stretch forward to snatch and suck prey) narrows their neck enabling the ring to be pushed even further back. It turns out that **Wings is a better conservation ambassador for her species than the rest of us humans put together**! Her rescue video on BBC Radio Cornwall's Facebook page quickly went **viral with over 1 million hits worldwide**.

Wings' rescue renewed the desire of all our volunteer networks (SRT, BDMLR, CSS and Seal Alliance members) to spread the word and raise awareness of the risks posed by flying rings. **Posters and metal signs of all sizes were distributed regionally, nationally and internationally** by volunteers and through our partners. Shops that were seen selling flying rings were either approached in person or via email/post in a coordinated campaign asking them to say 'No to the O'. Lizzi Larbalestier even won the **'most sustainable float'** award in Perranporth Carnival as she distributed leaflets to the crowd chanting…'We say O…you say

NO!'. Yorkshire Seal Group had **amazing sand art** communicating the campaign. We hope this will lead to reduced flying ring sales and usage, ultimately resulting in fewer lost rings being removed by volunteers from beaches and fewer new flying ringed suffering seals!

Practical Conservation Actions

We worked with a range of partners to make the southwest a safer place for seals. Examples of the kinds of action taken included:

- Sensitive Seal Sites (SSS) in Devon designated as **County Wildlife Sites**
- **Temporary signage** at various locations alerting swimmers about interactive seals
- Supporting local community groups with **information and signage** to manage a brand new seal haul out on a publicly accessible beach
- **Refurbishment of fence** to manage people around SSSs with partners at the wonderful National Trust (NT) at Pentire and West Cornwall
- Liaising with Police on a **seal shooting case** where the fire arm was surrendered
- **Wording advice** for signage encouraging people to stay on the coastpath around SSSs
- Advice to the RNLI about seals hauling out on **lifeboat slipways**
- Parish Council input about **Malle Rally** on the Lizard near a SSS
- Advising West Penwith North NT team about **barrier and signage** around a SSS
- Liasion with the Devon Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority about a **fisher openly feeding seals** in South Devon
- **Photo policy advice** to the NT about online/public seal photo best practice – all photos of seals looking at the camera (who have likely been disturbed) have been removed from the NT archives and catalogues
- **Letters** to the new Under Secretary of State and an East Coast MP about the mutually benefical relationship between **fisheries and seals**
- **Flying Rings letters** to vets practices and supermarkets across Cornwall by Peter Perkins
- Numerous snail mailed **letters** written to large and small flying rings retailers and manufacturers by Joyce Williams, supported by Jeremy Gilson
- **Letters** written to Cornwall and Devon Councils by Andrea Hunt and Chris Berry
- **SSS signs** in N Devon by local NT team
- Discussions and plans to gather evidence of, and take action on, potential **bycatch of seals** on the east side of the Lizard in conjunction with BDMLR and CSS
- Multiple **social media pages** followed up after their mention of SSS names or seal disturbance incidents. Appealing to admins to share best practice, delete posts or change group rules
- Engagement with Newlyn Art School to **mitigate seal disturbance** for outdoor sessions
- St Ives Bay Operator **meetings** to raise best practice x 2
- **Monitoring major events** around the Fal - the PowerBoat Race and Armed Forces Day
- **Letters** to wildlife Operators from Looe, Newquay, St Ives and Hayle to alert them to seal disturbance they have caused and **encouraging best practice** by Emma Woolfenden, Andy Rogers and Sue Sayer
- **Discouraging 'in water' activities** in areas known for seals, especially around haul outs
- Supporting Looe Island volunteer **seal amabassadors**

- Informing Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority about **potting activity** of key SSSs to mitigate disturbance
- Working with Whale and Dolphin Conservation to **design their new seal disturbance recording protocols** for their ShoreWatch volunteers
- **Best practice advice** to the Personal Watercraft Partnership and Ramblers Association
- Working with WCL on the **Marine Mammal Protect Act** plans for the UK
- Supporting Looe Marine Conservation Group with their **marker buoys around a SSS**
- Creating **best practice advice** for the Cornish Pilot Gig Association
- Supporting Operation Seabird with advice about seal disturbance caused by a **base jumper in North Wales**
- Supporting the **World Cetacean Alliance bycatch initiative**
- Advising about **disturbance mitigation during benthic surveys** around Lundy
- Suggesting **virtual events** to minimise public habituation and disturbance during releases
- Spreading the word to encourage volunteers to look out for **entangled seals in need of rescue**
- Raising awareness about what to do if a seal tries to **haul out on your board/kayak**
- Supplying data to the **National Wildlife Crime Unit** and the **WCL** for their annual report about wildlife crime
- Providing SSS data for the **Sea Mammal Research Unit, JNCC and Natural England** for the first ever aerial surveys in the SW and ground truthing these by land based counts. SMRU missed 72 seals at 8 sites around the SW, including zero counts at 2 substantial SSSs
- Working with The Seal Project to advise **MDL Marinas** about how to make their replacement wave barriers more seal friendly
- Raising awareness with the public about **best practice photography** around seals
- Reporting of **hooked seals,** and **seals being fed, to harbour masters** and providing free signage
- Following up **seal disturbance caused by drones**
- **Volunteer disturbance monitoring** at SSSs
- **Feedback to operators** about their good practice, with ideas about improvements
- Liasing with Natural England when **pupping site signage** is needed
- Writing **multiple articles** for local group newsletters about seal conservation
- Providing **ecologists** with survey advice, protocols and networking contacts
- Engaging with **authors** about coastal books, to share best practice and avoid naming SSSs
- Providing **data** on grey and harbour seals for the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
- Sharing tagged seal sightings with **multiple rehabilitation centres**
- Providing data on flying rings for a **parliamentary question**
- Sharing **intelligence** with Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority about gill netting activity and spates of **gill net seal entanglements**
- Raising awareness about the **natural scavenging and decomposition** of seal carcasses
- Supporting **Norwegian residents** to successfully prevent a **seal cull** on their patch.

Highlights of 2023: Seals and People

S107 'Square blobs Alien' re-identified for the first time in 16 years on 26/12/23 at West Cornwall by Sue Sayer and **S119 'Star skateboard'** re-identified for the first time in 20 years on 07/12/23 at West Cornwall by Sue Sayer. Both these females were first identified in 2003 and Star Skateboard had only ever been identified twice – both times in 2003 but she was still recognised straight away by Sue Sayer in the field. Where have these two females been all this time?

2023 started with the momentous news that our **Founder and Director Sue Sayer** had been **awarded an MBE for her services to wildlife conservation and protection** in the King's first New Year's Honours list. Sue was determined to make a memorable mark at her investiture at Windsor Castle in December 2023. She commissioned local artist, friend and SRT Corporate Supporter **Michelle Costello from Smartie Lids on the Beach** to design and create a **fascinator**. This depicted Sue's favourite and first ever re-identified seal 'Chairlift' from 2000, surrounded by pyroplastic rocks and ghost gear waves. This accompanied her **Starry Night** outfit (by Sue's favourite artist, Van Gogh). To Sue his work is prophetic, **reflecting the planetary turmoil we now find ourselves in, in terms of climate change and marine pollution** (including plastics). The first thing the King noticed and asked about was Sue's fascinator, giving her the opening needed to talk about the unique nature of each seal and the challenges being faced by their species in the wild. Huge thanks go to Gareth Richards from Gower Seal Group for nominating Sue for this award back in 2019!

Sue's MBE Investiture accompanied by Dan Jarvis (Vice Chair), husband Chris Howell and Gareth Richards

Conclusion

It is hard to believe that such a small charity in terms of funding and paid staff can make this huge contribution to marine conservation – only made possible by our amazing volunteers!

Let sleeping seals lie 😊

Revenue and Expenditure

Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	2024
Revenue	
Adoptions - Private WSS	7,542
Online Fundraising - Amazon Smile income	165
Donations - Boat	1,705
Donations - Corporate (inc' Corporate Sponsorship)	14,523
Donations - Private	18,858
Online Fundraising - Facebook income	569
Activity generated income - Fundraising income	229
Income from Projects/Report writing	1,050
Online Fundraising - Just Giving income	392
Activity generated Income- Merchandise sales	8,155
Activity generated income - Talks and Training fee income and expenses claimed	1,070
Online fundraising PayPal Giving Fund income	1,804
Jumblebee fundraiser income	819
Total Revenue	**56,881**
Cost of Sales	
Merchandise Purchases	4,808
Postage charges for merchandise	1,758
Shopify costs	252
FSC couse fees collected, paid over to FSC	1,050
Total Cost of Sales	**7,867**
Gross Surplus	**49,014**
Administrative Costs	
Boat charter	5,200
Professional fees - Insurance.	966
IT, hardware and software	14,520
Marketing & Promotional Resources	10,828
Office supplies	1,023
Other Miscellaneous costs	493
Paypal fees	113
Printing	349
Ranger - Sanctuaries at Sea (Sarah Millward)	18,456
Survey equipment	1,008
Training costs for Rangers and Volunteers	60
Ranger - Activities & Admin' Lauren McGregor	11,298
Ranger - SRT RMSR - Polly Ford	500
Grants given	4,788
Ranger - Karen Gaudern	1,468
Total Administrative Costs	**71,070**

Revenue and Expenditure

	2024
Surplus	**(22,056)**
Other Income	
Course fees collected for Field Studies Council	154
Gift Aid income	3,483
Flotilla grant - ringfenced	25,000
Total Other Income	**28,636**
Surplus	**6,581**
Surplus	**6,581**

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust		
On accounts for the year ended	31st March 2024	**Charity no (if any)**	1162936
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
   - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

   have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:		**Date:**	20/08/24
Name:	Mr J K Shepherd		

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA, CTA
Address:	11A Kimberley Park Road Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 2DA

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

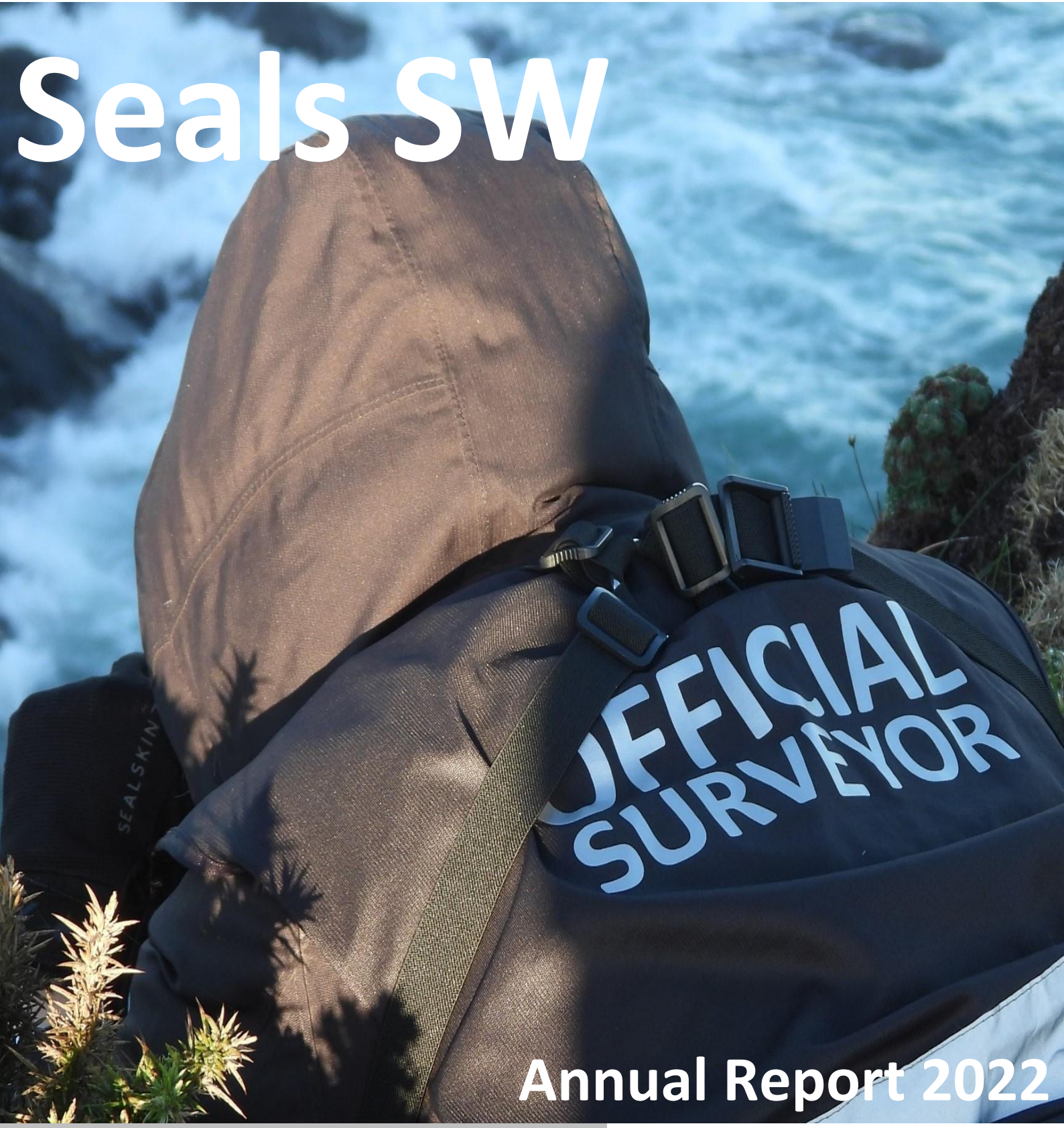
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	

CORNWALL SEAL GROUP RESEARCH TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1162936

Accounts

Seals SW



Annual Report 2022

Seal Research Trust's 'Seals SW' Annual Report

Funders (P4)

People (P5)

Charity Achievements and Activities (P6)

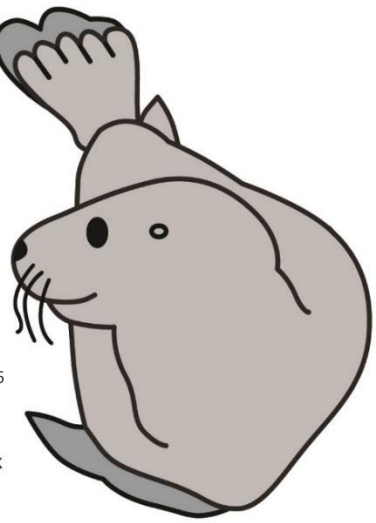
Feedback about SRT Activities (P17)

Seal Data Outputs (P20)

Policy and Conservation Actions (P26)

Conclusion (P31)

Seal Research Trust



Registered charity number:1162936

www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk

www.sealresearchtrust.com

Contents

Summary 3

Funders 4

People 5

- Marine Rangers and Science Advisor 5
- Hubs Volunteers and Photo ID Coordinator 6

Charity Achievements and Activities 6

- Summary 7
- Talks 7
- Workshops/Training 8
- Stalls/Events 10
- Field Engagement 10
- School Sessions 10
- Photo ID Project (PIP) organised surveys 11
- Meetings 11
- Reports 12
- Seals SW Sessions, Seals SW Newsletters and Wild Seal Supporter Updates 12
- Resources and Media Coverage 13
- Brigstow Institute Seedcorn Fund: Space for Seals Project 14
- Deep Learning Computer Vision Project 15
- The Debs Foundation Project 16
- People Protecting Precious Places Project Follow Up 16
- Wildlife Safe (WISE) Courses 16

Feedback about SRT Activities 17

Seal Data Outputs 20

- Surveys and Volunteers 20
- Age and Sex Classes 20
- Grey Seal Pups 21
- Common Seals and Common Seal Pups 21
- Photos, Albums and Identifications 21
- Ex rescued, Rehabilitated and Released Seals 23
- Entangled Seals 24
- Disturbance 24

Policy and Conservation Actions 26

- Consultations 26
- Legislation 27
- Campaigns 28
- Practical Conservation Actions 29

Conclusion 31

Summary

2022 proved another transformational year for SRT, which ended with 1.3fte Marine Rangers – Lauren McGregor and Sarah Millward supporting the rest of our volunteer team. Kate Williams coordinated our amazing Photo ID volunteer teams across the southwest and beyond. In 2022, we completed **632 activities for 27,857 beneficiaries**. This included 51 talks and 26 workshops with Sue delivering her first workshop in Asia. Key events included Operation Seabird Days, the SW Marine Ecosystems Conference, 2 'Discovering UK Seals' and writing and 'Ecology and Conservation' course. Thanks to Charlotte and Terry Carne we returned to face to face events (12). Sue ran online education for all ages from reception/primary/secondary (9) up to university groups. We ran 19 SRT Boat Photo ID Project Surveys. We had 308 meetings with politicians, TV presenters/researchers, statutory agencies, businesses, artists and other charities. 30 reports written by the team shared the important seal data collected by our volunteers, along with 12 Seals SW Sessions (monthly online meetings), 11 Seals SW Newsletters and 4 Wild Seal Supporter/Adoption Updates. New resources included stickers, posters, graphics, the 'Lizard Seal Pack' and a 'good neighbours' toolkit. Seals featured in 39 media outputs on TV, radio and in the press (local and national).

Partner projects with the Brigstow Institute (Bristol and Southampton Universities) saw us successfully complete a 'Space for Seals' project and the University of Bristol project began our 'Deep Leaning Computer Vision' work. The Debs Foundation funded ground-breaking PCB analysis of 7 adult male seal samples from the Cornwall Marine Pathology Team, finding 6 to have PCB levels above the low threshold for toxic effects and 3 above the high threshold, showing more research is urgently needed to discover its immunosuppression and reproductive effects on seals. We printed 22,000 more Seal Alliance 'Watching Seals Well' leaflets and 25 more 'Give Seals Space' signs for national distribution. Sue and Dan Jarvis are Wildlife Safe Scheme Steering Group members and delivered a Standard and Adventure course for 44 participants. We got some great feedback from our many and varied events.

Seal data from 4718 discrete surveys (13 every day) was collected by 263 different volunteers at 362 locations. An average of 10 seals were recorded per survey with a max of 519 seals on 1 survey (down from 557). 70% of seals were adults of which 56% were males. White coated pups were recorded 530 times at 40 locations (including 46 sightings at 15 south coast sites). Pups were 1% of all seals recorded. There were 29 Common seal sightings (down from 85 in 2021) with the 2nd successfully weaned Common pup recorded. We processed 121,756 photos for 12,107 seal IDs, 87% of which were re-IDs (Max 150 IDs in 1 survey). 7 seals we first met in 2000 were still alive in 2022 with 3765 unique seal IDs in total. We recorded 181 tagged seals and 124 entangled seals with an emerging issue of hooked seals. 1393 seals were seriously disturbed in 223 incidents (max 272 caused by a 7 min hail storm).

SRT submitted 29 **public consultations** and **campaigned with the Seal Alliance** to get seal disturbance made illegal and flying rings replaced with solid discs. We partnered with governing bodies to share our key messaging and provided expert input for multiple statutory agencies. Our incredible volunteers took lots of effective practical conservation actions with landowners, local groups, statutory agencies, authors and NGOs to make our sensitive seal sites safer for seals. It has been an utterly fabulous year for us all and an epic team effort.

Seal Research Trust (SRT) est. Cornwall 2000

Annual Report 2022

Funders

Our ambition is to transform SRT into a self-financing charity, funding our low overheads from **corporate and private donations**, through our **Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme, volunteer fundraising efforts** and with **profits from our online shop**. Whilst we still benefitted from a substantial donation from the **Seal Protection Action Group**, our biggest donation in 2022 came from proactive fundraising activities led by the **Carbis Bay Estate**. Other corporate donations were gratefully received from the **Animal Friends, Aspects Holidays, Bowgie Inn, Hairstory, LUSH Cosmetics, Mungo Lils on the Hill, Ourselves** (a 1% for the Planet partner) and **Smartie Lids on the Beach**. We were delighted when the **Humane Society International** contacted us to fund some rescue, rehab and release case studies and our film about climate change increasing the number of seals in need of rescue. The charter and administration costs for two of our Marine Life and Human Activity Boat Surveys were funded by **Polzeath Voluntary Marine Group** and **Our Only World**. Thank you to the **Brigstow Institute at Bristol University** who funded our 'Space for Seals' project. In addition, we were fortunate to receive lots of smaller donations from members of the public, our volunteers and supporters without whom we could not operate effectively. Thank you to Hayley Mitchell who joined as our **Seal Supporter Coordinator** and who ran three **Jumblebee fundraising auctions** for seals in April, August and December 2022. It was a great team effort – thank you! As a highly agile, thrifty and economical charity, Rangers continue to be our charity's main outgoing alongside boat charters and some modest IT hardware/software application costs.

SRT2022 Funders

People

Patron, Marine Rangers and Science Advisor

2022 proved to be another transformational year for SRT. **Gillian Burke** (Springwatch) continues to be our charity **Patron** and we were delighted to host a field visit catch up with Gillian in November. We began with 4 paid rangers at the start of 2022, but as Marion Beaulieu, our long term **Amazement and Discovery Ranger,** departed with substantial notice and Katie Bellman, our **Research Ranger,** and Charlie Gill, our **Marine Stories Ranger,** both moved onto full time positions, our charity Trustees took the opportunity to plan a substantial restructuring programme to ensure our charity was focused on delivering our mission and core purposes going forward. Tash Murch supported our team as our **Marine Stories Ranger** for a lot of the year until she too secured a full time job. We continued to learn from our **Retail Ranger** Emily Williams' experience as she returned from maternity leave for a few weeks, before she was head hunted for a more lucrative position. By the end of 2021, it had become apparent that we were in need of administrative support, so after a recruitment process at the end of 2021, we were delighted to contract Lauren McGregor as our first **Activities and Administration Ranger** as ongoing support. Lauren (aka Loz) has been a fabulous addition to our long-term Ranger Team turning her hand to almost anything from our IT Network, managing our online shop and scheduling our social media to supporting events with resource preparation and a million and one other tasks in between. Throughout 2022, Sarah Millward continued as our ongoing and long-term **Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger**. So, we ended 2022 with Sarah and Lauren in their 1.3 full time equivalent roles. We were very grateful that Polly Ford joined us as our **Retail Ranger** at short notice for a short period before Christmas to help us fulfil the influx of shop orders we received. Rebecca Allen continues to be our volunteer **Science Advisor** helping us with numerous data analyses during the year. We are thankful and glad these wonderful ladies plan to stay with us for the long term as our awesome core team.

We faced a few **health challenges in 2022**. Our Founder and Director Sue Sayer had a takotsubo post-menopausal stress heart attack during an entangled seal rescue on 25/04/22. After 10 days in hospital her heart, arteries and ejection fraction were all deemed healthy and normal. Huge thanks from Sue to the rest of SRT's Ranger and Volunteer team for rallying round during this time to seamlessly sustain our seal conservation activities! The team also pulled together in response to circumstances for Sarah, our Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger, and after our Activities and Administration Ranger, Lauren, was diagnosed with breast cancer. We are delighted that Sarah is now fully recovered, and, after Lauren's successful operation and radiotherapy treatment, she has been able to re-join the team in a managed return to work from home and then in the office. Thank you once again to everyone for ensuring that these times did not impact our data or important conservation work.

Hubs

In 2022 SRT restructured our work into **45 Photo ID Catalogues,** despite adding a few new ones across the southwest from **South Wales to Hampshire**. The catalogues are run by dedicated volunteers led by our amazing **Photo ID Hub Coordinator** Kate Williams. These teams communicate with each other through our **Facebook Workplace Platform** (free for

charities). This allows us to share new seal IDs, so we can make matches between the different Photo ID catalogues. We also share engagement wording, approach and tone to help us with effective conservation actions which avoids us all duplicating effort by reinventing wheels.

Volunteers

Our charity continues to exist and function effectively thanks to the generous, ongoing and long term contributions made by **multiple hub, administrative and specialist key volunteers**. We are hugely grateful to every single one of our amazing volunteers who are too numerous to name individually. Between them our volunteers:

- Survey from land and sea
- Process photos into survey albums
- Make IDs, confirm IDs and manage Photo ID catalogues
- Digitise and analyse data
- Report write
- Act as eyes and ears for change around their patch of coast
- Champion seals with the public by being ambassadors for the species
- Inspire others with their ongoing energy and enthusiasm
- Help upskill and empower others through training or shared resources
- Fundraise or support our charity financially
- Advocate for seals at a huge variety of public, private and voluntary meetings
- Arrange and deliver numerous events at varying venues
- Take conservation actions to make the coast safer for seals.

