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## PROPOSED ENGLISH COMMON NAME FOR THE NEOTROPICAL DELPHINID *SOTALIA GUIANENSIS* (P.-J. VAN BÉNEDÉN, 1864)

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Dolphins of the genus *Sotalia* (Delphinidae) occur along the Atlantic and Caribbean coasts of South and Central America and in the Amazon and Orinoco River basins (Flores and Da Silva, 2009; da Silva *et al.*, 2010 this volume; Gómez-Salazar *et al.*, 2010 this volume). The genus has been divided into two species based on skull morphology (Monteiro Filho *et al.*, 2002) and genetic evidence (Cunha *et al.*, 2005; Caballero *et al.*, 2007; Caballero *et al.*, 2010 this volume). The name *Sotalia fluviatilis* (Gervais and Deville in Gervais, 1853) has been assigned to animals found in the Amazon River basin (riverine) while *Sotalia guianensis* (P.-J. Van Bénédén, 1864) designates the coastal (marine) species in South and Central America, including the Orinoco River delta and Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela. While the name tucuxi has been widely adopted to refer to the former, for the latter common or vernacular names, whether in Spanish, Portuguese or English, vary depending on local designations across its range. The taxonomic status of dolphins occurring in the lower and middle Orinoco is uncertain and here we refer to them as *Sotalia* sp.

Along its distribution (Figure 1), *S. guianensis* is locally known as 'boto', 'golfinho', 'boto comum', 'golfinho-cinza' or 'boto-cinza' off the Brazilian coast; 'bufeo gris', 'bufeo blanco' or 'bufeo negro' in coastal Colombia; 'tonina del lago' in Lake Maracaibo and 'bufeo negro', 'bufete' or 'soplón' in the Orinoco River basin in Venezuela; 'lam' in Nicaragua; Guiana dolphin or Guiana white dolphin in British Guyana and 'profosu' or 'dolfijn'<sup>20</sup> in Suriname. These names naturally correspond to the different languages spoken in the various range states.

Several common, local names have tentatively been adopted in English (e.g. Geise, 2006), but authors with different linguistic backgrounds usually do not choose the same names. For instance, a review of the published literature on the species from 2002 to 2007 (approximately 60 scientific papers), revealed that for those papers in which at least an English title or abstract was provided, the most frequently used common name was 'marine tucuxi' (e.g. Flores, 1999; Azevedo *et al.*, 2007; Santos and Rosso, 2008), followed by 'estuarine dolphin' (e.g. Rosas and Monteiro Filho, 2002; Souto *et*

