

Seals SW

We put seals first!
**Seals unaware
of surveyor**
Photographer a good
distance away
following Defra/WiSe
best practice



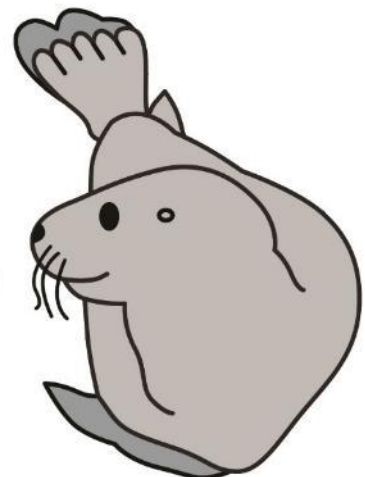
05/10/24 Lucky Bunting and her 4th pup in 5 years by Andy Hadfield

Annual Report 2024

Seal Research Trust's 'Seals SW' Annual Report

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SEAL
Research
Trust



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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

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



Begin using stickers on social media

Feb

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



SRT 2023 Annual Report released



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



Lundy Society Seals Field Course led by Rob Wells

Mar



Seal disturbance data update sent to Defra

Bilberry (from 2001) ID'd

STAPIP POLPIP CASPIP & census surveys

SWME Conference input on seals

Apr

Dan presented Wings' rescue film at the ECS



Restore Nature Now event in Truro

Presentation to White House Federal Scientific Committee



Operation Seabird event at Global Bird Fair in Rutland

Springwatch shared best practice on seal space & photography



Launched 1st schools creative competition



May

Manifesto for seals ready for General Election



SWW Meeting 3 about PT 02/05/24



First of four FSC Courses of the year

Gnome returned to Porthtowan (ID'd from 2004)

Jun

Cudden Hub record in a new sensitive seal site



Seal Alliance sign up in Dorset

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

Seal data submitted to LNRS



SRT input to Threatened Species Recovery Plans for Natural England

N Devon pupping site discovered



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

Jul

Research with Cornwall FLOW on underwater seal vocalisations



Sue & Dan become Mammal Society Science Committee members



Aug

SWME report published resulting in coverage by multiple media outlets



Mum feeding two pups recorded by Martin Yelland

Seal Alliance limit damage of BBC programme



Sep



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



SRT hosted Natural England's National Enforcement Team visit



Pup birth photographed by Martin Yelland



Oct

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

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

Dec

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



Chairlift's 27 year old teeth revealed



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

SRT attend JNCC Marine Mammal Forum



SRT on Panel at KOSCF Documentary premiere in St Ives



Visit from Defra Seals Policy Advisor

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'.

Thank you to our current funders for paying our critical 1.8 fte Marine Rangers



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

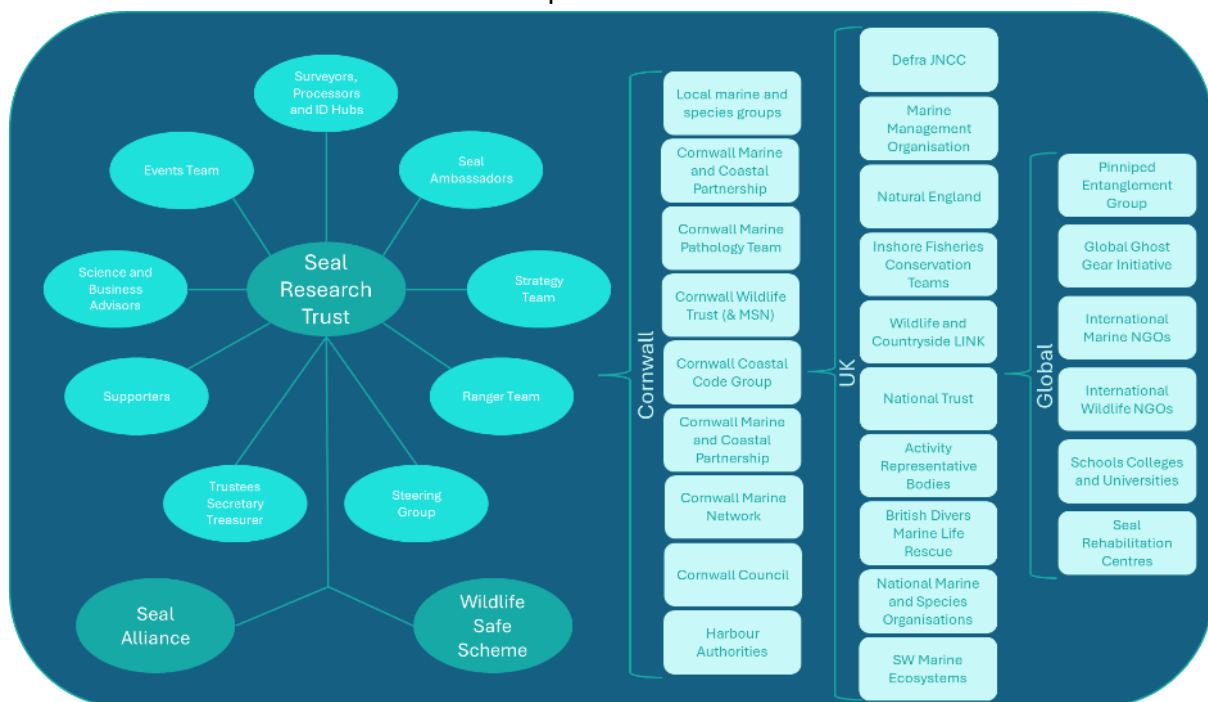
Patron, Marine Rangers and Science Advisors

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**.

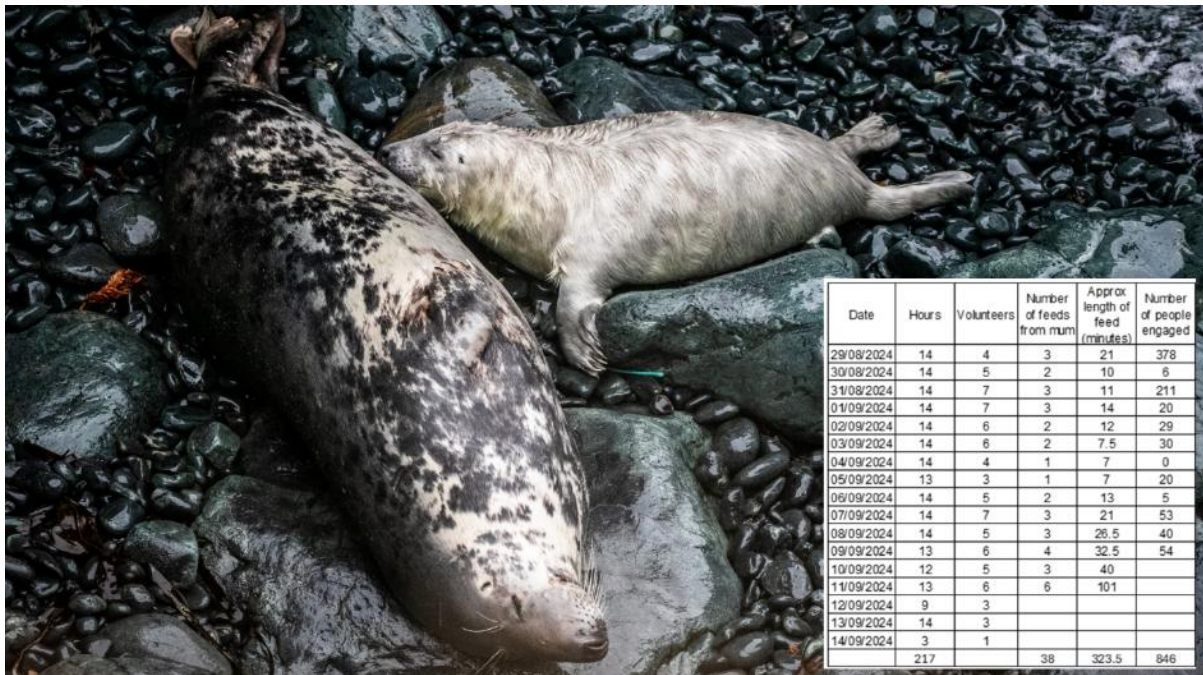


Cornwall Marine and Coastal Partnership Conference

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.)

