

4

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 Neophocaena phocaenoides in Appendix  
II

B. Proponent:

C. Supporting Statement

1. Taxon

1.1. Classis	Mammalia
1.2. Ordo	CETACEA
1.3. Familia	Phocoenidae
1.4. Genus/Species/Subspecies	<u>Neophocaena phocaenoides</u> (Cuvier, 1829)
1.5. Common Name(s)	
English:	finless porpoise
Spanish:	marsopa sin aleta
French:	marsouin sans nageoire, dorsale
Japanese:	sunameri, nomeno-io
India:	molagan
Pakistan:	tabi
Chinese:	hai chu

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution (current and historical)

The finless porpoise is found in warm rivers and coastal waters from the Gulf of Persia east along the entire Indian subcontinent, throughout southeast Asia and Indonesia, and north to China (up the Yangtze River as far as Dongting Lake), Korea and Japan. The northern limit of the species is probably near Ojika Peninsula, in northern Japan (Leatherwood and Reeves, 1983; Wang, 1985).

2.2. Population (estimates and trends)

The existence of clinal variation in morphological characteristics suggests two major populations: an Indo-Pakistan population and a Sino-Japanese population, referred to as *Neophocaena phocaenoides* and *Neophocaena asiaeorientalis*, respectively. The proposed specific separation between both populations is yet to be resolved (Pilleri and Gahr, 1972; Mitchell, 1975a; Leatherwood and Reeves, 1983).

Population size estimates are reported for the Inland Sea of Japan. Kasuya and Kureha (1979) estimated the number of porpoises observed during the breeding season (April) at 4,900. By early winter the number in the area dropped to 1,600.

### 2.3. Habitat (short description and trends)

The habitat of this species is mainly riverine and coastal. In these habitats, finless porpoises are reported from mangrove areas and open waters, in estuaries as well as in freshwater lakes connected to rivers. Small squids, shrimps and prawns and also small fishes are the reported prey items (Pilleri and Gahr, 1973; Leatherwood and Reeves, 1983).

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

Finless porpoises migrate to and from the Pacific coast mainly through two passes at the eastern Inland Sea of Japan. The peak of abundance occurs in April, and a subsequent reduction is observed in early winter. From observations in the fluctuation of the proportion of mother-calf pairs, it is suggested that porpoises use the Inland Sea of Japan as a breeding ground. In summer, the animals move out to the Pacific coast (Kasuya and Kureha, 1979).

In the Indus delta, finless porpoises move to the sea in April and return to the creeks and delta in October; here the movements of porpoises are said to follow movements of prawns (Pilleri and Gahr, 1972).

## 3. Threat data

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

The species has been hunted in Japan, in particular in the East China Sea (Ohsumi, 1972; Mitchell, 1975a). It seems, however, that recent direct catches are not large. Five were reportedly taken by harpooning during the period 1976-1982 and no direct takes have been reported since (Miyazaki, 1983; IWC, 1985-88). In China, finless porpoises have been taken in the Yangtze River and its tributaries. Fishermen took these porpoises with rifles, harpoons, and hooks, to use the oil, liver, skin, and meat (Mitchell, 1975a). It is not known if these catches continue at the present time.

Along the Indian coast, finless porpoises are accidentally caught in nets, although estimates of the magnitude of the catches does not exist (Mohan, 1985; Leatherwood, 1986). Bycatch of 21 animals for the period 1976-1982 was reported for Japan (Miyazaki, 1983).

Net entanglements are also known to occur in the Yangtze River in China (Liu et al., 1986), and it is possible that some may die in the "rolling hooks" that usually cause mortality of baijis (Lipotes vexillifer) (Zhou and Li, 1989).

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

Living as they do in riverine and coastal habitats, finless porpoises are vulnerable to habitat encroachment. This is particularly true for the population of finless porpoises in the Yangtze River, that may face the same threats as the baiji. Increasing development requires construction of dams for hydroelectric power and diversion of waters for agriculture. Dams may prevent movements of dolphins or reduce food availability. Moreover, further damage to the riverine ecosystem comes from the high level of pollution produced by several industries located along the Yangtze River (Perrin and Brownell, 1989). Because so little is known about habitat preferences and ecology of finless porpoises, it is difficult to evaluate the affects the foregoing factors may have on the population.

In coastal areas, increasing boat traffic and pollution may also affect finless porpoises. These animals left the Ise Bay in Japan during a time of high pollution and returned when pollution was reduced (Mitchell, 1975a).

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

No information. No studies of pollutant levels and effects have been performed in finless porpoises.

### 3.4. Threats connected especially with migrations

Boat traffic may affect the movements of finless porpoises in rivers and in coastal waters. There has been some concern about the levels of pollution in the Inland Sea of Japan, where the largest population of finless porpoises may be present, at least seasonally (Kasuya and Kureha, 1979).

### 3.5. National and international utilization

It has been known that finless porpoises were utilized for human consumption in China, where the oil and skin were also used (Mitchell, 1975).

## 4. Protection status and needs

### 4.1. National protection status.

The species is protected directly or indirectly through national legislation in only a few countries in the range;

these include Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and Iran (Atkins, 1989; Klinowska, in press). In Japan it has been protected since 1930 in a 1.5 km radius around Awashima Island, where finless porpoises were used by fishermen as indicators of the presence of fish (Kasuya and Kureha, 1979).

