

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI
O.A. NO. 727 OF 2024**

IN THE MATTER OF:

**NEWS ITEM TITLED " ENDANGERED GANGETIC DOLPHINS
FOUND IN MOST TRIBUTARIES OF GANGES PROMPTING
URGENT CONSERVATION" APPEARING IN MONGABY-INDIA
DATED 20.05.2024.**

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NDH- 26.11.2025

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FILED BY

**[RISHI K. AWASTHI]****Advocates for the Respondent No.6**

A-21, UGF, Defence Colony

New Delhi-110024

PLACE: NEW DELHI

DATED: 21.11.2025

2. That the instant affidavit is being filed by the deponent in terms of the directions passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal in the order dated 04.09.2025.
3. The Gangetic Dolphin is an indicator species for the river ecosystem and is at the apex of the food chain. It was declared as the national aquatic animal of India on 5th of October, 2009. This species has been included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), in Appendix II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and categorised as Endangered on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.
4. Dolphins in the main channel of the Ganga were split into four sub-populations when the Farakka Barrage (in 1975), the Ganga Barrage at Narora (1967) and the Ganga Barrage at Bijnor (1984) were built.
5. The primary habitats preferred by the Gangetic Dolphins are characterised by an eddy-counter current system in the main



Abhay Kumar

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

river flow caused by a point bar formed from sediments and deposits, a convergent stream branch, or by an upstream meander. They are also found below sand bars and bridges where eddies are formed. 40%-45% of the dolphin population is found at junctions of tributaries with the main river stem, at least during the dry season, presumably being attracted to these areas by concentrations of prey.

6. It is widely distributed in the state of Bihar mainly in rivers Ganga and its tributaries like Kosi, Mahananda, Ghaghra. The river Ganga flows between Chausa, Buxar and Manihari covering a length of 590 km.
7. There are the challenges for conservation Gangetic Dolphin in Bihar like Poaching, accidental killing, dolphin-fisherman competition, use of Dolphin oil as bait, habitat degradation which includes pollution, reduction of prey base, river traffic, construction of dams/barrages.
8. The State of Bihar has taken many steps for the conservation of Gangetic Dolphins, as explained herein below: -

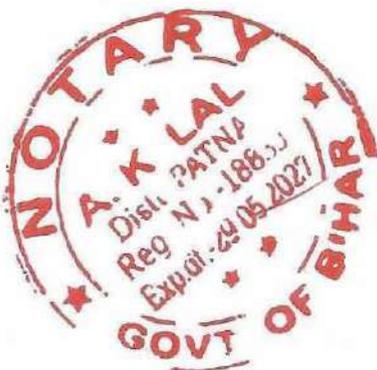


Abhay Kumar

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

- (i) A 60 km stretch of river Ganga between Sultanganj and Kahalgaon has been notified as wildlife sanctuary namely Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS), and is the only protected area designated for Gangetic Dolphin. This is like laboratory where the forest department not only takes all the possible efforts for conservation of Gangetic Dolphin but also learns new things. It has given a big boost to our conservation efforts.
- (ii) Critical stretches for the presence of Gangetic Dolphins have been identified. These are Gangi-Ganga Confluence near Sinha Ghat, Ara 20 km upstream, Ghaghara-Ganga confluence at Doriganj, Chhapra to Fatuha (confluence of Ganga and Punpun) (80 km), Barh to Mokama to Maniharighat (Katihar) (210 km), River Gandak from Triveni Barrage at Indo-Nepal border to Ganga – Gandak confluence at Patna (332 km).

These are our priority areas to focus on and this supports our decision-making process as far as channelling of resources is concerned.



Abhay Kumar

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

- (iii) National Dolphin Research Centre has been established in Patna. It is going to give a big boost to our conservation efforts. The Centre is running well under the guidance of interim Director. Additional posts have been sanctioned on 03-10-2025. Soon, the centre will run at its potential.
- (iv) Protection is at the core of conservation. Regular boat and foot level patrolling is ensured to prevent cases of poaching. The department has engaged 'Dolphin Mitra' i.e. youths engaged from the local community to patrol the area and also to make people living nearby the river aware about Dolphin Conservation.
- (v) The forest divisions, in whose jurisdiction such areas fall, have deployed rapid response team having trained people to respond to crisis situations. There are many cases in which Dolphins have been stranded and then rescued and released. The recent case is from Gopalganj where one Dolphin was rescued from a canal and released back in Ghaghra river on 08.10.2025.



Abhay Kumar
Additional Principal Officer, Conservation of Forests
-cum- Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

- (vi) Involvement of local communities through awareness creation is at the core of long-term strategy. Special emphasis is given on awareness generation about Gangetic Dolphin during wildlife week (2nd-8th October). National Dolphin Day (5th October) is celebrated all across the state with active involvement of fishermen, people living near the rivers, students and NGOs.
- (vii) The department has actively involved line departments, NGOs, Universities in our conservation and research efforts. This is the concerted and coordinated efforts of all, which has made us reach where we are.
- (viii) The department has launched 'Dolphin Protection Compensation-cum-Reward Program' in 2017 in which a sum of Rs. 20000 is given as Compensation-cum-Reward to the person who saves or contributes in saving the entangled Dolphin. Order dated 18.12.2017 issued by Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Bihar is annexed herewith as **Anneuxure-1**.



Abhay Kumar

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

- (ix) Fishing net or gill net with less than 4 cm mesh size has been prohibited in rivers of the State by virtue of Section 13 (ii) of The Bihar Fish Jalkar Management Act, 2006 vide Notification No. 389, dated 04.05.2006. It protects the catch of small fishes which are food for Gangetic Dolphins. Copy of The Bihar Fish Jalkar Management Act, 2006 is annexed herewith as **Annexure-2**.
- (x) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India has launched Project Dolphin in 2021 just like Project Tiger or Project Elephant. This will give another leap to our conservation efforts.

