



BRIEFING

INT

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# YANGTZE FINLESS PORPOISE

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *NEOPHOCAENA ASIAEORIENTALIS ASIAEORIENTALIS*

## HOW MANY ARE LEFT?

There are less than 2000 fresh water Yangtze finless porpoises remaining, of which 100 live in semi-natural reserves. This low number makes the species critically endangered.

## MORE ABOUT THEM

The Yangtze finless porpoise only lives in the Yangtze River, the longest river in Asia. At one point, this porpoise shared the waters with the Baiji dolphin—a species while last seen in 2002, has been declared functionally extinct in 2006. The Yangtze finless porpoise is known for its intelligence, which is on par with that of a gorilla. They primarily feed on fish, prawn, squid, octopus and shrimp. Its scientific name is *Neophocaena asiaeorientalis asiaeorientalis*.

## WHY IS THE YANGTZE RIVER DOLPHIN THREATENED?

This species has a high degree of interaction with humans which puts the finless porpoise at risk. Like other porpoises, large numbers are killed by entanglement in gill nets and illegal fishing. Land reclamation and infrastructure development has degraded and fragmented the dolphins' habitat, as do dredging, sand mining, water pollution, and navigation, causing vessel strikes and acoustic disturbance.

## WHAT IS WWF DOING?

In 2014, the Chinese government gave the Yangtze porpoise the strictest protections available by law. WWF works with the government to relocate porpoises to safer parts of the river where they have a better opportunity to thrive. We also help fishermen along the Yangtze River find feasible alternatives for income generation. The shift in livelihood helps develop the economy, stop overfishing and gives communities a central role in saving an iconic species.



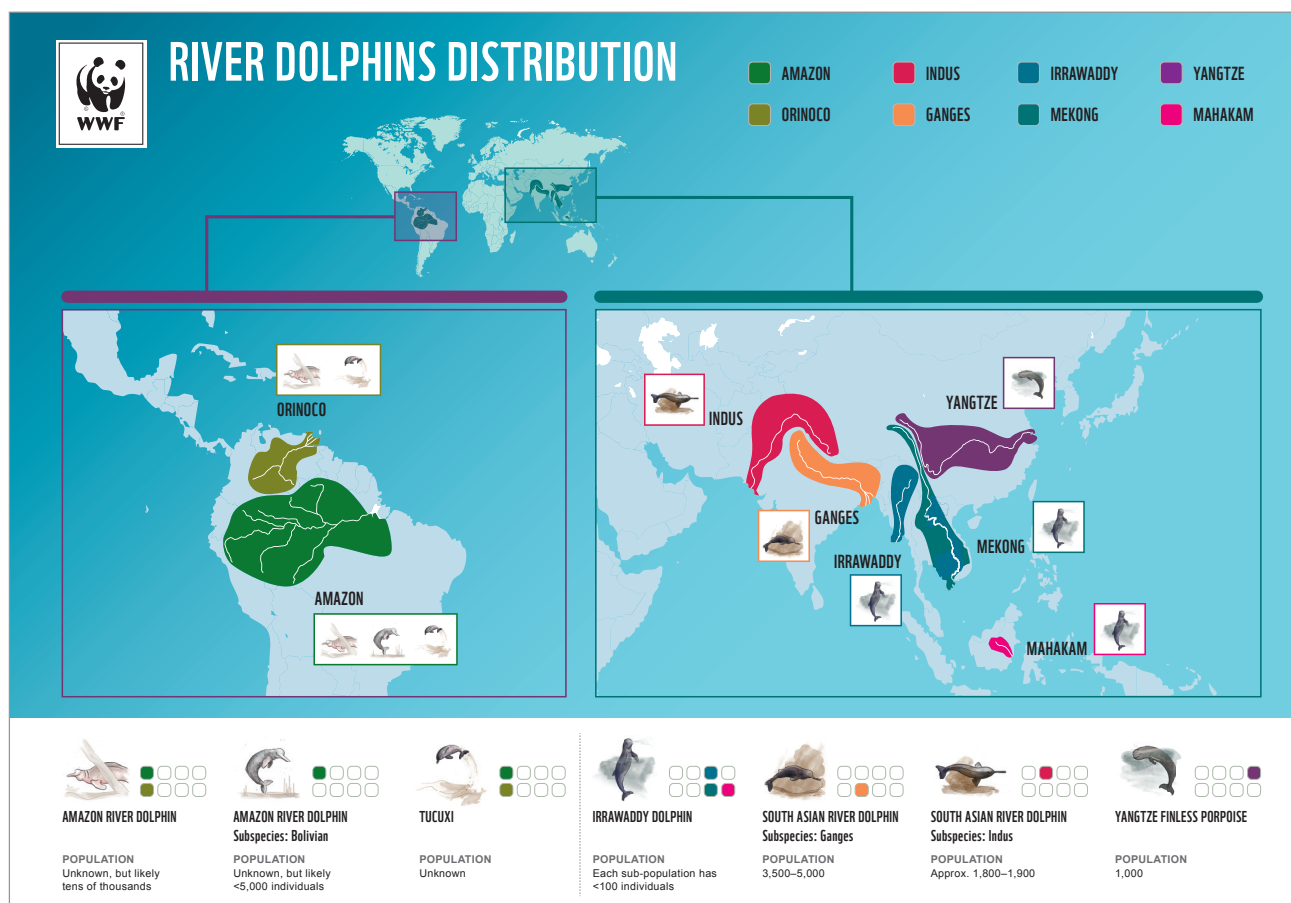
## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