Looe volunteer survey team

Charity Achievements and Activities

In total our extensive SRT team organised, delivered and participated in **632 activities** in 2022 to give seals a voice and share key conservation messages with a much wider audience by delivering more events online than ever before.

Summary

We even improved on 2021 as SRT's 2022 activities at least doubled our **reach**. Whilst most activities were based in **Cornwall**, we spread our influence further online with **201 UK** and **38 global events**!

In 2022, our **activity beneficiaries** totalled an impressive **27,857 people**. This included **3,568 0 to 16 year olds** (up from 132 in 2021); **1,145 17 to 24 year olds** (up from 375 in 2021) and **23,144 25+ year olds** (up from 12,749 in 2021). This is a massive achievement considering our Ranger team has shrunk by half. This shows just how much our volunteer team have stepped up, been empowered and taken on the role of public engagement. It has been wonderful to see key volunteers thrive, stepping out of their comfort zone to be wonderful ambassadors and advocates for the seals they love so much. Thank you to each and every one of them!

Our **social media** engagement also expanded in 2022 with at least one post a day across all four of our online platforms:

- **Facebook** followers 8,182 (up from 7,647 in 2021); reach 386,230; best post 23,327 reach
- **Instagram** followers 5,817 (up from 5,393 in 2021); reach 137,812; best post 8,586 reach
- **Twitter** followers 1,683 (up from 1,386 in 2021)
- **Linkedin** followers 653 (up from 0 in 2021).

By the end of 2022 we had gained **1,909 more followers**.
Increasing social media and YouTube channel engagement will be a key target for 2023.

SRT Activities in 2022 included:

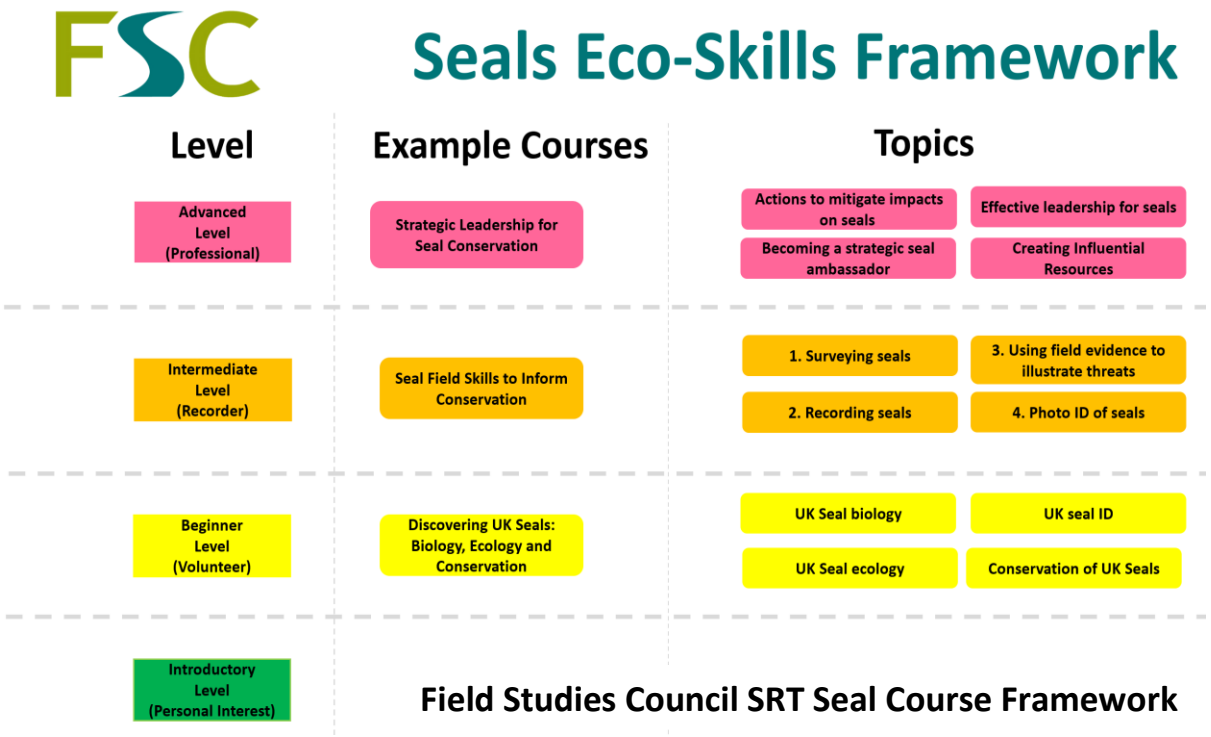
Talks: 51 (almost 1 a week)

We organised and delivered **51 talks** for a wide range of different audiences. A highlight for 2022 saw Sue Sayer deliver **our first talk in Asia** where we were invited to present on behalf of the **Global Ghost Gear Initiative for their workshop at the 7th International Marine Debris Conference**. Needless to say this proved to be a rather late online session in the early hours of the morning! After this, Sue was invited to repeat her presentation for the global **Pinniped Entanglement Group organised from the US**. At both these events, Sue summarised SRT's long term lost fishing gear/entanglement research along with a summary of our most recent 2021 entanglement data. We were honoured to be invited by Nika Strok Underwood to deliver two online talks for **Teens and Friends United** (a nature based charitable organisation in Austria) that got major coverage, as well as providing input at Nika's nature group at Minerva Virtual Academy later in the year. We provided seal expertise input for various statutory agencies including **DEFRA**, the **Marine Mammal Disturbance Partnership**, the **Seal Network UK**, the **Welsh Rural Crime Police Conference** and **Cornwall Council's Fisheries Stakeholder Group**. As ever, SRT volunteers also gave talks at other high profile events in the UK such as the two major Seal Alliance events (our **Seal Masterclass** and **SharePoint Sessions**) and regionally at the **South West Marine Ecosystems Seal Webinar,** as well as for the **RENEW Parliament Conference** and the **YourShore Conference,** both in Cornwall. A key development in 2022, saw volunteers Charlotte and Terry Carne become our **Events Coordinators** to help

organise and deliver talks for SRT, in partnership with our ever wonderful volunteer speaker Rob Wells. Between them they delivered a number of face to face talks for groups such as the **Tregony over 50's Club, Falmouth Hotel, St Austell Young at Heart, Kenwyn Nursing Home and Looe Heritage Centre,** along with an exciting visit to talk on **Lundy Island** for the Landmark Trust. Sue continued to deliver online talks for groups nationally and regionally including the **Abingdon Naturalist Society, Tiverton Mid Devon Wildlife, Manx Wildlife Trust and Exeter University EcoSoc**. Whilst we cannot take any credit for these, we were delighted that Gareth Richards from the **Gower Seal Group** (who is also a valued SRT volunteer) delivered numerous talks on his patch for a range of audiences. These have not been included in our totals.

Workshops/Training: 26 (1 a fortnight)

We were very excited in 2022 to partner up with the **Field Studies Council (FSC)** to create a new course for their **online Ecoskills programme**. Sue's first job at 18 was working as a cleaner to the FSC in Somerset, so this felt like going back to her roots! Sue wrote and resourced the course **'Discovering UK Seals'** ready for its first run through in June and got off to a flying start thanks to a group booking by Friends of Horsey Seals. It then re-ran in August with a group booking for Norfolk Seal Group. Participants spent a minimum of 2 to 3 hours a week online with a weekly zoom session with Sue and the courses lasted 4 weeks each, covering **Biology, Ecology, Species ID and Conservation**. So far we've had **101 course participants** add to their knowledge base about seals. Sue thoroughly enjoyed delivering these courses and cannot thank the FSC's Bek Trehern enough for inviting and supporting us to run this Ecoskills course.



Field Studies Council SRT Seal Course Framework

SRT were also invited by the **Cornwall Marine Network's Cornwall Marine Academy (CMA)** to design, write and resource an **Ecology and Conservation Course** for the 'Not in Education and Training' cohort of students. Sue enjoyed writing this for the team supported by Ranger

Tash. CMA's project lead Joe's feedback was glowing: '*I think it's brilliant! Very engaging with a lot of useful and relevant activities, whilst hitting the assessment criteria. The course can be both delivered online and face to face and easily adapted, which I like. Thank you!*'.

Our **ongoing, free, on demand, online volunteer training** continued to be popular with **25 new sign ups** in 2022. As ever, we continued to deliver online PID sessions for Hubs requesting support and skills training or in field training by our volunteer team across a range of survey sites. Huge thanks to all our volunteers who have spread the word so effectively and recruited new Hub team members. You are a wonderful asset to our seal team!

Sue had the idea in 2022 to start delivering free **Seal Masterclasses** for individuals or teams in a range of organisations and ran the first one in November with the **Marine Management Organisation**. British Divers Marine Life Rescue also partnered with us as we hosted two **Vet Interns on a field visit to West Cornwall** for them to learn about all things wild sealy! We were especially proud that one of them was Jas Gregory, who had helped her father Martin write the seal reports for Looe Island for many years before even starting her Vet Training in Bristol. We continued our ongoing delivery of Higher Education Workshops for degree and masters students running sessions for **Cornwall College Newquay and Plymouth University**.

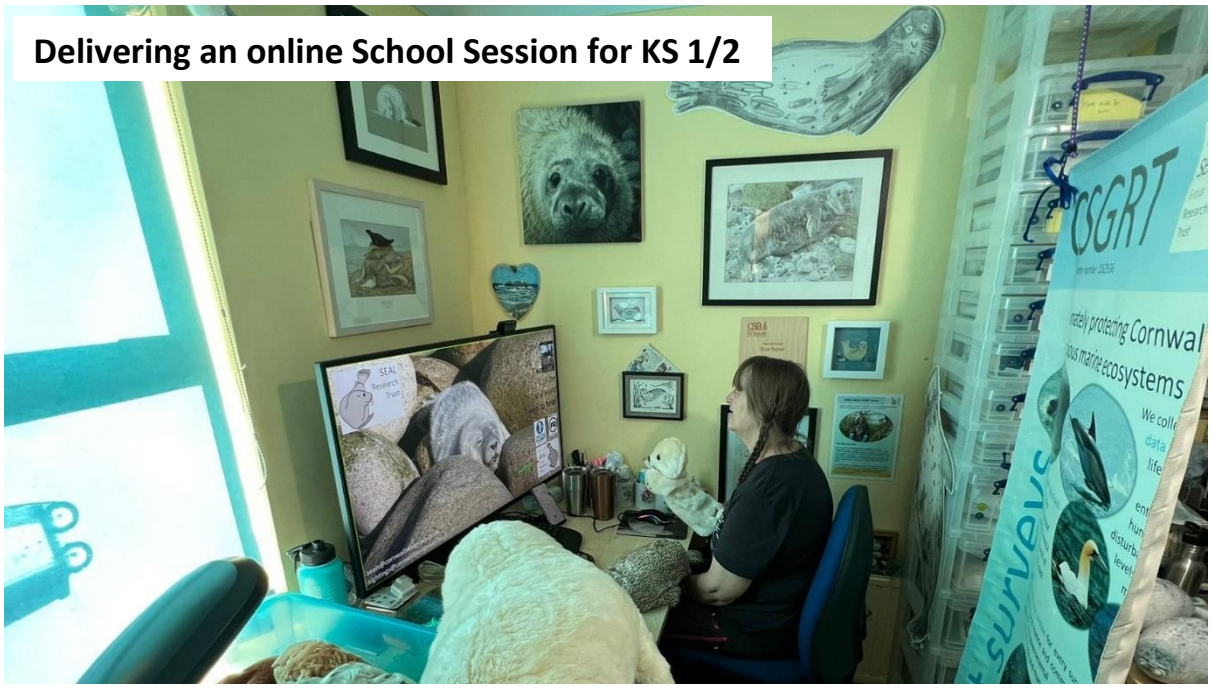
Our team upskilled too as we celebrated **Sarah Millward completing her 'Principles of Team Leading Level 2 Qualification'**. Sue learned from courses on **'Perfectionism', 'Building an Online Presence' and 'Effective Time Management'**. She also shared her learning on how to be a Productivity Ninja, putting her new skills into practice managing emails to keep her inbox clear and understanding the purpose/processes needed to run effective meetings. We still run **Crowdfunder training** about how to run a successful campaign. This was shared with **Newquay Wild Activities**.

Stalls/Events: 12

Thanks to Charlotte and Terry Carne taking on their volunteer Event Coordinator roles, supported by Ranger Lauren, SRT were able to take part in more face to face public events in 2022. Between them they orchestrated a wonderful team of volunteers to attend events at the **Cornish Seal Sanctuary, St Piran's Day, Operation Seabird's launch** at Godrevy and then later in the year at **Looe, Mount's Bay Marine Group's event at Gwennap, ASDA Bodmin's** charity stall, **Eden's Freshers Fayre** and **the Screech Owl Sanctuary's Open Day**. It is funny how the world works, as Charlotte has since secured herself a fab job working at the Screech Owl Sanctuary. Congratulations! Charlotte still volunteers with us running events – win win! By far the most innovative event for us was sending **Gracie the grey seal, made out of lost fishing gear by Emily Barker, to Wadebridge** to appear in a shop window along with a display about marine plastics by **Michelle Costello from Smartie Lids on the beach**.

Field Engagement: 152 (plus frequent conversations held by Claire the Looe Island Warden)

Whilst out surveying, our enthusiastic volunteers frequently engage face-to-face with members of the public. These opportunities help to win hearts and minds to our shared seal conservation cause. People love hearing about the seals they are watching and celebrity seal stories. We began formally recording this in 2022 and in total, **29 of our inspiring volunteers** had conversations with **3,811 members of the public**. Thank you everyone for spreading the word at a time and in a place where people are interested and eager to learn.



School Sessions: 9

Educating the next generation in all things 'seals and marine conservation' is key. Ranger Emily Williams and Vice Chair Kate Hockley delivered two face to face sessions for **Penpol School**, whilst Sue addressed **Trevithick School** pupils during a chance encounter up on the cliffs at West Cornwall. Despite lacking Ranger capacity, volunteers Emma Wright and Sue Sayer delivered more school input in 2022. Emma ran face to face sessions with **Nansledan**

School and the **1st Newquay Beaver Group**, whilst Sue covered the online school sessions for **Sennen** and **Roskear School** in Cornwall, as well as **Lawn Primary School in Swindon** and **Oatlands School in Harrogate**. Do tell your local school that we can do online talks for them!

Photo ID Project (PIP) organised day long surveys: 19

We were delighted to complete **10 day-long, systematic, boat-based Photo ID transect surveys** (CASPIP, STAPIP and POLPIP) along a 115km stretch of the north Cornish coast involving a total of **110 volunteers**. We also successfully completed **9 Looe Island Photo ID Project (LISPIP)** surveys undertaken by **76 volunteers**.

Hardy volunteer boat survey team

Meetings: 308

These multiple and varied meetings involved lots of us and a huge range of people from all walks of life, including **Politicians** (George Eustice) and **Statutory agencies** (Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Cornwall Marine Liaison Group, DEFRA, Devon and Cornwall Police, Natural England, Marine Management Organisation, Marine Mammal Disturbance Partnership, Marine Partnership Against Wildlife Crime, N. Yorkshire Police, Operation Seabird, Operation Seabird Cymru, Seal Network UK, South West Coast Path Association and Wildlife LINK). We partnered with several **Higher Education institutes** (Cornwall College Newquay, University of Bristol, University of Exeter, Oxford University, Plymouth University and the University of Southampton); **Students** (Alex, Ellie, Freya, Laura, Matilda and Rebecca); **Businesses** (Angling Trust, APEM, Attic Design and Print, Bowgie Inn, Carbis Bay Estate, Cornwall FLOW, Cornwall Marine Network/Academy, Crown Estate, FlowmoCo, MacSalvors, MDL Marinas, Microsoft, Primary PC, Sealife Conservation Tours and Total Training) and **Artists** (Chapel Street Gallery, Cornish Jewellery Company, Elspeth Stevenson, Emily Barker, Lindsey Keates, Lucy Leach, Mungo Lils on the Hill, Rosie Sherwood, Rosalyn Cook, Smartie Lids on the Beach and Tormark Press), as well as numerous **Charitable organisations** (Angel Bay Seal Group, BDMLR, Clean Ocean Sailing, Cornish Seal Sanctuary,

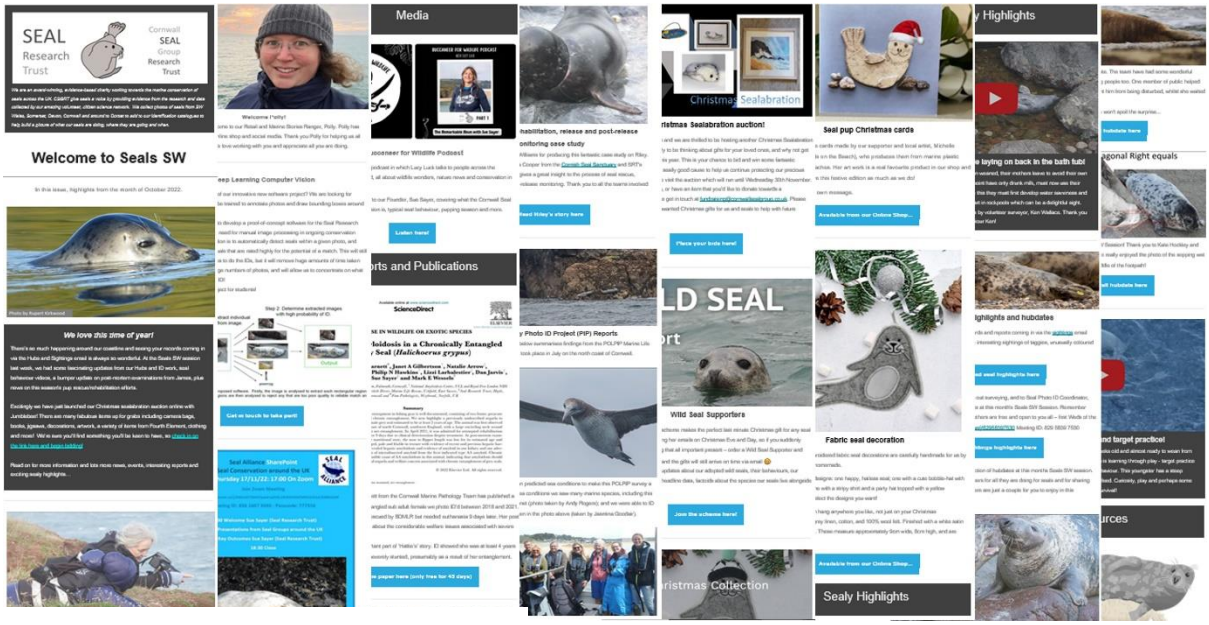
Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group, Cornwall and Devon Wildlife Trusts, Field Studies Council, Global Ghost Gear Initiative, Hayle Towans Partnership, Marine Animal Rescue Coalition, National Trust, N. Devon Marine Nature Recovery Plan, Pinniped Entanglement Group, RNLI, RSPB, RSPCA, Seal Alliance member groups, SW Marine Ecosystems, Teens and Friend United, Wight Biodiversity and the Wildlife Safe Scheme).

Reports: 30

Our amazing team collated data to write reports including **6 CASPIP reports** (2 of which were catch ups from the previous year) by Sarah Millward; **4 STAPIP reports** (1 caught up from 2021) by Mike Taylor; **4 POLPIP reports** (including 1 from 2021) by Sarah Millward and **9 LISPIP** reports by Martin Gregory. In addition, we published our **SRT Annual report for 2021** along with **the SW Marine Ecosystems Report on Seals for 2021**, both written by Sue Sayer; a **People Protecting Precious Places** report by Katie Bellman, as well as a **Green Recovery Challenge Fund project evaluation report** written and submitted by Sue Sayer. We also finally completed an **evaluation report for the LUSH Cosmetics funding** we received for the boat PIP surveys. Dr Mel Broadhurst (our Channel Isles volunteer) compiled our **2021 Census report** and, in addition, Mairi Young prepared a **summary for the North Cornwall Hub for 2020** and Catrin Ferguson wrote a **summary for the North Devon Hub for 2020.** Thank you ladies!

Seal SW Session: 12, Seal SW Newsletters: 11 and Wild Seal Supporter Updates: 4

Sue continues to deliver our monthly online **Seal SW Session for up to 50 people**, although Dan Jarvis ably stepped in to deliver the presentation Sue prepared from hospital for the May meeting. Our monthly presentations are a vital archive of all our charity's ongoing key activities. Ranger Sarah compiled and circulated **11 Seal SW Newsletters**. Our circulation list grew by 237 during 2022 to **1,027 subscribers**. Director Sue wrote **4 Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme Updates** which went to **179 recipients (up from 126 at the start of the year),** which summarise exclusive information about our adopted seals each quarter.



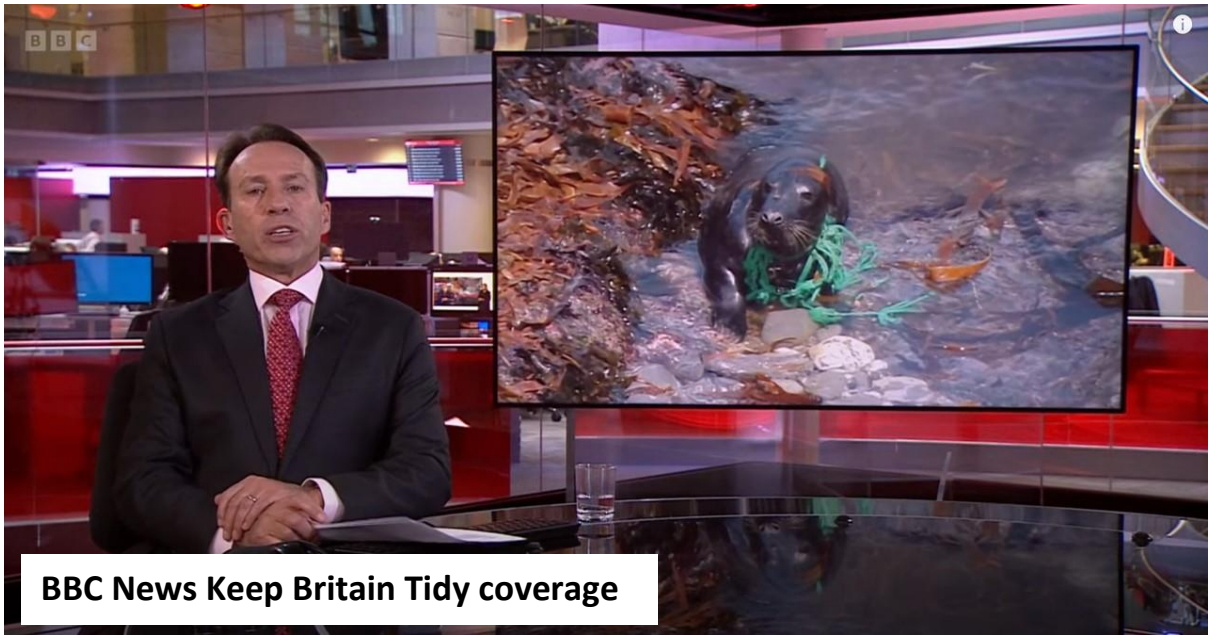
Seals SW Newsletter example

Resources: 5

The wonderfully active and ambitious Lizard Seal Hub planned, designed and funded a brand new **Lizard Seal Pack and Stickers** that can be purchased from Mungo Lils on the Hill for a minimum donation of £2. Volunteer Cliff Davies from the Looe Marine Conservation Group and our Looe PID Hub lead designed **Watercraft Stickers** outlining best practice around seals (see page 27). Volunteer Aidan Botha created a **wonderful poster and social media graphic** for our Flying Rings campaign (see page 27). In March the wonderful **Behaviour Change Cornwall** created some clear and attractive graphics for our **Give Seals Space campaign,** which have proved extremely popular and been used by lots of other organisations. A **'Good neighbours' toolkit** was also developed as part of our 'Space for Seals' project (see page 13).

