

# e-Newsletter



Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society

www.hkdcs.org

## Content

“Portraits of Dolphins - Art Competition”

Green group ships intend to stop whale hunt

Whale lost in River Thames dies

## Activity Review

### “Portraits of Dolphins - Art Competition”

“Portraits of Dolphins - Art Competition”, which is co-organized by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and HK Dolphin Conservation Society (HKDCS), has come to end on 7 January 2006 (Saturday), and the awarding ceremony was held that afternoon at the HK Central Library. A number of guests have been invited to present the



awards, including the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau, Dr. Sarah Liao.



Besides the ceremony, all the prize artworks and some of the selected artworks were put on show at the library for the public to appreciate Chinese white dolphins in an artistic way. Exhibition promoting conservation of HK cetaceans have been held at the same time.

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### [Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world](#)

[Green group ships intend to stop whale hunt](#)

[8 January 2006](#)

Every year Japan dispatches a whaling fleet to the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary around Antarctica. In the face of international opposition, Japanese whaling fleet set out again on 8 November 2005. This time Japan has doubled their whale hunt quota to 935 minke whales, and for the first time added 10 endangered fin whales, raising stronger controversies over the hunt.



Two of the concerned groups, Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd, have already sent out vessels to pursue the whaling fleet to Antarctica, in an attempt to halt their whale hunt and record their whaling operation. One of the Greenpeace ships has collided with the factory ship of the whaling fleet, while another ship of Sea Shepherd has rammed a whaling supply ship. Besides, Greenpeace sometimes deploy a few inflatable boats between the hunted whales and

the harpooners in order to stop them firing the harpoons, but still a certain amount of minke whales have been taken. Greenpeace considered the protest successful, "It has prolonged the hunt; some whales have got away and the whalers have had to look for another one." And Greenpeace has not seen any fin whale hunt yet.

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) imposed a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986. However, Japan has continued to hunt whales in the name of "scientific research". Whale meat has long been a part of the Japanese cuisine, and Japan makes no secret that the meat from the "scientific research" ends up in markets. For years a number of countries have urged Japan to stop their hunt, including Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. But Japan, considering consuming whale as a part of their cultures, has no intention to stop the annual hunt. Other than Japan, Norway and Iceland have also carried out commercial whaling every year, causing opposition of the IWC member countries.

Sources: WDCS, Greenpeace, Sea Shepherd, stuff.co.nz, news.com.au

Photo credit: Greenpeace / Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert

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### Whale lost in River Thames dies

21 January 2006

The lost and distressed whale seen swimming for two days in the River Thames, London, died on 21 January 2006, when rescue workers ferried it on a salvage barge in an effort to release it in the open sea. The whale struggled with the effects of being out of the water as it was ferried toward the Thames Estuary, officials said. It was learned that the animal had suffered a series of convulsions before its death.

The Northern bottlenose whale was first seen flailing through the Thames the day before, luring thousands of curious onlookers along the shoreline. Northern bottlenose whale is only found in the North Atlantic ocean, and is a species which prefers deep water (more than 1,000 m). It is generally accepted that the animal had got lost, being away from its normal habitat.

Source: Yahoo News, BBC News

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## Content

The visit of Long-beaked Common Dolphin to Hong Kong

Porpoise Season Again!

Reef Check 2005

4 Belugas from Russia arrived at Taiwan

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## Latest HK Dolphin News

### The visit of a Long-beaked Common Dolphin to Hong Kong

On 26 February 2006, an unusual visitor was found at the Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter! That morning, a passer-by spotted a little gray dolphin swimming around a buoy in the sea and called the police, who then notified the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). AFCD investigators arrived at the scene later and confirmed that it was a Long-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus capensis*). According to Mr. Samuel Hung of the HK Cetacean Research Project, the Key identifying features of this species include the yellowish patches and hourglass patterns on its body sides, which become more distinctive with age. The pale body pattern of the dolphin observed, along with its size (a length of around 1.3 m compared with over 2 m in adults) indicate that the dolphin is still a juvenile. Hung pointed out that Long-beaked common dolphin is not a resident species of Hong Kong, that the dolphin had probably entered Hong Kong waters accidentally after being separated from its pod.

Hung observed that the dolphin had no apparent injuries and was very active - breaching, swimming rapidly and riding the wakes frequently. Hung said the condition of the dolphin was satisfactory and should be given the chance to leave the typhoon shelter on its own. And AFCD did not have plans to relocate the dolphin for the time being. The next morning, AFCD staff visited the scene again, and found that the dolphin had already

vanished.



Short-beaked common dolphin, which is very similar in appearance to long-beaked common dolphin. The yellowish patches on their sides are one of the identifying features of common dolphins. (Photographed in New Zealand)

More information of long-beaked common dolphin is available in the following websites:

HK Dolphin Conservation Society

[http://www.hkdcs.org/QnA/sppinhk\\_en.htm](http://www.hkdcs.org/QnA/sppinhk_en.htm)

Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society

<http://www.wdcs.org/dan/publishing.nsf/allweb/14B25EB3DC3C07F1802569D0003BEEE6>

### Porpoise Season Again!

Between January and April each year is the peak season for spotting finless porpoise in Hong Kong, and this year was no exception. This January we had some sporadic sightings of porpoise in South Lantau, and this month they were spotted near Pui O, Shui Hau and Soko Islands. In fact, finless porpoises can be found in Hong Kong waters year-round, but they tend to stay offshore in Eastern Hong Kong during summer and fall, so it is very hard for the locals to see them. They do, however, move further inshore to southern Hong Kong during winter making it a prime time to go porpoise watching. And if you go hiking in southern Lantau the following months (near Mong Tung Wan and Chi Ma Wan), pay more attention to the sea surface and you may find a porpoise rolling on the surface like a tire!

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## Activity Review

### Reef Check 2005

The Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society this year has again participated in the Reef Check, which is jointly organised by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Reef Check



Foundation. The results of the activity have been released last month. As in last year, our survey site is Tai She Wan in Sai Kung. Results reveal that this place is one of the coral hotspot with high coral cover as high as 55%. Apart from coral, the presence of wrasses and some beautiful butterfly fish has also been noted as well.

After finishing work in our survey day, our team member went to Ung Kong Wan to enjoy a playful afternoon.



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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### 4 Belugas from Russia arrived at Taiwan

17 February 2006

Earlier this year the National Museum of Marine Biology and Aquarium (NMMBA) of Taiwan decided to import four more belugas. After a

seventeen-hour flight, the plane carrying the four animals finally arrived at Kaohsiung airport the night of 17 February. To avoid being confronted by protests from the local conservation groups, the airport and the airline company refused to confirm the flight and its landing time. Even though some concerned organizations knew about the belugas' arrival, NMMBA refused all media interviews and the animals were able to be transported to the aquarium in a low-keyed way.

NMMBA said that they would place the four belugas in an adaptation pool for a month and arrange for their meetings with visitors later. All of these animals are females with an average age of 4 - 5 years-old. This is the second time NMMBA had imported belugas, and they claimed that the import is for the aquarium's three existing male belugas (the fourth is a female) to breed with. Four years ago NMMBA imported six belugas but two died within two months of arrival.

The import of these four belugas has prompted much public opposition. Some local and oversea conservation groups have pointed out that introducing belugas from Russia poses a survival threat to the local wild population; and the process of hunting beluga is so brutal that the belugas are treated in an inhumane way.

