

SW Marine Ecosystems 2017

Seal highlights 2016

Cornwall
SEAL
Group
Research
Trust



Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust

Evidence based conservation charity (no.1162936)

- Passionately protecting Cornwall's precious marine environment
 - Identifying and monitoring local seals
 - Researching; communicating; engaging and conserving
 - Giving seals a voice in policy, planning and management
-
- The UK has 38-44% World's population (on the basis of pup production)
 - Less grey seals in the UK than red squirrels
 - Grey seals are a UK special responsibility species (JNCC)

Volunteer driven

2016 alone

- 2867 seal records
- 190 volunteers including 24 individual systematic surveyors
- 4 systematic team surveys
- 195 locations across Cornwall, Devon and the Isles of Scilly

CSGRT personnel

Trustees: Sue Sayer, Kate Hockley Dan Jarvis, Phil Knight, Richard Morton

Steering Group: Sue Sayer (Chair), Kate Hockley (Treasurer), Dan Jarvis (Secretary)

Scientific Advisors: Bex Allen, Dr Lucy Hawkes and Dr Matthew Witt

Veterinary Advisors: James Barnett, Katie Lewis and Darryl Thorpe

Senior Surveyors: Kate Hockley and Sue Sayer

Bird Advisor: Dave Williams

Ghost Gear Data Manager: Kate Williams

Web Manager: Edd Hurst

Rope Safety Advisors: Chris Howell and Phil Knight

BDMLR Liaison: Dan Jarvis and Dave Jarvis

Cornwall Seal Sanctuary Liaison: Claire Fraser

RSPCA West Hatch Liaison: Kirsten Larcombe

Cornwall Wildlife Trust Liaison: Abby Crosby and Claire Lewis (Looe Island)

National Trust Liaison: Cat Lee (Lizard) Richard Pope (West Cornwall) and Steve Sudworth (West Cornwall)

Post Mortem Liaison: Kelly Astley, James Barnett and Dan Jarvis

Personal and Professional Assistants:

- Marion Beaulieu
- Charlotte Bell
- Katie Drake
- Leyla Woodfine

IT and Data Consultant: Dan Murphy

Photography Consultant:

- Adrian Langdon
- Dan Murphy

Affiliated seal friendly boat operators:

- Atlantic Diver
- Tiburon Boating

ID Area Coordinators

- Katie Drake (Pentire)
- Jean Lawman (Coastwatch Gwennap)
- Rob Wells (St Austell Bay and Roseland)

PIP Survey Coordinators:

- Bex Allen (STAPIP)
- Martin Gregory (LISPIP)
- Sarah Millward (POLPIP)
- Tina Robinson (POLPIP)
- Derek Spooner (LISPIP)
- Sue Sayer (CASPIP)
- Mike Taylor (STAPIP)
- Dave Williams (All boat PIPS)

ID Team

- Marion Beaulieu: West Penwith North
- Katie Drake: West Pentire
- Alec and Enid Farr: Lizard
- Jes Hirons: Mounts Bay
- Dave Jenkins: North Devon
- Marine Discovery: Mounts Bay
- Newquay Sea Safaris: Newquay Harbour
- Wendy Sargeant: North Cornwall West
- Jenny Simpson: Padstow Bay
- Terry Thirlaway: Lizard
- Rob Wells: St Austell Bay and Roseland
- Kate Williams: North Devon

PIP Report Writers

- Jasmin Gregory (LISPIP)
- Martin Gregory (LISPIP)
- Sarah Millward (POLPIP)
- Sue Sayer (all)
- Mike Taylor (STAPIP)
- Ross Wheeler (CASPIP)

Student Team:

- Ellie Bearcroft (Falmouth University)
- Fleur Brochut (University of Neuchatel)
- Billy Heaney (University of Exeter)

Survey Team: Numerous amazing volunteers around Devon and Cornwall who systematically survey their local patch at least once a month







Population appears stable despite healthy pup numbers

CSGRT Cornwall census

NE IOS special Area of Conservation condition Assessment Monitoring

CWT Marine Strandings Network data

(high mortality – bycatch, entanglement, strandings; entanglement, pollution and disturbance reducing survivorship; emigration from habitat loss, prey depletion or sub optimal conditions?????)

So seals need our help more than ever!