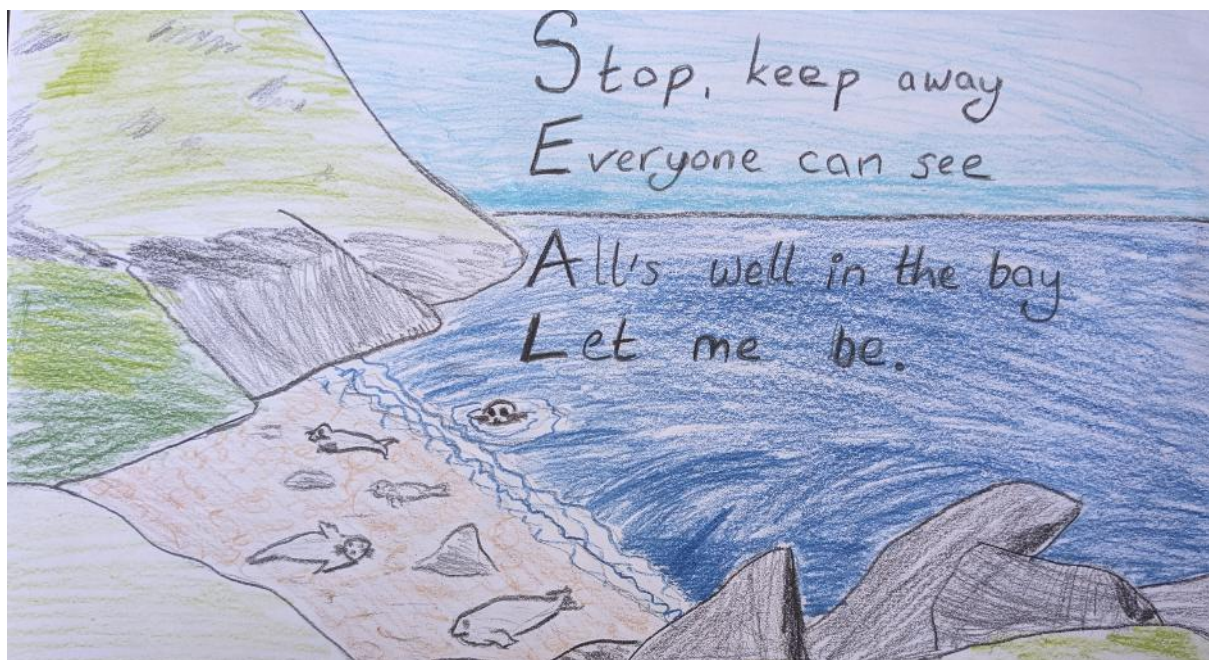


Wings and Jet, day 9 by Martin Yelland

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.



Schools competition entries



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.

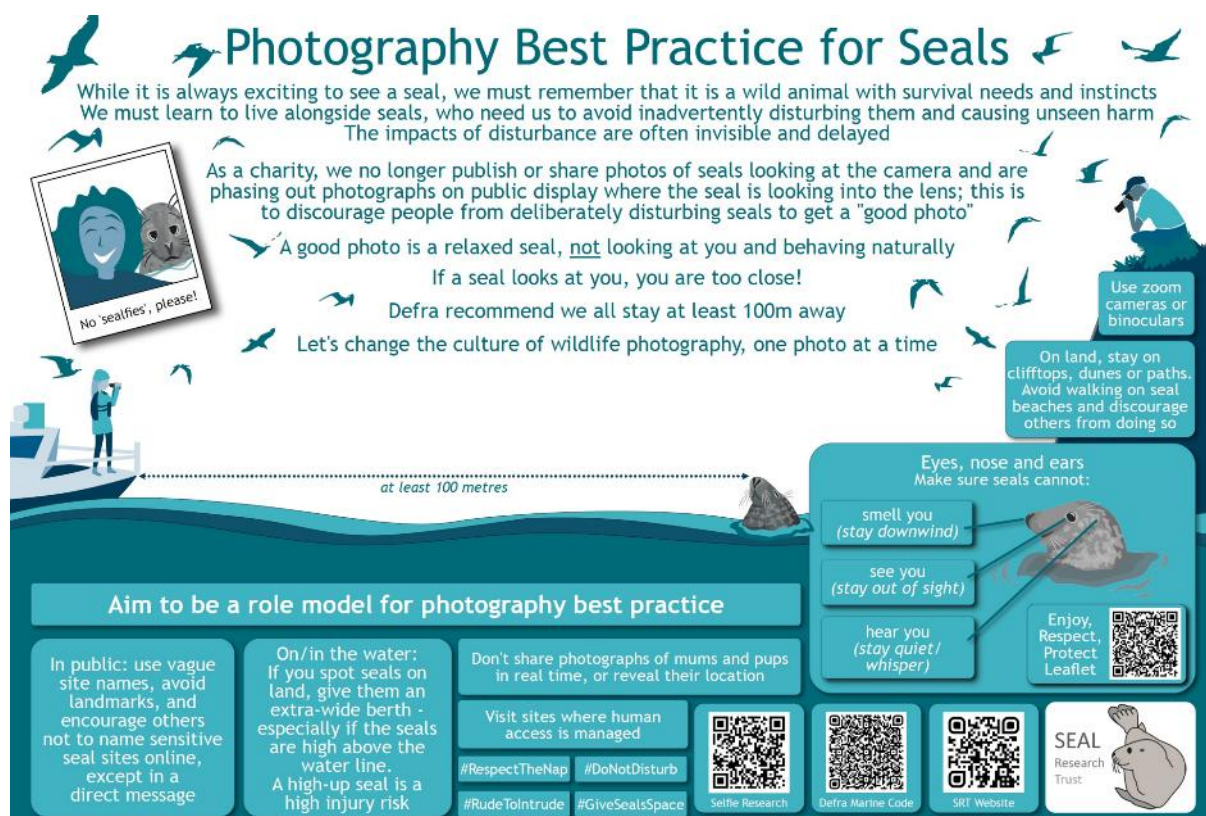
Seals SW Newsletter: sign up here! <http://eepurl.com/dHdy3j>

The collage displays a variety of newsletters and reports. Key elements include:

- Seals SW Newsletter:** A header with a sign-up link and a grid of newsletter thumbnails.
- Creative Competition Winners Announcement:** A section celebrating winners of a creative competition.
- Reports:** A section featuring various reports, including 'Seal Survey Photo ID Project (SPIT) Reports'.
- Sealy Highlights:** A section highlighting key events and activities.
- Seal SW Newsletter example:** A detailed example of a newsletter page with various sections like 'Welcome to Seals SW', 'Creative Competition!', 'Design something creative', and 'Support Us'.
- Support Us:** A section encouraging donations and support.

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!**

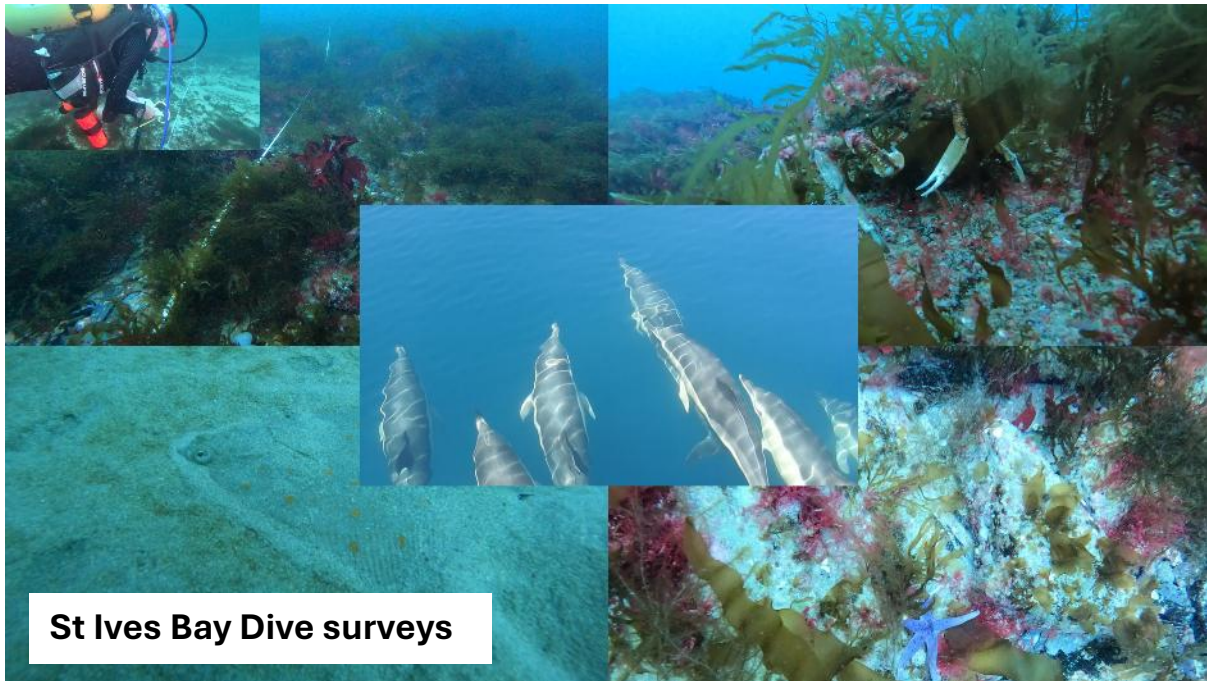
SRT also supported a local author with content about best practice around seals for their new book **'Snorkelling Guide to the UK'** and for a children's book **'Beach Aliens'**.