9.

- (i) The survey done by WII in 2024 reveals that the population of Gangetic Dolphins is 1297 in a stretch of 590 km of river Ganga, from Chausa, Buxar to Maniharighat (Katihar) which was 808 in 2010. This shows that the population of Gangetic Dolphins in River Ganga has increased 1.6 times in a period of 14 years which is quite encouraging. Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary, Bhagalpur has 212 Gangetic



Abhay Kumar
Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum- Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

Dolphins as per survey in 2024, which was 130 in 2002. The population in the Dolphin sanctuary has gone up by 1.6 times in a period of 14 years which is quite encouraging. Population Status of River Dolphins in India 2024 is annexed herewith as **Annexure-3**.

- (ii) The population of Gangetic Dolphins was more than 1150 in the State of Bihar as per the Conservation Action Plan for the Gangetic Dolphins published by National Ganga River Basin Authority, Ministry of Environment & Forest, Govt. of India in November, 2010, which has gone up to 2200 as per latest survey of WII published in 2024. Copy of the Conservation Action Plan for the Gangetic Dolphin 2010-2020 issued by the National Ganga River Basin Authority Ministry of Environment & Forest, Govt of India is annexed herewith as **Annexure-4**.
- (iii) Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary, Bhagalpur has 212 Gangetic Dolphins as per survey in 2025, which was 130 in 2003. The Population in the Dolphin Sanctuary has



Abhay Kumar

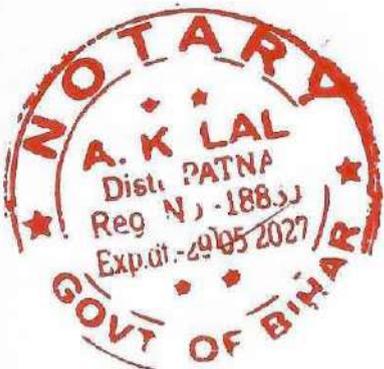
Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

gone up by 1.6 times. Copy of Research and Monitoring Activities in the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary, Bhagalpur, Bihar April 2024 to March 2025 is annexed herewith as **Annexure-5**.

It shows that the efforts of the Government, NGOs, Universities and Local People make towards conversation of Gangetic Dolphins are bearing fruits and giving positive results.

10. The following steps are also suggested for Dolphin Conservation:

- (i) Intensive Awareness campaigning, Designation of Brand Ambassadors for awareness campaigns,
- (ii) Development of a dedicated web portal for the Gangetic Dolphin,
- (iii) Identification of potential dolphin sanctuaries in the Ganga River system
- (iv) Intensifying our research work
- (v) Capacity building of frontline staff and people having close interaction rivers regarding Conservation, rescue and rehabilitation of Dolphin.



Abhay Kumar
Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

- (vi) Development of a sustainable fishery 30 management plan compatible with river dolphin existence. The Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, Barrackpore or the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai could take up this as a national review with help of each of the concerned state level fishery department.
- (vii) Environmental Impacts Assessments (EIAs) of projects proposed in the river basin need to focus and indicate the possible impact of the proposed activities on dolphins.

11. That I have read the contents of the compliance affidavit and found the averments contained in are true and correct and nothing material has been concealed thereof.

Abhay Kumar

DEPONENT

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

VERIFICATION:

Verified at Patna on 21st day of November, 2025 that the averments made in the present affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and information derived from the records of the matter.

No part of it is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.



Abhay Kumar

DEPONENT

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

Identify the Deponent signature
who has signed in my presence

Success Bahar
BR/1526/2019



बिहार सरकार
कार्यालय प्रधान मुख्य वन संरक्षक, बिहार, पटना
(वन्यप्राणी प्रभाग)

संख्या-वन्यप्राणी- 28 दिनांक-18.12.17

आदेश

पर्यावरण एवं वन विभाग द्वारा सन्यक विचारोपरान्त गंगा एवं सहायक नदियों में लुप्त हो रहे संकटाग्रस्त राष्ट्रीय जल जीव गांगेय डॉल्फिन (स्थानीय भाषा में सोंस के नाम से प्रचलित) के संरक्षण हेतु मछली फँसाने के जाल में डॉल्फिनों के फँसने पर बचाव या नौका एवं अन्य कारणों से डॉल्फिनों के घायल या संकटाग्रस्त होने पर बचाने के उद्देश्य से मछुआरों एवं अन्य व्यक्तियों द्वारा किये गये प्रयासों के लिए "डॉल्फिन प्रतिरक्षण क्षतिपूर्ति-सह- प्रोत्साहन कार्यक्रम" के संचालन का निर्णय लिया गया है। "डॉल्फिन प्रतिरक्षण क्षतिपूर्ति-सह-प्रोत्साहन कार्यक्रम" के अन्तर्गत निम्नवत् विनिर्दिष्ट परिस्थितियों में एवं निर्धारित प्रक्रिया के अनुसार संबंधित मछुआरों एवं अन्य व्यक्तियों को प्रोत्साहन एवं क्षतिपूर्ति की राशियों का भुगतान किया जायेगा।

2. प्रोत्साहन राशि एवं क्षतिपूर्ति के भुगतान हेतु घटनात्मक परिस्थितियों एवं प्रक्रिया:-

