

Project: To quantify the level of human disturbance to grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) hauled out on the islet of Kitterland, Isle of Man, and to provide recommendations for their future management to the Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Isle of Man Government

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This project lasted for 9 weeks during the summer of 2007. The place of study was an islet on the Sound, a channel separating the Isle of Man from the Calf of Man in the extreme south-west of the country. This part of the island is an area of outstanding natural beauty, with high sea cliffs and an abundance of marine wildlife including birds such as choughs and puffins as well as regular sightings of porpoises, dolphins and basking sharks. It is also an area

popular with boating enthusiasts, attracting various types of craft including jetskis. As the channel is narrow, this leads to disturbance of the seals that use the islet as a place of rest.

To measure the impact of disturbance, a study was undertaken to compare undisturbed patterns of behaviour against disturbed patterns. Data was collected on the rate of haul-out and return, together with boating activity and other related variables such as weather, wind direction and sea surface conditions.



To support the findings, a consultation was undertaken with members of the public and with government departments, agencies and marine enterprises to assess the overall perception of the problem, the level of understanding on how to approach seals and the degree of acceptance for change.

A final requirement was to initiate a photo-identification library of seal profiles.