



# Dolphin Population in Chilika Lake

## Why in News?

The dolphin population along **Odisha's coast and in its water bodies** has increased but the number of Irrawaddy dolphins in Chilika lake has fallen.

- A total of **six species of dolphins** — **Irrawaddy, bottlenose, humpback, striped, finless and spinner dolphins** — have been recorded.

## What are Different Species of Dolphins?

### ▪ About Irrawaddy Dolphins:

- **Habitat:** Irrawaddy dolphins are **found in coastal areas in South and Southeast Asia**, and in **three rivers**: the Ayeyarwady (Myanmar), the Mahakam (Indonesian Borneo) and the Mekong.
  - The Mekong River Irrawaddy dolphins inhabit a 118-mile stretch of the river between Cambodia and Lao PDR.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
  - **CITES:** Appendix I
  - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I

### ▪ About Indo- Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins:

- **Habitat:** Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins generally occur in shallow coastal waters of the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and Australia.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Near Threatened
  - **CITES:** Appendix II

### ▪ About Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphins:

- **Habitat:** The Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin occurs within the Indian Ocean from South Africa to India.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
  - **CITES:** Appendix I
  - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I

### ▪ About Striped Dolphins:

- **Habitat:** The striped dolphin inhabits temperate or tropical, off-shore waters.
  - It is found in abundance in the North and South Atlantic Oceans, including the Mediterranean and Gulf of Mexico, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean.

- **Conservation Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern
- **CITES:** Appendix II

- **About Finless Dolphins:**

- **Habitat:** The finless porpoise originally inhabited salt water niches along the coast of the Indo-Pacific Ocean.

- **Conservation Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered
- **CITES:** Appendix I

- **About Spinner Dolphin:**

- **Habitat:** The spinner dolphin is a small dolphin found in off-shore tropical waters around the world.

- It is famous for its acrobatic displays in which it rotates around its longitudinal axis as it leaps through the air.

- **Conservation Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern
- **CITES:** Appendix II

## Chilika Lake

- Chilika is **Asia's largest and world's second largest lagoon.**
- It **lies on the east coast of India in the state of Odisha**, separated from the mighty Bay of Bengal by a small strip of sand.
- It spreads over Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha on the east coast of India, at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal, covering an area of over 1,100 square kilometers.
- It is the **largest wintering ground for migratory birds** on the Indian sub-continent and is home to a number of threatened species of plants and animals.
- In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the **first Indian wetland of international importance** under the [Ramsar Convention](#).
- Major attraction at Chilika is **Irrawaddy dolphins** which are often spotted off Satapada Island.
- The **large Nalabana Island (Forest of Reeds)** covering about 16 sq km in the lagoon area was declared a **bird sanctuary** in 1987.
- **Kalijai Temple** - Located on an island in the Chilika Lake.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Q. Consider the following pairs (2019)

#### Wildlife Naturally found in

1. Blue-finned Mahseer : Cauvery River
2. Irrawaddy Dolphin : Chambal River
3. Rusty-spotted Cat : Eastern Ghats

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (c)**

**Source:TH**

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