Proposal for Inclusion of Species on the Appendices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

A. Proposal: Inclusion of Delphinus delphis (Black Sea population) in Appendix II

B: Proponent:

C. Supporting Statement

1. Taxon

1.1. Classis	Mammalia
1.2. Ordo	CETACEA
1.3. Familia	Delphinidae
1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies	Delphinus delphis (Linnaeus, 1758)

1.5. Common Name(s)

English:	common dolphin
Spanish:	delfin comun
French:	dauphin comun
Russian:	del'finy-belobochki
Turkish:	tirtak

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution (current an historical)

The common dolphin is widely distributed, occurring in all oceans to the limits of tropical and warm temperate waters. There are several distinctive forms that probably deserve racial or subspecific status; some scientists recognize more than one species. There are various recognized local forms in the eastern North Pacific, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, along the European and African Atlantic coasts, in the Indian Ocean, and off Japan (Leatherwood and Reeves, 1983).

2.2. Population (estimates and trends)

Estimates for the Black Sea population were based on aerial and ship surveys, but problems in the methodology of the surveys precluded confident results (Smith, 1982; IWC, 1983). The population, however, is considered severely reduced by overhunting (see details below). A recent estimate of nearly half a million individuals been published by Celikkale et al. (1988, 1989) for the pooled dolphin population (which involve at least three species) inhabiting the Black Sea but this report also needs further evaluation.

2.3. Habitat (short description and trends)

Throughout most of their range, common dolphins are pelagic, most likely to be found along or seaward of the 100-fathom contour. In the Black Sea, common dolphins may be found either in inshore waters or in the open sea (Tomilin, 1967; Smith, 1982).

The common dolphin of the Black Sea is typically ichthyophagous, feeding on horse mackerel, anchovy, sprat, mullet and jack mackerel as the main prey items. Other organisms like crustaceans and benthic molluscs are considered of minor importance (Tomilin, 1967; Celikkale et al., 1988, 1989).

2.4. Migrations (kinds of movement, distance, proportion of the population migrating)

According to Golenchenko (1949) common dolphins spend the winter in the southern part of the Black Sea, between Trabzon and Batumi, and perform annual migrations from these wintering grounds to the waters of Crimea and back. Other researchers consider that such a regular migration does not occur, but that seasonality in prey availability explain dolphin movements. Tomilin (1967) pointed out that common dolphins find their prey during their "irregular wanderings in the Black Sea".

3. Threat data

3.1. Direct threats to the population (factors, intensity)

A fishery for three species (common dolphin, bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise) operated in the Black Sea from 1870 to 1983 (Zemsky and Yablokov, 1974; Smith, 1982; IWC, 1984). Catches in the USSR before 1964 comprised 80-90% common dolphins, but after 1964 harbour porpoise came to predominate. It is unclear if these percentages refer to numbers or weight of animals. The species composition of the Turkish fishery was reported as 80% harbour porpoises, 15-16% common dolphins and 2-3% bottlenose dolphins, but common dolphins were still the preferred catch (Thornton, 1982; IWC, 1983). According to the records, 157,000-185,000 animals were taken in the Turkish fishery between 1951 and 1958 and about 1,300,000 were taken between 1967 and 1981 (IWC, 1983). An average annual take of 34,000 to 44,000 animals was estimated from weight data for the period 1976-1981 (IWC, 1984).

Statistics provided recently by M. Celikkale (pers. comm.) from official sources give a total catch of nearly 10,000 tons for the period 1954-1983. This would yield an approximate 8,000 dolphins per year. As can be seen from these different figures, the question about the extent of the dolphin fishery in the Black Sea is yet unresolved.

Incidental catches occur in the purse seine fishery for anchovies (Perrin, 1988) but the magnitude of this interaction is unknown.

3.2. Habitat destruction (quality of changes, quantity of loss)

Pollution has increased dramatically in the Azov Sea, and according to Tomilin (1967) this is the reason why common dolphins are no longer found there. Pollution is a matter of concern in the Black Sea. The main sources are the industrial wastes carried for several rivers that drain into the Sea, domestic effluents and pesticides (Celikkale, 1990).

3.3. Indirect threat (e.g. reduction of breeding success by pesticide contamination)

Fisheries operating in the Black Sea take around 560,000 tons of fish every year, the most important being the European anchovy and the Mediterranean horse mackerel, important prey species for the dolphin populations in the Black Sea (Northridge, 1984; Celikkale, 1990).

3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

No information.

3.5. National and international utilization

The main products obtained from dolphins in the Black Sea were meal and oil. Exportation of these to the European Economic Community is no longer possible because of a prohibition of imports of cetacean products (Klinowska, in press; Perrin, 1988).

4. Protection status and needs

4.1. National protection status

The species is protected by specific legislations in the USSR, Romania and Bulgaria. A temporary ban has been adopted by Turkey, where the dolphin fishery is scheduled to be reopened when a stock assessment has been completed (Berkes, 1977; Klinowska, in press; Perrin, 1988).

4.2. International protection status

Delphinus delphis is listed in Appendix II of CITES. Protection of this and other species is provided by the International Convention on Marine Resources of the Black Sea established in 1966 by the USSR, Romania and Bulgaria. Although the species is categorized as "Not Threatened" by IUCN, populations in the Black Sea, western Mediterranean and eastern tropical Pacific are considered "At Risk" (Perrin, 1989).

4.3. Additional protection needs

Establishment of a co-operative research effort between the Black Sea nations for limitation of pollution sources. Accurate estimations of abundance, incidental catches and a review of existing statistics of the dolphin fishery are urgently needed. Estimation of reproductive parameters and study of the evolution of pelagic fisheries will be necessary for future management decisions.

5. Range States

Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and the USSR.

6. Comments from Range States

7. Additional remarks

8. References

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