



FACT SHEET

WHY A SOUTH PACIFIC WHALE SANCTUARY?

The nations of the South Pacific strongly support the establishment of a sanctuary to protect great whales in their region. A South Pacific Whale Sanctuary will complement existing whale sanctuaries in the Southern and Indian Oceans.

The South Pacific is home to all species of great whales found in the Southern Hemisphere. They are blue, fin, sei, southern right, humpback, Bryde's, minke, pygmy right and sperm whales. There are many good reasons to protect these marine creatures, which are still being killed for commercial gain under the guise of 'scientific' whaling.

A South Pacific Whale Sanctuary will:

- protect whale populations dramatically reduced by whaling in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Some species of whales, such as the southern right whale, were hunted almost to extinction and only in the past 20 years have their numbers shown any signs of recovery.
- protect great whales from commercial whaling within their feeding and breeding grounds and migration routes in the Southern Hemisphere. It will extend protection from the feeding grounds of the Southern Ocean to the breeding grounds in the South Pacific, which are used by many great whales for mating, calving and calf rearing.
- ensure greater protection for migratory whale species in areas where they are known to be vulnerable to whaling activities, such as in breeding grounds where they concentrate in larger numbers.
- strengthen the effectiveness of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary by protecting whales as they leave its boundaries on their annual migrations.
- provide economic benefits to many South Pacific nations through whale watching. The industry is worth an annual \$US1 billion worldwide and attracts nine million participants in 87 countries, according to a report published by the International Fund for Animal Welfare. In comparison, Japan's and Norway's commercial whaling activities are worth just \$US60 million each year.
- foster long-term research on whale populations and the ecosystems in which they live. Whales live for many years and information essential for their long-term global management is still needed.

