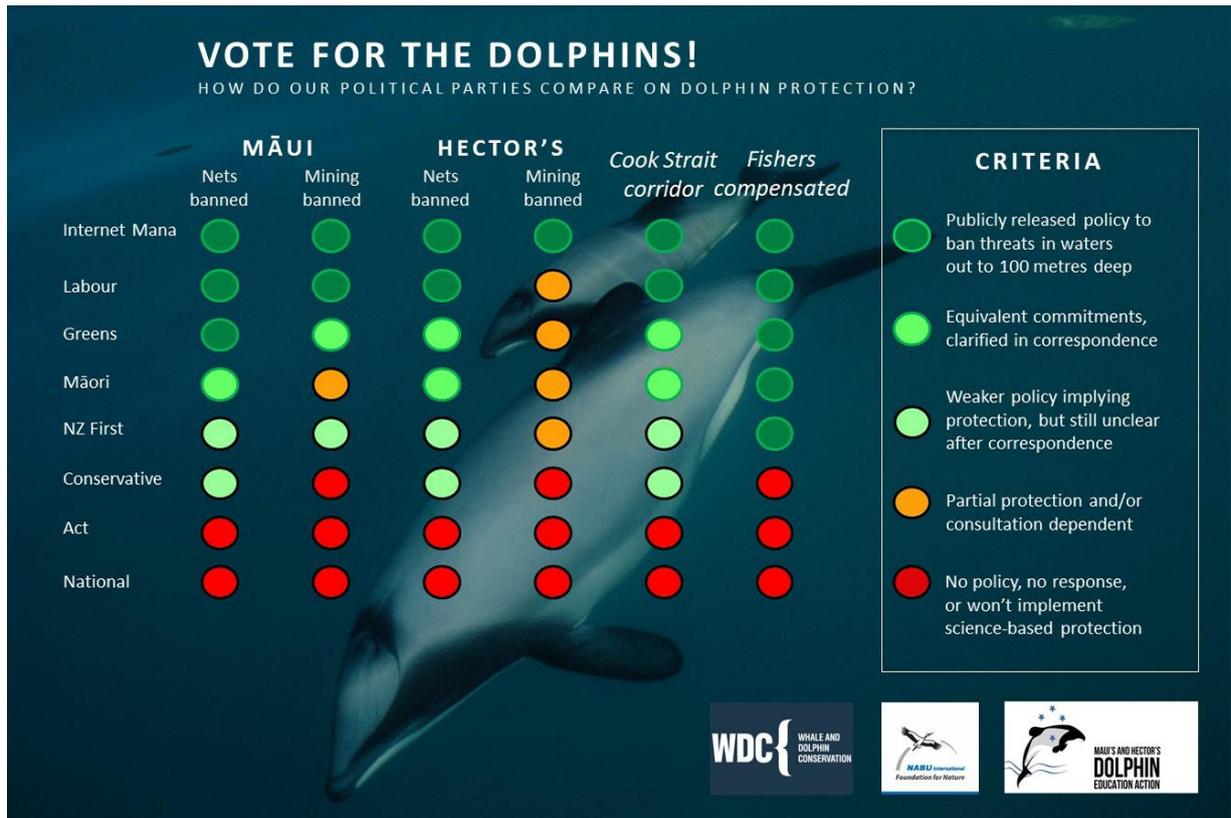


VOTER'S GUIDE FOR THRIVING DOLPHINS AND SEAS



SOLUTIONS FOR DOLPHIN CONSERVATION:

No fishing nets:

No gill nets, set nets or trawling out to the 100 metre depth contour in all areas of Hector's and Māui distribution.

No mining: No new mining to be explored or established.

Conservation corridor:

The vital link from Hector's in the South Island across the Cook Strait, and up into Māui territory. The Marlborough Sounds and Golden Bay Hector's dolphin subpopulations have no protection at all and are just as critical as Māui. They also are the key to long term survival of Māui with confirmed sightings of Hector's heading their way.

Compensation for fishers:

Monetary and other support for inshore fishers to transition from destructive, wasteful methods to selective, sustainable ones.

THE POLICIES:



The Internet Party 'Dolphins [Policy](#)' is the clearest and most comprehensive, with strong green circles across the board. The Internet Party will "take action to protect Hector's and Māui dolphins throughout their habitats, including the conservation corridor between the North and South Island dolphin populations".

