

Seminar
on Conservation of River Dolphins of
Indian Sub - Continent

August 18th & 19th, 1992, NEW DELHI.



Venue : CSIR Science Centre, Gate No. 2, Lodi Gardens, New Delhi - 3.
Hosted : National Institute of Oceanography, Panaji, Goa.
Convened : Conservation of Nature Trust, Calicut.

Ganges river dolphin, *Platanista gangetica* and the Indus river dolphin *P. minor* are the two river dolphins found in the rivers of Indian sub continent. The Ganges river dolphins are distributed in the rivers Ganges and Brahmaputra crossing the boundaries of Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan whereas the Indus river dolphins are confined to the river Indus of Pakistan. The river dolphins (Platanistoids) of the Indian sub-continent are unique as they have no functional eyes, but the functions of the eyes are taken over by an efficient sonar mechanism. Their sense of echo - location is well developed.

River dolphins of Indian sub - continent are "threatened" due to various ecological degradations like siltation, pollution and loss of habitat. The anthropogenic activities like pollution fishing, poaching, construction of dams and navigation also have its serious impact on them.

It has been observed that large numbers of Ganges dolphins are killed in the gillnets. Due to over exploitation of fishes, availability of its food is also becoming less. The calves of dolphins are becoming more vulnerable to the various types of gillnets that are increasingly employed in the rivers. Conflict between the dolphins and the human activities are mounting. If co - ordinated conservation measures are not taken immediately with the co - operation of the countries of its range of distribution the 'diving beauties' of the rivers, the dolphins, will be lost for ever. The Seminar is one of the efforts to preserve the bio-diversity of the species.

The Seminar is convened to discuss and formulate conservation strategies to protect the river dolphins of Indian sub continent and to safeguard its habitat. Specialists from the countries of its distribution, India, Pakistan, Nepal & Bangladesh along with the experts from U. S. A. and Canada will pool their expertise to evolve recommendations to save the dolphins.

Convener,

New Delhi
18 - 8 - 92

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SAVE THE RIVER DOLPHINS
Cetacean Specialist Group / I U C N