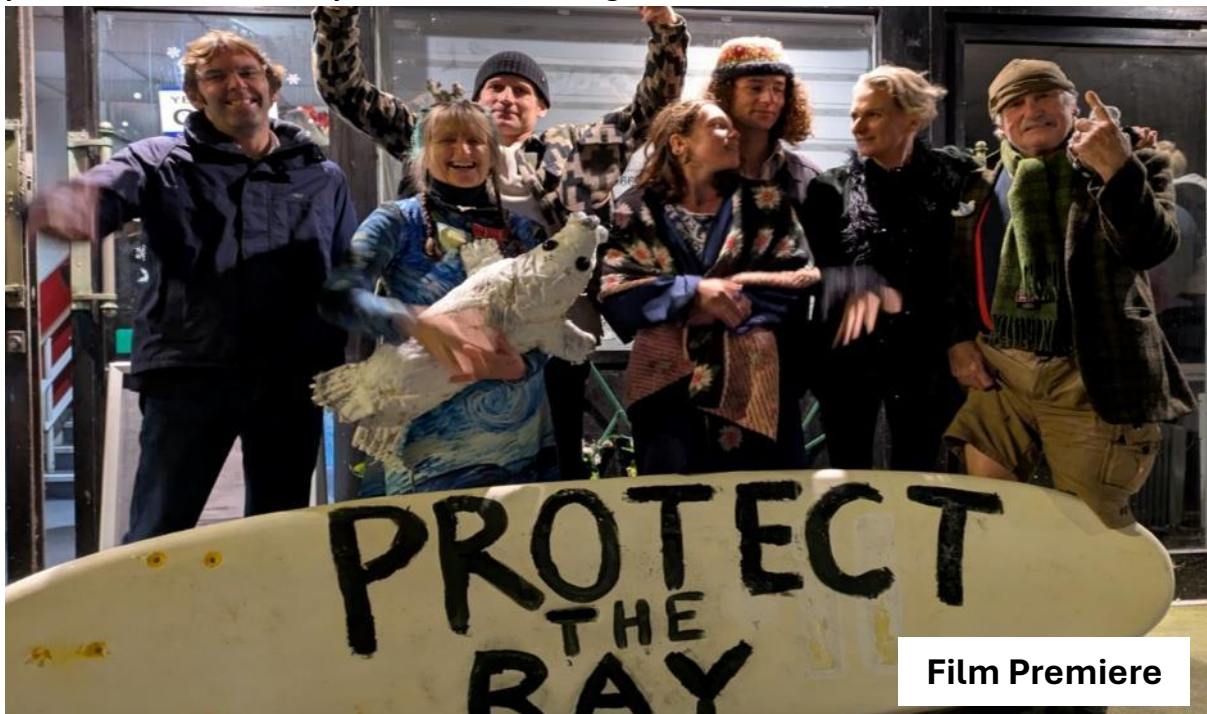
A Nova Scotia company has proposed a bold plan to fight climate change and is facing scrutiny over its safety. Avis Favaro reports.

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

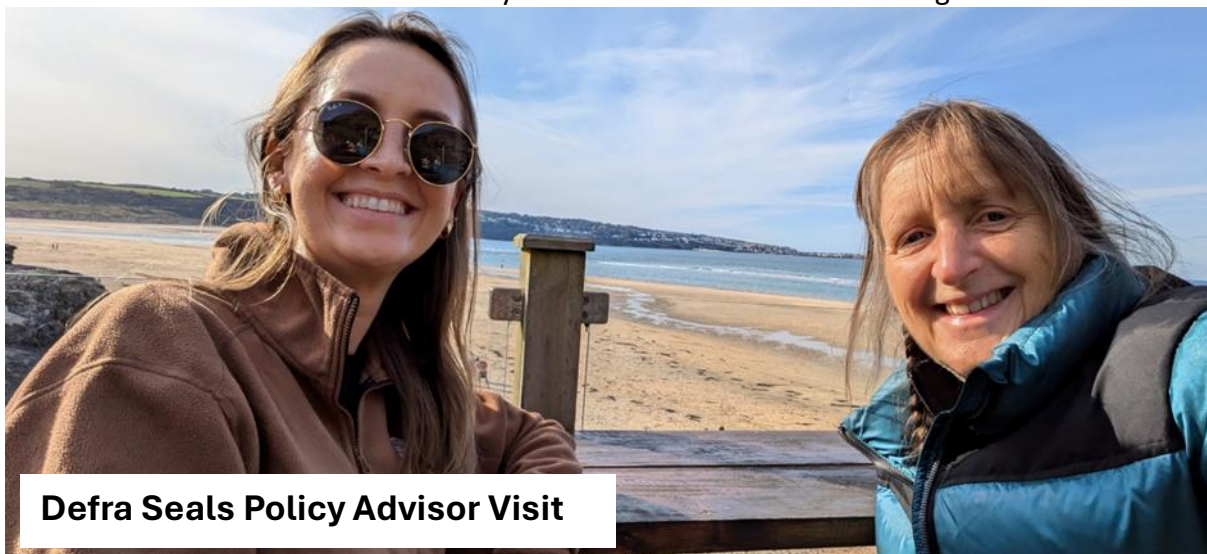
- Remember Francesco and Neil the Seal, adopted about 7 years in a row for his birthday? He has just been accepted at Exeter Uni, Falmouth campus, to do Marine Biology. I am so thrilled and believe that his interest stemmed from Neil, your day spent out on the cliffs with him aged 10 and identifying 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.



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 Trevoze 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

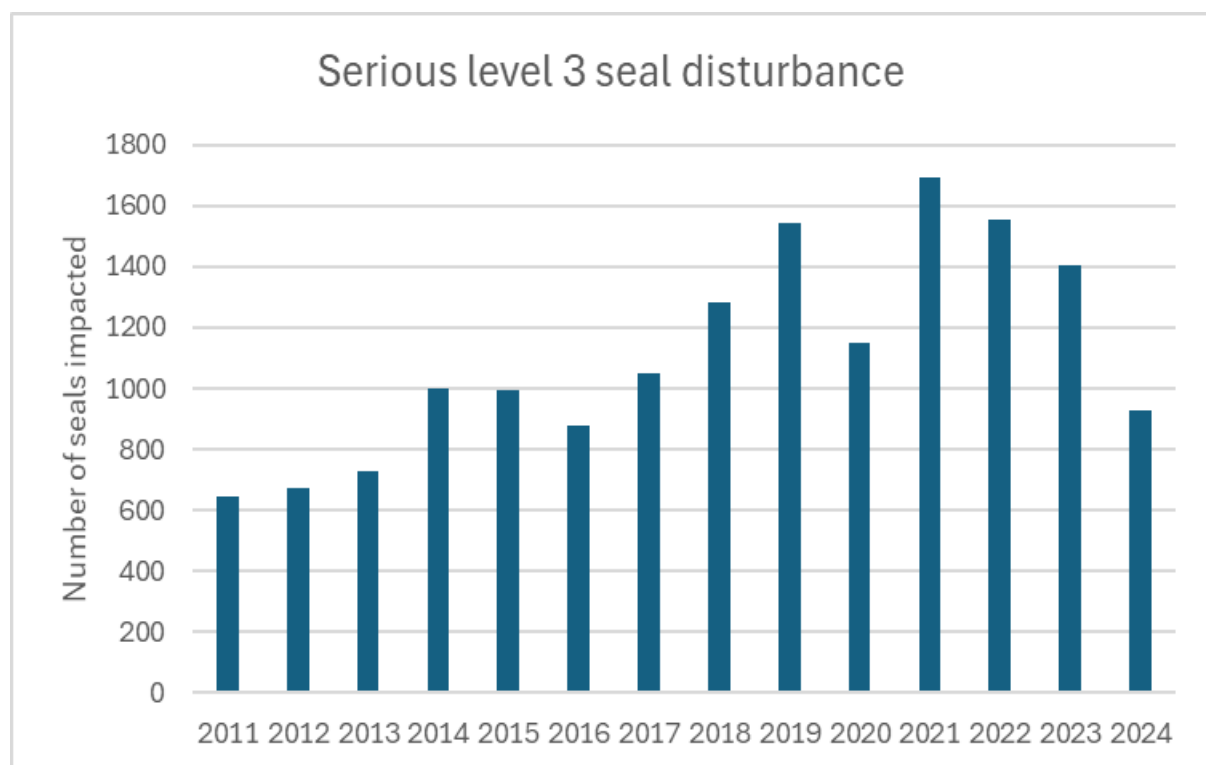
of seals being **hooked in line** mostly from our local sustainable inshore mackerel fishery. In 2024 **6 different seals were recorded as hooked**, ranging from apparently single to multiple hooked seals. We know from our long-term seal data that peak seal numbers have shifted earlier from March/April 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.



