

Seal Hospital Marine Wildlife Centre

Low Farm, Winterton-on-Sea, Norfolk NR29 4AW, England

Winter 2003/04 Newsletter

Norfolk – Suffolk Coast

A Story of Hope for the Future

We would like to thank all our supporters for their help, whether you adopted a pup or gave a donation; you have helped us to rescue sick and injured animals. In addition, you have helped us secure the use of Low Farm for at least the next twelve months. Low Farm is an ideal base for our rescue organisation and the hope is to develop it into Norfolk's best Marine Rescue and Educational Centre. To guarantee this, we need to raise the money to buy the Farm, our future rests with our supporters and the support of local firms and agencies.

To help us achieve this, we have applied for Charity Status

PDV Virus

As you are aware, 2003 was not a good year for our common (harbour) seal population. Although our local colony did not seem to be badly affected by the virus, further up the country many seals died from the virus. Our very good friends in Holland at the Seal Rehabilitation and Research Centre (SRRC), Pieterburen, had developed a PDV vaccine to immunise seals. Tests in Holland had found that the vaccine gave protection from PDV and led to long term immunity, although it is not known exactly how long the protection lasts. Pieterburen generously gave us the vaccine, even though supplies were low and in great demand, so we could immunise our rescued pups and allow us to continue to rescue seals during the PDV outbreak. Most of the other rescue centres had to close their pools to new pups because of the danger of cross infection.

A 5 week old Premature Common (Harbour) Seal Pup

Salty, a common (harbour) seal pup, was only a few of hours old when he was rescued by Julie and Marcus, part of our rescue team, on the 4th of May 2003. Julie and Marcus were walking along the beach on the Horsey Side of the Winterton Haul-out, when they came across a fluffy seal pup, they thought he was dead, but all of a sudden he stirred. Marcus protected Salty, while Julie contacted Harry. With the rescue equipment on the way, Julie and Marcus covered Salty to protect him, as he was obviously premature and likely to die. As they waited, passers-by told them to leave it, "as it will be dead by the morning", but we are here to save our seals and while there is hope, we will do our best to rescue and care for injured and abandoned pups. Within half an hour, Salty was on his way to the SOS hospital, where Harry quickly put Salty under a heat lamp as the pup's temperature was low, and also tidied up his umbilical cord. He weighed just 9 lbs. Salty was tube fed with a special milk mixture and vitamins every 4 hours, with our volunteers working around the clock to care for such a fragile patient. It is unusual for a common seal pup to be born with white fur, as they shed this before birth. Common seal pups are normally born in the water, so Salty was lucky to get to the beach and be found by one of our rescue teams. Salty proved to be a fighter, surviving being over five weeks premature and has turned into a very lively, healthy (weighing over 80 lbs) and strong little pup. We would have returned Salty to his home on Scroby Sands Island near Great Yarmouth, but a wind farm is being built on top of the seals breeding area. This has already caused several seals to leave the site, so Salty has been taken to Holland where he now lives until released.



Weighing time

We can only continue with our valuable work because of our volunteers both young and old. These volunteers work in extremes of temperature, fighting to keep the seal pups alive and back to full health. In the photo on the left are Mariko from Japan, who is staying to help us for a year so she can gain more experience of marine animal care, and Alison, another dedicated volunteer. Both, as part of their duties, work in the hospital checking the pups to make sure that they are well on the road to recovery. The pups are weighed regularly, to check that they are putting on weight, a sure sign of improving health.

New Hospital Pens

At the time of writing this newsletter, we are expanding our rescue centre so we can help more of the sick and injured local marine wildlife. We are converting one of our small barns to provide more hospital pens, which this will enable us to give intensive care to more of the increasing numbers of seal pups that are rescued along our coast. We have also increased the number of outside pools to help the rehabilitation process and get seals ready to be returned to the sea.



Our Motto is to Rescue, Rehabilitate and Release

If you would like more information about the latest rescues and releases, please visit our web site at:- www.saveourseals.co.uk

Rescued Seal Pups

Here are a few of our rescued seal pups this year. To see more of our rescued seal pups, both old and new, why not visit our website which is www.saveourseals.co.uk



Deno

This is Deno, a common (harbour) seal, she was rescued from sand near Great Yarmouth harbour, with serious wounds to her back on the 7th of September 2003 weighing 36lbs. She was in a fair condition although she was bleeding from the wounds on her back and left Flipper. These were dressed and she was given medication. Deno is now in one of the outside pools where she is eating well.

Bosun

Bosun is a common (harbour) seal and was rescued on 8th of September 2003 by Peter, one of our rescue team. Bosun was found at Sea Palling, aged about 1 month and weighing 28 lbs. He still had his baby coat on when we rescued him. At the moment, Bosun can be found in the pool.



Ness

Ness is a common (harbour) seal and was rescued on 16th of September 2003 by a member of our hospital team. He was found on the beach at Winterton, aged about 8 – 9 weeks old and weighing 29 lbs. He had a temperature of 38.9°F with poor breathing and mouth ulcers. Ness was given fish soup for the first couple of days and was then introduced to fish. He is now in the small pool with Sailor.

Daisy

This is Daisy, a common (harbour) seal and she was rescued on 29th of September 2003 by the seal team. She was found near Winterton aged about 2 weeks and weighing 28 lbs with a temperature of 38.5°F. Daisy had some cuts to the left and right flippers. We are feeding her fish soup and she is being kept in the hospital at the moment.



Nimrod

This is Nimrod, a common (harbour) seal and she was rescued on 12th of October 2003 by Sandy, a member of the seal team. Nimrod was 2 months old and weighed 32 lbs with a temperature of 37.9°F. She had bad breathing with some cuts to the left and right flipper.

Latsey

Latsey is a common (harbour) seal and was rescued on 29th of October 2003 by Lance, one of our rescue team. She was found at Sea Palling, aged about 10 weeks and weighing 35 lbs with a temperature of 37.8°F. We started her on fish soup before introducing Latsey to whole fish.



Varied Wildlife

It is not only seals that arrive at the rescue centre, as we have an ever widening selection of wildlife spread around our farm and sometimes also inside the house. Now we have what we hope is a permanent base for our organisation, we get a wide range of sick and injured wildlife arriving at our door, from Hedgehogs to Razorbills, we will try and help all that arrive.

Become a Volunteer

Would you like to become a Hands on Veterinary Nurse for our seal hospital? You need to be able to help for at least 6 months. "Hands on", means mostly cleaning, washing pups, feeding and helping to get them ready for release back into the wild. You must have stamina, and be ready to make a commitment to us, working at least one day per week. It is hard work, but the rewards are amazing!!

Seal Photos

We have many photographs of both our rescued pups and from our local colony on the beach. Packs include two rescued and two beach photos. Each photo pack sold means money towards the work of our organisation, all of us are volunteers, the money goes directly to the treatment of our local wildlife. **Photo Packs are £3.50 including P&P.**



Example pack

For donations of money, please make cheques payable to Save Our Seals and our postal address is:-
Seal Hospital Marine Wildlife Centre, Low Farm, Winterton-on-Sea, Norfolk NR29 4AW, England
Telephone number – 01493 393947