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SEALS IN SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA

The three species of otariids that breed in coastal areas and islands of southern Australia (Australian fur seals, New Zealand fur seals and Australian sea lions, Figure 4.1) can occur in sympatry (overlap in ranges) and can be easily confused with one another. They possess common features and characteristics. For instance, they can all appear grey to brown with dark flippers when they are wet. Ultimate identification to species level can rely on attention to details and circulating photographs amongst experienced observers. The location and behaviour of the seal provide clues, as do size and head shape. Colour can also be useful, although it may be deceptive because an individual's colour changes when wet, throughout the year (depending on pelt condition and time

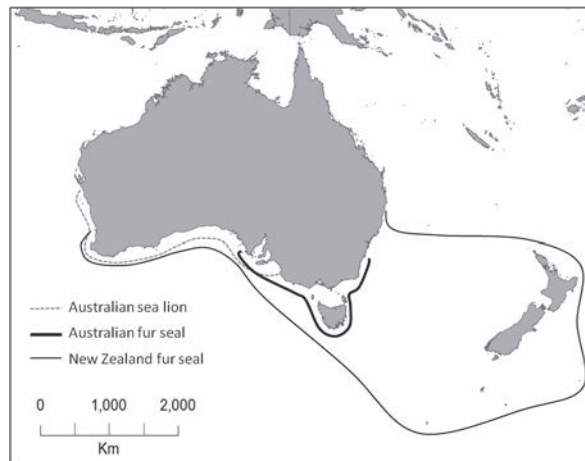


Figure 4.1. Ranges for the Australian sea lion, Australian fur seal and New Zealand fur seal.