

Trustees Annual Report 2019/2020

At CSGRT we described 2018 as a landmark year, but 2019 saw us riding a wave of success, which we sustained into 2020.



People

We ended 2019 with **4 paid rangers** fully funded until end of July/August 2020 all thanks to money from the **Heritage Fund, People's Postcode Lottery (Postcode Local Trust), Natural England, TEVI, LUSH cosmetics, TESCOs Bag of Help, Seal Protection Action Group, World Animal Protection, National Trust, Polzeath Marine Conservation Group, Aspects Holidays, Mungo Lils on the Hill, the Bowgie Inn, SeaChangers, Three Bays Wildlife, Hayle Lions** and our **incredible volunteer fundraising efforts and donations**.

Our Rangers are:

- Amazement and Discovery/Photo ID Ranger (Marion Beaulieu)
- Creativity and Activity Ranger (Emily Pollitt)
- Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger (Sarah Millward)
- Seal Research Ranger (Katie Bellman)

We hope to sustain our Rangers into the future by making our **Business Plan** targets a reality, through our **online shop** (gifts and clothing), our **Wild Seal Supporter Scheme, donations** and further **grant funding** applications.

Huge thanks to everyone who has contributed to this incredible achievement.

By the end of 2019, CSGRT had **20 local area Photo ID (PID) Hubs** across the region. We delivered an outstanding **65 free talks, 67 free stalls and events and 27 free training** sessions for our volunteers directly engaging with **12,097+ beneficiaries** – all of whom learned more about the SW's globally rare speciality species and how best to help them at work, rest and play.

Our news goes around the world via our **4 global partners**, website and social media – our **Facebook page @CornwallSealGroupResearchTrust** has **4322 followers** and our new **Instagram** page has grown rapidly to **410 followers**.

Data and policy

We continue to grow in all respects. Our supporter base grew to **376** volunteers, all of whom submitted at least one survey (with the Lizard team managing **daily surveys** for yet another year!) We received a total of **3794 discrete surveys** in 2019 (that's over 10 each and every day) including **9 Looe Photo ID Project** surveys, **9 boat Photo ID Project** transects and our quarterly **seal census**, all of which covered **399 different seal locations**. Katie coordinated an incredible **82 systematic seal and human interaction** surveys across **4 sites**. From these dedicated disturbance surveys, **392 different disturbance incidents** were recorded with **1956 individual seal reactions**, all of which were likely to impact their metabolisms and physiology. **High levels of disturbance** occurred at all 4 sites with on average **disturbance once every 14 to 29 minutes**. Our 20 PID Hubs processed a truly gobsmacking **120,743 photos** in 2019 into **3284 survey albums** resulting in **8722 seal identifications**.

All this data provides CSGRT with a robust evidence based from which we wrote **13 major reports**, **9 public consultations** submissions, designed **3 public signs** at coastal locations and delivered input for **93 meetings** with volunteers, partner organisations, business networks and statutory agencies. This included **2 meetings with the DEFRA policy advisor** for seals and seabirds – in **Truro** and at the **Home Office in London** and we hope these will lead onto the creation of a **Seal Network UK**.

As in previous years we continue to share evidence, information and advice with **4 global partners** – World Animal Protection, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, the Pinniped Entanglement Group and the 5 Gyres Trawlshare Microplastics Project.

Resources

Our exhibition and activity resources grew again this year. CSGRT appeared in **3 films** that got widespread coverage (BBC Springwatch, Exeter Marine – Underwater Film Festival and Seal Rescuers). We finally made the much needed transformation to a **van** to transport our mobile pop up marine centre exhibition to destinations as far away as Bristol Science Museum and Lundy Island. On one of our routine north coast boat surveys, CSGRT encountered a **dead gannet entangled in lost fishing gear**. We sent this important case study for post mortem with James Barnett who revealed the gannet had swallowed a single strand of the monofilament and was starving but had potentially suffered before dying as a result of being shot in the head with an air gun pellet. We kept the artefacts for display.

