

## **ASSIGNMENT 12: MY PORTFOLIO**

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND RESPONSIBILITY - GGH3708  
UNIQUE ASSIGNMENT NUMBER 898238  
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DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA)

### **Introduction**

After doing much research into possibly improving the environmental impact of my building (The Coronation in Kowloon, Hong Kong), I found that they already have everything under control. From recycling points everywhere, energy efficient lightbulbs/motion sensors, switching the shuttle minibus off in between trips, promoting earth hour and to leaving all the elevator's doors open on the ground floor when not in use (as to use the lobby air conditioning instead of their own) in summer, I had nothing to improve in this regard. The Coronation even won an award in 2016, The Hong Kong Award for Environmental Excellence (Moni Tong<sup>1</sup>, 2017). I therefore decided to look at my immediate surroundings outside of my building and found that the rate of consumption of seafood as food and for medical purposes, the keeping of exotic animals as pets and entertainment by individuals, bars and restaurants as well as the possible consumption of endangered species was a problem and not sustainable. The sheer amount of individual animals in one place/massive jars/other containers is astonishing to see. According to the Racing Extinction Documentary (2015), the wildlife trade is second only to the drug trade. Hong Kong and China forms a big part of this since there are millions of people that consume various parts of animals and wildlife here. It is certainly a very diverse animal based culinary and medicinal nation. Import values for shark fins in 2015 for example were 19625kg vs 24130kg in 2016 from five-endangered species and the import volumes in Hong Kong are currently the highest in the world in Hong Kong (Mok, 2017).

### **Part I: My Aim**

My aim is to 1) educate the people in my building on the consumption of endangered species in particular and the over-consumption of animals in general.

2) On daily trips to the fish market/traditional Chinese pharmacies, I would like to make sure there are no endangered species being sold and if I should come across any, I would like to report them to the appropriate authorities. 3) Other aims include reporting bars/restaurants/individuals that house exotic animals as pets or for entertainment value that are not within legal parameters. Please see plan implementation & proof 1), 2) & 3) below.

## My Activities

So what can you find in Hong Kong at a local traditional Chinese pharmacy, some supermarkets, restaurants and fish markets? Most of the items are barely recognizable since they have been dried but here are a few examples: Dried mature and baby shark fins, abalone, snakes, jars of seahorses, scallops, flying lizards, starfish, deer tails/penis, caterpillars, sea cucumbers, horns & antlers, live frogs, live sharks, live giant crabs and other fish. Dried bird's nests are also found in traditional Chinese pharmacies. If you name it, it can be found in Hong Kong or just across the border in China! However, not all the medicine and food is this exotic. Green/herbal teas, tree bark, plant roots, dried orange peel and mushrooms are also used as well as acupuncture, massage and certain exercises as an alternative to dietary treatment. In fact the most common elements used are plant elements & extracts (Wikipedia, 2017<sup>1</sup>).

I realized that before I can educate others I must educate myself. I have conducted an interview with Dr C. Spearman, a traditional Chinese medicine (*TCM*) doctor from Macau (Special Administrative Region of China) to try and understand the medicinal practice a little bit better as well as established the functions of various animal parts and the beliefs surrounding them in *TCM*. Here are some key points from our discussion: *TCM* in a nut shell is all about the yin yang (dark/bright) and finding balance in the body. She also mentioned that what you put into your body is what you get out in the end. I must say I do agree with this particular statement. Wikipedia<sup>3</sup> has the following to say about *TCM*: Energy circulates through channels (meridians) and are connected to bodily organs and functions. *TCM* is not based on scientific knowledge but is about 2500 years old.

Another interesting fact from my conversation with Dr Spearman was that Rhino horn is not prescribed in Hong Kong and is an illegal trade. You might however be able to purchase it online and according to her it is used for stroke, heart disease and status. What was also mentioned was that anything taken from the sea is good for your kidneys and anything with its back facing the sky can be ingested. This includes a rather broad scope of animals. Python wine anyone? Lastly, as some species like certain smoother sea horses are becoming less abundant, the less palatable or spiny sea horses are increasingly being made into tablets for easier ingestion (Dr C. Spearman<sup>2</sup>, 2017) (Wikipedia, 2017<sup>4</sup>). I am sure this is not the only reason for pills becoming more popular in *TCM* as it is much more convenient in general.

