

Today's Important Topic for UPSC CSE Aspirants (Project Dolphin)

Comprehensive Explanation for Questions :

Inside Story of the News (Project Dolphin) :

Inside Story of the News :

- Recently , the **Tamil Nadu Government issued an order to implement 'Project Dolphin' to strengthen the marine ecology and overall health of the marine environment under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat programme of the government of India.**
- Several incidents of dead dolphins washing ashore have been reported from Ramanathapuram and Thoothukudi over the past years.
- **The Gulf of Mannar, which extends from Rameswaram to Kanniyakumari and has a chain of 21 uninhabited islands stretching along 140 km of the coast, is known to have more than four species of dolphins including Steno bredanensis, Stenella attenuata, Stenella longirostris, and Delphinus delphis.**

Kahani Ander Ki : After the above-mentioned incidents, it becomes necessary for us to get detailed information about Project Dolphin . Since this program is also related to the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat Programme , then it becomes necessary for us to know about this Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat Programme also. We know that at this program related to Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve , so then it becomes necessary to know about Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve.

About Project Dolphin (Delphinus delphis) to Save Dolphins in Tamil Nadu :

- **Government of Tamil Nadu issued orders on 06.11.2023 to implement Project Dolphin under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats of the Government of India.**
- **More than 9 species of Marine Dolphins are found in the Coastal Waters of Tamil Nadu.**
- **Major habitats of the dolphins are found in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve.**
- Last year, 7 Dolphins were successfully rescued and released back to the sea at Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve.
- **Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve is an area of high productivity with rich marine biodiversity including marine mammals such as dugongs etc.**
- **Dolphins play an important role in keeping the marine environment in balance.**
- **Dolphins around the world face various natural and human-induced threats which include hunting, entanglement in fishing nets, overfishing, climate change, ship strikes, tourism activities, toxic contamination, noise pollution, oil and gas development and habitat degradation.**
- The conservation of dolphins and their aquatic habitat through use of modern technology by engaging with fishermen and other ocean dependent population is proposed under the project.
- This will be helpful in improving the population of Dolphin species and protection of their habitat at the same time improving livelihood of the local communities.
- Under the project a number of activities will be undertaken to handle challenges for saving critically endangered species.

- The project will focus on following activities:
- **Strengthening of protection activities through better patrolling antipoaching activities and strengthening of the surveillance and patrolling teams with modern equipment and technology.**
- **Rescue and rehabilitation activities through strengthening of veterinary services, patrolling and training etc.**
- **Dolphin habitat improvement through restoration of coastal ecosystem like mangroves, corals, sea grass etc.**
- Removal of ghost nets and reduction of pollution in coastal areas.
- **Enhancing awareness through celebration of “National Dolphin Day” with the involvement of local community and educational Institutions including launch of ‘Dolphin Scholarship’.**
- Encouragement of local community through incentives and awards.
- Launch of Dolphin scholarship programme and enhance understanding of their habitats etc. promoting eco-tourism and creating livelihood opportunities as a substitute to the conventional fishing practices.
- Symposium, seminars, meetings etc. for better learning and understanding of this endangered species.
- **Project Dolphin will strengthen the marine ecology and overall health of marine Environment.**
- **The Project will be implemented at a cost of Rs 812.6 lakhs (8.13 crore rupees)during the year 2023-2024.**

About Project Dolphin Program :

- **Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on August 15 (2020) , Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Project Dolphin on the lines of Project Tiger and Project Elephant.**
- **He said the project will focus on both river and sea dolphins, and “strengthen biodiversity, create employment opportunities and attract tourism”.**
- **Project Dolphin will protect and enhance the population of the human-friendly mammals.**
- It envisages addressing concerns over conservation and empowering stakeholders, such as the river-dependent population, in reducing river pollution and allowing for sustainable fishery and other river-based livelihood options through scientific conservation methods.
- As per plans, the ministry of environment, forest and climate change will launch the 10-year project to give impetus to conserving and protecting the fast-depleting species.
- The project will involve conservation of dolphins and the overall aquatic habitat through the use of modern technology, especially in enumeration and anti-poaching activities.
- It will engage fishermen and other river and ocean dependent population and strive for improving the livelihood of local communities.”
- **Project Dolphin will work in close tandem with several ministries and departments, such as Jal Shakti, shipping, agriculture, fisheries, power and rural development, besides state governments.**
- PM’s decision will greatly benefit the marine ecology in Ganga and give the river a new lease of life.
- **A 60 km stretch of Ganga from Sultanganj to Kahalgaon in the district of Bhagalpur has been declared as Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary named after the Pal dynasty university ‘Vikramshila’.**