- (i) मछली जाल में डॉल्फिन फँसने पर मछुआरा द्वारा फँसे हुए डॉल्फिन का फोटो मोबाइल फोन में तुरन्त ले लिया जायेगा। इसके उपरान्त जाल को काट कर डॉल्फिन को छुड़ा देंगे तथा उसे नदी में छोड़ देंगे। इस पूरी घटना एवं प्रक्रिया का फोटो अपने मोबाइल में ले लेंगे। तदुपरान्त इसकी सूचना संबंधित वनपाल/वनों के क्षेत्र पदाधिकारी तथा वन प्रमंडल पदाधिकारी को उनके सरकारी मोबाइल फोन पर उपलब्ध करा देंगे। यदि सम्भव हो तो सभी फोटो को मोबाइल फोन द्वारा वनों के क्षेत्र पदाधिकारी तथा वन प्रमंडल पदाधिकारी को मोबाइल फोन पर भेज देंगे। मोबाइल फोन से घटना का फोटो नहीं लिये जा सकने अथवा उसे नहीं भेजे जा सकने की स्थिति में भी तुरन्त अन्य माध्यम से भी वनपाल/वनों के क्षेत्र पदाधिकारी को सूचना दी जा सकेगी।
- (ii) मछुआ समुदाय के प्रतिनिधियों के माध्यम से संबंधित वनपाल/ वनों के क्षेत्र पदाधिकारी तथा वन प्रमंडल पदाधिकारी के कार्यरत मोबाइल फोन का नम्बर समय-समय पर उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा।
- (iii) ऐसी घटना की सूचना मिलते ही वनपाल/वनों के क्षेत्र पदाधिकारी इसकी प्राथमिक समुष्टि कराकर दो दिनों के अन्दर संलग्न प्रपत्र-1 में संबंधित मछुआरे से आवेदन भरवाकर उन्हें 2500/- रु० प्रोत्साहन राशि तथा 5000/-रु० जाल की कीमत की भरपाई का अन्तरिम अंश कुल 7500/-नकद भुगतान (Interim Part payment) करा देंगे।

हरत

(iv) इसके उपरान्त 15 दिनों में घटना के समस्त पहलुओं की जाँच एवं समुष्टि का जाल कटने की हाशि का मूल्यांकन जो 17,500/- से अनधिक होगा, अवशेष क्षतिपूर्ति की राशि का भुगतान नकद में मधुआरे को कर दिया जायेगा। इस प्रकार प्रत्येक मामले में प्रोत्साहन राशि सहित अधिकतम भुगतान की राशि 20,000/- से अनधिक होगी। इसके लिए वनों के क्षेत्र पदाधिकारी अपना प्रतिवेदन एवं अनुशंसा वन प्रमंडल पदाधिकारी को भेजेंगे, जिसपर वन प्रमंडल पदाधिकारी क्षतिपूर्ति की राशि के भुगतान की स्वीकृति के संबंध में आदेश देंगे।

(v) मछली जाल में फंसने के अलावे नौका प्रचालन से अथवा अन्य ज्ञात-अज्ञात कारणों से घायल अथवा संकटापन्न डॉल्फिन के बचाव हेतु विभिन्न रूप में प्रयास करने के मामलों में ऐसे प्रकरणों में संलग्न प्रत्येक मधुआरा या व्यक्ति को क्षतिपूर्ति सह प्रोत्साहन की राशि जो 5,000/- रूपये से अनधिक हो, वनों के क्षेत्र पदाधिकारी के प्रतिवेदन के आधार पर स्वयं घटना का समुचित सत्यापन द्वारा संतुष्ट होकर वन प्रमंडल पदाधिकारी क्षतिपूर्ति-सह- प्रोत्साहन राशि की स्वीकृति प्रदान करेंगे। ऐसे किसी प्रकरण में पाँच से अधिक व्यक्तियों के पात्रता के मामले में यदि प्रोत्साहन की सकल राशि 50,000/- से अधिक होने की स्थिति में 25,000/- रूपये तक की राशि स्वीकृत करते हुए उनके द्वारा आकलित अवशेष राशि की स्वीकृति हेतु अनुमोदन संबंधित वन संरक्षक से प्राप्त किया जायेगा।

(vi) इस पूरी प्रक्रिया के लिए आवेदन, जाँच, अंतरिम भुगतान, वन प्रमंडल पदाधिकारी को अग्रसारण एवं क्षतिपूर्ति की राशि के भुगतान की स्वीकृति के संबंध में आदेश तथा अंतिम भुगतान के लिए एक ही समेकित अभिलेख संदर्भानुसार प्रपत्र-1 अथवा प्रपत्र-2 उपयोग में लाया जायेगा जिसकी प्रति संलग्न है।

(vii) तत्काल एवं त्वरित भुगतान हेतु सभी संबंधित वन प्रमंडलों में इस प्रयोजनार्थ 50,000/- रूपया की राशि स्थायी अग्रिम के रूप में नकद रखी जायेगी एवं वास्तविक व्यय होने पर व्यय राशि को प्रभारित कर स्थायी अग्रिम की भरपाई कर ली जायेगी।

(viii) मछली जाल में फँसे डॉल्फिन को बचाने हेतु जाल काटे जाने के एवज में क्षतिपूर्ति सह/अथवा प्रोत्साहन राशि का भुगतान संलग्न विहित प्रपत्र-1 तथा अन्य कारणों से घायल या संकटाग्रस्त डॉल्फिन बचाने के प्रयास हेतु क्षतिपूर्ति सह/अथवा प्रोत्साहन राशि के भुगतान हेतु संलग्न विहित प्रपत्र-2 का प्रयोग किया जायेगा।

