

# County Coastal Collaboration – A Review of the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group



Cornwall Marine  
& Coastal Code  
Group



**Cornwall**  
Wildlife Trust

**Creating a Cornwall**  
where nature thrives

Coastal recreational activities have increased over the years, which have resulted in an increase in the pressure put upon our already stretched coastline.

Areas that were once inaccessible are now accessible via popular activities and sports such as kayaking, coasteering and power boating.



Seabirds disturbed from nesting sites  
Seals flushed from resting haul outs  
Cetacean chased from feeding grounds

A photograph of a whale breaching the surface of the ocean. The water is a deep blue with white foam from the whale's splash. A semi-transparent white text box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing a list of impacts. The whale's back and tail are visible above the water.

Abandonment

Vulnerability to predation

Loss of energy

Disruption to behaviour

Collision and injury

Death

The Impact



- Increase awareness
- A panel of experts
- Develop resources
- Monitor disturbance

# Resources and Materials

- Website;
  - Code
  - Leaflet
  - Online map
- Business card
- Web text & Pptx slide



**LEARN : SEE : REPORT**  
 Making your marine and coastal encounter great for wildlife - putting wildlife first!

**Cornwall Marine & Coastal Code Group**

**Aim: to minimize the effect to marine and coastal wildlife from encounters with people.**

*Please note this is work in progress and is regularly reviewed in the light of feedback received.*

Cornwall's coastal and marine wildlife, so essential to our economy, is under pressure from climate change, habitat loss, less available food, pollution and human activity...it needs our help and respect!

**Key messages:**

- **Learn: find out first.** Learn as much as you can about what wildlife you might see where and know the best way to act around it. This will help you improve your chances of great sightings.
- **See: be alert** whilst out and about. Act appropriately and aim to leave wildlife as you found it.
- **Report: see the big picture.** Understand that our coastal and marine wildlife has numerous encounters with people. Tell us about your sighting and any disturbance you see.

**Content of document:** (Dark blue boxes contain essential information)

PAGE	
2	Guiding principles - What you can do to help
3	Signs of disturbance and actions that scare, startle and panic wildlife
4	At the coast - Guidelines
5	On the sea - Guidelines
6	In the sea - Guidelines
7	Guidelines for operators and definition of disturbance
8	Birds
11	Seals
13	Dolphins, porpoises and whales
16	Basking sharks
20	Turtles



## Wildlife Watching

**Keep your distance!** Be cautious and quiet. Look for signs wildlife has spotted you. Be prepared to back off or take an alternative route

**Never follow, chase or feed marine life**

**It is not recommended to purposely snorkel, dive or swim with large marine animals** except with an approved operator

**Keep away from large groups of animals, hauled seals and sensitive areas such as breeding sites**

**Never touch or feed wild animals**

**What is disturbance?** Disturbance is when people change an animal's behaviour or its environment, affecting its wellbeing or survival prospects. Always keep an eye out for signs you are disturbing wildlife.

**Making marine encounters great for wildlife and great for you!**

Make sure your craft's movements are **constant, steady and predictable**

**Cornwall Marine & Coastal Code Group**

**"Please don't disturb us or damage our marine and coastal homes..."**

- Learn
- See
- Respect
- Report

**To find out how to have great wildlife encounters without causing harm, please visit**

[www.cornwallmarinelifecode.org.uk](http://www.cornwallmarinelifecode.org.uk)

**Marine Animal Emergency Response Contacts**

To report any wildlife disturbance or harassment please call the **Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group 24 hour disturbance hotline 0345 2012626**

A verbal report should be supported with video footage and/or photographic evidence if possible

If you find dead marine animals please call Cornwall Wildlife Trust immediately on **0345 2012626**

If you find a live, stranded animal in difficulty please call British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) immediately on **01825 765546**

Send your marine sightings and records to [www.marinedatacornwall.org](http://www.marinedatacornwall.org)

[www.cornwallmarinelifecode.org.uk](http://www.cornwallmarinelifecode.org.uk)

