



FACT SHEET

Chinese White Dolphin Conservation Factsheet No.50



Over the past ten years since WWF Hong Kong initiated its dolphin protection campaign, the Chinese White Dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*), also commonly called the 'pink dolphin', has risen from obscurity to gain international fame as the emblem of the resumption of the exercise of the administration of authority over Hong Kong by China in 1997.

Whilst dolphins are still sighted within Hong Kong's waters, WWF Hong Kong believes that every effort must continue to be made to save the dolphins' population. However, fame by itself does not afford protection.

PROTECTION FOR CHINESE WHITE DOLPHINS

The Chinese White Dolphin is located protected under the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance. This protects the species from capture but makes no provision for habitat protection. In 1995, Hong Kong's Marine Parks Ordinance (MPO) came into effect, allowing the designation of protected areas. Although a Marine Park at Sha Chau/Lung Kwu Chau was designated in 1996, as yet there has been no progress in actually ensuring the protection of the area, as set out in the Ordinance. High speed ferries still cross the area, large-scale fishing still occurs and the temporary Aviation Fuel Receiving Facility for the airport operates in the area.

With such an apparent contravention of the principles of the law specifically put in place to preserve the marine habitat, the Marine Park will fail to be effective in protecting the dolphin population. As development continues unabated in northern Lantau, WWF Hong Kong continues its call upon the Hong Kong SAR Government to use the MPO properly so that areas of natural habitat remain.

Figure 1 - Boundary of Sha Chau/Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park



The Chinese White Dolphin is also listed as Category 1 species under the Law of Wild Animals Protection of the People's Republic of China; but this also does not allow for habitat protection either.

OTHER PROTECTION MEASURES

The Marine Mammals Conservation Working Group (MMCWG) under the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department has representatives from green groups, government, developers and the fishing community. However, the group meets infrequently, and to date, has yet to resolve conflicts which have occurred between developer, conservationist and fisherman.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Through the WWF Hong Kong Adopt-a-Dolphin Programme, you can not only learn about the daily lives of Hong Kong's dolphins, you can contribute to the growing amount of research and education that WWF Hong Kong has been able to fund into the dolphins' ecology so that informed conservation measures can be proposed to the authorities. If you want to be more active, WWF Hong Kong and the SWIMS Dolphin Research Programme requires volunteers to help in their projects (see contact details below). Additionally, if you are involved in any water activities anywhere in Hong Kong, observe the code of conduct for dolphin watching, and report sightings (dead or alive) to WWF Hong Kong or the research groups - faxable forms are available on request or ring in your message to the contact numbers below.



CONTACT DETAILS

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DOLPHIN RESEARCH GROUP SWIMS

Address: University of Hong Kong, Cape d' Aguilar

Tel: 9026 6641

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DOLPHIN WATCHING CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Maintain forward progress at a slow steady speed throughout the trip – this reduces the risk of collisions, harassment and noise disturbance.
2. Follow an agreed route every trip without stops or deviations, unless you are in an emergency situation - cetaceans are more likely to become accustomed to predictable boat noise and behaviour.
3. Always slow down gradually to a no-wake speed if cetaceans appear directly ahead. Once clear of the animals, slowly resume speed - to reduce acoustic disturbance and to avoid collision or breaking up the group; to avoid disturbance from sudden changes in speed or direction.
4. Limit duration, route and number of trips in certain sensitive areas, such as Sha Chau/Lung Kwa Chau area where a high incidence of mothers and calves have been seen resting and socialising - to avoid repeated disturbance to specific animals in important parts of their habitats.
5. Dispose of fuel, oil, litter and other contaminants ashore - to avoid additional marine pollution. Littering at sea is illegal.
6. For the safety of all concerned, do not attempt to touch, swim with or feed marine animals - swimming with and touching wild cetaceans may be dangerous and may transfer deadly infection. Feeding them may alter their behaviour and result in dependency on an unnatural and unreliable food source.



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them, keep at least 500 m distance - too many vessels surrounding dolphins may bring about further stress and cause the pod to scatter.

FURTHER READINGS:

1. WWF HK Factsheet - The Chinese White Dolphin - *Sousa chinensis*, 1994, WWF Hong Kong.
2. *The feasibility of the proposed sanctuary for the Chinese White dolphin, Sousa chinensis, at Lung Kwu Chau and Sha Chau, Hong Kong* by Caroline c. Hoffman. 1995, WWF Hong Kong.
3. WWF HK Factsheet - Studies on Chinese White Dolphin. 1997, WWF Hong Kong.

Other fact sheets about Chinese White Dolphins:

Factsheet No.14 [The Chinese White Dolphin - Sousa chinensis](#)