

Statements

Releases from the Hull Seals regarding various situations and issues

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Cheating and the Hull Seals

The Hull Seals is an organization that got its start with the recent Distant Worlds 2 Expedition and was formed with the intention of rescuing and aiding pilots who put themselves at risk in the deepest reaches of our galaxy. As such, we as an organization salute those pilots that fly within the confines of Elite Dangerous in the manner it was intended at all times. The camaraderie and many friendships forged over the long months during the expedition were because of these risks and trials faced by honest and decent pilots.

When you take away the challenge of Deep Space exploration through cheating, you will never have the chance to meet this active, vibrant, and wonderful community of Commanders that call themselves Hull Seals.

Those who use hacks, exploits, and cheats stray far from Halpy's Light, and deserve nothing less than to be completely cast off from our galaxy. We will always be vigilant in keeping a lookout for those who would seek to harm the game and its various communities through cheating and exploitation.

The Hull Seals condemn the use of all cheats, hacks, exploits, and other game modification tools that effect gameplay by all CMDRs. Any Seal found to use these tools will be expelled from the Seal collective for violation of the Frontier Developments Terms of Service and the Hull Seals code of conduct. We define these tools as those that provide an advantage or unfair edge to players compared to what is possible in the game itself. Tools, such as HUD color changers, that have no impact on gameplay are not counted under this definition.

The Hull Seals & PvP

Rules on PVP Combat and the Hull Seals



Can Hull Seals engage in PvP combat?

- While on a call, Seals do not engage in Player Versus Player (PvP) Combat. Even if a player fires upon a Seal, the Seal is expected to disengage. *We are not and will never be mercenaries or a "dial-a-fight" service.*
- If Seals are logged in, active as Seals, and engage in consensual PvP, there must be clear proof that all parties agreed to the encounter. "They were in Open!" is not a valid reason.
- If you are representing the Seals in any way, Such as the name of your ship, CMDR name, attached to an expedition as a Seal, Ship ID, or any other way, any PvP must be consensual by all involved. At all times, follow Expedition or Private Group rules.
- You may not stalk or otherwise deliberately target a previous client that you friended as part of a case.

We recommend Seals and Clients unfriend each other after cases to prevent this. Failure to unfriend is not in and of itself an offense, but would be a determining factor if a complaint were brought against a Seal.

This is not to say that we forbid all CMDRs from partaking in PvP combat if they are Seals. When not on duty, advertizing the Seals, or in any way representing the Seals, CMDRs are encouraged to take part in any form of gameplay offered by the game.

However, no matter what, we expect all Seals to follow Frontier's Terms of Service, our own position on Cheating and the Hull Seals, and all other rules and regulations applicable to a situation. We take complaints very

seriously, and will act on complaints on a case-by-case basis. Failure to follow these rules can result in disciplinary action by the Seal body.

On the Future of the Seals

Hello, Seals.

We come to you today to ask for your help, and to draw attention to a potential issue drawing near in our future.

