



Seal rescue and pollution clean up



Our seal rescue and rehabilitation programme is one of the busiest in Europe, with three SEA LIFE rescue centres in the UK and Belgium. Our SEA LIFE team in Helsinki is also fully trained to respond to an oil spill and provide immediate rescue and clean-up for affected animals.

Our expert teams treat sick and injured seals, then return them to the wild – plus look after orphaned seal pups until they're old enough to look after themselves. If a seal can't be returned to the wild, they're given a safe and secure home in our aquariums or sanctuaries.

As well as providing care for injured seals, SEA LIFE supports projects to reduce one of the major threats to seals and other marine mammals – ocean plastic.

Seal rescue – Europe

- SEA LIFE operates some of the busiest sea mammal rescue and rehabilitation operations in Europe.
- Dedicated animal care teams annually rescue and care for hundreds of orphaned or injured seals and return them to the wild after weeks or months of care and recovery.
- SEA LIFE has seal rescue centres at SEA LIFE Hunstanton and SEA LIFE Scarborough in the UK and SEA LIFE Blankenberge in Belgium.
- Collectively these three operations successfully rescue and rehabilitate more than 100 grey (*Halichoerus grypus*) and common seal (*Phoca vitulina*) pups every year.
- Our seal rescue centres provide life-long care for seals whose injuries are too severe for them to survive back in the wild or retired from other animal centres.
- SEA LIFE has developed over 40 years of expertise in the care of seals at its centres and works closely with the SEA LIFE Trust's Cornish Seal Sanctuary at Gweek in Cornwall, previously run by SEA LIFE.
- Seal pups can need rescuing for various reasons, from malnourishment to being separated from their mum. Other seals can be suffering from wounds caused by fishing gear or ocean plastic.
- Every seal release is the culmination of months of hard work by SEA LIFE care workers. The youngest rescued pups often need bottle feeding at four-hour intervals round the clock, but there is always someone willing to turn out at midnight or four in the morning to help get them fed!



- The SEA LIFE team at Helsinki has also been trained to support oil response teams in clean-up and rescue of animals in the event of an oil spill.

Plastic Pollution Projects

- Plastic is a growing threat to our ocean's marine life, with discarded nylon fishing nets and angling line being a major cause of injury to seals and other marine mammals.
- SEA LIFE aquariums are steadily phasing out single use plastics from all aspects of our business. Plastic straws were removed from all sites in 2018, and in 2020 a plan to phase out plastic cutlery and beverage containers will be put in place.
- Around the globe our SEA LIFE teams organise regular beach, river and canal litter clean ups removing hundreds of tonnes of waste that could otherwise harm wildlife.
- In 2019, over 40 SEA LIFE centres around the world organised beach cleans as part of the SEA LIFE Trust's World Oceans Day 24 Hr Global Beach Clean. 2,442 volunteers collected 3,972 bags of litter – a massive 1,929 Kg
- All 51 SEA LIFE Centres across the world have joined forces with over 200 other aquariums, oceanographic museums and zoos to form a global coalition all pledging to raise public awareness about plastic pollution with the **#BeatPlasticsPollution** campaign. The campaign has been created by the European Commission, together with the United Nations Environment Programme and with the support of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, the European Union of Aquarium Curators, the World Association of Zoos & Aquariums, the US Aquarium Conservation Partnership and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO.

