

For Creative Minds

This section may be photocopied or printed from our website by the owner of this book for educational, non-commercial use. Visit www.ArbordalePublishing.com to explore all the resources supporting this book.

Thinking it Through



Looking at this sea lion's face, can you describe what features it has in common with your face?

Which direction do your nostrils face? What about a seal's nostrils? Why do you think a seal is different from us in that way?

Both seals and sea lions have flippers to help them swim through the water.

Have you ever used flippers to help you swim? If so, did it help?

What would you use to help you see underwater?

How would you keep water out of your nose when swimming?

How do you breathe while swimming?

How would you describe the body shape of a seal or sea lion?

How does this body shape help them live in the ocean?

When a seal grunts or makes any sound towards another seal, what do you think are some things they might be trying to communicate?

In the past, people hunted seals and sea lions for their fur—which is why some eared seals are called fur seals. After hundreds of years of hunting, some species were in danger of becoming extinct.

In 1972 the United States government passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act. This act includes laws to protect marine mammals from being hunted, captured, hurt, or harassed.

What are some things you can do to help seals and sea lions?

What kind of career do you think you would need to have to help people understand that some animals need special protection?



Fun Facts



Elephant seals can hold their breath for two hours and can dive as deep as 5,000 feet or 1,500 meters!

How long can you hold your breath?

Adult male hooded seals have a red “hood” in their nose that they can blow up like a balloon. This is one way they can attract a female.



When a seal sleeps vertically in the water it is called “bottling.”

Why do you think this behavior is called that?



Baby harp seals have white fur for two-to-three weeks before changing to silver-gray fur.



On land, earless seals look like they are doing a “banana pose.”

What does the shape of this pose remind you of?

On land, sea lions often use a “yoga pose.” It’s nice to have a good stretch.



A mother New Zealand fur seal can find her pup on a crowded beach by their “bark” and smell.

Would someone recognize your voice in a crowd?



Baikal seals are the only seals that live in freshwater.

They are found in Lake Baikal in Siberia, Russia.

Eared Seal or Earless Sea Lion? Identification

Using what you learned in this book, see if you can identify which are “earless” or “true” seals and which are “eared” sea lions?

bearded ?

1



California ?

2



gray ?

3



harbor ?

4



harp ?

5



hooded ?

6



spotted ?

7



Steller ?

8



Weddell ?

9



Answers: 1-seal (earless); 2-sea lion (eared), 3-seal (earless), 4-seal (earless), 5-seal (earless), 6-seal (earless), 7-seal (earless), 8-sea lion (eared), 9-seal (earless)

Positive Reinforcement Training

Seals and sea lions are very smart and love to learn. Training them is not just for fun. When in a zoo, or aquarium, they need to be able to open their mouth to have their teeth brushed or to lie still when the veterinarian comes for an exam.

Have you ever helped to train a dog to sit or lie down? It takes a lot of time and patience to train an animal to do a specific behavior. Humans might use words and hand signals to help train animals.

During a training session, a seal or sea lion may be asked to do a variety of behaviors. When they've done a behavior correctly, they receive a tasty fish or squid. This is called positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement could also be their trainer excitedly saying, "good job!" Everyone likes to know that they are doing things well.

Do you ever get positive reinforcement for good behavior? What and why?

Which of these images show positive reinforcement training and which shows why the animal has been trained?



Answers: 1-training; 2-why; 3-training; 4-could be either; 5-could be either; 6-training