



Frequently Asked Questions about Seals

What is the difference between Harbour and Grey Seals?

Grey seals are normally bigger and have a more Roman nose - nostrils are parallel and vertical, harbour seals have heart-shaped nostrils.

How long do seals live?

Males live up to 25 years and females up to 35 years.

How long do grey seal pups stay on the beach.

A minimum of six weeks. Three weeks suckling and a further three weeks moulting.

Where do grey seals go for the rest of the year?

Some remain in the local area but it appears that many do leave although we don't know where they go. They spend most of their time out at sea or near the coast, frequently hauling out on land to rest and groom.

How much weight do grey seal pups gain?

In ideal conditions, 2kg per day.

What do I do if I see a dead seal?

Nothing! This is all part of nature and the food chain.

What do I do if I see a sick seal?

Outside of Horsey and the pupping season, you should contact the RSPCA. If you spot a sick seal during pupping season at Horsey or Winterton, please inform the warden/s on site.



How long is the grey seal pupping period?

At Horsey & Winterton it lasts from early November until late January.

What is the gestation period of grey seals?

11.5 months (fertilised egg held in stasis for about 3 months of this).

At what age do grey seals start breeding?

Females become sexually mature at 3 - 5 years and males at 4 - 6 years.

What do grey seals eat?

Adult: flatfish, octopus, mackerel and herring.
Young: small edible fish, molluscs and crustaceans.

What happens to sick, injured or abandoned seals?

We keep an eye on them and if necessary we contact the RSPCA who decide whether they need treatment or are better left undisturbed.

Seals are frequently reported with netting/rope around their necks. Sometimes we cannot act straightaway and we need to monitor the situation and wait for the right opportunity. A seal will head straight for the water if we approach and if they are in the middle of the colony, especially during pupping season, we could potentially disturb females nursing pups, and they could become abandoned.