



2021/22

BLOOM ASSOCIATION HONG KONG  
ANNUAL REPORT

COVER PHOTO // Yiu Wai Hong@114°E Hong Kong Reef Fish Survey



## Vision // 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.

## What We Do // BLOOM HK

### 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. CREATING THE FUTURE

Assisting Hong Kong's progression towards a future of better oceans and fisheries by working with governments in addressing marine issues.

### FOUR. ENGAGING THE GENERAL PUBLIC

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.



# SHARKS AND WILDLIFE

## CITES PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

With CITES CoP19 (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) scheduled for November 2022, BLOOM HK dedicated the years work to preparation for the upcoming shark listings. At the 74th Standing Committee held in Lyon, France in March 2022, the Panamanian government announced their plans to list the entire requiem sharks family (Carcharhinidae) onto CITES Appendix II, due to many of the species being threatened with extinction and commonly found in the trade, with others being 'lookalike' species which are difficult to differentiate when in traded forms. Other sharks that have been suggested are related to the remainder of hammerhead sharks not already listed onto CITES (family Sphyrnidae) and guitarfishes (family Rhinobatidae).

In the lead up to the SC74, BLOOM HK has furthermore partnered with IFAW on a research project focusing on the role of the European Union (EU) and its member states in the international shark-related trade. The resulting report highlighted the importance of the EU as a global player in the trade, and thus their responsibility in ensuring the trade's sustainability and at the very least, to in regulating trades to eliminate activities detrimental to wild shark and ray poluations.

The full report is available at: [www.ifaw.org/resources/eu-role-global-shark-trade](http://www.ifaw.org/resources/eu-role-global-shark-trade)

## SHARK FIN & WILDLIFE TRADE RESEARCH

Despite the continued impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on trades and daily mobility throughout the city, BLOOM HK's shark fin trade research in collaboration with the Florida International University (FIU) has continued without breaks in monthly sampling activities. In the next project year, species identification by DNA analysis will reveal the up-to-date species composition of sharks and rays found being sold as shark fin products in Hong Kong's dried seafood retail market. While these updated findings will allow for pre- and post-CITES implementation comparisons, it will also serve as an indication for directions of upcoming conservation work, highlighting species most prevalent in the trade at least as seen in Hong Kong's retail market.

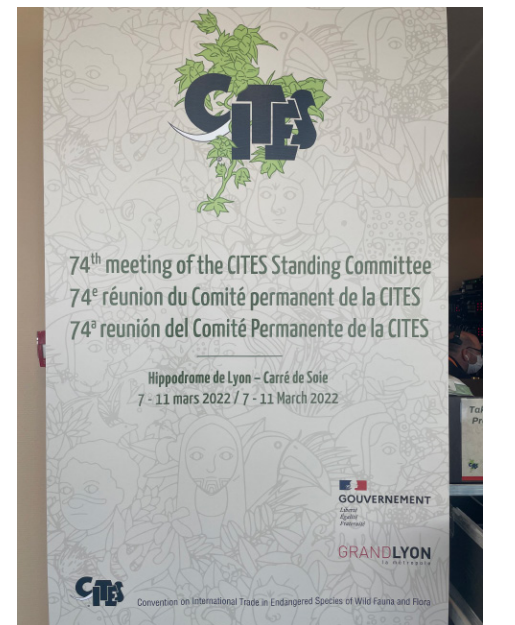
BLOOM HK further notes that the problem faced by sharks in the global trade is not exclusive to sharks, and other species groups and seafood products such as sea cucumbers, fish maw and abalone are all also facing similar threats brought about the demand for consumption. Opportunites to look more closely into these markets to identify conservation potentials will continue to be explored in upcoming years.



Teatfishes (including three species of sea cucumbers: *Holothuria nobilis*, *Holothuria whitmaei*, and *Holothuria fuscogilva*) was successfully listed onto CITES App. II in 2019, CoP18. Since the implementation of these listings, there have yet to be research to focus on these species and monitor changes in the trade. Such opportunities will also be prioritised in the upcoming years for BLOOM HK.



>> In the form that they are sold, it may be differentiate between species, thus the importance and necessity of listing 'lookalike' species.