So what are the above mentioned animals and animal parts used for? Here is a rundown of a selected few:

- 🦈 Shark fins (Fig. 1) – used for legal, traditional shark fin soup. They promote good health and is a celebratory/status meal (Dr C. Spearman<sup>2</sup>, 2017). Apparently shark fin soup is tasteless. *'It tastes like rice or noodle water and the texture is like melted plastic'*. *'I would not eat it every day even if it was offered to me'* (Ng Hoi Tat<sup>3</sup>, 2017).
- 🦈 Seahorses (Fig. 2) are steeped in herbal tea and can be used for asthma, impotence, wheezing, nocturnal enuresis, pain, labour induction and various other ailments (Wikipedia, 2017<sup>4</sup>).
- 🦈 Starfish are used as food (Wikipedia, 2017<sup>5</sup>), for the kidneys and for people with mental illness (Dr C. Spearman<sup>2</sup>, 2017). Crabs are used as food, with frogs being stir-fried or used in spicy soup (Dr C. Spearman<sup>2</sup>, 2017).
- 🦈 Apparently because minted gold from Japan has a similar shape to Abalone (Fig. 3), it is used as food. It is also used as a celebratory food (Dr C. Spearman<sup>2</sup>, 2017). Cans of abalone are on display during Chinese New Year and are bought to the front of the shop with other high valued food and drinks. None of the cans I have inspected says where the abalone comes from. We thus do not know if these abalone are endangered or not.
- 🦈 Snake oil may be used for joint pain (Wikipedia, 2017<sup>1</sup>) and snake blood is considered an aphrodisiac, whilst the meat is good for vision and the lower spine (Tomlinson, 2015).
- 🦈 Bird nests (Fig. 4) are dyed white and bought by some Asian women who believe they give brighter and younger looking skin (Dr C. Spearman<sup>2</sup>, 2017). They are steamed with milk and sugar and can be eaten or drunk and this is not an illegal practise (Dr C. Spearman<sup>2</sup>, 2017). Dr Spearman does not believe that this practise works herself. In general I find that women in Hong Kong are obsessed with ageing and will eat anything that contains collagen.
- 🦈 Sea cucumbers (Fig. 5) may be used for food (tasteless) or in medicinal use for male sexual health, arthritis and tendonitis (Wikipedia, 2017<sup>2</sup>). Whilst in Thailand recently, our dive instructor (Tim<sup>4</sup>, 2017) was telling us how some of his students will pick up sea cucumbers during their lessons and try and take them home. He also mentioned that sea horses used to be abundant about 13 years ago on the reefs he goes to every day but now he never sees them anymore.
- 🦈 Flying lizards (Fig. 6) are supposed to strengthen the immune system and may be soaked in water or wine (Brown, 2006).
- 🦈 Deer tails (Fig. 7) promote growth and strengthens physical power (Dr C. Spearman<sup>2</sup>, 2017).

🦎 Dried scallops (Fig. 8) can be used when you are sick to make a seafood broth and serves as a good food for increasing the body's energy levels and for the kidneys (Dr C. Spearman<sup>2</sup>, 2017).



Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

FIGURE 1: Dried shark fins, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 2: Dried seahorses, (A. Hanley, 2017).

FIGURE 3: Canned abalone in supermarket, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 4: Bird nests, (A. Hanley, 2017).



Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

FIGURE 5: Sea cucumbers, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 6: Dried flying lizards on sticks, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 7: Deer tail, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 8: Dried scallops, (A. Hanley, 2017).

Dr Spearman mentioned python, bear and alligator meat are also being used in *TCM*. According to her, pythons (not sure which part) can help with bladder problems and some people in Vietnam make wine with them. Tiger penis, bear testicles and penis (aphrodisiacs), bear paws, bear gallbladders and tiger bones are also used (Tomlinson, 2015). Crocodile jaws are sold, whilst live crocodile parts may be removed from animals while they lie in a pool of blood. It is believed that crocodile meat helps with lung disease and memory problems (Tomlinson, 2015). Dr Spearman firmly believes that crocodile meat can help with asthma but this has not been proven scientifically. Crocodile meat however has been found by Western medicine to be low in fat and cholesterol and high in protein and in general a healthier meat to consume (Men's Health Magazine, 2013).