Natural England contracts

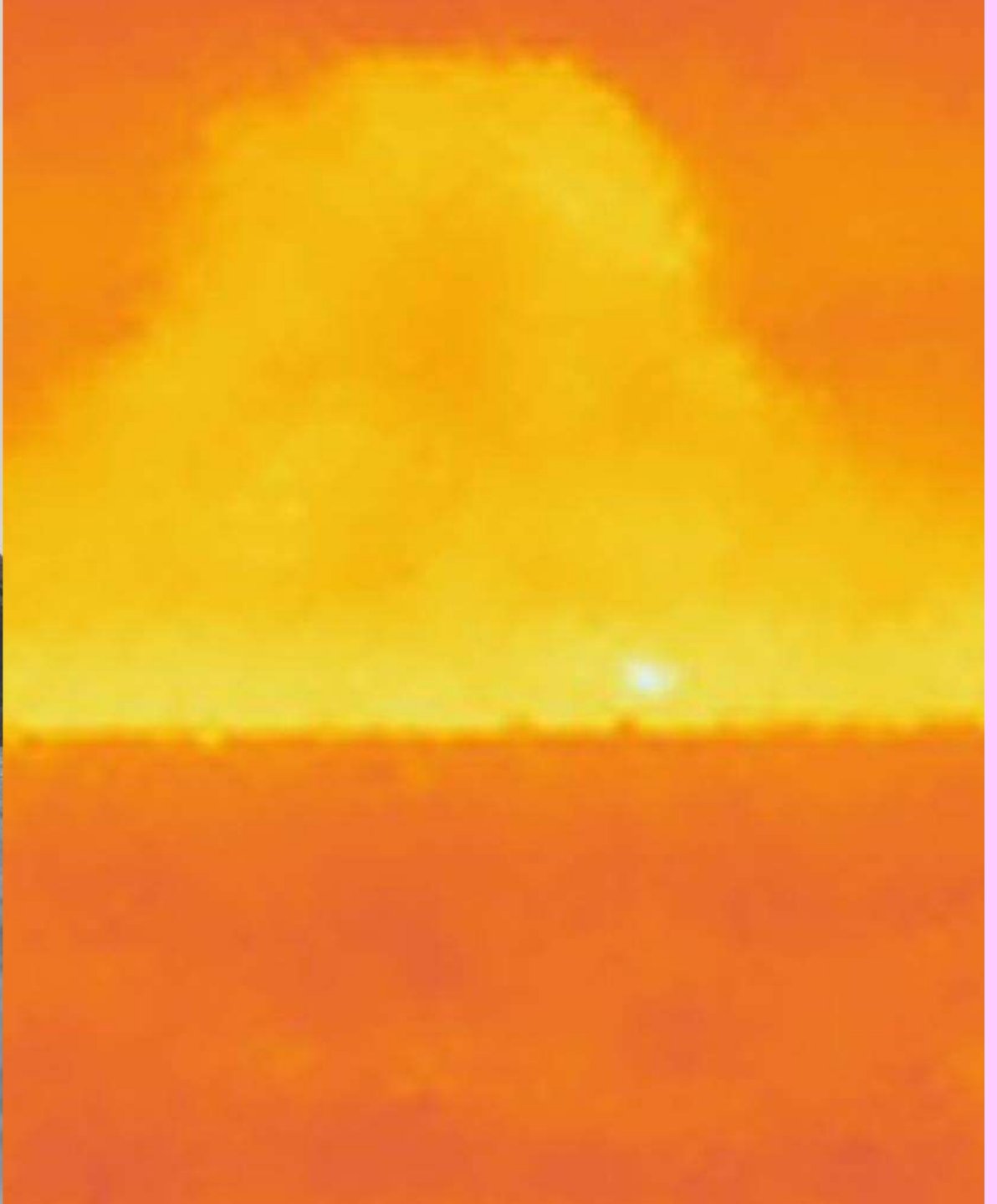
Isles of Scilly Special Area of Conservation
Condition Assessment Monitoring

Sea Cave Research Protect and Cornwall pup count

Isles of Scilly







Cornwall





Seal census

2016

Effort

Census 7th to 11 April 2016 – preferred survey day 7th April (4 surveys completed on 6th).
25 survey teams, one land based LISPIP survey and one POLPIP boat transect survey
51 sites in 38 areas surveyed (23 sites had no seals)

Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust

Census

7th-11th April 2016



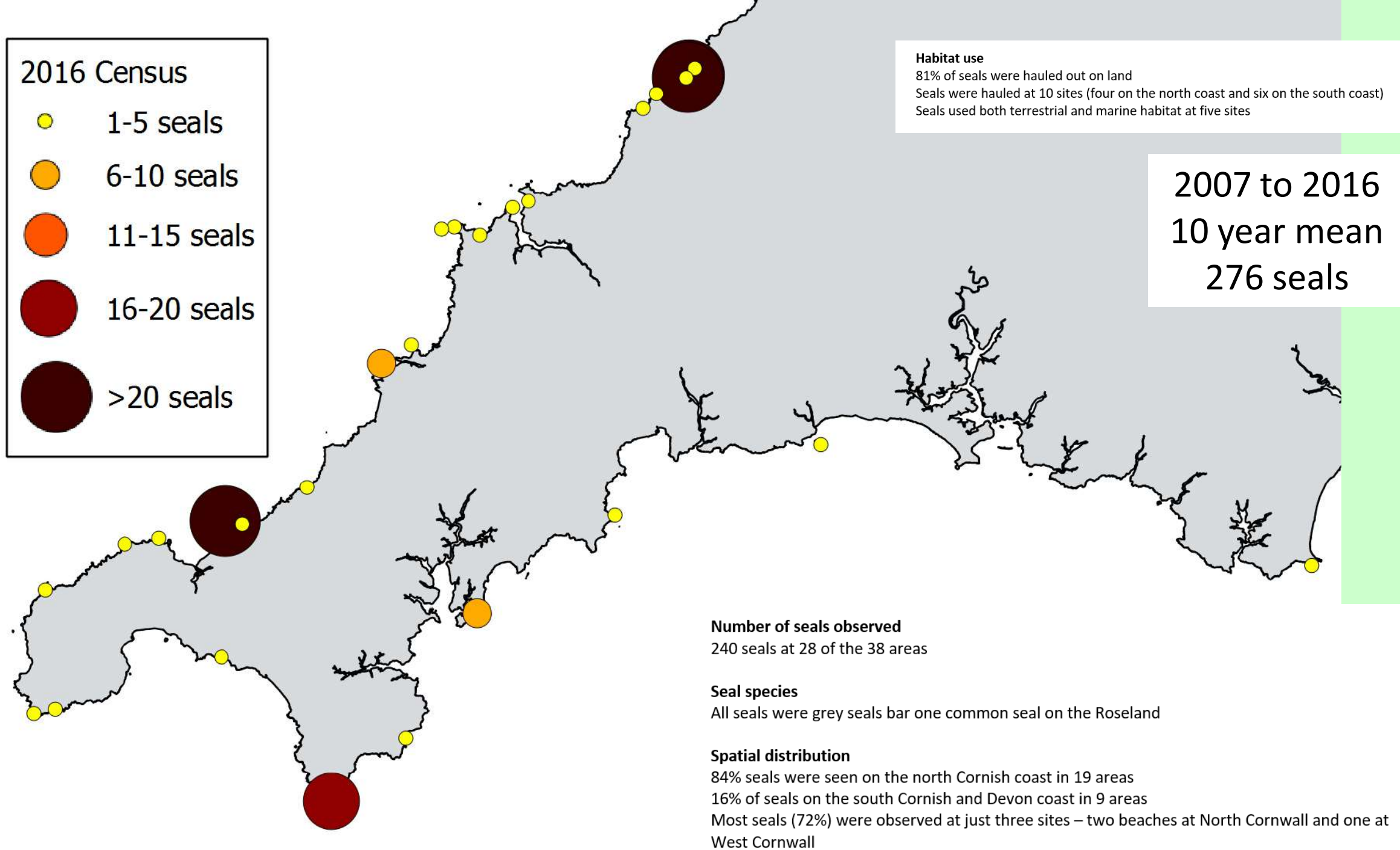
Land based surveying at West Cornwall during census week. Photo by Sue Sayer

Data collected for CSGRT by volunteers
Report written by Sue Sayer









Acknowledgements

A huge 'thank you' to all the individual volunteer surveyors, teams of recorders, boat operators (Atlantic Diver), local Marine Conservation Groups and Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Your efforts are hugely appreciated.



Conclusion and evaluation

Volunteer surveyors effectively covered all known key seal sites for this 2016 census
Seal numbers and spatial distribution were consistent with previous census

Recommendations

To continue to develop this long term data set
To replicate this protocol in other seal seasons – July (summer) and October (pupping)
To compile a comparative report from 10 years of seal census.

POLPIP surveyors 11/04/16 by Sue Sayer

Seal class of 2016

Vagrant seals

Common- 4 pups

Ringed



Seen a seal in distress? [CONTACT US NOW](#)



ABOUT SEALS

Find out more about the globally rare seals that you see around the Cornish coastline.



SEAL GROUP

Seal Group has been carrying out pioneering research since 2000. Find out what we do.



YOUR HELP

With your help we can make our seas a safer place for seals, other marine life and ourselves!



OUR PARTNERS

We work with a range of marine related organisations interested in seals and the sea.

