



Care for the Wild International

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Press Release

23RD February 2010

CARE FOR THE WILD INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES RULING ON HECTOR'S DOLPHINS, BUT WARNS THAT MORE PROTECTION IS STILL NEEDED

Care for the Wild International (CWI) gave a cautious welcome to the long-awaited ruling released today by New Zealand's High Court on fishing restrictions designed to protect endangered Hector's and Maui's dolphins.

Hector's dolphins are classified as Endangered, and their North Island cousins Maui's dolphins as Critically Endangered, by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The main threat to these dolphins, and the cause of their devastating decline in recent times, is entanglement in fishing gear, specifically inshore gill and trawl nets. UK-based charity CWI has been campaigning for several years for improved protection for the beleaguered dolphins.

"The fact that the judge has upheld most of the fishing restrictions put in place by the former Minister of Fisheries Jim Anderton in 2008, is great news for the dolphins", according to Mark Jones, one of the charity's directors. "We must now persuade the new fisheries minister Phil Heatley to uphold the restrictions that the judge has referred back to him".

CWI will also continue to lobby for the extension of fishing restrictions to all parts of the dolphins' range. "This is particularly important given the death of a Hector's dolphin in fishing gear last year in an area off Kaikoura that had a fishing exemption, and the sightings of Maui's dolphins off Taranaki well south of the current protected area before Christmas", said Mr Jones.

More information can be found on Care for the Wild International's website www.careforthewild.com.

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Notes:**1. Care for the Wild International**

Care for the Wild International (CWI) is a charity dedicated to the conservation and welfare of wildlife around the world. Working with our partners, we aim to protect wildlife and its habitat, rescue and rehabilitate displaced wild animals, and act as a voice for wildlife protection through campaigns, research and education.

2. Hector's Dolphins Facts

- Hector's dolphins are indigenous to New Zealand, and are classified as Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. This means that Hector's are "facing a high risk of extinction in the near future".
- Numbers have declined by over 70% since the 1970's, to a current population of around 7,000.
- Inshore commercial and recreational fishing (specifically set netting and trawling) is responsible for the majority of Hector's dolphin deaths.
- Females only have one calf every 2-4 years and do not reach breeding age until they are 7-9 years old. These species' potential for recovery is therefore extremely slow.
- Existing protection measures have failed to halt the species decline. Hector's dolphins will only be safe into the future if all threats of commercial and recreational fishing are removed.

3. Maui's Dolphins Facts

- Maui's dolphins, a north-island sub-species of Hector's dolphins, are classified as Critically Endangered by the Red List of Endangered Species. This means that Maui's dolphins are "facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the immediate future".
- Estimates suggest only just over 100 Maui's dolphins survive.
- Maui's dolphins prefer shallow waters up to 100m deep and are therefore highly vulnerable to nets.