How do I report a sick or injured seal?

Before reporting a seal in need of assistance, please note the following information:

- **Species** (refer to guide overleaf)
- Extent and location of injuries on animal
- Degree of movement or lack of movement
- **Location**
  - Marine
  - Inland

**Should I report this?**

- **Healthy pup on a beach or rocks**
  - Should I report it? **No**
  - Why? Pups are normal part of seal life.

- **Healthy seal on a beach or rocks**
  - Should I report it? **No**
  - Why? Seals are wild animals and know how to fend for themselves.

- **Seals on land**
  - Should I report it? **No**
  - Why? Seals don’t need assistance on land.

- **Healthy seal in the sea**
  - Should I report it? **No**
  - Why? Seals naturally come to the water to feed.

- **Healthy seal in shallow water**
  - Should I report it? **No**
  - Why? Some seals may be in shallow water to rest.

- **Healthy seal swimming**
  - Should I report it? **No**
  - Why? Swimmers can see seals swimming.

- **Healthy seal on the move**
  - Should I report it? **No**
  - Why? Seals are active and may be moving.

**Serious injury or entanglement**

- **Seal on land**
  - Should I report it? **Yes**
  - Why? Seals shouldn’t be on land. Contact the DSE.

- **Seal in the sea**
  - Should I report it? **Yes**
  - Why? Use the report seal tool online.

**Sick or injured seal**

- **Seal on land**
  - Should I report it? **Yes**
  - Why? Some seals may be on land for various reasons. Ask yourself if the seal is sick or injured.

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**Always Remember...**

**Respect seals**

All seals should be treated with respect. They can be aggressive when threatened, have sharp teeth and can move quickly over short distances. So give them space and observe seals from a distance.

**Don’t approach!**

By law you must keep at least 30m away from seals on land. Approaching a seal will scare the animal into the water, which may be a problem if it is injured or sick. Large seals can also trample young when feeding.

**Dogs and seals don’t mix!**

Dogs disturb seals from resting. If a seal feels threatened it may attack your dog. Some diseases can also be transferred from dogs to seals or vice versa. When walking your dog, keep it on a leash and away from seals.

**Feeding seals is not good for them!**

Seals are wild animals and know how to fend for themselves. Feeding a seal can encourage dependency or create туристical situations where they are not safe. Feeding a seal is illegal and you can be fined.

**Prevent injuries to seals**

If a seal approaches your boat, slow down. If fishing, remove your line from the water until the seal moves on. Baited fishing lines and hooks can cause injuries to seals.

**Seals are protected by law**

People who harm seals can be fined up to $5,250 under the Wildlife Act 1975. Call the DSE on 136 186 if you see anyone harassing a seal.

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There are two families of seals within Australian waters: the “eared” Otariidae and the “true seals” Phocidae. The most commonly seen seals, Australian Fur Seals, are in the Otariidae family, while the true seal group includes some less frequent visitors to our shores such as the Southern Elephant Seal and Leopard Seal. The diagrams show below the features of seals used for identification and their differences in size. These features are referred to in the descriptions (see right).

### Eared Seals

#### Australian Fur Seal (Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus)
- **Distinguishing Features:** Larger than other fur seals and similar character to sea lions. Males are heavily chewed with thick dark mane.
- **Length:**
  - Adult male: 2.5m
  - Adult female: 1.5m
  - Juvenile: 1.2m
- **Weight:**
  - Adult male: 100kg
  - Adult female: 50kg
  - Juvenile: 25kg
- **Colour:**
  - Adult male: greyish brown with paler chest and dark brown belly.
  - Adult female: pale fawn to greyish brown with pale chest and brown belly.
- **Juvenile:**
  - Similar to the female, coat pale when dry.
- **Pup:**
  - Black block with variable grey-brown undersides (Dec – Feb), same colouration as female (after Feb).
- **Coat:**
  - Short thick underfur concealed by long outer fur.
- **Flippers:**
  - Front flippers rounded and thicker where they join body. Hind flippers rotate beneath body, enabling them to walk on land.
- **Family:**
  - Otariidae
- **Mating season:**
  - 6-10 days after birth of a pup, with delayed fertilisation to allow for birthing in summer.
- **Calving season:**
  - Oct – Dec
- **No. of Pups:**
  - 1
- **Conservation status:**
  - Protected.
- **Distribution:**
  - Can be seen along entire coastline, with substantial breeding colonies at Phillip Island, Lady Julia Percy Island, Cape Bridgewater, the Spermies at Cringalong National Park, Row Island off Wilson’s Promontory and Koomeva Island.

#### Sub-Antarctic Fur Seal (Arctocephalus tropicalis)
- **Distinguishing Features:** Smallest of the seals found in Victoria. Unique pale yellow colour underside. Colour around eyes contrasts with darker upperparts. Males have distinctive “no-hawk” crest.
- **Length:**
  - Adult male: 2m
  - Adult female: 1.5m
  - Juvenile: 1m
- **Weight:**
  - Adult male: 100kg
  - Adult female: 35kg
  - Juvenile: 25kg
- **Colour:**
  - Adult male: dark grey with contrasting whitish-yellow face and chest.
  - Adult female: dark grey with contrasting whitish-yellow face and chest.
  - Juvenile: uniform dark olive-brown, occasionally with whitish-yellow face and chest.
- **Pup:**
  - Glossy-black with dark chocolate brown belly.
- **Coat:**
  - Demise short underfur concealed by long outer fur.
- **Flippers:**
  - Front flippers short and broad in relation to body size. Hind flippers rotate beneath body, enabling them to walk on land.
- **Family:**
  - Otariidae
- **Mating season:**
  - 7-12 days after birth of a pup, with delayed fertilisation to allow for birthing in summer.
- **Calving season:**
  - Nov – Feb
- **No. of Pups:**
  - 1
- **Conservation status:**
  - Protected in Vic, Vulnerable nationally.
- **Distribution:**
  - Occasional visitors to Victoria’s coastline.

