



BALTIC MAMMALS 5

HARBOUR PORPOISE

(*Phocoena phocoena*)

The harbour porpoise is one of the cutest and most elusive marine mammals in the Baltic Sea!

They are known for their shy nature and are rarely seen, but they play a crucial role in the marine ecosystem.

Sadly, the Baltic harbour porpoise is critically endangered and faces serious threats from pollution, noise from ships, and accidental capture in fishing nets that put their already low population at great risk.

1





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GREY SEAL (*Halichoerus grypus*)

The grey seal is one of the most charming and playful residents of the Baltic Sea.

They are found throughout the Baltic except for Kattegat. They have distinctive spotted coats and curious eyes. Their diet consists of various fish species making them vital for controlling fish populations.

After a century of bounty hunting and three decades of low fertility due to pollution, their recovery is a success story. However, coastal development, overfishing, contaminants, and entanglements still threaten them.





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EURASIAN OTTER

(Lutra lutra)

Eurasian otters are solitary animals often found near freshwater habitats and along the coast.

They primarily eat fish, but their diet also includes crustaceans, amphibians, birds, small mammals, and insects. Their population has increased in some countries over the past 20 years.

Habitat destruction, especially of wetlands, is a major threat, along with hunting, pollution, and development within their home ranges.





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RINGED SEAL (*Phoca hispida botnica*)

The ringed seal is a unique inhabitant of the eastern and northern parts of the Baltic.

They can live up to 48 years and their diet includes fish and invertebrates.

Contamination caused significant reproductive failures, which saw their population reach its lowest in the 1970s-80s, but numbers are slowly increasing.

However, the reduction of sea ice due to climate change and shipping remains a major threat as they require sea ice for breeding.



4



BALTIC MAMMALS 5

HARBOUR SEAL

(Phoca vitulina vitulina)

The harbour seal is found in the western and eastern parts of the Baltic.

These gregarious creatures breed on sheltered beaches, rocks and sandbanks, and they primarily eat fish.

Sadly, their numbers have declined due to hunting, by-catch and diseases that have caused mass mortality events.



5