



HARBOR SEALS PUGET SOUND



Friends of Fort Flagler

- ▶ To restore, preserve, and protect the natural and historical resources.
- ▶ Provide assistance and support for the park staff.



Docent Program

- ▶ Volunteer with WFWD at [Department of Fish and Wildlife Volunteer Program - Volunteer Console \(cervistech.com\)](http://cervistech.com)
- ▶ Join Rat Island Project: CERVIS private registration code link <https://cerv.is/0052gPBBPcr>
- ▶ Sign up Schedule: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0944AFA922AAF4C25-caspian>
- ▶ All Information Available at <https://friendsoffortflagler.org/> under Resources



WHAT'S THE
DIFFÉRENCE?



EARS?
FRONT FLIPPERS?



BACK FLIPPERS?
SOCIAL OR SOLITARY?



Harbor Seals are Marine Mammals.
What makes them a mammal?

- Warm Blooded
- Give Birth to a Live Pup
- Breast Feed
- Hair/Fur



Pups – 30 – 36 inches and 20 – 24 lbs.



Mom – 3.9-5.6 ft. and 225 lb.



Dad - 4.6-6.6 ft. and 275 lb.



FOOD? 4% TO 6% OF WEIGHT

10 – 15 pounds of food per day

- Fish - Herring
- Squid
- Shell Fish
- Salmon?

POPULATION?

- Puget Sound approximately 900 seals
- World Population 350,000 – 500,000



POPULATION-DECLINE

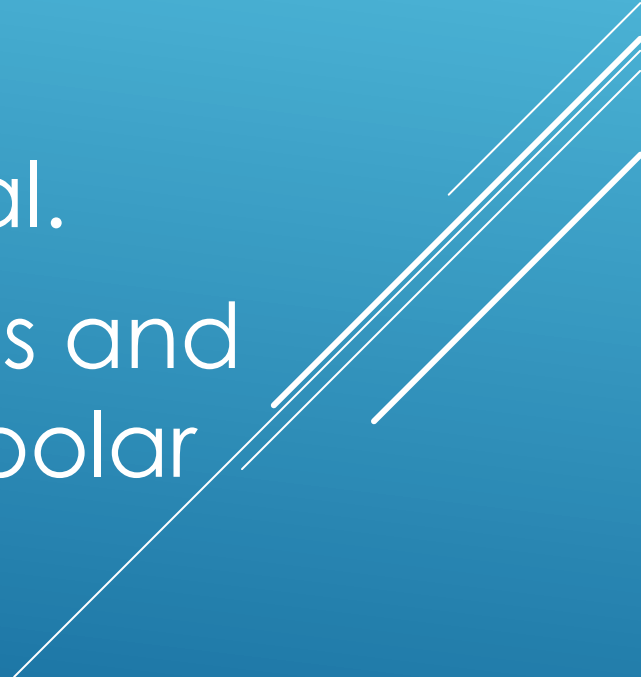
- What caused their decline?



POPULATION-DECLINE

- Harvested for meat and pelts
 - Bounty for hunting in the 1940's and 1950's
 - Today, population is stable
 - Tomorrow, Global Warming?
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POPULATION-PROTECTION?

- The United States passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972
 - People may not harass, feed, hunt, capture, collect, or kill any marine mammal or part of a marine mammal.
 - Whales, dolphins, and porpoises, seals and sea lions, manatees, sea otters, and polar bears within USA.
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SENSES?

- Highly developed hearing! 14X more accurate in water than on land.

Why?



- Detect prey by using nerves in whiskers.



KEEPING WARM?

- What is the water temperature in Puget Sound? **51 to 54 degrees**
- How do Seals stay warm?
 - Harbor seals have thick, short hair and has denser under hairs. Each guard hair has three to six under hair fibers.
 - The density of a harbor seal's hair increases with age.
 - Glands in the skin secrete oil which helps waterproof the hair.
 - BUT hair provides no insulation for the harbor seal.
 - **Harbor seals have blubber that keeps them warm.**

DIVING?

How deep can you dive?

Harbor Seals can dive 650 feet

How long can you hold your breath?

Harbor Seals can hold their breath 30 minutes.

2 Day old Pups can hold their breath a 2 minutes.

INTERESTING FACTS

When diving, blood is shunted away from tissues that are tolerant of low oxygen levels to the heart, lungs, and brain, where oxygen is needed.



PUPPING – PUGET SOUND



- June – October
- On Beaches
- Mom leaves pups to feed
- Milk is about 45% fat (human 50-60%)
- Pups nurse for about four to six weeks

PUPPING – PUGET SOUND

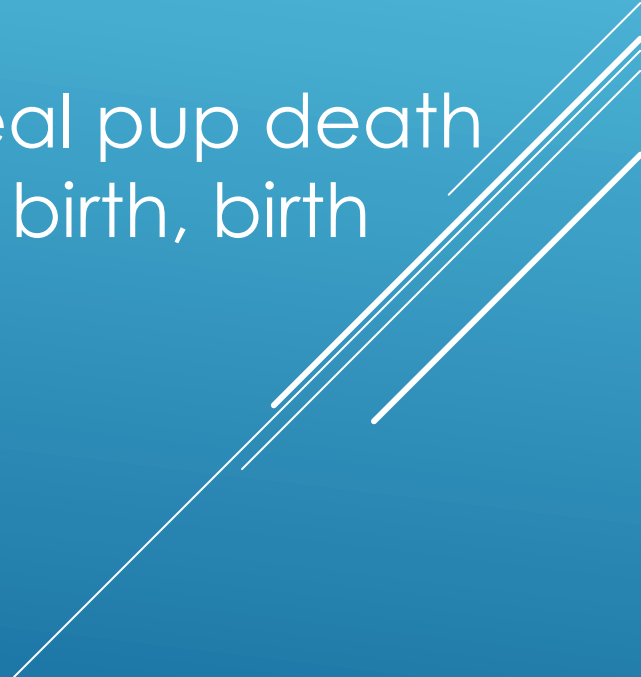


- Pups double weight in four (4) weeks – 40-48 pounds
- Noise – Maaaaa
- Once weaned, the noise or vocalization subsides
- Pup will follow mom to learn how to fish, and recognize danger

PUP SURVIVAL RATE

Only 50% of harbor seals survive their first year.