Source: [dwnews.com](http://dwnews.com)

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## Content

### Porpoise Hike

Over 1,100km of fishing net killing Britain's porpoises and dolphins

## Activity Review

### Porpoise Hike

On Sunday February 26, two HKDCS committee members - Leo and Patty - together with 15 members, set off enthusiastically to the finless porpoise land-based observation sites at Mong Tung Wan, Lantau. Leo was the only one who has seen porpoises before and became the focal point for questions.

We took the No. 3M bus from Tung Chung to Pui O from where we took the Chi Ma Wan country trail to get to the Mong Tung Wan porpoise viewing points. We couldn't help but take the walk at an easy pace because of the stunning scenery



along the way and in the end, we reached the viewing points 30 minutes later than scheduled.

Mong Tung Wan has two porpoise viewing points: one good for seeing the waters around Mong Tung Wan and Pui O, the other for Chi Ma Wan and Shek Kwu Chau. The participants were divided into two groups for the two viewing points and swapped after an hour.



We stayed at Mong Tung Wan for about two hours. At first, we all jumped at the sight of every single wave, thinking that it could be a porpoise. Disappointingly, we didn't see a single porpoise throughout the stay. Most of us

felt deflated but looking on the bright side, some were glad because porpoises which appear in these waters can possibly be hit by high-speed boats. And with many fishermen working in the area there may be less food available for porpoises.

The activity gave the participants the opportunity to understand the threats faced by porpoises which, in many ways, is a more valuable lesson than that of seeing the animals themselves.

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### [Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world](#)

[Over 1,100km of fishing net killing Britain's porpoises and dolphins](#)  
13 March 2006

Thousands of Britain's porpoises and dolphins are feared to be dying each year in over 1,100km of bottom set fishing nets currently in use off the south west coast of England while the UK Government has failed to implement the EU law brought in to protect them.

According to figures from Fisheries Minister Ben Bradshaw, some 1,100 km of gill and tangle nets - enough to stretch the length of the UK eight times over - is used by British fishermen in the waters to the south west of England.

With both harbour porpoise and common dolphin populations threatened by these fishing nets, WDCCS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, is calling on the government to act now before it is too late.

Gill nets and tangle nets are set on the seabed using anchors or weights and left to fish passively, for several days in some fisheries. The netting is fine, light and cheap and can be fished in huge quantities - over 100 km per vessel in the case of tangle nets. French, Irish and Spanish fishing vessels also use bottom set nets in this area.

Harbour porpoises are particularly at risk from these nets because of their feeding behaviour near the seabed. However, common dolphins are also getting killed. These animals become tangled in both gill nets and tangle nets and in their struggle to free themselves, become tightly gripped by the net. After a struggle which can result in cuts, severed fins and tail and even a broken beak, the animal eventually suffocates and dies. While some of the nets' victims wash up on the beaches in the south west, the majority sink to the ocean bed and go unrecorded.

Since the 1st January, these nets are legally required to be fitted with "pingers", electronic acoustic devices designed to keep porpoises away from the danger. Despite having more than 18 months notice since the EU law was adopted, Bradshaw has now admitted that not enough preparation has been done to be confident that the pingers can be introduced effectively. A further two month trial is due to be completed at the end of March. In the meantime, porpoises and dolphins continue to die in these nets.

Source: [WDCCS](#)

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Activity on Lamma Island – “Help Us Help Them”

Dolphin Research Trip

Whale & Dolphin Exhibition at Cityplaza, Taikooshing

Japanese fleet returns with vast whale haul

## Upcoming activities

### Activity on Lamma Island – “Help Us Help Them”

HKDCS is going to present a campaign from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2006 on Powerstation Beach on Lamma Island. It included specific theme and activities for each days.



#### 5<sup>th</sup> May (Friday)

To know them is to love them: a photo exhibition, relay races, treasure hunts, and children’s games



#### 6<sup>th</sup> May (Saturday)

##### What threatens them

threatens us: introduces up to date threats that the animals face and effective solutions to the problem. A lecture from the HKDCS Chairman educates and informs the public with ways that

they can help us help them.

**7<sup>th</sup> May (Sunday)**

**Celebrate hope with HKDCS:** auctions, lucky draw, talent shows and prizes

The Fee for each day is \$50, with free for fun on Saturday.

If you want to take part in, please contact Mr. Leo Yeung

[lwyYeung@hkdcS.org](mailto:lwyYeung@hkdcS.org)

### **Dolphin Research Trip**

Date: 27 May 2006 (Saturday)

Gathering Time: 2:00 pm (Please be punctual)

Gathering Point: Exit B of Tung Chung MTR Station

Dismiss Time: 5:00 – 5:30 pm

Fee for Friend of the dolphin, Dolphin Pal and Dolphin Elderly: HK\$150 per head

Non-member: must be accompanied by any member; Fee: HK\$200 per head

In case of unfavourable weather conditions, participants will be notified one day before of cancellation of the trip.

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### **Activity Review**

#### **Whale & Dolphin Exhibition at Cityplaza, Taikooshing**

The large scale exhibition "Get close with Chinese White Dolphin," jointly held by the Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society and the Cityplaza was completed with great success. The event was held from 7<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> April 2006, which coincided with the long Easter Holiday, so the exhibition with lots





of marvellous dolphin photos and panels drew many kids and their parents. And the dolphin computer games even made people queuing up. A series of talks were held during the public holidays from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> April to convey dolphin conservation messages. It is believed that the public should have had a good

chance to understand more about our dolphin friend.

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## [Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world](#)

### **Japanese fleet returns with vast whale haul** **21 April 2006**

Japan's so called 'research' voyage to Antarctica ended 14 April with the return of the fleet to Kanazawa Port. On board, their research subjects are already processed, shrink-wrapped and frozen into neat blocks. The meat from 853 minke whales and ten fin whales will now be sold to subsidise future years' research in Antarctica (where 50 humpback whales, and 40 more fin whales will be added in 2007) and the North Pacific, where Japan 'studies' 160 minkes, 50 Bryde's, 100 sei and 10 sperm whales each year.

WDCS anticipates that Japan will again have trouble selling the meat from this hunt. Last summer, 4,800 tonnes of whale meat were stored in warehouses in Japan, which included 20 percent of meat from the 2005 hunt which was unsold. The addition of fin whales and almost double the number of minkes this year will add over 1000 extra tonnes of meat, but prices continue to fall. Japan must be hoping that the species will re-awaken consumer interest, but the signs are not good: Bryde's meat - a new species in 2000 - has fallen to almost half its initial value; while the price of sei meat - new in 2002 and once the most prized species - has fallen by almost a third since it was first sold.

To shift the meat, the government is selling it at a great discount, including

to schools. More than 1.6 tons of whale meat were served as school lunch in hundreds of schools in Wakayama, Kyoto, Osaka and Nara prefectures and in Tokyo in January 2006, almost double the amount for the whole of 2005.

WDCS is also very concerned about the methods Japan used to kill these fin whales. Killing whales as large as fin, sei and sperm whales at sea under difficult circumstances is fraught with problems, which is reflected in the poor rate of instantaneous kills that Japan has reported from its Pacific hunt of the bigger species. Of even greater concern is the fate of whales that escape wounded and may die lingering deaths.

Source: WDCS

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### Dolphin Research Trip

#### Sonar tied to deaths of 400 dolphins?

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## Upcoming activities

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Fee for Friend of the dolphin, Dolphin Pal and Dolphin Elderly: HK\$150/ head

Non-member: must be accompanied by any member; Fee: HK\$200/ head

Please contact our committee member Ms. Winnie Au for registration

Email: [winnie@hkdcs.org](mailto:winnie@hkdcs.org)

\* In case of unfavourable weather conditions, participants will be notified one day before of cancellation of the trip.

