

BLOOM ASSOCIATION

HONG KONG

2014 - 15 ANNUAL REPORT



Claire Nouvian
Founder of Bloom Association

About BLOOM Association Hong Kong

BLOOM is a non-profit organization dedicated to marine conservation, founded by Ms. Claire Nouvian in Paris, France, 2005. On World Ocean Day, June 8th, 2009, the Hong Kong office was launched.

BLOOM's principal areas of work are those issues that need urgent attention: **the protection of vulnerable species and habitats** – sharks and the deep sea – as well as **the promotion of small-scale sustainable fisheries**, and **the maintenance of fishermen's livelihoods**.

VISION AND MISSION

To resist the fate of an overfished, barren ocean in the future, by proving that dedicated action can reverse the course of environmental and human tragedy. Giving a voice to the voiceless; ensuring that humanity has a future where children have food and fishermen have jobs, by restoring ocean ecosystems to their full biological capacity.

4 PRINCIPLES OF WORK AT BLOOM ASSOCIATION HONG KONG:

ONE. SHARING WHAT WE KNOW

Bringing knowledge of the many problems and solutions to ocean conservation issues, both local and global, to people, both local and global.

TWO. RESEARCH

Creating new information and filling knowledge gaps about ocean conservation and the marine world by carrying out scientifically rigorous research.

THREE. ADVOCACY

Assisting Hong Kong's progression into a future of sustainable oceans and fisheries by working with governments in establishing and enforcing marine policies.

FOUR. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Engaging the public through creative media to spread the word about our work, and restoring a sense of personal responsibility to marine conservation in all levels of the general public.



M A R I N E PROGRAMMES

SHARK CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

Hong Kong is one of the world's greatest trading hubs for shark fin and related products. Over 50% of all the shark fin exported from other countries in the world will at one point come through the ports of Hong Kong. However, not all of the products are consumed locally – most of it is re-exported to other markets, including mainland China.

ONGOING RESEARCH

Shark Fin-related Market Research: What's for Sale?

The colossal scale of the global shark fin-related market means that it is often difficult to keep track of what is being sold, and how the demand for shark fin-related is changing, and the health of shark-related populations worldwide. Since 2013, BLOOM has been assimilating market data from dried seafood retailers to observe the trends in categories of shark fin being sold, as well as changes in the prices of shark fin-related products. In addition, BLOOM holds a data inventory of all the countries that have exported shark fin to Hong Kong since 1998.

This year, in collaboration with the Stony Brook University, BLOOM began assisting the PhD research of Mr. Andrew Fields, using DNA analysis of shark fin samples to identify the species of sharks that are found for sale in Hong Kong. Mr. Fields' work is essential to understanding the species composition of Hong Kong's market for shark fin-related products and we will continue to offer our full support.

Shark Fin: To Eat or Not To Eat?

Press conference: 16th April, 2015

In 2014, BLOOM commissioned the Social Sciences Research Centre of The University of Hong Kong to conduct a survey on the shark consumption habits and attitudes in Hong Kong. Over 1000 Hong Kong residents were interviewed for their views on the consumption of shark fin.



The survey found that, of the respondents who have reduced their consumption of shark fins, over 80% quoted "environmental concerns" as the reason for lowering consumption, indicating a strengthening conservation conscience as compared to when the survey was first carried out in 2009. On 16th April, 2015, the results were presented in a press conference, held at The University of Hong Kong.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Customs Shark School

Course dates: 22nd, 23rd, 26th May, 2014; 21st - 23rd April, 2015

Proper enforcement is often hindered by lack of technique and knowhow. In collaboration with Stony Brook University and The Pew Charitable Trusts, BLOOM has piloted a training course for the Agriculture, Fisheries, and Conservation Department and Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department of the Government of Hong Kong SAR. The course offers unprecedented training allowing the visual identification of shark species from shark fins, allowing AFCD and customs officers to quickly identify CITES-listed and illegally traded shark fins during cargo and border inspections.

