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REPORT ON YEAR OF THE DOLPHIN AND FUTURE SPECIES CAMPAIGNS

(Prepared by the CMS Secretariat)

CMS “Year of...” Species Campaigns

Origin of the “Year of...” concept

1. The primary goal of the Convention’s Outreach and Communication Plan (COP 8, Resolution 8.8) is the identification and implementation of actions and initiatives for raising awareness of threats faced by migratory species.
2. Shortly after COP 8 in 2005, the Secretariat developed the concept of successive, annual campaigns, each built around a charismatic migratory species (or group of species). In addition to raising awareness in the wider public realm through these ‘flagship species’, key objectives included engagement with the private sector and numerous environmental organisations. A further aim is to raise new funds for the Convention’s activities, in line with the budget provision made by Parties in 2005.
3. Inspiration came from other UN and international campaigns (e.g. Polar Year 2007/08, Year of the Frog 2008, UNESCO Decade on Education for Sustainable Development 2005-14). CMS aims to complement rather than compete with other campaigns and hence liaises closely with other organisations to coordinate the choice of flagship species and timing of activities.

Year of the Turtle 2006

4. The CMS Agreement IOSEA (Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia) initiated the first ‘Year of...’ campaign in 2006 focused on the area covered by the agreement.
5. The ‘Year of the Turtle’ campaign highlighted the importance of marine turtles through numerous awareness and fund raising events throughout Southeast Asia. The initiative aimed to contribute to ensuring the long-term survival of marine turtles through involvement of local communities; identifying and protecting important habitat areas for marine turtles; reducing mortality by encouraging sustainable use and reducing bycatch and supporting or taking part in scientific research to better understand the turtles’ needs.

6. Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado of Japan took the role of YoT patron. The campaign featured a website with information on the situation of and threats to turtles, as well as regular news updates on the events and achievements of the Year of the Turtle. The campaign achieved a significant increase in visits to the IOSEA website.

7. Activities included training workshops for the fishing industry in Vietnam, turtle beach clean-up days in Pakistan, publication of new research findings in Thailand, and the launch of limited edition postage stamps in Kenya. There were various informational and promotional materials such as a poster, a calendar, T-shirts and caps.

8. A number of countries took the initiative to formally establish sanctuaries for marine turtles and to open specialised information centres as a contribution to the YoT. Satellite tracking projects were initiated, and turtles were released as part of awareness-raising activities.

The Year of the Dolphin 2007/2008



9. The first fully global CMS ‘Year of...’ campaign was the Year of the Dolphin in 2007, launched and managed by a partnership led by the CMS Secretariat and comprising two CMS agreements (ACCOBAMS, the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black and Mediterranean Seas, and ASCOBANS, the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas), an NGO (Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society) and the global tourism group TUI AG. All major strategic decisions were coordinated between these five partners.

10. Dolphins were an obvious choice for CMS. With their variety of almost 40 species, they are a highly diverse group and well-known globally. Many dolphin species are classified as endangered or critically endangered by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) and require urgent conservation measures. The threats they face range from bycatch, habitat loss and pollution to less obvious threats such as noise pollution. They are generally seen as sympathetic animals and can stimulate strong pro-conservation responses, especially among the young. Dolphins also have particular cultural significance, for example as species regularly depicted in art from ancient times. More recently, the exponential growth of whale and dolphin watching has shown how conservation and limited, responsible and sustainable tourism can be mutually supportive in saving marine mammals and providing income and engagement for humans.

11. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) fully support the YoD. Given its educational mandate, the Year of the Dolphin was selected as an official activity of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, a UNESCO-administered initiative covering the period 2005-2014.

