

Australian Fur Seal



Foundation for
National Parks
& Wildlife

Backyard Buddies is a free education program run by the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife. It gives you simple tips to transform your backyard into a safe and inviting habitat haven.

The Australian fur seal is the most common seal in Tasmanian waters: however it is the fourth rarest seal species in the world.



It would be pretty alarming to wake up to find a fur seal in your backyard, but they are our ocean buddies.

They live around Bass Strait, Tasmania, southern Victoria and southern South Australia but can venture as far north as NSW.

They spend most of their time in the sea and come ashore to breed on rocky islands and beaches.

Fur seals are excellent swimmers, but they can also get around out of the water by raising the front of their body onto their front flippers.

The males and females are physically quite different although they all have big heads, pointy faces with big eyes and long whiskers and very sharp teeth, like a dog's.

A thick layer of fat helps them keep warm in the frigid ocean.

The males are larger than the females and can weigh up to 350kg. Males are usually brown or dark grey and have a coarse mane on their neck and shoulders.

Females weigh up to 120kg and are more slender and a silvery grey colour with a brown underside.

Fur seals have a dense coat of two layers – a wool-like underfur and long, coarse outer hairs. This double layer traps air which waterproofs and insulates the seal.

All seals moult each year, replacing their old fur with new growth.

What is a backyard buddy?

Backyard buddies are the native animals that share our built-up areas, our beaches and waterways, our backyards and our parks. The fur seal is a backyard buddy.

Backyard buddies are also the local people who value the living things around them and are willing to protect and encourage them by doing a few simple things around their own homes.

So you can be a backyard buddy.

It's easy. All you have to do is care... and take a few simple steps.

Step one is to find out what fur seals do and do not like.

Australian fur seals love:

- **The ocean** – they spend most of their lives at sea and rely on an environment with plentiful fish.
- **Squid** – they can dive to depths of 200m to find their favourite snack.

But they don't like:

- **Garden pesticides** – these contaminate their habitat and food sources.
- **Competition** – commercial fishing upsets the natural fish population numbers and makes it difficult for fur seals to find reliable hunting grounds.
- **Nets and fishing lines** – if they get caught in these, it can lead to death.

EXPLORE:

Australian Fur Seal

www.backyardbuddies.org.au
www.facebook.com/backyardbuddies

Be a buddy to the Australian fur seal

Try to:

- limit your use of plastic – seals can be entangled in non-biodegradable items like plastic bags which find their way into our oceans.
- keep pesticides and chemicals out of your garden – the runoff can pollute seal habitat and food sources.

Avoid:

- approaching fur seals – especially during breeding season and when pups are around.
- throwing fishing gear and other rubbish into the ocean.
- releasing chemicals in waterways – most of them lead eventually to the ocean.

Don't be surprised if:

- you find a group of seals sunning themselves on a rocky beach – they are very social animals.
- they are gathered in a large group, roaring and growling – the males are vying for female attention.
- they have ears – unlike other seals, fur seals have external ears.

Did you know:

- Seals have a layer of fat under their skin called blubber, which keeps them warm in cold water.
- Seals can sleep underwater.

Find out more about your own backyard buddies

VISIT:

www.backyardbuddies.org.au

www.facebook.com/backyardbuddies

CALL:

1800 283 343 to purchase a Backyard Buddy toy. The proceeds go to threatened species conservation programs.

READ:

You can receive an email about animals you're likely to see in your backyard with tips on how to make your backyard friendly for them. It's called B-mail and it's free. All you have to do is sign up on our website.



Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife

Entanglement in marine debris is a constant threat to seals and other marine animals.



Contact us: (02) 9221 1949
fnpw@fnpw.org.au
GPO Box 2666 Sydney NSW 2001

www.fnpw.org.au