- **The Ganges River Dolphin is a species of freshwater dolphins primarily found in the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers and their tributaries in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.**
- In India, they are sighted in the deep rivers of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.
- **According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Ganges River Dolphin was officially discovered in 1801.**
- **It can survive only in freshwater and is essentially blind. This mammal hunts by emitting ultrasonic sounds, which bounce off fish and other prey, enabling it to “see” an image in its mind.**
- Once present in large numbers, the Ganges River Dolphin’s population has dwindled abysmally over the last century owing to killings, habitat fragmentation by dams and barrages and indiscriminate fishing.
- As per assessment reports available with the environment ministry, there are about 3,700 Ganges River Dolphins in Indian rivers, of which 962 are in Assam and 1,275 in Uttar Pradesh.
- According to the ministry, in Assam, the assessment was carried out in three rivers, with the Brahmaputra accounting for 877 of the 962 dolphins in the state.
- In addition to the species being India’s national aquatic animal, the Gangetic dolphin has been notified by the Assam government as the state aquatic animal too.
- Silting and sand lifting from rivers in Assam have been stopped to maintain its population. However, as per WWF estimates, they number between 1,200 and 1,800 in India.
- **In 2009, the Ganges River Dolphin was declared national aquatic animal during the first meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA).** Experts say river dolphins act as ideal ecological indicators of a healthy riverine ecosystem.
- **Gangetic dolphins have been placed under the “endangered” category by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).**
- Additionally, they have been included in Schedule-I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which means they have the highest protection against hunting.
- **They are also among the 21 species identified under the centrally sponsored scheme, “Development of Wildlife Habitat”.**
- Another effort to preserve and increase the numbers of dolphins was setting up of the Conservation Action Plan for the Gangetic Dolphin (2010-2020).
- This plan identified threats to Gangetic dolphins and the impact of river traffic, irrigation canals and depletion of prey-based on dolphin populations.

About Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat Programme :

- **The erstwhile Ministry of Environment and Forest scheme of 'Assistance for the Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries' was reformulated and renamed as 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH)' during the 11th Plan period (2007-2012).**
- **The MoEF, in consultation with Wildlife Institute of India and other scientific institutions/ organizations, identified 16 terrestrial and 6 aquatic species with the objective of saving critically endangered species/ecosystems that to ensure their protection outside Protected Areas, across the wider landscape/seascape.**

- **The Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats or IDWH is a Policy launched by the Central Government of India as a means to give out some technical and financial help to the different states and Union Territories for the protection of wildlife habitat in their respective zones.**
- The plan proposed intensive capacity building, better staff employment, wildlife stats evaluation, monetizing poaching activities, providing quality veterinary care and promotion of ecotourism.
- This organization also overlooks assistance for the relocation of specific communities from the protected areas to another place.
- Species Recovery Plans were prepared for several of these species.
- The Lion (*Panthera leo persica*) and Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) populations are showing an increasing trend, and the Sangai (*Rucervus eldii eldii*) and Hangul (*Cervus elaphus hanglu*) populations are stable; but the populations of the Great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) and the Nicobar megapode (*Megapodius nicobariensis*) have recorded declines.
- Vulture populations, in particular *Gyps bengalensis*, that had declined substantially in recent times have registered a small upward trend, indicating that conservation measures taken for the species are showing a positive outcome.
- Efforts are underway for developing protocols for monitoring the status and trends of the remaining IDWH species.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status		
		IUCN Red List	Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972	CITES
Asian wild Buffalo / Wild Water Buffalo (Mammals)	<i>Bubalus arnee</i>	Endangered (EN)	Schedule I	Appendix III
Asiatic Lion (Mammals)	<i>Panthera leo persica</i>	Endangered (EN)	Schedule I	Only the populations of India under Appendix I ; all other populations are included in Appendix II.
Manipur Brow-antlered Deer/Thamin/Sangai / Dancing Deer (Mammals)	<i>Rucervus eldii eldii</i>	Endangered (EN)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Dugong/Sea Cow (Mammals)	<i>Dugong dugon</i>	Vulnerable (VU)	Schedule I	Appendix I