YoD objectives

12. The objectives for YoD presented to the CMS Standing Committee in September 2006 were to:

- ❑ Increase general awareness in developed countries on dolphin conservation
- ❑ Provide coastal communities in developing countries with educational material on dolphin conservation
- ❑ Provide effective educational tools and information for children and their teachers on dolphin conservation, available on line
- ❑ Increase awareness and commitment of world governments on dolphin conservation, also with a view to national marine conservation agendas and plans
- ❑ Create partnerships and stimulate further action amongst non-governmental organizations dealing with marine conservation and support their advocacy role
- ❑ Directly involve a private business - TUI-AG - in a public awareness and conservation campaign, showing how UN objectives can be supported by and benefit private sector companies as well
- ❑ Increase environmental awareness in businesses
- ❑ Allow relevant conservation MEAs (Multilateral Environmental Agreements) to better fulfil their outreach and information mandate by reaching out to a broader audience
- ❑ Bridge the communication gap among private sector, UN agencies and non-governmental organization, by providing a common platform for joint activities and common goals
- ❑ Raise new and additional resources for dolphin conservation

Public support and information channels

13. The campaign was able to count on the support and communication channels provided by UNEP to distribute press releases and those offered by the corporate partner TUI AG, who increased public awareness by presenting the campaign in catalogues to tourist clients. The expertise, communications channels and graphic materials of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), with whom CMS signed a partnership agreement, further supported it.

14. Ministries of Environment worldwide and CMS Focal Points received written advice on the YoD Campaign. They were invited to participate in the campaign and send reports on their actions to the YoD website for publication. Several governments supported the YoD Campaign by promoting the campaign in their countries or covering printing costs of educational material. Governmental support in the form of voluntary contributions and other funding, distribution of information material, provision of dedicated websites and the organisation of major events came from Australia, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Maldives, Monaco, the Netherlands and Spain.

15. ACCOBAMS recruited Prince Albert II of Monaco as patron of the campaign. He is featured prominently on the YoD website and, by increasing press coverage considerably, supported the campaign's awareness-raising component at fundraising, sports and social events. The Patron launched the Year of the Dolphin in September 2006 on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of ACCOBAMS.

16. In the world of sports, the German world league swimmers Christian Keller and Christof Wandratsch as well as professional Austrian sailor Andreas Hanekamp were

officially nominated as YoD Ambassadors at the 2007 Boat Fair in Düsseldorf, Germany. As of March 2008, Prof. Thomas White of Loyola Marymount University in California, USA, author of the book “In Defence of Dolphins” also became an ambassador for the YoD, spreading its message to his students, scientific colleagues and the wider public. In June of 2008, the swimmers Miguel Arrobas and Nuno Vicente of OpenWaterPortugal became ambassadors. They helped raise awareness for the YoD through the media attention associated with their outstanding swimming achievements such as crossing the English Channel.

17. Other supporters were invited to join the Campaign after its launch in August 2006. Private sector companies, conservation bodies, municipalities, individuals and various interested groups were subjected to a screening process assessing eligibility for supporter status. They could then support the campaign through events, workshops, media initiatives, direct funding of YoD activities or YoD publications. YoD supporters launched and advertised special YoD activities at the local and national levels, and supported the distribution of educational material.

18. The Year of the Dolphin attracted more than 40 official supporters worldwide who are active in research and conservation, awareness raising, fundraising, public events, publications, media and lectures. Over 140 requests for YoD supporter status were received from all over the world.

19. An MoU was negotiated and will soon be signed with the Netherlands-based Dolphin Fund (DF), an NGO with the goal of supporting dolphin conservation, supported by the governments of Belgium and the Netherlands. 5% of the funds raised by the Dolphin Fund go to CMS cetacean conservation projects. Long-term cooperation between CMS and the Dolphin Fund is envisioned in which DF raises funds for CMS projects and is endorsed as a fundraiser by CMS in return.

The YoD - website

20. The website is the major information platform of a “Year of...” campaign, as this is the most cost-effective and direct way to make information available to as many people as possible. The YoD-website (www.yod2008.org; available in English and German) has been successful, totalling almost 10 million hits over the entire 2 years. It offers a news section, press releases on YoD issues and official messages from the Patron of the Year of the Dolphin and from the founding partners with information on the YoD campaign. Various publications and newsletters, which can be downloaded free of cost, provide educational and species related information.