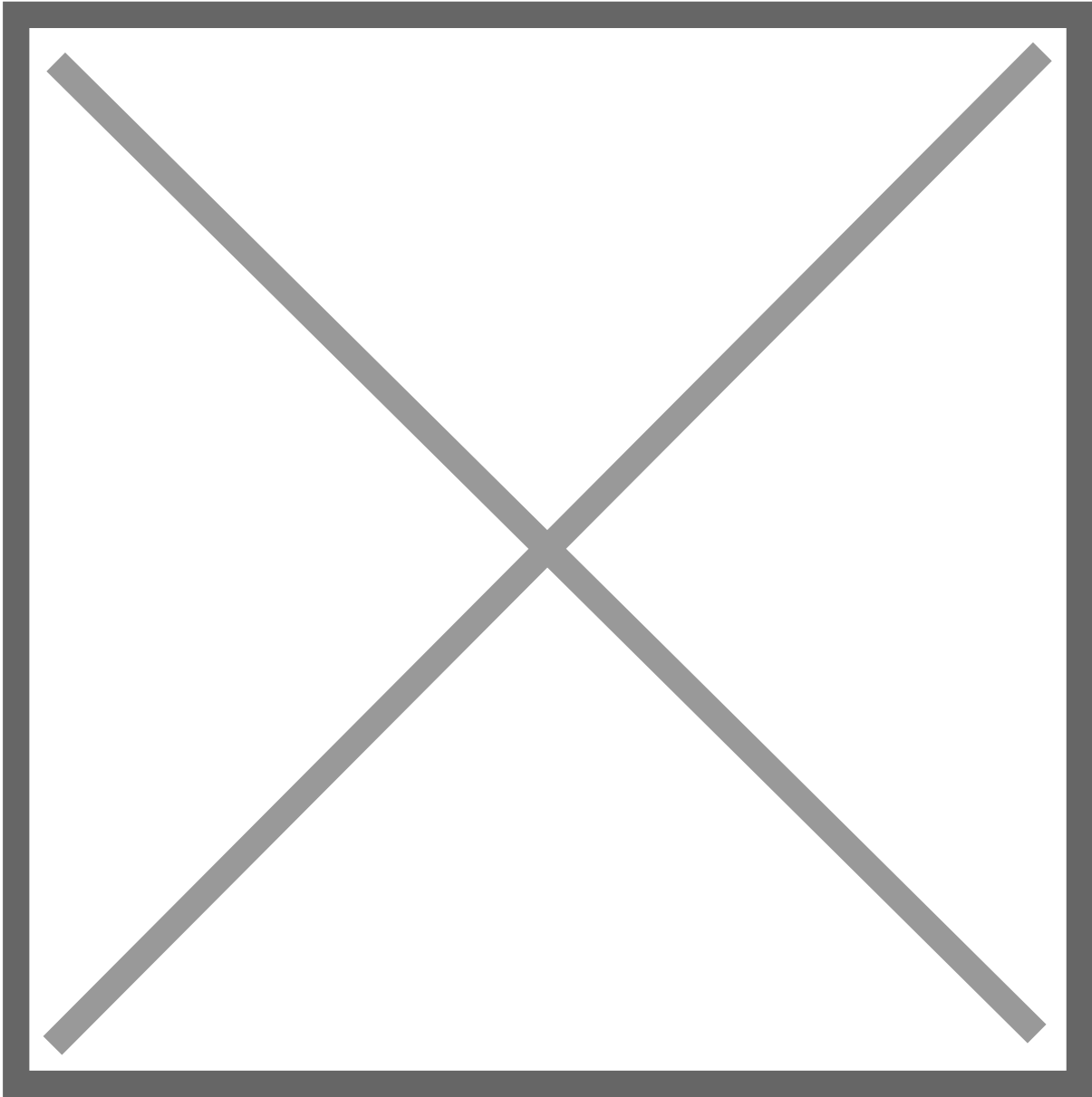
While we encourage you to read the entire post, here's the bottom line: **If our current trend continues, we won't be able to reliably continue to offer Console services in the future.**

Player Numbers

It's no secret that the largest community for Elite: Dangerous has been on PC. While there are console enclaves, and some console players rival even the most loyal PC players in devotion to the game, Consoles have always been a smaller market for Elite. Unfortunately, exact player numbers are not available for Xbox, PlayStation, or non-steam users. The best source of data we know about is the Steam Chart site, found here:

<https://steamcharts.com/app/359320>

As of time of writing, the last 7 days peak player numbers is 5,393 max concurrent players. That is, over the last 7 days the most number of players online at any given time was just over 5 thousand players. To give some context to that, in the entire history of the Seals (since our founding in 2017), the next lowest 7-day high is 6,001 concurrent players, over the 7 day period starting May 27th, 2019.

