

# Harbour Seal

Scientific name: *Phoca vitulina*

Canadian distribution: Atlantic (*P. v. concolor*),

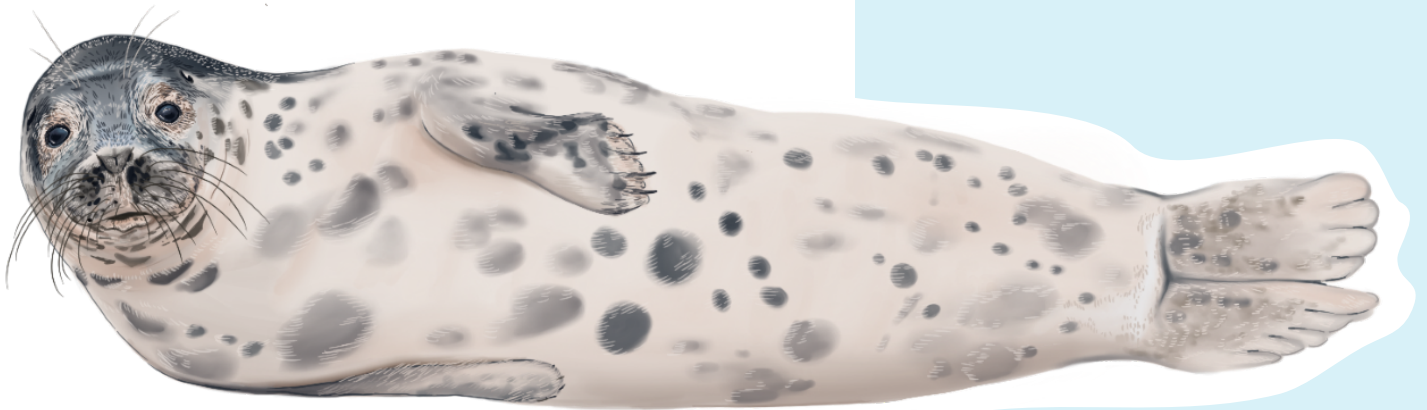
Pacific (*P. v. richardsi*) et Northern Québec (*P. v. mellonae*)

## IN BRIEF

The **subspecies** *P. v. mellonae* is the only strictly freshwater population of harbour seals in the world and is designated as **endangered** in Canada.

The life expectancy is 30 to 35 years for females and 20 to 25 years for males.

The harbour seal feeds abundantly on **fish** (cod, capelin, herring), and **invertebrates**.



## CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change may be creating **new habitat** for harbour seals in the Arctic because, unlike ringed seals, they do not need ice to give birth to their pups.

The incidence of **infectious diseases** could have devastating effects on some populations.

## Northern lexicon

### Marine mammal

**Pinnipeds:** from the Latin *pinna* for fins and *pes* for feet.

Group of aquatic mammals including seals, walruses, and sea lions whose limbs are modified into flippers.

There are **6** species of seals in Canadian waters:

Harp seal, grey seal, hooded seal, harbour seal, ringed seal and bearded seal.

# 480 m

The maximum depth to which it can dive (for 30 minutes!).