

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Mirounga leonina Southern Elephant Seal

Group: Chordata (vertebrates), Mammalia (mammals), Carnivora (Carnivores), Phocidae (Earless seal)

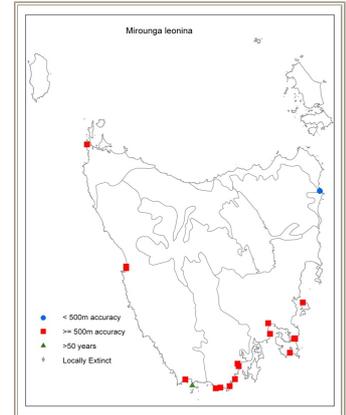
Status: *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995:* **endangered**
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Vulnerable

Endemic Status: Found in Tasmania and elsewhere



Southern elephant seals belong to the Phocidae family, which are earless seals. They are easily recognisable by their large trunk-like nose and huge body reaching 400 to 500 cm in length and weighing up to a massive 3600 kg (3.6 tonnes). Females are noticeably smaller weighing only 500 kg. Fur colour is dark to chocolate brown. Southern elephant seals once bred on King Island but were exterminated by the early 19th century. They now turn up on Tasmanian coasts only very occasionally with even rarer records of breeding. A breeding colony may be re establishing on Maatsuyker Island. A population of about 85 000 southern elephant seals live on Macquarie Island, including about 19 000 females. Animals come ashore in August to commence breeding from September to October. This time also coincides with the females pupping from the previous mating season. Non-breeding animals usually stay at sea during winter. Southern elephant seals also breed on Heard Island in the Antarctic. Threats are from deliberate persecution and hunting, entanglement in fishing gear, marine pollution including oil, chemicals and plastics, disturbance to breeding colonies and depletion of food stocks due to unsustainable commercial fishing.

Source; Bryant, S. L. and Jackson, J. (1999). *Tasmania's Threatened Fauna Handbook*. Threatened Species Unit, Parks and Wildlife Service, Hobart.



A complete species management profile is not currently available for this species. Check for further information on this page and any relevant Activity Advice.

Key Points

- **Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- **Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.

Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

Recovery Plan

Cite as: Threatened Species Section (2022). *Southern Elephant Seal (Mirounga leonina): Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link*. <https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Southern-Elephant-Seal.aspx> Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Accessed on 28/11/2022.

Contact details: Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

Permit: A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.