



## Dear friend of the Dolphin,

2007 is the Year of the Dolphin – as declared by the United Nations Environment Programme. For the 34 species of marine dolphin and 5 species inhabiting freshwater rivers all have one thing in common – they are endangered!

But sadly, the Year of the Dolphin has started with dramatic news: the extinction of the Chinese river dolphin!

We are using the year as an opportunity to present one species of dolphin each month in more detail. For the above reason, we'll be starting with the Chinese river dolphin, also known as the Baiji.

### Extinct means "forever"

December 13th, 2006 brought to an end the six-week research trip by an international team of scientists on China's Yangtze River. The aim of the trip was the sighting of a Chinese river dolphin- but the search was unsuccessful.

The Baiji was first discovered in 1914. In the 1980s the Baiji population was estimated at around 400 animals. In fewer than 30 years, noise and chemical pollution, over-fishing, heavy boat traffic and the construction of a dam have destroyed the Baiji's habitat.



foto by Sato, Hal



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### The Baiji's Legacy

The Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS) and its partners are doing all they can to prevent other dolphin species from suffering the same fate as the Baiji. The loss of the Baiji has to be a wake-up call – the likes of which must never come too late again!

In the Year of the Dolphin we want to draw attention to the growing dangers to whales and dolphins and to call upon governments worldwide to take drastic measures to stop the destruction of habitats, pollution, bycatch and numerous other threats.

We can all do something to prevent any further such loss to the diversity of species. It has become even more important to support scientific projects and to come to special agreements to promote global protection of the species. By highlighting the risks to dolphins we can help re-establish populations of endangered dolphins both regionally and internationally.

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