Rising incomes in China have seen more people able to afford exotic and rare 'delicacies' (Tomlinson, 2015). In some cases, the more endangered a species is, the more willing people are to pay for it and the greater healing effect it will have (Tomlinson, 2015).

In general I think that beliefs are changing slowly and that the younger generations are starting to see that the over consumption of animals, and particularly endangered animals, is not the way forward. I am concerned however that change may come too late for certain species.

Another problem is that once one species have become extinct or in some cases become inaccessible, they are simply replaced by another type of animal even though there is no relevance of this new animal to the 'ailment' it is supposed to cure (Racing Extinction, 2015). This is a scheme to mislead people in order to make more money.

Here, however, are some positive actions that have been taken by authorities recently:

- ✦ China Southern Airlines (China's biggest airline) has banned shark fin shipments (Lee, 2017) along with Cathay Pacific & Dragonair, Singapore Airlines and Hong Kong Express (Lee, 2016).
- ✦ China will shut down its domestic ivory trade by the end of 2017 and Hong Kong has pledged to the same by 2021 (Actman, 2016).
- ✦ From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, the produce, sale or purchase of state-protected wild animals and derived products for food could face criminal penalties as China toughens laws on consumption of endangered species (Eleftheriou-Smith, 2016).

According to Shuping Ho<sup>5</sup>, a Welfare Research & Developmental Officer at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (*SPCA HK*), the legal protection in Hong Kong, in terms of cruelty to animals is minimal. She also reported that the following types of wildlife in Hong Kong are important: 1) Native wildlife - most of them are not permitted to be kept (Hong Kong, 1976) and these include bats, primates and the Chinese pangolin for example. 2) Imported wildlife falls into two categories: Endangered wildlife (falls under *CITES* – the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora listing and may include tortoises and parrots for example) and Exotic animals that are not endangered (e.g. bearded dragons and hedgehogs). Possession of these exotic animals is not an offence, just the import/export of them without the relevant certificates. Furthermore she mentioned that certain legislation applies to different groups of animals. For example Cap. 169: To prohibit and punish cruelty to animals (Hong Kong, 1935), applies to all animals. Cap. 139B: Public health (animals and birds) (trading and breeding) regulations, (Hong Kong, 1973), does not include amphibians or fish. Thus you do not need a license to sell fish or amphibians including sharks (unless regulated under *CITES* where permits, licenses and other paper work need to be applied for).

Another problem, in addition to the issues mentioned above, that supplement the demise of certain species, is the introduction of non-native species into an unprepared environment.

This might be done unknowingly/knowingly and a shining example is the brown tree snake in Guam. Guam was free of brown tree snakes a half-century ago and now has about a million of them (Adelson, Engell, Ranalli & Van Anglen, 2008).

With no natural predators and the remaining birds (many endangered) on the island being evolutionarily unprepared for their new guests, they have a serious alien invasion on their hands (Adelson, Engell, Ranalli & Van Anglen, 2008). In some cases the damage done may and can be irreversible.

It is also important to keep in mind that the biggest contributor to the decline of species in general is the loss and degradation of habitat due to human activities and not necessarily overexploitation. Species overexploitation comes in as the second largest contributor (World Wide Fund for Nature, 2016). The combination of overexploitation, habitat destruction and possibly the introduction of a non-native species under the correct conditions however could spell disaster. A good example of overexploitation and habitat destruction combined is the African elephant driven to near extinction in the 1980's (Adelson, Engell, Ranalli & Van Anglen, 2008).

### Implementation and Proof

- 1) I have been distributing flyers in all the mail-boxes around The Coronation (150 in total) and I have the contents presented below as proof of my actions as well as a picture showing me distributing them into various mailboxes (Fig. 9-13). I have chosen four animals that are threatened/endangered and being overconsumed. With the exception of Rhino horn, I see the following animals/animal parts being consumed/sold every day at various markets and shops so hence my choices: Sharks (shark fin), Sea horses, Rhino's (rhino horn) and Elephants (tusks for ivory). I have listed my references at the end of this document for all four information pamphlets as well as on the pamphlets themselves (Cave, 2015; Fowlds, 2012; Greenpeace *HK*, 2016; Larson, 2010; Racing Extinction, 2015; Save our seahorses, 2011; Seastewards, n.d.; Wikipedia<sup>4+6+7</sup>, 2017). Due to the cost of printing, I have printed 150 pamphlets (300 HK\$) per animal (two back to front) and was therefore unable to distribute to ALL residents at The Coronation.