Media Coverage: 39

Our media coverage was extensive and began early in 2022, as **BBC Radio Cornwall covered Sue's 60th birthday fundraiser** that eventually generated an incredible £1,486. Thank you to everyone who donated so generously. Other coverage included: The **Seal Alliance Open Letter to the UK Government** calling for seal disturbance to be made illegal (as with whales and dolphins) which was covered by **BBC Spotlight** featuring Sue, Tash Murch and Billy Nason, as well as being run by **Pirate FM**. In February Sue was **Julia Skentelbery's Big Guest on BBC Radio Cornwall**. They also publicised our **St Ives Bay Stakeholder Group meeting**. Our **Annual Report** was shared by **Cornwall Marine Network, BBC Radio Cornwall and Bodmin College**. In July we had two requests from the **BBC Natural History Unit** for expert input into **Planet Earth III** and **Wild Scandinavia**. **BBC Radio Cornwall** again covered the release of the **SW Marine Ecosystems report** focusing on our input on seals.



BBC News Keep Britain Tidy coverage

Our partners at the **Pinniped Entanglement Group** continue to cover our stories **tracking entangled seal wounds** over the long term and **Wild Roseland** wrote an article about **Watching Seals Well** whilst **Bob Bate from Islands Radio** wanted his listeners to hear all about our collaborative efforts in the **Give Seals Space campaign**. By October Sue Sayer recorded her first ever **Podcast**, which turned into two, presented by **Lucy Luck from Buccaneer for**

Wildlife. Later that month we were contacted by **Keep Britain Tidy** and their **Ocean Recovery Project** who wanted to feature our work on the **impacts of lost fishing gear on seals**. This led to national coverage on the **BBC News** as well as regional coverage by **BBC Spotlight**. Not surprisingly, as soon as the press release embargo was lifted about **Sue's MBE**, she was asked for interviews by **BBC Spotlight, the Packet** and **West Briton Newspapers** and **Pirate FM**.

Brigstow Institute Seedcorn Fund: Space for Seals Project

In 2022, thanks to an application by **Leah Trigg at the University of Bristol**, we gained modest funding to explore the **relationship between seals and people**. We aimed to promote ethical relationships focusing on care and responsibility. We wanted to identify novel and engaging methods of communication and intervention. The delivery team included **Leah, Emma Rowe and Paul Hurley from Southampton University** and we enlisted a student **Beca Phillips**. Between March and June, the project delivered **two free workshops for stakeholders** at the **Carbis Bay Hotel** to explore and understand our varied and different perspectives of seals and the sea. The project team took part in **public tripper boat visits** to the key sensitive seal sites to experience first-hand public interactions with, and responses to, seals. Beca conducted a **literature review** about seal and human interactions and **interviewed members of the public** at two contrasting sites on either side of the Bay – in the town of St Ives and on the wild headland at Godrevy. The workshop saw participants engaging in a sensory way with their environment as they approached the sea, followed by a creative activity of building a life-sized seal on the beach before releasing it back into the ocean. This was followed by an exploration of the issues, thoughts and relationships we all have with our wider environment. Key outcomes from the project were two-fold...SRT were able to develop a **manifesto for seals**...a list of things seals need from us. This flipped perspective (from what we need to give seals) is transformational and forms a solid focus for all our conservation work going forward.

Space for Seals graphics

A second outcome was the idea that seals need us to be **good neighbours**. Workshop participants delved deeper into the concept of good neighbours and in doing so, the idea of a tangible asset emerged from the project.

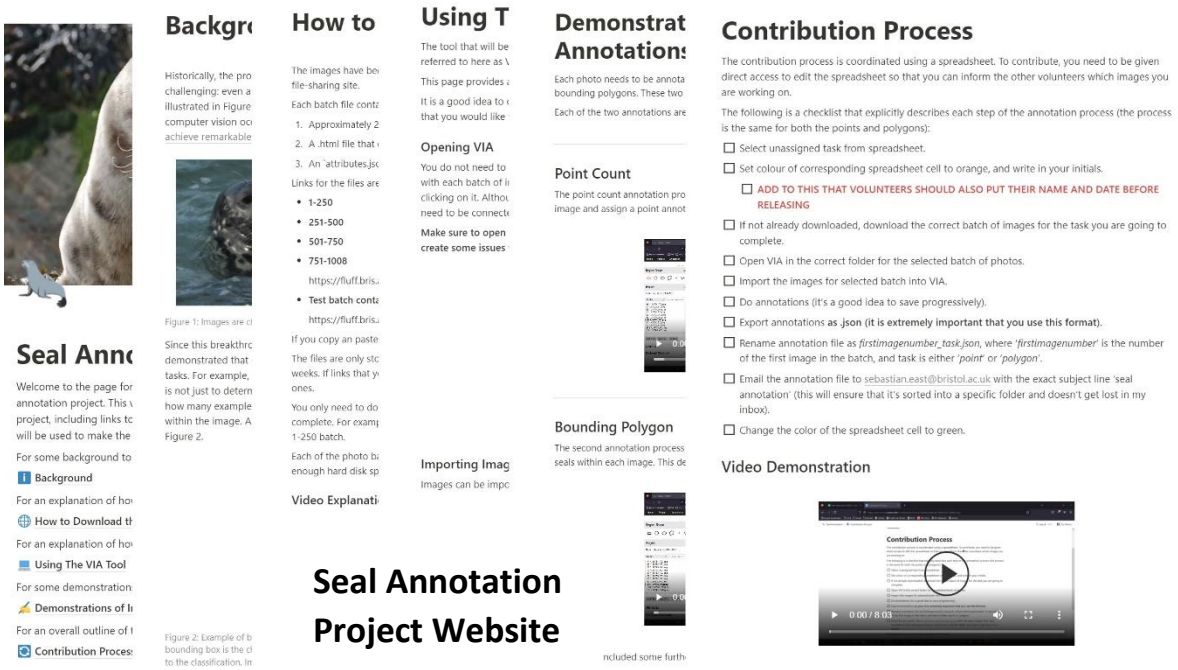
A fabulous artist **Sam Church** was enlisted to create a series of six cartoon like images around the concept of nuisance neighbours, illustrating what some of our human relationships are like with seals currently, with a take home ask of being a good neighbour. SRT have rarely used humour as part of our messaging, so this was an exciting development to potentially engage new audiences as a direct result of the project. Sam kindly worked the graphics into two formats – **a poster,** alongside **six individual standalone social media graphics,** forming our **'Good neighbours' tool kit** illustrating the following desired behaviours to help seals:

- It is a good idea to NOT stop and stare
- Keep quiet around seals
- Give seals more space
- Mums/pups can easily be scared by us
- It is best to stay off beaches used by seals
- Never feed wild seals.

For us the **'Space for Seals' project revolutionised our thinking and perspectives about stakeholder interactions with seals** in the wild that has fundamentally shifted our messaging and broadened our understanding of what effective communication looks like.

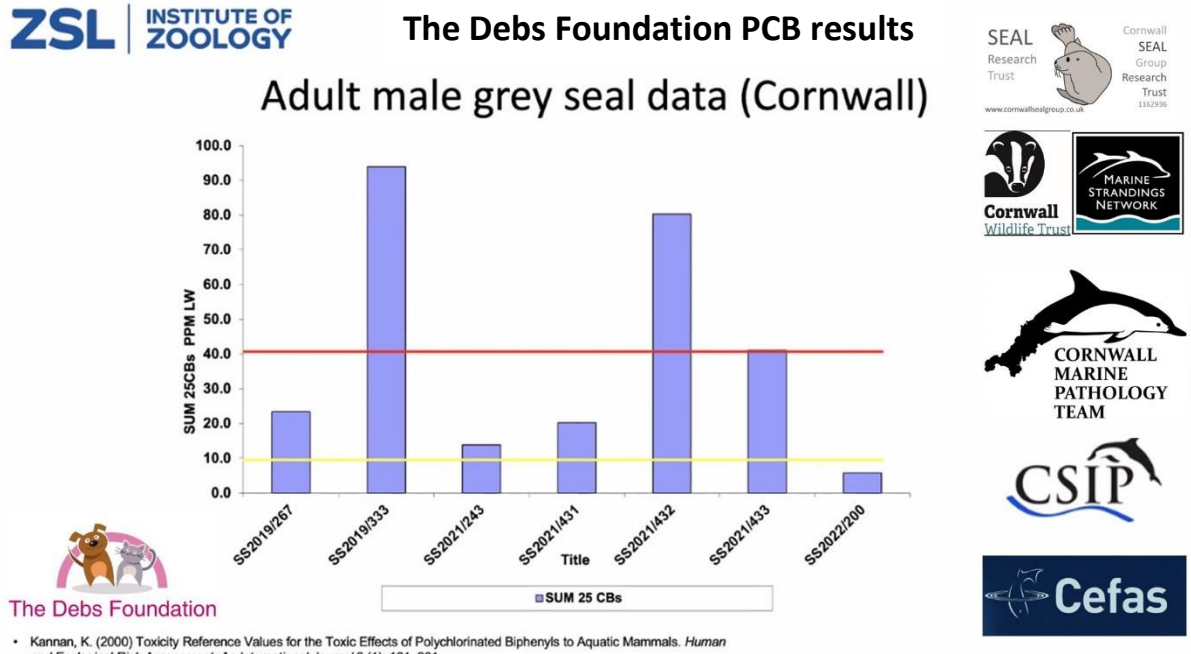
Deep Learning Computer Vision Project

2022 saw us team up with **Seb East from the University of Bristol** to develop a long term, three-phase project aimed at the development of **bespoke automated photo ID software** for SRT. Phase 1 saw us recruit volunteers to **point count** and **draw bounding polygons around seals** in **1000 survey photos**. We are excited to see where this project will lead but phase 1 has the potential to **auto extract seal images** from our survey photos, potentially saving albumising volunteers lots of hours of manual processing at some of the larger seal sites!



The Debs Foundation PCB Project

Early in 2022, we were approached by **David Gittison from the Debs Foundation** about a potential seal project they might like to fund. We immediately contacted our partners at **British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR)** and the **Cornwall Marine Pathology Team** about the possibility of asking the Debs Foundation to fund **seal sample analysis for PCBs**. They said yes! **Vet pathologist James Barnett** partnered with the **Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP)** to get 7 samples taken from dead adult male seals in Cornwall sent off to **CEFAS** for PCB analysis. The results showed what we had long theorised as **6 of the 7 seals sampled had PCB levels above the low threshold for toxic effects** and **3 had PCB levels above the high threshold for toxic effects**. This suggests that these seals might have had **reduced reproductivity** and be **potentially immuno suppressed**. The results surprised CSIP who are now looking for funding to progress this work further. Watch this space.



- Kannan, K. (2000) Toxicity Reference Values for the Toxic Effects of Polychlorinated Biphenyls to Aquatic Mammals. *Human and Ecological Risk Assessment: An International Journal* 6 (1): 181–201.

People Protecting Precious Places Project Follow Up

In 2022, thanks to funding from the **Seal Protection Action Group**, SRT printed another **22,000 Watching Seals Well leaflets,** bringing the overall total to **86,000 leaflets** that have been distributed nationwide. An additional **25 laminated metal Give Seals Space signs** were also requested by groups across Wales and the SW, bringing the total number of signs distributed to over **130**. We also freely shared the printable artwork so people and organisations could print, erect or distribute themselves as well, so we really have no idea exactly how many signs are actually up around the UK. This campaign has been hugely successful and will surely have made a **substantial contribution to mitigating seal disturbance nationally**.

Wildlife Safe (WISE) Courses

SRT's Sue Sayer helped to deliver the **seal and seabird** input during **two Wildlife Safe Scheme (WiSe) online courses** in 2022 – for the **Standard Boat Operator** course and the newer **Adventure** course. The **SW Standard Boat** online course over 2 nights finished on 17/03/22

with **14 attendees**, whilst the **Adventure** course (also over 2 nights on 24/03/22) was undertaken by **30 participants**. Sue and Dan from SRT's steering group are key members of the **WiSe Steering Group** and course deliverers.

Feedback about SRT Activities (don't just take our word for it!)

We always do our best to present exciting, interesting and informative input about seals in a multiplicity of ways. We deliver this to a huge variety of different audiences ranging from statutory agency consultations to schools. This is all aimed at promoting peoples' understanding about, and appreciation of, our heritage seals and their precious marine habitat. **We always ask for honest feedback from participants and organisers** about what went well and what we need to improve on. Our delivery team got some lovely feedback in 2022, some of which is listed below:

- *I loved your presentation at the Fisheries meeting, although actually I suppose loved is not the correct word, more that I found it hugely informative and interesting*
- *We included reference to your two publicly available disturbance reports. Thank you for all you do to collect the data and compile the reports, they are vital evidence in consultations like this (Natural England)*
- *I ordered the cuddly seal for my friend's 5yr old daughter for her birthday and she LOVES it! To the point that it's carefully wrapped in a mermaid towel and she asks her Mum to seal babysit if she has to leave him!*
- *This is an official mega THANK YOU for creating the fab presentation for Saturday's conference in amongst everything else you have going on! It was wonderful and, once again, showed how important people's sightings and data are to pull together stories about a species ecology that we otherwise would not be learning about*
- *A fantastic talk. Educational and very engaging with a powerful message about disturbance*
- *What a pleasure it was to listen to you last night and watch your presentation. I think the combination of real-life stories of individual seals linked to real science was especially appealing. Of course, overlaid by the threats to these species and the precautions we should all make if we want to see them - you put this aspect over so well without leaving us with a feeling that we were being lectured, as so often happens. You really seemed to be enjoying giving the talk, which came over very clearly*
- *I've just had a minute to watch your Waterbear film .... loved it! Beautifully succinct but gets across everything needed*
- *Thank you so much for taking time out of your day to speak with us. The children said they really enjoyed it & learned a lot from it*
- *Your passion and knowledge shone through as ever but it was also great to hear an overview of all the progress you have influenced and directly made. Just wanted to say what a fantastic webinar that was this afternoon, you were absolutely brilliant!*
- *It was an amazing webinar! So happy to hear from so many passionate people - makes me very proud to be a part of all this*

- *Just wanted to say I can't thank you and Colin enough for allowing me onto the WISE course. Really enjoyed it, learnt loads, took 6 pages of notes and the time just flew by*
- *I am so glad that I am participating on this WISE course. Loved it….and the panellists are just great*
- *Thank you so much for an excellent WISE course, I will be recommending it to as many organisations as I can in our area*
- *Thanks for letting me join today, Sue. I always learn more every time! Love it!*
- *When I was accessing your resources, I noticed your link to the recorded SWME 2022 Seal Webinar - I just watched it .....fantastic by the way (as always)*
- *Thank you again for such an inspiring talk at our last meeting. More than 50 people attended the zoom for your presentation*
- *Great to meet you this morning and for loaning your binoculars. The kids really appreciated the photo you sent of the seal called 'Turtle' that we all saw*
- *Thank you so much for attending our careers fair. I know that the children really appreciated everyone who came in - as do I. There was a buzz about the school with children before and after the event and many felt inspired by things they had seen*
- *Thank you for the latest WSS updates - lots to read and inwardly digest! Thanks to all your team and volunteers for all they do to help protect these lovely animals and for all the research they contribute to*
- *I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed your talk the other evening on zoom. I'm not sure if it was recorded but there was so much in there that I would like to listen to it all over again!*
- *Thank you so much for your enthusiasm and passion - you made the FSC content so interesting. My first time doing a course and my first time using Zoom, so I was a bit nervous about feeling 'put on the spot' as I'm not too confident (flashback to school days!) but that certainly was not the case, as you were so friendly and welcoming*
- *Thank you so much for today and the attachments and info. I learnt a lot with you today and am inspired to learn more*
- *It was a pleasure to have you today, the children really enjoyed it and cannot wait to try some of the activities!*
- *Thank you again for the lovely talk and introducing TAFU to the world of seals! I learnt so much more and really enjoyed listening to your presentation and all the information*
- *I have already recommended the FSC course and will do so to whoever listens*
- *Thank you so much for my recent order. It's for my son's 13th birthday and he's absolutely loved seals since seeing them on Springwatch and reading Sue Sayer's book. I'm really impressed with all the info contained in the order which will really please my son who aims to be a marine biologist one day. He asked for something seal related for his birthday on condition that it helped towards seal rescue and care so this is perfect, thank you!*
- *Guys, no joke, the Seal Alliance Masterclass was the best/most complete seal talk I've attended! Touched every topic / incredible data*
- *Thank you for the PEG presentation Sue. Important info to spread around!*
- *Thanks again for your presentation at the RENEW Conference! It went down very well yesterday and provoked a lot of discussion. I had several people come up to me and make*

very positive comments on your talk and saying that they didn't realise the impact of disturbance, the point you made about seals travelling so far to find a new haul-out made a particular impact

- *I can't thank you enough for today. The children were absolutely buzzing and didn't stop talking about it all day. It was perfectly pitched and I think the children could have sat and listened to you all day! I will definitely be recommending you to all my colleagues*
- *Just wanted to say a huge thank you for last night. I really enjoyed it and learnt a lot. I already have two volunteers who are going to help format the seal photos for us*
- *Sue – gold nugget tips about Crowdfunding and thank you for recording it! Just watched it – so much useful info in there.*
- *Really enjoyed The Remarkable Ruen podcast episodes*
- *That was such a useful meeting last Thursday and I really enjoyed it. Thank you so much for all your hard work organising and presenting it. Thanks very much to all the presenters too. I've forwarded on the YouTube link to all my local contacts, plus some others who are interested in seal welfare*
- *I just wanted to say thank you so much for yesterday. It was wonderful to meet you and learn from you, excited to work together in the future!*
- *Really valuable insight for students. In the past it has encouraged them to get involved, fundraise, focus their own research etc*
- *This is the first time we have had a talk with Sue, but it was informative and child friendly. The children were engaged with every aspect of the session. They could recall the important information from the session. We have taught the children the implications of using plastic and littering, but the talk has put the issues to the forefront of their minds. I haven't seen them more excited! The photos and videos were amazing and the children now want to search for seals and their unique patterns! The children loved the seals and were astonished to see the consequence of a plastic frisbee and the impacts on this on the poor seal. The information was child friendly. They are now clued up on all things seals.*

We still to collect Survey Monkey responses about our input. This is people's feedback to:
Talks online

- The majority of participants (71%) started the session knowing little about seals and by the end the same proportion of people said they know a lot about seals
- Before the talk only 29% of participants thought seals were very interesting and this rose to 86% by the end of the session
- The majority of participants (86%) started the session knowing little or nothing about SRT and by the end of the input the same proportion of people said they knew a lot or a moderate amount about SRT
- Everyone (100%) found the talks very informative and enjoyed them; everyone (100%) reported being inspired to do something by the talks and thought it was a session worth doing again.

Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Packs

- 100% of respondents thought the process of joining the scheme was good or excellent

- 83% thought the pack was very good value
- 83% said they learned a lot from their Welcome Pack and the same proportion said they learned a lot from their Seasonal Updates and rated the content excellent
- 100% would recommend the WWS Scheme to friends and family.

Comments included:

- *Great pictures, with plenty of assurance as to how they were obtained. Lots of information on recent activity, reports on particular animals or sites*
- *It's absolutely brilliant*
- *Content is clearly developed with care and love*
- *Incredibly educational.*

Seal Data Outputs (reports included above)

Surveys and Volunteers

In 2022 we received records from **263 different volunteers,** from which we were able to process **4,718 discrete surveys** (an average of **13 site specific surveys each and every day**) from **362 different locations**. Our Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger, Sarah, coordinated our **quarterly SW Seal Census** of which all four were completed in January, April, July and October. Thank you to all our amazing volunteers who took part and made these possible.

Age and Sex Classes

On average 9.8 seals were recorded across our 4,718 surveys, ranging from a minimum of no seals observed to a **maximum of 519 seals** counted during a single survey (**down from 557 in 2021**). Of seals that we were able to classify according to their age, **70% were adults and 30% juveniles, moulted pups or white coated pups**. Only adults can be reliably sexed, so of all adults that we could confidently sex **56% were males and 44% females,** which is the exact same proportion as recorded in 2021.

White-coated pups by Peter Perkins

Grey Seal Pups

White-coated maternally dependent grey seal pups (WCPs) were recorded on **530 occasions at 40 different locations** around the southwest. This included **46 sightings** of white-coated seal pups recorded at **15 different sites** on the south coast of Cornwall and Devon. White-coated pups represented just over **1% of all seals** observed. The maximum number of white-coated pups recorded at a single site was 17 at North Cornwall East. 5 or more seal pups were recorded 23 times at 7 different pupping sites at **West Cornwall East** and at 3 sites in the **North Cornwall complex**. **LP316 Lucky bunting** a seal rescued in 2016 had her third pup, again at a safe and remote site away from human activity. Our world record breaking seal mum **S112 Ghost had her 19th pup in 20 years**, thank goodness, returning to her normal pupping site having breached her site fidelity tradition in 2021. **90% of the pups were born on north coast sites with 10% on the south coast.**

Common Seals and Common Seal Pups

Our observations included **29 common seal sightings** (down from 85 in 2021). Most were single individuals up to a **maximum of 3 individuals seen on the 09/01/22 in South Devon.** Common seals were recorded **at 12 different locations** all at south coast locations, as well as in South Devon. Most notable in 2022 was the exciting record of Cornwall's **second successfully weaned common seal pup observed with its mother Serena.** In 2021 Serena was the first common seal to successfully wean a pup in Cornwall since our records began. Again we worked closely with local operators to avoid anything being posted about this second historic pup online. Thank you to them for their wonderful cooperation!

Serena's second successfully weaned pup by Rupert Kirkwood

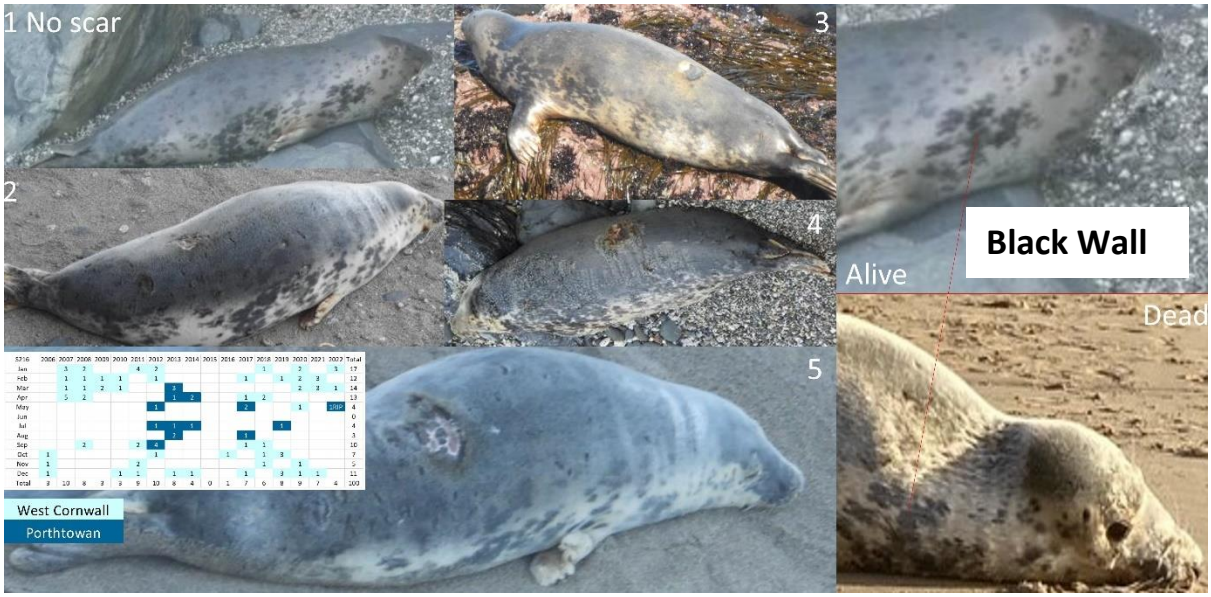
Photos, Albums and Identifications

Our PID Hubs continue to be highly productive, processing an incredible **121,756 photos** (103,900 taken in 2022 and 17,856 taken in previous years) in 2022 into **2,206 survey albums** (2,031 from 2022 and 175 from previous years). This enabled SRT to generate a total of **12,107**

seal identifications of which **87% were re-identifications** (which is surprisingly consistent compared to 87% in 2021 and 86% in 2020). This included our new maximum of **150 different individual seal identifications in a single survey** (8 more than our previous total in 2021) that were confirmed by two experienced volunteers. Over 100 different seals were identified on 4 separate surveys all at the West Cornwall site. Of all the seals re-identified, **7 were seals we first added to our catalogues back in 2000** (4 males S6/S7/S11/DP2 and 3 females S3/S4/S5) and **4** were seals that were **first identified in 2001 (all females** S16/S26/S31/S32**)**.