Funded by



# Active Engagement

- Events and information evenings
- Wise courses
- Specific training

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## Respond to issues

- Approaching business from partnership
- Wildlife Crime report

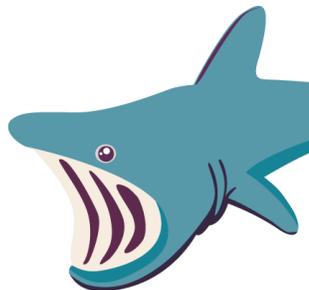


# Policy and campaigns

- Seal Alliance
- Defra's Marine & Coastal Wildlife Code
- Operation Seabird
- NE Marine Mammal Working Group
- Rude to Intrude
- Mitigation - G7 Wildlife Mitigation Working Group



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# Marine Disturbance Hotline

**0345 2012626**

24 hours a day  
7 days a week  
365 days in a year

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Single point of contact for all reports of marine and coastal disturbance

0345 201 2626

Public passes information to hotline

Database held by hotline coordinator with information on :

- Date and time of event
- Specific location
- Information about the species and number of animals involved
- Activity causing disturbance
- Severity
- Affect on species
- Actions and outcomes

Date of incident	Location	Latitude	Longitude	Reporter's name and contact	Animal group affected	Species	Number	Disturbance Type (Observed / Perceived / Potential)	Level (1: Limited / 2: Severe but not illegal / 3: potentially illegal)	Witness account	Cause	Details of who was involved	Affect on species	Notes	Site owner	Designation

Cause	Details
Aircraft (helicopter, plane, glider, microlight)	
Angler(s)	
Boat (fishing)	
Boat (leisure)	
Boat (tripper)	
Coastal user/walker(s)	
Coasteering	
Dog/Dog walker(s)	

Affect on species	Notes
Abandonment of nest/young	
Dispersed/scattered pod	
Displaced from area	
Displacement or crach dive L3	
Distress/abnormal behaviour	
Injury and/or death	
Multiple	
None observed	

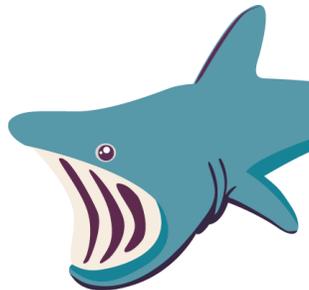
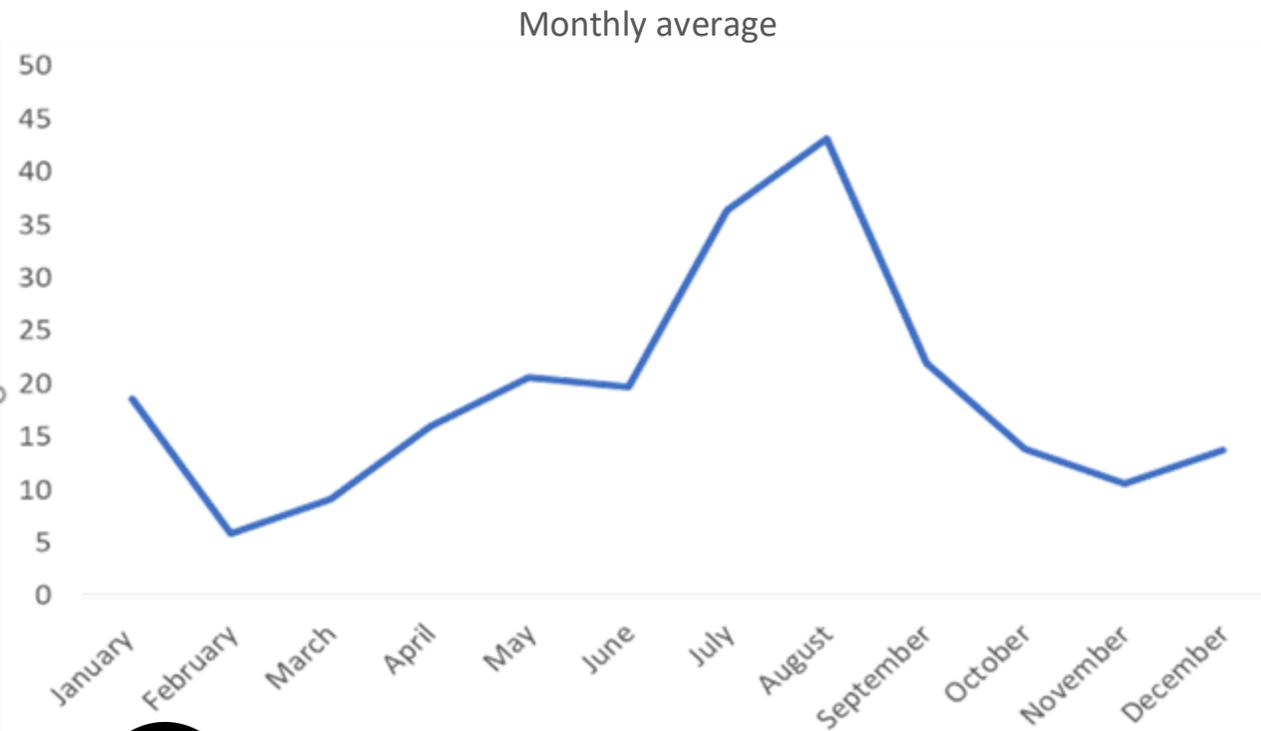


