

Harbor Seal



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DID YOU KNOW?



The harbor seal's scientific name, *phoca vitulina*, means "sea dog," so called because they make a barking noise to communicate with each other. They are related to sea lions and walruses.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?



Fish make up the main diet of a harbor seal, but they have been known to eat squid, shrimp, crab, and other **crustaceans** and **mollusks**. They can dive 500 feet in search of food, and occasionally attack and eat ducks.

HOME, SWEET, HOME



Harbor seals can stay out at sea for days at a time, and can hold their breath underwater for up to 15 minutes. In winter, they migrate south to New York City where they can be seen sunning themselves on the rocks in Pelham Bay Park.

Key Words



Crustacean - A type of animal (such as a crab or lobster) that has several pairs of legs and a body made up of sections that are covered in a hard outer shell

Mollusk - Any one of a large group of animals (such as snails and clams) that have a soft body without a backbone and that usually live in a shell

Molt - To lose a covering of hair, feathers, etc., and replace it with new growth in the same place

Gestation - The time when a person or animal is developing inside its mother before it is born



MAKE A DIFFERENCE



When they come up onshore to birth or **molt**, harbor seals can be disturbed by human presence. Make sure you stay at least 150 feet from seals, using binoculars if necessary to view them. Harbor seals can also be affected by oil spills and boating accidents, and can get caught in fishing nets.

OH, BABY!



Mothers give birth to one pup a year after a **gestation** period of nine months, the same as humans! Mothers raise their pup without the help of the father, teaching them to swim and dive within hours of birth.

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