

What is PAW NI?

The Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime NI (PAW NI) brings together statutory agencies, non-statutory agencies & interested parties with the common goal of combating wildlife crime through publicity, education and campaigning. PAW NI partners include key government Departments, PSNI and other enforcement agencies, environmental organisations, animal welfare groups and country sports associations.

Further information:

WiSe Scheme

www.wisescheme.org

Wildlife Crime Northern Ireland

www.wildlifecrimeni.org

Basking Shark Code

www.sharktrust.org/en/baskingsharkresources

Scottish Natural Heritage

www.marinecode.org/documents/scottishmarine-code-web.pdf

The Marine Management Organisation

www.gov.uk/government/news/how-to-watchmarine-wildlife-responsibly

The Green Blue

www.thegreenblue.org.uk/Boat-Users/Wildlife



Reporting a wildlife crime

If you see anyone intentionally or recklessly injuring, disturbing or harassing marine wildlife, the incident should be reported.



Information should be passed immediately to the PSNI*. Call 101.

- Describe your call as a wildlife crime report;
- Give details of the (potential) crime;
- Ask for an incident reference number;
- Retain incident number and date.

*Information can also be given anonymously via Crimestoppers.

You can also report a marine wildlife crime to:



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Email: Marine.Wildlife@daera-ni.gov.uk

Telephone: 028 9056 9262



WATCH OUT FOR WILDLIFE CRIME



Alain Le Garsmeur

MARINE WILDLIFE DISTURBANCE



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www.wildlifecrimeni.org



PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION AGAINST
wildlife crime

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Law

Certain species are protected by international, European and national legislation throughout the UK. Offences can include intentional or reckless disturbance, taking, harming and killing and in some cases possession or sale of the species.

Protected marine species include basking shark, whales, dolphins, porpoise and seals.

What is disturbance?

Disturbance is when interaction with people changes the behaviour of an animal or changes its environment, which impacts its well-being or survival.

The effects of disturbance can be especially critical during sensitive times, such as feeding, breeding or resting.

Disturbance is likely to cause avoidance reactions; it may result in interruptions of social behaviour of animals and unfortunately it is capable of leading to long-term changes in distribution.

How does this affect you?

When you are out and about by the coast you should be aware of the impact you may be having on marine wildlife.

Marine wildlife may be scared or startled by sudden movements, engine noises or changes in boat speed or course. If an animal changes its behaviour as a result of your presence then you may have disturbed it.

Signs of disturbance

SEALS Heads up looking at you, shuffling or stampeding into the sea, hissing or snarling, crash or splash dives.



BASKING SHARK

Animals cease to feed (mouth closes), tail lashing, sudden changes of direction, sinking from the surface.

WHALES, DOLPHINS, PORPOISES

Sudden and erratic movements, bunching together, repeated head or tail slaps, changes in diving/surfacing patterns or increase in swimming speed.



What can you do?

At the coast -

- Do not chase, touch or feed marine wildlife. Avoid seal haul-out sites; observe seals from a distance and especially avoid groups of mothers and pups.
- If you come across an abandoned seal pup which is obviously injured, sick or distressed, contact **Exploris** (Tel. 028 4272 8062). If you encounter seals be prepared to move away slowly and quietly.
- Keep pets under control. It is best to keep dogs on a lead in areas where seals are hauled out. If you find a whale, dolphin or porpoise stranded on the beach contact the **Portrush Coastal Zone** (Tel. 028 7082 3600).

On the sea - If on a wildlife tour, choose an operator accredited by the WiSe Scheme (Wildlife Safe). Boats/kayaks must keep their distance and allow for an obvious escape route for animals.

Be aware if paddling or rowing that a silent approach may startle wildlife more. Animals should not be pursued in the water and never approached head on.

Boat movements should be constant, steady and predictable. If an animal approaches, maintain a parallel course to it. Never cut across or go through a group.

In the sea - Let any wildlife encounter be on their terms. Make sure your movements are steady and predictable; move gently away at the first signs of disturbance.

Take care with your feet or fins. Avoid flash photography.