

## Why have a Strandings Network?

Unfortunately, marine mammals regularly strand around our coast. Information received on stranded animals can provide an accurate picture of what species occur and show local and seasonal distribution. Dead marine mammal strandings that undergo post-mortem examination provide us with valuable information on cause of death, disease, contaminants, reproductive patterns, diet and also useful pointers to the general health of the populations living in the seas around our coasts. This provides useful baseline data to detect outbreaks of disease or unusual increases in mortality.

## Whales, Dolphins & Porpoises

### Live Strandings - Urgency

If the cetacean (whale, dolphin or porpoise) is found alive, please telephone the relevant number as soon as possible. If the weather is hot keep the animal cool and wet, avoid pouring water near the blowhole. Keep well clear of the tail and do not pull the animal by its tail or fins.

### Information required (Dead Strandings)

When reporting a dead stranding please give a clear description of location, species if known, overall length and condition of the animal, for example: fresh; slightly decomposed; moderately decomposed; advanced decomposition.

### Safety Precautions

Please take great care around live stranded cetaceans, as the tail is extremely powerful and can easily cause injury. Avoid contact/inhalation with aerosols from the blowhole. Keep members of the public and dogs well clear. If handling a live or dead stranding gloves should be worn at all times. Wash hands thoroughly immediately after involvement and also before eating, drinking and smoking. Do not handle strandings if you have cuts or abrasions on your hands. For further information visit [www.nhm.ac.uk/zoology/stranding/safety.html](http://www.nhm.ac.uk/zoology/stranding/safety.html)



[www.ukstrandings.org](http://www.ukstrandings.org)

If you find a stranded marine animal please contact

LIVE STRANDING (all species):

England & Wales: RSPCA **0300 1234999**  
or BDMLR **01825 765546**

Scotland: SSPCA **0131 3390111**  
or BDMLR **01825 765546**

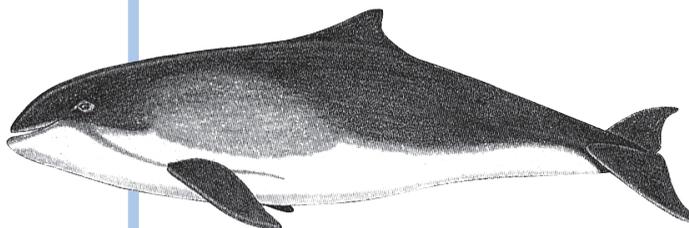
DEAD STRANDING:

England (cetaceans):  
Natural History Museum  
**0207 942 5155**

England (seals & turtles):  
Zoological Society of London  
**0207 449 6672**

Wales (all species):  
Marine Environmental Monitoring  
**01348 875000**

Scotland (all species):  
SAC Veterinary Services  
**01463 243030**



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## Seals & Turtles

### Live Seals

It is normal for seals to haul out. Only call the RSPCA if you are concerned for the welfare of the animal.

### Live Turtles

Of the world's seven marine turtle species, five have been recorded in UK waters. They are the leatherback, loggerhead, Kemp's ridley, green and hawksbill turtles. The leatherback, the largest marine turtle, is the species most frequently recorded in UK waters. Leatherbacks have a flexible, leathery shell and are unique among reptiles in that they are able to metabolically raise their body temperature above that of their immediate environment, allowing them to survive in colder waters. Each summer leatherbacks migrate from tropical nesting beaches to UK waters where they feed on jellyfish. The other four species have hard shells and are less frequently encountered in UK waters, where they usually occur as stray juveniles carried by currents from warmer seas.

Leatherbacks found stranded on beaches are usually very weak, but might still be saved.

If apparently uninjured:

Carefully drag the turtle back to the sea and release it (enlist the help of several people and pull the shell rather than the flippers).

- Do not drag the animal over rocks, as this will cause severe damage.
- If stranded on rocks, it may be better to wait for the incoming tide to provide some buoyancy before dragging the turtle back to sea. Other species (hard-shelled) loggerhead, Kemp's ridley, green and hawksbill turtles encountered on UK shores are usually cold stunned juveniles and should not be placed back in the sea.
- Wrap the turtle in a towel soaked in seawater, do not cover the nostrils.
- Place the animal in a sheltered and secure place on its belly. If inactive, raise the back end of the shell so the turtle is resting at approximately 30° to drain the lungs. Report the turtle as soon as possible.