Fig 2. Monthly average of reported marine wildlife disturbance events in Cornwall between 2014-2020. Reports increase steadily from February to June. There is then a steep increase in reports around July and August, during the peak tourist season before decreasing from September onwards.



Number of disturbance events

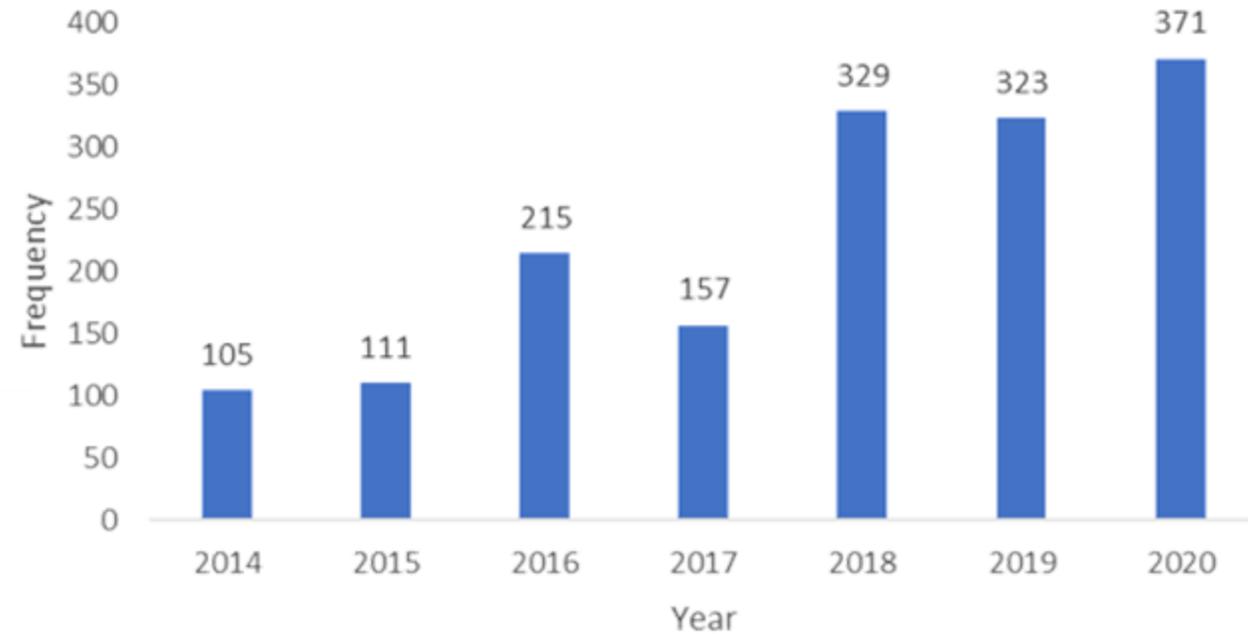
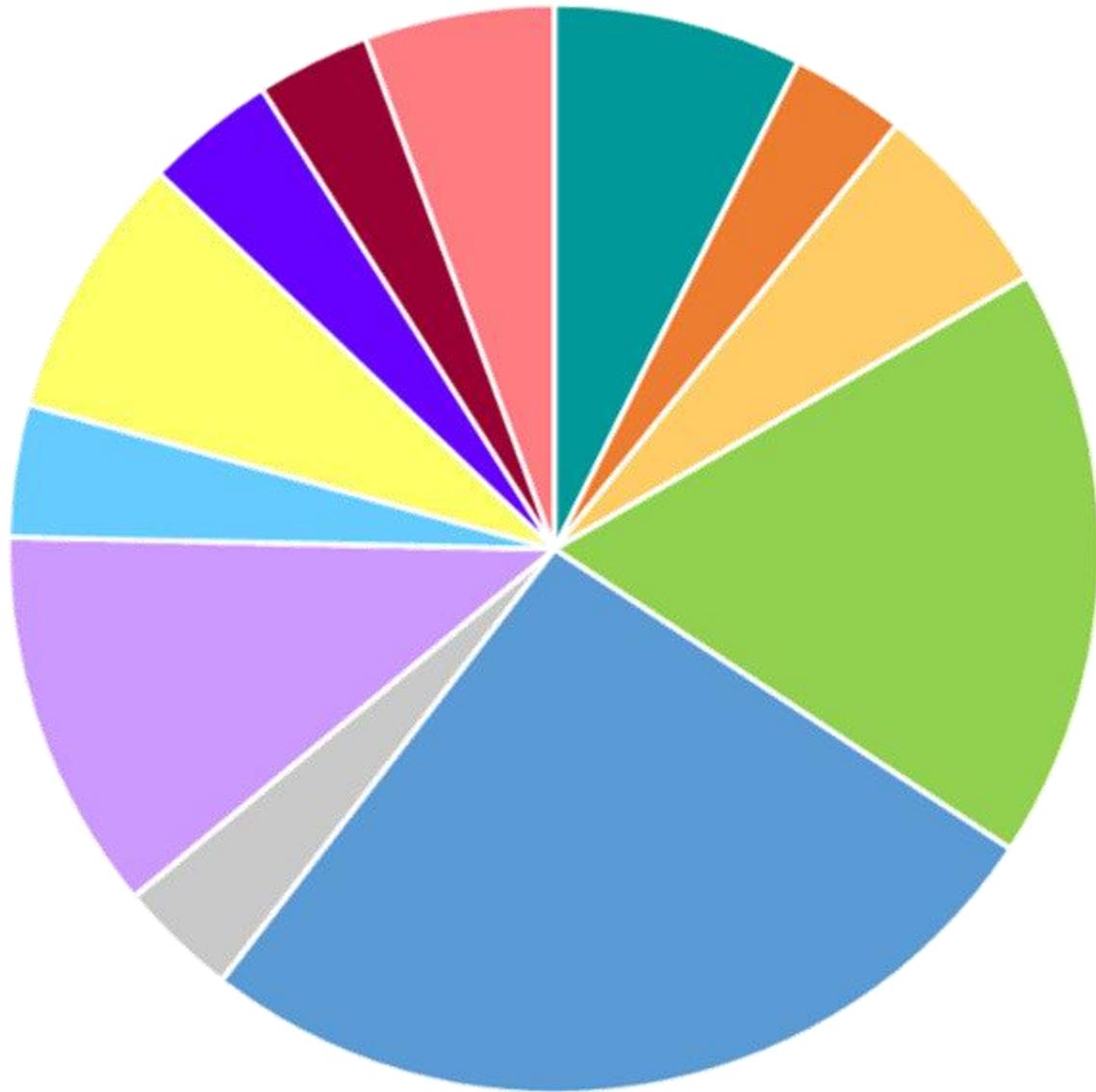


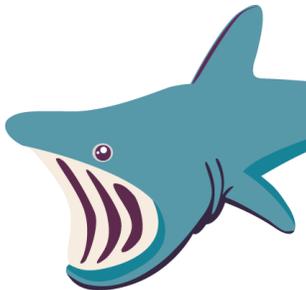
Fig 1. Frequency of reported marine wildlife disturbance events in Cornwall between 2014-2020. Reports have increased over time, likely due to increased public awareness and recording effort, which is reflected in the rise in incidents.

