



# GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN

The Ganges river dolphin lives in one of the most populated regions in the world - and is considered as a reliable indicator of the health of the entire river ecosystem.

Read on to discover more interesting facts about them.



## Where they live

Ganges river dolphins can only live in freshwater and inhabit the river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. They share their habitat with crocodiles, freshwater turtles and wetland birds.

[www.worldwildlife.org/species/ganges-river-dolphin](http://www.worldwildlife.org/species/ganges-river-dolphin)



## CHARACTERISTICS

- They have a stocky body with a long beak that thickens at the tip.
- Their skin is light grey-brown and it becomes paler on their body.
- They have large flippers that help them swim.
- Weighs up to 150kg.
- Their very flexible neck can bend at a right angle to their body, allowing them to dig in the mud for prey, whilst swimming along.

## FAMILY

As a calf, they are dependent on their mother until the age of one. They can be found in groups of other Ganges river dolphins, known as 'pods', the average size of which is two individuals.



## VIDEO

Watch footage:

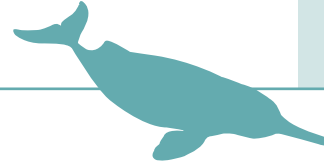
- [arkive.org/ganges-river-dolphin/platanista-gangetica/video-00.html](http://arkive.org/ganges-river-dolphin/platanista-gangetica/video-00.html)

## DID YOU KNOW

Being a mammal, Ganges river dolphins can't breathe in the water and must surface every 30-120 seconds for air.

## FEEDING

- Their diet includes a variety of fish and invertebrates such as prawns and clams.
- The dolphin has the peculiarity of swimming on one side so that its flipper trails the muddy bottom. This behaviour is understood to help it to find food.

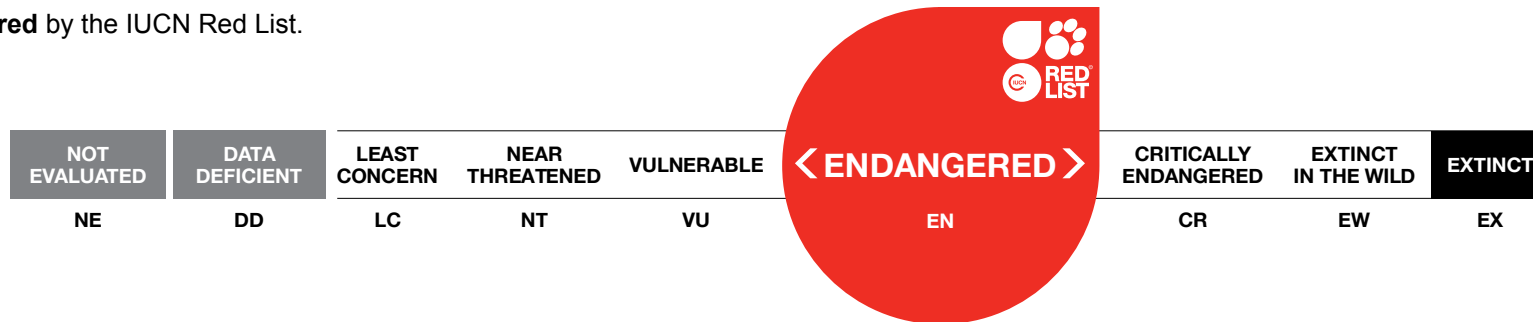


## DID YOU KNOW

Ganges river dolphins are essentially blind – they hunt by sending out ultrasonic sounds, which bounce off of fish and other prey, enabling them to ‘see’ an image in their mind.

## CLASSIFICATION

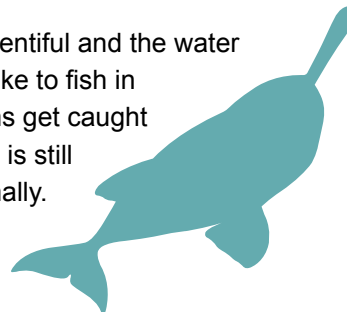
Classified as **Endangered** by the IUCN Red List.



## STATUS

Their survival is threatened by the construction of dams and water development projects that isolate them from other river dolphins and limit their access to prey.

They like to live in areas of the river where fish are plentiful and the water current is slower. For the same reason, people also like to fish in these areas and sometimes the Ganges river dolphins get caught accidentally in fishing nets. The Ganges river dolphin is still hunted for meat and oil, which are both used medicinally. The oil is also used to attract catfish in net fishery.



It is estimated that the total population for the species is 1,200–1,800 individuals.

Pollution is also a problem to the species, in particular chemical pollution that makes the freshwater they live in polluted.

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