

SEAL WATCHING CODE OF CONDUCT

Both grey seals and harbour seals are spotted around the Dorset coast. Encounters with seals are exciting but remember they are wild animals and protected by law, so their wellbeing is the top priority.

If you spot a seal, you can avoid disturbance by following this code:

ON LAND

Seals need to come ashore to rest, however they are more vulnerable on land.

Disturbance can cause them stress, waste precious energy & even lead to injuries

- ◆ **Observe from a distance – 100 metres**
- ◆ **Be quiet & try to remain out of sight**
- ◆ **To get a better view use binoculars and limit your viewing time to 10 minutes**
- ◆ **Use a zoom lens for photography**
- ◆ **Never touch or feed a seal.**
Seals have sharp teeth and a nasty, infectious bite requiring medical treatment
- ◆ **Keep children and dogs well away**
- ◆ **Make sure the seal has a clear access route to water**

IN THE WATER

Seals are much more agile in the water than they are on land but care still needs to be taken as they can be startled or injured

- ◆ **Keep your distance, at least 100 metres**
- ◆ **Watercraft - slow down. Kill your engine or put it in idle to avoid propeller strikes**
- ◆ **Maintain a steady speed & course**
- ◆ **Explore in small groups (maximum 2 vessels). Do not crowd, chase or intimidate the seal**
- ◆ **Move away after 10 minutes**
- ◆ **Juveniles can be inquisitive and may come closer - let them decide how close. Remain calm and don't swim with them or touch them.**



Please report seal sightings including photos to Dorset Wildlife Trust
☎ 01929 481044 or ✉ Kimmeridge@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk

If you are concerned about the welfare of a marine mammal
contact British Divers Marine Life Rescue

☎ 01825 765546 or 07787 433412 (out of hours)