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- Aircraft (helicopter, plane, glider, microlight)
- Boat (fishing)
- Boat (leisure)
- Boat (tripper)
- Coastal user/walker(s)
- Jetski(s)
- Paddle sports
- Natural disturbance
- Other
- Surveyor(s)
- Swimmer(s)/snorkeller(s)/surfer(s)
- Unknown



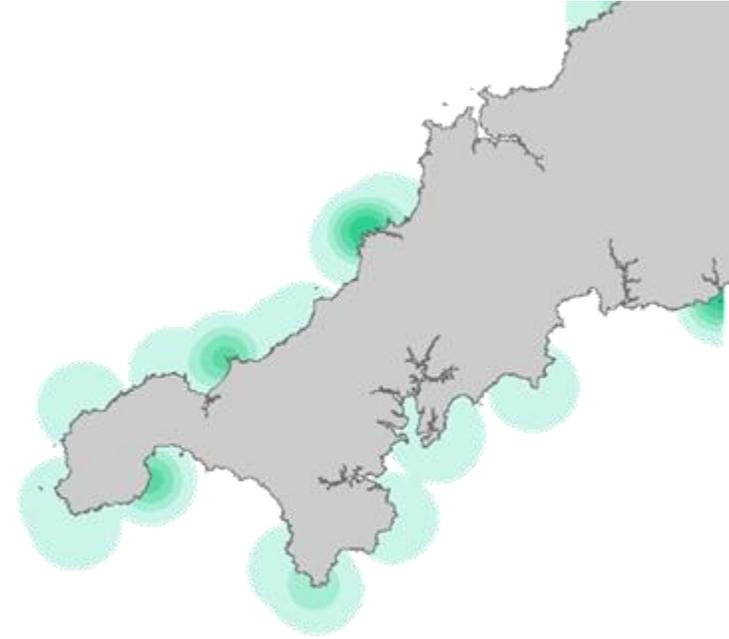
## 1. Coastal user/walker

This includes cliff and coastal walkers, dog walkers and people on the beach. Seals and seabirds are most frequently disturbed by people on the cliffs and on beaches. Three hotspots have been identified in Newquay, St Ives, and the Lizard.



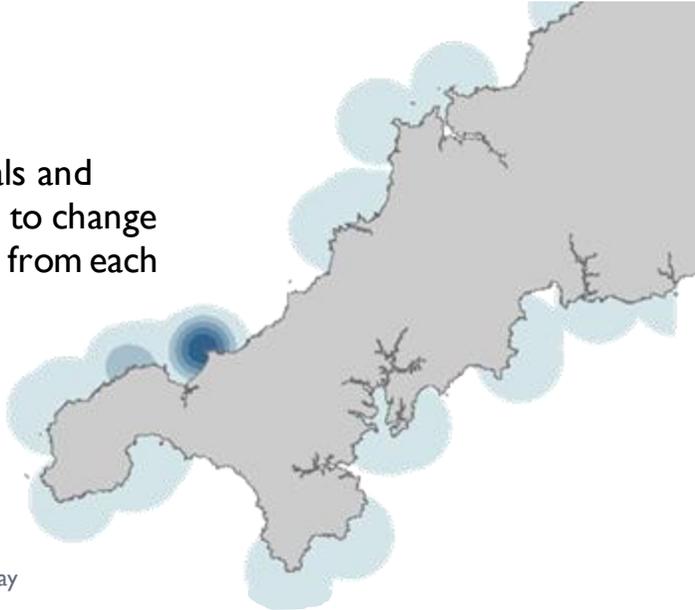
## 2. Paddle sports

This includes kayaks, canoes and paddleboards. Animals are often spooked by these vessels as they do not hear them approaching. Their recent popularity also means that more people are able to access sensitive sites. Hotspots have been identified in Newquay, St Ives, Mounts Bay, and the Lizard.



## 3. Tripper boats

Some tour operators may get too close to hauled out seals and nesting sea birds, or may pursue cetaceans or cause them to change direction, stop feeding, stop resting, or become separated from each other. This is a significant issue in St Ives Bay.