21. An event calendar invited official supporters to register their event online. A “virtual sea” map with dolphin species feature children’s drawings that were submitted online as personal contributions to achieve the Dolphin Diploma. The website also encompasses substantial scientific information in the form of fact sheets on all dolphin species, e.g. their ranges, preferred habitats and populations numbers, as well as a number of scientific publications with recent findings.

22. The website has been the main outreach tool to other organisations, experts, interested laymen and young people. It provides information on activities developed worldwide. It contains reference pages for governments, organisations and individuals interested in learning more about the initiative, supporting it directly or indirectly, and developing an activity. Beyond the aspects already mentioned, there is an official YoD video that can be viewed

online or downloaded at the I-Tunes Store. The online Dolphin Diploma tool was well received, with a total of more than 2,000 successful participants on the YoD website alone. It has promoted acceptance and support for cetacean conservation measures, and enhanced enthusiasm, while creating opportunities to become engaged in conservation efforts.

23. Being an important building block to any successful species campaign, a specific section of the website on Priority Projects features a choice of on-the-ground dolphin conservation projects. Following the main focus on education and awareness raising during 2007, the promotion of conservation is a clear priority during the extension of the campaign in 2008. These projects add to the impact and credibility of the campaign, and can easily be prominently featured on the website along with information on how to donate funds for selected projects. Priority Projects link to a choice of conservation projects around the world supported by YoD, which were developed and approved by the Cetaceans Liaison Group, a body of internationally renowned cetacean experts.

24. The projects were chosen according to geographical distribution and represent different aspects of conservation. Project objectives range from research on pollutants and their effects on reproduction to capacity building in cetacean-rich regions and monitoring to assess cetacean diversity and abundance. The projects are featured on the website and donations are encouraged. The list functions as a reference document for future fundraising and thus represents part of the YoD's legacy. YoD Partner WDCS, with its global network of conservationists, plays a central role in the implementation of the projects. Donations can be made through a link from the YoD website to WDCS. On the WDCS website, interested donors have the possibility to donate online.

Educational material and other publications of the YoD

25. Other success indicators of the campaign are the numerous educational materials that were distributed around the world and downloaded from the YoD website. YoD leaflets and posters were produced and distributed. Altogether, 10,000 English, 5,000 French and 5,000 Spanish leaflets as well as 5,000 English posters were produced and distributed by partners and supporting NGOs/individuals.

26. WDCS developed a Dolphin Manual as an educational brochure. It was translated into nine languages and YoD partner TUI distributed 25,000 copies in 60 tourist destinations. WDCS and ACCOBAMS, as well as CMS, distributed several thousand additional copies each. The Dolphin Manual formed a centrepiece of the YoD's educational campaign, and a similar manual should be considered for all 'Year of...' campaigns. The manual is can be downloaded from the YoD website for free.

27. WDCS produced 50,000 magazines to highlight the YoD campaign and distributed 25,000 leaflets on the Year of the Dolphin. WDCS also distributed 3,000 posters on the "World of Dolphins" to schools, dolphin adopters and people taking the Dolphin Diploma.

28. YoD promotional items were produced by TUI such as YoD caps, T-shirts, beachwear, inflatable dolphins and soft toys and distributed through its online shop. A part of the revenue was used to support a conservation project in the Baltic Sea and the WATCH II conference in October 2008.

29. The YoD was publicised in 17 million TUI catalogues. TUI supported the YoD educational campaign with targeted activities in selected hotels. The YoD was also advertised

by TUI through its relevant media, including direct mailings, timetables, in-flight magazines and numerous related activities in holiday destinations.

30. A number of publications dealing with or highlighting the Year of the Dolphin, e.g. brochures, children's magazines and books, newspaper articles, diving magazines and books on dolphins were produced by supporters.

