

PROTECT YOURSELF AND BABY SEALS

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Mid-July through late September is normally seal pup season in Southern Puget Sound, however, the first report of a premature seal pup in the area was May 30th this year. Up to 50% of the pups born will not survive the first year of life. Contributing factors to pup mortality are premature birth, wild predators or domestic dogs, infection, disease, dehydration or starvation.

A nursing pup that is separated from its mother will not survive. Here are several steps people can take to minimize stressing seals encountered on beaches.

1. Share the shoreline. If you see a seal on the beach, give it room. Marine mammal viewing guidelines recommend a minimum approach distance of 100 yards. Anecdotal reports indicate that pups have successfully reunited up to 48 hours after separation.
2. Observe from a distance using binoculars or a spotting scope if you want to see the animal "close up."
3. **Keep pets away. Baby seals can easily fall prey to dogs.** Older seals might bite in self-defense. Dogs are naturally curious about other animals in their environment. To avoid a possible injurious interaction, **dogs should be leashed and kept away from seals on the beach.**
4. Remind others that seal pups need to use shoreline habitat to rest or warm up. Do not pour water on seal pups.
5. Feeding or baiting seals in the wild is harmful. Seals that are fed by humans quickly learn to seek humans for feeding opportunities.

FAWNS

Many of the above tips that minimize stressing seal pups can also protect our new fawns. Remember that a doe with a fawn can do harm or even kill a dog if she feels threatened. The doe and fawn do not know which loose dog is a danger. Fawns will panic and many of us have seen fawns dead at the bottom of South Beach. Please remember **Herron Island has a leash law that will protect both your dog and the wildlife.**