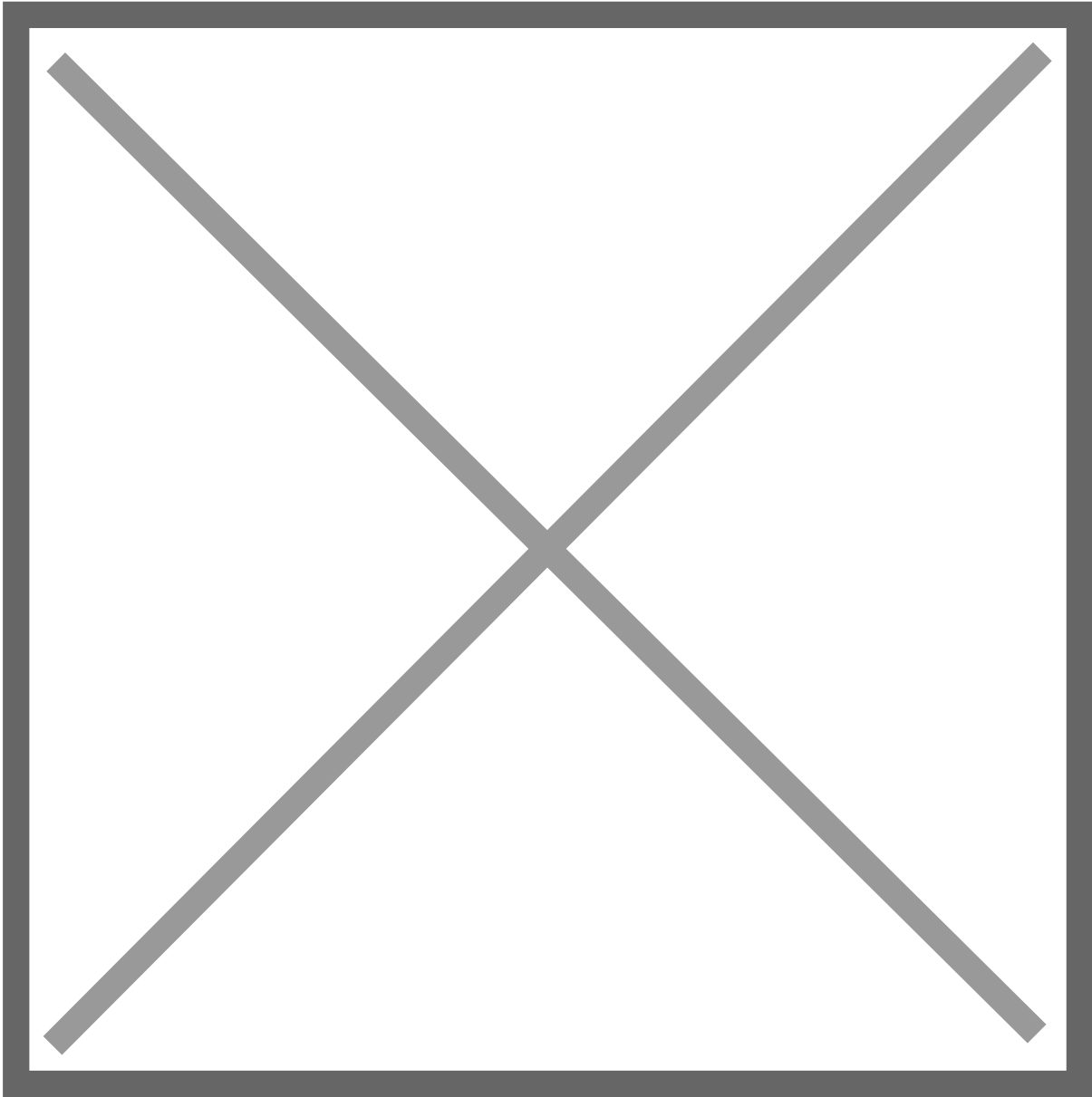


Top: Player Numbers from December 31st, 2018 to July 22nd, 2021. Bottom: All Time Player Numbers (Source: steamcharts.com)

Given the lack of concrete data for non-Steam platforms, we must assume that the player charts look similar (with a notable exception of the Odyssey-driven spike). Even without this new high, the drastic and dramatic decay in player numbers cannot be ignored. Pre-Odyssey Steam player numbers averaged anywhere between 12,000 and 20,000 with a low point in the 6 months preceding Odyssey's release at 10,500 concurrent high. Even without the Odyssey spike, this is a 40% reduction to the game's population.

