

# The Australian Sea Lion

Respecting colonies for survival





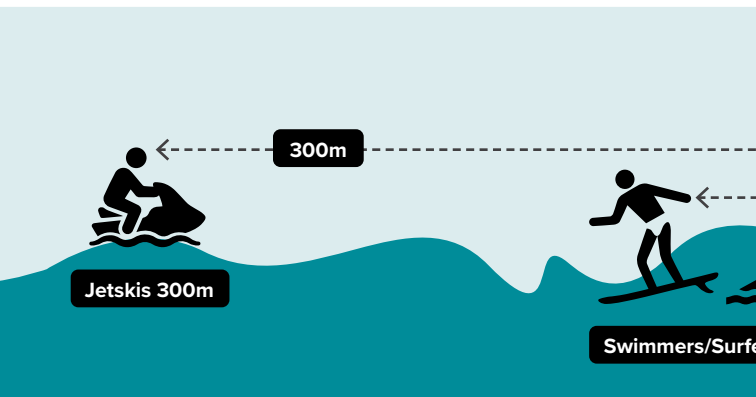
## Breeding

Australian sea lions breed approximately once every 18 months. Individual colonies breeding schedules are also asynchronous, meaning that each colony breeds independently from each other at different times across their entire range.

### Sea lion pups and their mothers

Sea lions are particularly sensitive to disturbance. Human disturbance can result in mothers being separated from their pups. Mother-pup separation can lead to malnourishment or starvation of the pup. It can also cause pup death from physical trauma from adult males or other protective mothers.

Sea lion pups are reliant on their mother's milk for at least 18 months. Though after 5 months, they begin to learn how and to hunt for food such as fish, crabs, octopus and squid.

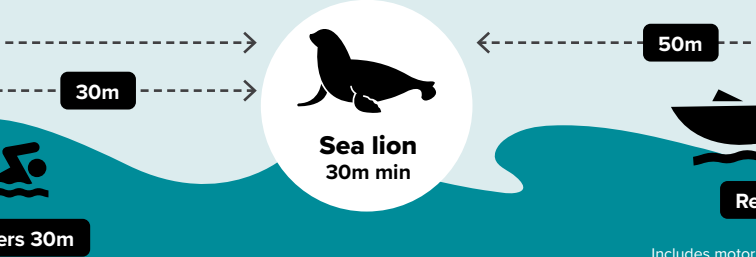


The mother spends another 18 months teaching the pup the art of finding and catching their own food before left to fend for themselves. These lessons from their mothers provide the pups with skills essential to independent survival in the harsh southern ocean.

Adult sea lions can be aggressive towards humans and other sea lions, especially around breeding season. It is a risk to both the sea lions and your personal safety if you approach a colony or individual animals either on land or in the water. Breeding colonies differ in population size across their range. The median pup production number is 14, meaning many of these smaller colonies are vulnerable to collapse.



## Minimum approach distances



Includes motor



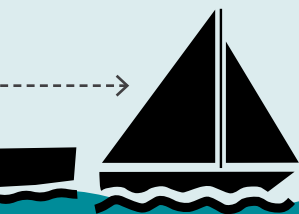
DEW Scientific Permit E26653 5 | Animal Ethics Permit 1/2020

## Need to know

Marine Mammal Regulations are in place to protect animals from disturbance and humans from being harmed by a defensive animal. Marine mammal regulations state that, without the appropriate permission:

- vessels must not anchor within 150 metres of a sea lion
- vessels must not approach within 50 metres of a sea lion
- if a sea lion is a pup / has a pup near, or appears to be sick, stranded or disturbed, vessels must maintain a distance of 150 metres
- Swimmers must not approach closer than 30 metres of a sea lion

Admire Australian sea lions from a distance. Stay clear of islands or beaches where sea lions are living or breeding.



**Recreational vessels 50m**

**Anchored vessels: 150m**  
Motorised and sail vessels 4 knot speed restriction



**Sea lion**  
30m min



## Australian sea lion survival

The Australian sea lion is the rarest seal species in Australian waters. Now Endangered, it's estimated that there's between 10,000 and 15,000 sea lions in Australia.

South Australia has approximately 82% of the population – the other 18% exist in Western Australia. The current low population size is due to a combination of exploitation during the sealing era, interactions with commercial fisheries, prey depletion, human disturbance, diseases and marine pollution. Populations are still declining at a rate of 2% per year on average.

Due to their vulnerability to disturbance, Australian sea lion colonies are largely restricted to remote, offshore islands. A large portion of colonies are located on islands off the coast of Eyre Peninsula.

## Great ways to enjoy sea lions

Observe Australian sea lions in the wild from the viewing platform at Point Labatt Conservation Park. Watch them basking on the beach, returning from hunting trips or swimming in the many rock pools. For the more adventurous, there are accredited tour operators across the Eyre Peninsula permitted to take people to swim with the sea lions. Visit Seal Bay on Kangaroo Island (tour options include wheelchair accessible boardwalk view).





**Always dreamed  
of being a  
Marine Biologist?**

# **Welcome to Sea Lion Spotter!**

A citizen science portal where your observations help shape recovery actions for Australia's largest Endangered Australian sea lion colony.

**Register at: [www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/Science/citizen-science](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/Science/citizen-science)**

Join our community of volunteers from around the world helping count Australian sea lion pups online. Get a glimpse into the private life of these inspiring marine mammals via our research drone images. Gain an insiders understanding of their biology, food chain and habitat health.

## **For further information**

National Parks and Wildlife Service - Eyre and Far West  
PO Box 22, 86 Tasman Terrace, Port Lincoln SA 5606

T: (08) 8688 3111

**[www.environment.sa.gov.au](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au)**

