

Nicks on Hector's dolphin fins are more than just scars

Ever notice how some dolphins have nicks and notches out of their fins? Each pattern is unique (like a fingerprint) and allows scientists to track individuals and tell whether the population is growing or declining.



Some of these nicks are caused by close calls with fishing gear. Since part of their habitat in Banks Peninsula is now protected from fishing, fewer dolphins have scars.

This is great! But how will we be able to tell if population numbers are healthy if we can't tell them apart?

I will be exploring the implications of this dilemma with statistical methods.



Hector's dolphins are found only in New Zealand, and are rarer than most species of kiwi!



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