>> BLOOM HK at CITES SC74



>> On 1 Jun 2021, BLOOM HK launched the 2019-20 shark consumption habits and attitudes sociological survey report, comparing findings from 2009-10 and 2014-15.



# LIVE FISH AND SEAFOOD

## SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD: BLOOM HK X CHOOSE RIGHT TODAY

ChooseRightToday.org (CRT) is an initiative by ADM Capital Foundation (ADMCF) for promoting and popularizing sustainable seafood in Hong Kong. The online platform provides a range of information, including identification, shopping and dining guides for where and how to find sustainable seafood in Hong Kong. It also provides content to help people understand the concepts behind sustainable seafood and what it is.

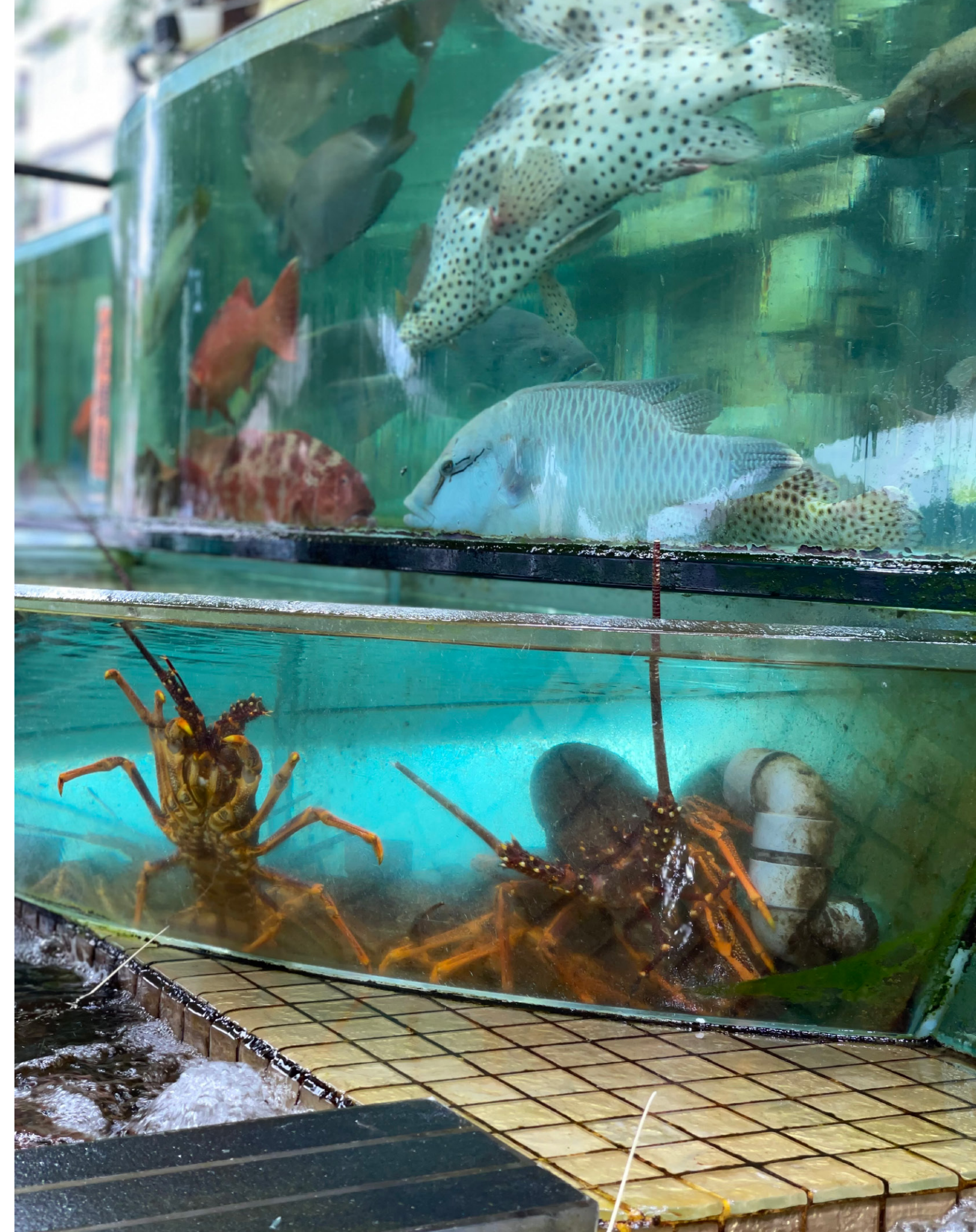
BLOOM HK has been partnering with ADMCF to bring new updates to the CRT platform. This included a new restaurant directory for where to find sustainable seafood in Hong Kong. This directory was made possible from surveys with 21,000+ restaurants and catering outlets. The directory functions as not only a dining guide, but also an education tool used in school and general public talks, to showcase the accessibility of sustainable seafood in Hong Kong even for a regular consumer, and to show that despite what is generally believed, sustainable seafood is not limited to expensive dining options.