In total **3,765 unique seals** were identified in 2022. **9 seals from 4 sites were identified 20 or more times** and most of these were from the **Lizard, Roseland and North Devon,** as a reflection of the extremely frequent survey effort at these sites (all are surveyed on multiple days every week) and utterly incredible ID processing hubs. Well done everyone!

We continue to partner with the **Cornwall Wildlife Trust Marine Strandings Network** and in 2022 two adult females – **Black Wall and Tulip** were both identified from their carcasses. **Black Wall** had been recorded since 2006, so it had been interesting for us to see from our ID photographs how the wound she developed on her back had progressed over time, before healing. She was also post mortemed, with findings that suggest she could potentially have been live bycaught. **Tulip** was a celebrity seal having been first identified by us in 2002. She was likely nearly 30 years old, which is the average life expectancy for a female grey seal, and we celebrated the contribution she made to informing our knowledge of grey seal behavioural science. Having lost her own pup (on Ramsey Island or somewhere nearby), Tulip had the instinct to nurse and wean another pup separated from its mother in a storm on the island of Skomer (having never been identified there before!). Incredibly our last live sighting of Tulip was towards the end of January when she looked fit and healthy and by 09/02/2022 she was dead – just goes to show looks can be deceiving. Two additional dead tagged ex-rescue, rehab and released seals were also identified as **Whipcord** and **Jurgen**.



In 2022, we had an extraordinary seal visitor. **Seal 'number 75'** a female moulted pup who was rescued near Biarritz, rehabilitated by **Biarritz Aquarium** and released there on the

12/05/22. By 08/06/22 she was swimming in **Mounts Bay** where she was photographed by our intrepid volunteer Andrea Hunt. **75 had swum an incredible 800km in less than a month**.

Seals from Cornwall have now been linked to the Isle of Man (**450km north**), Northwest Wales, Southeast Ireland, Southwest and South Wales, the Isles of Scilly, Northwest France, Northern France, Southern France **(800km south)**, North and South Devon, Dorset, Belgium and Holland (**650km east**).

Ex-rescued, Rehabilitated and Released Seals

SRT 2022 data included **807 sightings** of **181 different rear flipper tagged, rehabilitated seals** (around **2% of all seals observed**) from all around our southwest coast. Most of our tagged seals would have been released in **North Devon** or from the **northwest/southwest Cornish coast** but there were three notable exceptions. '75' (see above) and 'Christine' were released in **France** and 'Crater' who was finally tracked down by our Roseland Hub Coordinator Kerstin Hartmann as having been released from **Courtown in SE Ireland**. He had 17 IDs on the Roseland in 2022.

A maximum of **13 different ex-rehabilitated** seals were recorded on one survey on 11/02/22 at West Cornwall by Sue Sayer and Kate Hockley. In 2022, 10 or more ex-rehabilitated seals were recorded in the same survey on 4 occasions – all at West Cornwall.

SRT continue to use the confidential Googlesheet created by Paul Oaten from **RSPCA West Hatch Wildlife Hospital** that logs all seal admissions and, in 2022, Katherine Thomas from the **Cornish Seal Sanctuary** has continued to deliver regular and excellent input at our monthly Seals SW Sessions. We are hugely grateful to **British Divers Marine Life Rescue** who of course undertake the majority of seal pup rescues and then triage and treat most of the seals rescued at their **Seal Pup Hospital** before they are transported elsewhere for longer term rehabilitation.

Entangled Seals

To balance our resightings of rescued, rehabilitated and released seals, which reflect a positive intervention by people, were our observations of seals that have experienced entanglement at some point in their lives. SRT record entangled seals as currently entangled or as ex entangled – the latter based on evidence of a healed wound and no visible entangling material. This can be harder to judge than might be imagined. Seals having experienced or still experiencing entanglement were recorded **860 times** during **419 surveys up to a maximum of 23 different individuals in a single survey** – recorded on 13/01/22 at West Cornwall by Sue Sayer and Kate Hockley. **10 or more different entangled seals were recorded 12 times, all at West Cornwall** during the year. This is the highest number of entangled seals recorded in a single survey since our records began. In total **124 unique entangled seals were identified** from our catalogues (down from our all-time high of 134 in 2021).

A new entanglement issue that emerged in late 2021 continued to be observed in 2022 – that of seals being **hooked in line** mostly from our local sustainable inshore mackerel fishery. In 2022, **24 different seals were recorded as hooked,** ranging from apparently single hooked adult seals to moulted pups in need of rescue. One pup subsequently was found to have **22 hooks removed by BDMLR**. We know from our long-term seal data that peak seal numbers have shifted earlier from March/April to December/January. In contrast, we have been told that the mackerel fishery has moved later in the year, from starting in the summer to **commencing in** November. This has created a **temporal and spatial overlap between the mackerel fishery and peak seal numbers** that never used to occur. This has presumably caused this **new and emerging issue**.

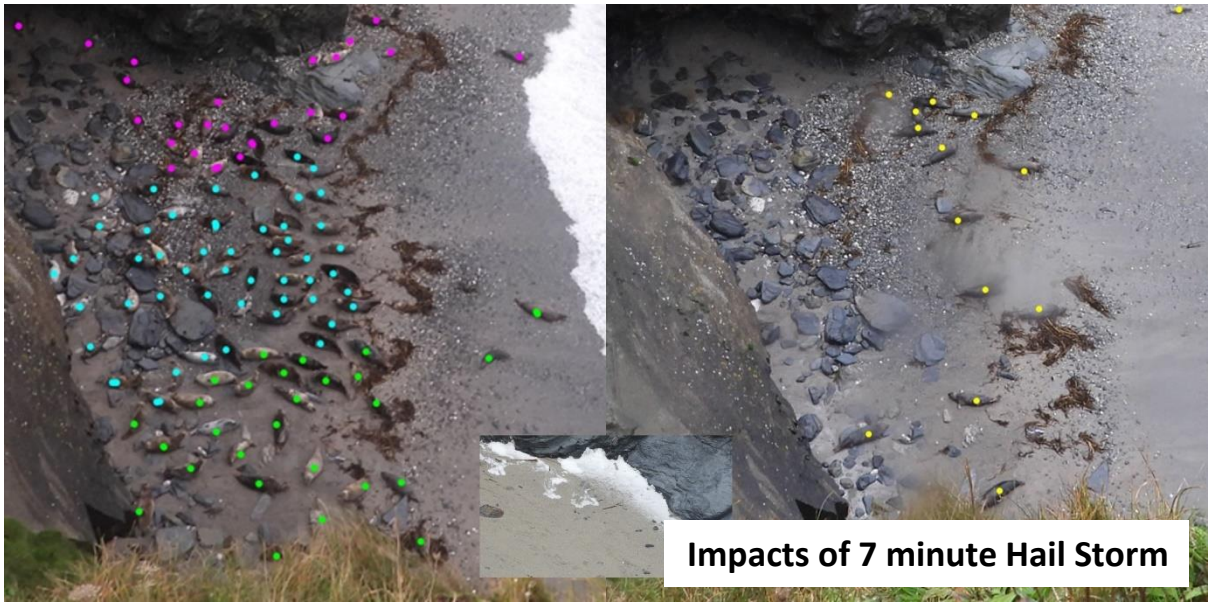
Hooked seal by Jeff Loveridge

SRT continue to share data and entangled seal experiences as members of the **Clean Catch UK National Steering Group** of which Sue and Dan Jarvis are members.

Bycatch includes the live entangled animals described above, who have most likely interacted with lost fishing gear. It also refers to dead seals accidentally caught up in live operational fishing gear. We were shocked to discover from the 2020 Special Committee on Seals report that **85% of all UK seal bycatch occurred in our southwest region** (ICES area VII).

Disturbance

From our routine data (not effort corrected) serious level 3 disturbance is described as seals leaving the land by tombstoning or in a stampede and entering the sea; crash diving at sea; displacement from sea areas where humans were present or seals being fed. There were **223 serious disturbance incidents**. In total **level 3 disturbance affected a shocking total of 1,393 seals in 2022**, from a minimum of 1 seal in one incident to an horrific **maximum of 272 seals on 17/11/22** at West Cornwall stampeding into the sea in a single incident. This was caused by a **7 minute hail storm**. The month before **37 out of 70 seals** had been seriously disturbed at West Cornwall during two back-to-back **hammering rain showers**, so it seems **climate change induced extreme weather events are adding to our already high levels of seal disturbance**.

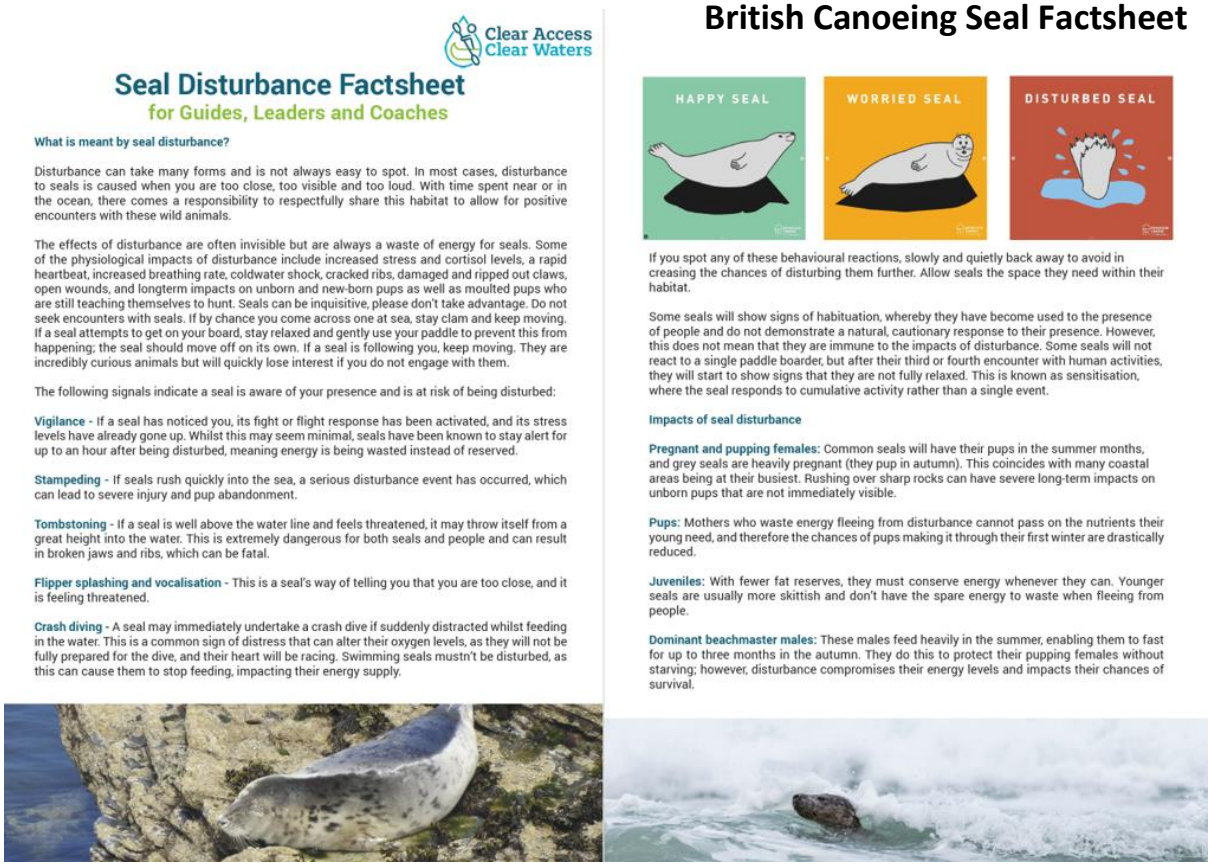


20 or more seals were seriously disturbed stampeding into the sea on **14 different occasions** at **4 different sensitive seals sites in North Cornwall, Pentire and West Cornwall**. At the **North Cornwall sites 66 seals** were recorded stampeding on 20/03/22 by Malcolm Baker, whilst at **Pentire 24 seals** stampeded into the sea on 08/10/22 recorded by Andy Rogers.

Where possible disturbance incidents are now routinely followed up by members of our newly formed volunteer **Conservation Team**. Case studies of disturbance and data continue to be shared with various statutory agencies including the **Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Natural England, Operation Seabird** and **DEFRA**. In 2022 Natural England provided a specific email address for SRT to report serious disturbance incidents within designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. This ensured audit trails and case studies could be built up as intelligence and evidence for potential action. In November 2022, the **Marine Management Organisation Marine Spatial Planning Team** requested SRT

disturbance data as part of their **SW Marine Plan Evaluation**. SRT's collated data from **2014 to 2021 showed an increase in serious seal disturbance incidents from 123 to 306 and seals seriously disturbed increased from 999 to 1,673**.

Whilst disturbance case studies are routinely shared in the majority of talks delivered by SRT, specific disturbance data has been presented to a variety of organisations including the **Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group, RENEW Parliament Conference, Plymouth University, The Welsh Police Mammals and EPS Wildlife Crime Group**, various governing bodies such as **British Canoeing** and **Kernow Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association,** as well as enforcement agencies such as **Natural England, Marine Partnership Against Wildlife Crime and Wildlife LINK**. We have also been collaborating with **Whale and Dolphin Conservation** to help them set up an effective and complementary disturbance recording system for their Shorewatch volunteer team.



Clear Access Clear Waters

Seal Disturbance Factsheet

for Guides, Leaders and Coaches

What is meant by seal disturbance?

Disturbance can take many forms and is not always easy to spot. In most cases, disturbance to seals is caused when you are too close, too visible and too loud. With time spent near or in the ocean, there comes a responsibility to respectfully share this habitat to allow for positive encounters with these wild animals.

The effects of disturbance are often invisible but are always a waste of energy for seals. Some of the physiological impacts of disturbance include increased stress and cortisol levels, a rapid heartbeat, increased breathing rate, coldwater shock, cracked ribs, damaged and ripped out claws, open wounds, and longterm impacts on unborn and new-born pups as well as moulted pups who are still teaching themselves to hunt. Seals can be inquisitive, please don't take advantage. Do not seek encounters with seals. If by chance you come across one at sea, stay clam and keep moving. If a seal attempts to get on your board, stay relaxed and gently use your paddle to prevent this from happening; the seal should move off on its own. If a seal is following you, keep moving. They are incredibly curious animals but will quickly lose interest if you do not engage with them.

The following signals indicate a seal is aware of your presence and is at risk of being disturbed:

Vigilance - If a seal has noticed you, its fight or flight response has been activated, and its stress levels have already gone up. Whilst this may seem minimal, seals have been known to stay alert for up to an hour after being disturbed, meaning energy is being wasted instead of reserved.

Stampeding - If seals rush quickly into the sea, a serious disturbance event has occurred, which can lead to severe injury and pup abandonment.

Tombstoning - If a seal is well above the water line and feels threatened, it may throw itself from a great height into the water. This is extremely dangerous for both seals and people and can result in broken jaws and ribs, which can be fatal.

Flipper splashing and vocalisation - This is a seal's way of telling you that you are too close, and it is feeling threatened.

Crash diving - A seal may immediately undertake a crash dive if suddenly distracted whilst feeding in the water. This is a common sign of distress that can alter their oxygen levels, as they will not be fully prepared for the dive, and their heart will be racing. Swimming seals mustn't be disturbed, as this can cause them to stop feeding, impacting their energy supply.

British Canoeing Seal Factsheet

If you spot any of these behavioural reactions, slowly and quietly back away to avoid in creasing the chances of disturbing them further. Allow seals the space they need within their habitat.

Some seals will show signs of habituation, whereby they have become used to the presence of people and do not demonstrate a natural, cautionary response to their presence. However, this does not mean that they are immune to the impacts of disturbance. Some seals will not react to a single paddle boarder, but after their third or fourth encounter with human activities, they will start to show signs that they are not fully relaxed. This is known as sensitisation, where the seal responds to cumulative activity rather than a single event.

Impacts of seal disturbance

Pregnant and pupping females: Common seals will have their pups in the summer months, and grey seals are heavily pregnant (they pup in autumn). This coincides with many coastal areas being at their busiest. Rushing over sharp rocks can have severe long-term impacts on unborn pups that are not immediately visible.

Pups: Mothers who waste energy fleeing from disturbance cannot pass on the nutrients their young need, and therefore the chances of pups making it through their first winter are drastically reduced.

Juveniles: With fewer fat reserves, they must conserve energy whenever they can. Younger seals are usually more skittish and don't have the spare energy to waste when fleeing from people.

Dominant beachmaster males: These males feed heavily in the summer, enabling them to fast for up to three months in the autumn. They do this to protect their pupping females without starving; however, disturbance compromises their energy levels and impacts their chances of survival.

As part of our awareness raising work in 2022, SRT wrote **4 letters to our newly created Marine Operators mailing list**. Each championed and clarified best practice around seals around the southwest.

Policy and Conservation Actions

Consultations: 29

SRT used data from our amazing volunteer citizen science network to submit evidence to **29 policy and planning consultations**. These varied hugely from issue based requests for

information **(MMO SW Marine Spatial Plan Monitoring, Joint Fisheries Statement, North Devon Marine Nature Recovery Plan, Cornwall AONB Landscape Review, Cornwall Climate Emergency DPD Hearings, Strategy for Cornwall's Historic Environment, DEFRA Operations, GGGI Annual Impact, Fishing Impacts in MPAs, Durham University on Charities, FSC Environmental Policies, People and Nature** and **N Tyneside Council Public Space Order)** to species input **(the UK Government's EFRA Committee)**, as well as activity based evidence **(Ceredigion Marine Code)** and developments near seal sites in the UK and beyond **(Pacific Grove Tin Cannery Hotel, Cornish Lithium, Looe Flood Defence Scheme, Dean Quarry Holiday Homes, Seismic testing for radioactive waste disposal site, Crown Estate Offshore Wind, Northumberland Campsite, Dogs on Beaches in Cornwall, White Cross Offshore Wind)**, not to mention multiple requests for identifying marine priorities **(DEFRA Marine Recovery Plan, DEFRA Environmental Targets, DEFRA HMPAs, DEFRA Net Gain, Wales Rural Strategy Consultation Empowering Local Communities)**. This is the hardest and most mundane aspect of our charity's work but it is undoubtedly the most important thing we do. It means all the data and expertise created by our huge volunteer team effort is communicated through the proper channels, where it counts, making a difference in planning and policy at a national and international level. All this is done monthly at our Steering Group Meetings.

Legislation

SRT continue to use our unique disturbance dataset to campaign to **get seal disturbance made an offence** (as it is with whales and dolphins), either by **adding seals to the Wildlife and Countryside Act** or by adding the word **'disturbance' to the Conservation of Seals Act.** The **Joint Nature Conservation Committee** have already made the former a recommendation but this has yet to be ratified by government. So, we continue to raise awareness everywhere on this issue. See more below.

MP Tracey Crouch and Mary Tester from Thames Seal Watch

Campaigns

SRT had two key campaign topics for 2022: **Disturbance and Flying Rings**.

We continued to raise awareness about **seal disturbance** sharing case studies and information about impacts on seals in pretty much every presentation we delivered. In a concerted campaign with the **Seal Alliance,** the following key actions were taken to make **seal disturbance illegal** as it is with whales and dolphins. SRT and the Seal Alliance reprinted 25 **Give Seals Space signs** and 22,000 **Watching Seals Well leaflets**. In February SRT drafted an **Open Letter,** which was approved by the Seal Alliance and **signed by 34 organisations and personalities**. It was sent to Government, which gained a lot of media attention nationally through our partner Seal Alliance Groups and in the southwest. This was followed by SRT drafting a **10 Minute 'Seal Protection' Rule Bill,** which was used as a basis for a presentation by **MP for Chatham and Aylesford** Tracey Crouch on 06/02/22 in Westminster. She and Mary Tester from the **Thames Seal Watch** were delighted when this passed to a second reading.

SRT worked with the **Marine Mammal Disturbance Partnership** led by **Natural England's** Ophelie Humphrey and Claire Ludgate. Despite this group working towards paddle sports stickers, these have yet to be finalised, so SRT collaborated with volunteer **Cliff Davies from Looe Marine Conservation Group** to get **2000 paddle sports stickers** of our own designed and printed. This was followed by another **1000 customised stickers for Gower Seal Group** and **1000 customised stickers for The Seal Project in South Devon**. Thanks to all our amazing volunteers who got these distributed around everywhere so quickly.

We were excited and delighted when **Devon and Cornwall Police and the Marine Management Organisation** launched **Operation Seabird** in April at three sites across the southwest including at West Cornwall. This **landmark national project** has built substantially stronger and closer connections between statutory agencies and NGOs to raise awareness with businesses and the public about the sensitivities of the coastline and how simple changes can reduce the pressure faced by our unique wildlife.

Natural England continue to explore the possibilities for **Photo ID** to provide the evidence needed to **apply functional linkage to existing designated SSSIs and SACs** where seals are a monitored feature. They are also exploring the possibility of a **new SSSI** for offshore islands.

SRT launched their **Flying Ring** campaign spearheaded by Jenny Hobson from **Friends of Horsey Seals (FOHS)**. Volunteer graphic designer Aidan Botha designed **two flying rings**

posters with a matching **social media graphic** to go in the **FOHS's leaflet**. These were used to illustrate our call to action on this issue. **Standard letters** outlining the issue were customised for numerous different audiences to go with the posters and volunteers signed up to distribute them around the county. They approached **pet shops, vets, harbour authorities, local beach goods shops, supermarkets, national retailers, holiday letting agencies, schools, holiday parks, RNLI** and **NCI stations, national wholesalers** and **manufacturers**. We cannot thank volunteer Peter Perkins enough for single handedly ensuring pretty much all the Cornish Supermarkets and Vet Practices received this information with lots of positive results and feedback.

By the end of the year, we were celebrating the wider team effort made by **Friends of Horsey Seals, Gower Seal Group and SRT that saw flying rings being taken off the shelves at Tesco, Pets at Home** and **CVS Vets** along with **numerous small local outlets and retailers**, making our coastline safer for seals and other marine life.

Practical Conservation Actions

We worked with a range of partners to make the southwest a safer place for seals. Examples of the kinds of action taken included:

- Evidence was sent to the **St Ives, Newquay and Looe Harbour Masters** to enable action whenever our volunteers, or the public, recorded **tripper boat passengers feeding seals**.
- Work with **Newquay Marine Group** to engage with the **Rockall Expedition** who set up a **camping pod on Goose Rock** disturbing sea birds and seals. The visit was cut shorter than the team had originally planned.
- Hub engagement with the **Mevagissey Harbour Master** to discuss effective ways to share **best practice with boat owners and operators.**
- We engaged with **Falmouth Harbour Commissioners** when a seal began repeatedly **hauling out on a pontoon near their refuelling station.**
- Work with the **National Trust** and the **West Penwith North Hub** team to **use trail cameras to monitor seal disturbance** caused by clifftop activity. We then met with the Penwith National Trust team to explore the possibilities of **path closure and signage.**
- **Author Jo Mosley** asked for our advice about the wording for a '**being environmentally thoughtful and responsible**' section in her new book **Stand Up Paddleboarding in Great Britain.**
- Devon Wildlife Trust accepted the **criteria for the designation of County Wildlife Sites for seals** which can now be recommended during their next annual site review.
- Consulted with **Natural England** and the **Southwest Coast Path** team to devise **wildlife best practice key messaging for waymarker posts** – these were put up in 2022**.**
- The **Pentire, Roseland, Rumps and North Devon Hub** teams wrote **letters to operators** thanking them for their good practice and/or suggesting where appropriate other positive actions they could take to **minimise seal disturbance**.
- Gathering evidence of **fishing activity too close to sensitive seal sites** for the **Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority** conservation team to action.