Edible Nest Swiftlet / White-nest Swiftlet (Birds)	Aerodramus fuciphagus	Least concern (LC)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Gangetic/South Asian River Dolphin (Susu) (Mammals)	Platanista gangetica	Endangered (EN)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Great Indian Bustard (Birds)	Ardeotis nigriceps	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Kashmir Red Deer/ Kashmir Red Stag /Hangul (Mammals)	Cervus hangul	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Great one-horned Rhinoceros / Indian Rhinoceros (Mammals)	Rhinoceros unicornis	Vulnerable (VU)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Jerdon's courser (Birds)	Rhinoptilus Bitorquatus	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Not evaluated (NE)
Malabar Large-spotted Civet (Mammals)	Viverra civettina	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Appendix III
Leatherback Turtle / Marine Turtle (Reptiles)	Dermochelys coriacea	Endangered (EN)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Nicobar Megapode / Nicobar Scrubfowl (Birds)	Megapodius nicobariensis	Vulnerable (VU)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Nilgiri Tahr (A Mountain Goat) (Mammals)	Nilgiritragus hylocrius	Endangered (EN)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Snow Leopard (Mammals)	Panthera uncia	Vulnerable (VU)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Swamp Deer/Barasingha (Mammals)	Rucervus duvaucelii	Vulnerable (VU)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Vultures (Birds)				
White-rumped Vulture	Gyps bengalensis	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Red-headed Vulture	Sarcogyps calvus	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Slender-billed Vulture	Gyps tenuirostris	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Appendix II

Indian Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Endangered (EN)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	Near threatened (NT)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Lammergeyer/ Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	Near threatened (NT)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Himalayan Griffon / Himalayan Vulture	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>	Near threatened (NT)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Eurasian Griffon/ Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	Least concern (LC)	Schedule I	Appendix II
Northern River Terrapin (Reptiles)	<i>Batagur baska</i>	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Clouded Leopard (Mammals)	<i>Neofelis nebulosi</i>	Critically endangered (CR)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Humpback whale (Mammals)	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Least concern (LC)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Red Panda / Himalaya Red Panda (Mammals)	<i>Ailurus fulgens</i>	Endangered (EN)	Schedule I	Appendix I
Caracals (Mammals)	<i>Caracal caracal</i>	Least concern (LC)	Schedule I	Only the population of Asia under Appendix I ; all other populations are included in Appendix II.

- **The Components of The IDWH Program :**
 - **Support to Protected Areas (National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves)**
 - **Protection of Wildlife Outside Protected Areas**
 - **Recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats.**
- **Protected Areas:**
 - India has a network of 998 Protected Areas including 106 National Parks, 567 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 105 Conservation Reserves and 220 Community Reserves covering a total of 1,73,629.52 Sq.km of geographical area of the country which is approximately 5.28%.

State Symbols of India : Out of these 22 identified species, which are state symbols of various states of India, their status is as follows:

