



FACTSHEET

Australian Sea Lion



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Common Name: Australian Sea Lion

Scientific Name: *Neophoca cinerea*

Conservation Status: Listed as Endangered under ICUN (2014). Listed as Vulnerable (Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 (Western Australia)). The waters around Rottnest Island are a designated Marine Reserve.

Habitat: Islands, coastal waters

Body length: 1.3-2.25 m

Weight: 65-250 kg

Gestation period: 4-5 months of embryonic diapause (temporary stop in embryo growth) followed by 12-14 months of normal gestation.

Number of young: 1

Description:

The Australian Sea-lion male is much bigger than the female. He has chocolate brown to black fur. His head and back of his neck is off-white. The female's fur is a lighter silvery-grey shade. Her underside is a yellowish cream. Their fur is made of a

single layer. Both males and females have blunt snouts and tightly rolled external ears. Their eyes are big and they have long whiskers. Sea lions have two very large pectoral flippers and a tail flipper.

Diet:

Squid, fish, small sharks, rock lobsters, sea birds

In the Wild:

Australian Sea Lions are the rarest sea lions in the world. They like to rest on sandy beaches on the sheltered sides of islands. They use their front flippers as prop-ups while they use their back flippers to move themselves forward. They are powerful swimmers and head out to sea for up to two days to catch their food.

There are no breeding colonies on Rottnest; the sea lions which are seen around the Island are young males. The Australian Sea Lions are unique to Australia and are found from the Abrolhos Islands in WA round to just east of Kangaroo Island in South Australia.



Threats:

- Human disturbance (divers, boat traffic)
- Entanglement in fishing nets
- Entanglement in debris/rubbish
- Climate change affecting their breeding and feeding sites and food supply
- Pollution especially oil spills

DID YOU KNOW?

Adult sea lions are very territorial. During the breeding season, they form groups of females called harems under one bull (male sea lion). Members of an individual harem will be aggressive towards sea lions that are not members and will kill pups that don't belong to their group.