

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern
Parliament Buildings
Wellington



8 August 2019

Dear Prime Minister,

RE: An Open Letter to the Prime Minister of New Zealand

On behalf of hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders and international citizens, represented by the undersigned, we call on you to ensure that our most beautiful, beloved and endangered Māui and Hector's dolphins are protected from extinction.

Māui and Hector's dolphins are the world's smallest and rarest marine dolphins. There are only around 57 critically endangered Māui left, and some sub-populations of Hector's are even lower in number.

None of the proposed Threat Management Plan (TMP) measures will adequately protect Māui and Hector's throughout their habitat to prevent extinction and enable recovery of the species.

So far, the TMP is a disappointment because of its poor science and poor economic rationale that fails to correctly consider the risks of inadequate action.

The International Whaling Commission, the IUCN, the Society for Marine Mammology and other preeminent scientists have repeatedly called for a ban on set and trawl nets within waters 100m deep where Māui and Hector's are found.

The government must at a minimum,

- exclude set and trawl net fishing activity out to 100 metres deep in all waters in which Māui and Hector's dolphins are found
- Ban new and extended oil, gas and mineral exploration and extraction activities within the dolphin habitat

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- Install tamper-proof, marine-proven, closed circuit recording cameras on all fishing vessels operating in the dolphin habitat nationally, not just in Māui habitat as currently proposed.

We must protect these dolphins from extinction now, or risk putting New Zealand on a short and shameful list of countries who have failed to protect their endemic species. This would undermine New Zealand's reputation, and our brand in the international community.

What you do next will determine the fate of Māui and Hector's forever.

Yours sincerely

American Cetacean Society, Animal Welfare Institute, Australian Marine Conservation Society, Black Cat Cruises – Banks Peninsula, Campaign Whale, Cat MacLennan, Barrister, Animal Agenda Aotearoa, Center for Biological Diversity, Centro de Conservación Cetacea, Cet Law, Cetacean Society International, Catlins Surf School – Curio Bay, Dolphin Connection, Dr Mike Joy, Senior Researcher Institute for Governance and Policy Studies, Victoria University, EarthRace Conservation, ECO - Environmental and Conservation Organisations of NZ, Environmental Investigation Agency UK, Environmental Investigation Agency US, E-Ko Cruises – Marlborough Sounds, Fundaciōn Cethus, Fremantle Underwater Film Festival, Gemma McGrath -Aotearoa Dolphin – researcher, Greenpeace NZ, Guardians of the Sounds, Hector's Protectors, Humane Society International, Humane Society International – Australia, IFAW - International Fund for Animal Welfare, IFAW - International Fund for Animal Welfare, Jane Goodall Institute NZ, Jesu Valdes, Hector's dolphin researcher, Kiwis Against Seabed Mining – KASM, Let's Face It, Marine Mammal Alliance Nantucket, Maui and Hector's Dolphin Defenders NZ, MEER e.V, Muriwai Environmental Action Community Trust, NABU, New Zealanders for Endangered Wildlife, NZ Whale and Dolphin Trust, OceanCare, Oceanic Preservation Society, Our Seas Our Future Charitable Trust, Peninsula Citizens for the Protection of Whales, People for Nature and Peace, Phelan Pirrie, Brent Bailey, Tessa Berger, Louise Johnston of Rodney Local Board, Pro Wildlife, Professor Liz Sooten, Scientist, University of Otago, Project Jonah, Ric O'Barry's Dolphin Project, Save the Whales Again, Sea Shepherd NZ, Seal Protection Action Group, Society for the Conservation of Marine Mammals, Surfbreak Protection Society, Sylvia Earle Alliance/Mission Blue - Hope Spot, Titirangi Residents and Ratepayers Association, The Pod - Saving Māui and Hector's Dolphins, Tui Allen – Author, Waitākere Ranges Local Board, Waitākere Ranges Protection Society, Whāingaroa Environment Centre, Whale and Dolphin Conservation (Intl), Whale Man, World Animal Protection, World Cetacean Alliance, Zoological Society of Auckland