3. कार्यक्रम का क्रियान्वयन जिला एवं वन प्रमंडल -

जिला	वन प्रमंडल
भोजपुर, बक्सर, पटना, छपरा, वैशाली, सीवान, समस्तीपुर, मुंगेर, खगड़िया, बेगूसराय, भागलपुर, दरभंगा, मधुबनी, सीतामढ़ी, अररिया, किशनगंज, पूर्णियाँ, कटिहार, सुपौल, सहरसा	भोजपुर वन प्रमंडल, पटना वन प्रमंडल, सारण वन प्रमंडल, वैशाली वन प्रमंडल, गोपालगंज वन प्रमंडल, समस्तीपुर वन प्रमंडल, मुंगेर वन प्रमंडल, बेगूसराय वन प्रमंडल, भागलपुर वन प्रमंडल, मिथिला वन प्रमंडल, दरभंगा, सीतामढ़ी वन प्रमंडल, अररिया वन प्रमंडल, पूर्णियाँ वन प्रमंडल, सुपौल वन प्रमंडल एवं सहरसा वन प्रमंडल

4. क्षतिपूर्ति एवं प्रोत्साहन राशि के व्यय का शीर्ष - गैर योजना - मुख्य शीर्ष 2406 वानिकी तथा वन्यप्राणी, उप-मुख्य शीर्ष-01 वानिकी, लघु शीर्ष-001 निदेशन तथा प्रशासन, उपशीर्ष-0001 निदेशन और प्रशासन, विपत्र कोड-19-2406010010001, विषय शीर्ष 33.02 मुआवजा इकाई से किया जायेगा।
5. इस कार्यक्रम के संचालन में यह सतर्कता एवं निगरानी बरती जायेगी कि इसमें कोई आपराधिक कृत्य/मंशा/प्रवृत्ति का मामला अंतर्ग्रस्त नहीं हो एवं ऐसा दोषपूर्ण मामला स्थापित होने पर क्षतिपूर्ति तथा प्रोत्साहन राशि की वसूली एवं सुसंगत कानूनी कार्रवाई की जा सकेगी।
6. यह कार्यक्रम सरकार के अनुमोदन से क्रियान्वित किया जा रहा है।

अनु०:-यथोक्त।

Surat 15/12/2017

अपर प्रधान मुख्य वन संरक्षक-सह-
मुख्य वन्यप्राणी प्रतिपालक, बिहार

ज्ञापांक-वन्यप्राणी 69। दिनांक- 18.12.17

प्रतिलिपि निदेशक, पारिस्थितिकी एवं पर्यावरण, पटना/क्षेत्रीय मुख्य वन संरक्षक, पटना/ मुजफ्फरपुर/ भागलपुर/ वन संरक्षक, पटना/ वन्यप्राणी अंचल, पटना/ सीवान/ मुजफ्फरपुर/ भागलपुर/ पूर्णियाँ अंचल/ वन प्रमंडल पदाधिकारी, भोजपुर/ पटना/ सारण/ वैशाली/ गोपालगंज/ समस्तीपुर/ मुंगेर/ बेगूसराय/ भागलपुर/ मिथिला/ सीतामढ़ी/ अररिया/ पूर्णियाँ/ सुपौल/ सहरसा वन प्रमंडल को सूचनार्थ एवं आवश्यक कार्रवाई हेतु प्रेषित।

अनु०:-यथोक्त।

Surat 15/12/2017

अपर प्रधान मुख्य वन संरक्षक-सह-
मुख्य वन्यप्राणी प्रतिपालक, बिहार

ज्ञापांक-वन्यप्राणी 69। दिनांक- 18.12.17

प्रतिलिपि प्रधान सचिव, पर्यावरण एवं वन विभाग, बिहार सरकार को सूचनार्थ प्रेषित।

अनु०:-यथोक्त।

Surat 15/12/2017

अपर प्रधान मुख्य वन संरक्षक-सह-
मुख्य वन्यप्राणी प्रतिपालक, बिहार

ज्ञापांक-वन्यप्राणी 69। दिनांक- 18.12.17

प्रतिलिपि आदेश की एक प्रति आई०टी० मैनेजर को विभागीय वेबसाइट <http://forest.bih.nic.in> पर अपलोड करने हेतु प्रेषित।

अनु०:-यथोक्त।

Surat 15/12/2017

अपर प्रधान मुख्य वन संरक्षक-सह-
मुख्य वन्यप्राणी प्रतिपालक, बिहार

निबंध सं० पी० टी०



बिहार गजट

असाधारण अंक
बिहार सरकार द्वारा प्रकाशित

14 मई 1928 (सं०)

(वि० सं० 389)

पटना, बुधवार, 4 मई 2006

द्वितीय विभाग

अभिप्रेत

3 मई 2006

सं०-एल०जी०-1-011/06/सेक०-34— बिहार विकास मंडल द्वारा पर्याप्त निम्नलिखित अधिनियम, विधायक संख्या: अगस्त 2006 को अनुमति दे चुके हैं, इसके द्वारा सर्व साधारण की सूचना के लिए प्रकाशित किया जाता है।

बिहार-राज्यपाल के आदेश से,
रमेश कुमार,
सरकार के संयुक्त सचिव।

(Bihar Act 13, 2006)

THE BIHAR FISH JALKAR MANAGEMENT BILL - 2006AN
ACT

to provide for provisions for settlement of Jalkars relating to the Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Bihar, Patna.