- The **North Cornwall Hub** team wrote to **Natural England** to provide evidence about **disturbance incidents affecting seals in the SSSI**.
- SRT contacted the **Ministry of Defence about low flying chinook helicopters at North and West Cornwall** with very positive results and we used the opportunity to remind flight crews about the **voluntary no fly zones over our sensitive seal sites**.
- We used **time lapse photography** to demonstrate to members of the public and statutory agencies just **how busy our sensitive seal sites get in terms of human activity in the summer**. One site had **powered crafts every 5.5 minutes** and another had **paddle crafts every 2 minutes**.
- We worked with **The Seal Project** to evidence and report the **feeding of seals by a fisher in Brixham Harbour**.
- We responded by **sending out information to numerous requests for advice and guidance for wild swimmers** when they are approached by seals around our coast.
- **BDMLR** led on the **compilation of an Open Letter to the Norwegian Government** about their **killing of Freya – an out of habitat walrus**.
- The **West Cornwall Hub team continue to report drone incidents to the National Trust** team for them to action with the pilots. Many pilots didn't realise that they needed a licence to fly on National Trust land. When told, they would pack up willingly and quickly.
- Thanks to swift action by the **Lizard Hub**, we were able to contact **Natural England** about the **coastpath remedial work** above a beach where a pup had been born. The work was postponed until the pup had weaned.
- The **Roseland National Trust** team put up sensitive site signs (not mentioning seals) aimed at encouraging people to stay on the coast path to reduce disturbance.
- The **North Cornwall National Trust team erected an awesome fence and accompanying signage** in collaboration with the **Pentire Hub** aimed at **reducing clifftop disturbance**. This proved effective for the majority of people who respected the messaging provided.

National Trust Management at Pentire by Andy Rogers

- The **Roseland Hub** team followed up **numerous land and sea based disturbance incidents** throughout the year by contacting the people causing the disturbance directly or indirectly via support from the local harbour authorities in Falmouth.
- **Dartmouth harbour** created and posted a webpage about the grey seal pupping season.
- **Multiple websites removed the specific names of sensitive seals sites** after SRT volunteers alerted the page admins to the risks this created for our seals.
- A partnership between the **National Trust, a Nudist Group, BDMLR and SRT** gave a **mum and pup the space needed** for the pup to successfully wean on an accessible public beach. BDMLR/SRT volunteer monitors enabled a south coast pup to wean successfully.

South coast pup day 1 and at successful weaning with new signage

- **Natural England** put up **pupping signs at West Lizard** again this year once our volunteers alerted them to the presence of pups.
- **Lost fishing gear removals** from multiple beaches in many hub areas making them safer for all marine life. Special thanks to the **Roseland Hub** who engaged partners **Clean Ocean Sailing** to remove an entire gill net tier from rocks next to the haul out beach.
- Work with the **National Trust to display signs to manage people** around vulnerable moulted seal pups with requests for **temporary, voluntary beach closures**.
- Advice with **The Seal Project** was given to **MDL Marinas** about how to make their **new breakwater more seal friendly**.

Conclusion

It has been **another utterly incredible year for seal research, engagement and, ultimately, conservation**. Despite a smaller core Ranger team, our expanding volunteer conservation team have made this **our best year ever in terms of public engagement and positive interventions and actions**. Our ongoing, extensive survey effort provides masses of evidence for us to collate to tell everyone the stories that our seals are bringing to us on shore about the changing state of our seas. **Another epic team effort! Thank you**!

Let sleeping seals lie 😍
Seal
Research
Trust
Registered charity number:1162936
www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk
www.sealresearchtrust.com

Profit and Loss

Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023
Turnover	
Activity generated income - Fundraising income	91.22
Activity generated income - Talks and Training fee income and expenses claimed	4,925.50
Activity generated Income- Merchandise sales	8,761.53
Adoptions - Private WSS	6,150.67
Adoptions- Corporate WSS	100.00
Donations - Boat	3,300.00
Donations - Corporate (inc' Corporate Sponsorship)	20,232.35
Donations - Private	7,631.87
Income from Projects/Report writing	9,893.24
Online Fundraising - Amazon Smile income	238.76
Online Fundraising - Facebook income	1,444.60
Online Fundraising - Just Giving income	129.54
Online fundraising PayPal Giving Fund income	381.39
Other Revenue	29.50
Total Turnover	**63,310.17**
Cost of Sales	
Merchandise Purchases	5,427.92
Postage charges for merchandise	1,080.10
Shopify costs	302.92
Total Cost of Sales	**6,810.94**
Gross Profit	**56,499.23**
Administrative Costs	
Boat charter	6,200.00
IT, hardware and software	1,526.67
Marketing & Promotional Resources	1,409.20
Office supplies	990.89
Other Miscellaneous costs	140.08
Paypal fees	105.31
Printing	1,340.20
Professional fees - Insurance.	912.92
Ranger - Activities & Admin' Lauren McGregor	8,109.00
Ranger - Bethany Trevethick	275.50
Ranger - Marine stories - Emily Williams	324.23
Ranger - Marine stories - Tash Murch	1,862.00
Ranger - Sanctuaries at Sea (Sarah Millward)	14,409.60
Ranger - SRT RMSR - Polly Ford	633.60
Survey equipment	499.96
Travel and expenses	94.60
Total Administrative Costs	**38,833.76**

	2023
Operating Profit	**17,665.47**
Other Income	
Course fees collected for Field Studies Council	810.00
Gift Aid income	6.25
Total Other Income	**816.25**
Profit on Ordinary Activities Before Taxation	**18,481.72**
Profit after Taxation	**18,481.72**

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust		
On accounts for the year ended	31st March 2023	**Charity no (if any)**	1162936
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
   - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

   have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: **Date:** 05/07/2023

Name: Mr J K Shepherd

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA, CTA
Address:	11A Kimberley Park Road
	Falmouth, Cornwall
	TR11 2DA

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

CORNWALL SEAL GROUP RESEARCH TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1162936

Accounts

Annual Report 2021

Seal Research Trust's Seals SW Annual Report

Funders (P3)

People (P3)

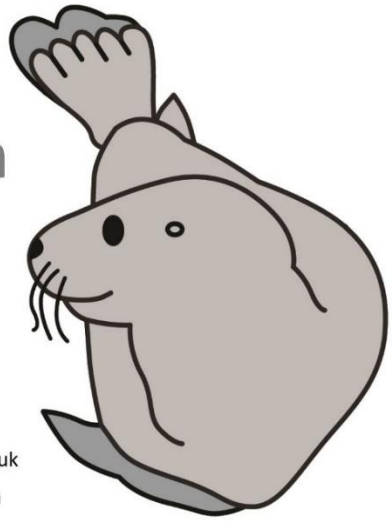
Charity Achievements and Activities (P5)

Feedback about SRT Activities (P11)

Seal Data Outputs (P13)

Policy and Conservation Actions (P18)

Seal Research Trust



www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk

www.sealresearchtrust.com

Contents

Funders 3

People 3

- Hubs 3
- Marine Rangers, Science Advisors and Analysts 4
- Volunteers 5

Charity Achievements and Activities 5

- Summary 5
- Talks 6
- Workshops/Training 8
- Stalls/Events 8
- Other Activities 8
- Photo ID Project (PIP) organised surveys 9
- Meetings 9
- Reports 9
- Media Coverage 10
- PPPP Outputs 10
- PPPP Stakeholder Groups 10
- PPPP Report 11
- Wildlife Safe (WISE) Courses 11

Feedback about SRT Activities 11

Seal Data Outputs 13

- Surveys and Volunteers 13
- Age and Sex Classes 13
- Grey Seal Pups 13
- Common Seals and Common Seal Pups 14
- Photos, Albums and Identifications 14
- Ex rescued, Rehabilitated and Released Seals 16
- Entangled Seals 17
- Disturbance 17

Policy and Conservation Actions 18

- Consultations 18
- Legislation 19
- Campaigns 19
- Practical Conservation Actions 21

Seal Research Trust (est. Cornwall 2000)

At the Seal Research Trust (SRT) we described 2018 as a landmark year, 2019 saw us riding a wave of success, which we sustained in 2020 despite COVID-19 and 2021 proved a legal revolution for seals.

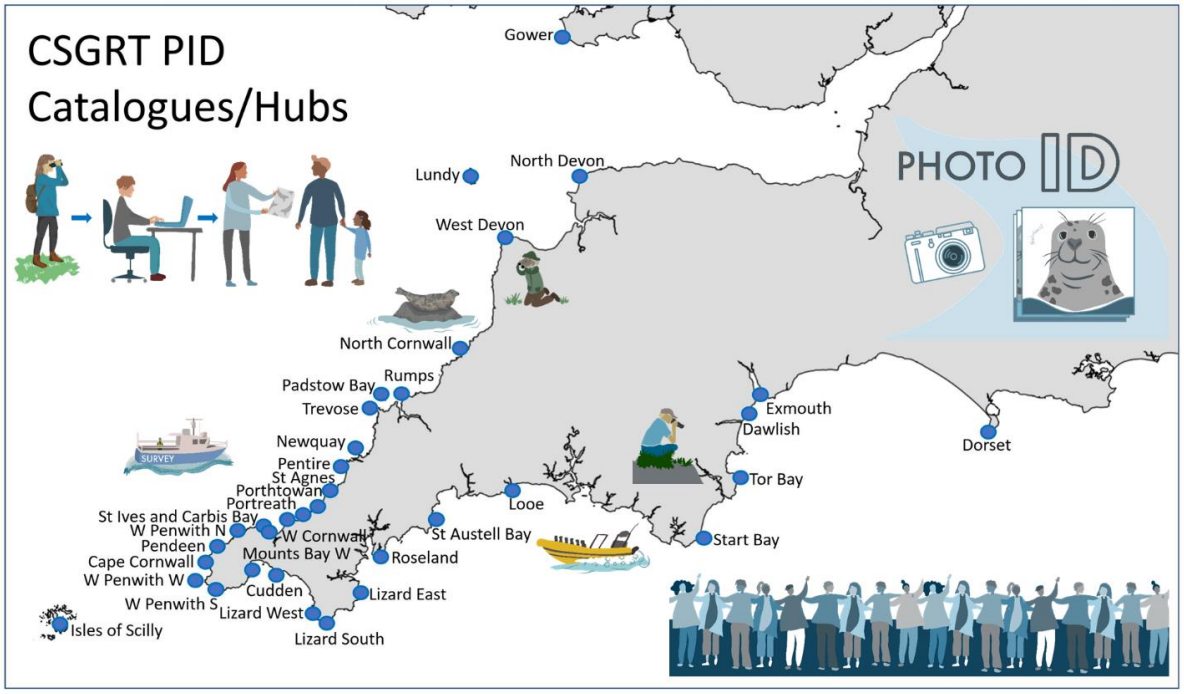
Funders

DEFRA's Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF) administered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund proved to be our largest successful funding bid to date. We are hugely grateful to our GRCF investment manager Kayleigh Luscombe who has supported us throughout our People Protecting Precious Places Project (PPPP) all year. In 2021 our Rangers, resources and activities were also financially supported by **Animal Friends; Aspects Holidays; LUSH Cosmetics; Mungo Lils on the Hill; Natural England; Polzeath Marine Conservation Group; Rowes Cornish Bakers; Seal Protection Action Group; Smartie Lids on the Beach; Tesco Bags of Help; The Bowgie Inn; our Online Shop; Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme and wonderful volunteer fundraising efforts and donations. Thank you!**

People

Hubs

By the end of 2021, SRT had **67 Photo ID Catalogues** across the southwest – the main ones being shown as blue circles on the map below. The catalogues are run by incredibly dedicated volunteers and these volunteer teams do everything from being **eyes/ears for coastal change; surveying; processing photos into survey albums; making or confirming IDs; album checking; digitising data; data entry and analysis; report writing; fundraising to being ambassadors and champions for seals**.



Marine Rangers, Science Advisors and Analysts

We started 2021 with **4 part-time paid Marine Rangers** and ended the year with **4**, although in June to August inclusively we maxed out at **7 part-time paid Rangers** in total.

We began with:

- **Amazement and Discovery Ranger** (Marion Beaulieu)
- **Digital Ranger** (Joe Gray)
- **Research Ranger** (Katie Bellman)
- **Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger** (Sarah Millward)

Later in the year, Joe was replaced by two part time **Marine Stories Rangers** (Charlie Gill and Emily Williams). In December Emily went on maternity leave and not long after, Charlie got her dream job working at Wildwood Escot. Both were replaced by Tash Murch.

We are hugely grateful to Joe Gray for his digital expertise creating the Seal Alliance website (www.sealalliance.org), setting us up with efficient social media scheduling software and teaching us how to optimise our online activity for Google's search engine algorithms. We were delighted to hear that Joe had secured his dream job too, as a wildlife film camera man with the Natural History Unit in Bristol – we will be very excited to see where the future takes Joe and wish him all the best.

For our PPPP project, we recruited two temporary and part time **Survey and Data Rangers** (Beth Trevethick and Charlotte Bright) who helped make this project a huge success.

By the end of the year, we had advertised and appointed a brand new, part-time **Activities and Administration Ranger** and in December Lauren McGregor was inducted into this post.

Critical to the success of our GRCF work, we were delighted to welcome Bex Allen to the PPPP team as our **Science Advisor** and Michael Hunt as a **Data Analyst**. Both were superb, enabling us to make the PPPP report the comprehensive and thorough document that it is.

After several wonderful years with us, Katie Bellman finally left her Research Ranger role in December. Heading up our PPPP project surveys and report, Katie recruited and trained survey participants in the rigorous protocols demanded by this research. After completing our PPPP report in December, Katie left us to start a new and exciting Engagement Officer role for the Cornwall Wildlife Trust's Your Shore Project. We are delighted to keep Katie in Marine Conservation work in Cornwall and wish her well in her new and exciting role.

So, 2021 was a year of substantial change for us all as a charity, as we fulfilled our GRCF Project requirements, we anticipated and planned for our longer-term Rangers, Katie and Marion's, departures. Marion left us in February 2022.

Whilst SRT's overheads are minimal and most of our activity is undertaken by volunteers, all these amazing people need recruiting, encouraging, supporting, training and empowering by our Marine Ranger team who, along with our boat survey charter fees, amount to our greatest expenditure. We also need Rangers to fulfil specific aspects of our funded project work. As our volunteers are our charity's most precious asset, they all need looking after. Happy volunteers support seals over the longer term. Together our team helps spread our citizen

science findings to a growing audience in engaging and interesting ways, whilst also developing important skills as conservation leaders of the future.

Volunteers

Our charity can only function effectively thanks to the generous contributions made by multiple hub, administrative and specialist key volunteers. We are hugely grateful to every single one of our amazing volunteers who are too numerous to name individually. Key coordinating or administrative volunteers include:

- **Photo ID coordinator – Kate Williams** organises our Photo ID work and responds to all emails sent into the sightings@cornwallsealgroup.co.uk account. Supremely well organised, Kate collates and manages all public photo submissions to ensure they get processed either by herself, one of our floating volunteers or our catalogue teams.
- **Data Manager** and **Wild Seal Supporter Scheme Coordinator – Karen Gaudern**. Karen digitises the majority of survey albums generated each month (alongside Kate Williams, Kate Hockley and Jasmina Goodair) and ensures our Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme runs like clockwork
- **Seal Supporter Coordinator – Hayley Mitchell** who organises our online Jumblebee auctions and supports individual fundraisers. She joined us in 2021.
- **Events Coordinators – Charlotte and Terry Carne in conjunction with Rob Wells** who are arranging and facilitating all our face-to-face events**.** They took on this role in 2021.
- **Treasurer – Lesley Fitt**, an experienced accounts manager and passionate advocate for marine conservation, Lesley manages our online accounts with efficiency and care.
- **Database Coordinator – Jeff Loveridge** who originally designed our comprehensive seal database back in 2011. Now Jeff manages the database (which contains **46662 surveys** in total) and inputs data from our volunteer citizen scientists and public contacts. In 2021 this averaged 14 surveys every single day of the year. He took on this role in 2021.
- **Catalogue and Hub Coordinators –** Gareth Richards, Kate Williams, Louise Secker, Jules Disbury, Susan Timms, Jenny Simpson, Katie Bellman, Sue Sayer, Andrea Hunt, Marion Beaulieu, Teresa Boulden, Victoria Pombeiro, Amy Fox, Jeremy Gilson, Kerstin Hartmann, Emma Woolfenden, Cliff Davies, Sarah Greenslade and Sarah Hodgson.
- **Routine Surveyors** – SRT can't function without this inspiring team of volunteers too numerous to name individually. We always appreciate how critical your efforts are!

Charity Achievements and Activities

In total our extensive SRT team organised, delivered and participated in 923 activities in 2021 to give seals a voice and share key conservation messages with a wider audience.

Summary

SRT's 2021 activities gained a much greater **reach**. Whilst most events were based in **Cornwall**, we spread our influence further online with 169 events being attended by people across the **UK** and 40 having participants from across the **Globe**!

In 2021, our **activity beneficiaries** totalled an impressive 13256 people (including 132 0 to 16 year olds; 375 17 to 24 year olds and 12749 25+ year olds). This is a massive achievement considering the continuation of the global pandemic, during which our charity representatives were all super cautious for everyone's personal safety's sake.

Our **social media** engagement was excellent in 2021 with an average of a post a day:

- **Facebook** 705592 unique users; followers 7647; profile visits 7644; best post 86380 views
- **Instagram** 278108 unique users; followers 5393; profile visits 18815; best post 25341 views
- **Twitter** followers 1386
- **Linkedin** was used by SRT for the first time in 2021, but we don't pay for insights.

Posts travelled the world with most views obviously being in the UK, but we have followers across **Europe** and **Russia**, along with viewers from the other side of the Atlantic in **Canada** and the **USA** and from as far away as **Thailand** and **Australia**.

In 2021 CSGRT signed up to **Facebook Workplace** (free for charities) as a forum for interconnecting our volunteers to share messaging, IDs and conservation actions. It has been hugely helpful, not least for making individual seal photo ID matches between catalogues and to inform seal conservation. Facebook Workplace were so impressed with us, they included us as one of seven global charities in their **2021 Social Impact Report**. This can be downloaded here https://www.workplace.com/2021-social-impact-report .

SRT Activities in 2021 included:

Talks 52

We organised and delivered 52 talks for a wide range of different audiences. We partnered with British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) and the Cornish Seal Sanctuary (CSS) to host, coordinate and deliver the **European Seal Rescue Conference** from Cornwall. We were keynote speakers at high profile events such as the **South West Marine Ecosystems Seal**

Webinar; two major Seal Alliance events (our **Seal Masterclass and SharePoint Sessions**); several **Wildlife Safe Scheme Courses** (WISE Standard and Adventure) and we were honoured and proud to present at the 10th Birthday celebrations for **Seachangers**.

We provided seal expertise during talks to various statutory agencies including **DEFRA**, the **Marine Mammal Disturbance Partnership**, the **Seal Network UK** and at the **Welsh Rural Crime Police Conference**.

Face-to-face talk at Heligan by Sue and Rob Wells, organised by the Three Bays Wildlife

We partnered with 2 school pupils who successfully completed their **Duke of Edinburgh Volunteer Experience** with us, alongside talks we delivered to Universities and Colleges to share our knowledge of seals with their students from **Bournemouth, Callywith, Cornwall College Newquay, Exeter, Falmouth and Plymouth**.

Community groups enjoyed our seals stories (such as the **Royal Fowey Yacht Club; Carrick and St Austell U3A; Crowlas and Ladock WI**) along with our advice about Watching Seals Well shared with marine focused organisations (**CWT Marine Recorders Evening , Flushing Sailing Club, Royal Fowey Yacht Club, Perranporth Beach Rangers, Three Bays Wildlife, 7 Bays Wildlife, The Seal Project, Wildlife Safety on the Fal Conference**) and other special interest groups (**including Alderney Wildlife Trust, Bristol Natural History Society, Chiswick Pier Trust, Cornwall Science Community, West Oxfordshire Field Society**).

Workshops/Training 26

Workshops mainly focussed on **seal related skill development** particularly our 4 volunteer online photo ID training sessions which saw 48 new volunteers complete the process. In 2021, our volunteering went global as remote digital volunteering took off. We have been delighted to welcome digital volunteers from the **USA, Iceland and Germany** to our team. But SRT have other transferable skill sets, and we were able to share other aspects of our expertise too, for example on **setting up a conservation charity, successful crowdfunding strategies and database management**. SRT have developed activity process documents to enable others to more easily understand and take on key actions and tasks.

Stalls/Events 17

COVID-19 restrictions and our cautious approach meant face-to-face events were limited in 2021. Cornwall College students ran an online quiz to raise funds for us in April and in June we hosted two separate important VIP visits for **George Eustice (Environment Minister) and Rebecca Pow (Parliamentary Undersecretary for the Environment)** to the West Cornwall sensitive seal site in conjunction with their parliamentary teams, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Trust. We joined **Isaac Nicholson**, our 14-year-old Duke of Edinburgh student at the finish line of his incredible 100km cycle in a day that raised over £500 for our charity. Two events were impromptu and unplanned with substantial gatherings on the clifftop above two separate **seal pup rescues** with partners BDMLR. Rather than let the public leave with their own perceptions of the events they witnessed and to avoid Chinese whispers, we took the opportunity for people to understand what had happened, how and why, as well as taking the opportunity to share our Photo ID research and the contribution it makes to our understanding of the lives of individual seals and the conservation issues they face at sea. The year ended with 9 day-long events at the fabulous joint fundraising **Carbis Bay Hotel Christmas Fayre** celebration organised by Harriet Tatlow.

Other Activities 23

This category of activity mostly consists of our enthusiastic volunteers engaging face-to-face with members of the public in the field during their routine surveys. These provide wonderful opportunities to win hearts and minds over to our shared seal conservation cause. People love hearing about the seals they are watching and celebrity seal stories.

Photo ID Project (PIP) organised surveys 140

122 of these surveys comprised People Protecting Precious Places surveys organised by our Research Ranger Katie (not all could be used). We completed **10 day-long systematic boat-based Photo ID transect surveys** (CASPIP, STAPIP and POLPIP) along a 115km stretch of the north Cornish coast involving a total of 92 volunteers. We also returned to the **Looe Island Photo ID Project (LISPIP)** surveys, completing 8 during the calendar year.

Boat based Photo ID transect volunteer team aboard Newquay Sea Safaris and Fishing

Meetings 585

These multiple and varied meetings involved a huge range of people from all walks of life, from statutory agencies (**Clean Catch UK, Cornwall Council Fisheries Stakeholder, DEFRA, Natural England, Marine Management Organisation, Marine Mammal Disturbance Partnership, Special Committee on Seals, Seal Network UK and South West Coast Path Association**) to school pupils (**Maya Roberts and Isaac Nicholson**) and all partners in between, such as local businesses (**Attic Design and Print, Business Dr John Pomeroy, Cornwall Marine Network, Easy Divers, FlowmoCo, Hannah Stitfall Wildlife, Julie Bignall and the Carbis Bay Hotel**) and artists (**Animal Friends, Chapel Street Gallery, Cornish Jewellery Company, Emily Barker, Lucy Leach, Mungo Lils on the Hill, Rosie Sherwood, Rosalyn Cook, Smartie Lids on the Beach, Tregirls Pottery and Zennor Made**), charitable organisations (**Cornwall, Devon and Dorset Wildlife Trusts, Fathoms Free, the Field Studies Council, Hayle Towans Partnership, Plover Rovers and RSPB**) and students (**Bethany, Charlotte, Emily, Finn, Georgina, Lorraine, Megan, Ollie and Robyn**). Everyone helped us spread the word about our iconic seals.

Reports 21

Our amazing volunteers **Jeremy, Mairi, Martin, Mel, Mike and Ross** compiled data and reports on specific sensitive seal sites or on our census work. 4 student dissertations were

completed along with 8 PIP reports. We were delighted when our SRT team finally got our **'Post release monitoring of rehabilitated gray seal pups over large temporal and spatial scales'** paper published in Marine Mammal Science. A huge achievement on behalf of all our incredible citizen science volunteer efforts along with our partners at BDMLR, CSS and RSPCA West Hatch Wildlife Hospital. We were also pleased to complete our major grant evaluation bid report for the Heritage Emergency Fund.