**Only by building and growing a strong global community of partners will we be able to secure the long-term future of river dolphins.**

WWF is excited to work with local and global partners on key projects including:

- Population monitoring and relocating the porpoise to safer parts of the river within their natural range;
- working with local fishermen to adapt their livelihoods, and with the government to reduce fishing activities within the river dolphins' range;
- creating a global movement to unite and inspire governments, businesses and communities to secure the long-term future of river dolphins, their rivers and the communities that depend on them.
- working towards a signed Inter-Governmental Declaration by 2021 to protect river dolphins worldwide.

**JOIN US.  
TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE  
THIS HAPPEN.**



## RIVER DOLPHINS AT RISK

*River dolphins are found in 15 countries, covering some of the world's most ecologically diverse river basins, including the Yangtze, Mekong, Indus, and Ganges in Asia and the Orinoco and Amazon basins in South America.*

There are however only **five existing species** of river dolphins left in the world today and **they are all endangered or critically endangered**.

WWF's answer to disrupt and reverse this trend is to build a global movement, the River Dolphin Initiative, to secure the long-term future of river dolphins, their rivers and the communities that depend on them.

Our vision is that by 2030, we will have stopped the decline of river dolphin populations in Asia and South America and will have restored and doubled the most threatened populations.

There are three major global threats to river dolphins:

- Unsustainable fishing and fishing-related activities. In Asia, (illegal) bycatch is the number one cause of river dolphin mortality. In South America, intentional killing of river dolphins for fish bait and meat affects several thousand dolphins per year.
- Infrastructure projects that affect habitat connectivity, including hydropower dams, irrigation barrages and

embankments. In Asia, river dolphin habitat has decreased by 50–70% and in South America by 10%. Asia and South America are in the grips of an infrastructure explosion; for example, with hundreds of dams planned in the Amazon, and a potential giant dam in the lower Mekong (Sambor).

- Mining, agriculture and industrial development that degrade water quality. Deteriorating water quality due to agriculture runoff and industrial effluents is a serious threat to dolphins in Asia, while mercury poisoning due to gold mining has been found in dolphins in both Asia and South America.

### HOW WILL WE DELIVER THIS INITIATIVE?

WWF has long-term river dolphin conservation experience, but we know that we cannot bend the curve alone. Our solution is to mobilize a powerful global community of partners to secure the future of river dolphins and the communities that depend on healthy and productive freshwater ecosystems.



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together possible [panda.org](http://panda.org)

### For more information, please contact:

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