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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### Sonar tied to deaths of 400 dolphins?

3 May 2006

About 400 dead bottlenose dolphins washed up on 28 April along the shore of a popular tourist destination on Zanzibar's northern coast. It was not

immediately clear what killed the 400 dolphins, whose carcasses were strewn along a 2 1/2-mile stretch of Nungwi, said Narriman Jidawi, a marine biologist at the Institute of Marine Science in Zanzibar.

Scientists are now studying the remains of some of the 400 dolphins. Among other possibilities, marine biologists were examining whether U.S. Navy sonar threw the animals off course.

Some scientists surmise that loud bursts of sonar, which can be heard for miles in the water, may disorient or scare marine mammals, causing them to surface too quickly and suffer the equivalent of what divers call the bends — when sudden decompression forms nitrogen bubbles in tissue.

A U.S. Navy task force patrols the coast of East Africa in counterterrorism operations. A Navy spokesman ruled out the possibility Navy sonar might have disoriented the dolphins and led to their deaths. He said there were no U.S. Navy vessels within 580 miles of the location in the 48 hours before it happened.

The most conclusive link between the use of military sonar and injury to marine mammals was observed from the stranding of whales in 2000 in the Bahamas. The U.S. Navy later acknowledged that sonar likely contributed to the stranding of the extremely shy species.

In Zanzibar, a preliminary examination of their dolphins' stomach contents failed to show the presence of squid beaks or other remains of animals hunted by dolphins. Their general condition, however, appeared to show that they had eaten recently, since their ribs were not clearly visible under the skin.

Experts are preparing to further examine the dolphins' stomachs for traces of poisonous substances such as toxic "red tides" of algae.

Source: The Associated Press

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### Latest News

A wake up call to save the world's whales

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## Latest News

Blogs written by Mr. Samuel Hung, the chairman of the HKDCS, will be carried on the online programme of the "Civil Society" by the Radio Hong Kong (RTHK) next week (3-7 July 2006). The blogs will cover various popular topics about the Chinese white dolphins, dolphin conservation and whaling, etc.

The website of "Civil Society" is: <http://civilonline.rthk.org.hk/civilsociety/>  
(in Chinese only)

Besides, the blogs will be broadcast during the radio programme "Civil Society" next week.

"Civil Society" is broadcast every Monday to Friday, from 3:00 - 4:30 pm on Radio 1, RTHK (FM 92.6-94.4). (in Cantonese only)

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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### A wake up call to save the world's whales 21 June 2006

At the IWC's 58th meeting, on the Caribbean island of St Kitts between 16th and 20th June, pro-whaling countries gained a majority of votes for the first time in over 20 years. In a landmark moment, with the passing of the 'St Kitts and Nevis Declaration', the moratorium on commercial whaling was proclaimed

unnecessary, the IWC dysfunctional, conservation groups a threat to governments, and whales voracious predators that are out-competing humans.

The 'St Kitts and Nevis Declaration' flies in the face of world opinion and was secured by just one vote, with 33 votes in favour, 32 against and one abstention. Significantly and controversially, Denmark was the only European Union Member State to vote in favour of the declaration, causing an outcry across Europe and around the world.

The moratorium on commercial whaling has not been a complete success but it has saved many thousands of whales and saved several populations from the brink of extinction. Japan's objective of overturning this ban will require over three quarters of the vote at the IWC, which Japan does not yet have. Japan must hope to gain that majority next year when the IWC meets in the USA. However, WDCS hopes that the setbacks of this meeting will act as a catalyst for high level intervention from conservation-minded countries to take back the IWC and ensure the security of whale populations.

Philippa Brakes, Whale Welfare Expert for WDCS said: "This may be just the wake up call that the world needs. The global community has another year to prevent this tragedy from occurring and with such a spotlight on the IWC now, we can only hope that any countries that might have been considering joining at the whalers behest, or continuing to vote under instructions from the whaling nations, will reconsider the implications of being accessories to one of the biggest environmental crimes of the millennium."

Source: WDCS

For more information concerning the meeting held by the International Whaling Commission (IWC), please visit the website of IWC:

<http://www.iwcoffice.org/index.htm>

and website of the WDCS:

<http://www.wdcs.org/dan/publishing.nsf/allweb/E39BA98044C97E3180256D04004A0425>

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## Content

### Reef Check 2006

#### Greenland's narwhal hunters off the hook

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## Latest Activity

### Reef Check 2006

Reef Check 2006, an annual campaign jointly held by Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Reef Check Foundation has just been launched. HKDCS again has taken part in this event, hoping to put in some effort to conserve our marine environment.



Our survey site this year is Tai She Wan in

Sai Kung, interested members and ambassadors with a valid SCUBA license are welcomed to join our survey team. We will also visit Sharp Island in addition to our survey site. Members who are not eligible to conduct survey may also join us to have a playful time and enjoy the marvellous underwater scenery.

Interested members can browse our website <http://www.hkdcs.org> for more information and download the relevant application form, or you may also contact Choyce from [choyce@hkdcs.org](mailto:choyce@hkdcs.org)

If you want to know more about Reef Check, please go to the following website:

[http://www.afcd.gov.hk/tc\\_chi/conservation/con\\_mar/con\\_mar\\_cor/con\\_mar\\_cor\\_hkrc/con\\_mar\\_cor\\_hkrc.html](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/tc_chi/conservation/con_mar/con_mar_cor/con_mar_cor_hkrc/con_mar_cor_hkrc.html)

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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### Greenland's narwhal hunters off the hook

14 July 2006

Greenland's hunt for narwhals is unsustainable. Even Greenland's own scientists stated late last year that they were unable to guarantee that any international trade in the tusks was sustainable while hunting levels remained so high.

For the last four years, WDCS has tried to bring Greenland to account for its hunting; taking its concerns to CITES which regulates trade in endangered species. Finally, last year, the narwhal was included in a Review of Significant Trade – a process to review the impact of



international trade on the species, and make recommendations to ensure that it does not harm the species. But at a meeting of CITES' Animals Committee which concluded today in Lima Peru, the review of Greenland was dropped.

Greenland wriggled off the hook by imposing a temporary export ban just weeks before the meeting. The Animals Committee concluded, wrongly in WDCS' view, that if there was no trade, there could be no review.

The reality is that Greenland will continue to hunt narwhals at unsustainable levels during the period of the trade ban, and just stockpile the ivory tusks and the carvings that they sell to tourists. Either Canadian hunters, who also trade the ivory tusks, will move in to meet the demand - a bonanza for them – or the reduction in supply will push prices up, benefiting Greenland when trade resumes.

Greenland says it will not lift the ban and resume exports until its scientists are certain that trade is sustainable. However, once trade resumes, the export permits accompanying the stockpiled ivory will violate the CITES treaty, because they will relate to animals taken during the period of the trade ban when hunting was unsustainable.

Sue Fisher, WDCS' wildlife trade and hunting expert, commented: "If Greenland abides by its promise not to trade until its scientists are sure it is sustainable, they will have to reduce their hunting quotas; there is no other way

around it.” But the hunting lobbying in Greenland will fight quota reductions to the bitter end and has incredible influence over the Home Rule government of this Danish territory. For example, hunters exceeded the narwhal quota of 260 last year by 50 animals and, instead of being punished, were simply given an extra 50 on this year’s quota.