Media Coverage 59

SRT had some extremely high-profile coverage on mainstream TV programmes on **Autumnwatch and Countryfile** as well as in the press (**National Geographic, Telegraph, Guardian and Observer**). SRT's seals featured in the **Global Ghost Gear Initiative, Pinniped Entanglement Group and Facebook Workplace Social Good** global annual reports. We featured in articles and blogs for private companies (**Aspects Holidays**), national charities (**RNLI, RSPCA**) and governing bodies (**British Canoeing, SUP Mag and SUP Boarder**) as well as multiple local newsletters (**Scilly Now and Then, Clean Ocean Sailing, Wild Cornwall, Devon Mammal Group**). Septimus (our legendary seal skeleton) appeared in the seal chapter in **Mary Colwell's book 'Beak, tooth and claw'**. Sue Sayer appeared in the **Cornwall Climate Care film 'Under the surface' and Off the Fence's 'Underwater Underdogs'** and SRT team members and volunteers featured in interviews on **BBC Radio Cornwall, BBC South East, Times Radio, BBC Breakfast TV, Radio 4, Radio 5, BBC News Channel, BBC Radio Wales, Dogdesk Radio, Charitable Radio and City News**. SRT's Seals SW Newsletter circulation grew from 474 at the start of the year to 762 by December.

PPPP Outputs - events and interpretation materials

110 two-hour 2021 **Seal and Human Interaction Surveys** could be compared to the 80 pilot surveys in 2019. The **Seal Alliance** had a total of 15 meetings in 2021 (including our international Masterclass which had up to 297 views and our members SharePoint Session which has had 131 views). A **Seal Alliance website** was created with 5 blogs and 16 blogs/news stories were posted on our Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust website. **10 Seals SW Newsletters were issued in 2021 along with 5 exclusive Wild Seal Supporter Updates** being sent out to seal adoptees. **64,000 leaflets and 106 signs** were sent to places north of John o'Groats and south of Land's End. They were translated into **French** and we have had requests from people wanting to translate them into **Dutch and Welsh**. We freely shared printable artwork so people and organisations could print, erect or distribute themselves.

PPPP Stakeholder Groups 3

St Ives Bay Stakeholder Group: 4 meetings completed with 2 WISE Courses for boat operators. The Seal Alliance leaflets were distributed and a watercraft sticker designed with 400 printed. Sticker feedback has informed a national watercraft and car sticker design. Best practice guidelines were agreed for an offshore sensitive seal site; 2 boat operators signed up for Seal of Approval trial scheme 2022/23. **St Austell Bay Stakeholder Group**: 3 meetings and 1 face-to-face talk were held and ambitious headland rewilding began. Seal Alliance signs put up and a green, living fence was planted to screen the seal haul out to reduce seal disturbance.

Looe Stakeholder Group: 1 meeting complete with plans to introduce a best practice graphic and mooring buoys around an offshore sensitive seal haul out site.

PPPP Report

SRT's Final PPPP Report was launched to **government, statutory agencies and press** on 06/02/22. The report contained 4 main sections: **2013 - 2021 Cornwall-wide data** (33797 surveys); **2019 -2021 systematic surveys at 4 sensitive seal sites in Cornwall** (190 in total); **St Ives Bay Stakeholder Group** and **Recommendations**.

Wildlife Safe (WISE) Courses

SRT's Sue Sayer helped to deliver the seal input during several WISE online courses in 2021. **SW Standard Boat** online course completed 17/03/21 with 14 attendees. The **WISE Adventure Course** ran online over 4 evenings from the 22/03/21 and had 84 participants nationally. **WISE SW Standard Boat** online was completed on 11/12/21 and 12/12/21 attended by 18 and WISE delivered a bespoke online course for the **University of Exeter** on 22/11/21 attended by 40 students. Sue and Dan from SRT's steering group are now key members of the **WISE Steering Group** going forward.

Feedback about SRT Activities

All our activities aimed to promote peoples' understanding and learning about our heritage seals and their precious marine habitat. Throughout our PPPP work, SRT encouraged participants to complete feedback about their experience on Survey Monkey. We need feedback to help us improve. It remains a challenge to get people to do this, but in total **451 participants** completed surveys across a range of very varied activities.

Not all surveys covered all aspects of our work (to avoid the questionnaires becoming too lengthy), but responses have been collated and from our analysis of where these questions were asked, we have discovered:

- Before SRT's engagement activity 52% of 354 participants knew Little or Nothing about seals and after the engagement this metric dropped to 1%.
- Before SRT's engagement activity 62% of 235 participants knew Little or Nothing about SRT and after the engagement this metric dropped to 4%.
- Of 330 respondents, 38% had not followed any of CSGRT's online platforms previously.
- Of 355 responses to the question about how informative the engagement had been or how much they had learned, 96% said that that had found it Very or Quite informative and had learned from the experience.
- From SRT's practical experiences by 43 respondents, 93% reported learning new skills.

The key questionnaire for us was completed about our brand-new talk 'Watching Seals Well' aimed at helping people to 'think seal' and enabling them to understand disturbance from a seal's perspective. Out of 152 responses:

- 9% knew A lot/45% A little about seals before the talk. After the talk 69% knew A lot/1% knew A little about seals
- 13% knew a lot/65% knew a little or nothing about SRT before the talk. After the talk 58% knew a lot/3% knew a little or nothing about SRT
- 94% of respondents thought the talk was very informative
- 89% thought disturbance is a problem for wildlife in their local area
- 97% thought the talk would help reduce disturbance to seals/wildlife
- 95% enjoyed the talk A lot
- 96% thought the talk had Inspired them to do something to help
- 53% were Inspired A lot (23% Quite a bit more) by the talk to spend more time in nature
- 63% felt their Compassion for, or Connection with nature, was enhanced by the talk a lot (27% a moderate amount)
- 100% of participants thought the talk was a Good event for us to deliver again.

In terms of changing behaviour, PPPP completed surveys reported that:

- 95% of 315 respondents have been Inspired to take action to do something to help seals
- 74% of 179 respondents have been Inspired to spend more time in nature
- 86% of 179 respondents felt their Compassion and Connection with nature had been enhanced
- 96% of 23 respondents who took part in our outdoor seal Census surveys said they had had a Very positive or Quite positive effect on their physical or mental health and wellbeing.

Respondent comments included (we have hundreds of these, but here are just a few):

- We will share the information with family & friends
- Anytime I go out I'll make sure that I educate anyone disturbing wildlife, additionally help with petitions to get animals more protection
- Talk to more people about the issue in my role at a coastal visitor centre
- I am a member of the Ilfracombe & North Devon Sub Aqua Club and whilst we do follow the Lundy seal code of conduct, I will be able to explain why it is so important especially to pregnant female seals
- Continue to volunteer and ensure the public are spoken to in an appropriate way
- It's always good to hear methods used by other rescue/responder groups and especially interesting to hear about work in other countries from our own
- Talking with people about seals and their habitats, doing more beach/street cleans, donations, choosing to not eat farmed fish and encourage others to do the same
- I have already applied to volunteer in your Photo ID program, and now the talk has inspired me to print the leaflets and distribute them around the seal watching sites around the country. I'm also thinking about how to apply the knowledge I'm gaining from the UK to improve local awareness and take actions and talks like this are helping a lot!
- I will share the seal group's information as much as possible and I hope to possibly volunteer with them in the future! I would love to help with community engagement and get the important messages across!

- I will make family and friends aware of the problems that seals face and give them information and email details about CSGRT. I intend to look into reducing my output of microplastics and harmful chemicals in our waste water
- Just making sure I follow and appreciate signs at locations telling people to keep a respectful distance from wildlife
- Has changed the way I'll take pictures of seals and raised my awareness for photographing wildlife in general
- Next time I'm on the coast, now that I know what the signs of disturbance are, if I see folks causing disturbance, I will feel confident to explain what the signs and consequences of disturbance are. I'm also going to share what I've learnt from this talk with my friends and family
- Educate others to live in a more environmentally friendly way such as alternatives to putting bleach down the toilet.

Seal Data Outputs (reports included above)

Surveys and Volunteers

In 2021, we received records from **331 different volunteers,** from which we were able to process **5235 discrete surveys** (an average of **14 site specific surveys each and every day**) from **330 different locations**. Our Sanctuaries at Seas Ranger, Sarah, reorganised our coordination of our **quarterly SW Seal Census** of which all four were completed in January, April, July and October, including **10 boat based systematic Photo ID Project (PIP) surveys** – CASPIP, STAPIP and POLPIP. We were delighted to **restart our Looe Island Photo ID Project** and we were able to complete 8 of these monthly holistic seal, bird and butterfly surveys.

Age and Sex Classes

On average, 9.5 seals were recorded across our 5235 surveys, ranging from a minimum of no seals observed to a maximum of 557 seals counted in a single survey. Of seals that we were able to classify according to their age, **65% were adults and 35% juveniles, moulted pups or white coated pups**. Only adults can be reliably sexed, so of all adults that we could confidently sex, **56% were males and 44% females** which is almost identical to 2020.

Grey Seal Pups

White coated maternally dependent grey seal pups were recorded on **605 occasions at 36 different locations** around the southwest. They represented just over **1% of all seals** observed. The maximum number of white coated pups recorded at a single site was 8 at West Cornwall East. 5 or more seal pups were recorded 24 times at 5 different pupping sites at **West Cornwall East** and at 3 sites in the **North Cornwall complex**. We alerted our partners BDMLR about numerous pups and assisted in two rope-based rescues of white coats at West Cornwall. LP316 Lucky bunting a seal rescued in 2016 had her second pup, this time at a safe and remote site away from human activity. Our world record breaking seal mum S112 Ghost had her 18th pup in 19 years but breached her site fidelity tradition as this happened on

Cornwall's south coast leaving her Beachmaster partner, DP2 White Back C, without her on the north coast. More **south coast pups** were recorded than previously!

S112 Ghost and her 18th new-born pup on the south coast of Cornwall

Common Seals and Common Seal Pups

Our observations included **85 common seal sightings** – most were single individuals up to a maximum of 4 individuals seen on the 14/01/21 and 15/01/21 in south Devon. Common seals were recorded right around the southwest coast **at 10 different locations** from north Devon, at one site on the north Cornish coast, to the Isles of Scilly and then at 6 south coast locations as well as in south Devon. Most notable in 2021 was the exciting record of Cornwall's **first witnessed common seal pup observed with its mother**. SRT worked closely with local operators to avoid anything being posted about this historic pup online. This avoided any potential disturbance and ensured the pup thrived and was successfully weaned. We cannot be more grateful to everyone who saw this pup and avoided posted their exciting news online. **This is the first surviving wild common seal pup we have recorded since 2000**.

Photos, Albums and Identifications

Our PID Hubs continue to be highly productive, processing an incredible **123311 photos** (103467 taken in 2021 and 19844 taken in previous years) in 2021 into **3213 survey albums** (2284 from 2021 and 929 from previous years). This enabled SRT to generate a total of **13542 seal identifications** (up from 12162 seal identifications in 2020) of which **87% were re-identifications** (compared to 86% in 2020). This included our new maximum of **142 different individual seal identifications in a single survey** (20 more than our previous total in 2020) that were confirmed by two experienced volunteers. Over 100 different seals were identified on 7 separate surveys all at the West Cornwall site. Of all the seals re-identified, **7 were seals we first added to our catalogues back in 2000** (4 males and 3 females) and **4 were** seals that were **first identified in 2001 (all females)** including S49 Pliers shown below.

S49
Pliers

Trevose
Pentire
Porthtowan
Portreath
West Cornwall
Skomer

S49	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Jan								2						1	1				1			5
Feb			1		1	1	2		1					2				1	2			10
Mar					1		3		1			1	1	1							1	8
Apr				2		2	2		1													7
May						2																2
Jun		1		2		1																4
Jul	1												2									3
Aug		2	1	2									2							1		7
Sep		1																	1 1 1			2
Oct		1	3		1			1	2									1	2			11
Nov			2					1	1		2					1	1	1				9
Dec			2								1					1		1	3			6

In total, **57 seals from 5 sites were identified 20 or more times** and most of these were from the Lizard and the Roseland as a reflection of the extremely frequent survey effort at both sites (Lizard daily and Roseland multiple days every week). The oldest seals from each of the five sites identified 30+ times were BRX139 (1st ID 2020 and ID'd 114 times since at various Torbay sites, LIZ5 (1st ID 2014 and ID'd 281 times in total all on the Lizard), MPF6 (1st ID 2009 and ID'd 522 times since all at North Devon), ROC13 (1st ID 2009 and ID'd 221 times since at 9 different sites from Looe to the Roseland) and S161 (1st ID 2003 and ID'd 264 times since at 11 different sites from Trevose to the west of St Ives Bay).

S161 Cross comb

S161's ID calendar created from sightings by 27 different volunteers

Trevose
West Cornwall
St Ives & St Ives Bay

S161	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Jan				1	1		1	1				3		3	2	1	1	2	1	17
Feb		1	2			6	1				1	1		1	2	1	3	1	1	21
Mar			1	1												1	1			4
Apr					1	1								1	1			2	1	7
May	1		8	2	1	1		3	1	1		1	1	2	4	2	3	2		33
Jun	1		3	3	1	2			1	2	2	1	1	2	2	4	6	4	1	36
Jul			3			2	1		3		3	2	1	4	1	3	7	5		35
Aug	1	1	3	1		1	1	1	4	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	4	7	1	41
Sep					2	2					2	3			1		1			11
Oct		2			4									2	3	1	2	2		16
Nov												2	1		2					5
Dec								1			1	1		2	1	1	3			10
	3	4	20	8	10	15	4	6	9	4	10	16	6	19	23	18	31	14	1	236

Photo ID Catalogue photo

Seals from Cornwall have now been linked to the Isle of Man (**450km away**), Northwest Wales, Southeast Ireland, Southwest and South Wales, the Isles of Scilly, Northwest France, Northern France, North and South Devon, Dorset, Belgium and Holland (**650km away**).

Ex rescued, Rehabilitated and Released Seals

SRT 2021 data included **980 sightings of 192 different rear flipper tagged, rehabilitated seals** (around **2% of all seals observed**) from right around our southwest coast. Most would have been released in north Devon or from the north/south Cornish coast. A maximum of **18 different ex rehabilitated** seals were recorded on one survey on 17/01/21 at West Cornwall by Andrea Hunt. In 2021, 18 ex rehabilitated seals were recorded on more than 9 occasions – all at West Cornwall. 9 ex rehabilitated seals were identified 20 or more times (LIZ4 Archer lady, LIZ30 Hufflepuff aka Brush, LP228 Orion, ROS908 Pangolin, ROS971 Hungry caterpillar, MPF256 Slipper, ROM104 Snail, ROS1127 Calimero and S16 Rabbit f).

Paul Oaten from **RSPCA West Hatch Wildlife Hospital** created a Google Sheet for sharing confidential data with SRT. In December, we were delighted that Emma O'Neill from **CSS** restarted regular input at our monthly Seals SW Sessions. The most notable event for our rehabilitated seals was the publication in Marine Mammal Science of our 'Post release monitoring of rehabilitated gray seal pups over larger temporal and spatial scales' on 23/08/21. As partners in 2021, led by Dan Jarvis from BDMLR, SRT and the CSS hosted the **European Seal Rescue Conference** in Cornwall in 2021.

Jenga (right) ex rehabilitated seal from 2007/2008 Beachmastering and protecting his female

Entangled Seals

To balance our resightings of rescued, rehabilitated and released seals, which reflect a positive intervention by people, were our observations of seals that have experienced entanglement at some point in their lives. SRT record entangled seals as currently entangled or as ex entangled – the latter based on evidence of a healed wound and no visible entangling material. This can be harder to judge than might be imagined. Seals having experienced or still experiencing entanglement were recorded **811 times on 357 surveys up to a maximum of 18 different individuals in a single survey** – this was recorded on 13/12/21 at West Cornwall by Sue Sayer and Kate Hockley. **More than 10 different entangled seals were recorded 12 times all at West Cornwall** during the year. **18 unique entangled individuals seen in a single survey,** this is the fourth highest number of entangled seals since our records began. In total **134 different entangled seals were identified** from our catalogues. Of these, **4 were identified more than 30 times in 2021** (BRX139 Easter bunny, MPF256 Slipper, S524 Legs and LP379 Long mono).

A new entanglement issue emerged in 2021, that of seals being caught up in flying rings/dog toys used around the coast for exercise. **A male (LP566 Joy Division) and Female (LP666 Splits)** were both recorded with **flying rings around their necks in March 2021**. Both have since been freed. This will become one of SRT's key campaigns in 2022.

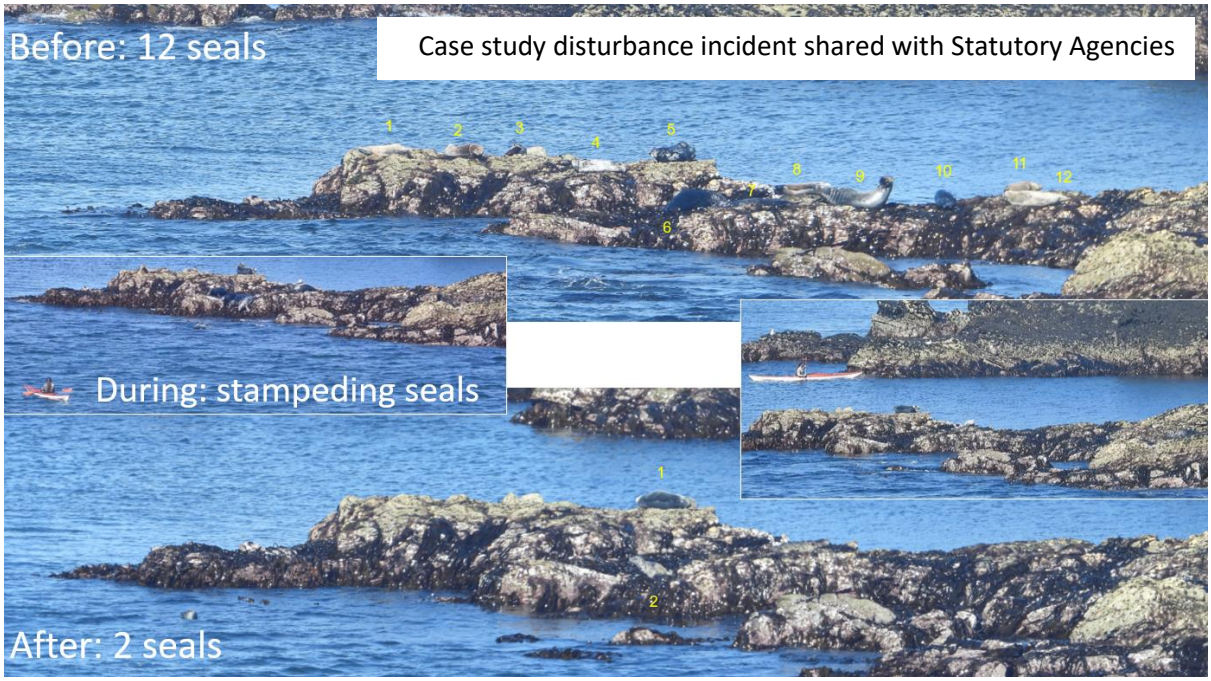
Splits (left) and Joy Division (Right)

SRT are now able to share data and entangled seal experiences as members of the **Clean Catch UK National Steering Group** of which Sue Sayer is a member.

Disturbance

From our routine data (not effort corrected) serious level 3 disturbance (seals leaving the land by tombstoning or in a stampede and entering the sea, crash diving at sea, displacement from sea areas where humans were present or seals being fed) were recorded on **241 occasions as 282 incidents** (on some surveys multiple disturbance incidents were observed). In total, **level 3 disturbance affected a shocking total of 1487 seals in 2021** from a minimum of 1 seal in an incident to maximum of 79 in a single incident at West Cornwall. **Over 20 seals were seriously disturbed stampeding into the sea on 17 different occasions** at **6 different sensitive seals**

sites from multiple North Cornwall sites to Looe in south Cornwall. At the **North Cornwall sites up to 70 seals were recorded stampeding** on 23/11/21 by Carolyn Bloomfield and Malcolm Baker. Where possible, disturbance incidents are now routinely followed up by members of our newly formed **Conservation Team**. In 2021, SRT and the **Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group** aligned their databases and the data from SRT is shared with CMCCG each month. Case studies of disturbance and data are also shared with the newly formed **Marine Mammal Disturbance Partnership,** set up in 2021 and led by **Natural England,** of whom SRT are key participants. Sue Sayer was also invited to present information about seal disturbance at the **Welsh Coastal Wildlife and Rural Affairs Crime Conference organised by Rob Taylor**.



Policy and Conservation Actions

Consultations 31

SRT used data from our amazing volunteer citizen science network to submit evidence to 31 policy and planning consultations. These varied hugely from issue based requests for information **(Climate Change, Wildlife Crime, Marine Disturbance, Non Licensable Activities)** to species input **(Sandeels and Norway Pout** and **The Joint Nature Conservation Committee 7th Quinquennial Review)**, as well as activity based evidence **(Energy generation, Drones, Fixed and Drift Net Byelaws and Personal/Recreational Watercraft)** and developments near seal sites in the UK and beyond **(Via Ferrata, Charity Buildings, Holiday Park and Hotel Plans)**, not to mention multiple requests for identifying marine priorities **(Cornwall and Devon Wildlife Trust, DEFRA, Global Ghost Gear Initiative, Cornwall Biodiversity and for ABPmer)**.

Legislation

In March 2021 the amended **Conservation of Seals Act** finally came into force, better protecting seals by making shooting an offence in addition to injuring and taking seals. This involved the important removal of the Netsman's Defence. At the end of November 2021, DEFRA issued notification that all **wild capture fisheries were now legally required to report incidental bycatch of marine mammals**. These events should be reported to the Marine Management Organisation within 48 hours of the end of the fishing trip.

Campaigns

SRT's key issue focus in 2021 was that of **seal disturbance**. In a concerted campaign with the **Seal Alliance** the following key actions were taken to make **seal disturbance illegal** as it is with whales and dolphins. SRT and the Seal Alliance began by raising awareness with national **Give Seals Space signs** and **Watching Seals Well leaflets**. In June, SRT hosted site visits for **Environmental Minister George Eustice and Parliamentary Undersecretary for the Environment Rebecca Pow,** along with partners **BDMLR** and the **National Trust (NT)**. In July we hosted another visit from **DEFRA's Seals and Seabird's Policy Advisor Vicky Bendall**.

Left to right: Richard Bellamy (National Lottery Heritage Fund), George Eustice, Dan Jarvis (BDMLR), Sue Sayer (SRT), Steve Sudworth (NT) and Geoff Penhaligon (George Eustice's team)

Kick started by the euthanasia of the seal 'Freddie Mercury' after a dog attack on the banks of the Thames, Mary Tester from her newly formed **Thames Seal Watch**, set up a **UK Parliamentary Petition** to raise public awareness of the issue. By the time this closed the petition had **26306 signatures from every single UK constituency**. Mary also collaborated with SRT on an **Early Day Motion** aimed at raising MP awareness of the issue. Mary wrote to every single MP gaining considerably more support than the number of MPs who signed up (as many MPs choose not to sign EDMs full stop.) Something must have worked as SRT were delighted to discover that when the **JNCC's 7th Quinquennial Review** was announced, they suggested that both **native and vagrant seal species be added to the Wildlife and Countryside Act**, which would effectively make seal disturbance illegal. Obviously SRT encouraged as many organisations and individuals to support these suggestions during the **JNCC's public consultation**. The Seal Alliance's next step was to send an **Open Letter** to Boris

Johnson requesting government support for these amendments, which was sent with a **Press Release** including our **PPPP Report launch**, as evidence supporting the needs for this legislative change. To follow, Sue Sayer, Mary Tester and MP Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford) drafted a **10 Minute Rule Bill entitled the Seal (Protection) Bill,** which was read in **Westminster** on 06/02/22. Watch this space. None of this would have been possible without our decades of seal data on disturbance (by people and dogs), so **each and every one of our volunteers can take some credit in the success of this campaign**.