Welcome to Cornwall Seal Group (Research Trust)

Cornwall Seal Group (CSG) is an evidence based conservation charity supporting a large network of active citizen scientists who routinely survey seals on their local patch in order to learn more about grey seals, a globally rare marine mammal for which the UK has a special legal responsibility to protect (JNCC).

CSG encourage everyone to send in their seal sightings (even just one seal in the sea or on land) with a date and location from anywhere around the southwest – photos are a bonus as they help us to confirm if it is a grey seal, whether it is male or female and perhaps even reveal its name and life history! Please email sue@cornwallsealgroup.co.uk with your sightings.

Each seal has a unique fur pattern that enables it to be photo identified throughout its life. Learn the pattern and you can recognise the seal! CSG hold identification catalogues for numerous sites from north Devon round to Dorset.

Photo ID is one of the most powerful research tools for studying seals. It is a non invasive technique revealing information about lots of different aspects of their biology and ecology and ultimately enabling the life stories of individual seals to be built up over time.

Some key learning outcomes from this work have shown that most of the seals seen at sites in Cornwall just appear to be moving through – stopping off to rest on their way to somewhere else. A small proportion of seals seen at a site will remain there for several months, using the site as their base from which to forage. Very few seals (if any) spend all year in one place. Each seal seems to take a unique pathway and seals seen in Cornwall have also been photo identified in north and south Devon, Wales and France.

So if you see a seal in the southwest, please remember to tell us!

Muddy Ringed seal



Barry Williams

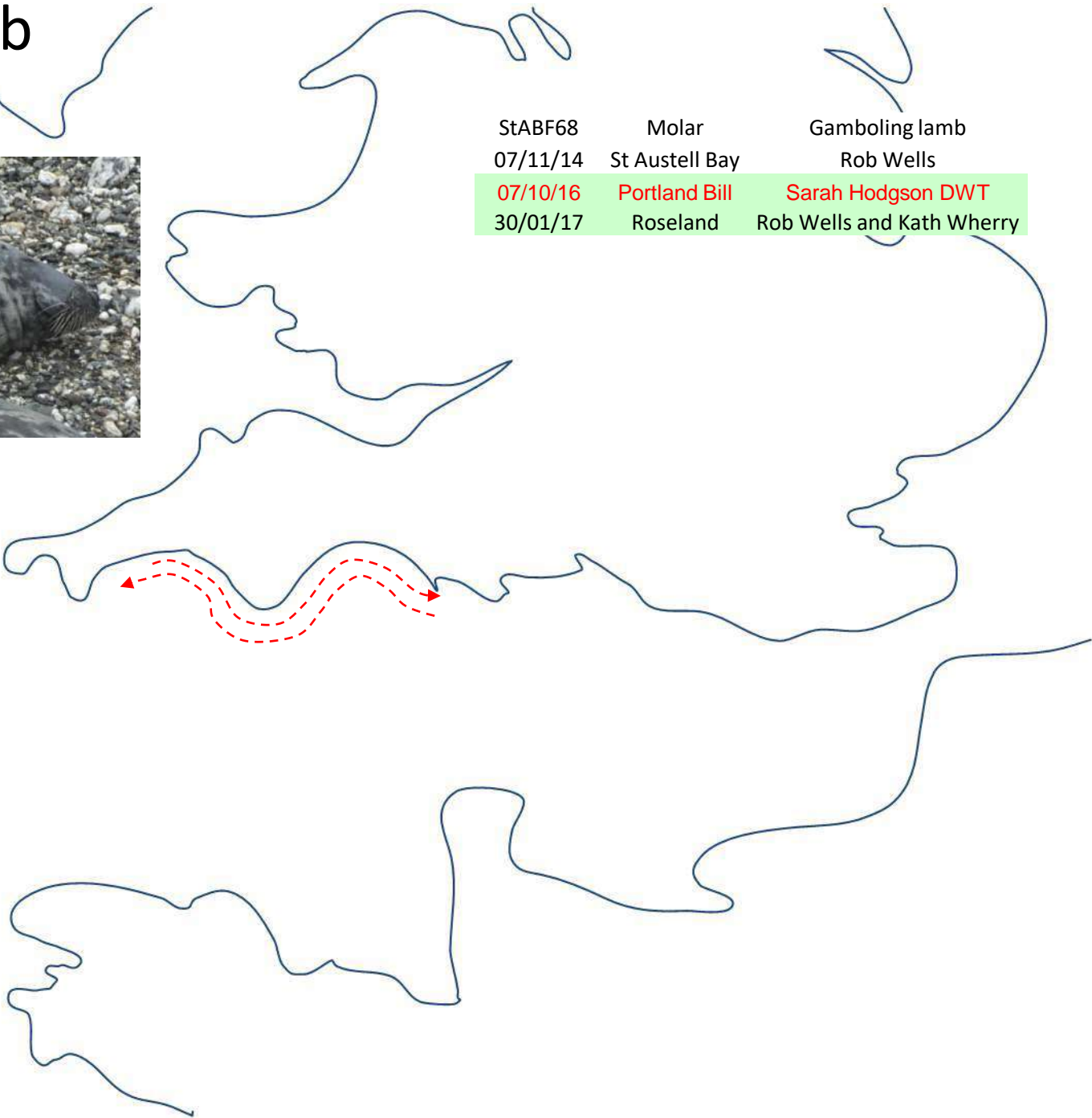
Changing perceptions - one seal at a time