## Hong Kong Sustainable Seafood Coalition (HKSSC)

BLOOM HK has been partnering with ADM Capital Foundation and HKSSC on conducting Seafood Risk Assessments (SRA) that can help increase understanding for the sustainability and conservation threats associated with seafood found available in Hong Kong. The assessments can also provide better insight into the local fisheries situation, such as through interviews with fish farm owners. Assessment outcomes can be used by members of the industry to be taken into consideration when sourcing seafood for their own businesses.

## IUCN Red List Regional Assessments

In addition to collaborations on SRA, BLOOM HK has also assisted in the follow up work for fulfilling the Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP), by conducting local fisheries interviews for the purpose of IUCN Red List regional assessments.



It is worth noting that in BLOOM HK's sociological survey completed in 2020, up to 64.9% of survey respondents said that they were willing to pay some premium for sustainable seafood. More than 90% of respondents found it either 'acceptable' or 'very acceptable' for all seafood served to be sustainable in government official functions, wedding banquets and corporate banquets respectively. These findings are indications that the Hong Kong general public may be ready to learn more and accept more varieties of sustainable seafood. The next step would therefore be to continue helping members of the industry meet this demand with adequate supply.



>> There is still much room for improvement for Hong Kong's seafood. Apart from the problems of illegality in the trade, poor traceability for seafood origins and insufficient interest in seafood sustainability from consumers, industries and the local government, species mislabeling is also a problem often ignored. There are currently no systems or frameworks to guide proper labeling of products, and incentives for businesses to commit to proper labeling is also low.



>> Some restaurants may indicate sustainable seafood items on their menus. While this is rare, such a practice helps customers to identify and learn more about sustainable seafood options.



# HONG KONG MARINE LIFE

## 114°E Hong Kong Reef Fish Survey

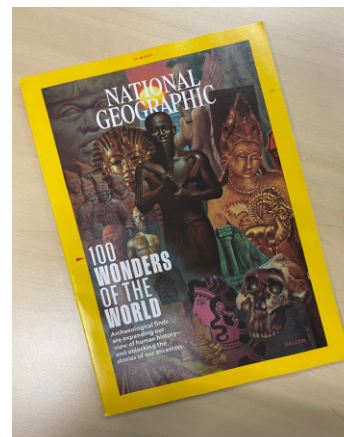
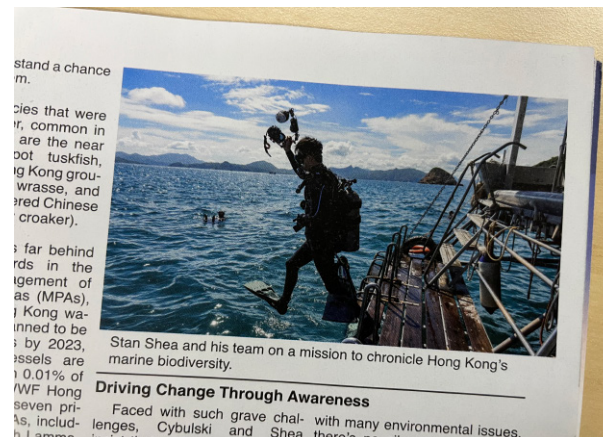
BLOOM HK continues the 114°E Survey this year, adding 12 new-to-Hong Kong species to the project database and bringing the total number of species recorded in the survey to 431 species. These discoveries will be published in an upcoming peer-reviewed journal publication along with other new records made in the previous survey years.