Whilst 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.



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.



JP doing well at CSS



02/02/25 at Pentire by Peter Perkins

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

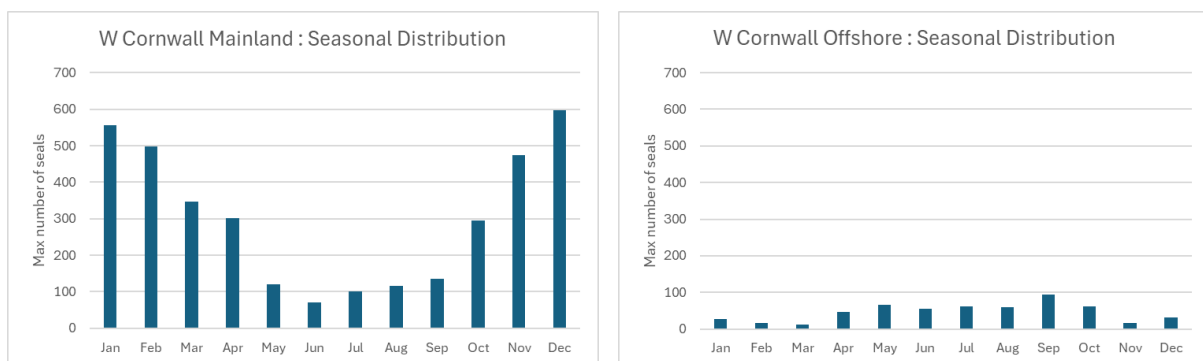
ensure they were not disturbed by the public. This was highly successful, the only disturbance to feeds coming from the attendant male seal who was keen to mate. (See page 14 for more details.) The Hub team routinely spent many hours in 2024 acting as seal ambassadors. We spoke to 100s of people offering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



Pentire Hub volunteer Peter engaging with the public

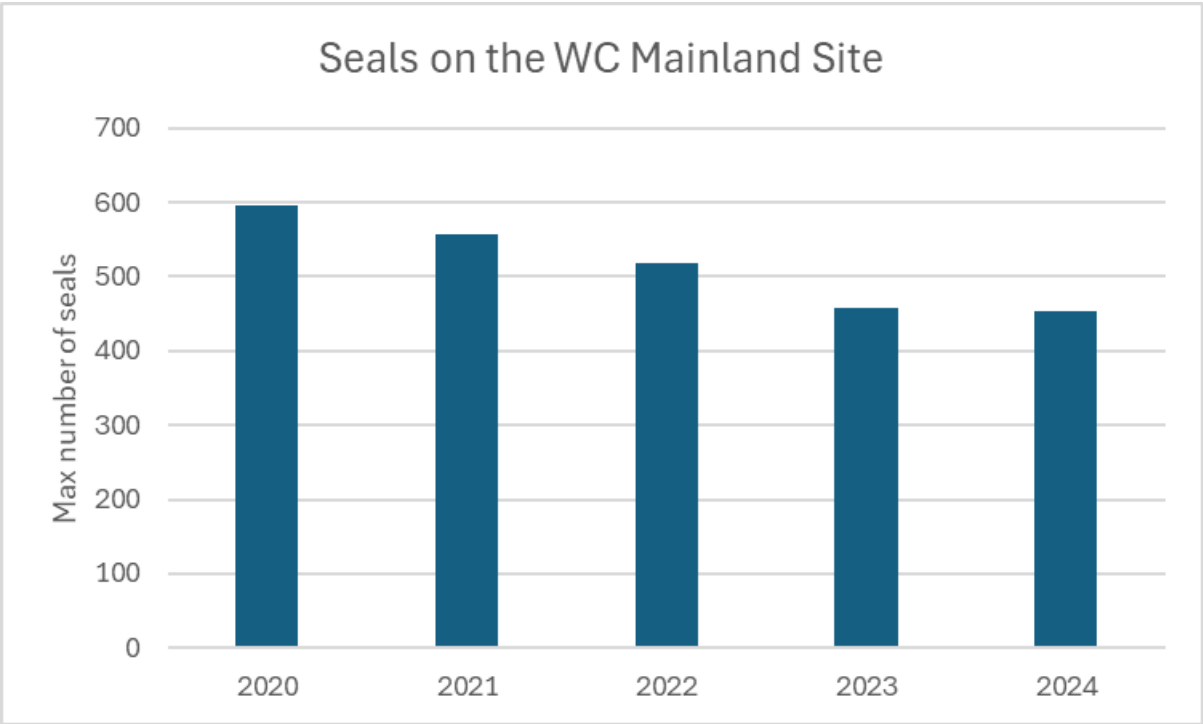
West Cornwall: Sue Sayer

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.

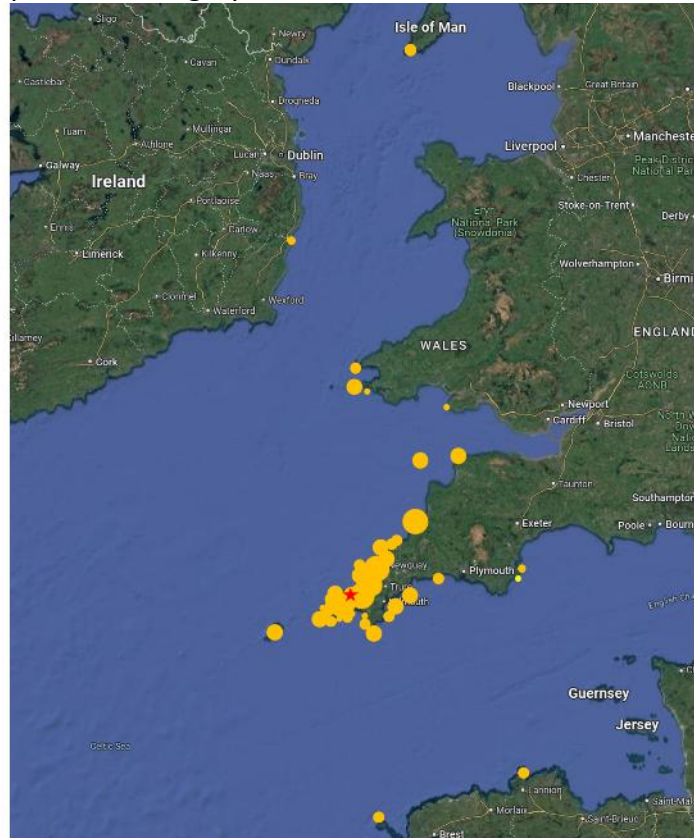
Seals from this site now link to 42 sites across the Celtic Sea from the Isle of Man in the north, to SE Ireland and N France in the south making this site an important hub for Celtic Sea seals. Impacts here will have widespread implications for grey seals.

Seal movements from photo ID: West Cornwall

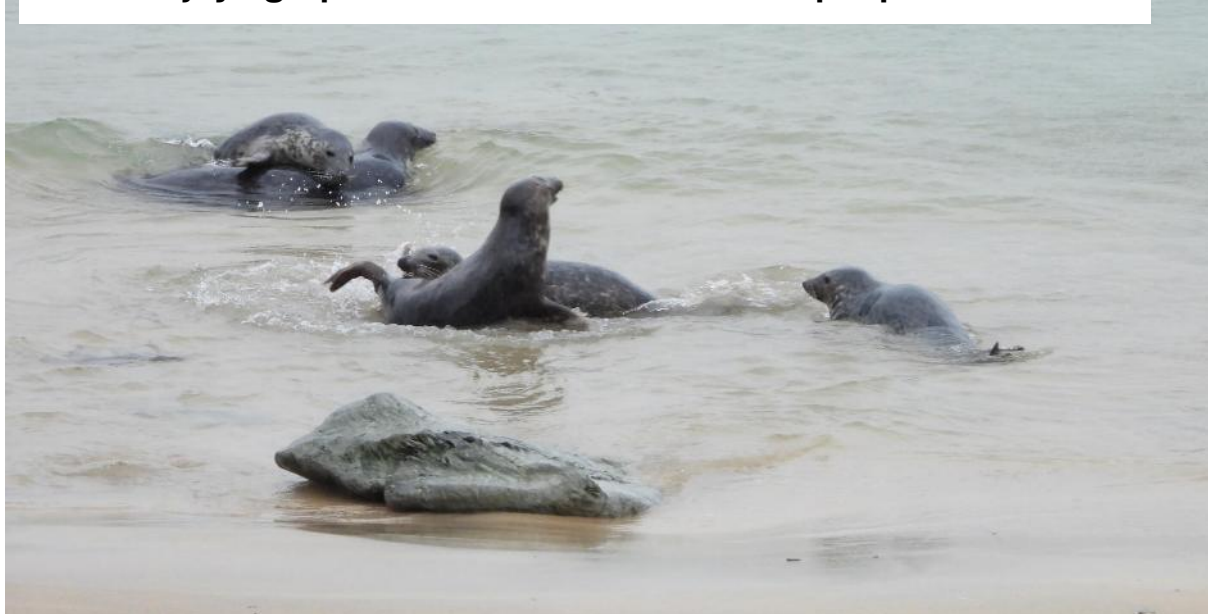
5643 seals link West Cornwall to 42 other areas across the Celtic Sea