In all areas of dolphin distribution, they will "ban new mineral exploration, ban fishing methods known to cause dolphin mortality (gillnets and trawling) and help the fishing industry transition to dolphin safe fishing methods (such as fish traps, hook and line methods)". The Internet Party takes it even further by committing to "establish marine traffic limits, community education programmes, support more research where needed" as well as offering support to environmental groups dedicated to save the dolphins.

Internet have taken expert science into consideration and are fully committed to save both Hector's and Māui from further decline, including the genetic bridge. Their policy also contains excellent background information on the dolphins.



Labour were the first party to have a comprehensive dolphin protection policy and make a clear commitment to protecting Māui and Hector's dolphins. Ruth Dyson, the Labour Party spokesperson for Conservation has made public statements over a long period explaining that this will be a win-win situation for the fishing industry. The same selective, sustainable fishing methods that are best for dolphins are also best for fish stocks and therefore the long term economic viability of the fishing industry.

Labour will "promote the recovery of Māui and Hector's dolphin populations by ensuring that only dolphin-safe fishing methods are used throughout the natural range of these dolphins, in all areas less than 100 metres deep". Labour have also committed to "implement a phase-out of destructive and unsustainable fishing methods (such as bottom trawling, dredging and set netting)" and to "support the fishing industry in transitioning to safe fishing methods that do not cause mortality of endemic marine mammals".

It is not yet entirely clear where Labour stands in terms of approving new mining activity, especially for Hector's dolphins. They have clearly stated they "will keep Māui dolphin safe from oil exploration" and "not grant any new permits for oil exploration unless it is proved that this activity, particularly seismic surveying, causes no harm to Maui's dolphin". They have indicated in public that they will seek the advice of scientists before considering any mining proposals. You can see their policy [here](#).



The Green Party have been a good voice in parliament for protecting the dolphins, with several oral questions initiated in proceedings, but their policy is not the strongest. They have a specific election [policy](#) for only Māui dolphins and “will extend fishing protections (prohibit lethal set nets and trawl nets) to the entire Māui range, as recommended by expert scientists. The International Whaling Commission’s scientific committee, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and the Society for Marine Mammology, have all called for set nets and trawl nets to be prohibited throughout the Māui dolphins’ range”. What they don’t mention is that most of these expert scientific groups have also called for the same protection measures be put in place for Hector’s dolphins. Their full Maui’s dolphin [policy](#) is comprehensive, but makes no mention of Hector’s dolphins, or the imperative conservation corridor.

The [overarching policy](#) is to “set near zero limits for threatened by-catch species in all fisheries, and to close a fishery if the by-catch limit is exceeded”. In further correspondence, Metiria Turei (Email, 19 August 2014) confirmed that “this would apply to Hector’s dolphin habitat, including the important area of ocean that is being used as a bridge between the North and South Islands, providing a vital genetic link between Hector’s and Māui” dolphins. The timeframe and mechanisms for achieving a near zero by-catch limit are not entirely clear from the policy documents or the correspondence.

The Green Party have made a firm commitment to financial compensation for the fishing industry, undertaking to “help protect the livelihoods of affected fishers by supporting them to adopt dolphin-safe fishing methods, with up to \$20 million over three years to transitional support for affected fishers”.

The Green Party have also committed to prohibiting “new oil and gas exploration, and mineral mining, throughout the Marine Mammal Sanctuary” off the North Island west coast. The sanctuary covers part of the range of Māui dolphins, extending to 12 nautical miles offshore from Maunganui Bluff to New Plymouth. They make no mention of protecting Hector’s dolphins from the impacts of mining.



As stated in the Māori Party’s Environment [policy](#), under Kaitiakitanga: the Māori Party commits to “enhance biodiversity within the marine area and prevent the extinction of the Māui dolphin and other marine species” and “promote transition from net setting and trawling to more selective sustainable fishing methods”.

The overall goal is to enhance biodiversity within the marine area and prevent the extinction of the Māui dolphin and other marine species. Te Uruora Flavell, in a [speech](#) to the Environmental Defence Society on 5 July, 2014, said “current measures are inadequate; the

New Zealand community clearly believes in stronger protection measures; this would involve a transition from set netting and trawling to more selective, sustainable methods”.

When asked for more specifics, the Māori Party confirmed they will “support the protection from gill nets and trawling out to the 100 metre depth contour in areas of Hector’s as well as Māui distribution. The Māori Party also supports the transition to sustainable fishing methods and will do what we can to help fishers transition to that” (Helen Leahy, Chief of Staff, Email 3 September, 2014).