AROUND THE WORLD

Proper shark conservation can only be achieved through dialogue and mutual understanding with the 200+ countries involved in Hong Kong's shark fin-related trade. In the past year, BLOOM visited Washington D.C., Beijing, Colombia, Sri Lanka, and Fiji to converse with their respective governments and traders, explaining the role of Hong Kong in the global trade, and discussing opportunities for cooperation in working towards a sustainable future for sharks.



I'm FINished
WITH FINS
一翅都唔食

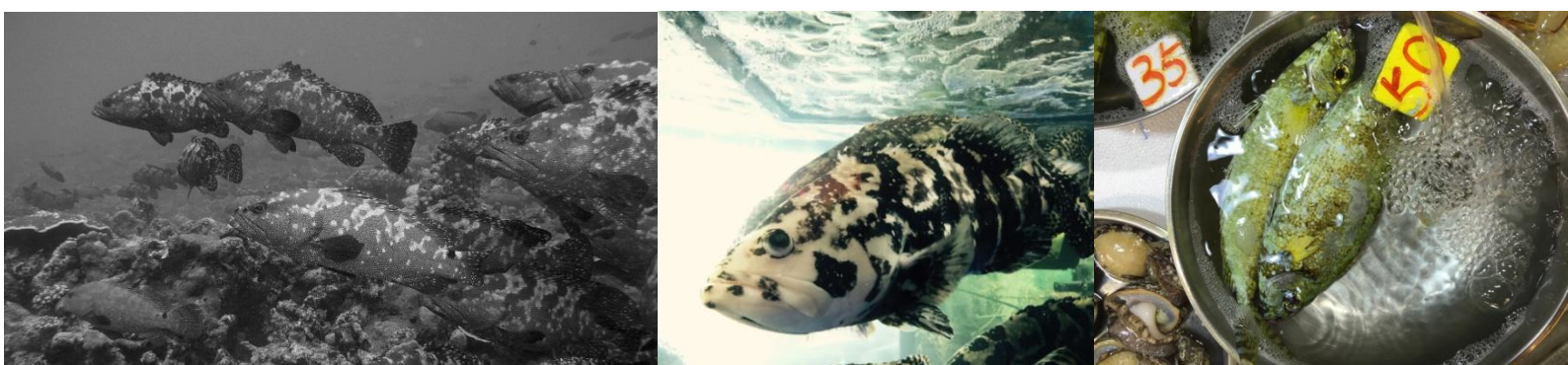


FINished with Fins
Milk Magazine issue 670

The FINished with Fins campaign is an initiative by the Shark Savers and WildAid. BLOOM's Marine Programme Director, Stan Shea, was invited to be one of the many faces of the campaign, pledging to give up eating shark fin.

FOR THE LOVE OF SEAFOOD

Hong Kong is not only a glutton for shark fin. It is also a major trading hub and consumer of many other seafood, including bêche-de-mer, abalone, and Live Reef Food Fish (LRFF). In the past year, BLOOM has also expanded its work to take an interest in the local trade and consumption of these marine resources. Following BLOOM's co-authored publication on Hong Kong's sea cucumber trade in 2012, we have been investing in research into the LRFF Trade during this past year.



LIVE REEF FOOD FISH

Commissioned by the Hong Kong Airport Authority, the ADM Capital Foundation has spent a year to conduct an in depth and holistic research on how airlines and other carriers of LRFF cargoes may support a sustainable LRFFT.

As LRFF is often exported and not consumed within the source countries, traders of LRFF rely heavily on the availability of transportation modes, especially airlines, that may efficiently and securely deliver their live fish from source to destination. Carrier companies are hence in a position to greatly enhance Hong Kong's capacity to monitor and regulate the LRFFT – in particular, to prevent illegal trades.

As one of the collaborators of this project, BLOOM visited the traders of some of the Asia Pacific region's greatest LRFF exporters, including Sabah, Malaysia, and Manila and Palawan, Philippines, as well as Hong Kong, to conduct interviews and understand the mechanics of the exporting process.

The report is scheduled to publish in November 2015.

HONG KONG MARINE BIODIVERSITY

Many of Hong Kong's marine conservation issues may be to do with the use and exploitation of global marine resources, however Hong Kong itself also has remarkable local underwater biodiversity that is too often underrated. In the past year, BLOOM has been involved in initiatives to conserve the local marine ecology.

