



UNDER THREAT: Sea lions help bring much-needed tourism revenue to SA. Picture: Peter Shaughnessy

# Aussie sea lions facing extinction

**Brian Williams**  
ENVIRONMENT REPORTER

A STUDY has found that about 370 threatened Australian sea lions are killed each year in nets used by commercial shark fishermen.

Unless the catch of females in its South Australia habitat is stopped, it is feared the species will become extinct in some areas.

Queensland's marine turtles suffered similar major losses until the late 1990s when trawling was banned in rookeries during the egg-laying season and turtle excluder devices fitted to prawn nets.

Similarly, endangered dugongs suffered major

losses until the use of gill nets was restricted.

Meanwhile, Environment Department and fisheries staff are investigating the origin of a net used to trap and kill three dugongs off Cairns.

Sailors aboard HMAS *Labuan* found the net last Friday. One of the air-breathing mammals was released and three dead dugongs brought ashore.

Girringun Aboriginal Corporation spokesman Phil Rist said yesterday that illegal harvesting undermined his organisation's efforts to balance traditional activities with conservation.

Discovery of the dugongs comes on the back of anecdotal accounts of

turtles being targeted for illegal meat trade.

WWF spokesman Cliff Cobbo said the Federal Government should fund new indigenous rangers to police more remote areas to the north.

Humane Society International spokeswoman Alexia Wellbelove said urgent action was similarly needed to protect sea lions, which brought vital tourism revenue to SA.

Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett has given fishermen until June 30 to implement measures to protect sea lions.

Ms Wellbelove said: "Scientists have stated that in order to avoid further declines ... management arrangements in the fish-

ery need to eliminate bycatch of the females as soon as possible.

"HSI believes the only proven option is the closure of fishing grounds where females are most impacted.

"Whilst we sympathise with the industry on the impacts these closures may have, the Australian sea lion is an important contributor to the economy and the Government has strict legal obligations to protect it."

The State Government did not move to have turtle excluder devices fitted to nets until the US said in 1996 it would ban Australian prawn imports because the tackle had not been adopted.

## AC/DC's album the best

THE AC/DC album *Back in Black* has topped a poll of the 100 greatest rock albums of all time.

The band had another two albums in the chart - *TNT* at number 29 and *High Voltage* (72).

The Triple M chart featured seven Aussie bands in the top 20, including INXS, Midnight Oil and Cold Chisel. Guns N' Roses' *Appetite for Destruction* was at No 2.

## Thief flashes screwdriver

POLICE are searching for a man who robbed a Logan adult shop with what looked like a sharpened screwdriver on Thursday night.

The armed man entered the shop on Grand

Plaza Drive at Browns Plains about 9pm and then fled with the cash he had demanded from a female worker.

The robber is of average height with a slim build, and fair skin.