



## Dolphin Population in Odisha

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### Why in News

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Recently, Odisha has released the final data on the dolphin census, indicating a spectacular growth in numbers.

### Key Points

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- **Census Data:**

- The **population of dolphins in Chilika**, India's largest brackish water lake, and along the Odisha coast has **doubled this year** (2021) compared with last year.
- **Three species were recorded** during the census, with 544 **Irrawaddy, bottlenose and humpback dolphins** sighted this year, compared with 233 last year.
- The **rise in the Irrawaddy dolphin population in Chilika** can be attributed to the **eviction of illegal fish enclosures**.

- **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.

- **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

## **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.

**Source:TH**