31. As an interactive exercise, the Dolphin Diploma was designed by YoD partner WDCS with the goal of encouraging children and young people to learn about dolphins and develop their own initiatives for dolphins. After correctly answering a number of questions on dolphins and their conservation, the participants are requested to take action through holding lectures / talking to their parents and friends, organising cookie and car boot sales or drawing pictures for the YoD website. As a reward, they then receive a diploma, which can be downloaded.

32. As a result of the joint launch of the IMAX movie 'Dolphin & Whales 3D', an educational kit in English and German was made available on the YoD website. Other educational tools and information for children and their teachers on dolphin conservation were made available online free of charge. This inspired and supported educational campaigns in other countries. Educational material and information was delivered in a format specifically for children, and included news on UN and other initiatives to protect dolphin species.

33. All these activities and publications combined have helped the campaign to achieve its goal of increasing general awareness on dolphin conservation. The objectives of providing educational tools to children and their teachers in general as well as to developing countries in particular have also been met.

An overview of several key YoD achievements

34. In early 2007 it was brought to the attention of the YOD Partners that there was a proposal to export twelve dolphins captured in a drive hunt in Taiji, Japan to the Ocean World theme park, a captive facility in the Dominican Republic. The partners decided to take cooperative action, as the capture of live dolphins subsidizes a hunt during which many thousands of other dolphins are being killed indiscriminately and unsustainably to be sold as meat for human consumption. The Partners wrote to Dr. Leonel Antonio Fernandez Reyes, President of the Dominican Republic, and the Dominican Republic's Government decided not to issue an import permit for the dolphins. The YOD partners believe that an important step has been taken for cetacean conservation and wish to publicly commend the stance of the Government of the Dominican Republic.

35. Activities in a large number of hotels run by TUI supported the educational campaign. The campaign actively promoted education by providing coastal communities in developing countries and others with educational material on dolphin conservation, which occasionally catalysed conservation activities.

36. A YoD exhibition in English and German explaining specialised CMS instruments for cetaceans as well as core objectives and activities of the campaign were displayed at Bonn City Hall and Frankfurt Airport during a photo exhibition focusing on dolphins. The exhibitions also featured at the Wadden Sea House in Wilhelmshaven, seat of the Wadden Sea Seal Agreement, as well as on the island of Norderney and the maritime museum of Stralsund. Scientific exhibitions, photo exhibitions and lectures by various authors took place at locations in Germany, Kenya, Portugal, Spain and many other countries.

37. A questionnaire sent out to the official supporters in late 2007 indicates a wide range of supporter activities, especially in the fields of education and awareness, but also some scientific and fundraising action. A great number of self-motivated individuals started their own campaigns, such as public awareness raising among local communities and tourists, publications on the YoD, educational activities in schools, public events, research and conservation or local YoD launches. Many were supported by the YoD partners with information material. These individual campaigns clearly show that the YoD reached people on a very personal level, thereby greatly increasing its outreach factor. Altogether, there were activities in more than 30 countries, among them Canada, Egypt, France, Greece, China (Hong Kong), India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Samoa, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, the UK and the USA.

38. The UNEP- and CMS-supported European launch of the IMAX movie 'Dolphins and Whales 3D' on March 10th 2008 in Berlin, Germany, received major press coverage. The CMS Executive Secretary participated in the release together with the Mantello brothers (producer and director), the award-winning German actress Martina Gedeck and renowned ocean explorer Jean-Michel Cousteau.

39. Various YoD partners and supporters organised a wide range of fundraising events. The Dolphin Fund organised fundraising activities; the sum donated to the YoD by the Dolphin Fund comes to approximately € 5,000, which was used to finance a fishing gear exchange in Kenya, aiming to reduce bycatch and increase the local population's eco-awareness.