WDCS is now examining other legal options for bringing Greenland to account for the decimation of this species. The most heavily exploited population on the west coast has been reduced to approximated 25% of its former levels by hunting, most of which is conducted with rifles from motor boats.

Source: WDCS

Photo Source : Narwhal.info

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## Content

**Dr. Jane Goodall chooses Mr. Samuel Hung, HKDCS chairman, as one of her heroes in wild animal conservation**

**The latest issue of newsletter has been released!**

**Dolphin trapped in Speedo is rescued**

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## What's New

**Dr. Jane Goodall chooses Mr. Samuel Hung, HKDCS chairman, as one of her heroes in wild animal conservation**

Renowned primate expert and conservationist, Dr. Jane Goodall, has selected five people to honor whom she believes have made a difference for animals and to our world, including HKDCS chairman, [Mr. Samuel Hung](#). The one-hour special by the Animal Planet, "Jane Goodall's Heroes", brings out Goodall's profound respect for these people and her passion for their work. She also shares new insights about her life, including how she started on her chosen path and what has driven her all these years.



Sunday, August 27th at 8PM e/p.

[More info about the TV program](#)

Besides, Mr. Samuel Hung was also awarded US\$ 5,000 for his work on dolphin conservation by Animal Planet, which is donated to HKDCS. This means very much to HKDCS, as well as the dolphins.

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### **The latest issue of newsletter has been released!**

The latest issue of HKDCS newsletter (Summer 2006) has been mailed to our members in late August. If any member still cannot receive it, please call us at 2866-2652, or contact committee member, Sammi at [sammi-ng@hkdc.org](mailto:sammi-ng@hkdc.org). In addition, coloured version of the newsletter (in pdf format) has been uploaded to HKDCS website, please visit <http://www.hkdc.org>

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### **Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world**

#### **Dolphin trapped in Speedo is rescued** **17 August 2006**

A lucky adolescent male bottlenose dolphin is back to living nude and free in Florida's Sarasota Bay after making a potentially fatal wardrobe choice early this summer. The 10-year-old dolphin, known as Scrapy, probably owes its life to a Brookfield Zoo marine mammal research team that works year round in the bay.

The drama began July 6, when a member of the team working in the bay spotted Scrapy unaccountably and uncomfortably swimming around while wearing a black, Speedo-brand man's bikini swimsuit.

"He must have found the swimsuit floating in the water," said Randall Wells, a population biologist who runs the Sarasota Dolphin Research Program.

"Somehow he got his head and torso through the waist and one of the leg holes of the suit, and it was hugging him right where his pectoral fins and body meet.

The project team began looking for Scrapy every day. They feared the

tight-fitting, non-rotting synthetic cloth suit could injure or kill the dolphin as "drag" force from swimming pushed it into the soft skin in front of the pectoral fins."Eventually it could cut deeply enough to sever arteries, causing him to bleed," Wells said.

When the swimsuit was still stubbornly clinging to Scrappy after three weeks, the team got an emergency rescue authorization from federal officials who monitor its work in the bay.

Scrappy's capture turned into an all-day ordeal for the departing team Wells organized Aug. 3. Five fast boats carrying 31 people raced across the bay after the animal, trying to surround it with a net. Late in the day they were able to bring the dolphin aboard a boat.

The suit had made cuts a half-inch deep and three-quarters of an inch long in front of each fin. Scrappy was visibly underweight and also had a fresh, visible but non-serious shark bite, both conditions probably caused by a hampered ability to swim because of the suit.

"We felt his injuries weren't that serious, so after we removed the swimsuit, we cleaned the wounds and gave him a strong antibiotic. Then we attached a small radio tag to one of his fins and, after about half an hour, we let him go."

With the radio tag, his team can locate the animal easily every day, Wells said, and Scrappy, who as an immature male still lives mostly by himself, has shown no ill effects from his wardrobe experiment.

"I suppose the real lesson for humans is that, if you bring something to the beach or on your boat, take it home with you. Anything you leave behind could have dire consequences for wildlife."

Source: Chicago Tribune

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## Contents

Activity Review - Reef Check 2006

North Atlantic right whale close to extinction

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## Activity Review

### Reef Check 2006

10 September, HKDCS again took part in Reef Check – an annual marine conservation event jointly organized by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Reef Check Foundation.

This year we were allocated Tai She Wan in Sai Kung, the same as last two years' and hence we had the advantage of being already familiar with the site. This year our survey is so popular among our members that our survey team had almost 30 members! The weather before the survey had been unstable with the red rainstorm warning signal hoisted. But the weather the next day turned out to be wonderful with north monsoon.



Under supervision of Choyce - HKDCS vice chairlady, diving members had their duties prepared and allocated before entering the water while those who did not scuba dive helped out with other preparation work on board. After Choyce had laid down the 100-m transect line, diving members responsible for surveying fish, invertebrate and coral respectively started their work. With our previous experiences in underwater survey, the activity was carried out smoothly. After the survey, we went to Sharp Island and spent a great afternoon there having water sports and enjoying the marvelous underwater scenery.



We have already handed in the data obtained from the survey to AFCD. AFCD will later release the results Reef check activity.

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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### Right whales close to extinction 18 September 2006

Fewer than 350 North Atlantic Right Whales roam the waters of the Eastern seaboard of North America. The population is dangerously close to extinction and the US government states that “Today, the right whale population is sufficiently fragile that the premature death of a single mature female could make recovery of this species untenable”. They also acknowledge that the biggest threat to the survival of this species is ship



strikes. However, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS, the governing body charged with protecting these whales) has yet to provide adequate protection for this critically endangered species and, as they sit back and wait, at least 17 right whales have been documented as dying or being killed since February of 2004. More than ½ of those deaths were attributed to vessel strikes and 10 of those killed are known to have been females, including 3 that were pregnant when they were killed.

In November of 2004, the NMFS acknowledged that action needed to be taken when it issued a comment deadline for a proposed rule to reduce ship strikes to right whales. However, since that time, at least 7 right whales died as a result of ship strike injuries and 2 additional animals were struck. This does not consider the animals that died and were not necropsied (scientifically studied) to determine a cause of death. Nor does it include the animals that have been struck and lost at sea.

NMFS currently states that “A continued lack of recovery, and possible extinction, will occur if deaths from ship strikes are not reduced”. NMFS is currently seeking comments from the public regarding a proposal to control ship speed in the areas where right whales are known to occur throughout their feeding, breeding and migratory ranges. “Unfortunately, many people think that the whales are already saved which is simply not true” said Sue Fisher, US Policy Director for WDCS (North America). “Not only do they still need our help, but here is a chance to save, not just a whale, but an entire species found nowhere else in the world.”

Source: WDCS



## Contents

- Dolphin Specimen & Pak Tam Chung Nature Trail Ecotour
- Green Groups declare against LNG terminal construction at Sokos

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## Upcoming Activity

### Dolphin Specimen and Pak Tam Chung Nature Trail Ecotour

Autumn is a good time for us to take a walk in the beautiful countryside! We are planning a tour to the Sai Kung Visitor Centre and Pak Tam Chung Nature Trail to let members have a chance to get together and learn more about dolphins and the natural environment.

Dolphin specimen and skeleton, as well as exhibits on Marine Parks and Marine Reserve, traditional rituals of villages in Sai Kung, and ecological and geological interest in the area can be found in the Country Park Visitor Centre. Afterward we would have a pleasant walk at the Pak Tam



Chung Nature Trail and experience the nature. When walking past mangrove forests, we would introduce to you various mangrove species and other wildlife in the intertidal zone.

