



YANGTZE FINLESS PORPOISE

The Yangtze finless porpoise is a small mammal that can be found in the Yangtze River in China. Read on to discover more interesting facts about them.

Where they live

Finless porpoises live in the Yangtze River in China, where they can be found in the main river channel and two large lakes connected to the river – Poyang and Dongting and in two oxbow lakes, Tien ezhou and He wangmiao, where they have been recently translocated to. wwf.org.uk/where_we_work/asia/asian_rivers/



CHARACTERISTICS

- Unlike most porpoises they don't have a fin on their back or a beak.
- They have a rounded head and are a dark to pale grey colour.
- They have moderately large flippers.
- They can't breathe under water, so have to come to the surface regularly to breathe air like you.
- Weigh up to 72kg.
- They don't leap out of the water like a dolphin, but they do like to 'spy hop' – this is when they look like they are standing up in the water and then use their fins to spin round so they can see what's happening.

DID YOU KNOW

Porpoises are part of a group of marine mammals called cetaceans, which includes all whales and dolphins too. Of nearly 90 species of cetacean, only 5 species and 2 sub-species - including the Yangtze finless porpoise - live in freshwater.

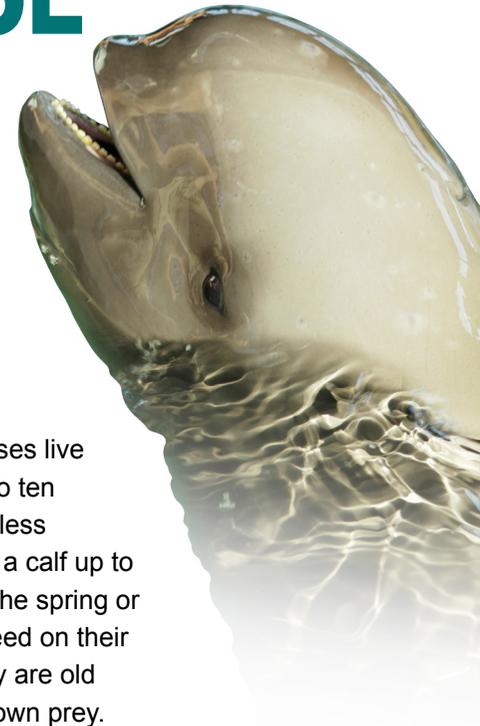
FAMILY

Yangtze finless porpoises live in small groups of up to ten individuals. Female finless porpoises give birth to a calf up to 79cm long, usually in the spring or summer. The calves feed on their mother's milk until they are old enough to catch their own prey.



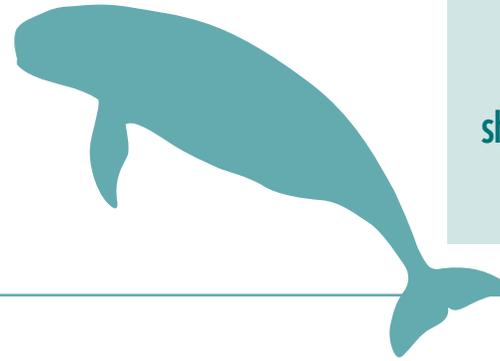
VIDEO Watch footage:

- arkive.org/indo-pacific-finless-porpoise/neophocaena-phocaenoides/video-00.html



FEEDING

- They need an abundant food supply for survival.
- Their diet consists of small fish, molluscs and crustaceans, like shrimps.
- They can chase fish at very high speeds, making sharp turns and fast accelerations.

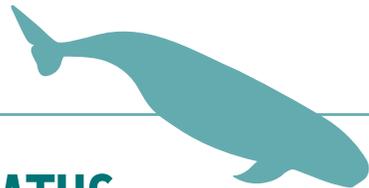
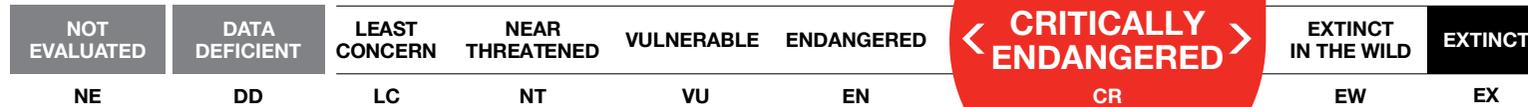


DID YOU KNOW

Finless porpoises have 15-21 pairs of spade shaped teeth in both upper and lower jaws, which they use to catch and crush the shells of prey.

CLASSIFICATION

Classified as **Critically Endangered** on the IUCN Red List.



STATUS

- Although they are not directly targeted by fishermen, large numbers of the species die when they become accidentally entangled in fishing gear.
- The waters they live in are really busy with people fishing and using the waterways to move around, so they are also injured and killed by boats and ships moving in and out of the estuary.

- High levels of toxic pollutants also affect their population.
- Their habitat is severely impacted by fishing and pollution.
- In 2012 there were as few as 1,000 finless porpoises left in the Yangtze. There is an almost 90% chance that the Yangtze finless porpoise will be extinct in the next century unless urgent conservation efforts are made.

