

Cathedral Rocks - Interacting with seals



The Rottnest Island Authority promotes the protection and conservation of the New Zealand fur seals to ensure the survival of these wild animals. Please help us by following these simple rules.

1. Swimming with fur seals can be dangerous

For your safety and the protection of this threatened species, swimming with the seals around Cathedral Rocks is not permitted. Please use the Cathedral Rocks platform provided to view the seals acting naturally in their environment, which provides a safe haven from predators such as great white sharks.

Human disturbance of seals while they are basking (resting on the rocks) or thermo regulating (flipper sailing with one fin in the air) is known to affect population numbers and risk the seals disappearing from the site.

If you are elsewhere around Rottnest Island where being in or on the water is permitted and a seal approaches you closer than 50 metres, move away slowly and get out of the water. Fur seals have inflicted serious injury to people who were trying to get a closer look. This applies whether you are swimming, snorkelling or stand-up paddle boarding.

2. Keep to designated tracks and paths at all times

Remain on the walking tracks and viewing platform provided. These have been installed for your safety and to maintain separation from the seals so they can remain as wild animals.

Walking off the tracks or platform is also prohibited to protect the habitat of breeding seabirds located in this area, such as the Short-Tailed Shearwater. These birds dig nesting burrows in the ground which can collapse if walked over, trapping and suffocating the birds.

3. Boating and other water activities

If you are water based, please remember that all vessels must remain at least 100 metres away from marine wildlife at all times. The entire area around Cathedral Rocks is a marine sanctuary zone where interference with wildlife is an offence with fines of up to \$5,000.

4. Take your rubbish home with you

Rubbish and debris can be dangerous to seals with potential to cause death from entanglement or ingestion of plastic. Keep them safe by taking your rubbish home with you or putting it in the bins provided on the Island.

5. Respect the animals and they will tolerate your presence

It is very easy to photograph and enjoy the fur seals in a safe manner, without disturbing them. Don't make excessive noise, enter the water or throw anything to try to get their attention. Be responsible and the opportunity to enjoy interacting with the fur seals will remain for future generations.