Among the many factors that can contribute to seal pup death are abandonment, starvation, disease, premature birth, birth defects and human intervention.

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SEAL PUP ON THE BEACH?



HUMAN DANGER?

- Dog bite
 - Human scent & interference
 - People take pups home
 - People move pups
 - People feed pups
 - Debris
 - Boat traffic
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IF I SEE A SEAL ON LAND, IS IT SICK OR INJURED?

Seals seen on land are not necessarily stranded or in need of help. Seals are semi-aquatic, meaning they spend part of their lives on land and part in the water. **Seals “haul out” on land to rest, thermoregulate, molt (annual shedding of fur), and give birth.** However, there are cases where seals are considered stranded and may be in immediate danger or in need of medical attention.

Seals typically strand due to illness or injury, and others may strand already deceased. **Evidence of human interactions**, such as entanglement, vessel strike, gunshot wounds, ingestion of marine debris, harassment, dog bite and more.

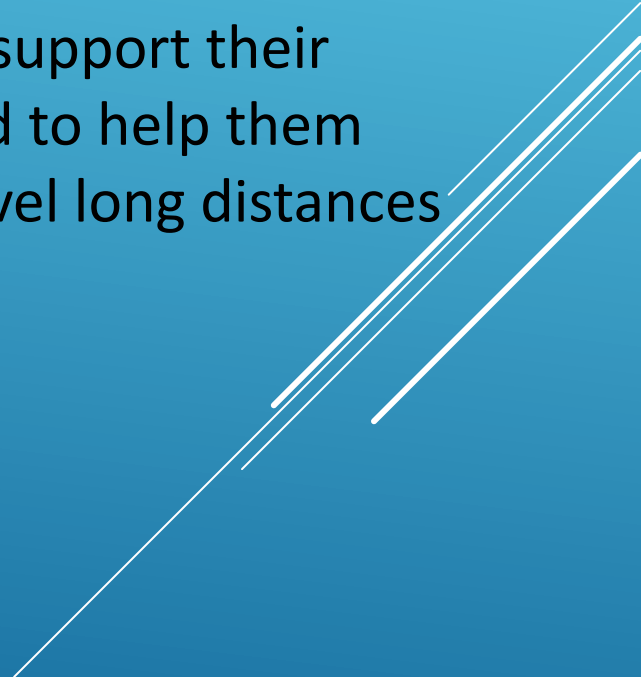
IS IT NORMAL FOR A SEAL TO BE ALONE ON THE BEACH?

Yes, most species of seal spend time alone—**even young seals**. Some seal species leave their newborn pups on the beach while they forage at sea, so it is important to leave them alone so the mothers can come back to retrieve them. **However, seal pups spend a relatively short time with their mothers, just days to weeks, before they are weaned and independent.**

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IT LOOKS LIKE A SEAL IS HAVING DIFFICULTY MOVING. IS SOMETHING WRONG?

Usually not. While seals are agile in the water, they look very awkward moving around on land. **Seals, as opposed to sea lions, can only flop along on their bellies when on land.** They do not have the ability to rotate their rear flippers forward to walk on them like sea lions can. They also have very short front flippers that cannot support their bodies in an upright position, and are instead used to dig into the sand to help them inch along. Despite their awkward movements over land, they can travel long distances and are usually able to get back to the water when ready.

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HOW LONG CAN SEALS STAY OUT OF THE WATER? DON'T SEALS NEED TO BE WET?

No, seals do not need to always be wet. Being semi-aquatic, they regularly haul out on land, sometimes for days at a time. They often leave the water to take a break from swimming and warm up in the sun.

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SHOULD WE FEED A SEAL ON THE BEACH?

Definitely not. **Seals should never be offered food of any kind.** Not only is it illegal to do so, but such actions could be harmful to the seal and to you.

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DO SEALS NEED TO EAT EVERY DAY?

No, seals are opportunistic feeders and often go days without feeding. **They also have energy stores in their thick blubber layer that allows them to go extended periods of time without eating.** When they do get hungry, they eat a variety of fish, crustacean and squid.

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IT LOOKS LIKE A SEAL IS SHIVERING. IS IT COLD?

Shivering can be a stress response and often occurs when people are too close. **If you observe a seal shivering, there is a good chance you are standing too close.**

Please step back and be sure to maintain a distance of 150 feet. Shivering can also help seals thermoregulate. Never attempt to cover a seal with anything. Not only is it dangerous for you, but it can also be detrimental to the seal by causing it to overheat or become stressed.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A SEAL PUP?

- Observe from a distance – 150 Feet
- When the stranding network receives a report of a live seal, **trained volunteers will be sent to observe the seal's behavior and assess its health from a distance** so as not to unnecessarily disturb the seal. This helps responders determine whether a seal is in need of intervention and is, in fact, stranded.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A SEAL PUP?

- Do not touch the animal
 - Call park ranger
 - Call NOAA **360-385-5582 EXT 103**
 - Region Stranding Hotline: **1-866-767-6114**
 - **NOAA-NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ASSOCIATION**
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WHERE TO SEE?

- Off The Beach
- Rat Island
- Low Tide
- Any Time Of Day
- Any Weather



THANK YOU FOR
COMING!

