

# Vaquitas

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Introduction

Vaquitas, discovered in 1958, are critically endangered with only ten estimated animals remaining in the wild. None of these cetaceans have ever been captured and raised in captivity. Cetaceans belong to a family of aquatic creatures that are mostly whales, dolphins, and other aquatic mammals. Gillnet fishing hurts the vaquita and totoaba population.

## What Are Vaquitas

Originally porpoises swam into the Gulf of California and evolved to become Vaquitas. Adults can grow up to 1.5 meters in length and grow up to approximately 55 kilograms in weight. Today, vaquitas are only found in the shallow waters of the Gulf of California. Vaquitas consume small fish, shrimp, squid, and octopuses. Preyed upon by killer whales and large sharks, humans appear to be their most challenging predator.

## Why Is The Totoaba Gillnet Fishing Hurting The Vaquita

The totoaba, like the vaquita, is native to the Gulf of California. In addition, they both are going extinct because of overfishing. A totoaba is a BIG fish, even bigger than the vaquita, which is the problem. The totoaba's swim bladder is what fishermen want because it is prized for its thickness and size. It is also sought after for its perceived medicinal properties. A totoaba sells for as much as \$46,000 per kilogram on the black market in China. Fishermen use gill nets to catch the totoaba which is also catching the vaquita.

## Vaquitas Are Dying, What Can We About It

Since vaquitas are dying you are probably wondering what we can do to help. According to [porpoise.org](http://porpoise.org) you can tell everyone you know, the more people know the better. You can also purchase sustainable seafood. Don't purchase Mexican shrimp. And you can support the Gulf of California. So there are more things that you can find at [porpoise.org](http://porpoise.org). An article will help you is called, [What You Can Do to Help The Vaquita — Porpoise Conservation Society](#) - so go do something.

## Conclusion

Even if you don't know what vaquitas are, they are important to learn about. They are a real species and it's not a small problem. Overfishing hurts a lot of species, not just vaquitas. And gillnet fishing does not just hurt the vaquitas but the totoaba. Which at first I didn't think was endangered but they are going extinct too. And again you, can, help. Don't buy Mexican shrimp so that will pressure the Mexican government because Mexican shrimp is a BIG money making thing. And that supports the government so if we don't buy Mexican shrimp and then they will notice. And we can write a letter or make an article. Remember it's not totoaba, it

is the gillnet fishing by humans.

## Source List

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