40. Numerous events took place along the Kenyan coast, focusing on schoolchildren. The Kenyan Wildlife Service adopted whale-watching guidelines. The launch of a YoD-sponsored boat to control fisheries close to Marine Protected Areas and whale-watchers took place in April 2008.

41. Portugal dedicated the Children's Day, World Animal Day and Nature Conservation Day 2007 to the Year of the Dolphin, and numerous educational events and distribution of materials took place in this context.

42. Dedicated individuals, especially teachers, organised grassroots awareness campaigns, which the YoD Partners supported with educational materials and promotional items. One outstanding Indian campaign consisted of an individual, a young teacher, visiting numerous schools in and around the city of Mumbai, educating almost 3,000 schoolchildren, their teachers and, by extension, many families about the YoD and its purpose.

43. A final YoD event is planned for late 2008 in Crete, Greece. The objective of the meeting is to provide an open forum for discussion among the national and local authorities in the Mediterranean, regional fisheries representatives and relevant NGOs, to facilitate implementation of existing plans for the conservation of the marine environment and its species, especially dolphins, in the Ionian Sea.

44. For a full account of the YoD's achievements, please visit www.yod2008.org. Take a look at the news section and the detailed report in the YoD Choice 20 Document.

Returning to the YoD's goals...

45. For the first time the CMS Secretariat promoted communication and the creation of synergies between the corporate sector, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations, thus providing a common platform for joint activities and common goals. Educational bodies and academia were also involved in some of the YoD's events. Following initial experiences with corporate partners (CMS Thesis Award for outstanding PhD theses on migratory species conservation, sponsored by Lufthansa and National Geographic Germany) and within the framework of the fundraising body "Friends of CMS", the CMS Secretariat successfully worked with a corporate partner - TUI AG - in a public awareness and conservation campaign by promoting environmental awareness in businesses and initiating a mutually beneficial cooperation between Business and Biodiversity.

46. Numerous NGOs and dedicated individuals were involved in the campaign, distributing educational material, organising beach clean-ups, and holding lectures at schools, to name only a few activities.

47. As further success indicators references in the media, the educational impact on tourists, schools and in developing countries generally, participation by interested organisations and individuals and conservation activities can be identified. The launch of the campaign was featured in more than 100 international media. YoD events received coverage in the form of press releases and television reporting in numerous countries, thus increasing awareness of dolphin conservation. Several press releases were distributed through the UNEP media list of European journalists and also featured on the UNEP website.

2009: The Year of the Gorilla

48. 2009 will be the Year of the Gorilla. Gorillas face existential threats through habitat destruction, poaching/exploitation (bushmeat trade), diseases such as the Ebola-virus, and the side effects of regional wars and conflicts. All four Gorilla species are listed either Endangered or Critically Endangered by the IUCN. The Year of the Gorilla 2009 (YoG) will focus on the threats to gorilla survival and related topics. Similar to the Year of the Dolphin, the YoG aims to raise awareness and to educate the wider public as well as generate funds to support conservation action. It also aims to harness public attention and provide lobbying support to drive political advancements for the sustainable management of remaining gorilla populations.

49. In June 2008, a new and legally binding CMS Agreement for the conservation of all known gorilla populations in their 10 West and Central African range states came into effect. The main objective of the Gorilla Agreement is to conserve and restore gorilla populations through the implementation of a detailed Action Plan covering education, population-specific conservation and research as well as wider issues of forest management. The Gorilla Agreement will support an urgent conservation and sustainable development programme under the auspice of the Great Apes Survival Project ([GRASP](#)), an alliance of over 30 governments, UN agencies, numerous NGOs and several corporate sponsors.

50. The Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) Partnership, with its global network of gorilla conservation bodies, will be one of the two partner organisations of the CMS YoG campaign. The other partner will be the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), which will substantially support the educational side of the campaign.