Case Numbers and Seal Numbers

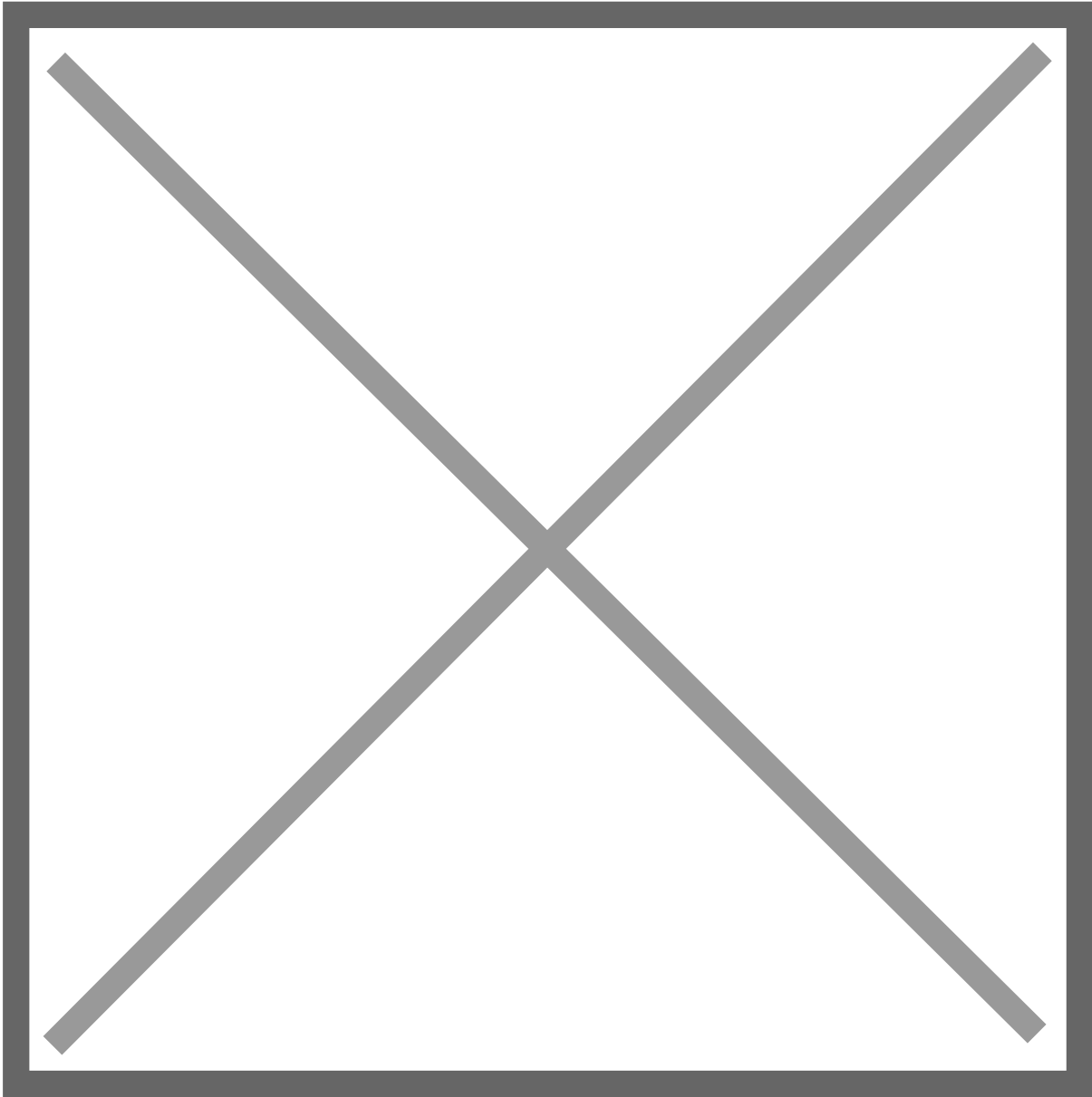
In an additional attempt to provide context, let's look at our own Seal case numbers. Such stats are readily available at <https://hullseals.space/statistics>.



