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Hi – I'm sending this to your Press Office in the hope that you can forward it to your CEO and Board of Directors/Trustees. Your website gives no contact details for your CEO or Admin Staff – It's easier to contact the CIA than the RSPCA CEO.

CEO & Board of Trustees,
RSPCA,
Horsham,
West Sussex

Dear Sirs,

About 4pm on the afternoon of Thursday 20th December 2018 I received a telephone call from XXXXX who was on the beach at Salthouse in Norfolk with a casualty seal.

I took a note of his mobile phone number and asked him to stay with the seal until I could get someone from the RSPCA to contact him. I phoned your East Winch Wildlife and Seal Rescue Centre in Kings Lynn and got through to a recorded message asking me to report wildlife casualties on another RSPCA telephone number. As I had hoped to speak to someone I didn't have pen and paper ready, so I had to call the first number again to take a note of the second number.

When I phoned the second number I was connected to a long series of multiple-choice push-button options. I had to negotiate three or four automated levels before finally getting through to an RSPCA employee. From first telephoning East Winch to talking to a person took circa 15 minutes. This was phoning from a landline in my office. Had I, like most people reporting wildlife casualties, been telephoning from a mobile phone out in the wind and rain, possibly from an area with poor mobile

reception, just getting through to someone from the RSPCA would have been a difficult and frustrating exercise.

When I did get through it was obvious that my request for someone from the RSPCA to contact a third party about a sick seal was not covered in the script or training given to your operative. However the woman who took my call did agree to take XXXXX mobile number and he was contacted by the RSPCA a few minutes later. XXXXX was told no-one from the RSPCA could help on the Thursday but it was arranged for an RSPCA Inspector to meet him on the Friday.

On the Friday your Inspector was taken to the seal and she agreed it was in a very poor condition and in need of help. However your seal facility at East Winch was full and your Inspector said she would try and get the seal into the Sea Life Centre seal hospital at Hunstanton. Your Inspector apologised to XXXXX about the time it had taken to get to the seal and explained that she was the sole Inspector covering the whole of Norfolk as well as the Ipswich and Felixstowe areas of Suffolk. This seems extraordinary – one person covering such a large area where casualty seals, most of which need at least two people to handle and carry them safely, will be a frequent occurrence.

I do not know what the current financial situation is with the RSPCA, but I strongly suggest you reassess your call centre system with a view to putting people phoning about casualty animals through to a person far more quickly than happens at present. You could perhaps have “Are you calling about an injured animal?” as your first push-button option and have that option take you direct to an operator. This would not only improve the help you give to casualty animals it would vastly improve your reputation with the public and thus increase your income through donations and legacies.

It does also appear that you are short staffed and under resourced in the most important areas of your work – your Inspectorate and rehab facilities. It is very unfortunate that a casualty seal is left overnight and

then only one person is available to recover it and the only accommodation option available is within an aquatic zoo.

I urge you to look at these aspects of your work with a view to prioritising and improving them.

Yours faithfully,

John F. Robins,
Save Our Seals Fund

PS: If you wish to discuss this case with XXXXX he can be contacted on e-mail address: XXXXXXXX I'm sure he would appreciate an update on the fate of the seal he did his very best to rescue.