S.No.	States/ Union Territories	Animal	Bird	Tree	Flower	Butterfly
1.	Assam	Indian One-horned Rhino	White-winged Wood Duck	Hollong	Foxtail Orchids	-
2.	Chhattisgarh	Wild Buffalo	Hill Myna	Sal	Indian Laurel	-
3.	Gujarat	Asiatic Lion	Greater Flamingo	Banyan	Marigold (Galgota)	-
4.	Himachal Pradesh	Snow Leopard	Western Tragopan	Deodar	Rhododendron	-
5.	Madhya Pradesh	Swamp Deer	Paradise Fly catcher	Banyan	Palash/Parrot Tree	-
6.	Manipur	Sangai	Mrs. Hume's Pheasant	Toon	Siroi Lily	-
7.	Meghalaya	Clouded Leopard	Hill Myna	Gamari	Lady Slipper Orchid	-
8.	Rajasthan	Chinkara	Indian Bustard	Khejri	Rohira	-
9.	Sikkim	Red Panda	Blood Pheasant	Rhododendron	Noble Orchid	-
10.	Tamil Nadu	Nilgiri Tahr	Emerald Dove	Palmyra Palm	Kandhal	-
11.	Uttar Pradesh	Swamp Deer	Sarus Crane	Ashok	Brahm Kamal	-
12.	Jammu & Kashmir (UTs)	Hangul	Black necked Crane	Chinar	Rhododendron	-
13.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands (UTs)	Dugong	Andaman Wood Pigeon	Andaman Padauk	Pyinma Tree (Lagerstroemia hypoleuca)	-

Conservation of Dolphin:

- ✚ As per studies conducted on river dolphin, population of Gangetic River dolphin in the mainstream Ganga are known to be stable, although there has been decline in tributaries. The important steps taken by the Government for conservation of Gangetic River dolphin include:
 - Gangetic river dolphin is listed in the Schedule –I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, according to them highest degree of protection.
 - Gangetic river dolphin has been designated as the National aquatic Animal of India.

- The Ministry has included Gangetic River dolphin as one of the 22 critically endangered species for providing financial assistance to States under the Centrally sponsored scheme 'Development of Wildlife habitats.
- Important habitats of Gangetic River dolphin along the Ganges River have been notified as Protected Areas, such as Vikramshila Dolphin Sanctuary, Bihar.
- A comprehensive action plan (2022-2047) has been developed to ensure wellbeing of the river dolphin and aquatic habitats, the role of various stakeholders and line Ministries have been identified.

About Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Wildlife Sanctuary :

- Gangetic dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) is an endangered species found in Gangetic-Brahmaputra plain of India.
- It has been declared as the national aquatic animal of India.
- The species is found in Ganges–Brahmaputra–Meghna and Karnaphuli–Sangu River systems of India, Bangladesh and Nepal.
- A 60 km stretch of Ganga from Sultanganj to Kahalgaon in the district of Bhagalpur has been declared as Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary named after the Pal dynasty university 'Vikramshila'.
- This species has been declared as National Aquatic Animal of India.
- The Sanctuary is a 60 km stretch of the Ganga River, from Sultanganj to Kahalgaon (25°17'23" N, 86°55'48" E), in Bihar, notified in 1991 for conservation of the endangered Gangetic River dolphin.
- Gangetic dolphin has been notified as National Aquatic Animal of India on 18th May 2010 by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.
- The decision was taken in the first meeting of National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) chaired by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on 5th October 2009.
- This day (5th October) is celebrated as "National Dolphin Day".
- As per the ministry's notification, their estimated population was 2000 in 2010("Dolphin Declared National Aquatic Animal," 2010).
- The area of Sanctuary is prone to changes due to inundation of the floodplains and the meandering channels of the Ganga during monsoon.
- The river stretch, particularly a 36 km stretch from Sultanpur to Bhagalpur, is a paradise for breeding birds because of the presence of a large numbers of sandbars.
- Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS) is the only dolphin sanctuary in India and crucial for the conservation of the Endangered Gangetic River dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*), the national aquatic animal.
- Other important aquatic mammalian fauna includes the Vulnerable Indian smooth-coated otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*).
- The Sanctuary is also identified as an 'Important Bird Area' by BNHS for its rich avifauna.
- The Sanctuary is home to hundreds of Indian skimmers (*Rynchops albicollis*), Pallas's fish eagle (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*), Greater spotted eagle (*Clanga clanga*) and Lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*).
- Greater adjutant (*Leptoptilos dubius*) and Lesser adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) have also been reported from the Sanctuary.