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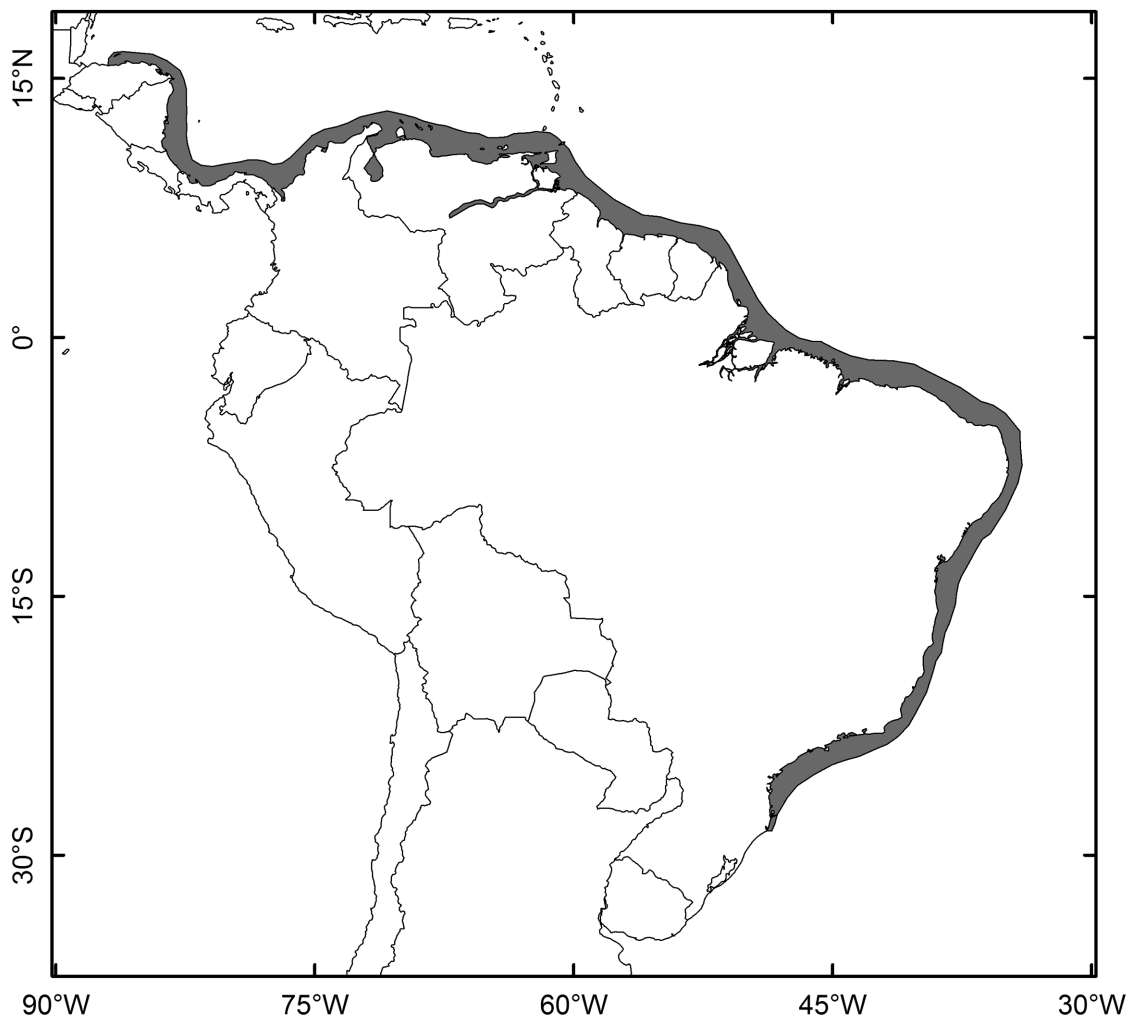
<sup>20</sup> 'Dolphin' in Dutch

*al.*, 2006; Rossi-Santos *et al.*, 2007). Nomenclatural consistency is clearly lacking, as emphasised by instances in which the same journal has accepted two different names (marine tucuxi and estuarine dolphin) as seen in Azevedo *et al.* (2007), Rossi-Santos *et al.* (2007), Rosas and Monteiro Filho (2002), and Santos and Rosso (2008). Recently, yet another name, 'costero,' was proposed in a single article (Caballero *et al.*, 2007). In fact, none of the English common names proposed to date has properly reflected either the species' distribution, habitats or other conspicuous characteristic; all may therefore be considered misleading or inadequate.

During its 2008 Annual Meeting in Santiago, Chile, as proposed by Flores *et al.* (2008), the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) endorsed 'Guiana dolphin' as the common English name for *Sotalia guianensis* in its IWC List of Recognized Cetacean Species (LRCS), and thus also for its *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management* (IWC, 2009). The

primary rationale accepted by the IWC Scientific Committee related to the geographic area from where this species was first described. In addition, the Committee recognised the consensus achieved by various authors from different countries covering the species' range in proposing the common name.

Here we propose that from now on 'Guiana dolphin' be used as the English common name of *S. guianensis* in the *Latin American Journal of Aquatic Mammals* (LAJAM), as well as in all related fora such as the *Sociedad Latinoamericana de Especialistas en Mamíferos Acuáticos* (SOLAMAC, the Latin American Society of Specialists on Aquatic Mammals). Considering the endorsement by the Scientific Committee of the IWC, it would be appropriate and consistent if authors apply the name 'Guiana dolphin' elsewhere as well. It should be emphasised that in proposing this English common name, we are not attempting to propose or define any local names for the species in any of the range states.



**Figure 1.** Distribution (area in grey) of the Guiana dolphin *Sotalia guianensis* in South and Central America (map by Júlia E.C. Oshima).

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