

Harbor Seal
(*Phoca vitulina*)

ORDER: Carnivora
FAMILY: Phocidae

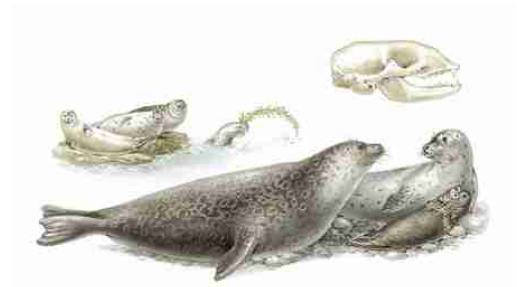
Harbor Seals live near coastlines and eat a highly varied seafood diet, depending on what is available. They can dive as deep as 450 m and stay under for almost half an hour, but six-minute dives to depths of 30–100 m are more usual. Females usually have one pup a year, and two weeks after the pup is born, mate again. The fertilized egg stays dormant in the uterus for up to three months before it implants in the uterine wall and begins to grow. This is called delayed implantation. Total gestation, including the period of delay, lasts 8–9 months. Instead of being born with the white coat typical of most seals in the family Phocidae, the pups often molt before birth, shedding the very soft white or pale gray coat called a lanugo while they are still in the uterus. Like dogs, Harbor Seals can suffer from heartworm. The disease has been found in North American and European populations.

Also known as:
Common Seal

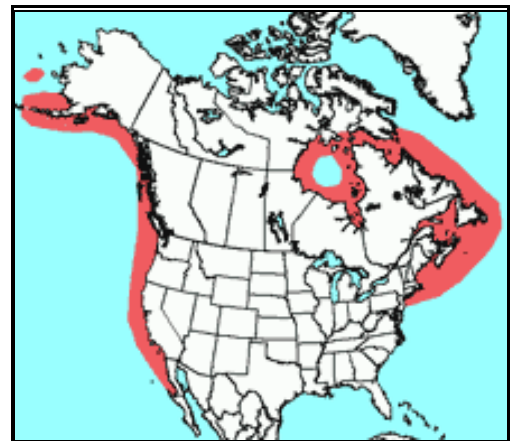
Sexual Dimorphism:
Males are slightly larger than females.

Length:
Average: 1.8 m males; 1.5 m females

Weight:
Average: 130 kg males; 105 kg females



Phoca vitulina – female and pup (right) with male (left); young females in background
Credit: painting by Sandra Doyle/Wildlife Art Ltd. from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)



FIELD NOTES

DATE: _____ LOCATION: _____