Be it enacted by the legislature of the State of Bihar in the Fifty seventh year of the Republic of India as follows :-

1. **Short title, Extent and Commencement -**
 - (i) This Act may be called The Bihar Fish Jalkar Management Act, 2006.
 - (ii) It shall extend to the whole of the State of Bihar.
 - (iii) It shall come into force with immediate effect.
2. **Definitions :-** In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires :-
 - (i) "Disqualified Fishermen Co-operative Society" means a Society which is found disqualified by District Fisheries Officer.
 - (ii) "Applicant Fisherman" means a fisherman who has submitted an application to the Society for the Settlement of Jalkars.
 - (iii) "Jalkar" means Tank, Pokhar, Ahar, River, water course channel, 'Chaur', 'Dhav', reservoir Lake, Ox-bow lake etc. under Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Bihar, in which Makhana, Singhara & fish is reared.
 - (iv) "Water area" means total area of said Jalkar recorded in the Revenue Khatiyan record;
 - (v) "District Fisheries Officer" means District Fisheries Officer-cum-Chief Executive Officer, Fish Farmers Development Agency notified by Government.
 - (vi) "Family" means husband-wife, minor son and unmarried daughter.
 - (vii) "Settlement Year" means a period from First July to 30th June but for Singhara, Makhana-cum-fish Jalkars, this period would be from 1st October to 30th September.
 - (viii) "Fishermen" means the person who is a professional fisherman engaged in fishing and fish culture.
 - (ix) "Fishermen Co-operative Society" means a Fishermen Co-operative Society at Block level registered under Bihar Co-operative Societies Act 1935 and Bihar Self Supporting Co-operative Societies Act 1996 in which the members are only Fisherman
 - (x) "Fishing Zone" means the water area in which fishing is possible.

11. **Declaration of Parta :-** Site inspection report will be placed before the Reserve Deposit Fixation Committee by District Fisheries Officer, if the Jalkar remains unsettled after two limited bids. After considering the facts mentioned in the report this committee shall refix their reserve deposit amount or shall declare them temporarily parta and may make recommendation to the Managing Committee for long term settlement.

12. **Claims of Reschedulement / Remission :-**

(i) Claim for Reschedulement / Remission may be made only in the case of damage by natural calamity such as earthquake, flood, drought or fish epidemic. Claim of remission will not be admissible for damage caused by other reasons.

(ii) Application for claim of remission/ reschedulement by Society will be received in the office of the District Fisheries Officer within two months of occurrence of natural calamity. Along with the application, a copy of the proceeding of meeting of the managing committee of the society shall be enclosed, in which member wise amount of proposed reschedulement / remission is clearly mentioned.

(iii) The managing committee may consider the claim of reschedulement/ remission only after receipt of concerned certificate of natural calamity by Collector and / or fish epidemic certificate by Divisional Deputy Director (Fisheries).

(iv) The amount of remission will not be more than the amount of the next installment and the period of reschedulement will not be more than the remaining period of settlement. Drawing of water from tanks, reservoirs and mauns for irrigation shall be prohibited. District Fisheries Officer may order for drawing of water for irrigation when the water level is minimum average five feets in these jalkars.

(v) The society shall not be deemed to be a debtor till the final decision of the government on the claim of legal remission.

(vi) Drawing of water from tanks, reservoirs and mauns for irrigation shall be prohibited. District Fisheries Officer may order for drawing of water for irrigation when the water level is minimum average five feets in these jalkars.

13. **Fishing Prohibition :-**

(i) Fishing in rivers shall be prohibited from 15th June to 15th August.

(ii) Fishing net or Gill net with less than 4 cm. Mesh size shall be prohibited in rivers.

(iii) Fishing of fingerlings of culturable fishes of any species shall be prohibited.

(iv) Putting of fence or any obstruction restricting the movement of fish shall be prohibited in rivers and reservoir.

(v) Use of dynamite or explosives, poison and poisonous chemicals for fishing shall be prohibited.

14. **Appeal and Revision :-**

(i) An appeal against all decisions regarding short term settlement taken by District Fisheries Officer and Deputy Director may be filed before the Director Fisheries.

(ii) An appeal against of all decisions taken by Collector and Director Fisheries may be filed in the Court of Departmental Commissioner.

POPULATION STATUS OF
RIVER DOLPHINS
IN INDIA

2024



CITATION:

Qamar Qureshi, Vishnupriya Kolipakam, Abdul Wakil, Soumitra Dasgupta, Satya Prakash Yadav, Virendra R. Tiwari & Bivash Ranjan. Population Status of River Dolphins in India, 2021 - 23 (2024). Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, New Delhi and Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

