

Agenda Item 5.6

Review of Implementation of the ASCOBANS  
Triennial Work Plan (2007-2009)

Year of the Dolphin 2007-2008

**Document 5-05**

**Report on the Results of the Year of  
the Dolphin 2007/2008**

**Action Requested**

- Take note of the report
- Comment

Submitted by

Secretariat



**NOTE:**  
**IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY, DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR  
OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING**



## REPORT ON RESULTS OF THE YEAR OF THE DOLPHIN 2007/2008

1. The “Year of the Dolphin 2007/2008” (YoD) was the major outreach campaign of CMS and its cetacean-related agreements, which was originally planned for 2007 and then extended to 2008.



2. CMS, ASCOBANS and ACCOBAMS formed a multi-stakeholder partnership with the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDSCS) and the multinational travel and tourism company TUI. All major strategic decisions were coordinated between these five partners. Worldwide, more than 40 official supporters were accepted. These supporters were and are active in research and conservation projects, awareness raising, fundraising, public events, publications, media and lectures.

3. Dolphins were an obvious choice for CMS. With their variety of almost 40 species, they are a highly diverse group and well-known globally. Many dolphin species are classified as endangered or critically endangered by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) and require urgent conservation measures. The threats they face range from bycatch, habitat loss and pollution to less obvious threats such as noise pollution. They are generally seen as sympathetic animals and can stimulate strong pro-conservation responses, especially among the young. Dolphins also have particular cultural significance, for example as species regularly depicted in art from ancient times. More recently, the exponential growth of whale and dolphin watching has shown how conservation and limited, responsible and sustainable tourism can be mutually supportive in saving marine mammals and providing income and engagement for humans.

4. Several governments within and outside of the ASCOBANS Area have supported the YoD in form of voluntary contributions and other funding, distribution of information material or provision of dedicated websites. Activities such as public awareness raising among local communities and tourists, publications on the YoD, educational activities in schools, public events, research and dolphin conservation or launches were initiated in many countries in both the developing and the developed world.

5. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) fully supported the YoD. Given its educational mandate, the Year of the Dolphin was selected as an official activity of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, a UNESCO-administered initiative covering the period 2005-2014.

6. The objectives for YoD, as presented to the CMS Standing Committee in September 2006, were to:

- ➔ Increase general awareness in developed countries on dolphin conservation
- ➔ Provide coastal communities in developing countries with educational material on dolphin conservation
- ➔ Provide effective educational tools and information for children and their teachers on dolphin conservation, available on line
- ➔ Increase awareness and commitment of world governments on dolphin conservation, also with a view to national marine conservation agendas and plans
- ➔ Create partnerships and stimulate further action amongst non-governmental organizations dealing with marine conservation and support their advocacy role
- ➔ Directly involve a private business in a public awareness and conservation campaign, showing how UN objectives can be supported by and benefit private sector companies as well

- Increase environmental awareness in businesses
- Allow relevant conservation MEAs (Multilateral Environmental Agreements) to better fulfil their outreach and information mandate by reaching out to a broader audience
- Bridge the communication gap among private sector, UN agencies and non-governmental organization, by providing a common platform for joint activities and common goals
- Raise new and additional resources for dolphin conservation

7. A detailed report on how these objectives were met was prepared by the CMS Secretariat for the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of Parties (UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.21, downloadable from [http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/cop9\\_meeting\\_docs.htm](http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/cop9_meeting_docs.htm)).

8. In summary, for the first time communication and synergies between the corporate sector, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations were promoted on a wider scale in the CMS Family of Agreements, thus providing a common platform for joint activities and common goals. Educational bodies and academia were also involved in some of the YoD's events. Numerous NGOs and dedicated individuals were involved in the campaign, distributing educational material, organising beach clean-ups, and holding lectures at schools, to name only a few activities. More information on these activities can be found on [http://www.yod2007.org/en/Start\\_page/index.html](http://www.yod2007.org/en/Start_page/index.html).

9. Success indicators are *inter alia*:

- References in the media – The launch of the campaign was featured in more than 100 international media. YoD events received coverage in the form of press releases and television reporting in numerous countries, thus increasing awareness of dolphin conservation. Several press releases were distributed through the UNEP media list and also featured on the UNEP website.
- The educational impact on tourists, schools and in developing countries generally – The website was the major information platform of the “Year of the Dolphin” campaign, as this is the most cost-effective and direct way to make information available to as many people as possible. The YoD-website ([www.yod2008.org](http://www.yod2008.org); available in English and German) has been successful, totalling almost 10 million hits over the entire 2 years. While now dormant, it is still online to provide continued access to the many articles and statements and the information and educational material offered for download.

