

Seal saves drowning dog



Seals live in the open sea and in rocky coastal areas. They eat meat and have sensitive eyes, ears and whiskers that normally help them to detect prey. But the seal described in this surprising incident used its senses to help another creature in distress.



A seal was seen coming to the aid of a drowning dog and pushing it to the safety of a river bank.

Chris Hinds was out walking his own dogs when he saw the Alsatian-cross injured and whimpering at the water's edge. As he approached, it panicked and plunged into the River Tees only to be swept away by the fast-flowing tide on Tuesday evening. Mr Hinds, 43, sent his son Raymond, 18, to call the fire brigade and RSPCA from his mobile phone in his car parked nearby.

He stayed on the bank beneath Newport Bridge, Middlesbrough, to follow the path of the dog. As the dog yelped 30ft out and he shouted, a seal popped up and began to circle the stricken animal. Then to Mr Hinds' amazement it swam up behind the dog and used its nose to push it by the backside on to mudflats.

"I just couldn't believe what was happening in front of my eyes, it was a truly amazing experience I will never forget," said Mr Hinds, of Middlesbrough, who had been out walking his own two dogs. "I thought the dog would die because there was nothing I could do to get to it. When the seal suddenly appeared from nowhere I wondered what it would do. It took a matter of seconds to save the dog. I don't know why the seal did what it did. I can't explain it."

The rescued dog, thought to be aged between five and eight, had a gashed head and an injured rear leg. It had no collar and police are now trying to trace the owner. Sub-officer Mark Baxter of Stockton fire station said: "It is one of the strangest things I have ever heard. By the time we arrived the dog was on dry land and there were three common seals bobbing in the water keeping an eye on him."