



Guidance on Seeking Support from Local Retailers

The UK Seal Alliance Executive, created a Flying Ring Strategy Group (FRSG) to lead the 2025 campaign to reduce the harm caused to seals.

It's an exciting time ahead and one that we can all make a difference and celebrate our success later on this year.

The overall aim of the FRSG is to:

Aim

- To stop the unnecessary harm and suffering inflicted on seals and other marine mammals by entanglement in lost or discarded flying rings.

Objectives

- To raise public awareness of the harm flying rings cause once lost or discarded around our coast and waterways.
- Galvanise all sections of the community including retailers, to act in a positive and supportive way by not using, purchasing or selling flying rings
- Secure government action by gaining sufficient public support by way of a national petition that urges the Government to stop the import and sale of flying rings in the UK.
- Urge the Government to encourage retailers to sell biodegradable solid discs as a safer alternative.
- Seek public support by choosing to buy a non-plastic (preferably biodegradable) flying disc as a safer alternative.
- Gain support amongst local authority councillors across the UK to vote on a voluntary ban on the use, purchase and sale of plastic flying rings within their local authority area.

To achieve success will require a concerted effort across all sections of the community including retailers, suppliers, organisations (both public and private) and the general public to name but a few.

Gaining public support and traction is paramount as recently witnessed in the recent broadcasting of a television docudrama on the plight of the Post Office Sub-Postmasters.

Although this unfortunate situation was in the public domain for many years, it took a television programme to bring it to the fore winning over the hearts and minds of the public.

Public feeling is a powerful tool and can bring about change; we want to replicate that success.

Without you, we cannot protect our seals from the harm and suffering they are currently experiencing.

We recognise that nobody purchases or sells a flying ring with the intention of harming wildlife however, the reality is that many are lost or discarded ending up in the sea posing a danger to seals.

Several major suppliers across the UK have shown great leadership and no longer sell flying rings likewise many smaller retailers have followed suit.

However, we still have some way to go as there are still many retailers out there selling them.

Our aim is to secure their support but how can we do this safely?

With any human interaction you will never be certain the response you could receive. Never ever seek or maintain conflict; it is always wise to withdraw if you feel that a confrontational situation could arise.

Our experience of approaching retailers has in general, been positive but please be aware that a very small percentage of retailers could take umbrage.

You may consider visiting with a colleague should a situation be a negative one.

In any case, a softer and informative approach will be most helpful to all concerned and tends to set a positive atmosphere and environment for a conversation.

Introduce yourselves as taking part in a national campaign to get rid of these items from all retailers across the UK.

Tell them that you are visiting all retailers in the area that sell these and are seeking their support to join the many 100's of retailers that are removing them from sale.

Inform them that many major retailers such as Tesco, Pets at Home, Sainsburys, Asda, Halfords and many more are supporting the campaign.

Tell them it is never your intention to reduce any profit-making opportunity but for them to switch to selling the solid disc alternative instead.

Take with you some photos of seals entangled in flying rings and ask if the retailer would like to see them but please advise them they are graphic.

Never show graphic/upsetting photos to any person under 18 years of age as they are deemed in law, a child.

Tell them you would like to add them to a list of supportive retailers and that you intend to celebrate their support via social media should they agree.

Inform them that a has been launched across the UK seeking a ban on their sale/use.

The link to the Save Our Seals petition is <https://www.change.org/SaveOurSealsFromFlyingRings>

Inform them that local authorities are also seeking to ban these across the UK.

Should they support you, request they return the items to their supplier or ideally hand over to you for appropriate recycling (maximise this with photos and a media post if permission is secured from the retailer)

Don't be put off should a retailer not support the campaign; it is their decision.

However, after your discussion please leave them with a letter to remind them of the conversation.

They may be unsure on a decision at that particular time but could change their mind at a later date.

If supportive, please leave the attached poster with them for display in their shop window.

Thank them for their support in either case.

Should you require further information or guidance please contact the following FRSG members:

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