CONVENTION ON BIODIVERSITY

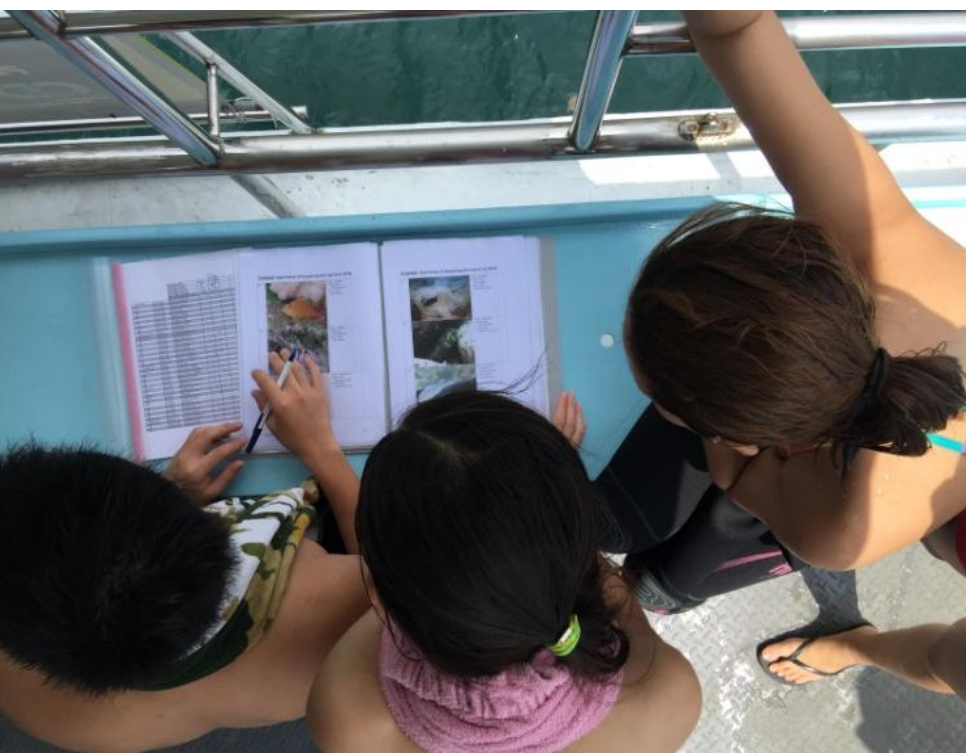
The Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) is an international agreement binding those countries joining the convention as Parties in the active effort to achieve specific goals for biodiversity conservation by the year 2020 (more information about CBD and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets may be found at www.cbd.int). Hong Kong, although not a country, is also committed to these goals by extension of the commitment made by The People's Republic of China. Each Party will achieve these goals by devising Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (BSAP).

To achieve this, several focus groups for different aspects of local biodiversity conservation work was established, and experts and NGOs all over Hong Kong were invited to participate as members. BLOOM has been taking part in five of the focus groups, including:

1. Sustainable Use, Ecological Footprint and Ecosystem Services Focus Group
2. Marine Habitat Focus Group
3. NGO Focus Group
4. Standards and Red List Working Group – Marine Fishes Focus Group
5. Sustainable Use of Marine Resources Focus Group

The final BSAP is currently under review and approval by the corresponding departments of the Hong Kong government.





REEF FISH SURVEY

It is difficult to conserve what one does not know about. Funded by the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation Hong Kong (OPCFHK), BLOOM has been conducting a local underwater reef fish survey to understand what species are currently being found in Hong Kong waters. This survey was piloted in the year between July 2013 and June 2014, and has continued into the current year with success.

Citizen Science

Citizen science is a concept now applied by many institutes to combine the elements of scientific research with community outreach to conduct research projects. Up to now, the survey has recruited 16 trained divers as core volunteers, collecting data, photographs and gaining skills in fish identification.