The Māori Party “promotes robust consultation with mana whenua for all oil and mineral exploration permits” and this conflicts with their commitment to prevent extinction of Māui dolphins. It is not clear what this will mean, as past consultations have not necessarily led to effective environmental protection. The Māori Party are still to make a commitment on where they stand on dolphin protection with regard to mining activity.



There is no mention of dolphins in New Zealand First’s Environment and Conservation policy, but their strong [policy](#) on Primary Industries is promising: an “inshore fishery in which no bulk harvesting methods will be allowed”. This would mean no trawling or set netting in inshore waters.

There are a number of potential ‘loopholes’ in the NZ First Party’s policy. For example, it is not clear if the party supports recreational gillnetting in inshore waters, which would be a serious threat for the dolphins. The boundaries for inshore fisheries do not necessarily match with dolphin distribution: the 100 metre depth contour and 12 nautical miles offshore ‘default values’ are both mentioned in the policy, to be confirmed regionally through consultation with all stakeholders. This is not encouraging, as consultation usually takes many years and dolphin protection needs to be implemented now. In addition, policy states: “Where commercial fishing inshore is required in order to supply local trade (for example coastal set netting for flat fish) this must be only in designated areas and only by approved methods.” If this last statement means that any set netting or trawling for flat fish was permitted in Hector’s and Māui dolphin habitat, again this would be a serious threat to dolphin safety.

In response to a request for clarification, Richard Prosser (Email 4 September, 2014) stated that “It may be that commercial longlining for certain target species may be permitted in certain areas, but trawling and gill netting will be excluded from the entirety of the designated inshore fishery zone. Approval of coastal set netting for flat fish will be required to take account of endangered dolphin habitats amongst its other considerations”. Commercial fishers will also be compensated for the loss of access to the inshore fishery. Their stance on mining “may well be that the preservation of endangered species outweighs any economic returns possible from the exploitation of any given mineral resource” is encouraging, given that Winston Peters has [said](#) the party will “do everything they possibly can to preserve what we have left” of Māui dolphins.

The Conservative Party has a 'Thriving Oceans' policy but it is not yet available on their website. There is no mention of dolphins in their developing policies, but they feel very strongly about the inshore environment and "suggest practical and significant improvement can be made by sensible changes such as outlawing gill netting". They have also said they will ban commercial trawling in social media. In terms of dolphin conservation, it remains unclear whether they are prepared to extend their proposed set net and trawling bans to all areas of dolphin distribution.

It appears at this stage, they support mining and consultation. Potentially more green circles will be added for the Conservative Party when this summary is next updated.

National

National has made it clear in many public statements that they have no intention of improving protection for either Māui or Hector's dolphins. There is no mention of Māui or Hector's dolphins in their policies. Nick Smith, the Minister of Conservation has stated that if more research data become available (e.g. sightings or further fisheries deaths), he would initiate a review of the protection measures. National currently have red circles across the board for consistently ignoring the science and urgency to take a precautionary approach.

There are many examples of National deliberately misleading the public and confusing the issues in the media. For example, in his recent [address](#) to the EDS conference, 7 August, 2014, Nick Smith stated: "The science makes plain that the vast bulk of the risk to Māui is set netting and that is why our Government doubled the set net ban area".

In fact, set-net fishing is *only one* of the overwhelming risks to Hector's and Māui dolphins. Trawling and marine mining are also overwhelming risks.

To date, National has taken an *extremely risky* approach with decisions the exact opposite of a precautionary approach. A precautionary decision would have been to ban fishing methods known to kill dolphins in the habitat of Māui and Hector's dolphins, as recommended by the [IWC](#), [IUCN](#) and other national and international scientists including the [Society for Marine Mammalogy](#) and the [New Zealand Marine Sciences Society](#). Instead, after lengthy consultation periods, with taxpayers' money wasted revisiting and talking around the science, National has added only 3% more protection, to total 19% of Māui dolphin habitat protected today.



There is no mention of dolphins in the Act Party's policies. We have requested clarification, and hope to hear from Act soon.

Please note:

These policy summaries were correct at the time of publishing and will be updated accordingly where hosted online, with welcome developments in the political parties' policies. Political parties wishing to make urgent updates should contact Gemma McGrath by email: aotearoa.dolphin@gmail.com

Māui or Maui's?

Māui is correct in te reo Māori. Maui's is not.

Out of respect for many Māori engaged in this issue, we are long overdue to say Māui dolphins. We have stayed true to various parties' quotes, where they still use Maui's. Apologies for any confusion.