Hull Seal Case Numbers over the period of 7/22/2020 to 7/22/2021. (Source: The Hull Seals)

There are a few things that stand out immediately. Notably, you can tell when we switched over to our IRC solution, which had its go-live day on November 20th, 2020 (which immediately saw a spike in cases and their frequency). While the Seals, expectedly so, do not have the sheer demand as other service organizations such as the Fuel Rats, and certainly not to the extent and concentration we saw during DW2, there is a noticeable decline that started very quickly after Odyssey's release on May 19th, 2021.

Additionally, the vast majority of Seal cases are PC driven. If this means that Console players are safer fliers, the Seals are not as well known by the console community, or there simply aren't enough Console CMDRs to have a large foothold isn't clear from this graph, so we must gather context by looking at publicly available data from other sources, such as our good friends, the Fuel Rats.



Fuel Rat Case Numbers over the period of 7/22/2020 to 7/22/2021. (Source: The Fuel Rats)

What is immediately clear is that still, PC cases are significantly larger than their console equivalents. Xbox, similarly to Seals cases, lags behind, and PlayStation brings up the rear. A similar situation can be seen in registered Rats and Seals, as self-identification lists significantly more PC players in each organization compared to their Console counterparts. In both organizations, however, there has been a decrease in cases since the immediate Odyssey-driven spike.

In fact, this decrease in players has had a significant impact on the ability for the Seals to respond to requests for assistance - Not only has this reduction in players meant that there are fewer trained seals able to take the cases, spread across both the galaxy and the various time zones in which the Seals operate, there are fewer and fewer new seals being recruited and trained to take up the mantle. On console, this situation has become untenable. More than a dozen times in the last few months, a case has either needed to be turned down or diverted to a nearby carrier instead of dispatching a Seal to the client, because there were no seals in range at the time. This issue plagues all levels to a degree, but is notable with Consoles, particularly PlayStation.

Next Steps

There will of course be some people who blame this unfortunate circumstance on various single entities or actions. As the staff, we do not believe this can be blamed on any one factor - perceived or otherwise. However, passing blame around does not truly solve the issue at hand. What we must consider is where we go from here, and what we can do to try and correct the problems at hand.

Caseload, of course, is out of our control. We can and should advertise our services, both as individuals and as the Seal whole. We should go out in the galaxy and try and find people who need our help and guide them home. We **should** join expeditions, and enjoy the vibrant galaxy so long as we find enjoyment in the game. Other plans, such as the Seal Player Faction, are also on hiatus as Frontier has stopped adding new factions at this time.

The three places we can most focus is on what services we offer, how we offer them, and what we do for recruitment.

First, in the next few weeks we will be rolling out a disclaimer that will present itself to all cases. This disclaimer will, unfortunately, state that it is taking significantly longer than usual to find seals able to go on Console cases, but that we will do our best to find a responder for any CMDR who wishes to ask for our assistance.

This is not something we wanted to do, as it shakes trust in the Seals ability to help those in the galaxy, and may result in an even further reduction in cases. However, it is better for us to be honest with not only ourselves but our clients that we are currently having issues.

Second, starting immediately we are beginning a 3-month observation and review process of our systems, numbers, and activity levels. We need your help to come up with ideas as to how to keep offering the high standard we expect from the Seals, how to engage the Seals, coordinate our efforts, and what we can do to improve ourselves or fix the issues that present themselves.