Septimus' story booklet describes his life before he met CSGRT's Rob, his IDs, death and reconstruction resulting in the important message he tells us about how cumulative impacts can affect a single animal. His story inspired us to create various **innovative and participative activities** to accompany him on his travels. Another experience of note for Septimus in 2019 was a three day personal **photoshoot** at the University of Falmouth with Rose Summers and Adrian Brown generating stunning imagery for us to use.

Augusta is a seal pup who died at the age of 3 days old. 16 months after her death she has returned as a skeleton to keep Septimus company. We are still exploring the surprising stories her skeleton has to tell about the life and death of a new born pup.

Seals

We started the year with a serious **disturbance** incident at West Cornwall, which was reported to, and followed up successfully, by the **Police** and **Natural England**. In January, 5 year old ex entangled '**Lucky Bunting**' grabbed our attention with the 6 boyfriends she had, finally choosing to mate with 9 year old '**Three Scars**'. We tracked her progress all year and saw her in early September, but we have yet to find out where she chose to pup. Adult female '**Legs**', who pupped at West Cornwall in 2018 suddenly became entangled in monofilament net in January and by the end of the month we were devastated to see that it had cut right through the skin encircling her neck. We also recorded a young male with the first **deformed flipper** we have ever seen. He was re-identified throughout the year so is thriving despite this.

Through February and March we had new evidence of links made by travelling seals identified at both Cudden Point and the Lizard '**Monkey wrench**' and our first seal link ever with the offshore lighthouse at Wolf Rock as the Lizard's adult male '**Splat**' turned up snoozing there. On 25th March,

we were gobsmacked to discover during a single survey, at a single site on one day, seals that had previously been identified across **Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset, England, Wales, France and Ireland!** The emphasised the importance of a **network of joined up sites** being essential for the survival of this species.

In April we were sad to record the death of adult male **'Eight Horns'**, a seal known to have linked sites as distant as north Devon and St Austell Bay, RIP big man. To put a smile back on our faces, ex entangled adult male **'Kettle'** who we have known since 2003 returned to West Cornwall and was seen sparring with the much younger adult male **'Cat'** after a longer than usual absence.

By May our event season was well underway and Septimus went to visit **Mevagissey Museum** where he met lots of classes of school children. Thanks to everyone who made this possible. A **welsh satellite tagged seal** was photographed at North Cornwall where he seems to have journeyed from Pembrokeshire, before surprising us all by swimming straight back there. Two new seal links were discovered between mainland Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in the form of **'Frog Mouth'** and tagged seal **'Wolf'**. Sadly however, the month ended with British Divers Marine Life Rescue recording the worst ever entangled seal at Trebarwith Strand.

June was celebrated with two great IDs – adult female **'Cable car'** (an entangled seal) still going strong. She has only been identified 23 times across 4 sites in the 16 years we have known her since her first ID in 2003. For the first time our volunteers have been able to effectively survey offshore islands at Pendeen, and were rewarded by an ID of adult male **'White ring teddie stripes'** – his 5th ID site.

Bristol Science Museum was Septimus destination in July, whilst living adult male seal **'Flying bird'** put in only his fourth appearance on Cornwall's south coast in 18 years! He seems to prefer it there now, as he has not yet returned to his usual haunts on the north coast. Beautiful adult female **'Angel'** was identified at an offshore site near Trevose, which was her 21st appearance in 6 years. This is the fourth time she has stopped off here to rest on her commute between the West and North Cornwall sites.

'Tulip belle' is a stunner and in August she amazed the seal world as we discovered not only had we known her since 2001, but that she had routinely visited the **Isle of Man 450km away** and where she had pups in 2012, 2013, 2016 and 2018! But it was back to reality with a bump, as we had photographs of adult female **'Trunk'** being hooked for the fourth time just this summer, as an indirect result of people feeding her in Newquay Harbour.