Apart from underwater surveys, the project has also participated in several outreach activities, including Hong Kong's first underwater photography exhibition hosted by Taiwan's 'Beneath Taiwan Beyond Dive', school and corporate seminars, and the ESG Matters Ocean Series.

Notably, as part of Swire Trust Tomorrow's Oceans Tomorrow initiative, the project was featured on the Nov 2021 issue of the National Geographic magazine, and in an interview now available in both video and article form online.

## Marine Protected Areas

Part of the project's objectives for the 114°E Survey starting from 2020 is to educate the public on the importance of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the conservation of marine life and habitats. In addition to regular surveys, the project has also begun focusing part of its surveys on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), with Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park being the main study site. A preliminary review of the data has found at least 62 species for the marine park that have not been documented to occur there, enabling increased understanding for the species diversity of the site. Future analyses will compare data to understand the species diversity of reef fishes inside and around MPAs.



>> BLOOM HK projects were featured the November 2021 issue of the National Geographic magazine (center and right) and in a short film (left - filming).



Photo By // Yiu Wai Hong@114°E Hong Kong Reef Fish Survey

In recent years of survey, the project has found more and more tropical species recorded in Hong Kong waters. Future analyses will investigate the possibility of climate change impacts as a potential reason for these observations.



>> 114°E Survey core volunteers entering data after a survey dive. All volunteers are trained on the survey methodology before joining.



>> 114°E Survey core volunteer (foreground) describing the dive's findings, with a newly joined volunteer from Swire (background).



>> Outreach activities, including collaborations with Apple on Today at Apple (left) and BASELINE gallery (right).

## LINKS

### Oceans Tomorrow

[www.nationalgeographic.com/oceans-tomorrow/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/oceans-tomorrow/)

### Direct Video:

<https://youtu.be/Owg1MlvJvs0>

### Article:

[www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/paid-content-why-education-is-key-to-building-a-more-sustainable-marine-ecosystem](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/paid-content-why-education-is-key-to-building-a-more-sustainable-marine-ecosystem)



@114e.hkreeffish

114ehkreeffish.org



# EDUCATION AND MEDIA

## Seminars

BLOOM HK tailors seminars for all sectors on marine-related topics, the most popular of which are for shark conservation and local marine biodiversity. Some highlights this year include the Harbour School, The University of Hong Kong, Swire Lunch and Learn, Sony Entertainment, Apple on Today at Apple, BASELINE gallery, Beneath Taiwan Beyond Dive, and AFCD Reef Check seminars, among others.

## Media interviews

BLOOM HK always welcomes invitations for interviews. This year's highlights include National Geographic magazine and video feature, and RTHK Climate Watcher, as well as other media appearances as a result of the launch of the sociological survey on shark consumption habits and attitudes in Hong Kong 2019-20.



## PUBLICATIONS

Over the years, BLOOM HK has collaborated in academic research on various marine issues, pushing forward the extent of our knowledge on these topics. Some of these research are published in journals. Below are a selection:

García Barcia, L., Valdes, A.E., Wothke, A. et al. (in press). [Health Risk Assessment of Globally Consumed Shark-Derived Products](#). Expo Health.

Cardenosa, D., Shea, S. K., Zhang, H., Fischer, G. A., Simpfendorfer, C. A., & Chapman, D. D. (in press). [Two thirds of species in a global shark fin trade hub are threatened with extinction: Conservation potential of international trade regulations for coastal sharks](#). Conservation Letters.

Conand, C. et al. (in press). [Review of fisheries management of sea cucumbers in the Indian Ocean](#). Western Indian Journal of Marine Science.

Chow, W.K., Ho, A., To, A. Shea, S.K.H., Tsang, L.M., ANG, P.O., Kei, K. (2021). [Field guide to indicator species of Hong Kong Reef Check](#). Hong Kong: AFCD, Reef Check Foundation

Cardenosa, D., Fields, A.T., Babcock, E.A., Shea, S.K.H., Feldheim, K.A., and Chapman, D.D. (2020). [Species composition of the largest shark fin retail-market in mainland China](#). Scientific Reports 10, 12914.

