



## Help us save our rarest dolphins from extinction

**Maui's and Hector's dolphins are only found in our waters and are one of the rarest marine dolphins in the world**



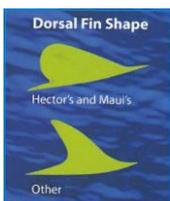
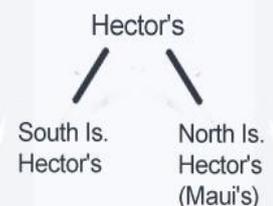
- only **55** Maui's dolphins remain in New Zealand, although once found around the North Island Maui's are now restricted to the west coast of the North Island
- Hector's dolphins were once abundant but the population has declined by 75% in the last 40 years
- Both dolphins are extremely slow breeders
- Set nets are the single biggest threat to Hector's and Maui's dolphins
- **We urgently need your help to stop New Zealand's rarest dolphins from extinction**

### Background:

Hector's dolphins in the North Island have separated from those in the South Island to such a degree that over time they have become genetically distinct. Dolphins found off the North Island coast are recognised as a sub-species, the Maui's dolphin.

In the 1970s there were between 21,000 to 29,000 Hector's dolphins found around most of our coastline. Today, fewer than 7,000 dolphins remain, scattered around NZ.

Both Hector's and Maui's dolphins are listed on the IUCN's (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) Red List of **threatened species**. Maui's dolphins have the highest threat classification status in New Zealand and are listed as **critically endangered**. The latest government population estimates there are **only 55** adult and juvenile Maui's dolphins left in our waters. Hector's dolphins are listed as endangered.



Hector's and Maui's are the only dolphins in the world with a **rounded dorsal fin**. They also have distinctive black markings on their fins, tails, flippers and faces, and while common dolphins grow to about 2.6 m length, our Hector's and Maui's dolphins only reach between 1.2 – 1.6 m. They are so small they could fit in a bathtub.



Their populations take a long time to rebuild. Hector's and Maui's dolphins live for up to 20 years and are incredibly slow breeders. They only produce one calf every 2 to 4 years and do not start breeding until they are about 7 to 9 years old.

Hector's and Maui's also prefer shallow water of less than 100 m deep, which makes them particularly vulnerable to deaths caused by human activities such as fishing.



### The threat:

Our rare dolphins are vulnerable to boat strikes, trawling and pollution, marine mining but the **main threat is set netting**.

Our dolphins are accidentally caught in set nets and drown. At least TWO Maui's dolphins have been killed between Nov 2011 and Feb 2012. With only **55** individual Maui's dolphins left we need **immediate action** by the Government to stop these accidental killings.

#### Set nets:

- Used by commercial, recreational and customary fishers
- Responsible for **more than 60%** of all known Hector's / Maui's deaths
- Kill a wide range of threatened marine mammals, seabirds and other species of fish
- **110 – 150 dolphins are killed by commercial set nets every year**
- Banned or are heavily regulated in many countries including Australia, the UK and USA

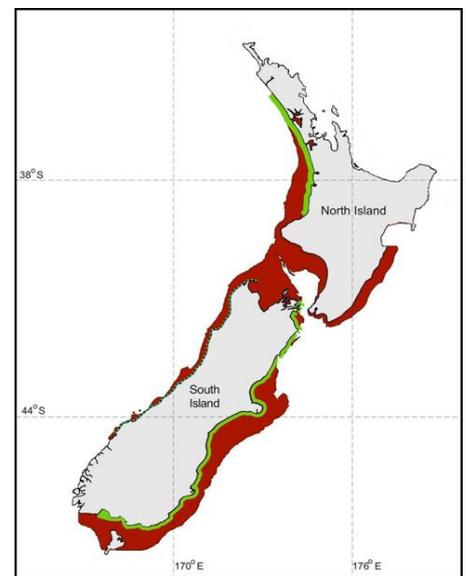
### What we want:

In May 2008 the Government announced new measures to protect Hector's and Maui's dolphins that recognised the impact of set netting and addressed a number of other threats. The current protection measures are a major step in the right direction. However, they are **not sufficient** to allow population recovery and **do not** meet national or international guidelines for marine mammal protection.

**Under the proposed protection measures, the total population would continue to slowly decline.** In the absence of fisheries by-catch our dolphins could recover to at least half of their original population within a few decades.

Since the 2008 announcement the Government has allowed some commercial set nets to operate in protected areas at the top of the South Island.

In response to the latest Maui's population estimate in March 2012 the Ministers of Conservation and Primary Industries announced they are seeking submissions on interim protection measures around Taranaki.



Red areas indicate where Maui's and Hector's dolphins are found. Green areas show where set nets are banned

### **Forest & Bird wants to stop the decline of Maui's and Hector's dolphins and increase protection so the species recovers to a non-threatened status**

To do this Forest & Bird is calling the Government to act **immediately** to ensure the species survival. Forest & Bird is asking for a **total ban on all set nets out to 100m depth to protect all areas** where the world's smallest and rarest dolphins are found. We believe the proposed interim measures are **not adequate** and the delay due to a consultation period could result in more dolphin deaths. Under the Fisheries Act, the Primary Industries Minister has emergency powers to immediately extend a temporary set net ban to include Taranaki while permanent protection measures are put in place.

### **Maui's dolphins are highly likely to become extinct in our lifetime, the time to act is now.**

You can:

- Submit on the proposed interim protection measures, visit [www.forestandbird.org.nz/saveourdolphins](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/saveourdolphins)
- Visit your local MP and express your concerns about the survival of Maui's and Hector's dolphins
- Write a letter or email calling for the Minister to use emergency measures to immediately protect Maui's dolphins:
  - Minister of Conservation Kate Wilkinson ([k.wilkinson@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:k.wilkinson@ministers.govt.nz))
  - Minister for Primary Industries (Includes Fisheries) David Carter ([d.carter@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:d.carter@ministers.govt.nz))  
Freepost, Parliament Buildings, Wellington
- Support Forest & Bird and visit [www.forestandbird.org.nz](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz) for more information