



Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong University Sponsorship Programme 2006-07

Backgrounder

- Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong (OPCFHK) enables university students to contribute to the conservation of endangered animals by working “in the field” on OPCFHK-sponsored research projects across Asia.
- Organised by the OPCFHK, the Programme is a joint-effort between OPCFHK, The University of Hong Kong (HKU) Department of Ecology and Biodiversity, and the School of Science of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST). Selected students have the chance to work with world-leading scientists on conservation field-research projects.
- A total of twelve students participated in this year’s six different scientific research projects sponsored by OPCFHK.
 - Students from The University of Hong Kong include: Tang Wing Kai, Stephen Cartwright, Leung Ngo Hei, Fu Wing Kan, Sung Yik Hey and Lai Nga Yee.
 - Students from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology include: Li Hoi Ting, Wong Lai In, Chiang Yan Ting, Tsui Pui Yi, Wu Wai Keung and Zhang Luduo.
- There are growing opportunities for conservation-related jobs in Hong Kong and China, however, the industry is experiencing a shortage of talent and more young professionals are needed.
- OPCFHK aims to encourage more students to consider a career in conservation by giving them a chance to experience real-life conservation work. OPCFHK believes that gaining first-hand experience working alongside professional conservationists can be an important source of inspiration for students to pursue conservation professionally.

2006-07 Projects:

Project #1	Giant panda monitoring at Wang Lang National Nature Reserve, Sichuan
Date	27 January to 9 February 2007
Location	Wang Lang National Nature Reserve, Sichuan, China
Principal Investigator	Sichuan Forestry Department
Students	Sung Yik Hey (HKU); Wu Wai Keung, Ronald (HKUST)
Description	Monitor the distribution, quantity and activities of giant pandas in the Wang Lang National Nature Reserve
Outcome	Data collected at Wang Lang can be used by other National Nature Reserves as a reference, and for development purposes

Project #2	Determining the critical habitat, abundance, distribution and conservation of Small Cetaceans (Dolphins and Porpoises)
Date	14 to 29 January 2007
Location	Karachi coast and creeks, Pakistan
Principal Investigator	Dr. Ejaz Ahmad
Students	Lai Nga Yee (HKU); Zhang Luduo (HKUST)
Description	Monitor the abundance, distribution and conservation of Small Cetaceans (Dolphins and Porpoises) in the area
Outcome	Insight and research gathered will help increase the level of understanding on the animals and their habitat, and can be used in the formation of future conservation plans

Project #3	Baiji (Yangtze River dolphin) and Finless Porpoise – Population Monitoring
Date	21 to 30 January 2007
Location	Poyang Lake, Jiangxi, China
Principal Investigator	Dr Wang Kexiong, Institute of Hydrobiology, the Chinese Academy of Sciences
Students	Fu Wing Kan, Vivian (HKU); Tsui Pui Yi, Apple (HKUST)
Description	Monitor the daily movements of finless porpoise and baiji
Outcome	Findings will be used in the design, establishment and management of reserves in the area that are needed to help save the animals from extinction

Project #4	Chinese White Dolphin (Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin) – Population Monitoring
Date	22 January to 4 February 2007
Location	Leizhou Bay
Principal Investigator	Professor Zhou Kaiya, College of Life Science, Nanjing Normal University
Students	Tang Wing Kai, Ricky (HKU); Li Hoi Ting, Kathy (HKUST)
Description	Studying the endangered Chinese White Dolphin to understand how their population is being threatened by humans
Outcome	Findings will be used to help develop proper conservation measures to protect the Chinese White Dolphin in the area

Project #5	Marine mammals & marine turtles by-catch reduction awareness, habitat restoration and nature tourism programme
Date	15 February to 1 March 2007
Location	Sri Lanka
Principal Investigator	Mr. K.A.D.T.J. Kapurusinghe
Students	Leung Ngo Hei, June (HKU); Chiang Yan Ting (HKUST)
Description	To monitor the number of marine turtles and to improve & conserve the quality of marine mammal & turtle habitats in Sri Lanka.
Outcome	The collected data and analysis will be used to develop messages to promote by-catch reduction and develop nature tourism programmes

Project #6	Assessment of Dugong Population and its Habitat
Date	5 to 16 April 2007
Location	The Central Philippines
Principal Investigator	Dr. Hilconida P. Calumpong
Students	Stephen Cartwright (HKU); Wong Lai In, June (HKUST)
Description	Monitor the population and the habitats of Dugong in the Central Philippines
Outcome	The research will help develop conservation measures and improve the overall condition of the Dugong's natural habitats

- The research projects listed above are funded by OPCFHK.
- While primarily funded by Ocean Park, OPCFHK is also reliant on support from caring corporations and donors in order to run the University sponsorship program and to make a real difference in the conservation efforts throughout Asia.

Testimonials by University Sponsorship Programme Student Participants

Sung Yik Hey & Wu Wai Keung, Ronald

(Giant panda monitoring at Wang Lang National Nature Reserve, Sichuan)

We think that Wang Lang is one of the pioneers running ecotourism in China. The successful ecotourism benefited the Bai Ma Cang minority, while the exploitation of wildlife reserve from hunting of animals and collecting of wild plants was substantially reduced. Wang Lang can set an example that other nature reserve to follow so as to achieve sustainable ecotourism.

Leung Ngo Hei, June & Chiang Yan Ting

(Marine mammals & marine turtles by-catch reduction awareness, habitat restoration and nature tourism programme in Sri Lanka)

The trip was an eye-opener to us; not just in terms of marine turtles and their conservation, but also in cultural terms. We learnt facts about the turtles and had hands-on experience with these animals. We did a variety of works that were directly and indirectly important to the survival of the sea turtles and we had valuable chances of meeting Sri Lankans; it was so meaningful and unforgettable.

All students recorded and shared their experiences via blogs and videos posted on <http://blog.opcf.org.hk/usp0607.html>.