



## Summary of the main points to make on Maui's dolphins when writing your submission to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and/or letters to the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister of Conservation

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While a review of the Maui's dolphin portion of the draft *Hector's and Maui's Dolphin Threat Management Plan* is being undertaken, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and the Department of Conservation (DOC) have asked stakeholders and the public to submit on their consultation papers containing interim measures to protect Maui's dolphins from human-caused deaths. The proposed interim protection measures are:

1. Set net closure along the Taranaki coast from Pariokariwa Point south to Hawera and out to 4-nautical miles.  
(MAF – submission deadline is April 11, 2012)
2. Extension of the West Coast North Island Marine Mammal Sanctuary to Hawera and out to 12 nautical miles, with restrictions on seismic surveys throughout the sanctuary.  
(DOC – submission deadline is April 27, 2012)

Otherwise, personal letters to Ministers can be sent at any time, but ideally before they make decisions – so before the end of May 2012.

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WWF believes these interim protection measures are inadequate to halt the extinction of this species. For Maui's dolphins to survive, they need complete protection across their entire range – from Maunganui Bluff (near Dargaville) to Hawera (including all harbours) and out to 100m deep.

### Here are some key points to help when preparing your letter(s) and/or submission(s):

- Maui's dolphins (*Cephalorhynchus hectori maui*) are only found in New Zealand and are listed as 'critically endangered' by the IUCN.
- Maui's dolphins live to about 20 years, mature at 7-9 years and only produce 1 calf every 2-3 years – this equates to a natural population growth of only 1.8% (in absence of human-induced death).
- The latest abundance estimate released by the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Auckland University indicates that only 55 individuals over the age of 1 year remain as of 2011 (95% confidence interval range of 48-69).
- The historical population size of Maui's dolphin is believed to have been around 1500 individuals, and may have been considerably higher.
- Ever since nylon monofilament gillnets (set nets and drift nets) were introduced in the late 1960s, dolphin numbers have been drastically declining. This method of fishing is indiscriminative, and has been banned in many countries as its known for its high levels of bycatch of marine mammals, sharks, turtles and seabirds.
- Maui's dolphins continue to decline at a rate of 3% per year, and are threatened with extinction within several generations. There is no room for error.

- Their extinction would earn New Zealand the dubious honour of achieving only the second-ever recorded disappearance of a cetacean (dolphin, whale, or porpoise) caused by human actions. The first was China's Baiji or Yangtze River dolphin.
- Maui's dolphins are regularly seen along the west coast of the North Island—from Maunganui Bluff in the north to Cape Egmont in the south, including harbours (Manukau, Kaipara, Raglan, Kawhia and Aotea), and out to water depths of 100m.
- Scientists as well as DOC and the Ministry of Fisheries (now part of MAF) have concluded that bycatch in fisheries, particularly gillnets, is the most serious threat to the dolphins.
- Gillnets and trawlers are currently operating where Maui's are found, due to inadequate protection measures not extending across their entire known habitat. The interim protection measures proposed by the government also do not adequately cover this range.
- Fishing doesn't have to stop, we just need to switch to more selective methods, such as longlining, fish trapping, trolling, angling, and spear fishing – especially where the dolphins are found. Set nets have already been banned in many countries due to their destructive levels of bycatch of various marine mammals, sharks, turtles, and seabirds.
- Historically, observer coverage has been too low (<1%) and under-reporting of bycatch has been problematic.
- To save New Zealand's endemic Maui's dolphins, I call on MAF and DOC to:
  - Extend the interim boundary of the set net closure along the coast from Maunganui Bluff to Hawera, into all the harbours found in between (including Manukau, Kaipara, Raglan, Kawhia, and Aotea) and out to 100 m water depth.
  - Extend the interim boundary of the West Coast North Island Marine Mammal Sanctuary from Maunganui Bluff to Hawera into all harbours in between (including Manukau, Kaipara, Raglan, Kawhia, and Aotea) and out to 100 m water depth.
  - Include an interim boundary extension of trawling restrictions from Maunganui Bluff to Hawera (including all harbours) and offshore to 4nm.
  - Raise trawling vessel observer coverage to 100% (at least during the review period) to ensure accurate estimates of bycatch.
  - Include protection of the marine corridor between Farewell Spit and Cape Egmont to allow connectivity between Maui's and Hector's dolphins.
  - Bring forward the review of the Hector's and Maui's Threat Management Plan and develop a clear plan of action for the species recovery, including population targets, achievable management goals and clear, timebound actions.

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More details about the dolphins are available in two factsheets on the WWF-New Zealand website at: [http://www.wwf.org.nz/what we do/species/hector s and maiu s dolphin/](http://www.wwf.org.nz/what_we_do/species/hector_s_and_maiu_s_dolphin/)