

# Protecting the Whale Population. The Real and Imminent Extinction Risk to Whales, Dolphins And Porpoises

By [Mammal Research Institute](#)

Global Research, September 04, 2020

[Mammal Research Institute](#)

Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Environment](#)

*Established in 1985, the MRI Whale Unit is a global, African research, conservation and education facility that researches the ecology, population dynamics and behaviour of the diverse cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) in the Southern African sub-region and surrounding oceans, with the principal objective of providing knowledge that will promote their conservation. A primary raison d'être of the Unit remains the development of human capacity in these areas. Research, Conservation and Education are interlinked to execute forward-looking programmes, integral for the understanding of conservation priorities for African cetaceans.*

The MRI Whale Unit possesses a wealth of expertise and tacit knowledge, intellectual property, and well-established knowledge resource bases. The Unit has current national and international collaborations with over 30 organisations, and co-leads the research theme on southern right whales of the Southern Ocean Research Partnership of the International Whaling Commission ([iwc.int/sorp](http://iwc.int/sorp))

Research Projects range across a broad national and international geographic and institutional spectrum and align within these Research Themes:

- **Recovering Whales** - The role of large whales in Southern Hemisphere Ocean Ecosystems
  - Large Migratory whale population abundance and trends
    - Southern right whale population abundance and trends
    - East and West coast humpback whale abundance
    - Antarctic blue whale population abundance
  - Acoustic monitoring of seasonal presence and abundance of baleen whales on historical whaling grounds

- Large whale feeding ecology
  - West coast humpback feeding ecology
  - Southern right whales as a model species to predict the effects of climate change on Southern Ocean productivity
  - Southern right whale body condition on the South African breeding ground
  
- **African Links** – Building African Marine Mammal research capacity
  - African East Coast and Western Indian Ocean
    - Establishing movement links of humpback whales between SA and Mozambique, Madagascar and the Western Indian ocean archipelago breeding grounds
    - Monitoring occurrence of southern right whales in Mozambique and links between SA and Mozambique

### **The Real and Imminent Extinction Risk to Whales, Dolphins And Porpoises**

This is an open letter from experts highlighting the current risks to the worlds cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises). The list of signatories to the statement is still being regularly updated. The final date to sign on is the end of September. If your name is missing or if there are some other problems with your sign-on please email us and we will correct this.

Please email both [Mark Simmonds](mailto:mark.simmonds@sciencegyre.co.uk) (mark.simmonds@sciencegyre.co.uk) and [Els Vermeulen](mailto:elsvermeulen5@gmail.com) (elsvermeulen5@gmail.com) to sign or make a correction. The list of species and populations and their statuses is based exclusively on the IUCN red data list.

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