Google maps retrieved 14/09/24



Seals enjoying a public mainland beach when people are absent



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

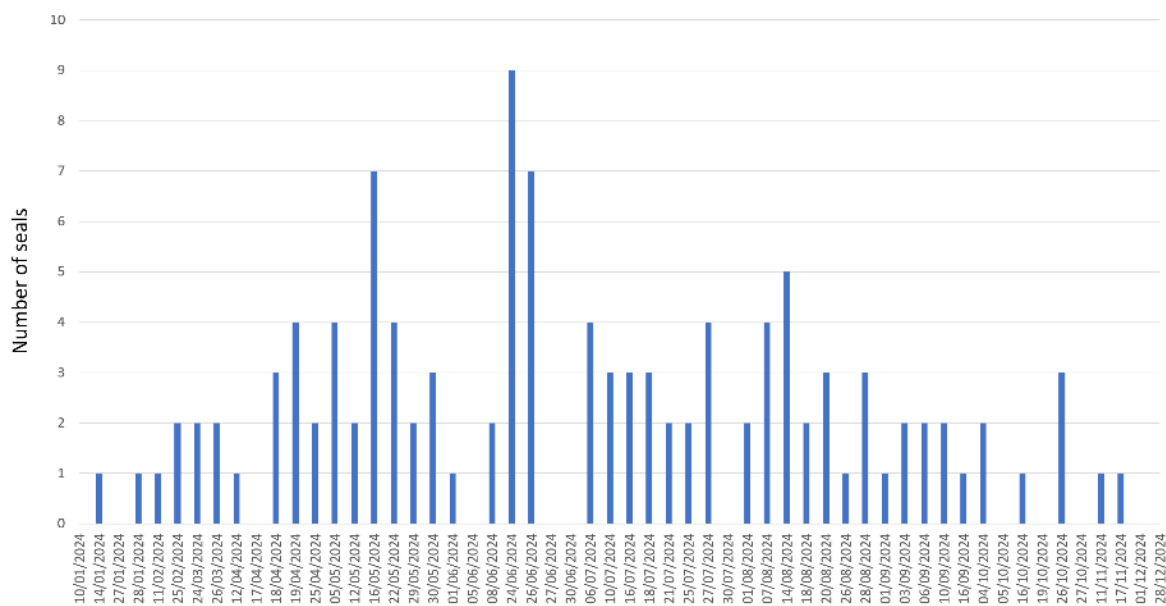
28/08/24 Wings, 3 days after giving birth to Jet, looking fat and healthy. As Jet feeds and grows, Wings becomes thinner. She is unable to leave and hunt for herself as she is on constant watch. Jet will have gained approx. 30 kg by the time he has weaned.



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).