In 2021 Sue Sayer was added to the list of 'Trusted people' contributing to the question drafting by DEFRA to be posed to the **Special Committee on Seals** (government advisors on the species.) SRT were also invited to join the **Partnership Against Wildlife Crime by DEFRA** and the **Marine Mammal Disturbance Partnership** led by Natural England's Ophelie Humphrey and Claire Ludgate. As seal experts, **Wildlife and Countryside LINK** invited SRT to join the **LINK Bycatch and Marine Mammal Groups** and the national **Welsh Police Coordinator for Wildlife and Rural Crime, Rob Taylor,** added Sue to his strategy team.

All the extensive data evidence our volunteers collect, collate and present can be shared in these important **policy, planning and legislative** networks to **make a difference for seals**.

Thanks to SRT evidence, there are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest in Cornwall where it is already a criminal offence to disturb seals, protecting them at key haul out sites across Cornwall's north coast: **Aire Point to Carrick Du; Godrevy to St Agnes and Boscastle to Widemouth Bay** SSSIs. In making this happen, it became obvious that to add a single species to an SSSI, the site had to begin a complete redesignation, so we have been supporting **Natural England to mount a case for reviewing the SSSI review process** itself potentially with Cornwall and the Thames as case studies.

Practical Conservation Actions

We worked with a range of partners to make the southwest a better place for seals. We:

- Provided evidence to Natural England to support **enforcement letters** when seal disturbance has occurred in an SSSI
- Worked with landowners the National Trust to plan their **extensive soft landscaping activities around the West Cornwall site** to protect seals from disturbance, as well as improve habitat for other species
- Supported the National Trust, Cornwall College Newquay and the Pentire Hub to set up **trail cams to monitor** mainland haul outs and disturbance events
- Consulted with Natural England and the Southwest Coast Path team to devise **wildlife best practice key messaging for waymarker posts**
- Worked extensively with statutory agencies to support our key partner BDMLR when a **vagrant visitor - a walrus -** appeared on Cornwall's north coast and then spent weeks in St Mary's harbour on the Isles of Scilly. He was at considerable risk and required onsite monitoring by BDMLR's Lizzi Larbalestier who Sue personally supported almost daily. Sue contacted Alaskan Walrus expert Lori Quakenbush for **key behavioural and conservation advice** as well as helping to produce **shared press statements and public posters** with Lizzi and the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

The walrus in his original pontoon built by Lizzi Larbalestier from BDMLR

- Raised awareness with the Cornwall Council Fisheries Stakeholder Group and Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority about the **changing phenology of grey seals in St Ives Bay**. It turns out the **phenology of the mackerel fishery had also changed creating spatial overlap between the two, resulting in numerous fish and line hooked seals** since October
- Joined Devon and Cornwall Police's Rural Advisory Group with other partners BDMLR and the Cornwall Wildlife Trust to **plan, monitor, advise and deliver a marine mammal safe G7 summit** at the Carbis Bay Hotel. SRT, BDMLR and CWT Seaquest SW coordinated **49 volunteers who monitored marine activity for 365 hours** to provide daily marine disturbance mitigation advice for the security services to action. This created a **model for organisational collaboration for all other major marine events across the UK**
- Created an **Eco film for the G7 Cornwall Schools Eco Conference** in Falmouth

- Collaborated with Colin Trundle at Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority to create two **SSSI signs for fishers outlining their legal responsibilities around seals in the Godrevy to St Agnes and Boscastle to Widemouth Bay SSSIs**

Entangled moulted pup caught up on hooks and line

- Shared our **new online and public photo policy** that sees us role model best seal photo practice. We no longer share photos of seals looking at the camera (as they have most likely been disturbed), photos with large numbers of seals (to avoid people asking and being told the specific location) and only share generic site names publicly. We always want people to see and enjoy seals, but not in a way that simply drives up disturbance, negating our conservation efforts.
- Supported volunteers to **remove risky lost fishing gear** from sites occupied by seals.
- Devised a new system of **risk assessing for seals** to detail disturbance events.
- Created **Best Practice Guidelines and a Seal of Approval Scheme** for operators around one offshore sensitive seal site with the St Ives Bay Stakeholder Group
- Trialled a new **Watercraft Sticker** about marine wildlife best practice with the St Ives Bay Stakeholder Group. This idea is now being developed into a national version
- Submitted data on three sensitive seal sites to Cornwall Wildlife Trust for their submission to government on **High Level Marine Protected Areas**
- Helped to **design coastal signs for playful juvenile seals and mums and pups** around the coast at their time of need. These were designed to appeal to coastal users' better natures, encouraging them to put seals first and give them plenty of space.
- Actioned Natural England's request to **monitor the Aire Point to Carrick Du SSSI at West Penwith North** for disturbance using trail cameras they supplied in 2021. Huge thanks to volunteer Jeff Loveridge for devising appropriate survey protocols and data analysis for NE and landowners the National Trust.

What a year of major actions and achievements on top of all our routine surveys! Thanks to all our amazing and inspiring volunteers, core team, partners and funders we know **we made a positive difference for our iconic and enigmatic seals in 2021**! **Great team effort!**

Profit and Loss

Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust
For the year ended 31 March 2022

	2022
Turnover	
Activity generated income - Fundraising income	92.95
Activity generated income - Talks and Training fee income and expenses claimed	2,763.00
Activity generated Income- Merchandise sales	7,859.93
Adoptions - Private WSS	4,560.44
Donations - Boat	3,055.20
Donations - Corporate (inc' Corporate Sponsorship)	4,905.47
Donations - Private	24,430.44
Grant Income	37,850.00
Online Fundraising - Amazon Smile income	161.12
Online Fundraising - Crowd Funder	801.00
Online Fundraising - Facebook income	2,730.00
Online fundraising PayPal Giving Fund income	413.92
Other Revenue	466.10
Total Turnover	**90,089.57**
Cost of Sales	
Merchandise Purchases	1,732.75
Shopify costs	227.32
Total Cost of Sales	**1,960.07**
Gross Profit	**88,129.50**
Administrative Costs	
Boat charter	6,600.00
IT, hardware and software	1,670.49
Marketing & Promotional Resources	1,352.82
Office supplies	189.10
Other Miscellaneous costs	112.90
Paypal fees	180.48
Printing	2,828.35
Professional fees - Consulting	5,895.00
Professional fees - Insurance.	803.88
Ranger - Activities & Admin' Lauren McGregor	1,656.62
Ranger - Amazement & Discovery (Marion Beaulieu)	15,042.30
Ranger - Bethany Trevethick	774.25
Ranger - C J Bright	649.20
Ranger - Marine stories - Emily Williams	2,063.87
Ranger - Marine stories - Tash Murch	1,415.50
Ranger - Marine Stories- Charlotte Gill	2,188.00
Ranger - Research (Katie Bellman)	9,525.60
Ranger - Retail (Joseph Gray)	1,236.00
Ranger - Sanctuaries at Sea (Sarah Millward)	16,731.25

	2022
Survey equipment	6,621.53
Training costs for Rangers and Volunteers	161.25
Travel and expenses	2,478.40
Total Administrative Costs	**80,176.79**
Operating Profit	**7,952.71**
Other Income	
Gift Aid income	2,873.57
Total Other Income	**2,873.57**
Profit on Ordinary Activities Before Taxation	**10,826.28**
Profit after Taxation	**10,826.28**

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A **Independent Examiner's Report**

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust		
On accounts for the year ended	31st March 2022	**Charity no (if any)**	1162936
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

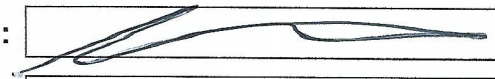
My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
   - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

   have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:  **Date:** 26/10/22

Name: Mr J K Shepherd

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA, CTA
Address:	11A Kimberley Park Road
	Falmouth, Cornwall
	TR11 2DA

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

CORNWALL SEAL GROUP RESEARCH TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1162936

Accounts

CSGRT

Annual Report 2020

Who knew we could achieve so much?

An extraordinary year

Inspiring ambassadors for seals

Smashed expectations and targets

It's all change

Highs and lows

Amazing seal stories

World record breakers

Phenomenal teamwork

COVID19 transformed our charity for the better forever.

Cornwall SEAL Group Research Trust

Annual Report 2020

Charity Commission and Fundraising Regular requirements

Cornwall SEAL Group Research Trust
1162936
www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk

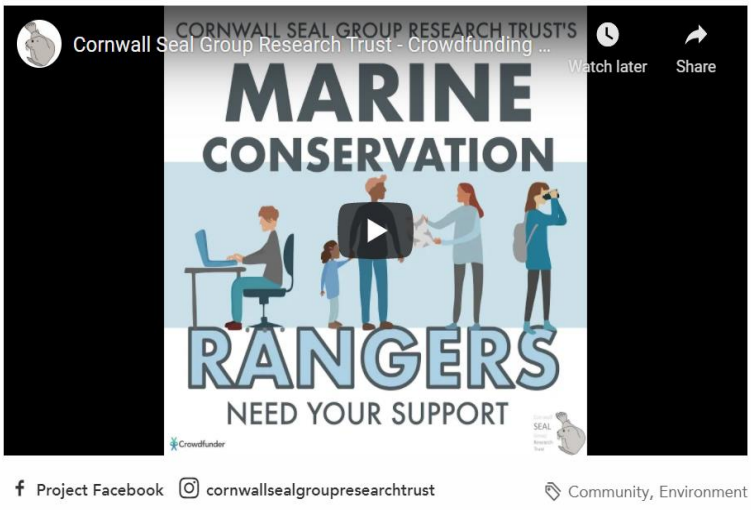
CSGRT conduct their own independent fundraising and do not engage any third party fundraisers. In 2020, CSGRT ran our first ever Crowdfunding Campaign https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/protect-endangered-seals-by-funding-marine-rangers and exceeded our target of £20,000. On occasions, our volunteers might run a fundraiser for us (for example using a remote Facebook birthday fundraiser). Most of our donations are not solicited and occur organically and spontaneously as a result of our activity and engagement.

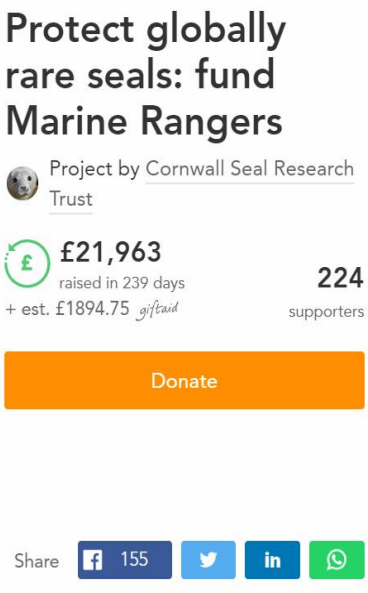
All fundraising by CSGRT is carried out in accordance with the Fundraising Regulator Code of Fundraising Practice https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code . There were no failures to comply with this code.

The majority of our fundraising arose from voluntary unsolicited sign ups to our Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme (by individuals for themselves or as a gift or businesses aligned to our values and conservation outcomes) or simply as a straightforward donation arising from posts on our social media or other online activity. In 2020, CSGRT received their first unexpected legacy unsolicited and out of the blue. With so little face to face activity our collection pots in a few outlets provided a minimal amount of donations.

No complaints were received about our fundraising activities.

CSGRT have a Safeguarding Policy reviewed annually. We protect vulnerable people by having all our Marine Rangers engaged in events with young people DBS checked and they have third party adults present responsible for the young people – such as class teachers or teaching assistants.





Charity Activity 2020

Cornwall SEAL Group Research Trust
1162936
www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk

At CSGRT we described 2018 as a landmark year, 2019 saw us riding a wave of success, which we managed to sustain in 2020 despite COVID19.

People

We began 2020 with **4 paid rangers.** At the start of 2020, our Rangers and activities were funded by The **People's Postcode Lottery (Postcode Local Trust), Heritage Lottery Fund, Heritage Emergency Fund, Natural England, TEVI, LUSH Cosmetics, TESCO Bags of Help, Seal Protection Action Group, Polzeath Marine Conservation Group, Three Bays Wildlife, Animal Friends, Aspects Holidays, Fourth Element, Mungo Lils on the Hill, Rowes Cornish Bakers, The Bowgie Inn, SeaChangers, Waterhaul, The University of Exeter** and our **incredible volunteer fundraising efforts and donations**. However, during 2020, funding ran out and COVID19 made our finances rather precarious. As a result, we ran our first ever **Crowdfunder Appeal**. Thanks to everyone's huge generosity and a lot of hard work by our team, we surpassed our target and raised a total of **£21963**.

In 2020, our part time Rangers were:

- Amazement and Discovery/Photo ID Ranger (Marion Beaulieu)
- Creativity and Activity Ranger (Emily Pollitt)
- Retail Ranger (Joe Gray)
- Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger (Sarah Millward)
- Seal Research Ranger (Katie Bellman)

CSGRT Marine Rangers

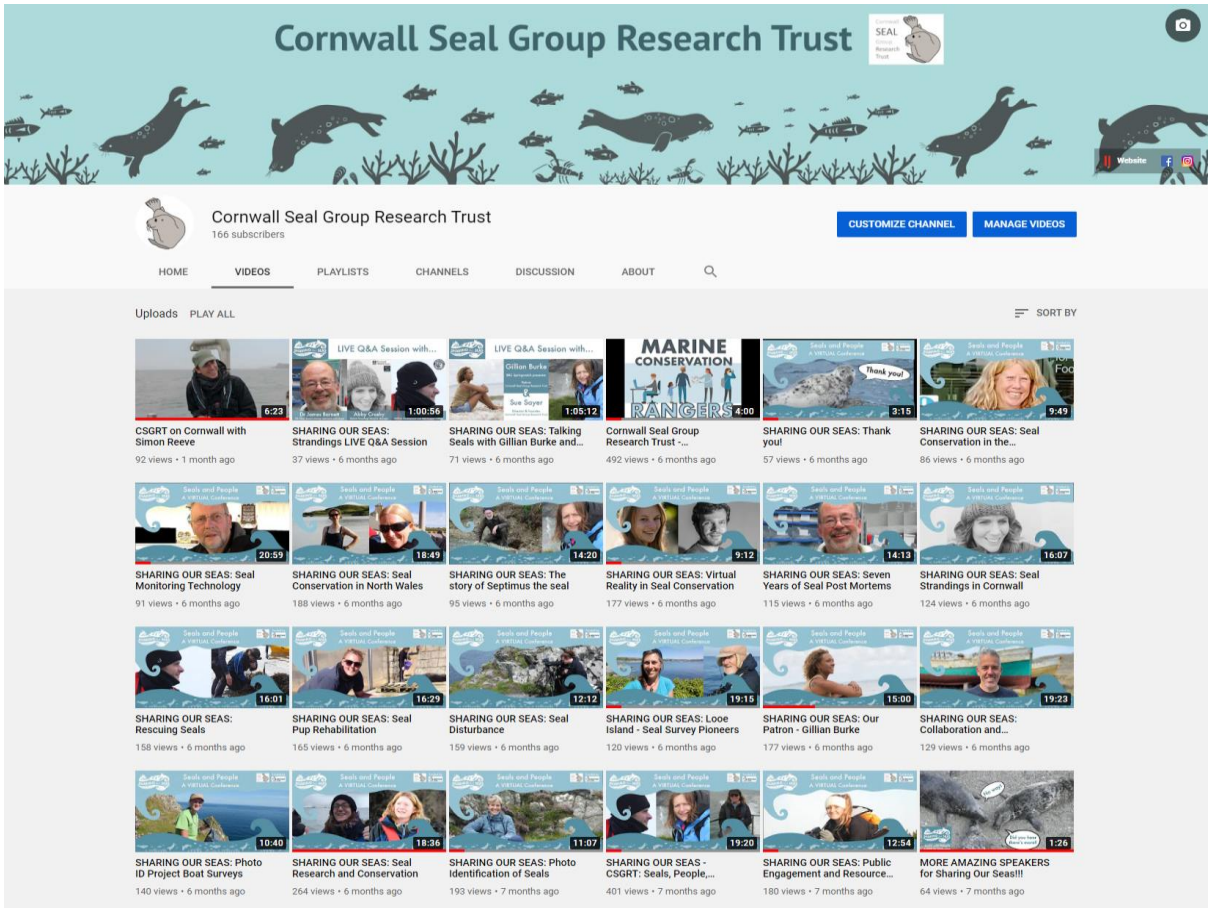
Emily has moved on to pastures new and we have been joined by Joe. So, we have ended 2020 with 4 paid rangers, all of whom are thankfully funded until end of Feb 2022 by the **Heritage Lottery Green Recovery Challenge Fund.** We also welcomed lots of new hub and administrative volunteers and several key volunteers:

- **Photo ID coordinator – Kate Williams**, who organises our ID work and responds to all emails sent into the sightings@cornwallsealgroup.co.uk email account
- **Data Manager** and **Wild Seal Supporter Scheme Coordinator – Karen Gaudern**. Karen digitises the majority of survey albums generated each month and ensures our Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme runs like clockwork
- **Treasurer – Lesley Fitt**, a passionate advocate for marine conservation.

Going forward, we hope to sustain our Rangers by increasing our self-generated funding streams through our **online shop** (gifts and clothing), our **Wild Seal Supporter and Adoption Scheme**, and private / corporate **donations**. Huge thanks to everyone who has contributed to this incredible achievement.

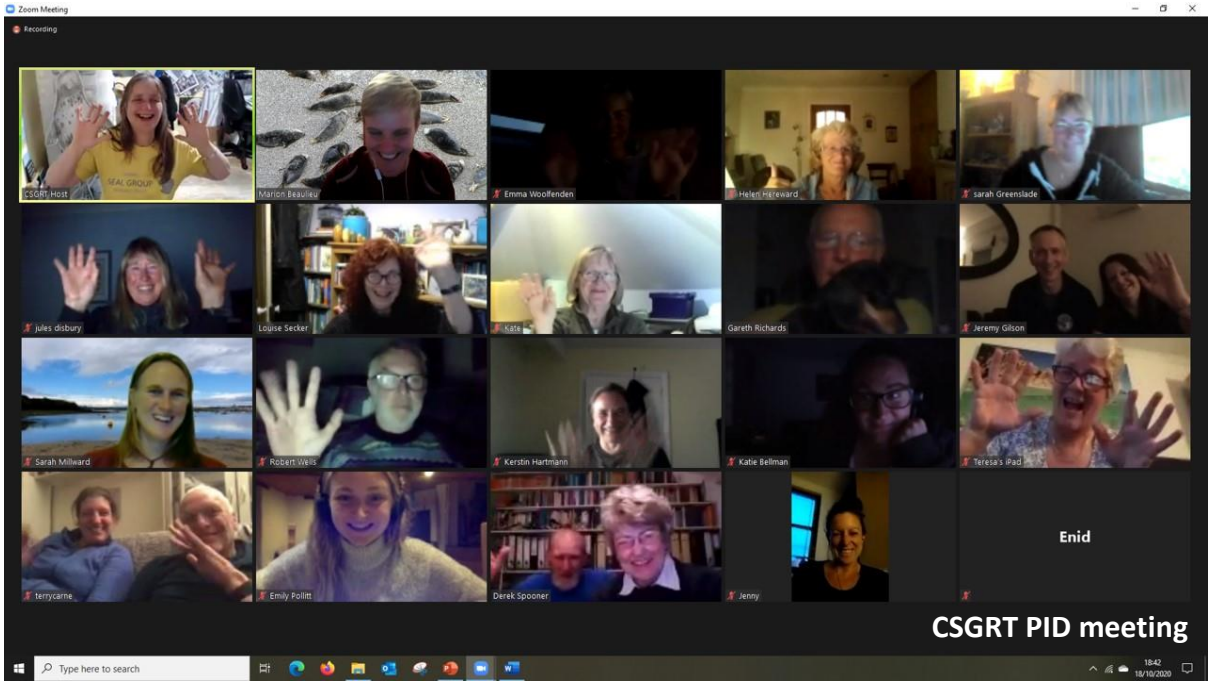
We finally got **fibre broadband** at CSGRT HQ to help us access our IT network remotely and share seal stories online a bit faster. This helped us to deliver **53 free talks, 14 free events and 53 free online training workshops** for our volunteers directly engaging with **8652+ beneficiaries** from all age groups. This shared our learning about the SW's globally rare speciality species and how best to help them at work, rest and play. In return, Mevagissey Museum won a **Cornwall Heritage Innovation Award** for their partnership with us and our Septimus exhibition and CSGRT got a mention in the **House of Lords**.

Our news goes around the world via our **4 global partners**, website and social media – our **Facebook page** has **6141 followers** (up 30%); our **Instagram** page has **2671 followers** (up 84%); our Twitter account has **893 followers** and we set up a new **CSGRT YouTube channel** in May 2020. Our online talks, training and videos had **4440 views in 2020**. Incredibly our Lucky bunting rescue video on our old YouTube channel had **836,970 views** - mostly in India!



2020 saw us building mutually beneficial local artist and business partnerships with a range of talented artisans – **Kurt Jackson, The Chapel Street Gallery, The Cornish Jewellery Company, Rosalyn Cook, Lindsey Keates, John Daniels, Smartie Lids on the Beach, Zennor Made** to add to **Animal Friends and Attic Design and Print** who we have supported for several years.

As ever, people are our most precious asset. By the end of 2020, CSGRT had **25 local area Photo ID (PID) Hubs** across the southwest. These incredibly dedicated volunteers are not only eyes and ears for the seals on their local patch, but they conduct surveys, process photos, make and confirm IDs as well as digitise data. Most importantly these inspiring people are ambassadors and **champions for seals**, representing them in local communities.



Data and Reports

Thanks to an incredible **365** volunteers, we were able to process a total of **4438 discrete surveys** in 2020 (that's over 12 each and every day with the Lizard team managing **daily surveys** for yet another year!) Working within government COVID19 guidelines these included **6 boat Photo ID Project** transects and two of our quarterly **seal censuses.** Sadly, we had a big miss this year, as we were unable to do any of our Looe Photo ID Project surveys down to a combination of COVID19, weather and sea conditions. It is a good job Assistant Warden Claire Lewis keeps routine records for us year-round. Our surveys covered a total of **280 different seal locations**. This was down on 2019, but not really surprising considering the COVID19 pandemic. On **average 9 seals** were recorded per survey from a minimum of zero to a maximum of 596. Overall, of the seals that we could accurately age and sex, **73% were adults** and 27% juveniles. Of the adults we could confidently sex, **57% were male** and 43% female. Our observations included **118 common seal** sightings.

Our PID Hubs processed a truly gobsmacking **139,704 photos** in 2020 and generated a total of **12162 seal identifications** of which **86% were re-identifications**. This included our new maximum of **122 different individual seal identifications** in a single survey that were

confirmed by two experienced volunteers. Of all the seals re-identified, **7 were seals we first added to our catalogues back in 2000** (4 males and 3 females).

777 observations of entangled seals were recorded up to a **maximum of 19** entangled (current or ex) on a single survey. It is not always possible to add an entangled seal to the ID catalogue, so of the 777 records, **94 different entangled seals were identified on 492 occasions**. The most frequently identified were '**Slipper' (42 times); 'Legs' (33); 'Beast' (24); 'Long line' (24) and 'Mono double' (20)**.

From our routine data (not effort corrected) , disturbance was down this year, perhaps as a result of the COIV19 pandemic. Serious level 3 disturbance incidents **dropped from 141 to 64 and seals affected from 614 to 192** during lockdown between Feb and July inclusive. Things then deteriorated with August being our worst August for the number of seals affected. In total, we recorded **221 different disturbance incidents** (of which 156 were serious level 3) with 1319 individual seal reactions (of which **946 were serious level 3**), all of which were likely to impact seal metabolisms and physiology. Level 3 'serious' disturbance data is shown in the tables below – No. of seals impacted (top) No. of Incidents (bottom).

