



*por un planeta vivo*

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## **New expedition to count river dolphins in the Amazon**

**LIMA, Perú.-** On Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup> an international scientific expedition through the Amazon river basin started in Iquitos, Peru. This expedition included parts of Colombia and Brazil. The main goal is to make river dolphin counts, in order to determine the dynamics of their populations and confirm whether they have increased, decreased or remained stable.

“WWF has been performing an expedition on the borders of Colombia, Brazil, and Peru to estimate river dolphin abundance. The collected information will be of great importance to have estimates regarding river dolphin populations. Furthermore, it will contribute greatly towards one of the main goals of the National Action Plan for Conservation of River Dolphins (*Inia geoffrensis* and *Sotalia fluviatilis*) and the Amazonian Manatee (*Trichechus inunguis*) in Peru”, said Vania Tejeda, Biodiversity Officer at WWF Peru.

On this trip there will be 12 scientists from the initiative for South American River Dolphins (SARDI, for its English acronym). This is the third time the scientists will be traveling this route of the Amazon river, from Iquitos, going by Leticia (Colombia), and arriving at Santo Antonio do Içá (Brazil).

Information from 20 – 30 years ago will help confirm that the river dolphin populations could be decreasing. The group of experts needs to collect new data to determine population tendencies and verify what is happening, as explained by Fernando Trujillo, scientific Director at the Omacha Foundation and member of SARDI.

The group of scientists will also evaluate the different types of threats on the path, including pressure of river Dolphin hunting to be used as bait to catch a species of fish known as mota (in Peru, Colombia), piracatinga (in Brazil) or blanquillo (in Bolivia). This is due to this activity being still under development on the peruvian part of the river, according to Miriam Marmontel, investigator at Mamirauá Institute in Brazil. “We will also collect data regarding other threats such as deforestation. We are noticing that the river level is too high, which is atypical during this time of the year. Furthermore, the journey we will be making from Leticia to San Antonio de Içá (Brasil) will be the first, and this will allow us to cover a lack of information, because we had made expeditions from the river Putumayo to the Amazon and we were missing a piece to have a vision of this axis”, tells Saulo Usma from WWF Colombia.

SARDI is conformed by the organizations Faunagua, Omacha Foundation, Mamirauá, Prodelphinus and WWF. On this occasion, the Initiative welcomes Solinia, an organization in Peru, that is helping with the organization of the expedition, and its scientists are part of its technical team.

The experts at SARDI expect that the information obtained during this trip, together with the analysis of satellite monitoring performed since 2017, will be taken into consideration for the development of a Conservation and Management Plan (CMP for its English acronym) for the



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river dolphins. This plan would be endorsed by the International Whaling Commission (maximum scientific body in charge of cetacean related regulations), as a result of a coordinated effort between governments. This way, the CMP is aiming at mitigating the threats to river dolphins in South America.