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## NEWS

# Bay of Bengal possible crusader for the evolution of new life forms; Scientist believe new species of 'river shark' evolving

By **Mauricia** / 2016.12.19



A pink dolphin waits for a feed by local people in the Negro river in Manaus, Amazonas state, Brazil, on November 23, 2013.

The Bay of Bengal promises an evolution of new life forms as marine scientists uncovered two dolphin species living in the waters off Bangladesh which are genetically different from those living in other parts of the Indian and western Pacific Ocean.

American Museum of Natural History marine scientists has found out that the Bay of Bengal could become a crusader for the transformation of new life forms. The teamwork with Wildlife Conservation Society and Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes (Universidade de Lisboa), led to the discovery of two dolphin species considered to be different in genetics compared to other dolphins living in the Indian Ocean and western Pacific Oceans other areas.

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According to Nature World News (<http://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/34257/20161217/bay-bengal-realm-evolutionary-change-dolphins.htm>), the published study in Conservation Genetics kept the feasibility of a new species of 'river shark' in the exact waters. The collected DNA both from the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins (*Sousa chinensis*) and Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*) was evaluated concluding that both inhabitants of both species are remarkably different from populations in other regions of the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

"Our findings indicate that there is a connection between the presence of these distinct populations of dolphins and the unique oceanic habitat that is found in the Bay of Bengal," said Dr. Ana R. Amaral of CE3c, the lead author of the study. "The combination of a biologically rich yet isolated seascape could be driving speciation or the emergence of new species."

The Bay of Bengal is situated in the northern part of Indian Ocean and collects massive volumes of fresh water as well as organic matter from the Brahmaputra, Meghna, and Ganges Rivers where junctions also support the biggest mangrove forest in the world. Located in the deeper waters is a submarine canyon known as the Swatch-of-No-Ground (SoNG) which reprocess nutrients through outpouring. This makes a biologically prolific coastal region having a multifaceted interchange of currents that makes conditions for creatures to become secluded from other regions of the Indian Ocean, ScienceDaily (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/12/161215085916.htm>) reported.

Skin samples are being collected from 32 coastal Indo-Pacific and humpback dolphins which are extracted from genetic sequences from the samples for comparison with earlier published sequences for the said species. Researchers discovered that the two dolphin species are genetically distinctive from other dolphin species.

If a new species called 'river shark' evolved from the Bay of Bengal, more species are expected to evolve as well with genetics totally different from other population. Only time can tell.



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