



Information for organisers of kayaking trips around the coast : please be seal friendly!

Check the CWT website for the map of sensitive wildlife areas around the coast.

Plan to avoid the two key seal haul out areas all year round and known bird breeding habitat.

Brief the group about what to do if seals are seen, so you get the best views! Agree a silent signal to alert the group to the presence of seals.

Keep your eyes peeled and ears alert for seals and other marine life.

Regular tour boats may be ignored by seals, who then take to the sea when kayaks are in the same area.

Be aware that you are not the only people watching and enjoying the seals that day.

Report any seal numbers and locations to sue@cornwallsealgroup.co.uk

Seals in the sea – to get the best views of seals

Anticipate seal terrain and if seals are seen in the sea, signal silently to other members.

Maintain a steady, straight, predictable course.

Let the seals approach you. Look behind you and paddle backwards to get the best view of seals!

NEVER feed wild seals.

If seals approach your kayak, remain calm and quiet, even if they put their flippers on your kayak. If you think they are being too cheeky, gently but firmly tell them 'no' and move your kayak slowly away from them.

(Keep your hands in towards the boat and be aware of the 'seal bite' letter)

Seals on land – to see the seals at their very best

Anticipate possible seal ledges and be vigilant for seals

Seals may be hauled out all year round. If seals are seen hauled out:

Assess the wind direction (from you to the seals will increase the likelihood of disturbance)

Assess ambient noise levels (quieter, still conditions mean that voices and paddle splashes carry further and increase the distance over which disturbance occurs)

Avoid beaches with pups (between Sept and Dec) and never land on beach of breeding seals.

Assess the seals' reactions, whilst avoiding direct eye contact.

If the seals repeatedly look at you, you are **close enough**

If the seals move towards the sea, you are **too close and need to back off slowly**

Kayak slowly and steadily, parallel to the shore past the seals maintaining silence and a constant speed and direction. Never use your ability to approach quietly as a way to get close to seals. If you approach silently, seals may be startled by your sudden appearance.

Feel pleased that the seals that were hauled on your arrival were still there when you left! If they weren't, then you must take responsibility for having disturbed them. If you think the seals were just curious and entered the sea to get a better look at you, ask yourself this question....if you hadn't been there, would the seals have gone in the water?...If not, then they have been disturbed by you.

Seals invest a huge amount of energy in hauling out to rest and digest their food. Flushing seals into the sea prematurely stresses them and is a double blow to their energy budget and wastes their hard won energy. You will not be the only people the seals have seen that day. Disturbance is cumulative, so if you see other people watching seals, take extra care.