

HARBOR SEALS

Help seals and their pups by leaving them be...

Harbor seal pups and human interference:

- Harbor seals are less mobile on land and therefore more vulnerable to disturbance or predation while out of the water.
- Adult seals are more wary and escape to the water more quickly than pups.
- Females will flee to the water if disturbed or approached and may leave their pups behind.
- A female is more likely to return to reclaim her pup once the disturbance near the pup goes away.
- Data suggest pups have successfully reunited with their mothers up to 48 hours after separation.
- If activity continues near the pup, the female may eventually give up trying to return and the pup will be abandoned. **A nursing pup that is separated from its mother will NOT survive.**

Harbor seal pups look very cute, but remember they are wild animals and need to remain with their mothers. Please leave pups where they are, do not touch or relocate a pup. If you are concerned for the welfare of the pup, take the following steps:



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: University of New England;
Bottom left: Maine Department of Marine Resources*