From homogeneous species behaviour
to
Individual heterogeneous seal level
to
Effective species level conservation

StABF68 Gamboling lamb
ROF495 is DOR23



StABF68	Molar	Gamboling lamb
07/11/14	St Austell Bay	Rob Wells
07/10/16	Portland Bill	Sarah Hodgson DWT
30/01/17	Roseland	Rob Wells and Kath Wherry



First
Cornwall and Dorset
photo ID link

Pinnipeds, people and policy: the implications of grey seal movements for the management of mobile marine species

SUE SAYER¹, REBECCA ALLEN², LUCY A. HAWKES³, KATE HOCKLEY¹, DAN JARVIS¹, MATTH

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Keywords: grey seals, mobile marine species, conservation status, European Marine Site
Scientific Interest, Marine Protected Areas, site fidelity, citizen science, policy, managen

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- Callan Duck c.duck@st-andrews.ac.uk

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CSGRT sincerely thank those who have shared photos for seal identification (they know who they are) and to those whose online photos have been used (user IDs not listed) including: T Adams, T Bain, S Beadle, A Bicknell, J Barry, C Bollen, S Bone, G Blundell, P Borecki, D Boyle, K Brown, B Buche, L Butters, C Caseldine, H Caseldine, R Castillo, D Chapman, R Chittenden, L Clarke, G Clegg, J Clegg, R Collins, C Cornishlight, C Curtis, R Daddow, M Dawton, D Drake, K Drake, S Duffield, R Durrant, J Dwyker, B Earll, D Faith, A Farr, E Farr, C Farran, M Fenwick, J Foster, K Francis, P Gillard, M Gregory, R Grey, D Groves, Sarah G, V Hall, D Haines, T Hardman, R Hartley, S Hassani, L Hawkes, G Hawkins, B Heaney, J Hirons, K Hiscock, T Hocking, K Hockley, C Hood, D Jarvis, D Jarvis, L Jarvis, D Jenkins, D Johnson, K Johnson, N Jones, C Jose, R Jutsum, C Keast, J Keast, C Keiser, J Kent, P King, C Lewis, I Lewis, Lizzie and John, K Lock, J Loveridge, J Loveridge, A Lowe, B Lowe, C Lowe, D McBride, B MacDonald, A Mills, C Mills, L Morgan, S Needham, F North, L Nutley, F Parrott, I Parrott, L Payne, B Phillips, N Ponting, S Pow, E Priestley, D Murphy, M Orman, T Pharic, J Rainbow, D Rail, L Rogers, J Ross, T Russell, L Sargeant, W Sargeant, G Savage, H Selley, P Semmens, C Spooner, D Spooner, E Stubbings, M Stephens, A Steele, S Stewart, M Taylor, S Taylor, T Thirlaway, M Thorne, N Tomalin, L Tozer, S Van Trijfel, C Waddell, P Walker, D Warmesley, G Waters, R Wells, P Welsh, K Wheston, P White, C Wilding, B Williams, Will, J Williams. We are extremely grateful to all of you and could not have undertaken this research without you whether your interest is passing one, or an obsessive passion!

