

Taiwan to use DNA to protect whales, dolphins

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The tactic is meant to outwit poachers who try to cover their tracks after catching whales and dolphins by cutting off the animals' heads, tails and fins, said Hsia Jung-sheng, an official from the Council of Agriculture.

"What they don't know is that the government has set up a comprehensive databank on [DNA](#) from whales and dolphins," she told AFP.

"Using [molecular biotechnology](#), experts can easily pin down the species of whales or dolphins even if the sample is just a scrap of meat."

Taiwan's coastguards last week discovered a haul of dolphin meat weighing more than 1.3 tonnes in the northeastern fishing port of Suao.

All species of [whales](#) and [dolphins](#) are protected by Taiwan's conservation law, and any person found violating the law faces a prison term of up to five years and a fine of up to 1.5 million Taiwan dollars (47,000 US dollars).

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