Other success indicators of the campaign are the numerous educational materials that were distributed around the world and downloaded from the YoD website. YoD leaflets and posters were produced and distributed. Altogether, 10,000 English, 5,000 French and 5,000 Spanish leaflets as well as 5,000 English posters were produced and distributed by partners and supporting NGOs/individuals.

- Participation by interested organizations and individuals – WDCS developed a Dolphin Manual as an educational brochure. It was translated into nine languages and YoD partner TUI distributed 25,000 copies in 60 tourist destinations. WDCS and ACCOBAMS, as well as CMS, distributed several thousand additional copies each. The Dolphin Manual formed a centrepiece of the YoD's educational campaign, and a similar manual should be considered for all ‘Year of...’ campaigns. The manual is can be downloaded from the YoD website for free. WDCS produced 50,000 magazines to highlight the YoD campaign and distributed 25,000 leaflets on the Year of the Dolphin. WDCS also distributed 3,000 posters on the “World of Dolphins” to schools, dolphin adopters and people taking the Dolphin Diploma. As an interactive exercise, the Dolphin Diploma was designed by YoD partner WDCS with the goal of encouraging children and young people to learn about dolphins and develop their own initiatives for dolphins. After correctly answering a number of questions on dolphins and their conservation, the participants are requested to take action through holding

lectures / talking to their parents and friends, organising cookie and car boot sales or drawing pictures for the YoD website. As a reward, they then receive a diploma, which can be downloaded.

YoD promotional items were produced by TUI such as YoD caps, T-shirts, beachwear, inflatable dolphins and soft toys and distributed through its online shop. A part of the revenue was used to support a conservation project in the Baltic Sea and the WATCH II conference in October 2008. The YoD was publicised in 17 million TUI catalogues. TUI supported the YoD educational campaign with targeted activities in selected hotels. The YoD was also advertised by TUI through its relevant media, including direct mailings, timetables, in-flight magazines and numerous related activities in holiday destinations.

A number of publications dealing with or highlighting the Year of the Dolphin, e.g. brochures, children's magazines and books, newspaper articles, diving magazines and books on dolphins were produced by supporters.

- Conservation activities - Various YoD partners and supporters organised a wide range of fundraising events. The Dolphin Fund organised fundraising activities; the sum donated to the YoD by the Dolphin Fund comes to approximately € 5,000, which was used to finance a fishing gear exchange in Kenya, aiming to reduce bycatch and increase the local population's eco-awareness. Numerous events took place along the Kenyan coast, focusing on schoolchildren. The Kenyan Wildlife Service adopted whale-watching guidelines. The launch of a YoD-sponsored boat to control fisheries close to Marine Protected Areas and whale-watchers took place in April 2008.

In early 2007 it was brought to the attention of the YOD Partners that there was a proposal to export twelve dolphins captured in a drive hunt in Taiji, Japan to the Ocean World theme park, a captive facility in the Dominican Republic. The partners decided to take cooperative action, as the capture of live dolphins subsidizes a hunt during which many thousands of other dolphins are being killed indiscriminately and unsustainably to be sold as meat for human consumption. The Partners wrote to Dr. Leonel Antonio Fernandez Reyes, President of the Dominican Republic, and the Dominican Republic's Government decided not to issue an import permit for the dolphins. The YOD partners believe that an important step has been taken for cetacean conservation and wish to publicly commend the stance of the Government of the Dominican Republic.

The two WATCH Meetings (Western African Talks on Cetaceans and their Habitats) in October 2007 (Canary Islands, Spain) and October 2008 (Togo) have received external funding also because of their direct relevance to the Year of the Dolphin. As a result of the two negotiation meetings, on 3 October a new Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Conservation of the Manatee and Small Cetaceans of Western Africa and Macaronesia was signed by 15 Range States and 3 collaborating organizations on 3 October 2008 in Lomé, Togo.

10. All in all, CMS considers the Year of the Dolphin campaign a big success with lasting impacts on an institutional side but also in the field. The materials developed for the campaign continue being used and appreciated. The success indicators mentioned above are only a few examples from a long list of activities carried out by YoD Partners and Supporters throughout the world. Lessons learnt through this first global species campaign of CMS are now being used for the current campaign on the Year of the Gorilla 2009 and for any future ones to follow.