#### New Zealand Fur Seal (Arctocephalus forsteri)
- **Distinguishing Features:** Smaller than the Australian fur seal and darker in colouration. Sharply pointed snout.
- **Length:**
  - Adult male: 2m
  - Adult female: 1.5m
  - Juvenile: 1m
- **Weight:**
  - Adult male: 100kg
  - Adult female: 35kg
  - Juvenile: 25kg
- **Colour:**
  - Male: grey to brown.
  - Adult female: grey to brown and lighter underneath.
  - Juvenile: similar to females.
- **Pup:**
  - Black, but become grey to brown after first moult (4mths).
- **Coat:**
  - Long outer fur conceals short thick underfur. Older males have mane.
- **Flippers:**
  - Front flippers are long with straight sides, with little or no thickening where it joins body. Hind flippers rotate beneath body, enabling them to walk on land.
- **Family:**
  - Otariidae
- **Mating season:**
  - 7-10 days after birth of a pup, with delayed fertilisation to allow for birthing in summer.
- **Calving season:**
  - Nov – Jan
- **No. of Pups:**
  - 1
- **Conservation status:**
  - Protected. Considered vulnerable in Victoria.
- **Distribution:**
  - Can be seen along entire coastline.

#### Southern Elephant Seal (Mirounga leonina)
- **Distinguishing Features:** Long body and heavy build. Adult male is noticeably larger than female, with conspicuous proboscis (nose) during the breeding season.
- **Length:**
  - Adult male: 6.5m
  - Adult female: 4m
  - Juvenile: 3m
- **Weight:**
  - Adult male: 12,000kg
  - Adult female: 5000kg
  - Juvenile: 4400kg
- **Colour:**
  - Adult male: dark brown with lighter brown underside.
  - Adult female: lighter than males.
  - Juvenile: greyish coat, slightly paler below.
- **Pup:**
  - Black to very dark brown.
- **Coat:**
  - Short hair with lack of dense underfur. Males have a mane.
- **Flippers:**
  - Outermost digits of hind limbs are longer than middle digits. Hind flippers rotate under body enabling them to walk on land.
- **Family:**
  - Otariidae
- **Mating season:**
  - 18 days after birth of a pup, with delayed fertilisation to allow for birthing in summer.
- **Calving season:**
  - Sept – Nov
- **No. of Pups:**
  - 1
- **Conservation status:**
  - Protected in Vic, Vulnerable nationally.
- **Distribution:**
  - Occasional visitors to Victoria’s coastline.

### True Seals

#### Australian Sea Lion (Neophoca cinerea)
- **Distinguishing Features:** Bushy, black nose with white ring around eyes. Males have a large head and yellow crown.
- **Length:**
  - Adult male: 2.5m
  - Adult female: 1.8m
  - Juvenile: 1.2m
- **Weight:**
  - Adult male: 100kg
  - Adult female: 60kg
  - Juvenile: 25kg
- **Colour:**
  - Adult male: chocolate brown, yellow crown with dark muzzle. Greyer back with dusky abdomen and flippers.
  - Adult female: dark back and top of head, with creamy-yellow under-body and head sides.
  - Juvenile: similar to female.
- **Pup:**
  - Dark brown with paler crown and dark facial mask.
- **Coat:**
  - Short hair with lack of dense underfur. Males have a mane.
- **Flippers:**
  - Outermost digits of hind limbs are longer than middle digits. Hind flippers rotate under body enabling them to walk on land.
- **Family:**
  - Otariidae
- **Mating season:**
  - 7-10 days after birth of a pup, with delayed fertilisation to allow for birthing in summer.
- **Calving season:**
  - Jan – Oct
- **No. of Pups:**
  - 1
- **Conservation status:**
  - Protected.
- **Distribution:**
  - Occasional visitors to Victoria’s coastline.

#### Leopard Seal (Hydrurga leptonyx)
- **Distinguishing Features:** Serpentine-like appearance, with long neck and large, flat reptilian head. Powerful jaws and broad mouth gape. Sharp teeth.
- **Length:**
  - Adult male: 4m
  - Adult female: 4.5m
  - Juvenile: 2m
- **Weight:**
  - Adult male: 350kg
  - Adult female: 400kg
  - Juvenile: 120kg
- **Colour:**
  - Adult male: dark brown with lighter brown underneath.
  - Adult female: darker than males.
  - Juvenile: greyish coat, slightly paler below.
- **Pup:**
  - Black to very dark brown.
- **Coat:**
  - Hair short and dense.
- **Flippers:**
  - Front flippers long and broad, near the centre of the body.
  - Hind flippers small and used for locomotion in the water.
- **Family:**
  - Phocidae
- **Mating season:**
  - Nov – Jan
- **Calving season:**
  - Sept – Jan
- **No. of Pups:**
  - 1
- **Conservation status:**
  - Protected.
- **Distribution:**
  - Occasional visitors to Victoria's coastline.

### Scale Bar

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Note: all lengths and weights are averages for an animal in healthy condition, but may vary. = Female,  = Male