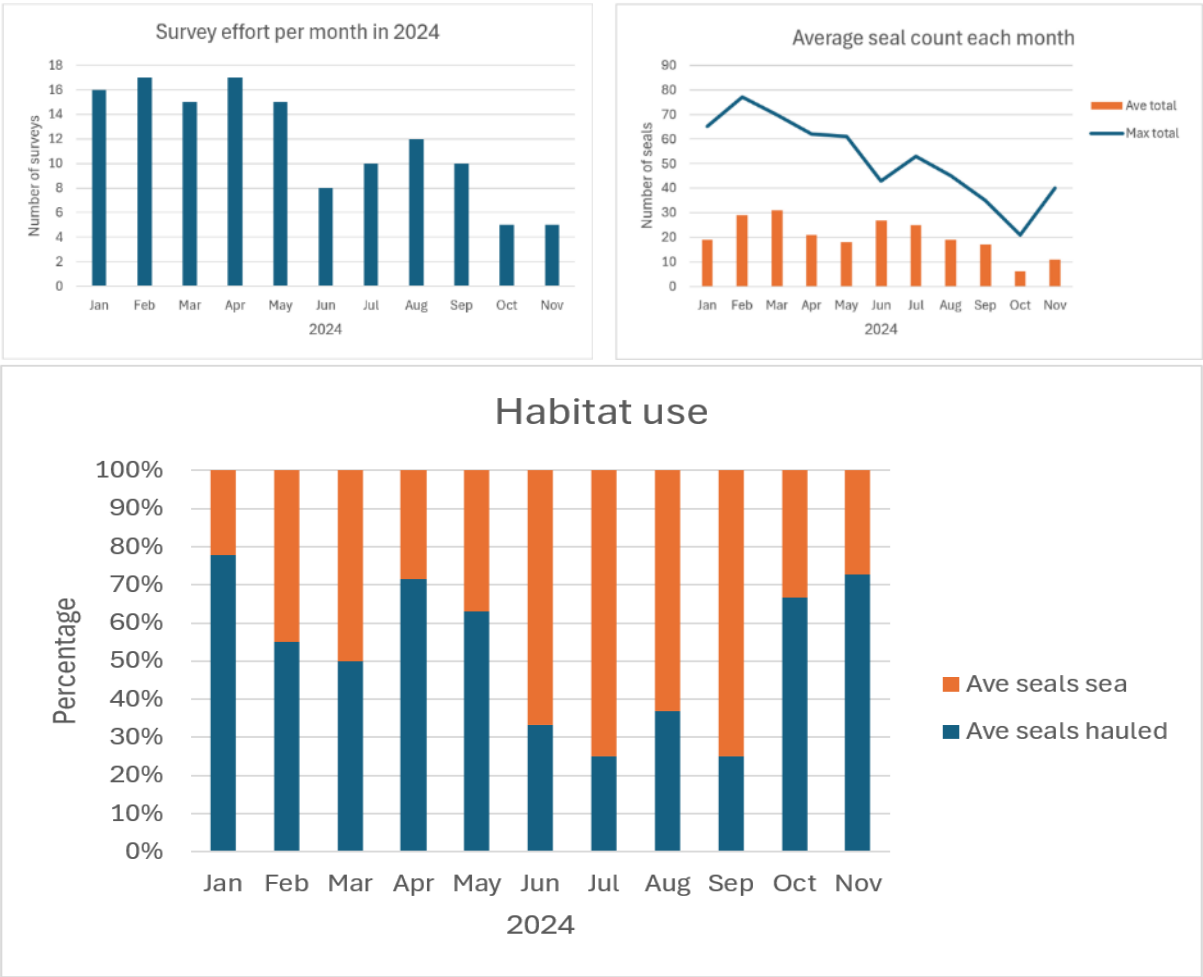
Top visitors

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

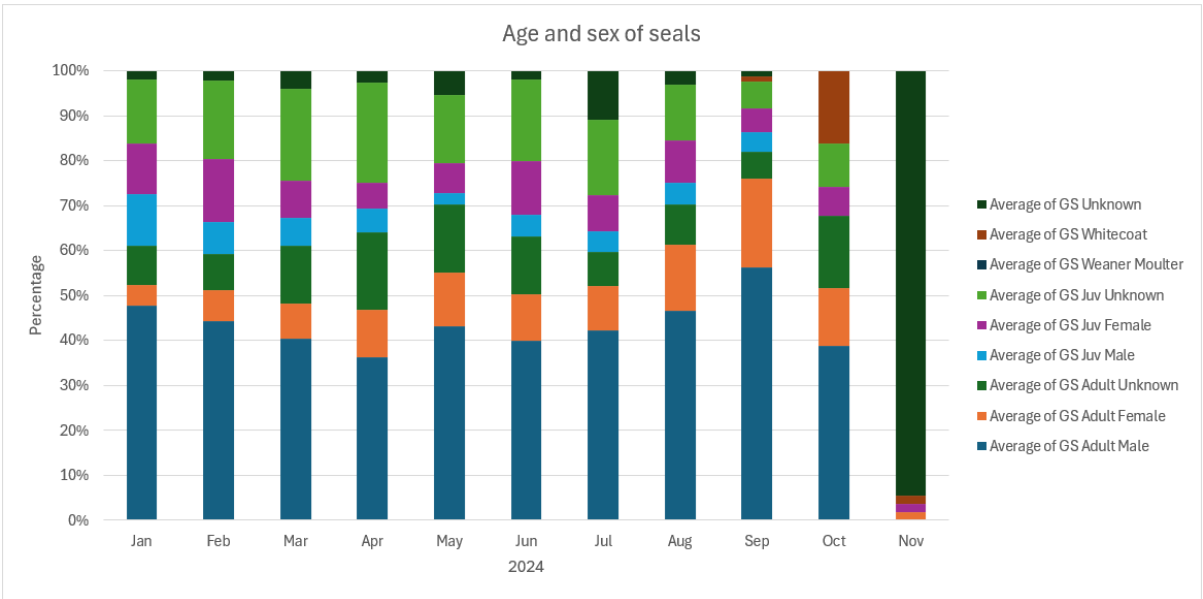


Lizard: Sarah Millward

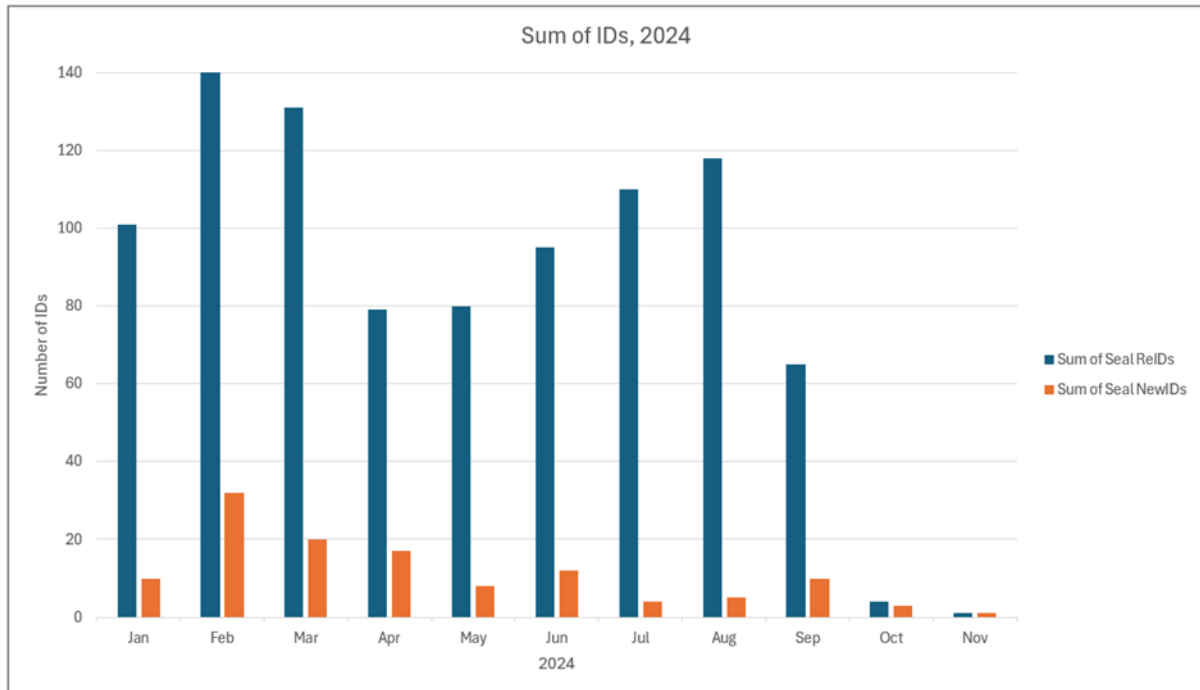
Survey Effort from Jan to Nov 2024: Total recorded surveys for the year: 130.



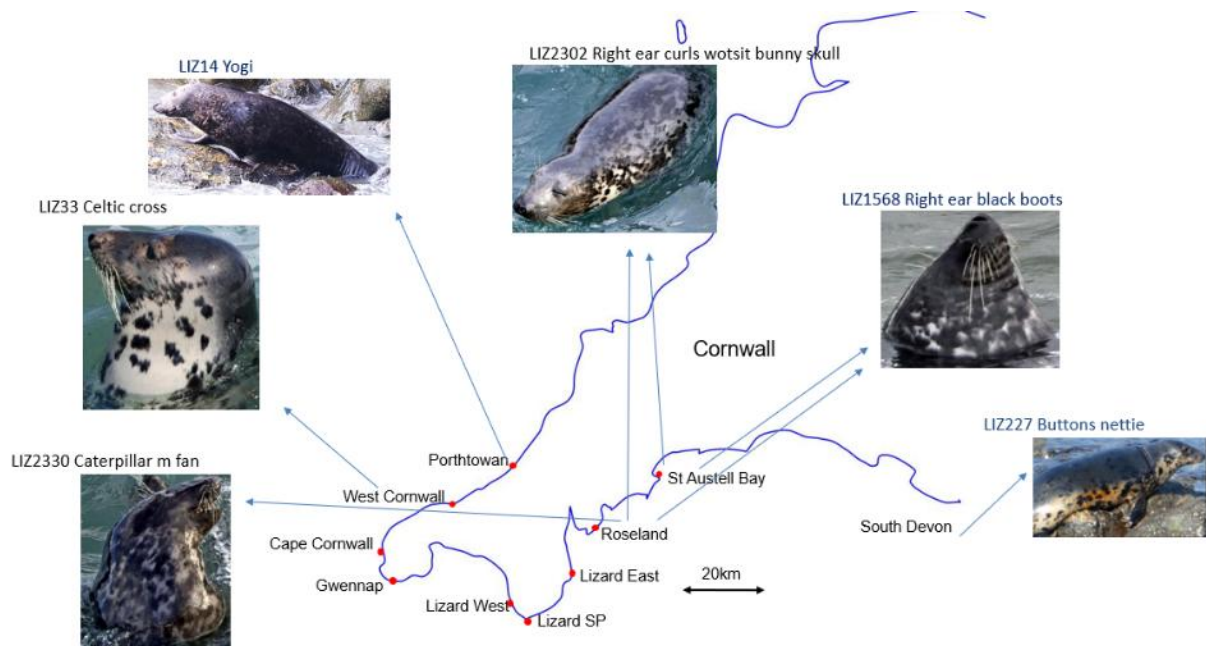
As usual, seals were seen all year, peaking in February and troughing in October. Most seals were seen in the sea during the summer and hauled out in the autumn, winter and spring.



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	50
Feb				8	8	15	16	9	9	16	5	6	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	213
Jun			14	21	26	25	29	29	28	28	11	9	226
Jul			23	25	29	29	1	26	30	21	11	10	211
Aug			20	18	27	25	28	18	14	20	13	11	197
Sep			7	18	17	17	26	12	19	18	7	12	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

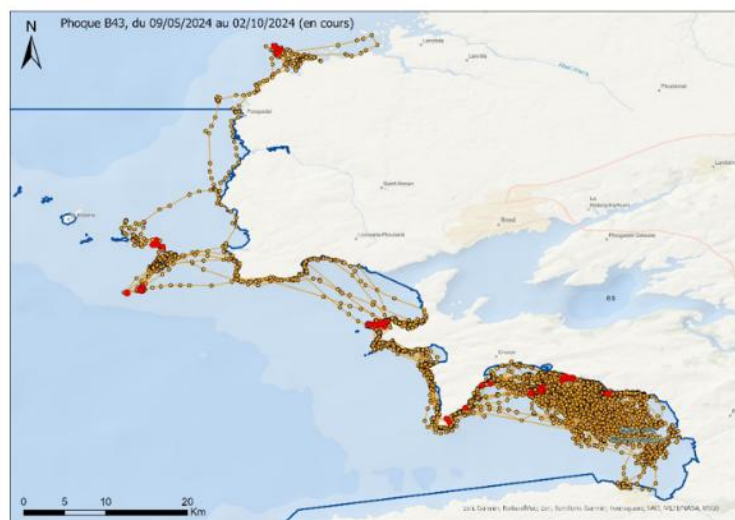


LIZ14 Yogi once again went off around the coast to Porthtowan to pursue his Beachmaster role on the north coast. Yogi usually returns with a new scar or two from his encounters with the female seals. This year he hasn't been recorded returning to the Lizard.

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	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.