Cardenosa, D., Fields, A.T., Babcock, E.A., et al. (2020). [Indo-Pacific origins of silky shark fins in major shark fin markets highlights supply chains and management bodies key for conservation](#). Conservation Letters, 14(3);e12780.

Cardenosa, D., Fields, A.T., Shea, S.K.H., Feldheim, K.A., and Chapman, D.D. (2020). [Relative contribution to the shark fin trade of Indo-Pacific and Eastern Pacific pelagic thresher sharks](#). Animal Conservation 24(3), pp 367 - 372.

Cardenosa, D., Shea, S.K.H., Zhang, H., Feldheim, K., Fischer, G.A., and Chapman, D.D. (2020). [Small fins, large trade: a snapshot of the species composition of low-value shark fins in the Hong Kong markets](#). Animal Conservation 23(2), pp 203 - 211.

Barcia, L., Argiro, J., Babcock, E.A., Cai, Y., Shea, S.K.H., Chapman, D.D. (2020). [Mercury and arsenic in processed fins from nine of the most traded shark species in the Hong Kong and China dried seafood markets: The potential health risks of shark fin soup](#). Marine Pollution Bulletin 157, 111281.

Fields, A.T., Fischer, G.A., Shea, S.K.H., Zhang, H., Feldheim, K.A., Chapman, D.D. (2020). [DNA Zip-coding: identifying the source populations supplying the international trade of a critically endangered coastal shark](#). Animal Conservation 23(6), pp 670 - 678.

Shea, S.K.H., and To, A.W.L. (2018). [Ocean fifteen: new records of reef fish species in Hong Kong](#). Marine Biodiversity Records 11(24).

To, A.W.L., Shea S.K.H., and Conand C. (2018). [Trade patterns of beche-de-mer at the global hub for trade and consumption – an update for Hong Kong](#). SPC Beche-de-mer Information Bulletin 38.

Fields, A.T., Fischer, G.A., Shea, S.K.H., Zhang, H., Abercrombie, D.L., Feldheim, K.A., Babcock, E.A., and Chapman, D.D. (2018). [Species composition of the international shark fin trade assessed through a retail-market survey in Hong Kong](#). Conservation Biology 32(2): 376-389.

To, A.W.L., and Shea, S.K.H. (2018). [Field guide to indicator fishes of Hong Kong Reef Check](#). Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department: Hong Kong.

To, A.W.L., and Shea, S.K.H. (2017). [Field guide to common reef fishes of Hong Kong](#). Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department: Hong Kong.

To, A.W.L., and Shea, S.K.H. (2016). [New records of four reef fish species for Hong Kong](#). Marine Biodiversity Records 9(82).

Conand, C., Shea, S.K.H., To, A.W.L. (2014). [Beche-de-mer trade statistics for Hong Kong in 2012](#). SPC Beche-de-mer Information Bulletin #34.

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.



# THE HONG KONG TEAM



**Stan Shea**  
Marine Programme Director

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. To date his seminars have reached over 10,000 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.



**Kathleen Ho**  
Marine Programme Manager

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, engaging the younger audiences for information sharing seminars and communications.

## FUNDS AND DONATIONS

BLOOM HK is grateful for everyone who supported our work this year. In alphabetical order:

ADM Capital Foundation, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Florida International University, International Fund for Animal Welfare, NGC Network Asia LLC, Swire Group Charitable Trust, The Pew Charitable Trust, Shark Conservation Fund of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, other one-off donations and donors who wish to remain anonymous.

## CONTACT

Ms. Kathleen Ho: [kathleenho@bloomassociation.org](mailto:kathleenho@bloomassociation.org)  
Visit our website: [www.bloomassociation.org/en/bloom-hong-kong](http://www.bloomassociation.org/en/bloom-hong-kong)

This report was prepared by Kathleen Ho, BLOOM HK  
All photos in this report are provided by BLOOM HK unless credited otherwise.