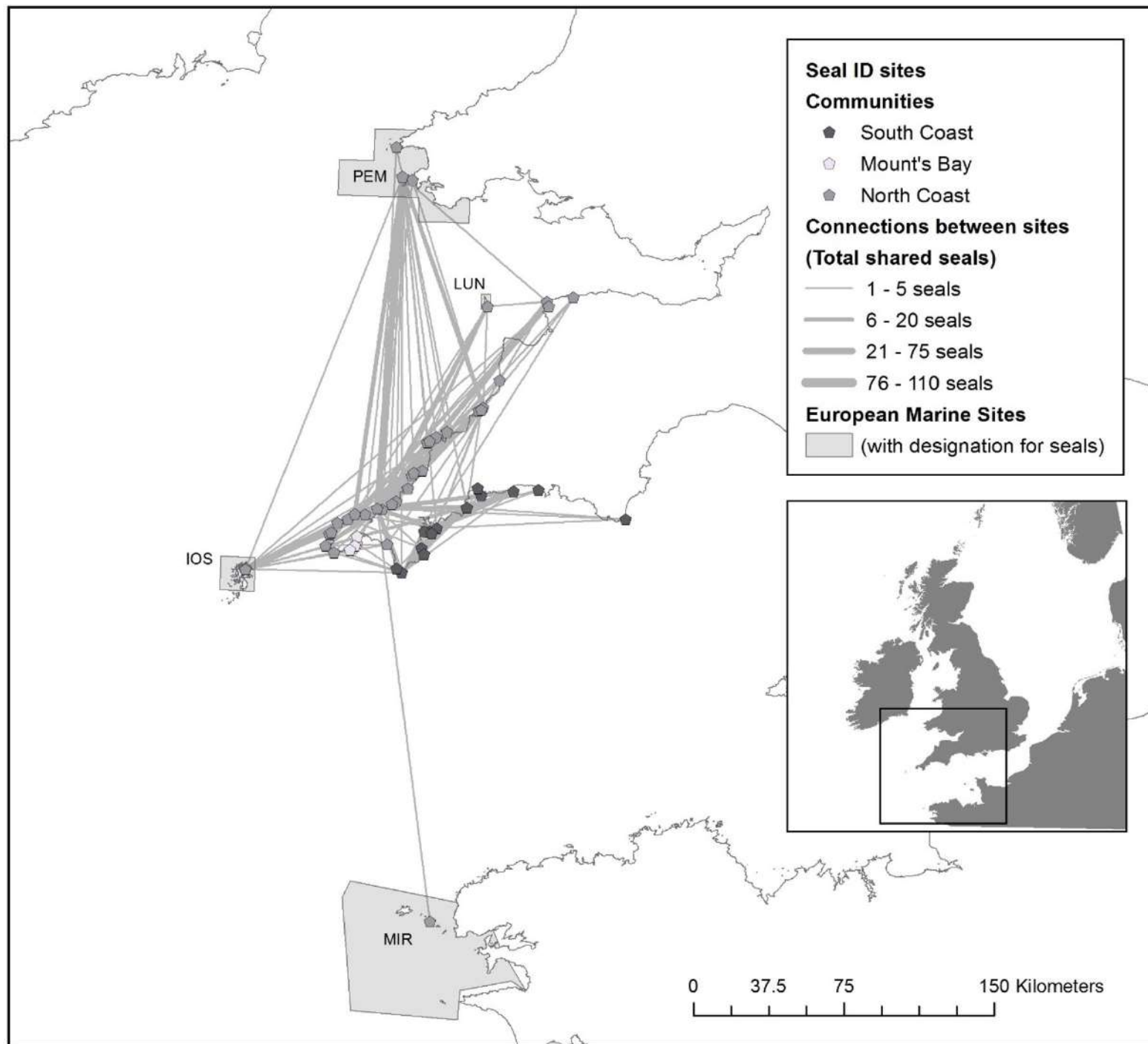
CSGRT are grateful to collaborate with so many amazing organisations including British Divers Marine Life Rescue; Cardigan Bay Marine Wildlife Centre; the Cornish Seal Sanctuary; Cornwall Wildlife Trust’s Marine Team, Seaquest SW and Marine Strandings Network; the Landmark Trust and Lundy wardens; Morte Wildlife Group; National Coastwatch Institute; the National Trust; Natural England; Natural Resources Wales; Oceanopolis; Parc Natural Marine Iroise; RSPB; RSPCA Wildlife Hospitals; Wildlife Trusts from Devon and South and West Wales with Skomer wardens.

Thank you to all the operators who make a living in the marine environment and contribute to our work: Atlantic Diving, AK Wildlife Cruises, Charles Hood, Coastline Ecocoasters, Cornish Sea Tors, Dive Scilly, Elemental Tours, Koru Kayaking, Marine Discovery, Orca Sea Safaris and Scilly Seal Snorkelling.

Seal photo ID projects (PIPs - CASPIP, INTPIP, IOSPIP, LISPIP, MERIFIC, POLPIP, STAPIP) that have involved hundreds of volunteer surveyors have contribute hugely to our ID effort and have been organised by the following groups: CSGRT, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Cornwall College, Looe Marine Conservation Group, National Trust, Polzeath Marine Conservation Group and the University of Exeter.

This work has relied on the inspriation, energy and enthusiasm of the CSGRT steering group, trustees, supporters, families (particularly Chris Howell) and friends underpinned by scientific capacity building provided by Cornwall College and the University of Exeter (particularly Dr. Brendan Godley.)