Fig. 9 (a)

Fig. 9 (b)

Fig. 9 (c)

FIGURE 9 (a), (b) & (c): Me distributing flyers around The Coronation, (N. Hanley, 2017).

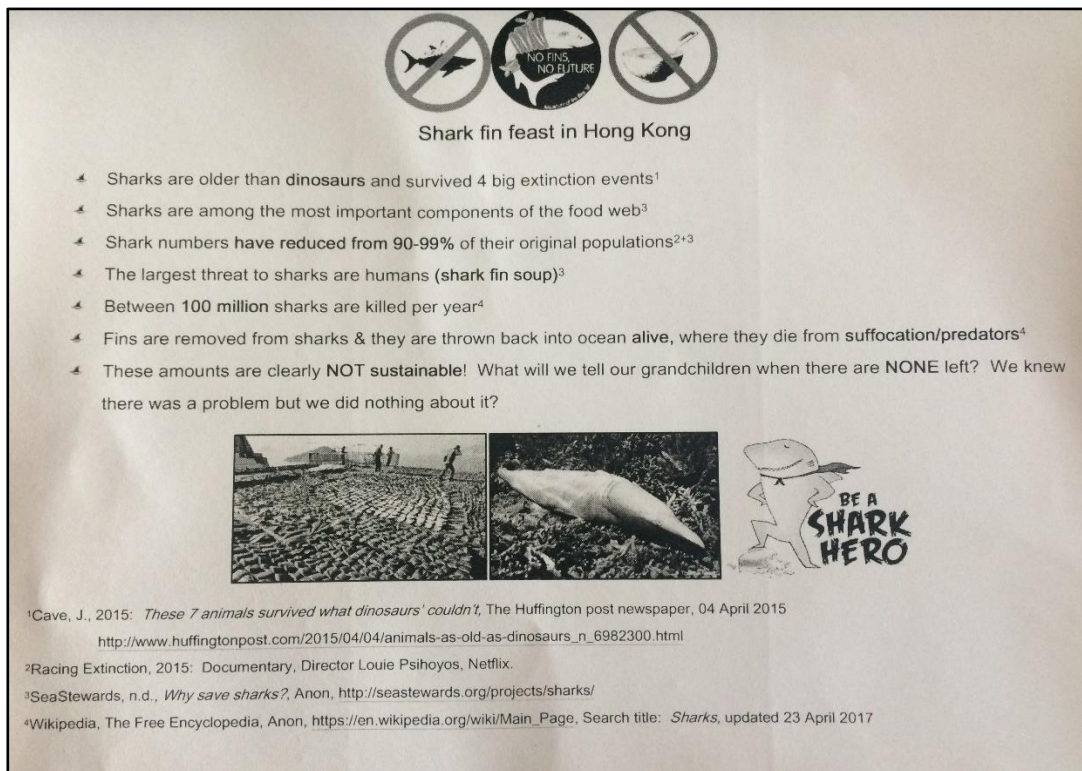


Fig. 10

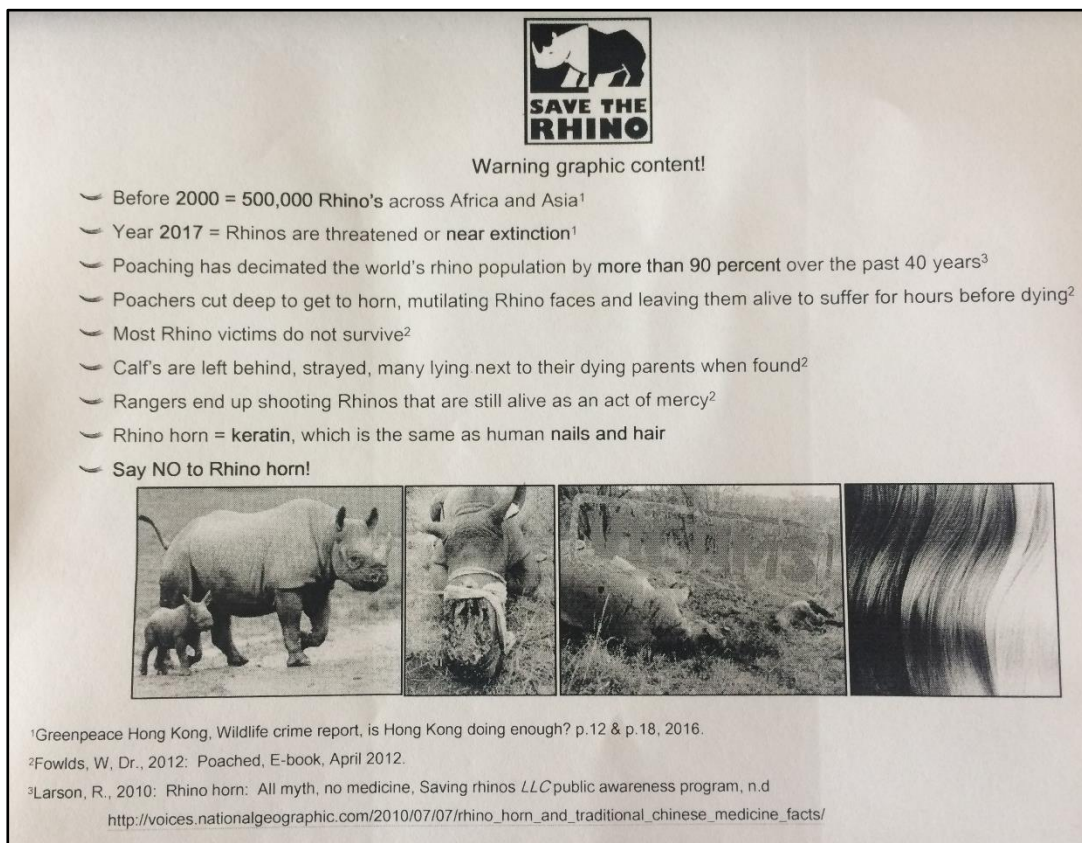
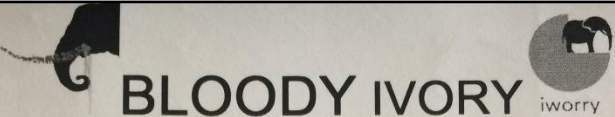


Fig. 11

FIGURE 10 & 11: My shark and rhino information pamphlets (A. Hanley, 2017).




# BLOODY IVORY iworry

Warning graphic content!


- ☞ In 1979, Africa = minimum 1.3 million elephants<sup>2</sup>
- ☞ In 2012 = 440,000 African elephants remain<sup>2</sup>
- ☞ Hong Kong is the third-largest port for illegal ivory seizures in the region (approximately 33 tonnes over past decade with less than 10% of illegal trade being intercepted globally)<sup>1</sup>
- ☞ Globally 170 tonnes ivory/229,279 elephants between 2009 & 2014 have been trafficked<sup>1</sup>
- ☞ One elephant is poached every 15 minutes<sup>1</sup>

IF THERE IS NO DEMAND FROM CONSUMERS, THERE WILL BE NO POACHING!  
THE CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU!!!



<sup>1</sup>Greenpeace Hong Kong, Wildlife crime report, is Hong Kong doing enough? p.12 & p.18, 2016.  
<sup>2</sup>Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, Anon, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page), Search title: Elephant, updated 30 April 2017

Fig. 12



## SAVE THE SEAHORSE!

Our generation does not own the oceans!!!

- £ Seahorse populations are thought to be **endangered** with some species vulnerable to **extinction** as a result of **overfishing**, habitat destruction & pollution<sup>2</sup>
- £ Seahorses mate for life and the male bears the unborn young<sup>1</sup>
- £ An excess of **150 million seahorses** are taken from the wild per year & used for medicine<sup>1</sup>
- £ Seahorse fisheries have reported a minimum decline of 50 per cent<sup>1</sup>
- £ They may become **extinct within 20-30 years**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Save our seahorses, 2011: *The Seahorse Dilemma*, 2011 <http://www.saveourseahorses.org/the-seahorse-dilemma.php>  
<sup>2</sup>Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, Anon [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page), Search title: *Seahorse*, updated 15 March 2017

Fig. 13

FIGURE 12 & 13: My elephant and seahorse information pamphlets (A. Hanley, 2017).



