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PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF SPECIES ON THE APPENDICES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

- A. **PROPOSAL:** Inclusion of *Stenella longirostris* (Southeast Asia populations) on **Appendix II**.
 B. **PROPONENT:** Government of the Republic of the Philippines

C. **SUPPORTING STATEMENT:**

1. Taxon

1.1	Classis	Mammalia
1.2	Ordo	Cetacea
1.3	Familia	Delphinidae
1.4	Genus/species	<i>Stenella longirostris</i> (Gray, 1828)
1.5	Common names	English: Spinner dolphin Spanish: Estenela giradora French: Dauphin longirostre

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution

Polytypic. The spinner dolphin is distributed throughout oceanic tropical zones in both hemispheres with approximate latitudinal limits of 30-40° (and 20-30° S and exhibits marked geographic variation. In Southeast Asia, it has been recorded from the Philippines, Australia, Thailand, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam and likely occurs in the marine waters of the other nations of the region. Three subspecies have been described in the eastern tropical Pacific: S.l.longirostris, S.l.orientalis and S.l.centroamericana. The spinner dolphins in Philippine waters are most similar to S.l. longirostris. A dwarf form of the spinner dolphin, as yet unnamed, occurs in the shallow waters of the Gulf of Thailand and off northern Australia and may also occur in Indonesian and Malaysian waters. Boundaries between the distributions of these two forms in Southeast Asian waters have yet been determined. Each form may occur as two or more populations with ranges extending across national EEZs.

2.2 Population

The number and sites of populations of the two forms in Southeast Asian waters are unknown. Approximately 10% of Philippines waters have been surveyed to inventory of cetaceans, but abundance estimates from that work are not yet available. In these surveys, the large-form spinner dolphin has been the most commonly encountered species in oceanic habitats. Questions of stock identity have not been addressed.

2.3 Habitat

The large-form spinner dolphin in Philippine waters lives in deepwater oceanic habitats, often close to shore because of the very deep water surrounding some of the Philippine

Islands, and feeds on small mostly mesopelagic fishes and squids. The dwarf form in the Gulf of Thailand, off northern Australia and possibly elsewhere in the region inhabits shallow waters usually less than 50m deep and is thought to feed on bottom and reef-dwelling organisms.

2.4 Migrations

The extent of migrations is unknown. The ranges of regional populations almost certainly extend across international boundaries, e.g., between the Philippines and Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia, Indonesia and Malaysia, Australia and Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, Macau and China, Vietnam and China, Vietnam and Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand, Thailand and Myanmar, etc. In the Philippines, abundance in some areas may show seasonal change, suggesting that migrations occur.

3. Threat data

3.1 Direct threats to the populations

Hunting of dolphins is illegal in nearly all countries in Southeast Asia, but dolphin harpoon fisheries exist in at least the Philippines and Indonesia. The spinner dolphin is the most frequently caught species in the Philippines in those fisheries so far examined. A complete survey to determine the number and size of these harpoon fisheries in the Philippines has not been carried out. As the dolphin fisheries are illegal, it is difficult to obtain accurate data on the catches.

Incidental catches in other fisheries probably pose a larger threat to spinner dolphins in the region than harpoon fisheries do. Spinner dolphins are killed incidentally in large numbers in a variety of fisheries in the Philippines; the gear involved includes drift nets, set gill nets, purse seines and other round-haul nets used to catch tuna, mackerel, bonito, scad, flying fish and a wide variety of other finfish.

The impacts of the direct and incidental catches on the populations are unknown because the ranges and sizes of local/regional stocks have not been determined. Data on the age composition of the incident kill in a tuna drift net fishery at Siaton, Negros Oriental in the Philippines suggest that the take is disproportionately composed of young calves and may be unsustainable.

3.2 Habitat destruction

Environmental contamination is not known to be a threat to the habitat of pelagic dolphins in the region at this point, but burgeoning populations and rapid economic development are reasons for concern about levels of marine pollution and their possible effects on all marine organisms.

3.3 Indirect Threats

Very large and rapidly increasing human populations in the region have led to greatly increased pressure on stocks of marine fish and invertebrates, which has resulted in declining catch per effort, collapse of some stocks and shifts to increasingly smaller fishes and squids. This overexploitation of marine resources poses a potential threat to the

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dolphin populations, which increasingly are depending on some of the same fishery stocks used by humans. An example is the relatively new and rapidly expanding fisheries for several species of flying fishes, which are a staple food of many pelagic dolphins.

3.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

The number and ranges of populations have not yet been determined, but there are indications that abundance may undergo seasonal fluctuations in at least some regions, in tandem with that of other large pelagics such as yellowfin tuna. Thus populations may be impacted by incidental kill in fisheries may be in the waters of different countries; e.g., the same spinner dolphins involved in a tuna drift net fishery in the Philippines may be involved in another such fishery in Indonesia, or Malaysia.

3.5 National and international utilization

In some nations in the region, in addition to the use for shark bait or human consumption of spinner dolphins taken in illegal harpoon fisheries, dolphins killed incidentally in other fisheries are also utilized. Such use of incidentally killed dolphins is illegal in some nations, but enforcement is difficult and the meat moves extensively in local commerce. The potential market for dolphin meat created by this illegal traffic poses a conservation threat beyond the impact of current takes, in that the present illegal harpoon fisheries could expand through use of purse seines or other net gear and greatly increase their catches. This has happened in Peru, and combined incidental and illegal directed dolphin catches there are now thought to be unsustainable.

International trade has not been documented, but illicit dolphin catches seized in recent years from distant-water fishing vessels, e.g. very recently in Taiwan, could have come from Southeast Asian waters fished illegally or under international EEZ fishing-rights agreements.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1 National protection status

In the Southeast Asian region, dolphins are fully protected in the Philippines, Australia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. However, there are many problems of enforcement and interpretation in most of these countries and actual protection is minimal or non-existent in many places. Prospects are that legal protection will be enacted soon in Vietnam and Cambodia. In Singapore, dolphins come under the Fisheries Act and are not provided special protection. Information on the status of protection in Macau, Brunei Darussalem and Myanmar was not available at this writing.

4.2 International protection status

Stenella longirostris is on Appendix II of CITES.

4.3 Additional protection needs

All Range States should ratify the Bonn Convention, and a regional agreement should be

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developed to facilitate the identification, assessment and conservation of the stocks.

5. Range States (in Southeast Asia)

Philippines (CMS party), Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Macau, Brunei-Darussalem, and Australia (CMS party).

6. Comments from Range States

7. Additional remarks

8. References

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