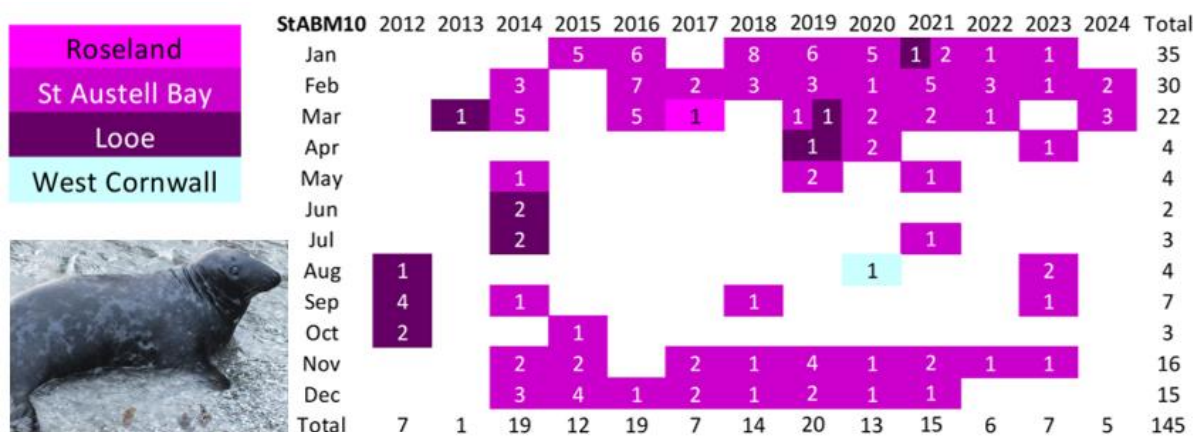


Echo fully moulted

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.



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.



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.

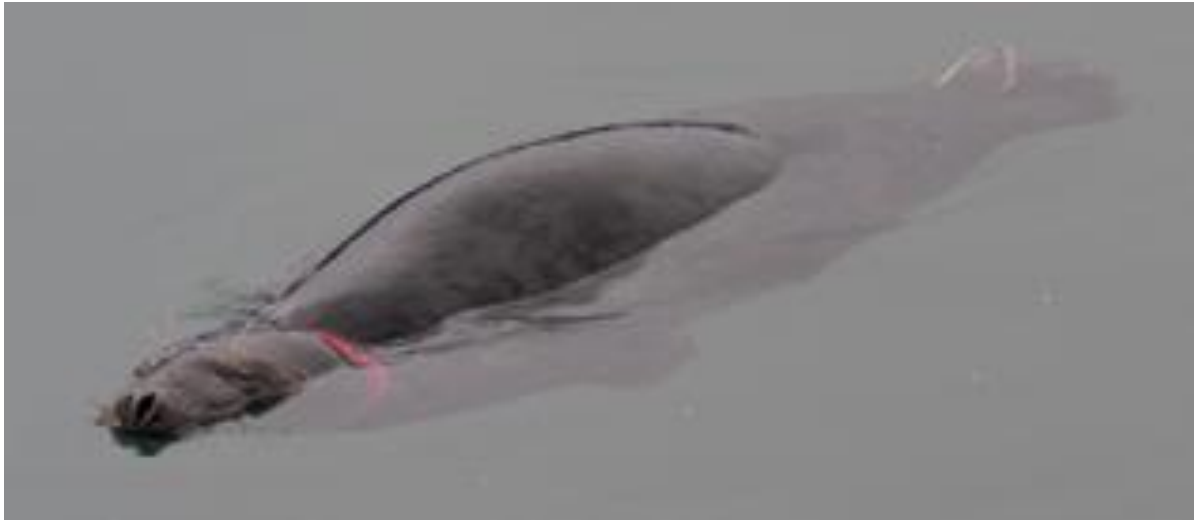


Harbour seal mum and pup by Sarah Greenslade

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.

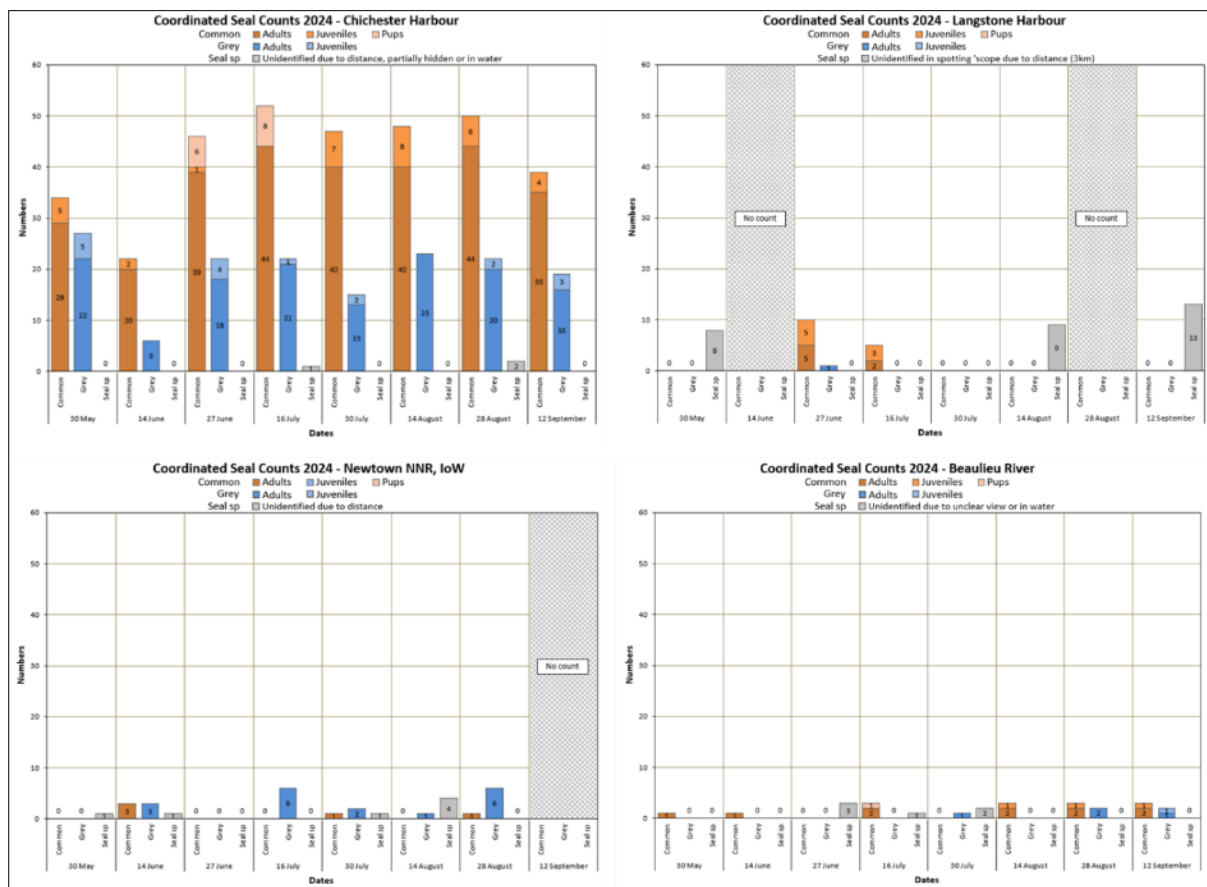
Awareness raising: Paddlesports users are one of the groups most likely to encounter seals and we were keen to reach out to them to promote codes of conduct. The Seal Research Trust, were kindly able to provide us with some watersports stickers for our campaign. Ahead of the summer school holidays, we 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.

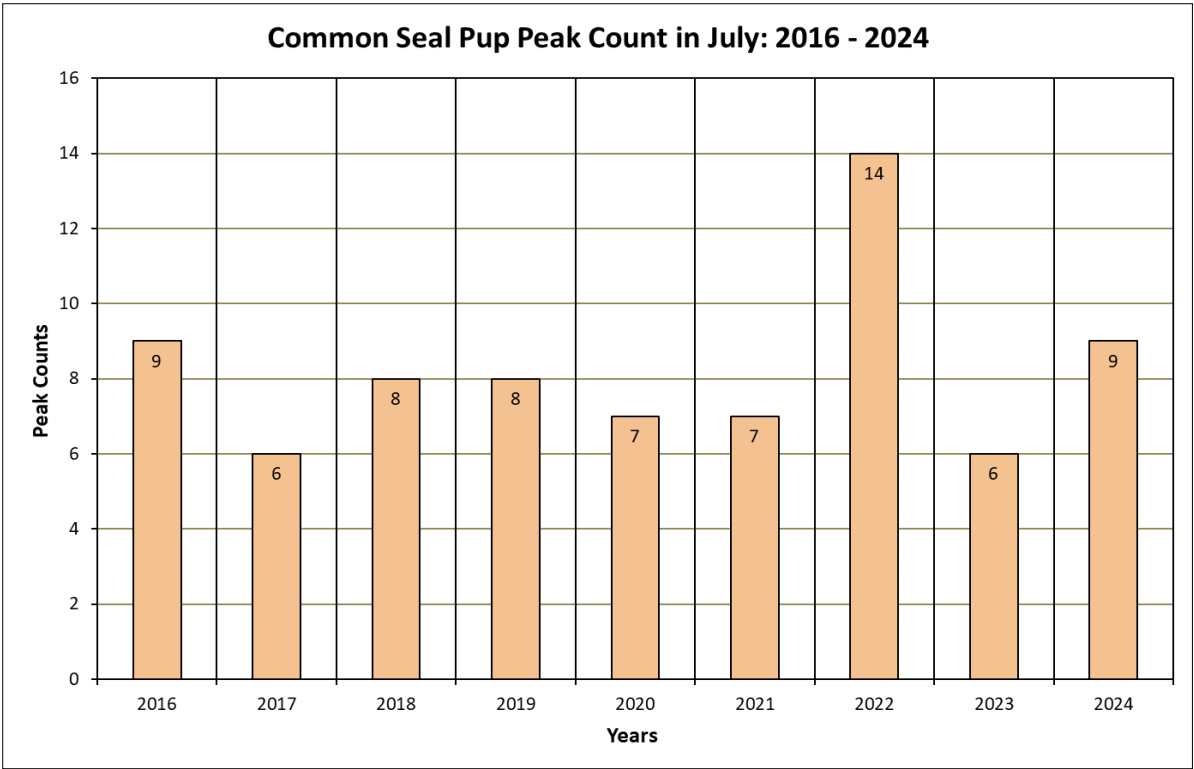
These counts were coordinated with Langstone Harbour counts, then in 2023 with counts in Newtown NNR, Isle of Wight and in 2024 with the addition of the Beaulieu River, Hampshire. These counts provide a glimpse into the Solent resident breeding population of common seals as well as visiting grey seals.



