



Grey Seal



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Latin: *Halichoerus grypus*

Irish: *Rón glas*

Size: Seals can grow to a length of up to 2m.

Months seen: All year

Habitat: Rocky coastline

Food: A seal's diet normally consists of crabs, lobsters, and fish such as salmon and cod.

Features: The grey seal is a familiar sight along the Irish coastline. The bull (male) has a black to mid-grey coat, while the cow (female) has a much lighter, spotted coat. They differ from the common seal in that they have a more pointed muzzle. Common seals have a more cat-like face.

Grey seals can dive to a depth of seventy metres. On average, they spend eight minutes under water before coming up for air, but are able to remain underwater for up to thirty minutes without coming up for air.



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Seals mature at about 6 years of age, but they do not begin to breed until they are about 10 years old. While they spend most of their life at sea, breeding takes place on small rocky islands in breeding colonies known as 'rookeries'. This occurs in late autumn, and dominant bulls can have harems of up to 10 cows. Pups are born in September to October.