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grey seals. The
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art of their citations.
analysis has shown
1g marine protected



Designated habitat is dependant on multiple sites with no protection.

Sites with no protection are functionally linked to designated habitat.

Impacts at the unprotected sites can affect the favourable condition status of the protected sites!

Interesting experiences

Learning about seal biology and ecology

Intelligence test – hauling out onto small boat repeatedly indicates learning process

Feeding strategy – zig zag herding sandeels up a narrow inlet to feed

Key and pup Daily record

A Cornwall first

Not reading textbook

Staying at her 'home' site to have her pup three years running!

2016

All photos by and huge thanks to Terry Thirlaway

Yogi

Injured 16/10/16

Wound development

PEG research – how marine mammal wounds heal!

Photos by Alec and Enid Farr and Terry Thirlaway

Interesting behaviour

Alec and Enid Farr



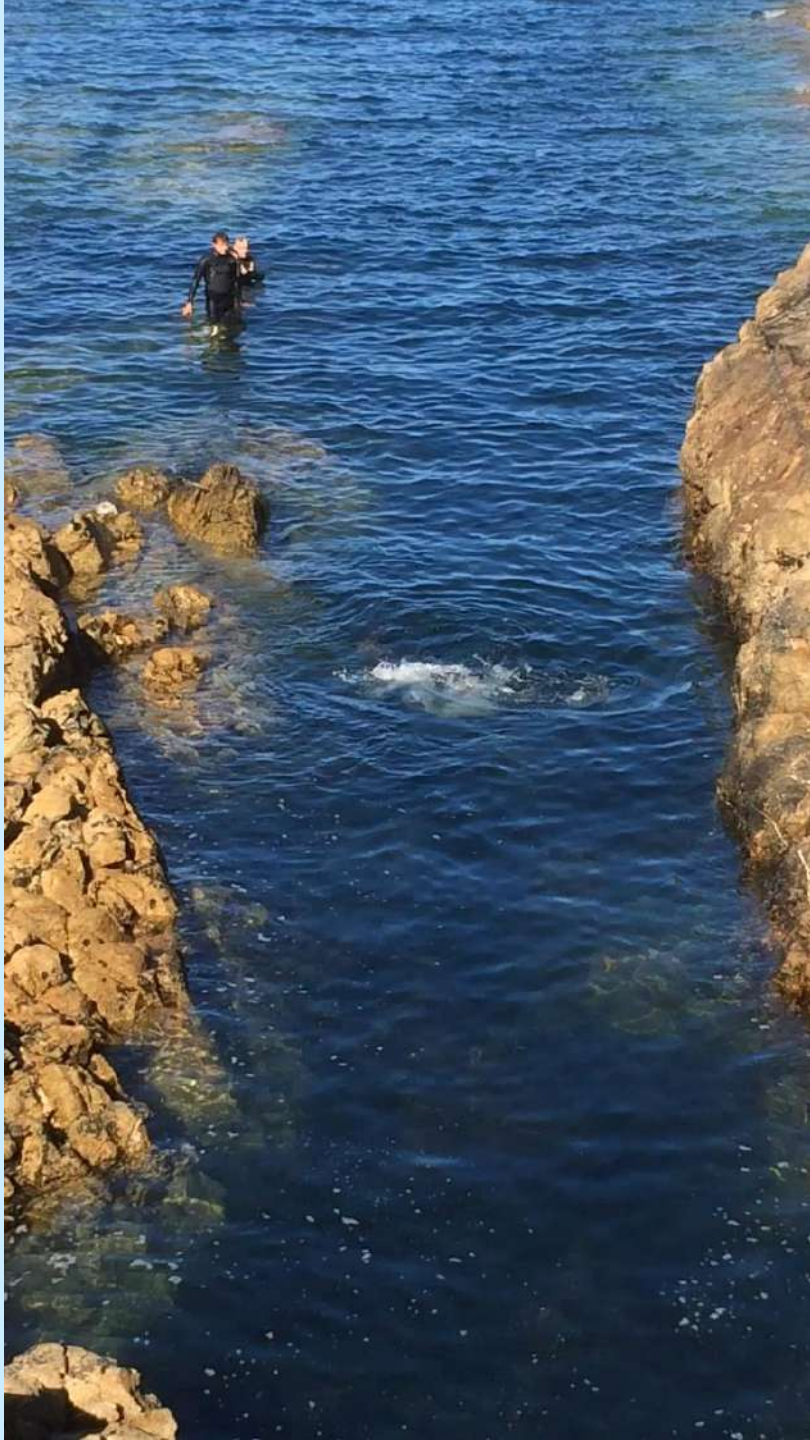
07/07/16	Lizard South	Alec Enid Terry
18/08/16	Lizard South	Alec Enid Terry