51. The launch ceremony of the YoG will be held at the 1st Meeting of Parties of the CMS Gorilla Agreement in Rome, 29 November 2008. Patrons and Ambassadors for the YoG will

be presented at the launch. Ambassadors will play a central role in lobbying and disseminating the YoG message. If possible, there should be ambassador work-plans with tangible, verifiable goals.

52. The website will act as the centrepiece of the YoG communication strategy. The software used for the YoG-website will allow several CMS-selected editors from around the globe to post information on the website, resulting in a more lively and voluminous web-presence than during the Year of the Dolphin, during which access to the website management system was restricted to a very small number of people.

53. The website provides information on gorilla species as a whole as well as individual populations. Threats will be described and existing conservation action carried out by the YoG partners presented. French, German and Spanish sections of the website are envisaged, as well as the full coverage in English. A YoG video featuring an outline of conservation facts and interviews with YoG Ambassadors, available for online viewing and download, will be placed prominently on the website. YoG brochures, posters and a monthly newsletter will also be produced.

54. It is one of the priorities of the YoG to support fieldwork aimed at the conservation of gorillas and their habitats, by raising awareness but also by attempting to raise funds for projects that can be featured on the YoG-website. An independent expert panel will choose the projects. Having regular updates on the situation and development of one or several habituated family groups of gorillas would certainly attract attention and be a valuable, 'alive' addition to the website.

55. A YoG leaflet and poster are being produced. Following their success during the Year of the Dolphin, the production of a "Gorilla Manual" and a "Gorilla Diploma" are envisaged, but their production depends on the availability of funds (role of corporate partner). In addition, a YoG song and dedicated video are planned.

56. In collaboration with GRASP and WAZA, CMS will issue a detailed statement outlining the YoG's position on zoos and captive breeding. WAZA applies high standards to its member zoos, allowing only institutions with sophisticated keeping conditions and animal husbandry to become members. These will be taken as guidelines for the statement.

57. If a partnership with the private sector is developed like the one with TUI for YoD, the terms of cooperation need to be defined in detail and turned into a Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Cooperation (concerning monetary contribution, rights to logos etc.), so as to avoid later misunderstandings or conflicts. Concrete financial contributions by corporate sponsors to specific conservation projects are envisaged.

58. CMS Friends, a Germany-based NGO with the mission of rallying support for CMS from the private sector and other sources, will be involved in mobilising resources for Gorilla conservation projects.

59. The YoG presents CMS with an excellent opportunity to raise considerably its profile while at the same time giving the new Gorilla Agreement a high-profile launch. The YoG will benefit from the fact that gorillas are highly charismatic animals often featured in the media, emblematic for the rapid loss of biodiversity and with an especially strong appeal due to the species' close relatedness to humans. Together with its partners GRASP and WAZA, the numerous governments, NGOs and corporate sponsors, CMS will be able to run a vigorous

outreach and education campaign, while at the same time encouraging range states to expand their existing engagement in conservation and support for conservation action.

Future “Year of...” Campaigns

60. 2010 will be designated the “International Year of Biodiversity”, which will provide CMS with a good opportunity to highlight new agreements, achievements made over the last years and cooperation with other environmental organisations.

61. 2011 is likely to be the “Year of the Bat”, during which EUROBATS will take a lead role. The flagship species of the 2012 “Year of...” campaign has not yet been determined yet. Potential candidate species groups are sharks and big cats.

Action requested:

The Conference of the Parties is requested to:

- a. note the contribution which “Year of ...” campaigns to date have made to the attainment of CMS objectives for outreach, education, awareness, partnership-building and practical conservation.
- b. express thanks to all the organisations, particularly those in the private and voluntary sectors which have supported the Turtle and Dolphin campaigns.
- c. request the Secretariat to organise further “Year of ...” campaigns during the next triennium 2009-11.
- d. make appropriate provision in the CMS budget for 2009-11 to facilitate the Secretariat’s role and to call on Governments, the private sector and NGOs to support further campaigns in partnership with CMS and its Agreements.