The Nature Trail ends at Sheung Yiu. We will walk back along the footpath to Pak Tam Chung Bus Terminal and dismiss. (The walk will take around two hours, with resting and nature appreciation time included.)

**Date:** 26 November 2006 (Sunday)

**Gathering point:** In front of the food kiosk at Pak Tam Chung Bus Terminal

(can be reached by KMB Route No.94 from Sai Kung or No.96R from Diamond Hill MTR station, and get off at Pak Tam Chung)

**Gathering time:** 1:00 pm

**Fee:** Free (Please arrive at the gathering point on your own arrangement)

**Itinerary**

1:15 – 2:00 p.m. Sai Kung Visitor Centre

2:00 – 4:30 p.m. Pak Tam Chung Nature Trail (ends at Sheung Yiu)

**Note:**

Please prepare your own drinks, food, sunscreen and insect repellent.

Please wear shoes and clothes suitable for outings.

For those who are interested, please contact our committee member Leo ([lwyveung@hkdc.org](mailto:lwyveung@hkdc.org)) or Patty ([patty@hkdc.org](mailto:patty@hkdc.org)).

**Reference website for the trail:**

[http://www.afcd.gov.hk/parks/trails/Eng/hiking/ntrail/ntrail\\_ptc.htm](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/parks/trails/Eng/hiking/ntrail/ntrail_ptc.htm)

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## Latest news of dolphins in Hong Kong

### Green Groups declare against LNG terminal construction at Sokos 20 October 2006.

The CLP Group intends to establish a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal, which will be used to store the cleaner fuel natural gas for power generation, on Tai A Chau of Soko Islands. However, six environmental groups in Hong Kong issued a joint statement yesterday declaring against the plan, due to the frequent occurrence of the Chinese white dolphins and finless porpoises around Soko waters. The groups also request the government to declare the waters around Sokos Marine Park for nature conservation.

The WWF (Hong Kong), Nature Conservancy, Friends of the Earth, Green Lantau Association, Green Power as well as Living Islands Movement state that the waters around Soko Islands are where both the Chinese white dolphins and finless porpoises utilize, and an important spawning and nursing

ground for fish. Building a LNG terminal at the proposed site will inevitably damage the dolphins' and fishes' habitat.

It is also stated that in 2002, waters around Soko Islands and South Lantau have already been proposed and endorsed by the Country and Marine Park Board as a new Marine Park. The green groups urge the government to approve the proposal as soon as possible. Also, the green groups criticize that the CLP does not publicize the EIA report.

The CLP Group submitted the EIA report to the government yesterday, raising five environment enhancement measures, which include: establishing two marine parks in Sokos, laying artificial reef in west of Siu A Chau, undergoing historical relics excavation and restoration at Tai A Chau, establishing vista point and birdwatching site, and building a public pier. To achieve the air pollutant emission standard by 2010, CLP states that they have to build the LNG terminal as soon as possible. And they would publicize the EIA report 60 days after the submission of the report.

Prof. Paul Lam of the City University of Hong Kong, who specializes in Ecological Risk Assessment, states that there are many issues related to construction of the LNG terminal like navigation safety, marine ecology and air pollution. It will be impossible to work out a feasible plan if these issues are considered and discussed separately. He hopes that related parties can work out a viable plan to minimize environmental impact together.

Source: Metro Hong Kong



### Contents

HKDCS website nominated for “2006 Meritorious Website Contest”

HKDCS 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary - Dolphin Watching

Dolphin captured at Taiji found with abnormality

## What's New

### HKDCS Website has been nominated for the “2006 Meritorious Website Contests”

“2006 Meritorious Website Contest” is jointly organized by the Television & Entertainment Licensing Authority and the Hong Kong Playground Association. The activity aims to encourage healthy website visit among youngsters.

Now, public voting for the contest has already begun, whose deadline is 17

December. By the date a series of promotional activities will be held, including the “Voting Kick-off Carnival”, which is to be held on 10 December. Please support this meaningful activity, and vote for us!



For more details or to vote online, please visit the official website of the organizers:

[http://www.merit.gov.hk/index\\_e.html](http://www.merit.gov.hk/index_e.html)

## Upcoming Activity

### HKDCS 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary - Dolphin Watching

12 December 2006 is HKDCS's third Anniversary. To celebrate this special occasion, we plan to hold a dolphin watching trip for members on 10 December (Sunday).

**Date:** 10 December 2006 (Sunday)

**Gathering time:** 10 am

**Gathering point:** Tung Chung MTR Station Exit B

**Dismiss time:** around 4 pm

**Dismiss point:** Tung Chung Pier

**Itinerary:**

We would first go to waters off West Lantau to search for Chinese white dolphins. At noon we would go on shore of Tai O to have lunch and look around (Free time). Later we would board again and go back to Tung Chung, and look for dolphins on our way back.

**Fee:** HK 150/head (Member) HK 200/head (Non-member\*)

\*Non-member must be accompanied by any member

**Points to note:**

- s Please bring your own food, drinks, sunscreen and sea sickness pills
- s Please wear enough and suitable clothes and shoes
- s Participants may have their lunch at Tai O (at participant's own expense)
- s In case of unfavourable weather conditions, participants will be notified one day before of cancellation of the trip

Those interested please contact our committee member Leo (Email: [lwyueung@hkdcsc.org](mailto:lwyueung@hkdcsc.org)).

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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### Dolphin captured at Taiji found with abnormality

6 November 2006

On 28 October a young bottlenose dolphin captured by fishermen in a dolphin drive hunt at Taiji, Japan was found bearing an unusual feature - two extra fins. The two extra fins are located halfway between the dorsal fin and the tail fluke on either side, where the pelvic structure would be found.

The discovery of the dolphin was largely covered by the media, and it was claimed that this was the first time such a dolphin had ever been found. Some scientists even claimed that this would be an important evidence for that dolphin ancestors had once

lived on land.

However, among the media coverage there is not a word about how the dolphin was brought to captivity - the annual Japanese dolphin massacre. The five-year-old dolphin was netted with its mother during the Japanese drive hunt, and then it was soon separated from its mother, which was later butchered along with other bottlenose dolphins. The four-finned dolphin is now retained in a steel cage in Taiji Harbor, and will be transported to the Taiji Whale Museum (a commercial dolphinarium) later for display.

For more information about the four-finned dolphin and Japanese dolphin slaughter, please see the weblog by the "Save Taiji Dolphin Campaign".

