

HOW TO TELL WEANERS FROM YEARLINGS

It can be very difficult to differentiate between a weaner and a yearling!

Time of Year	WEANERS	YEARLINGS
February - March	Weaners lose their black natal coat in favor of a silver one which quickly changes, turning darker gray on the dorsal (back) side.	Occasionally yearlings come ashore to rest during the breeding season. They can be identified by their coats which are shades of beige/brown and are starting to look quite worn. Some of them show a condition called "scabby molt" which will be replaced during their first catastrophic molt.
April - May	By early May, most of the weaned pups have left the rookery. At the time they leave their coats are warm tones of yellow/beige on the ventral (stomach) side and darker brown on the dorsal side.	Yearlings returning to molt have a coat that is showing wear. As the molt proceeds the beige/brown hair is sloughed off along with the outer layer of skin revealing a new coat that appears in shades of gray (silver/charcoal.) As the new hair grows it will turn beige/brown
June - August	During the summer it will be impossible to tell weaners from yearlings by the color of their coats. Size can be deceiving. Individuals of both age categories might haul out to rest during the summer.	