

HARBOR SEALS

Harbor Seals Rest on Beaches – Let them be

- Harbor seals utilize specific shoreline locations on a regular basis as resting places (haul-outs).
- Harbor seals rest out of the water for several hours to days to regulate body temperature, tend to pups, and sleep.
- **Do not handle, cover or attempt to feed seals.**



Pups and Pupping

- Pups are born in the spring and summer (April through June).
- Females may give birth anywhere that there is easy access to the water.
- Nursing pups remain with their mothers for 4 to 6 weeks and then are weaned to forage and survive on their own.
- Females will flee to the water if disturbed or approached and may leave their pups behind. A female seal is more likely to reclaim her pup once the disturbance near the pup goes away.
- A nursing pup may double its birth weight by the time it is weaned and uses stored fat reserves as it learns to feed on its own. A nursing pup that is separated from its mother will not survive.
- Up to 50% of the pups born will not survive the first year of life. Contributing factors to pup mortality are:
 - Conditions associated with fetal development or premature birth;
 - Disease;
 - Predation by shoreline predators or domestic dogs;
 - Infection;
 - Dehydration;
 - Starvation

What to do when encountering a seal on a beach:

- Stay at least 150 feet away from it. Pup's mothers may be just around the corner.

- **Don't handle it**, and keep other people and dogs away.

- Call a local marine mammal stranding network member.

Visit NOAA's Northeast Regional website for contact information (http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/stranding). Or call NOAA Fisheries Service's stranding hotline at 1-866-755-NOAA (6622).



Report Harassment

Seals are federally protected from harassment and capture by the public. If you observe incidents of people or pets tormenting, disturbing or attempting to remove a seal from the beach contact the local marine mammal stranding network response agency to report a violation.

Photo credits: Upper right: Marine Mammal Stranding Center; Middle background: Maine Department of Marine Resources; Bottom right: College of the Atlantic, Allied Whale