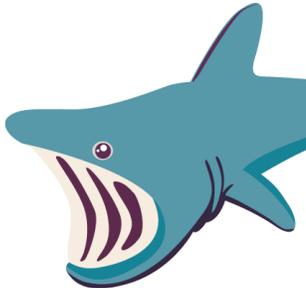
• Newquay

Truro

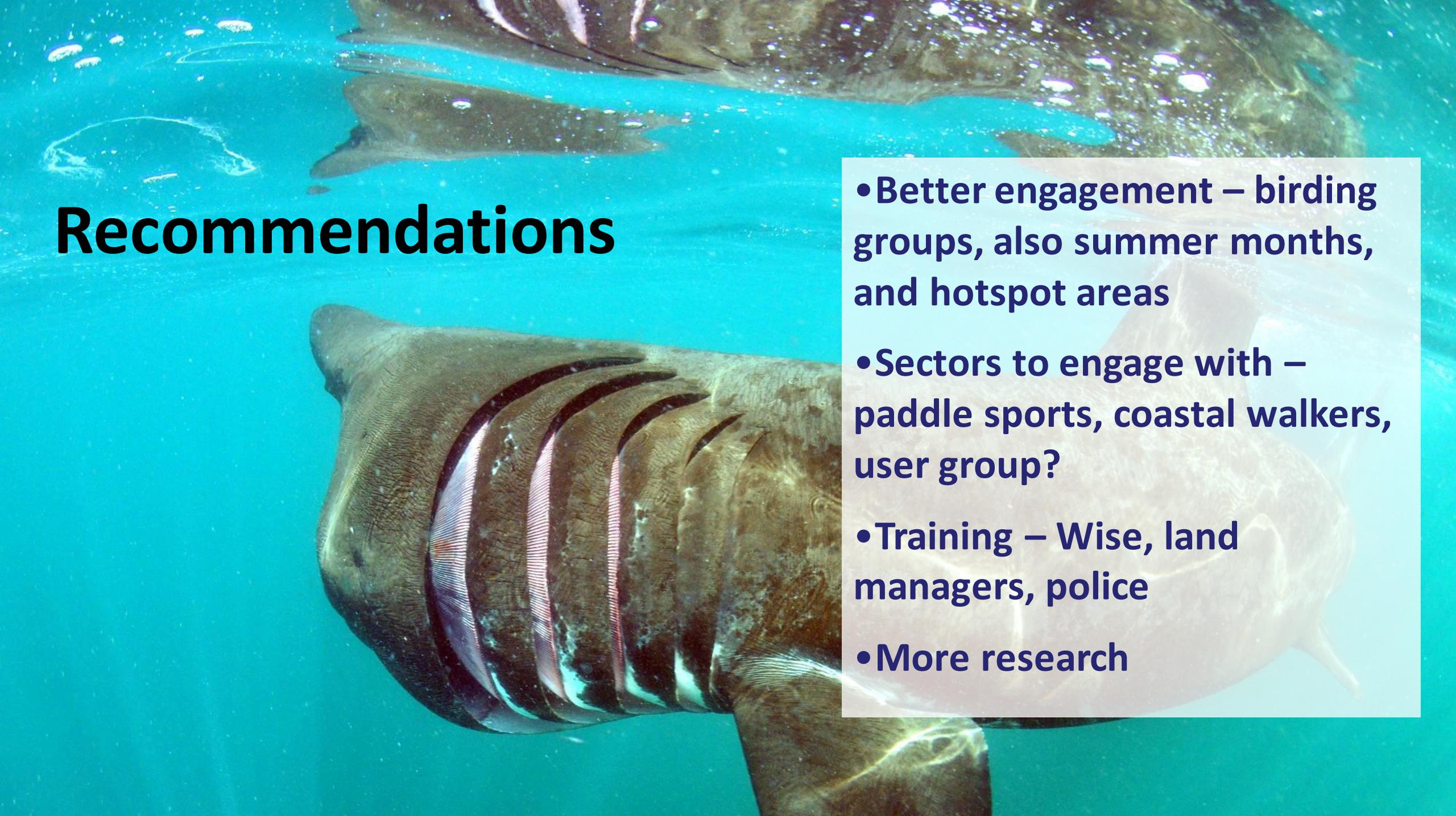


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# Recommendations

An underwater photograph of a shark's head and gills, showing the intricate structure of the gill slits and the surrounding skin. The water is clear and blue, with some light reflections on the shark's body.

- Better engagement – birding groups, also summer months, and hotspot areas
- Sectors to engage with – paddle sports, coastal walkers, user group?
- Training – Wise, land managers, police
- More research

**This report should be used to demonstrate that action is required to mitigate the significant and serious issue of marine and coastal wildlife disturbance across the UK in addition to Cornwall and the South West.**



# Thank you

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