September saw us **exhuming Augusta** and she was methodically processed by the incredible John Pethick before being taken up to Kings Langley by Rose Summers and Joe Gray. Pup season started in earnest and detailed records have been kept around the county as well as during our **5 week Septimus exhibition on Lundy Island**. Highlights of the visit included identifying adult female **'Hedge'** and 3 adult males – **'Cat'**, **'Wolf eyes'** and **'Heart BB'** – all from West Cornwall. Despite her painful entanglements, we were delighted to finally discover where **'Trunk'** (who we've known since 2003) has her pups. By the end of the month we had identified two dead young adult seals – ex rehabilitated female **'Boo'** and all wild male **'Fright night'**. We continue to wonder why so many of our identified dead seals are in their early teens.

There was a another shock in store for us in October as Rupert Kirkwood photographed a common seal in the Fowey – this turned out to be an ex rehabilitated seal called **'Micky'** from Holland! In

peak pupping season, we celebrated the return of adult female '**Ghost**' (after her worrying absence in 2018) as she returned to have her 16th pup in 17 years on exactly the same beach. Still a world record breaking achievement to the best of our knowledge! Other highlights included the entertaining juvenile male '**Nudger**' originating on the Lizard, moving onto Looe and now the Roseland. Adult female '**Lightning**' who has mostly been identified in Looe and who had pupped on the north coast in 2009, suddenly appeared after a storm with a pup in Mullion Harbour on the south coast – she has obviously not read her pupping handbook! We had more excitement as Dorset Wildlife Trust revealed that adult female '**Gambolling lamb**' had returned to Portland from Cornwall.

November and December revealed more interesting seal stories as ex rehab seals '**Skoda**' and '**Coyote**' were photographed off Lundy. Ex rehab young adult female '**Orion**' was videoed demonstrating adolescent 'crazy girl' behaviour that we think might be linked to hormonal changes as she matures. Sadly, we lost adult male '**Arc dot**' who was found dead at Widemouth, but we took some solace from the fact that '**Tulip belle**' had become a national celebrity seal!



2019 was a rollercoaster year with numerous highs and lows for seals and a landmark year for CSGRT and our ability to gather all the hard-won data to make these detailed

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Jan												2	2	4	2	1	1	2	5	19
Feb								2	1				2	2	2	1	1	2		13
Mar							1					1	2	1			1	3		9
Apr							1	1					1			2		2	1	8
May							1									1				2
Jun								1						1						2
Jul										1	1									2
Aug							2	2	3							1		1		9
Sep								2	1			1				1		2		5
Oct												2	2			3		7		0
Nov	1											2	2							1
Dec													2							0
	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	8	5	1	1	6	11	8	4	10	3	19	6	70

stories possible. We cannot do this without all our combined efforts, so we are hugely grateful to every one of our 376 volunteers who have submitted this critical data in 2019!

Thank you all! Here's to an exciting 2020!

Seals and People Achievements (to June 2020)

Surveys 2020

1364 in database - Jan:332 Feb:236 Mar:286 Apr:312 May:181 including once in a lifetime baseline data of what 'no disturbance' looks like at 4 seal sites.

First Devon/Dorset seal link



Photo ID

New Photo ID Coordinator (Kate Williams) and new Photo ID systems (sightings@cornwallsealgroup.co.uk)

Remote access to network for Rangers and Volunteers

Engagement 2020

Talks / Conferences	15
Workshops / Training	22
Conference Calls / Meetings	111
Stalls / Events	6
PIP's / Surveys	1
Media	26
Reports	9
Social Media Totals	317



(**Online talks** for Maritime UK (2); Cornwall Marine Academy, Seaquest SW and **Remote talk**: University of Exeter)

Awards and recognition

Soroptimist: nominations for Kate Hockley and Sue Sayer

Women in Science and Engineering: Sue Sayer and Katie Bellman



Resources

Augusta skeleton: 3 day old seal pup (stark contrast to Septimus)

VR experience: #SeptimusSomeSeal

Wild Seal Supporter (with quarterly updates);

Corporate Sponsor schemes and **Online Shop**



Links with Artists

Sarah Bell: Watercolour cards of CSGRT named seals

Jackson Foundation: Spectacular Seal Day

Lindsey Keates: Heartlands Exhibition

Reports

Natural England: Monitoring grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) pupping sites in Cornwall 2019/2020

SW Marine Ecosystems: Somerset to Dorset (including Ireland and Channel Isles)



CSGRT/CMCCG: Tourism based human activity and seal interactions in Cornwall 2019

Marine Mammal Science Journal: Post release monitoring paper in review

The image shows the 'Marine Mammal Science' logo and a table of contents for a journal. The table lists various articles and their authors.

