

18 September 2012 Last updated at 18:19 GMT

# Bolivia enacts law to protect Amazon pink dolphins



The pink dolphin, known locally as bufeo, is Bolivia's only freshwater mammal species. Bolivian President Evo Morales has enacted a law aimed at protecting a unique species of dolphins that live in the country's Amazon rivers.

The new legislation bans fishing freshwater pink dolphins and declares the species a national treasure.

At a ceremony along the shores of the Ibare river, President Morales called on the armed forces to protect the habitats of the pink dolphins.

The species is threatened by erosion, pollution and logging in the Amazon.

The Bolivian pink dolphin, whose scientific name is *Inia boliviensis*, is similar to mammals found in neighbouring Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela.

Male Bolivian freshwater pink dolphins can weigh up to 200kg (440 pounds).

An appendix to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (Cites) says the species is vulnerable because of overfishing in the Amazon basin.

But it says the main threat is the contamination of rivers in the region by mercury, used in illegal gold mining operations.