01/12/16	Lizard South	Alec Enid Terry
02/12/16	Lizard South	Alec Enid Terry
04/12/16	Lizard South	Alec Enid Terry
11/12/16	Lizard South	Alec Enid Terry
14/01/17	Lizard South	Alec Enid Terry
30/03/17	West Cornwall	Sue Sayer

Isles of Scilly

- Aug 2016



Ghost gear

Lucky Bunting

Rescued 12/07/16

En

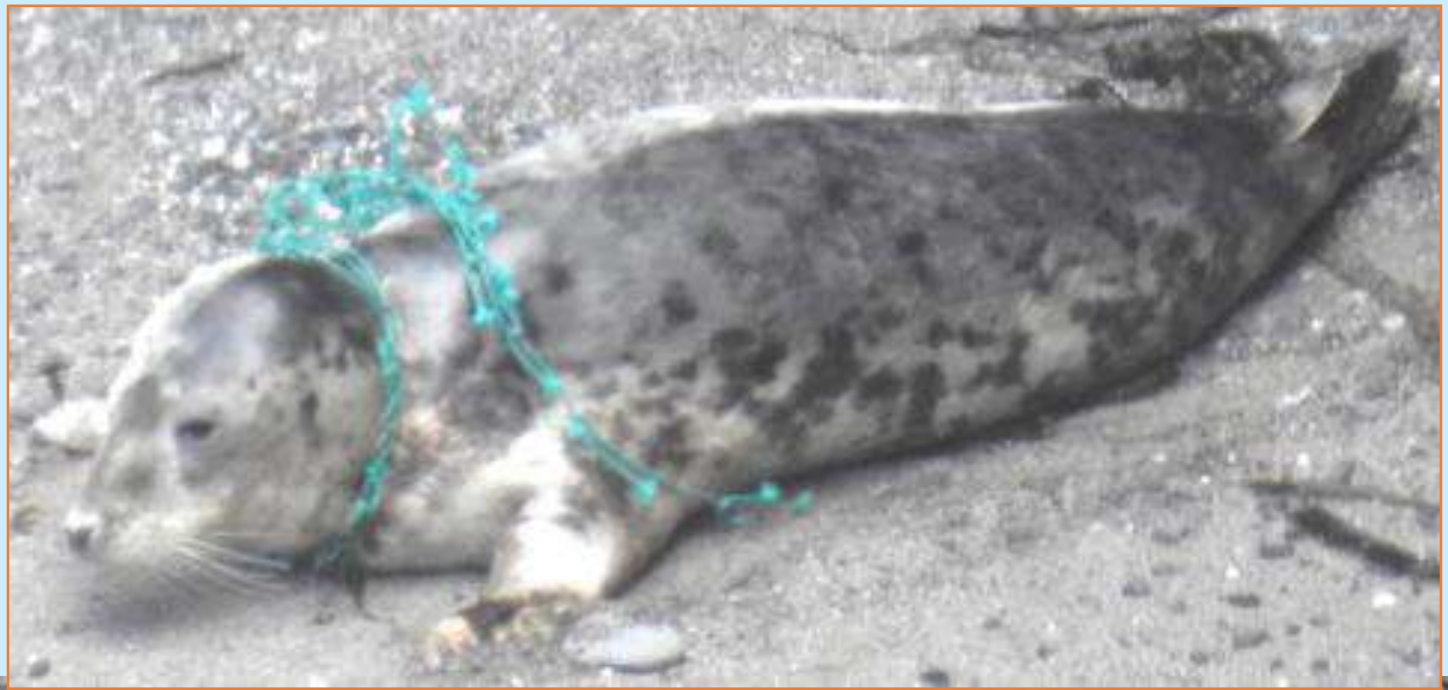


e

55 days (<2 months)
later on the same beach

LP316

Lucky Bunting



2016 12 14 Falmouth Tamara Cooper

PME revealed Apple Tree to be a ground breaking grey seal and possibly a world first!

CSS, BDMLR and University of Exeter

In her stomach she had:

- a golf ball sized piece of monofilament net
 - pebbles and
 - 2 bits of sweetcorn!



James Barnett

Population appears stable despite healthy pup numbers

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(high mortality – bycatch, entanglement, strandings; entanglement, pollution and disturbance reducing survivorship; emigration from habitat loss, prey depletion or sub optimal conditions?????)

So seals need our help more than ever!

Thank you for your records
and listening!

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