



© IFAW

# Last call for the mediterranean monk seal

- 2,500 years ago the monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) was a common sight in the Mediterranean Sea, loved by the ancient Greeks. Nowadays it is the rarest marine mammal in Europe and one of the six most threatened animals on Earth.
- The current total population is estimated at fewer than 500 individuals spread over Mediterranean and West African countries. Around 200-250 monk seals live in Greek and Turkish waters.
- There are many threats to this critically endangered species: destruction of habitat, mass tourism and human disturbance, shortage of food caused by overfishing, deliberate killing by fishermen, entanglement in fishing gear, disease and pollution.
- IFAW has been engaged in protecting the Mediterranean monk seal for many years, through funding projects for the establishment and enforcement of protected areas, providing practical research and surveys, supporting rehabilitation and encouraging cooperation across the regions where monk seals still remain.