

## BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

## PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

Original Application No. 727/2024

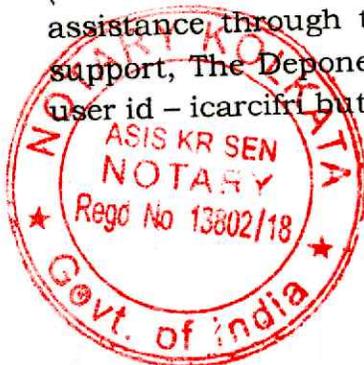
News Item titled "Endangered Gangetic dolphins found in most tributaries of Ganges prompting urgent conservation" appearing in Mongabay- India dated 20.05.2024

Affidavit on the behalf of Respondent no. 5 (ICAR-CIFRI).

I, Dr. Basanta Kumar Das, aged about 59 years, working as Director, at ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CIFRI), Barrackpore, Kolkata-700120, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as under:

1. That I am the authorised representative of Respondent No. 5 - ICAR-CIFRI, and am fully conversant with the facts and circumstances of the present case. I am competent to swear this affidavit on behalf of my organization, and this affidavit is being filed in compliance with the Hon'ble Tribunal's Notice and solemn order dated 20.01.2025 and solemn order dated 04.09.2025 in connection with O.A. No. 727/2024, arising from the *Mongabay-India* news item dated 20.05.2024 titled "Endangered Gangetic dolphin found in most tributaries of Ganges prompting urgent conservation."

2. That in compliance with the Notice and Order dated 20.01.2025 in O.A. No. 727/2024, titled "Endangered Gangetic dolphin found in most tributaries of Ganges prompting urgent conservation" (*Mongabay-India*, dated 20.05.2024), ICAR-CIFRI submitted expert comments and details of its ongoing activities for the conservation of the Ganges river dolphin under the Namami Gange (Phase-III) Project through email on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025, along with supporting documents. The Deponent also attempted to file report through the e-filing process but faced technical difficulties, which were duly communicated via email on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Later, on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025, another e-mail was received advising us to complete the e-filing process and providing an e-filing support contact number (011-23043528). The Deponent made several attempts to seek technical assistance through the provided contact but could not obtain the necessary support. The Deponent also created an account in the e-filing portal with the user id - icarcifri but was not able to e-file the report.



20 NOV 2025

3. That to achieve holistic conservation of the Gangetic River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*), also known as 'susu', ICAR-CIFRI has implemented multiple conservation and awareness initiatives, including:

- a. Organising seminars, exhibitions, educational programs, and webinars on riverine ecology and dolphin conservation;
- b. Conducting community sensitisation programmes focusing on dolphin and fish biodiversity (including *Hilsa*) to improve fishermen's livelihoods under the NMCG Phase III Project;
- c. Celebrating "National Dolphin Day" to promote mass awareness on aquatic biodiversity.

4. River Ranching for Ecosystem Restoration: ICAR-CIFRI has been promoting river ranching to enhance aquatic biodiversity and strengthen the food web for dolphins. To date, the following species have been released into the Ganga River system:

- a. 155 lakh IMC fingerlings (*Labeo catla*, *Labeo rohita*, *Cirrhinus mrigala*, *Labeo calbasu*);
- b. 1.32 lakh Hilsa juveniles; and
- c. 0.37 lakh Mahseer fries.

These efforts have contributed to restoring fish diversity, improving ecological balance, and ensuring a sustainable food base for the Gangetic dolphin.

5. Awareness and Outreach: Under the Namami Gange initiative, ICAR-CIFRI has organised 431 awareness campaigns across Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, and West Bengal from 2020 to 2024, reaching over 20,000 stakeholders, including fishermen, students, and local policymakers.

6. Rescue and Reporting Efforts:

- a. In March 2022, one dead dolphin was handed over to the respective State Fisheries and Forest Departments for postmortem examination.
- b. At Farakka, the CIFRI team successfully rescued a newborn dolphin entangled in fishing gear.
- c. Another dolphin was rescued at Balagarh (Hooghly) by a local fisherman sensitised through CIFRI's awareness programme.

7. Ongoing Research: ICAR-CIFRI continues to conduct habitat characterisation, population monitoring, and training for sustainable fishing practices to mitigate accidental entanglement, habitat loss, and pollution.



8. The presence of Gangetic dolphins in several tributaries of the Ganga highlights their ecological resilience and the necessity for continued habitat protection. Experts emphasise that strict enforcement of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, alongside pollution control, habitat restoration, and community participation, is critical for the long-term survival of the species.

9. ICAR-CIFRI reaffirms its continued commitment to collaborate with the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), State Fisheries and Forest Departments, NGOs, and local communities for the sustainable management of river in ecosystems and the long-term conservation of the Ganges River Dolphins.

10. That the statement made in paragraphs 1 to 9, are true to my knowledge and as per record available in the office of the respondent and the rest are my respectful submission before the Hon'ble Tribunal.

DEPONENT

बसंत कुमार दास/BASANTA KUMAR DAS  
निदेशक /Director  
भा.क.अनु.प.-केन्द्रीय अंतर्संघीय मात्स्यिकी अनुसंधान संस्थान  
ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute  
बैरकपुर, कोलकाता -700120  
Barrackpore, Kolkata-700120



VERIFICATION

I, the deponent within named state that this affidavit is verified at ..... by the deponent above named on this .....day of November, 2025 and say that the contents of this affidavit made in paragraph no. 1 is true to my knowledge and those made in paragraphs no. 2 to 9 are true to my information derived from records and rest are my respectful submission before this Hon'ble Tribunal.

Deponent

बसंत कुमार दास/BASANTA KUMAR DAS  
निदेशक /Director  
भा.क.अनु.प.-केन्द्रीय अंतर्संघीय मात्स्यिकी अनुसंधान संस्थान  
ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute  
बैरकपुर, कोलकाता -700120  
Barrackpore, Kolkata-700120



Identified by me

Advocate f/419/2023

Solemnly affirmed and declared before me on Identification

ASIS KUMAR SEN  
City Civil Court  
Kolkata  
Reg. No.-13802 / 18

20 NOV 2025