No. of seals	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Jan	26	84	22	76	12	182	94	188	154	218	1115
Feb	34	15	21	27	73	17	52	5	140	15	399
Mar	55	125	27	55	113	80	94	63	108	25	747
Apr	58	91	164	186	362	39	123	305	14	10	1354
May	50	33	118	169	135	35	65	31	62	56	754
Jun	14	32	22	49	14	21	49	57	39	26	324
Jul	32	78	42	65	40	131	98	105	251	60	903
Aug	71	22	68	24	82	25	119	145	126	150	835
Sep	84	25	81	176	74	81	70	61	58	50	763
Oct	12	68	80	53	63	121	31	75	341	53	897
Nov	42	7	14	83	14	20	174	37	127	147	665
Dec	151	1	30	36	13	127	84	232	124	136	934
	629	581	689	999	995	879	1053	1304	1544	946	

Incidents	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Jan	3	9	3	6	5	13	13	3	11	13	80
Feb	3	3	4	2	6	3	3	2	6	5	37
Mar	5	2	2	11	8	7	9	6	7	4	62
Apr	13	3	20	19	16	3	19	13	3	4	114
May	6	5	13	17	14	3	9	12	17	15	111
Jun	3	7	6	12	5	5	10	19	22	14	104
Jul	6	23	20	8	10	15	15	27	86	22	233
Aug	11	6	12	9	20	12	13	26	50	37	199
Sep	12	8	19	17	15	16	19	15	17	17	157
Oct	3	8	10	10	8	6	14	9	23	10	101
Nov	6	1	4	8	2	5	15	4	2	8	55
Dec	9	1	4	4	2	10	6	9	12	7	64
	80	76	117	123	111	98	145	145	256	156	

On a more positive note, there were **790 sightings of ex rehabilitated tagged** seals up to a **maximum of 12** on one survey. On all but one occasion, these seals were identified and in total **121 different individual tagged seals were identified** post release back to the wild. These had been released from the **Gower** in southwest Wales to the north, **Combe Martin** to the northeast, the **Isles of Scilly** to the west, **Gunwalloe** to the south and **Sidmouth** to the east. The most frequently identified were '**Archer lady**' **(78 times);** '**Prudie**' **(46);** '**Hufflepuff**' **(46);** '**Slipper**' **(42) and** '**Orion**' **(41)**. Tagged seal sightings show a lot less seasonal variation than entangled seals.

All this data provided CSGRT with a robust evidence base from which we wrote **15 reports including 4 for publication** (a **'Post release monitoring'** paper for **Marine Mammal Science** currently in review, our **'Grey Seal pupping sites in Cornwall 2019/2020'** for **Natural England,** the **'Human Activity and Seal Interactions'** report for the **Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group** and we edited the **Southwest Marine Ecosystems Seal Report**.**)**

Policy and Conservation

We used the evidence we collated to give seals a voice in **36 public consultation** submissions, as wide ranging as the **Southwest Marine Spatial Plan**, **the Responsible Fishing Port Scheme**, **the Southwest Coast Path**, **OCR's Natural History GCSE**, **Fishing Fixed Net Byelaws**, **the AONB Management Plan**, **Cornwall's Marine Nature Recovery Priorities** and amending the **Conservation of Seals Act** with a range of statutory agencies coordinated by **DEFRA**. This was the biggest news ever as the **Conservation of Seals Act finally outlawed the taking, injuring and killing by any means of seals in the UK**.

CSGRT represented seals at the two **Seal Network UK** meetings chaired by DEFRA online in March and November 2020 and hosted a socially distanced visit by **Vicky Bendall the DEFRA Seals and Seabirds Policy Advisor**.

Sue Sayer chaired the newly formed **Seal Alliance's Disturbance Working Group** which held 8 meetings from April 2020 and will launch some exciting developments in 2021. CSGRT

DEFRA's Vicky Bendall at CSGRT HQ

were invited to represent seals on the National Steering Group for a new statutory organisation aimed at reducing wildlife bycatch – **Clean Catch UK led by DEFRA**.

At the start of lockdown, CSGRT approached **Natural England to review the Aire Point to Carrick Du Site of Special Scientific Interest** and seals have been confirmed as a monitored species across this protected area. This is now the **third SSSI in Cornwall** where seals are features of interest and **well protected legally even from disturbance**.

We partnered with **Perran Sands Holiday Park** to design a large sign about seals and our new banners were put up by the National Trust on the **Roseland and the Bowgie Inn**. CSGRT agreed **pupping signs** that were **erected temporarily on the Lizard** (by Natural England) **and the Roseland** (by the National Trust and volunteers) to reduce disturbance. We partnered with **British Divers Marine Life Rescue** in a **pup watch at Pentire where signs** were also

Thank you Perran Sands

designed, agreed and **put up by the National Trust** along with new clifftop fencing to protect 'Lucky bunting' and her pup 'Little flag' from clifftop footfall and disturbance. The Roseland haul out had fencing too. CSGRT also created **advisory signs for Dorset and Carbis Bay** where juvenile grey seals had been actively engaging with swimmers. Thank you to all the volunteers who participated in this valuable ambassadorial work.

Lockdown impacted our ability to communicate with our supporters and the public, so CSGRT transformed our operational procedures, set up a new **remotely accessible IT network** and went online. Our supporters benefitted, as newsletter subscribers (http://eepurl.com/dHdy3j) were able to access new **virtual monthly meetings**. We held an incredible **341 conference calls and meetings** with volunteers, partner organisations, business networks and statutory agencies. **CSGRT's 20th birthday** was celebrated with a **virtual conference** **attended by 700+** different people. Incredibly, COVID19 has changed our charity and seal conservation for the better forever.

As in previous years we continued to share evidence, information and advice with **4 global partners** – World Animal Protection, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, the Pinniped Entanglement Group and the 5 Gyres Trawlshare Microplastics Project.

Media

In 2020, CSGRT featured in **43 written articles** for organisations such as the Pinniped Entanglement Group, Global Ghost Gear Initiative Newsletters, Finisterre, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership, the SW Coast Path, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Cornwall and Devon Mammal Groups.

CSGRT and seals were discussed in **3 live radio interviews** from **BBC Radio 4's nature table to Radio Cornwall** interviews about seal pups and our Green Recovery Challenge Fund grant. CSGRT took part in **3 high profile TV** series including **Countryfile** and **Springwatch** earlier in the year and **Simon Reeve in Cornwall** that was watched by 3million viewers in November. Several clips also featured in local news programmes throughout the year.

Resources

Our exhibition and activity resources grew again this year. Our **Virtual Reality experience,** where people of all ages and abilities can explore the anatomical features of our seal

skeletons was launched and proved a great hit prior to lockdown. We created a series of **9 online activities for families** to share during lockdown and these are available to download for free from our online shop. We also have new **Seal Adaptation** leaflets, **15 Fascinating Fact** Infographics, a **Timeline of CSGRTs first 20 years** and **Top Ecotips** to give away to inspire eco action at home.

Seals and Seasonal Activity

The beauty of long-term data sets is that you can begin to spot changes. **Phenology shifts** appear to be taking place in the seal world. **Peak haul out season for seals is now earlier** moving from April in 2013/14 to March (for 5 years) to Feb (for 2 years) and even Jan and Dec (for 1 year each). Likewise, the pupping season, that **used to peak in October, has moved to September for the last 2 years and is shorter and more compressed** than it used to be. Alongside this, seals have started using apparently **new haul outs** not previously recorded by CSGRT on the Lizard and at West Cornwall, whilst **haul outs have shifted** from one side of the headland to the other on the Roseland.

After a highlight on New Year's day of identifying our **favourite Bottlenose dolphin 'Topless'** at Portreath, we were horrified a short while later to discover an **enormous yellow mooring buoy washed up on the West Cornwall** haul out beach. We soon realised that this would break up into millions of plastic fragments if not removed, so began an epic undertaking with Ghost Net Busters and the National Trust to remove this lost gear before it was too late.

In January, we discovered that adult female, **BRF20 'Tulip place holder', who has an extremely swollen and blind right eye has actually survived in this condition since 2012** –

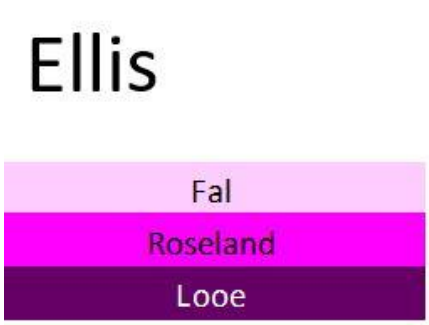
she seems to spend the summer in the Fal or on the Lizard and the winter on the Roseland haul out. Adult male **LIZ837 'Number 25'** made us smile when he challenged our ID skills during his annual moult. Sarah Greenslade took a photo of a **seal launching itself vertically out of the water** that had us gobsmacked. Then, true to form, adult male '**Arrow Flight'** made his usual short winter visit to the north coast from his favourite haunt in Mounts Bay.

In February, it was a great relief that **LF80 'Brittany'** and another unidentified seal actually turned up during filming for Countryfile for our 100th Looe survey. Like 'Arrowflight' adult female SCF1 '**Kelp'** also turned up at West Cornwall from Mounts Bay – this was only the 5th time since 2008 that we have seen her on the north coast. Great news was to be had from Fowey too as FRC1 **'Serena Lowen'** the common seal was recorded there again. It was wonderful to host a **West Cornwall Fieldcraft Day** for the University of Exeter despite the beach having been recently scoured of its top layers of sand revealing more rocks below.

Our **monthly meetings became 'virtual'** in March as we all learned new skills as fast as we could and they started with a bang, as Looe's LF8 **'Lucille'** amazed us all by hauling out in Brixham! She now **links south Devon to north Cornwall** where she was identified in 2017. Kate Hockley and Sue Sayer celebrated by wearing their glad rags as their voluntary contributions were recognised in **Soroptimist Award nominations**. Adult male BRX70 **'Crinkle'** delighted The Seal Project team in south Devon by linking them up with Dorset as they started a new adventure conducting boat surveys. Kate and Sue got lucky when their all-weather writer got ripped out of their hands and blew over the cliff, but was returned to them by a massive gust catapulting it into a gorse bush - phew! S38 **'Thistle clubs'**, first ID'd in 2002 was photographed with 3 entangled seals all lined up on the beach. Then lockdown hit! Some of our luckiest volunteers were able to exercise to their seal site. Fortunately, their survey photos kept our spirits up. LM72 **'One spot 2'** was re-identified back in south Devon for the first time that we know of after lots of identifications in Looe, the Roseland and the Lizard.

April got off to a sad start after ex RSPCA rehab seal '**Vobster'** who was **released in north Devon was found bycaught off the northwest coast of France** - RIP. Fortunately, our spirits

were soon lifted after we recorded some interesting prone howling and body clapping behaviour by a sub adult adolescent male. BRX139 **'Easter bunny'** put in an appearance in south Devon with a shawl of plastic sack around her neck, which fortunately disappeared soon afterwards. Adult male LM46 **'Wiggins'** turned up in Mevagissey again and adult male common seal LC18 **'Ellis'** returned to the Roseland as lockdown continued. Oblivious to world affairs, DP927 **'Clockwork seal'** put in his usual April appearance at West Cornwall and we are left wondering where else he goes when he is off our radar.



Ellis	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Jan			2						1	2	5	6
Feb							1	2	2	3	4	
Mar						1	5		1		3	3
Apr						2	2	1		1		8
May							1	1	1			3
Jun						1		2				
Jul								1	1		2	1 1
Aug										1		
Sep								1		1	1	
Oct	1								4	1	2	
Nov					2				3		2	
Dec						1		3	6	4	4	
	1	0	2	0	2	5	9	11	19	14	23	20

Devastation hit in May as we lost one of CSGRT's founder members – the legend that was Tim Bain. RIP great man. We also learned from research that seal mums must leave their pups at three weeks in order to survive the energy loss created by feeding them. We became more confident about our online talks and even did some for Maritime UK. It got busy again in north Devon as **57 seals we re-identified during 27 surveys with Starfish being identified 10 times in May alone** and tagged seal **RSPCA's Wookey** was photographed hauled out. In December, he became our **first link between north Devon and the Gower**. We had been helping identify an old adult male **Bertus in Holland** and we were relieved to find that he was still alive after a carcass washed up nearby. The Fal became a popular **haul out spot for adult females on human structures** as the rest of us enjoyed a range of nesting birds on our daily exercise.

In June, we enjoyed a behind the scenes experience during Springwatch filming with our patron Gillian Burke was able to meet Augusta whilst recording for our Crowdfunder film.

Kate Williams had an extraordinary experience at Portreath as she watched **a sudden rush of 10 seals exiting a cave** beneath her. Teresa Boulden spotted ex rehab seal **'Puffa'** at Pendeen from 2003. The Lizard team got great photos of three of their favourites…LIZ112 **'Two fishes'**, LIZ15 **'Key'** and LIZ860 **'Fidget'**. Not to be outdone, S161 **'Crosscomb'** put in an appearance in a blowhole rockpool in the middle of the West Cornwall wave cut platform…she is the only seal we have ever seen access this pool from underwater. The Seal Project were sad to identify a beautiful dead adult male seal as TOR13 **'Sidney'**. RIP.

S344 Seahorse

S344	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Jan				1	1				1				3
Feb			1		1		1						3
Mar			1	1	1		1		1				5
Apr	1	1	1		1	1			1	1	1	2	10
May							1			2	1		4
Jun	1						1	2		1	8		13
Jul				1			1		4	5	6	1	18
Aug									1	4	1		6
Sep		1		1	1					1			4
Oct	3	2	1	1	1					2			10
Nov								1					1
Dec								1					1
	5	4	6	5	4	1	5	4	8	16	17	3	77

Trevose
Pentire
Porthtowan
West Cornwall

Pupping season started with **4 dead pups (2 from late June)** at Porth, St Mary's, Portreath and Torbay – the last of which was tiny and obviously premature. To help pups, we shared messages about the impact of disturbance on mums in the summer which was picked up by the **Telegraph newspaper**. July was a month of filming, as we went out with crews from **Cornwall Climate Care, BBC Spotlight and Beagle Media**. Our seals hauled out on cue to greet Simon Reeve and he was introduced to NF8 **'Radley'**, S466 **'Skinny H**', S344 **'Seahorse**', S409 **'Pitchfork'**, S422 **'Ivy'**, DP822 **'Heart sideways'**, PJF8 **'Fuchsia T'** and LP298 **'Whist'** in turn. Still with no Ranger funding after August, our **Sharing our Seas: Seals and People Virtual Conference** took place over a week to be followed by the launch of our all-important **Crowdfunder**. Massive thanks again for everyone's amazing support. We continued to enjoy Andy Roger's monthly updates sharing all his natural highlights from Pentire. This was the month lockdown was lifted. This roller coaster month ended with a sealy low, as poor entangled S524 **'Legs'** returned with a new bobbly lesion on her neck and a high, with a beautiful photo of LC18 **'Ellis'** hauled on a mooring buoy in the Fal.

As **pupping season took off in August**, so did disturbance records all-round the southwest. A juvenile seal called **'Sammy'** became far too interested in people as visitors returned to his favourite beaches in Weymouth – fortunately he was watched over by an amazing local volunteer team who kept him safe. We are very grateful to **Ghost Net Busters** who did a very early morning removal of some lost fishing gear from the Pentire offshore haul out without disturbing any seals. **Matt and Lucy** got a great record of 4 seals hauled out at Dawlish as S89 **'Wings'**, S326 '**Box Desk'** and S347 **'Spade'** all delighted visitors in St Ives

Harbour and the haul out returned to the mainland at West Cornwall. The month ended sadly with the demise of LP306 **'Wide eyes wolf'** at around the age of 6 years old. RIP.

A seal was recorded behaving strangely in September by the Padstow Ferry Skipper in the River Camel and to our amazement this turned out to be BRX4 **'Flower'** from south Devon – behaving normally for her. LP41 **'Jenga'** became the first ever ex rehabbed male seal to be recorded mating at Porthtowan – his chosen female was S451 **'Skateboard'**. A **'chocolate orange' stained seal** and a **premature pup** were recorded on the Gower by Gareth. We called **Ghost Net Busters** out for another low-profile removal of trawl net from a secluded pupping beach. As pupping season peaked, **CSGRT partnered with BDMLR to rescue a pup (named Empanada by the Cornish Seal Sanctuary)** from West Cornwall. We finally got out on the first **boat survey PIPs** of the year – wearing masks of course…our new ones designed by **Rowes Cornish Bakers**. The **common dolphins** seemed delighted and we had one of our best ever experiences with them in glassy seas that will live long in our memories.

Keeping up to date with pups, kept us hugely busy in October and there were lot of highlights. Our world record breaking mum – S112 **'Ghost'** was back! We were delighted that she returned to have her **17th pup in 18 years** – right on cue. She hung around for 24 days – a good sign for her pup! S240 **'Hanging eyes'** was hot on her heals returning after an **absence of 2.5 years to have her 12th pup in 14 years**. TOR2 **'Sammy'** and TOR5 **'Nipper'** had their pups on the same beach in south Devon.

Rob Wells celebrated as there were **late pups – two firsts**! One on the historical mainland haul out beach on the **Roseland** watched over by Kerstin and the second on his local **St Austell Bay** haul out. We recorded **two seals painfully hooked in their sensitive muzzles** in St Ives Bay. Louise Secker discovered an exciting link up between **Lundy and North Cornwall by LUN533 'Owl eyes Podium' who we have tracked since 2012** and our Hub teams found a **link between Lizard South and south Devon**. Taggies provide invaluable information as they can be accurately aged and reveal that **older seals are not always longer/bigger** as shown by LP123 **'Ugg'** and LP228 **'Orion'**. It was a bumper month for tagged seal sightings and a taggie from the Roseland turned out to be an entirely new link up as ROS1000 **'Morgan'** had been rehabbed by **RSPCA Mallydams and released in Sidmouth in 2018**.

December was seabird month, as the phenomenon of 'snowing gannets' returned to the north coast. **Clean Ocean Sailing** approached us about a **large gill net on the Roseland and they partnered seamlessly with our local hub to successful remove it**. Thank goodness as this was another bad month for entangled seal sightings. LIZ35 **'Quaver star'** put in her occasional visit at West Cornwall, although she seemed to have a respiratory infection. Sadly LP182 **'Stinkweed'** (an ex RSPCA taggie) was found dead at Hayle – **another adult male to die in his prime – 11 years old – RIP**. More taggie news came as Andrea identified a second Mallydams seal called LP649 **'Panda'** at West Cornwall, which was the first **ever link between the Gower and Cornwall**. Then, LP5650 **'Empanada'** (mentioned above) delighted us as she swam right around the treacherous Land's End seas from her Lizard release site on the south coast to appear back on the north coast beach she was rescued from. This is a **minimum journey of 75km navigated in just 12 days at the ripe old age of 3 months**! Another seal to turn up on cue was S923 **'U cup head'** who made her one visit to West Cornwall on 09/12/20, as adult female S253 **'Scales of Balance'** did her usual West Cornwall to North Cornwall commute in less than 4 days.

We continue to learn that there is no **such thing as an average seal**…like us, they are all doing their own individual thing. They know what they are doing - we just haven't caught up yet. Our photo identification work continues to demonstrate how far our seals swim and how much they depend on joined up and protected coastal habitat. Our photo ID works has helped us to realise just how **complicated seal society** is and the impacts we are all having on their health and welfare.

Massive thanks to all our volunteers across our **Wales, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Dorset and Hampshire** network, who make these incredible discoveries possible. This huge team effort makes our globally rare grey seals the most intensively studied in the world.

Sue Sayer: Director: Jan 2021

Appendix: Hub personnel

Seal Photo ID Hubs

Surveyors

Cardigan Bay
Dave Jarvis

Gower
Gareth Richards

North Devon
Dave Jenkins

Lundy Island
Dean Woodfin Jones
Martin Thorne

North Cornwall
Mike Stephens
Malcolm Baker
Shan Uglow
Pauline McKeogh

Padstow Bay
Jenny Simpson

Rumps
Jules Disbury

Trevose
Terry Carne
Charlotte Bright

Newquay and Pentire
Katie Bellman
Andy Rogers
Craig Ashley

Portreath to Porthtowan
Peter Welsh
Andy Hadfield
Ellen Jones
Kate Williams

West Cornwall
Sue Sayer
Kate Hockley
Andrea Hunt
Geoff Rogers
Nichola Peters
Karen Gaudern
John Adelson

Carbis Bay
Andrea Hunt
Vanessa Bottrell

St Ives
Nichola Peters
Eli Kej
Peter Nason
Chris Oates

West Penwith North
Jeff Loveridge
Helen Hambly

Cape Cornwall
Malcolm Baker
Teresa Boulden

Porthgwarra
Teresa Boulden

Mounts Bay West
Andrea Hunt
Vanessa Bottrell
Hannah Jones
Mounts Bay East
Teresa Boulden

Lizard West and SP
Alec and Enid Farr
Terry Thirlaway
Ken Wallace
Hilary Hoad
Jeremy and Angela Gilson
Peter Hall

Lizard East
Cat Lee

Roseland
Rob Wells
Kath Wherry
Kerstin Hartmann

St Austell Bay
Rob Wells

Looe
Claire Lewis
LMCG
Derek Spooner
Martin Gregory

South Devon
Sarah Greenslade
Duncan Kenny

Solent
Richard Holgate

CSS
Ken Wallace

Seal Photo ID Hubs

Processors

Cardigan Bay
Dave Jarvis

Gower
Gareth Richards

Somerset
Vanessa Lloyd

North Devon
Kate Williams

Lundy Island
Dean Woodfin Jones
Lundy wardens and volunteers
Kate Williams

North Cornwall
Louise Secker

Padstow Bay
Jenny Simpson

Rumps
Jules Disbury

Trevose

Newquay and Pentire
Katie Bellman
Andy Rogers

Portreath to Porthtowan
Kate Williams

West Cornwall
Sue Sayer
Kate Hockley
Andrea Hunt

Carbis Bay
Andrea Hunt

St Ives
Louise Secker

West Penwith North
Marion Beaulieu
Helen Hambly

Cape Cornwall
Teresa Boulden

Isles of Scilly

Porthgwarra
Teresa Boulden

Mounts Bay West
Andrea Hunt

Mounts Bay East
Teresa Boulden

Lizard West and SP
Enid Farr
Sarah Millward
Jeremy and Angela Gilson

Lizard East

Roseland
Rob Wells
Kerstin Hartmann
Helen Hereward

St Austell Bay
Rob Wells
Emma Woolfenden

Looe
Cliff Davies
Christine Spooner
Sophie Holden
Jasmina Goodair

South Devon
Ellie Knott
Sarah Greenslade
Kate Williams

Solent
Kate Williams

Revenue and Expenditure

Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust
For the year ended 31 March 2021

	2021
Revenue	
Activity generated income - Fundraising income	63
Activity generated Income- Merchandise sales	4,894
Activity generated income - Talks and Training fee income and expenses claimed	1,528
Adoptions- Corporate WSS	2,914
Adoptions - Private WSS	5,355
Donations - Boat	1,054
Donations - Corporate (inc' Corporate Sponsorship)	9,395
Donations - Private	2,727
Grant Income	92,746
Legacies	42,093
Online Fundraising - Amazon Smile income	98
Online Fundraising - Crowd Funder	21,923
Online Fundraising - Facebook income	1,791
Online Fundraising - Just Giving income	133
Online fundraising PayPal Giving Fund income	163
Total Revenue	**186,875**
Cost of Sales	
Merchandise Purchases	1,772
Shopify costs	272
Total Cost of Sales	**2,044**
Gross Surplus	**184,831**
Administrative Costs	
Boat charter	2,750
IT, hardware and software	5,083
Marketing & Promotional Resources	7,167
Office supplies	437
Other Miscellaneous costs	54
Paypal fees	94
Professional fees - Accountancy fees	275
Professional fees - Consulting	2,000
Professional fees - Insurance.	913
Ranger - Amazement & Discovery (Marion Beaulieu)	14,170
Ranger - Creativity and Activity (Emily Pollitt)	7,390
Ranger - Research (Katie Bellman)	12,675
Ranger - Retail (Joseph Gray)	2,406
Ranger - Sanctuaries at Sea (Sarah Millward)	14,269
Survey equipment	3,183
Training costs for Rangers and Volunteers	410

	2021
Travel - National	4,077
Total Administrative Costs	**77,352**
Surplus	**107,480**
Surplus	**107,480**
Surplus	**107,480**

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust		
On accounts for the year ended	31st March 2021	**Charity no (if any)**	1162936
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
   - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

   have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: **Date:** 01/07/21

Name: Mr J K Shepherd

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA, CTA
Address:	11A Kimberley Park Road
	Falmouth, Cornwall
	TR11 2DA

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.