

# Marine mammals of New Zealand

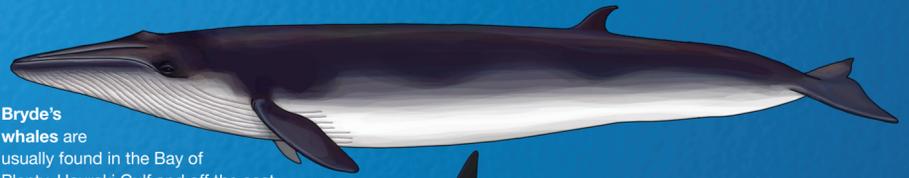


Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai

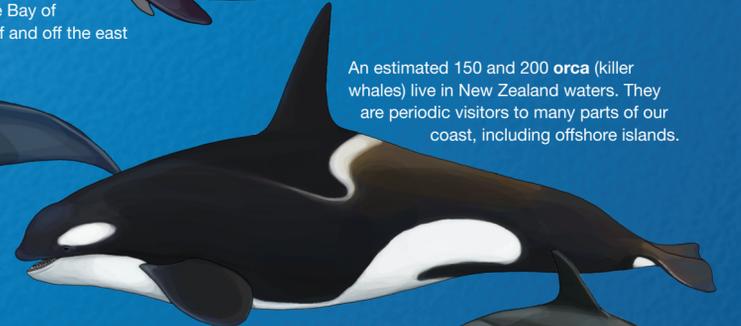
New Zealand's largest whale is thought to be the **pygmy blue whale**, a slightly smaller subspecies of its close relative, the Antarctic blue whale. Pygmy blue whales (including mothers with calves) have been seen foraging offshore in the South Taranaki Bight in summer. We are still learning how often, for how long, and how many blue whales use New Zealand waters.



**Bryde's whales** are usually found in the Bay of Plenty, Hauraki Gulf and off the east coast of Northland.



An estimated 150 and 200 **orca** (killer whales) live in New Zealand waters. They are periodic visitors to many parts of our coast, including offshore islands.



**Māui dolphin**, a sub-species of Hector's dolphin, is one of the rarest dolphins in the world.



**Resident bottlenose dolphins** are found off the east coast of the North Island, off the top of the South Island, and in Fiordland.



**Common dolphins** tend to stay a few kilometres from shore. Generally preferring warmer waters, they are particularly common in the Hauraki Gulf, Bay of Plenty and off Northland.



**Southern right whales** can be seen in winter and spring at their breeding grounds near the subantarctic islands. A few sightings are also reported around mainland New Zealand.



Much of our knowledge of **Gray's beaked whales** is based on strandings rather than sightings. There are 11 other species of beaked whale in New Zealand waters.



**Humpback whales** are often seen in winter, migrating up the New Zealand coast to their breeding grounds in the tropics. They later return to their summer feeding grounds near Antarctica.



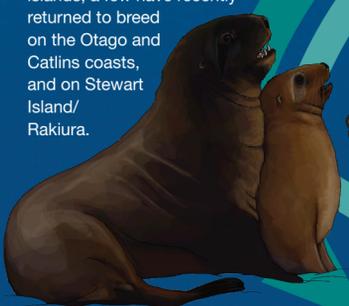
**Hector's dolphin** is New Zealand's only endemic dolphin and is one of the smallest in the world, reaching no more than 1.5 m in length.



**New Zealand fur seals** are found all around the coast, spending much of their time on land at their rocky shore breeding colonies, or at haul-outs.



Although **New Zealand sea lions** breed primarily on our subantarctic islands, a few have recently returned to breed on the Otago and Catlins coasts, and on Stewart Island/Rakiura.



North Island

**Pygmy sperm whales** are usually seen alone or in small groups. Unfortunately, they are more frequently found stranded than at sea.



**Long-finned pilot whales** are actually part of the dolphin family. They regularly mass-strand on the New Zealand coast.



**Dusky dolphins** are found near shore around most of the South Island, and the southern part of the North Island.



Two species of **minke whale** occur around New Zealand. The dwarf minke is most often seen; the larger Antarctic minke is mostly found south of New Zealand, feeding on krill in the Antarctic Ocean.



**Sperm whales** are common in New Zealand's deep offshore waters. Semi-resident 'bachelor' males regularly feed in the submarine canyons near Kaikoura.



Chatham Islands

Subantarctic Islands

Snares Islands/  
Tini Heke

Bounty Islands

Campbell Island/  
Motu Ihupuku

Auckland Islands

Antipodes Island

Stewart Island/  
Rakiura

## Sharing the coast with marine mammals

Take your rubbish home to prevent marine mammals ingesting or becoming entangled in it.

Give marine mammals some space.

Call the 0800 DOC HOTline (0800 362 468) to report:

- Marine mammals that are entangled, seriously injured or being harassed
- Stranded whales or dolphins
- Unusual sightings and sightings of rarer species

## Key

- New Zealand fur seal breeding colony
- New Zealand fur seal haul-outs
- New Zealand sea lion habitat (frequently seen in these areas)
- New Zealand sea lion habitat (local population base)
- Māui dolphin range
- Hector's dolphin range
- Whale summer migration route (heading south)
- Whale winter migration route (heading north)

Blue whale (30m) Sperm whale (18m) Southern right whale (17m) Humpback whale (14m) Orca (10m) Hector's dolphin (1.5m)



The species illustrations on this poster are not to scale. This graphic indicates relative sizes of some species.