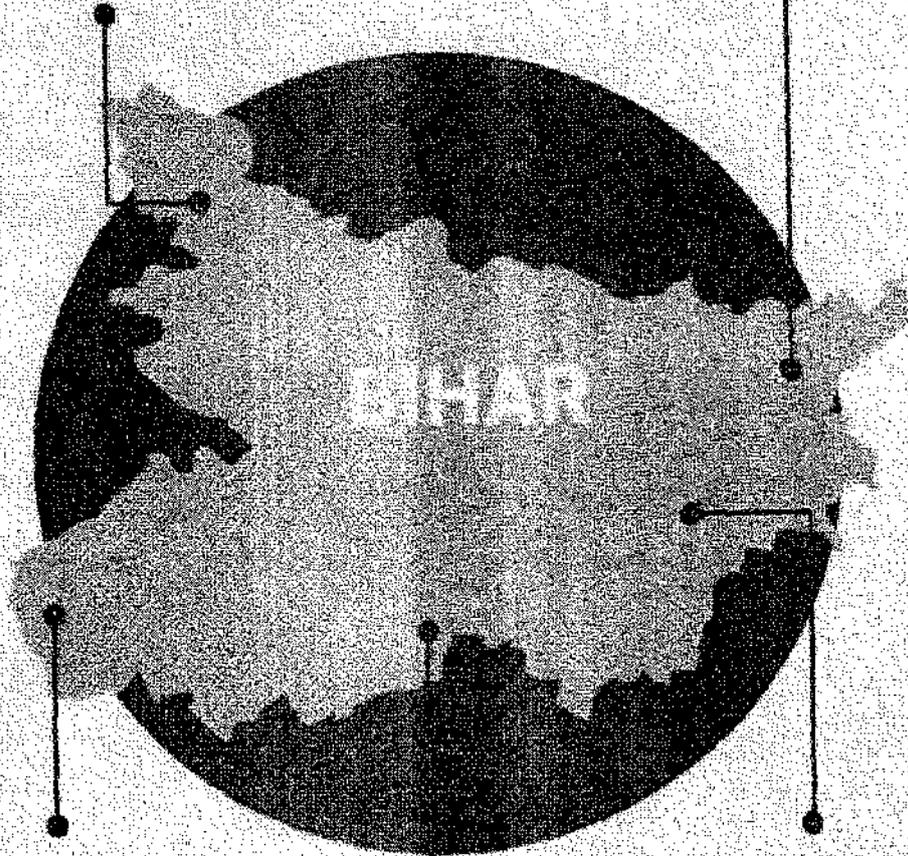
ISBN No. (Print) : 978-81-972769-3-4
ISBN No. (Electronic) : 978-81-972769-1-0

Cover Image : Ganesh Chowdhury

POPULATION
ESTIMATE
2220
(2118-2329)

NUMBER OF
KILOMETERS SURVEYED

1368



NUMBER OF
SURVEY DAYS

38

NUMBER OF
RIVERS SURVEYED

5

LEAST COUNT

1813

TABLE 6.2

Ganges River Dolphin population estimate in Ganga from Chauasa to Manihari and its tributaries Gandak, Mahananda, Kosi and part of Ghaghara in Bihar, and Manihari to Rajmahal in Jharkhand.

N_{ca} is the observer corrected population estimate, and ER_{ca} is the observer corrected encounter rate (per Km). N_{oa} is the observer and availability corrected population estimate and ER_{oa} is the observer and availability corrected encounter rate (per Km).

River	River Stretch	N_{ca}	ER_{ca}
Ganga	Chauasa - Manihari (Bihar)	122 (101-150)	0.5
	Manihari - Rajmahal (Jharkhand)	162 (127-177)	0.5
Gandak	Mahabanga - Zuzme - Gandak - Ghagra Confluence - Patali (Bihar)	577 (322-746)	0.5
Mahananda	Mathi - Ganga - Kharanaga Bridge - Ganga (Bihar)	155 (145-169)	0.5
Kosi	Ka - Sarapani - Indar - Indar - Napat - Rajauli - Kosi - Ganga Confluence - Purvatal (Bihar)	371 (217-547)	0.5
Ghaghara	Bachhawal - Rajmahal (Jharkhand)	151 (139-164)	0.5
	Bihar	2195 (2118-2327)	1.4
	Jharkhand	152 (152-172)	2.6
	Overall Bihar and Jharkhand	2382 (2270-2501)	1.7



**THE CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN
FOR
THE GANGETIC DOLPHIN
2010-2020**



**National Ganga River Basin Authority
Ministry of Environment & Forests
Government of India**

POPULATION STATUS OF THE GANGETIC DOLPHIN IN THE
GANGA RIVER SYSTEM

NAME OF THE RIVER	LENGTH OF RIVER SURVEYED	DOLPHIN COUNT	SOURCE
INDIA			
THE MAIN GANGA CHANNEL			
The Ganga (Haridwar to Bijnor Barrage)	100 km	Nil	Sinha et al. (2000)
The Ganga (Bijnor Barrage to Narora Barrage)	169 km	36 (d/s survey) 56	Sinha et al. (2000) (pers. comm. S. Behera 2010)
The Ganga (Narora to Allahabad) Kanpur to Allahabad	600 km/200 km	10 (discrete segment survey) 78	Sinha et al. (2000) (pers. comm. S. Behera 2010)
The Ganga (Allahabad to Buxar)	425 km	172 (d/s survey)	Sinha et al. (2000)
The Ganga (Buxar to Maniharighat)	500 km	808 (d/s survey)	(Sinha et al. 2010)
The Ganga (Maniharighat to Farakka)	100 km	24 (d/s survey)	pers. comm. R. K. Sinha
The Farakka Feeder canal	38 km	21 (d/s survey)	Sinha et al. (2000)
The Bhagirathi (Jangipur Barrage to Triveni)	320 km	119 (d/s survey)	Sinha et al. (2000)
The Hooghli (Triveni to Ganga Sagar)	190 km	97 (d/s survey)	(pers. comm. G. Sharma 2008)

TRIBUTARIES OF THE GANGA

The River Yamuna (from confluence of Chambal to Allahabad)	250 km	104	WWF Nepal (2006)
The River Ghaghara (Kailashpur Barrage to Deorhat, J.P.)	505 km	295	WWF Nepal (2006)
The Kosi (Kosi Barrage to Kursala)	200 km	85 (discrete survey)	Sinha and Sharma (2003a)
The Gomti (Gomti Barrage to confluence with Ganga at Patna)	320 km	267 (d/s survey)	Multi-Organisational survey 2010
The River Girwa (India-Nepal border to Girijapuri Barrage)	20 km	23 (d/s survey) 28	Smith et al.(1994) WWF Nepal (2006)
The Sarda (Sarda Barrage to Patya)	100 km	Nil	Sinha and Sharma (2003)
The Chambal (Keshoraipatan to Pachnada)	567 km	93	WWF Nepal (2006)
The Ken (from confluence of Yamuna at Chilla to Bardham Kali village)	30 km	08 (d/s survey)	Sinha et al. (2000)
The Kumari (from confluence of Sind River)	100 km	Nil	Sinha et al. (2000)
The Betwa (from confluence of the Yamuna at Hamirpur to Orai)	84 km	06 (d/s survey)	Sinha et al. (2000)

