

Reporting Dead or Stranded Marine Mammals

Warning: Marine mammals may carry diseases which are transferable to humans. Do not put yourself at risk of injury. Do not attempt to move heavy animals without adequate assistance. Always wash hands thoroughly after any contact.

Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises

If the animal is still alive

If the whale, dolphin or porpoise is still alive it can be reported to either:

- The British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) on **01825 765 546** (during office hours) or on **07787 433 412** (out of hours). BDMLR will advise on what to do and will send a trained medic out as soon as possible. The [BDMLR website is a valuable source of advice and guidance](#)

Or to:

- The RSPCA hotline (England & Wales) on **0300 1234 999**/SSPCA hotline (Scotland) on **03000 999 999**

It's important to take care when near a stranded dolphin or whale, as the tail is powerful and can cause injury.

Do not attempt to return a beached whale, dolphin or porpoise to the sea before it has been assessed by a medically qualified person.

If the animal is dead

[The Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme \(CSIP\)](#) coordinate the investigation of all whales, dolphins and porpoises, marine turtles and basking sharks that strand around the UK coastline. Strandings of dead animals should be reported to CSIP on **0800 652 0333**

The following information is useful when reporting a dead cetacean:

- Date on which the animal was seen
- The estimated length of the animal
- The location of the animal (including grid reference if known)
- Condition of the animal

- Species of the animal (if known). CSIP have produced [a useful leaflet on cetacean identification](#) which will help with this

Photographs of the dead animal can also be very useful, particularly shots of the body (along with something for scale), close up shots of the head and mouth, close up shots of the genital region (to potentially allow sex determination), as well as close ups of any marks, cuts, and lesions.

If the animal has visible signs of bullet wounds, knife wounds or net marks, report them to the [Marine Management Organisation](#) on **0300 123 1032**.

Seals

If the animal is alive

Finding a seal on a beach does not necessarily indicate a problem. It is part of the normal behaviour of seals to haul out on to the coast where they regularly spend time resting or digesting their food. Mothers regularly leave their pups alone on the shore while they rest, play and forage for food nearby. Lone pups are a common sight and are quite safe. **If you find a live seal on the shore, it is more than likely just resting.** Observe from a distance, particularly if it is a young pup. Scaring it may cause it to move, making it difficult for its mother to find again.

Please keep dogs away. Seals can carry diseases and they will bite if they feel threatened.

If you see a seal then do not approach and watch it from a distance. If the animal appears sick (coughing, sneezing, short of breath), malnourished, in distress, or if you are concerned for its welfare then please contact one of the following:

- The BDMLR hotline: **01825 765546** (office hours) or **07787 433412** (out of hours)
- RSPCA hotline (England): **0300 1234 999**
- SSPCA hotline (Scotland): **03000 999 999**

If the animal is dead

Dead seals found within Northumberland should be reported to the local council who will report the incident to the relevant bodies and will liaise with them to agree the removal of the carcass wherever practicable:

- Northumberland County Council **0345 600 6400**
- North Tyneside Council **0345 200 0101**

[The Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme \(CSIP\)](#) also collects data about dead seals. Reports can be made to CSIP on **0800 652 0333**