<http://www.earthisland.org/saveTaijiDolphins/weblog.html>

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# e-Newsletter

Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society

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What's New - HKDCS has made 2007 dolphin e-calendar & calendar cards

Upcoming Activity - Gold Coast Shopping Mall "X'mas Joy & X'mas Care"

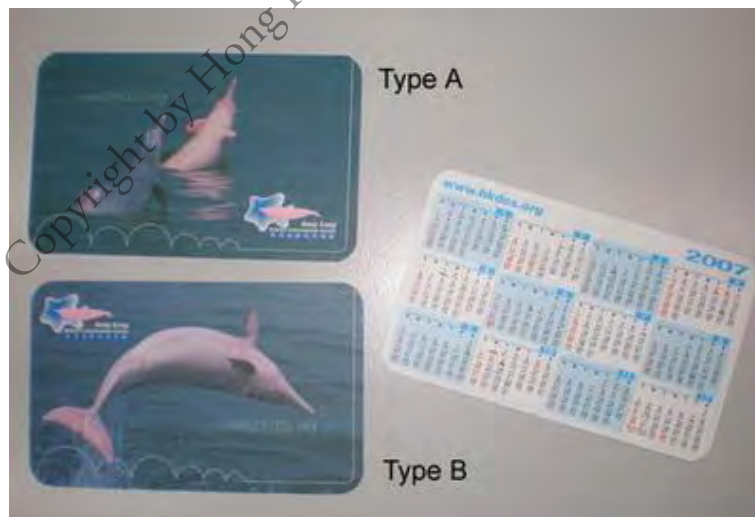
Yangtze expedition fails to find endangered Chinese dolphin - baiji

## What's New

### HKDCS has made 2007 dolphin e-calendar & calendar card

HKDCS has made a new dolphin e-calendar (in pdf format), click the following link to download: [http://www.hkdcs.org/2007\\_HKDCS\\_calendar.pdf](http://www.hkdcs.org/2007_HKDCS_calendar.pdf)

Besides, HKDCS has also made two types of dolphin calendar cards this December:



### Details for getting HKDCS 2007 Dolphin calendar card

- s For each type of calendar card, every person can get three at most (Free of charge)
- s Please mail an addressed envelope with enough postage to HKDCS

(Mailing address: P. O. Box 156, Tung Chung Post Office, Hong Kong), and indicate on the envelope which type and how many calendar card you would like to get. We would mail you back the calendar cards later.

- s Mailing service is just available within Hong Kong territory.
- s We distribute the calendar cards while stock lasts.
- s After the stock has run out we shall mail back the stamped addressed envelope to the mailer.

For enquires, please contact HKDCS (Email: [info@hkdc.org](mailto:info@hkdc.org))

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## Upcoming Activity

### Gold Coast Shopping Mall “X’mas Joy & X’mas Care”

In this Christmas holiday HKDCS has been invited to be the benefited charity of the activity “X’mas Joy & X’mas Care” by the Gold Coast Shopping Mall. All the money gained through the activities “Lovely Bear Charity Sales”, “Care Bears Photo Corner” and “Care Bears Workshop” will go to HKDCS for dolphin conservation.

#### Activity Details:

##### “Lovely Bear Charity Sales”

Date: 23 - 26 December

Time: 1 - 5 pm

Anyone who donates HK\$20 to HKDCS can get a bear stuffed toy.

##### “Care Bears Photo Corner”

Date: 23 - 26 December

Time: 1 - 5 pm

Anyone who donates HK\$10 to HKDCS can take a photo with the Care Bears.

##### “Care Bears Workshop”

Date: 23 - 26 December

Time: 1 - 5 pm

Anyone who spends HK\$30 or more at the shopping mall or donates HK\$30 to HKDCS is entitled to join the Care Bear Workshops once.

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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### Yangtze expedition fails to find endangered Chinese dolphin - baiji

2 Dec 2006

A team of 30 Chinese and foreign scientists have failed in a 26-day search for the rare white-flag dolphin (baiji) in the Yangtze River, raising fears of imminent extinction.

The last such expedition, in 1997, located 13 of the world's rarest dolphins, which lives only in China's longest river, the Yangtze, Xinhua news agency said Saturday. The baiji is considered to be more endangered than the giant panda, which lives in remote forest areas, because the dolphin faces additional threats from pollution and environmental degradation, it said.



Qi Qi - a captive baiji (died in 2002)

"We can't say the baiji is extinct. However, the population has dropped dramatically over the past decade," Wang Ding, vice director of the hydrobiology institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was quoted as saying. Wang and his colleagues estimate that no more than 50 are left.

During a 1,700-kilometer (1,100-mile) trip down the river that ended in Shanghai, the scientists found that the population of the finless porpoises had also fallen.

Wang said pollution, overfishing, shipping and a large number of water conservancy projects had affected the habitats of the animals, Xinhua said. "If the situation cannot be improved, the baiji may be extinct within ten years, and the finless porpoise will also be endangered," Wang said.

There are an estimated 1,000 black finless porpoises in the river, about half the number 12 years ago, Wang said.

Source: Yahoo News



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- Activity Review - Gold Coast Shopping Mall "X'mas Joy & X'mas Care"
- Activity Review - HKDCS 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Celebration - Dolphin Watching
- Russia approves eight capture quotas for orcas in 2007

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## Activity Review

### Gold Coast Shopping Mall "X'mas Joy & X'mas Care"

In the past Christmas holiday HKDCS has been invited to be the benefited charity of the activity "X'mas Joy & X'mas Care" by the Gold Coast Shopping Mall. All the money gained through the activities "Lovely Bear Charity Sales", "Care Bears Photo Corner" and "Care Bears Workshop" went to HKDCS for dolphin conservation.



Besides, HKDCS has also set up a booth at the shopping mall on 23-26 December 2006 selling HKDCS and dolphin souvenirs.

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## Activity Review

### HKDCS 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Celebration - Dolphin Watching

HKDCS is three years old now! To celebrate HKDCS's 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary on 12 December, HKDCS has organized a dolphin watching trip for the members on 10 December 2006 (Sunday). There were scores of attendants that day. The participants first went to the West Lantau by boat to search for Chinese white dolphin. After watching the dolphins, they went ashore at Tai O to have lunch and have some sightseeing around. Every participant did enjoy the day and learn a lot about the dolphins!



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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### Russia approves eight capture quotas for orcas in 2007

19 December 2006

As the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Mikhail Fradkov, approves a quota of eight orcas (killer whales) for capture in Russian waters in 2007, the 2006 season for live orca captures in Russian waters has ended without a single animal being caught. As winter arrives, the window of opportunity for capture teams seeking wild orcas to sell to aquariums and marine parks has closed.

For the past six years, the Russian Government has approved quotas for up to 10 orcas a year to be captured in Russian waters. In spite of this, very few captures have actually taken place. In one tragic attempt, on 26th September



2003, a group of orcas, which included a young calf, was captured in Zhirovaya Bay, Kamchatka in Far East Russia. During the capture attempt, one juvenile female orca was killed and another young female captured alive and transported over 7,000 miles to a facility owned by the Utrish Dolphinarium on the Black Sea. At the time of capture, she was a prime, healthy and nearly-mature animal, but, less than a month after capture, on the 19th October, confined in captivity and separated from her family group, the orca died.

Since 1961, at least 135 orcas have been taken from the wild for entertainment or display purposes. Over 80 percent of these animals are now dead, surviving an average of less than six years in captivity.

Around the world, 46 orcas, the victims of previous captures from around the world, continue to suffer a shortened and impoverished life in captivity.

As Cathy Williamson, WDCS's Anti-Captivity Campaigner notes: "Captures can be fatal for both the orca that is taken and for others in its family group. The importance of key individuals means that the removal of just one animal could have long term implications for the survival of the group. As well as having serious concerns about the welfare of any animals taken, we fear that the future survival of orcas in Far East Russia could be threatened by further captures."

Source: WDCS

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Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society

[www.hkdcs.org](http://www.hkdcs.org)

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- What's New - HKDCS holds monthly dolphin research survey
- Campaign launched in Taiwan to protect local Chinese white dolphin
- Western Pacific Gray whale death raises fear for extinction

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## What's New

### HKDCS holds monthly dolphin research survey

To collect more data on wild Chinese white dolphins in Hong Kong for research, we are starting a monthly boat survey this year. All HKDCS members are welcomed to attend our boat survey.