- The Sanctuary is also home to a sizable population of Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), a variety of freshwater turtles and numerous fish species.
- National Waterway -1 connecting Haldia to Varanasi passes through the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS).

About Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve :

Geographical Surroundings of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve :

- **Location:**
 - Located at the south-eastern tip of India, the Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve (GoMBR) is the first Marine Biosphere Reserve in South and South-East Asia.
 - The Gulf is where the southward extension of the Bay of Bengal meets the Indian Ocean and is one of the most biologically diverse regions in India.
 - It extends between Toothukudi & Ramanathapuram districts, joint declaration of Government of India & Government of Tamil Nadu.
 - It is located in the southeastern coastline of India and is a unique marine environment rich in biodiversity.
- **Physical Feature :**
 - The Gulf of Mannar endowed with three distinct Coastal ecosystems namely coral reef, seagrass bed and mangroves are considered one of the world's richest regions from a marine biodiversity perspective, is known for its unique biological wealth and is a store house of marine diversity of global significance.
 - It came into existence on 18th February 1989, by a joint declaration of the Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu.
 - It has been recognized by the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO.
 - It is one of the most biologically diverse regions in India, comprising 117 species of corals, 450 species of fishes, 4 species of sea turtles, 38 species of crabs, 2 species of lobsters, 12 species of sea grasses, 147 species of marine algae, 160 species of birds, 641 species of crustaceans, 108 species of sponges, 731 species of molluscs, 99 species of echinoderms, 4 species of sea horses, 12 species of sea snakes, besides 11 species of mangroves.
 - It is also home to several globally important and highly threatened species like the Dugong(*Dugong dugon*), Whale shark(*Rhincodon typus*) , Sea horses (*Hippocampus*) , Green Sea turtle(*Chelonia mydas*) , Hawksbill turtle(*Eretmochelys imbricata*) , Indian Ocean humpback dolphin (*Sousa plumbea*) , Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin(*Sousa chinensis*) & Sacred chanks (*Turbinella pyrum*) etc.
 - This area is also the last refuge of an invertebrate, the unique 'living fossil' *Balanoglossus* that links vertebrates and invertebrates.
 - Although classified as a Marine National Park and recognized as a World Heritage Site, habitat destruction, over-harvesting of marine resources and localized land-based sources of marine pollution have been identified as threats to the ecological integrity of the Site.
 - The Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve occupies a prominent place in the cultural heritage and history of India.
 - The famous pilgrim centre, Rameswaram, which finds place in the epic Ramayana (one of the great epics of India) is situated in the gulf on the island of Pamban.

- Habitat destruction, over-harvesting of marine resources, localized land-based sources of marine pollution, destruction of coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangroves are identified as main human impacts to the long-term viability of the resources.
- The region has a recorded history of over 2000 years of settled agriculture, well established human-made tanks and supportive water bodies.
- Seagrasses provide immense indirect ecosystem services to commercially important fishes and macroinvertebrates by acting as nesting and nursery grounds. Abundance of fish larvae in the seagrass bed, reported at 198 individuals/100 Sq.m., was higher than the open sandy areas, with 112 individuals/100 Sq.m. in GoMNP in 2008.
- **The region has a high potential for eco-tourism, as the MNP is situated between Rameswaram and Tuticorin, with rich coral reefs and seagrass.**
- **The soil is typical coastal sand, strewn with shingles, and there are swamps in areas of Van Island, Kasuwari Island, Poomarichan Island, Pullivasal Island, Krusadai and Shingle islands.**
- Quicksand is seen in parts of Mulli and Krusadai Island. **Mangrove soils are slightly acidic. Anaerobic condition in the soils helps sulphate-reducing bacteria to produce hydrogen sulphide.**
- **The characteristic black or grey colour of the soil is due to reduction of ferric compounds to ferrous sulphides.**
- Landscape composed of beaches, algal beds, minor deltas, backwater areas, creeks, mudflats, sea grass beds, coral reef, salt marshes & mangroves.
- Beaches-extensively spread along GoM coast.
- It is gently sloping marked with altered crusts & troughs formed by wave action; coastal areas between Mandapam & E of Vaippar River-covered by 12 beach ridges; sand spits are in the S. side of Tuticorin & SW Rameswaram shore.
- Swales & backwater zones are between coastal plains of Mandapam & Kottakkarai River.
- Mudflats are near Vaippar River mouth, around Valinokkam backwater lagoon, Kallar River mouth & Gundar River mouth; 21 offshore islands-made up of calcareous dead reef & sand.
- Coral reefs extend from S of Rameswaram-Tuticorin, believed to be once covered with dense mangrove forests.

