

SEALS. PHOCÆ.

Seals, like other mammiferous animals, are provided with four limbs, though nothing but their extremities appear externally, being covered by the integument of the trunk, the fore-limbs to the wrist, the hinder to the heel. The digits of the fore-feet are successively shorter from the thumb, which is the longest. The posterior feet have the lateral digits either longer than the intermediate, or the whole nearly of an equal length. On the upper lip are whiskers: the tongue is smooth and bifid at the tip. The stomach is simple, the cæcum short, the digestive tube long, and nearly equal in size. The heart is formed like that of terrestrial, warm-blooded animals. In their dental system there are three divisions: 1st, those having six superior and four inferior incisors: 2d, with four superior and four inferior: 3d, with four superior and two inferior.

Seals are found on the sea-coasts throughout the world, but principally in the northern regions. They are viviparous, bringing forth and suckling their young on land; they are polygamous and gregarious, living in large families together. They swim with admirable facility, remain for a considerable time under water, and derive their subsistence entirely from the sea. They sun themselves on the sea beach and on ice banks, scrambling upon them by the aid of their flippers, or fore-feet. On land, their motions are awkward and heavy. They are vigilant, intelligent, and tenacious of life.

PHOCA VITULINA. (L.) *The Common Seal.*

This species is found most numerous in high northern latitudes. It has a round head, and an aspect not unlike that of some varieties of the dog, whence the name of sea-dog. The extremity of the muzzle is flat and broad; the posterior part of the head is large, and without bony projections; the upper lip is peculiar, moveable, and extensible, garnished with strong, thick whiskers. It has no external ear, but instead of it, a small tubercle. The fore-limbs are short, and the feet have five digits, joined together by a membrane, having thick, long, black nails protruding from the extremities.

The general color is a yellowish grey, spotted with brown,