**Research and Monitoring Activities in the
Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary,
Bhagalpur, Bihar: April 2024 to March 2025**



Submitted to the

PCCF-cum-Chief Wildlife Warden

& Divisional Forest Officer, Bhagalpur Division,

Dept. of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Government of Bihar.

by

Dr. Nachiket Kelkar

Head, Riverine Ecosystems and Livelihoods programme, Wildlife Conservation Trust

Member, State Board for Wildlife/ National Dolphin Research Centre Committee,

Dept. of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Govt. of Bihar.

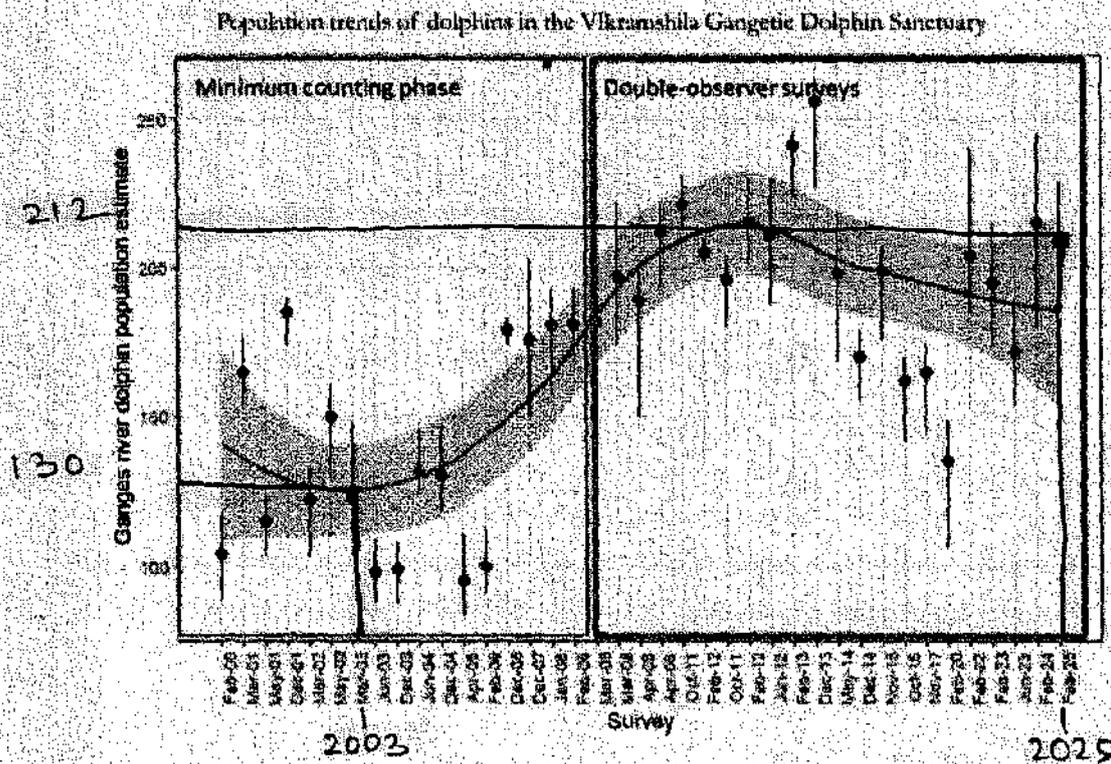
Member, IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group.





observer surveys in the downstream direction (with flow), which involved two teams and would allow explicit estimation of population size with the associated uncertainty due to sighting biases. The population estimation methodology based on double-observer surveys is conducted with two observer teams (platforms) on the same boat scanning the same area simultaneously, with full independence of detections. The detections by the two teams are matched post hoc based on sighting time and odometer readings, through a scientifically robust process involving four stages of screening to identify sightings "common" to both teams, and "unique" sightings by either of the teams. The proportions of common and unique sightings are used to calculate the number of missed animals, which provides an estimate of the actual population size of Ganges river dolphins. We also calibrated and found that single-observer count surveys can be "corrected" by sighting distances, sighting conditions, boat speed, and river channel width. This correction then allowed us to estimate trends seamlessly from long-term annual population estimates. Since 2021-22, unto today, we are seeing a phase of stability.

Figure 1. Population trends of Ganges river dolphins in the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary.





In our latest survey in February 2025, we estimated a total abundance of 212 ± 3 Ganges river dolphins (95% Confidence Interval: 206-218) from the double-observer survey in the 73.7 km stretch of the VGDS. This estimate included 112 adults, 92 sub-adults, and 8 calves. We recorded two dolphin deaths likely due to bycatch and one targeted killing case (in Kahalgaon) in 2024-25. The reported number of deaths was lower in this year than in the previous. Overall, the river dolphin population may be considered stable and fluctuating around an average of 200 dolphins in the Sanctuary. The distribution hotspots of Ganges river dolphins (Figure 2) along Sultanganj, Tintanga-Buddhuchak, Raghapur-Bahatra, and downstream of Bhagalpur (from West to East) also remained stable. Presence of calves and juveniles was noted at all river dolphin hotspots.