Third, we must work on recruitment. If we cannot recruit and maintain active levels of seals on any given platform, we must consider terminating our services on that platform. In order to prevent this, we are asking for your help. Beyond not only being Seals, and responding to cases yourselves, please go out and try and recruit new Seals to our family, on all platforms, and spread the word that the Seals are here and able to help. Answer questions others have and do your best to be good ambassadors of the Seals out in the world. Only by working together will we be able to keep the lighthouse bright for those who need us.

As always, we want to hear your feedback and comments. You are the Seals, and without you the Seals cannot exist. Let's work together to make sure that the Seals will still be here for those who need us.



The Hull Seal Admins

May 2022 Update

Hello, Seals.

As you might have noticed, Elite's status has been quite volatile in the recent past. This has impacted many facets of the game, and has resulted in a number of changes to the game's community. Longtime programs like the GMP and DWOrg have all stepped back, and the loss of further development on Console has done a great disservice to many CMDRs who we call friends.

This change has not just impacted outside organizations, but the Seals as well. Over the time we've been together as an organization, we've seen a number of CMDRs and valued Seals who could always be trusted come, and go. Unfortunately, this has left us with a vacuum to fill, and we need your help to fill it.

Let us be clear: The Seals are **NOT** shutting down. We are still trying to carry out our mission in Elite for as long as we can. We will still do our best to offer our services on all platforms, PC, Xbox, and PlayStation, for as long as we can be reasonably sure that we have pilots.

However, we must still face facts, and admit our mistakes as well as the situation we find ourselves in. Over the last few weeks from the time of writing, half of our cases have gone unanswered. Of the last 10 cases, 4 cases received no response from us, and forced CMDRs to go elsewhere to find help. A fifth case was understaffed, with no Dispatcher or other Seal helping coordinate the rescue, causing undue stress and work for the Seal who did respond. We consider all of these instances to be a failure.

This 50% failure rate is not sustainable as an organization.

But, we're not out yet. There are places where we need to do better, but together it is our belief that we can fix these missteps and mistakes, and continue to offer the proud tradition of service that we uphold. The Admins have developed a two-phase project, but we can't do it alone. *We need your help* in order to continue doing what we do best.

As of today, we're beginning a rollout of Phase One of that plan. We'll give the details on Phase Two later this quarter. Here are some of the details:

1. Case Notify pings will be replaced with Trained Seal pings, to ensure that all Seals will be notified about incoming cases.
2. We will be adding a "Low Seal Numbers" warning to the New Case Creation Pages on our website, to temper expectations and warn our clients that we are having issues filling cases.
3. The Engagement teams will be attempting to organize more events in Elite going forward, to explore and enjoy this game we love.
4. The Outreach crew - with your help - will be stepping up recruitment of new Seals to help bolster our numbers.
5. The SOP team will be reviewing the current SOPs to ensure that the documents are clear of any common misunderstandings.
6. We're asking Seals to fill out the survey linked at the bottom of this form to help guide or process forward.

Additionally, we want to remind you: Any Seal Can Do Any Job At Any Time. You don't need to be fully trained to take a case, or to dispatch, or to do any other job in the Seals. If you are who is available - Go. Call your jumps, even if you're just a pup. Take on that Dispatcher role from your fellow Seal so they can focus on flying, even if you aren't fully trained. If you see someone who needs help - offer it. Take the initiative.

Yes, training is important and a Seal trained in a position should take over if they can, but in a pinch, we're all in this together. Or, sign up for trainings and become a Dispatcher or Advanced Seal Trained position yourself! We can always use more people - and the job is easier than ever.

Finally, we have a request from all of you. Please fill out this survey so we know who we have active in the Seals, and can better estimate where we are as an organization. These questions will help us better develop and continue to evolve the Seals the best we can. The link to the survey is: <https://forms.gle/ewPuPra83gdeaxLT7>

Finally, from all of us, Thank You for being a Seal and being on this journey with us. While things aren't great right now, it's still our hope that we can right the ship and continue to offer our services in Elite to anyone who needs them.