



NOAA FISHERIES

Protected Resources Division

Public Service Announcement

For Immediate Release

April 15, 2015

Share the Shore with Harbor Seal Pups

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The West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network encourages you to "Share the Shore" with harbor seal pups. Pups are born on the outer coast of Washington in May through July. In our inland waters pups are born in the north (San Juan Islands, Bellingham, Whidbey and Camano Islands) in June through August. In south Puget Sound pups are born in late June through September. Harbor seal pupping in Hood Canal takes place in August through October. There are 3,000-5,000 harbor seal pups born in Washington inland waters each year. Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act harbor seal populations have recovered to healthy numbers. The harbor seal population is at carrying capacity (maximum population size of the species that the environment can sustain indefinitely).

Nursing pups remain with their mothers for 4 to 6 weeks and are then weaned to forage and survive on their own. Harbor seal pups may haulout in the same place for several days or weeks at a time; this does not mean they are abandoned. Pups that are being weaned must learn to survive and forage for food. Weaned pups will spend extended hours on shore resting and regulating their body temperature. **Please respect nature's role.** Up to 50% of the pups born will not survive their first year of life.

Many harbor seal pups are too young to have developed protective wariness (escape response) and may not flee when approached while resting and warming up on shore. Harbor seals use log booms, docks, and shoreline habitat on a daily basis to rest and regulate their body temperature. Please **Share the Shore**- stay back 100 yards if possible, keep your dogs on a leash, and if the animal is injured call our hotline at [1-866-767-6114](tel:1-866-767-6114).

Harbor seals (and all marine mammals) are protected by law under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Federal marine mammal regulations prohibit harassing seals to reduce human disturbance of important life processes. **Don't Touch Seal Pups!** The best thing you can do is to leave the animal alone – it's best chance for survival is in the wild.

For more information about harbor seal pups in Washington State please read the Share the Shore with Harbor Seal Pups, Frequently Asked Question document distributed with this PSA or visit our website at: http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected_species/marine_mammals/pinnipeds/index.html