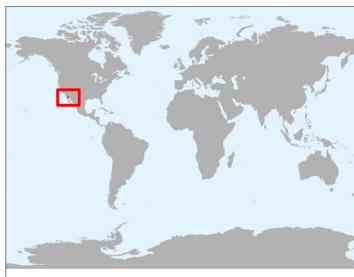




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Geographical range

Species of the Day: Vaquita

The **Vaquita**, *Phocoena sinus*, is listed as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. This small porpoise is restricted to the upper Gulf of California, Mexico, and has the unfortunate distinction of being the world's most threatened cetacean species.

With a population estimated at only around 150, the Vaquita is undergoing a disastrous decline. The upper Gulf of California is intensively fished, and as a result the most serious threat to the Vaquita is entanglement in gillnets.

Since 2008, the Government of Mexico has established the Vaquita Refuge as a net-free fishing zone, and reduced the level of fishing effort in other areas through a combination of economic measures. Compensation for fishing permit holders who retire their permits or switch to other Vaquita-safe fishing methods, and improved enforcement to regulate illegal fishing have so far reduced the gillnet fishing effort by about a third. However, given the perilous status of the Vaquita, stronger measures are needed to ensure that all gillnets are removed from the entire range of the species.

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