

Welcome to

Seal Rescue Ireland's Stranding Network

Thank you for being interested in helping in our mission to monitor the health of Ireland's marine mammals and spread the word about ocean conservation. A large part of our job is educating the public about seal pups. During baby season we get a variety of calls every day with people concerned about healthy pups being on the beach. Many people don't even realize it is ok for seal pups to be on the beach. Your job will be to assess the difference between a healthy pup and pups potentially needing care. Through special training and experience you will become more comfortable assessing the cases. At first you can start out just transporting but after attending one of our training courses you will be able to go out on rescues and assessments. Below is basic info about joining our Marine Animal Stranding Network. If you have any additional questions never hesitate to call or email anytime! Our rescue hotline is open 24/7!

Frequently asked questions:

What is the typical process of how a pup is rescued and where do I fit in as a Stranding Volunteer?

- Seal Rescue Ireland's rescue hotline is displayed all over Ireland since we service the entire country. When we receive a phone call at the rescue centre we assess the situation based on the finders description and photos (if possible). If we think there could be an issue with the pup or we cannot assess anything from the phone call, we will try to find someone in the stranded pup's area to go out and make an assessment. A stranding volunteer goes out to assess and if the pup needs to be taken into the hospital a transport is organized. The 1st responder will NOT be responsible to drive the pup all the way back to Seal Rescue Ireland in Courtown, Co. Wexford but the help is welcomed.
- If a seal is healthy, yet in a busy location, you may also be asked if you would be willing to go down to the site and educate the public about the seal pup or put up signs to let the public know that the seal is in a good condition but needs to be left alone and people and dogs need to stay away. This can have a huge impact of the survival of a seal pup born in a busy area. Some people may call this 'seal sitting' when asking you to help...It is like babysitting but so much better!

How will I be notified of pups in my area?

- There are a few ways you might be notified: Through the Facebook Volunteer Group, Through Whatsapp Group Messaging, or Through a phone call or text message

When will I get calls?

- Our busiest times of the year are the start of summer and start of winter. These are the times when pupping occurs. It is all dependent on the year and weather that year but typically we will see a rush of rescues in June, July and August and again in November, December, January. Rescues are not scheduled so you can expect to get calls from 8am-8pm any day of the week unless you specify the times and days you are available. The more you are available the more chances you have being involved in a rescue! Please contact the rescue line at anytime if you availability has changed.

What supplies will I need to be prepared?

- Suggested Basic Rescue Kit List: Large Towels, Large sheet (cover kennel if animal can see out), Large Bin(with lid), fish box or dog kennel for animal transport (pups are from 7-18kg), Protective gloves (fire pit gloves would great), Latex or Nitrile gloves to protect from feces or other contaminants, thermometer, camera, full water bottles (use to cooling seal if they are overheating) or hot water bottle if animal is cold but WARM SLOWLY.
- Advance Rescue Kit will include medical equipment and equipment to administer oral fluids. This

will be explained overtime when you reach a more advanced stage.

Who Pays for what?

- Transport Costs: Volunteers cover their own petrol and transport costs
- Animal Treatment: If an animal needs vet care, Seal Rescue Ireland will cover vet costs. This work or medications or any costs MUST be pre-approved otherwise the cost is placed on the volunteer.

Are there any risks associated with coming in contact with seals?

● There are zoonotic diseases that are transferable from animal to human as well as there are diseases that humans can transmit to an animal. You must be aware of this and know to always use protective gear and properly wash any clothing or laundry that has come in contact with the seals. Some seals have internal parasites or other issues that are not evident from the naked eye so always use precautions. If you ever get bit by a seal clean the wound immediately - you may potentially need to get on specific antibiotics – more details will come with training.

Will we ever rescue anything other than seals?

● Every now and then we get calls for terrestrial wildlife and other marine mammals. We may ask you to respond to other marine mammals but it is not likely. There have been some cetacean (dolphin, porpoise, whales) type strandings that we have responded to but we are unable to take them in for rehab. Any other calls about other wildlife needing rescuing will be referred to other rescue groups.

Are there things I can do when not rescuing?

● There are heaps of volunteer projects you can do from your own home. It takes a lot of different skills and tasks to keep a rescue center up and running. Please contact the volunteer coordinator if you have free time to assist with computer projects. This may include stuff such as data entry, googling projects, researching funding options, or getting quotes about things from different companies. The list is endless and we are sure to have something suiting for everyone that is willing to help! Even if you have 1 extra hour in the week to put to this that would be AMAZING!