#### Points to note:

- s Boat surveys will be held on weekdays (Monday to Friday)
- s Schedule of boat survey is determined based on weather conditions so we can only announce the survey date several days before. Please note the announcement on our website.
- s The survey starts at around 9:30 am at Tung Chung and ends at 4-5 pm. Please bring your own lunch and beverages.
- s Please wear enough and suitable clothes and shoes. Bring your own sunscreen and sea sickness pills as well.
- s In case of unfavourable weather conditions, participants will be notified one day before of cancellation of the trip

**Fee:** HK 150/head (Member) HK 200/head (Non-member\*)

\*Non-member must be accompanied by any member

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## Activity Review

### Campaign launched in Taiwan to protect local Chinese white dolphin

29 January 2007

A campaign was launched yesterday to save Taiwan's Indo-Pacific humpbacked dolphins, which the World Conservation Union (IUCN) will soon list as "critically endangered".

Ms. Shih-chu Yang, a researcher of the *FormosaCetus* Research and Conservation Group, said that fewer than 200 of the humpbacked dolphins could now be found near Taiwan.

Yang's group began surveying the population of humpbacked dolphins along the west coast of Taiwan in 2002. A total of 49 dolphins were recorded by the group, most of which were spotted within 5km of the coastline between Miaoli and Chiayi counties.



Chinese white dolphins in Taiwan look similar to those in HK, but bear more spots.

Researchers at *FormosaCetus* have compared the humpbacked dolphins with those found in other parts of the world and concluded that those found in Taiwan "likely represent a unique and isolated local population."

"Their habitats are being gradually destroyed because many government-approved development projects are also located in these areas," she said. The group's research specifically identified several high-profile investment plans as threatening to the humpbacked dolphin population. These included a Kuokuang Petrochemical Technology chemical plant, a Formosa Group steel plant, and the construction of the Hushan Reservoir.

Meanwhile, *FormosaCetus* said that gill nets and some other fishing equipment used by fishermen in the area also posed a serious threat to the species. They have also noted that human activity, along the coast are suspected to have greatly impacted the lives of these dolphins in Taiwan, as some of them have large scars on their dorsal fins and backs.

The campaign has received strong and swift support from other environmental protection groups. Jointly, the groups have urged the Executive Yuan to immediately suspend any projects that endanger the dolphins.

They also suggested appropriating a budget to conserve and protect the humpback dolphins.

Source: Taipei Times

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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### Western Gray whale death raises fear for extinction

#### 1 February 2007

A critically endangered Western Pacific Gray Whale (Western Gray Whale) has died off the coast of Japan after becoming trapped in fishing gear. It is a problem which now threatens this rare creature with extinction.

This is the fourth Western Gray Whale, all female, to be killed in fishing nets on the Pacific coast of Japan in the last two years. It is a juvenile female of approximately 9 metres length, was dead when discovered by fishermen on 19 January 2007 in Yoshihama Bay, off the north eastern coast of Honshu.

The Western Gray Whale population comprises about 120 individuals, of which only 20 to 25 are reproductive females. If this rate of loss of females continues, it will be likely to lead to the population's extinction, according to a projection prepared by the World Conservation Union's Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel.

"We are extremely worried about this problem of incidental mortality in fishing gear as it could become a major factor inhibiting the recovery of Western Gray Whales. We anticipate that Japanese authorities will take action immediately to reduce this risk to the whales," said Randall Reeves, Chair of the Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel.

The World Conservation Union established this independent scientific advisory panel to monitor the whale population and provide advice on protection measures, particularly in regard to oil development activities off Sakhalin Island, Russia, where the whales spend the summer and fall months feeding.

"We are extremely concerned at the loss of this female, which belonged to one of the most endangered whale populations in the world," said Carl Gustaf Lundin, Head of

IUCN's Global Marine Programme.

The Western Gray Whale population is listed as critically endangered (the highest category of threat) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Killing Western Gray Whales is prohibited by the International Whaling Commission.

"We don't know why the incidence of Western Gray Whale entrapments off Japan has suddenly increased. It is essential to find out what is causing this spate of net entrapments, so that remedial action can be taken," said Lundin.

The World Conservation Union will approach the Government of Japan to find ways of cooperation on these issues.

Source: People and the Planet

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What's New - HKDCS holds monthly dolphin research survey  
Fisherman drowned in encounter with whale

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### What's New

#### HKDCS holds monthly dolphin research survey

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**Fee:** HK 150/head (Member) HK 200/head (Non-member\*)

\*Non-member must be accompanied by any member

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### Activity Review

#### Fisherman drowned in encounter with whale

13 Mar 2007

A coastguard official has reported that a fisherman has died after an incident involving a whale which had strayed into a shallow bay in Japan.

The accident happened in a bay off the south western island of Shikoku, in Japan. A video camera was rolling when some fishermen were trying to disentangle the whale when their boat was capsized. People on the boat were then tossed into the sea.

The body of Noriyuki Yamamoto, 58, was recovered by divers from the sea but he was pronounced dead at a nearby hospital in Uwajima.

Yamamoto and two other fishermen had joined in a rescue operation when their boat overturned when the whale slammed into the side of the boat. Besides Yamamoto, the two other fishermen were also tossed into the sea, but they were later rescued.

Mark Simmonds, WDCS Director of Science comments *"It is not clear exactly what was happening however this was a large whale, possibly a sperm whale, in shallow water and seemingly entangled. It is likely to have been very frightened and stressed."*



A sperm whale has been found beached in Hong Kong in 2003

Instances of whales attacking humans are extremely rare and WDCS is aware of no unprovoked attacks on humans by whales in the wild. Sperm whales are large, powerful animals with some males weighing up to 55 tons and measuring 18.3 meters in length. Frightened whales may make sudden movements and these can be dangerous to people in close proximity.

Attempts to disentangle whales are notoriously hazardous, and for this reason should only ever be carried out by trained professionals.

Sources: WDCS / AP / BBC / CBS4

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What's New - HKDCS has held two dolphin research surveys  
Whale protection proposed for Strait of Gibraltar

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### What's New

#### HKDCS has held two dolphin research surveys

HKDCS has already held the first two dolphin research surveys in this year on 29 and 30 March 2007 (Thur and Fri) respectively. In the surveys our research team has observed a lot of finless porpoises and Chinese white dolphins. The attending members have taken many photos of the animals and learned a lot about these two cetacean species. We shall upload the data, photographs and other details of these two surveys to the page of [Research Log](#) of our website shortly.

In this year HKDCS will continue to conduct monthly boat surveys to collect more data on the wild cetaceans in Hong Kong for research. All HKDCS members are welcomed to attend our boat survey. For the date, time and gathering venue of the survey, please keep watch for our website announcement.

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### Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

#### Whale Protections proposed for Strait of Gibraltar

5 March 2007

A new proposal to protect the waterway that separates Europe from Africa for some of the world's most threatened whales and dolphins will be considered later this year by the 20 governments that have signed an agreement to conserve the heavily trafficked marine region.

The Strait of Gibraltar and the adjacent Alboran Sea would be protected under proposals being formally recommended to the 20 country parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area, ACCOBAMS, at the meeting of the parties in Croatia in October.

Areas used by fin, sperm, Cuvier's beaked and killer whales as well as bottlenose and common dolphins and harbor porpoises for feeding, breeding and rearing young are proposed for protection from encroaching industry and pollution.



Fin whale – one of the species residing in the Strait of Gibraltar

"These proposals are based on solid science and are some of the most far reaching and significant to be recommended in European waters. They aim both to protect critical marine ecosystems as well as to reduce persistent threats to the whales and dolphins and the species and habitats they depend on," says Erich Hoyt, a senior research fellow with the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, WDCS, based in England.