1. Introduction
2. The first 100 years of marine mammal research: a review of the literature
3. The first 100 years of marine mammal research: a review of the literature
4. The first 100 years of marine mammal research: a review of the literature
5. The first 100 years of marine mammal research: a review of the literature
6. The first 100 years of marine mammal research: a review of the literature
7. The first 100 years of marine mammal research: a review of the literature
8. The first 100 years of marine mammal research: a review of the literature
9. The first 100 years of marine mammal research: a review of the literature
10. The first 100 years of marine mammal research: a review of the literature

Actions

Clean up: Removal of yellow buoys (large and small) from West Cornwall Haul out) with BDMLR and NT

Monthly meetings: Went virtual in April (Newsletter recipients get presentation and live Zoom delivery)

Strategic meetings: Seal Network UK meeting and Seal Alliance meeting

Statutory link ups: Potting referral to IFCA, NE and MMO (W and N Cornwall disturbance within SSSIs)

Major consultations: Marine Spatial Planning and Climate Change Development Plan Document

University of Exeter: Visiting Researcher status

European Cetacean and Society of Marine Mammology Conference Barcelona

Lucky Bunting's story from monitoring to rescue and post release ongoing life story



Radio and TV coverage

PEG Newsletter: Legs entanglement

Radio Four Nature Table: Elephant's seal skull

Countryfile: Looe 100th survey in 11 years!

Springwatch: Disturbance key messaging – link from survey, through disturbance events to impacts (Septimus)



Challenges

Funding Rangers Sept 2020+

Shooting (St Ives Bay)

Disturbance

Concerns about pox

Coming up

20th birthday virtual conference - Sharing our Seas: Seals and People

36560 surveys; 1,003,507 photos and 72,127+ IDs

From **27th June** we'll be releasing **daily talks** on our YouTube channel and on **4th July** there will be **live Q&A** sessions with experts. For more information visit:

[YouTube \(Search Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust\)](#)

[Eventbrite \(Search Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust\)](#)

Crowdfunder

To fund a Marine Conservation Ranger for a year - launch shortly after conference



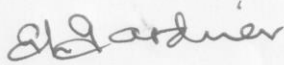
Cornwall Seal Group

GLT Services

Accountancy & Bookkeeping
18 Meadowside Close
Hayle, TR27 4JL

I have examined the receipts and payments and found them to give a true and fair view of the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2020 of the Cornwall Seal Group Main Account.

Gillian Gardiner



25 August 2020

Cornwall Seal Group

Statement of Accounts on Transactions For the Year Ended 31 March 2020 Main Account

INCOME	
Talk Fees & Expenses Claimed	1,146.99
Merchandise Sales	5,754.31
Adoptions	457.50
Donations & Fund Raising	12,957.68
Contracts (World Animal Protection & Natural England)	15,140.00
Grants	77,519.00
Boat Donations	1,425.00

TOTAL INCOME	114,400.48
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EXPENDITURE	
Boat Charter	10,586.30
Report Writing & Photo ID	900.00
Merchandise Purchases	4,507.04
Printing, Stationary, Postage, Storage Boxes & Branded Clothing	6,571.41
Contracts (World Animal Protection & Natural England)	13,870.00
Sea Ranger - Marion Beaulieu	12,770.00
Sanctuaries at Sea Ranger (Sarah Millward)	8,570.00
Creativity & Activity Ranger (Emily Pollitt)	17,350.00
Research Ranger (Katie Bellman)	12,520.00
Other Expenses	21,580.39

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	109,225.14
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SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	5,175.34
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Represented By:

Lloyds Bank opening balance for year (1/4/19)	18,804.72
Lloyds Bank closing balance for year (31/3/20)	28,140.62
Paypal opening balance for the year	5,114.93
Paypal closing balance for year	954.37