New Tails in Town

In the past year of this research, 4 species new to Hong Kong were found and documented. These findings are not only exciting, but also indicate the incredible lack of knowledge we have for the biodiversity along our own coastlines.

SHARING WHAT WE KNOW

A large portion of BLOOM's work has to do with sharing what we now know about shark and marine conservation. Our target audience ranges from primary to university students, from housewives to researchers, and from professional divers to corporate leaders. There is so much about the ocean that we still do not know, which makes it all the more important that what we do already know, we share with one another.

SEMINARS

Each year, BLOOM conducts seminars for a variety of audiences. This past year, apart from those held at overseas conference, BLOOM has visited several groups, including the Discovery College and the Rotary Club, to share our knowledge on shark and marine conservation.

BLOOM always welcomes invitation to hold seminars. Each seminar is tailored to deliver the most relevant message to audiences.

MEDIA COVERAGE

As sharks, sustainable seafood, and other marine-related issues are becoming increasingly popular in Hong Kong, demand for opinions and information on these topics from the media have also become more and more wanted. In the past year, BLOOM was featured or interviewed on at least 15 media platforms, including The Wall Street Journal, South China Morning Post, and Apple Daily.

OTHER PRODUCTIONS

Apart from written media, BLOOM has also been involved in television and radio productions. Highlights include a special feature on the 881903 Commercial Radio, RTHK documentary Fishy Business - In Search of Sharks (Episode 1) set in Mozambique, South Africa, and an interview for TVB programme, "Adventures to the Edge", scheduled to air on 5th August 2015.



香港珊瑚魚圖鑑

Hong Kong Reef Fish Photo Guide

杜偉倫 Allen To

程詩灝 Ken Ching

佘國豪 Stan Shea



In 2013, BLOOM's Marine Programme Director, Stan Shea, published a co-authored photo-guide on reef fish species found in Hong Kong waters. The book assimilates data collected over 7 years of underwater observation, and is now available at various dive shops in Hong Kong.



**WILL WORK
FOR FISH**

THE HONG KONG TEAM



Stan Shea
*Marine Programme
Director, Hong Kong*

Stan is the most long-standing member of BLOOM Association Hong Kong. Joined in 2009, he is the face and steer of all of BLOOM's projects in Hong Kong, whether in research, advocacy or outreach. He believes strongly in spreading the message of conservation as a key step in protecting the oceans, and to date his seminars have reached over 8000 individuals worldwide.

Stan holds a BSc in Environmental Sciences from Oxford Brookes University and a Master's degree in Ecology and Biodiversity from The University of Hong Kong.

Publications:

To, A.W.L., Ching, K.S.H., and Shea, S.K.H. (2013). *Hong Kong Reef Fish Photo Guide*. Hong Kong: Eco-Education and Resources Centre.

To, A.W.L., and Shea, S.K.H. (2012). *Patterns and dynamics of bêche-de-mer trade in Hong Kong and mainland China: Implications for monitoring and management*. TRAFFIC Bulletin 24 (2), pp 65 - 76.



Kathleen Ho
Marine Programme Co-ordinator, Hong Kong

Kathleen joined the BLOOM Hong Kong office in January 2015, after obtaining a BSocSc degree in Geography and an M.Phil. in environmental ethics, both from The University of Hong Kong.

At BLOOM, Kathleen is chiefly responsible for managing ongoing projects of the marine programme, assisting with field research and engaging the younger audiences for information sharing seminars. She also handles all administrative and accounting tasks.

OUR DONORS

None of our work would have been possible without the support of our donors. BLOOM would like to thank the following institutions, for believing in what we do:

The Pew Charitable Trusts
Stony Brook University
The ADM Capital Foundation Limited
Ocean Park Conservation Foundation Hong Kong
Chantecaille Beaute Inc.
Research Foundation of SUNY
Ocean Park Hong Kong
Commercial Radio Productions Limited
Fung (1906) Foundation Limited

CONTACT US

For more information about our work at BLOOM Association Hong Kong or BLOOM Association in Paris, France, please visit our website:

www.bloomassociation.org

More questions? Email us!

Ms. Kathleen Ho
kathleenho@bloomassociation.org