Name of Site	Year of Creation	Date of Notification	Date of Declaration	Area (In Sq.km.)	Location (State)	Legal Status
Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve			04.08.2022	526.72	Tamil Nadu	RAMSAR Wetland Sites
Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserves		18.02.1989		10,500 Sq.km. Total Gulf area (Area of Islands 5.55 Sq.km.)	Indian part of Gulf of Mannar between India and Sri Lanka (Tamil Nadu).	Biosphere Reserves
Gulf of Mannar Marine	1980			526.02	Tamil Nadu	National Park

Do You Know about it ?

- Biosphere Reserve (BR) is an international designation by UNESCO for representative parts of natural and cultural landscapes extending over large area of terrestrial or coastal/ marine ecosystems or a combination thereof.
- BRs are designated to deal with one of the most important questions of reconciling the conservation of biodiversity, the quest for economic and social development and maintenance of associated cultural values.
- BRs are thus special environments for both people and the nature and are living examples of how human beings and nature can co-exist while respecting each other's needs.
- The Biosphere Reserve Programme is guided by UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme as India is a signatory to the landscape approach supported by MAB programme.
- A scheme called Biosphere Reserve is being implemented by Government of India since 1986, in which financial assistance is given in 90:10 ratio to the Northeastern Region States and three Himalayan states and in the ratio of 60:40 to other states for maintenance, improvement and development of certain items.
- The State Government prepares the Management Action Plan which is approved and monitored by Central MAB Committee.

Source : <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=169754>

; <https://tnswa.org/gulf-of-mannar>

; <https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/aspac/gulf-mannar>

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; <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pm-modi-independence-day-speech-project-dolphin-details-1711465-2020-08-15>

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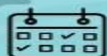
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& [https://wii.gov.in/nmcg/protected-areas-along-ganga/vikramshila-gangetic-dolphin-wildlife-sanctuary#:~:text=Vikramshila%20Gangetic%20Dolphin%20Sanctuary%20\(VGDS,\)%2C%20the%20national%20aquatic%20animal](https://wii.gov.in/nmcg/protected-areas-along-ganga/vikramshila-gangetic-dolphin-wildlife-sanctuary#:~:text=Vikramshila%20Gangetic%20Dolphin%20Sanctuary%20(VGDS,)%2C%20the%20national%20aquatic%20animal).

PROJECT DOLPHIN

PRESERVING OUR UNDERWATER FRIENDS



10-YEAR PROJECT TO FOCUS ON BOTH RIVER AND SEA DOLPHINS



AIM TO STRENGTHEN BIODIVERSITY, CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ATTRACT TOURISM



KILLING, HABITAT FRAGMENTATION BY DAMS AND BARRAGES AND INDISCRIMINATE FISHING HAS REDUCED THE GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN POPULATION FROM TENS OF THOUSANDS TO AROUND 3,700 OVER THE LAST CENTURY



GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN, A SPECIES OF FRESHWATER DOLPHINS, IS PRIMARILY FOUND IN GANGA AND BRAHMAPUTRA RIVERS, AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES IN INDIA, BANGLADESH AND NEPAL



IN INDIA, THESE DOLPHINS ARE SIGHTED IN DEEP RIVERS IN ASSAM, BIHAR, JHARKHAND, MADHYA PRADESH, RAJASTHAN, UTTAR PRADESH AND WEST BENGAL



GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN, OFFICIALLY DISCOVERED IN 1801, CAN LIVE ONLY IN FRESHWATER

Source: Government of India