



PRESSE RELEASE

UNEP/CMS rallies further support for the Year of the Dolphin

Bonn, 16 August 2007 - "The reported extinction of the Chinese River Dolphin in 2006 shows the threats facing dolphins as a whole. This alarm signal will spur increasing conservation efforts for all 38 of the remaining dolphin species, freshwater and marine alike during the Year of the Dolphin (YoD)", said Mr. Robert Hepworth, Executive Secretary of CMS.

UNEP/CMS and its partners ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) and TUI consider the loss of this mammal as a wake-up call to signal growing man made threats to whales and dolphins. The YoD Partners look to Governments and the Private Sector to work together in preventing further habitat degradation, chemical and noise pollution, incidental bycatch and the many other dangers facing our whales, dolphins and porpoises.

The Year of the Dolphin is a special campaign during 2007. It has prompted actions to highlight the plight of dolphins world-wide. For example thousands of Dolphin Manuals and other relevant material featuring the Year of the Dolphin have been distributed by the founding partners to raise awareness among children of dolphins around the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and in the Caribbean. A workshop on fisheries will be funded following the recent launch of the campaign in Crete, Greece to reduce interactions between cetaceans and fisheries. The dolphin has been featured as the predominant theme in children's literature from Italy to Nepal.

Passengers in Europe and Asia will have the opportunity to study reports on the campaign in inflight magazines. Film producers will document progress made during the campaign. TUI's partner in Kenya organized a major event in Mombasa in cooperation with CMS and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to raise awareness on dolphins. As a contribution to responsible ecotourism, new guidelines for whale watching were given to KWS Marine Park Chief Wardens for implementation along the Kenyan coast. They were produced as a direct result of the Kenyan YoD campaign. The campaign was also prominently advertised during the 2007 Grand Prix in Monaco.

Raising awareness and education will be at the centre of the dolphin week at schools in the Netherlands and Belgium in October. In France, Sailors for Dolphins is hoisting the campaign flag fly in the rig of sailing boats competing during international regattas.

Conservation bodies, universities and municipalities in Portugal are commemorating the Year of the Dolphin in the media on Children's Day, Nature Conservation Day and World Animal Day. The Dolphin Fund, established by the Coastal Union, the European Cetacean Society and NatureNet Europe is promoting conservation projects in Europe. Backstreet Boys singer and

Year of the Dolphin Ambassador Nick Carter will start supporting initiatives, amongst which a dedicated website, dolphin video and dolphin song.

It has become even more crucial for the Convention and its partners to support vital research and develop relevant agreements with a view to ensuring conservation on a global scale. CMS and its partners will negotiate a new agreement on West African cetaceans in Tenerife, in October. Based on international cooperation, a global network of agreements will ensure the efficient conservation of these migrants across the world's seas. The Agreement on the Conservation on Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic areas has submitted a new proposal for large areas of protection in the Mediterranean and Black Seas for some of the world's most threatened whale and dolphin populations to be discussed at its next Meeting of the Parties in October.

CMS is working with governments, conservation bodies, industries and individuals around the world to prevent a similar loss for biodiversity from happening again. Raising awareness of threats to dolphins and negotiating regional agreements are crucial steps to help restore populations of endangered dolphin species on a regional and international level.

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