One of the proposals would protect the Strait of Sicily - an area frequented by fin whales and a range of dolphin species off Italy, Malta and Tunisia and on the high seas. Other proposals would safeguard eight areas for common dolphins in the Mediterranean - five in Greece, and two in Italy - as well as the Amvrakikos Gulf of northwest Greece.

About 14 kilometers (nine miles) wide at its narrowest point, the Strait of Gibraltar is the entry and exit point between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. It is bordered by the continents of Africa and Europe, and the countries of Morocco, Spain, the British colony of Gibraltar, and the Spanish exclave of Ceuta.

Source: [ens-newswire.com](http://ens-newswire.com)

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What's New - Latest HKDCS Newsletter (Spring 2007) released

What's New - HKDCS Research Log 2007 uploaded

Cetacean News - Sea World trainer injured by orca during medical examination

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## What's New

### Latest HKDCS Newsletter (Spring 2007) released

The latest version of HKDCS newsletter (Spring 2007) has been released and mailed to all our members. If you still have not received it, please contact our committee member (Tel: 2866-2652 E-mail: [info@hkdcs.org](mailto:info@hkdcs.org)). Also, the pdf version of the newsletter is now ready to download at our website. <http://www.hkdcs.org>

### HKDCS Research Log 2007 uploaded

In 2007 HKDCS will continue to conduct monthly boat surveys to collect more data on the wild cetaceans in Hong Kong for research. HKDCS has already uploaded the data collected, photographs taken and other details of the surveys carried out in March to the page of "Research Log 2007" at our



website. Check it out now to learn more about what HKDCS has exactly done in wild cetacean research! [http://www.hkdcs.org/research/rehlog\\_en.htm](http://www.hkdcs.org/research/rehlog_en.htm) Besides, we will upload the data and details for the April survey to the Research Log page soon.

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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### Sea World trainer injured by orca during medical examination

11 April 2007

Another trainer at Sea World, San Diego has been injured by a captive orca while apparently assisting in a medical procedure on the animal

Reports say that the animal, a 19 year old female orca named Orkid, who was born in and has spent her entire life in captivity, was undergoing a sonogram in preparation for possible artificial insemination.

The trainer is said to have been knocked from a low wall by Orkid, hitting her head and side in the fall.

There have been many incidents of trainers being injured by the orcas they are interacting with during Sea World's shows, which show trainers in elaborate in-water displays with the huge mammals. Sea World's other theme parks have also had such incidents occur, including in 2004, at Sea World Texas and in 2005 at Sea World Orlando.

During a show on Wednesday 29th November last year at Sea World's San Diego theme park, a 30-year-old orca known as Kasatka, a 7,000-pound, 17-foot-long female, grabbed a trainer's foot and pulled him underwater twice, before letting go so he could escape from the pool and be taken to hospital for treatment.

WDCS is strongly opposed to keeping these animals in captivity. Scientific evidence indicates that orcas in captivity suffer extreme mental and physical stress, which is revealed in aggression between orcas and towards humans, boredom, and a lower life expectancy and higher infant mortality than in the wild.



Orca is a kind of huge and extremely intelligent animal that should not be kept in captivity.

WDCS also notes that it knows of no cases of aggression displayed by orcas towards humans in the wild, but several documented cases of aggression displayed by captive orcas, both towards their pool mates and towards humans. The two most serious

cases resulted in fatalities to the people involved.

Recently a report by state officials into the safety of trainers working with captive orcas, which stated that 'it was 'just a matter of time' before a captive orca at Sea World's Adventure park killed a trainer, was withdrawn by the agency that issued it after two days of talks with Sea World officials.

**Source:** WDCS / NBC 11.com

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## What's New

### New Book Release

#### “An Identification Guide to the Dolphins and other Small Cetaceans of Taiwan”

The latest field guide written by HKDCS advisor, Dr. John Y. Wang and dolphin researcher, Ms. Shih-chu Yang, “An Identification Guide to the Dolphins and other Small Cetaceans of Taiwan”, has been released. The two authors are renowned dolphin researchers with years of experiences in the field and the book contains detailed information and scores of precious field photographs of various small cetaceans occurring in Taiwanese waters. As a dolphin lover, you really should not miss it!



#### Details of the Book:

Name: An Identification Guide to the Dolphins and other Small Cetaceans of Taiwan

Authors: John Y. Wang, Shih-chu Yang

Language: Chinese & English (Bilingual)

Number of Pages: 207

Publisher: Jen Jen Publishing Company, National Museum of Marine Biology and Aquarium

Published Date: May 2007 (First Edition)

ISBN: 978-986-7112-37-8

Price: HK\$ 235 (Members' Discount: HK\$ 190)

Local Postage: HK\$ 10

To place an order or have any enquiry, please contact HKDCS committee member (Tel: 2866-2652; Email: [info@hkdc.org](mailto:info@hkdc.org))

This field guide will be for sale in the Hong Kong Book Fair 2007. Please see HKDCS website announcement shortly.

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## Latest news of whales and dolphins in the world

### Dolphins could be wiped out of English Channel

15 May 2007

The sight of dolphins leaping in the English Channel could become a thing of the past, conservationists warned yesterday after research showed an increase in the number of dolphins being washed up dead on beaches in the south west.

Experts warned that unless urgent action was taken against the hundreds of miles of nets and tangle nets around the approaches to the English Channel, the dolphins and porpoises there would be wiped out.

A total of 128 dolphins and porpoises were found washed up dead on the coast of the South West this year, including 60 common dolphin, 46 harbour porpoises and two bottlenose dolphin, according to a report by Marine Connection, a whale and dolphin charity, and the Wildlife Trusts.



This is despite a ban imposed in 2004 by the Government on pair trawling for bass congregating in the Channel to spawn in which two trawlers tow up to two thirds of a mile between them which was thought to be killing dolphins. The ban only applied to British trawlers and within the 12 mile limit.

Increasingly conservation concern has focused on gill and tangle nets, up to 70 miles of which can be set by a single boat. Under EU law pingers are supposed to have been fitted to set nets since last year in the South West, but conservationists say this law is not being enforced because the pingers can fly off and strike fishermen on the

head when the nets are hauled. Pingers are attached to nets and emit a noise approximately every four seconds in an attempt to warn marine mammals.

The report by the two charities, the South West Dolphin Report, said that the number of dead or stranded dolphins washing up on the shores of the south west had risen steeply since the early 1990s. There were just 58 dead dolphins and porpoises recorded in 1990 but this rose to about 100 a year after 1997. From 2002 to 2004 alone, there were 871 strandings.

Dr Lissa Goodwin, fisheries and policy officer for Marine Connection, said: There could be a severe impact on a sub-population of common dolphin that we could be close to wiping out. There is also a very real danger that we could be seeing the last of the bottlenose dolphins of the South West coast.

"Entanglement in fishing gear is the number one cause of death in stranded dolphins, particularly common dolphins and harbour porpoises. If we want to reduce human impacts on dolphins we need to take urgent action. Lindy Hingley of Brixham Seawatch said dolphins had fallen in the last ten to 15 years. She said: if we do nothing now, in four year's time we won't be getting any sightings.

Conservationists want the Government to give powers to inshore fishery management bodies to close fisheries that have a known by-catch of dolphins, porpoises, turtles or seabirds until suitable mitigation devices are identified.

Source: telegraph.co.uk

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