



# South Taranaki Whale Sanctuary

For a healthy environment

The Green Party will create New Zealand's largest marine mammal sanctuary to protect endangered blue whales from destructive mining

The South Taranaki Bight is an important feeding ground for critically endangered Antarctic blue whales and is a habitat for 37 other species of whales, dolphins, and porpoises. Their existence is under threat from destructive seabed iron sands mining and other exploration for fossil fuels and minerals. The Green Party will:

1. Create a marine mammal sanctuary off the South Taranaki coast, working with iwi, affected communities, the Department of Conservation, and other experts.
2. Prohibit any seabed mining permits and new petroleum and mineral prospecting permits in the sanctuary.

Endangered blue whales in the South Taranaki Bight are under threat from commercial exploitation in their feeding ground, such as seabed mining and seismic blasting from ships searching for oil and gas. These magnificent animals are the world's largest. They deserve our protection, as do the thousands of other creatures that call this region home.

The Green Party will create a new marine sanctuary called the South Taranaki Whale Sanctuary, that will prevent destructive seabed mining and phase out existing extractive activity, under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978. The sanctuary would be New Zealand's largest at around 30,000 square km, to cover the area where blue whales have most commonly been sighted. It could extend from Hawera in the North to Foxton in the South, out to around the 250 metre depth contour. The western boundary would extend north roughly in line with the South Island's Kahurangi Point. This includes most areas where blue whales are known to swim. The exact boundaries would be confirmed following negotiation with iwi and affected communities, and advice from the Department of Conservation (see map over page). Existing petroleum wells in the area will be allowed to continue to operate until their permits expire.

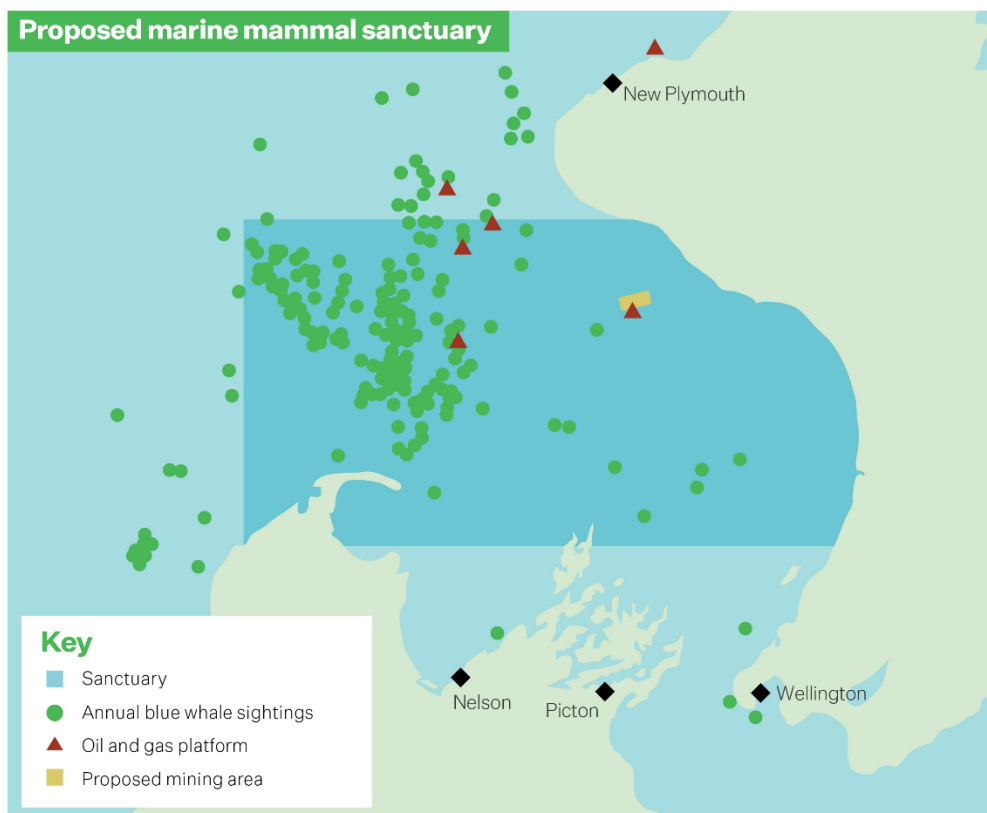
Ngāti Ruanui, alongside other iwi and hapū from South Taranaki, and Kiwis Against Seabed Mining (KASM), have been campaigning for a moratorium on seabed mining. The Green Party supports the kaitiaki rights of Ngāti Ruanui and other iwi. We stand with everyone who thinks it's time to put a stop to the irresponsible exploitation of our unique marine environment.

## A sanctuary to protect whales at risk

The South Taranaki Bight is one of only five known feeding areas for critically endangered blue whales in the southern hemisphere, where they forage for dense concentrations of krill regularly throughout the year. Scientists believe that the blue whales in the region may be part of a distinct New Zealand population of Antarctic blue whales. The Bight is also home to many other marine mammals, including Maui's dolphin, bottlenose dolphins, humpback whales, killer whales, sperm whales, and fur seals.

Iron sand seabed mining vacuums up the entire seabed, filters out minerals, and dumps everything back. Sediment generated from seabed mining can affect whales' ability to find and capture krill, their primary food source, and the disruption caused by ships and mining activities may drive the whales away. Noise pollution from oil and gas extraction, including seismic blasting, can prevent whales from communicating with each other.

By creating the South Taranaki Whale Sanctuary we can stand up to the mining industry, help protect whales and dolphins, and create sustainable local jobs through eco-tourism ventures. Preventing more fossil fuel exploration will also help protect our beaches from the risk of oil spills, and uphold our commitment to transitioning to clean energy.



[www.greens.org.nz/  
blue-whale-sanctuary](http://www.greens.org.nz/blue-whale-sanctuary)

**Green**

Authorised by James Shaw, Parliament Buildings, Wellington