



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Conservation status of marine mammals

Title

Conservation status of marine mammals

Publisher

New Zealand's Environment Reporting Series: The Ministry for the Environment and Statistics
New Zealand

Description

New Zealand has a diverse range of marine mammal species and subspecies, including whales, dolphins, seals, and sea lions. Marine mammals are indicator species for the state of our marine environment. The conservation status of a species relates to its risk of extinction. Many of these species are endemic (only found in) to New Zealand. They are apex species (near the top of the food chain) and can thrive only if their ecosystems are healthy. A decreasing population can indicate that the ecosystem is degrading. Marine mammals played an important part in New Zealand history; in the past whales and seals were hunted in great numbers. Now we have a rapidly-growing whale- and dolphin-watching industry.

Source

Department of Conservation

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Coverage

2013; New Zealand waters (Exclusive Economic Zone)

Identifier

<https://data.mfe.govt.nz/table/53481-conservation-status-of-marine-mammals/>

Type

Dataset

Language

eng-nz

Subject

indigenous, biodiversity, threat status