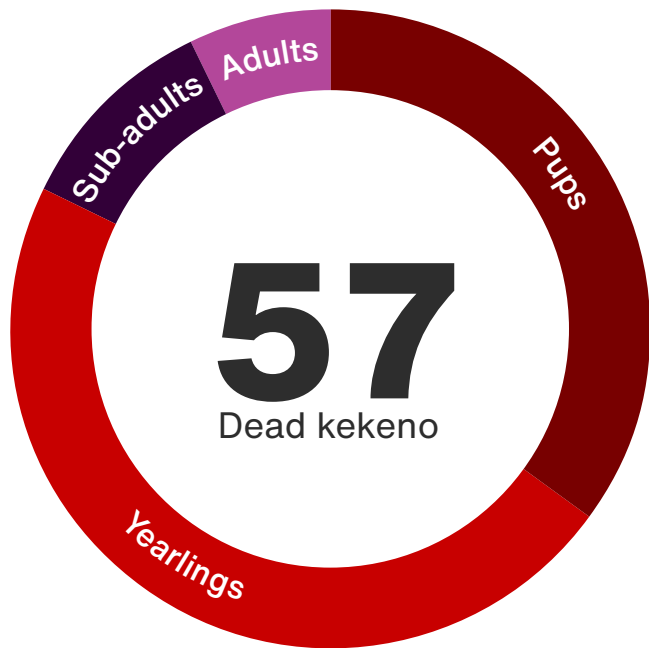


# KEKENO / FUR SEAL MORTALITIES 2023

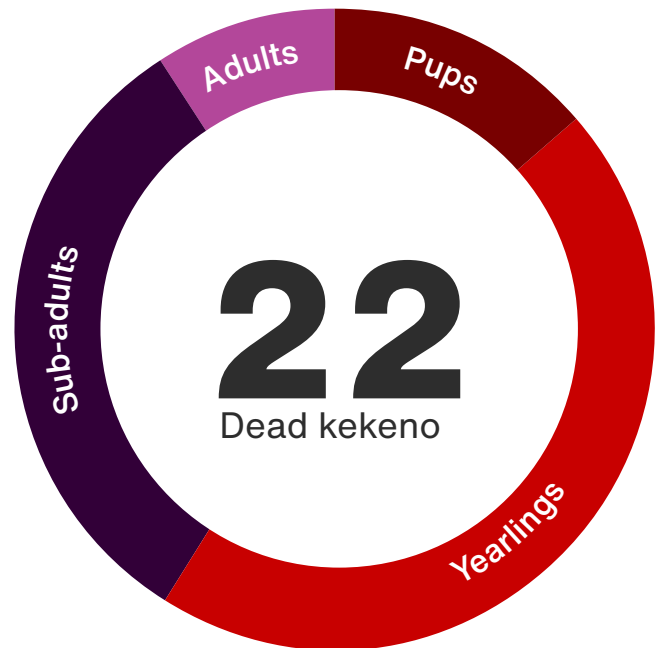
In the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi

Throughout 2023, I continued my investigation into the phenomenon of beachcast kekeno. This year marked a departure from my 2021 approach; I did not solicit reports from the public, leading to reduced visibility of the study. Instead, I relied on data gathered from social media, contacts familiar with my research, the citizen science platform iNaturalist.nz, and colleagues within the Department of Conservation's Seal Observation Squad. This network enabled me to document 21 instances of beachcast kekeno, alongside one additional case of a seal that succumbed after being cared for at Auckland Zoo, bringing the total to 22.

## 2021



## 2023

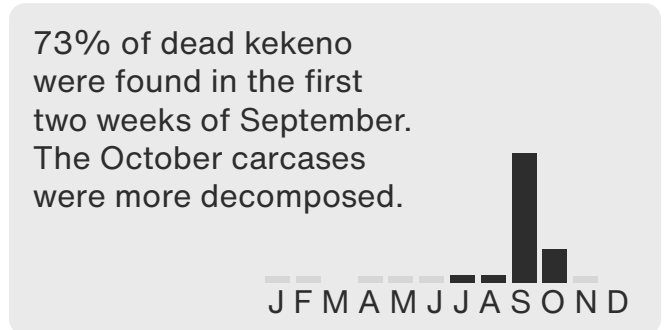


**25** Thin dead kekeno

**32** Kekenos that did not die from starvation

**6** Thin dead kekeno

**14** Kekenos that did not die from starvation



Similarities with the more extensive 2021 study have been observed, however older animals died in 2023. Gratitude is extended to the DOC (Department of Conservation) and the Hauraki Gulf Forum for their support of necropsies to determine causes of death. In 2023, Auckland Zoo conducted a necropsy revealing starvation and significant parasitic infection as causes. I am committed to assisting with the transportation of kekeno to Auckland Zoo for necropsies during the initial fortnight of September 2024. My thanks to DOC experts for their assistance in categorising the dead kekeno.