Figure 2. Feb-2025 hotspots of Ganges river dolphin distribution in Vikramshila Gangaic Dolphin Sanctuary.



Impact of the Sultanganj-Aguwanighat bridge collapse, June 2023

We had conducted a river dolphin survey in June 2023 to assess the impact of the Sultanganj-Aguwanighat bridge¹ collapse on 4th June 2023, on dolphin abundance and distribution within the sanctuary. In June 2023, the Ganges river dolphin population was estimated at 172 ± 18 Ganges river dolphins, based on an upstream count and sighting distance-based correction for detection. This nearly overlapped with the February 2023 abundance estimate of 192 ± 9 Ganges river dolphins in the 72 km stretch of the VGDS. Two reasons were noted for this difference: 1) weather conditions led to low visibility in some segments of the Bhagalpur-Sultanganj stretch, and 2) detection of dolphins could be affected by rising water levels in May and June, after which they often move into shallower side-channels. The difference was not conclusive to say that the Ganges

¹ <https://www.ainda.com/2023/06/hibas-nitish-kumars-dream-bridge-over-ganga-collapses-again-during-construction/>

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI
Original Application No. 727/2024

IN THE MATTER OF:

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

VAKALATNAMA

KNOWALL to whom these present shall come that I Abhay Kumar, Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar the above named Respondent-No.6 do hereby appoint

AWASTHI AND ASSOCIATES, Advocates

Rishi K. Awasthi D/61/2004, Ritu Arora D/935/2001, Amit Vikram Awasthi, D/2419/2011, Piyush Vatsa D/2540/2015,

Avinash Ankit D/3701/2018, R.K. Gupta R/3055/2021, Rahul Raj Mishra, Adv, Enroll. No. D/7773/2018,

Mitali Singh, Enroll. No. D/7429/2022. Kapil M Kant, Adv, Enroll. No. UP-09586/2015,

Abhigyan Chaitanya Adv Enroll. BR-1855/2022 and Ishaan Raj Adv Enroll. BR-1549/2023

Address: A-21, UGF, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024,

Phone No. 011-40104221

(herein after called the advocate/s) to be my/our Advocate in the above noted case) thereby authorizing him/them- To act, appear and plead in the above-noted case in this Court or in any other Court in which the same may be tried or heard and also in the appellate Court including High Court subject to payment of fees separately for each Court by me/ us.

To sign, file verify and present pleadings, appeals cross objections or petitions for execution review, revision, withdrawal, compromise or other petitions or affidavits or other documents as may be deemed necessary or proper for the prosecution of the said case in all its stages.

To file and take back documents to admit and/or deny the documents of opposite party.

To withdraw or compromise the said case or in any manner relating to the said case or to arbitrate any differences or disputes that may arise touching or in any manner relating to the said case.

To take execution proceedings

The deposit, draw and

which may be necessary

To appoint and instruct

conferred upon the Advocate

And I/We the undersigned do hereby agree to ratify and confirm all acts done by the Advocate or his substitute in the matter as my/our own acts, as if done by me/us to all intents and

And I/We undertake that I / we or my /our duly authorized agent w whom we may refer to do so and to sign the Power of Attorney on our behalf.

And I /we undersigned do hereby agree not to hold the advocate responsible for the result of the said case. The adjournment costs whenever ordered by the Court shall be retained by the Advocate and I /we the undersigned do hereby agree that in the event of the whole or part of the fee agreed by me/us to be paid to the Advocate remaining unpaid he shall be entitled to withdraw from the prosecution of the said case until the same is paid up. The fee settled is only for the above case and above Court. I/We hereby agree that once the fee is paid, I /we will not be entitled for the refund of the same in any case whatsoever. If the case lasts for more than three years, the advocate shall be entitled for additional fee equivalent to half of the agreed fee for every addition three years or part thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I/We do hereunto set my /our hand to these presents the contents of which have been understood by me/us on this 20th day of November, 2025



Rishi K. Awasthi
Advocate
D/61/2004

Abhay Kumar
Client

Abhay Kumar
Client

R.K. Gupta
R/3055/21

Mitali Singh
UP-9586/2015

Avinash Ankit
D/3701/2018

Abhigyan Chaitanya
BR/1855/2022

Mitali Singh
D/7429/2022

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum- Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
-cum- Chief Wildlife Warden, Bihar



134 PROOF OF SERVICE

Nabi Hasan <nabihasan48@gmail.com>

27

Advance Service of News Item titled "Endangered Gangetic dolphins found in most tributaries of Ganges prompting urgent conservation" appearing in Mongaby- India dated 20.05.2024 in Original Application No. 727/2024

1 message

Nabi Hasan <nabihasan48@gmail.com>

Sat, Nov 22, 2025 at 1:42 PM

To: Rajan Shaw <rajan.shaw543@gmail.com>, gიციცgeorge.adv42@yahoo.in,

saurabh.balwani@balwanilawchambers.com

Cc: rishi awasthi <rishikawasthi@yahoo.co.in>

Dear Sir,

Please find attached herewith a copy of Counter Affidavit No. 6 filed on behalf of Respondent No. 6 (State of Bihar), to be placed before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, New Delhi.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of the advance service.

Thanks & Regards

Nabi Hasan

Office of Mr. Rishi K. Awasthi, Advocate

A-21, Upper Ground Floor, Defence Colony

NEW DELHI-110024

(M) +91-8527606415

nabihasan48@gmail.com



Counter Affidavit in News Item titled Endangered Gangetic dolphins found in most tributaries of Ganges prompting urgent conservation.pdf

5637K