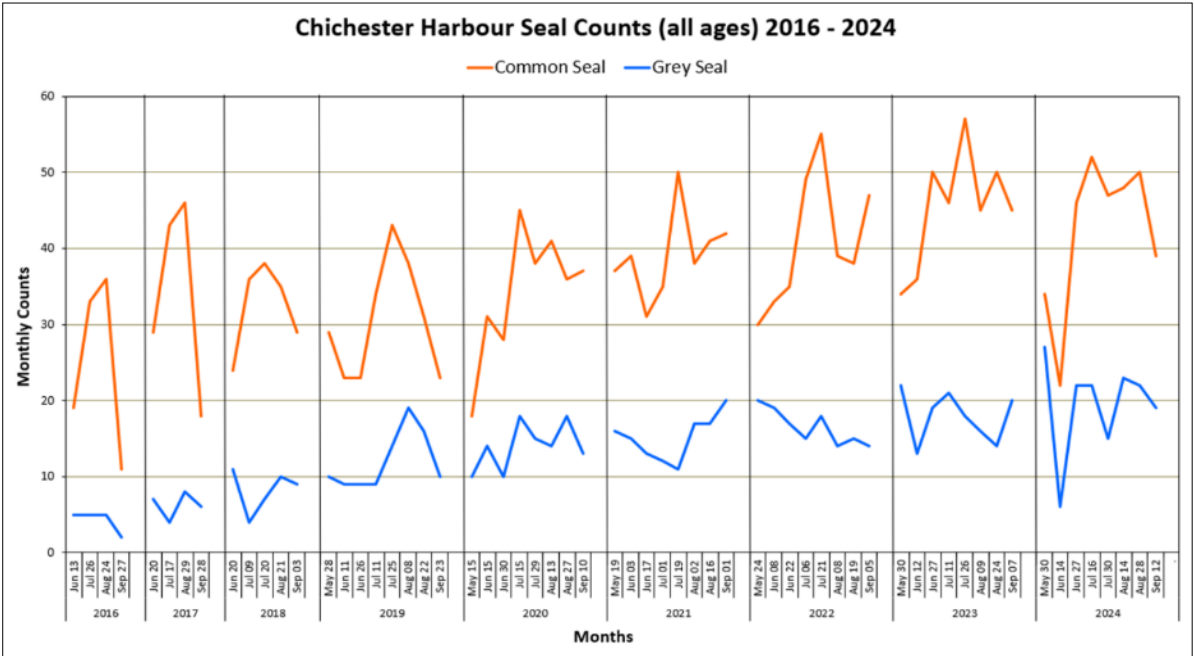
Common (orange) and grey (blue) seal counts in the Solent sites

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.

The 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
- CLOS 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 gear 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 cove 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

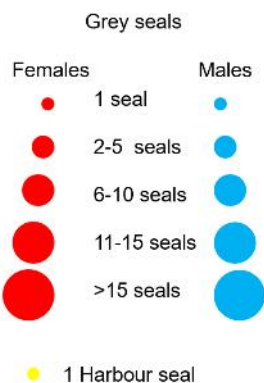
- Advising on new Lundy Code of Conduct for visiting operators
- Facilitating signage at Cape Cornwall put up by National Trust
- Engaging with local paddle operators when photo shared of seal on board
- Feedback to author about the seal content of their new book: Snorkelling in Britain
- Follow up about 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

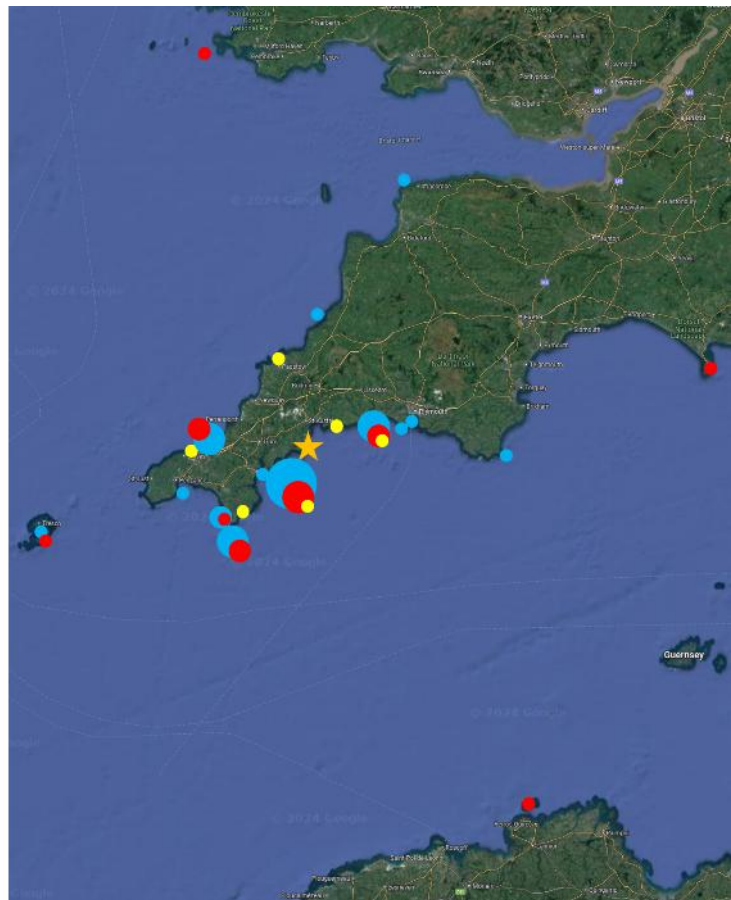
St Austell Bay hub was 10 years old. In that time, there were 729 surveys at the haul out beach with 5 sub sites also checked. Rob Wells completed 77% of all these surveys – at first it was just Rob and now he has a team of surveyors including Pat and Dermot and Helen. The maximum seal count was in 2022-2023 – 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).

Seal movements from photo ID: St Austell Bay

91 seals link St Austell Bay to 18 other sites across the Celtic Sea



Google maps retrieved 14/09/24



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.

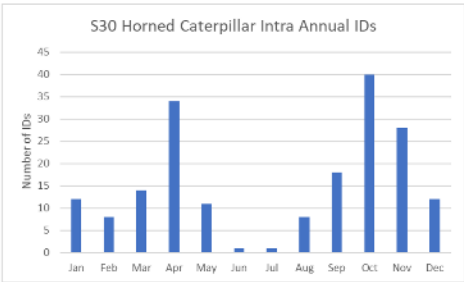
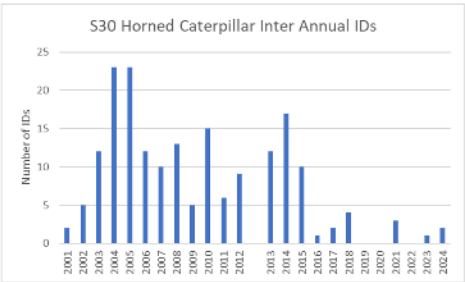


Old friend. On 28/11/24 S30 Horned Caterpillar (known since 2001) put in unexpected appearance at West Cornwall after only visiting there once since October 2018. These experiences motivate us to continue researching our native, heritage, speciality grey seals.

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
	2	5	12	23	23	12	10	13	5	15	6	9	12	17	10	1	2	4	0	0	3	0	1	2	187



Porthtowan
West Cornwall
West Penwith North
Roseland
St Austell Bay



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 Evening 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



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?

Seal
Research
Trust



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

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	31 st 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	<p>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.</p> <p>It is my responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>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.</p>		
Independent examiner's statement	<p>In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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