#### 4.2. International protection status

Neophocaena phocaenoides is listed in Appendix I of CITES. Protection of habitats that is now effective under the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention may be applicable for the conservation of this species (Klinowska, in press). The species is categorized as "Not Threatened", by the IUCN, however the population of the Yangtze and Chinese coastal waters is considered "At Risk" (Perrin, 1989).

#### 4.3. Additional protection needs

There is a need for studies on systematics, population identity and abundance. Incidental catches should be monitored, and statistics collected. The effects of current development on the major river basins and coastal areas inhabited by the species should be assessed and monitored.

#### 5. Range States

Range states so far identified include Oman, United Arabian Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Kampuchea, Vietnam, China, United Kingdom (Honk Kong), Taiwan, North Korea, South Korea and Japan.

#### 6. Comments from Range States

#### 7. Additional remarks

#### 8. References

Atkins, N. 1989. Summary of national laws and international agreements affecting river dolphins. Pp. 168-173 in: W.F. Perrin, R.L. Brownell, Jr., Zhou Kaiya and Liu Jiankang (Eds.). Biology and Conservation of River Dolphins. IUCN/SSC Occasional Paper 3. IUCN, Gland. 173 pp.

IWC. 1985. Report of the Scientific Committee, Annex I. Report of the sub-committee on small cetaceans. Rep. Int. Whal. Commn 35:130-140.

IWC. 1987. Report of the Scientific Committee, Annex H. Report of the sub-committee on small cetaceans. Rep. Int. Whal. Commn 37:121-128.

- IWC. 1988. Report of the Scientific Committee, Annex I. Report of the sub-committee on small cetaceans. Rep. Int. Whal. Commn 38:117-124.
- Kasuya, T. and K. Kureha. 1979. The population of finless porpoise in the Inland Sea of Japan. Sci. Rep. Whales Res. Inst. 31:1-44.
- Klinowska, M. (In press). Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises of the World. The IUCN Cetacean Red Data Book. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
- Leatherwood, S.L. 1986. Whales, dolphins, and porpoises of the Indian Ocean Cetacean Sanctuary. A catalog of available information. SWRI/HMRC Tech. Rep. 87-197. 207 pp. (unpublished).
- Leatherwood, S. and R. Reeves. 1983. The Sierra Club Handbook of Whales and Dolphins. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco. 302 pp.
- Liu, R., R.J. Harrison and K.W. Thurley. 1986. Characteristics of the skin of Neophocaena phocaenoides, from the Chiangjiang (Yangtse River), China. Pp. 23-31 in: M.M. Bryden and R. Harrison (Eds). Research on Dolphins. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 478 pp.
- Mitchell, E.D. 1975 (Ed.). Report of the Meeting on Smaller Cetaceans, Montreal, April 1-11, 1974. J. Fish. Res. Bd. Canada 32(7):889-983.
- Miyazaki, N. 1983. Catch statistics of small cetaceans taken in Japanese waters. Rep. Int. Whal. Commn 33:621-631.
- Mohan, L.R.S. 1985. Observations on the by-catch of dolphins Stenella longirostris, Tursiops aduncus, Sousa chinensis and Delphinus delphis tropicalis in the gill nets off Calicut coast, India. Proc. Symp. Endangered Marine Animals and Marine Parks, 1985, 1:78-83.
- Ohsumi, S. 1972. Catch of marine mammals, mainly small cetaceans, by local fisheries along the coast of Japan. Bull. Fish. Res. Lab. Shimizu 7:137-166.
- Perrin, W.F. 1989. Dolphins, Porpoises, and Whales. An Action Plan for the Conservation of Biological Diversity:1988-1992. IUCN, Gland. 27 pp.
- Perrin, W.F. and R.L. Brownell, Jr. 1989. Report of the workshop. Pp. 1-22 in: W.F. Perrin, R.L. Brownell, Jr., Zhou Kaiya and Liu Jiankang (Eds). Biology and Conservation of River Dolphins. IUCN/SSC Occasional Paper 3. IUCN, Gland. 173 pp.

Pilleri, G., and M. Gahr. 1972. Contribution to the knowledge of the cetaceans of Pakistan, with particular reference to the genera Neomeris, Sousa, Delphinus and Tursiops and description of a new Chinese porpoise (Neomeris asiaeorientalis). Investigations on Cetacea 4:107-157.

Pilleri, G. and M. Gahr. 1973. Contribution to the knowledge of the cetaceans of Southwest and Monsoon Asia (Persian Gulf, Indus Delta, Malabar, Andaman Sea and Gulf of Siam). Investigations on Cetacea 5:95-149.

Wang, P. 1985. Distribution of cetaceans in Chinese waters. NMFS, SWFC Adm. Rep. LJ-85-24. 11 pp.

Zhou, K. and Y. Li. 1989. Status and aspects of the ecology and behavior of the baiji, Lipotes vexillifer, in the lower Yangtze River. Pp. 86-91 in: W.F. Perrin, R.L. Brownell, Jr., Zhou Kaiya and Liu Jiankang (Eds). Biology and Conservation of River Dolphins. IUCN/SSC Occasional Paper 3. IUCN, Gland. 173 pp.