2) On various trips to the Yau Ma Tei fish market, I have taken the following pictures.  
The following fish are not classified as endangered (Fig. 14-17) (*CITES*, 1973).



Fig. 14

Fig. 15

Fig. 16

Fig. 17

FIGURE 14: Japanese spider crab, (concern over their numbers) (Wikipedia<sup>8</sup>, 2017) (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 15: Red snappers, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 16: Permits, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 17: Indonesian ocellated flounders, (A. Hanley, 2017).

The following fish however looked suspicious (Fig. 18 & 19):



Fig. 18

Fig. 19

FIGURE 18: Suspect European eel, critically endangered (International Union for Conservation of Nature<sup>1</sup>, n.d.) and listed in Appendix II, *CITES*, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 19: Suspect black abalone, critically endangered (International Union for Conservation of Nature<sup>2</sup>, n.d.), (A. Hanley, 2017).

I emailed The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (*AFCD*<sup>6</sup>), to inform them about my suspicions (Fig. 20). I am awaiting their response regarding this matter.

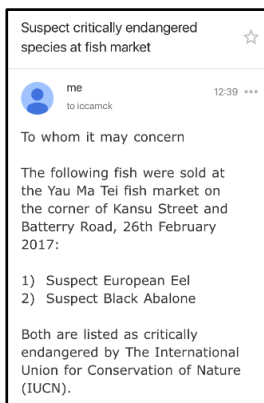


FIGURE 20: My email to the AFCD regarding the critically endangered animals, (A. Hanley, 2017).

3) I have reported the following bar to authorities (Fig. 21): The Beach Club Café, since they kept three black tip reef sharks in a tank above their bar (Fig. 22 & 23). The second time I went there, there were only one in the tank and I subsequently asked the barman what happened to the other two. He said (unfortunately could not get his name) that someone fed the missing two peanuts and they died. I suspected an act of animal cruelty and also thought that perhaps the tank was too small for them. I reported the Beach Club Café to the following authorities and I wrote a letter to the assistant manager of the bar (Fig. 24) and the results were as follows:



Fig. 21

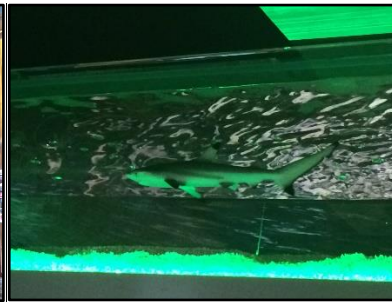


Fig. 22



Fig. 23

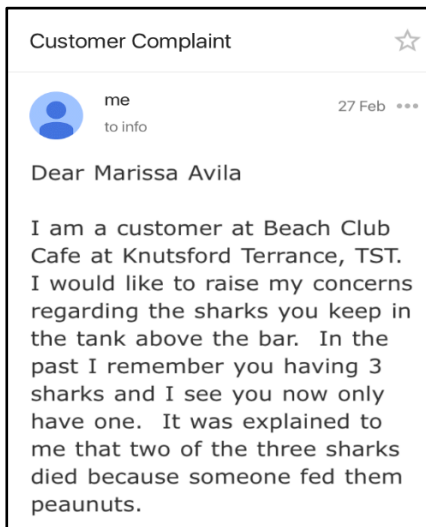


Fig. 24

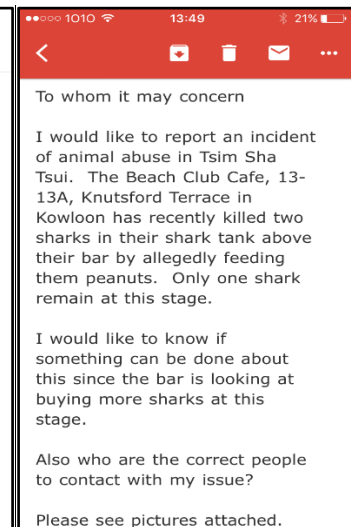


Fig. 25

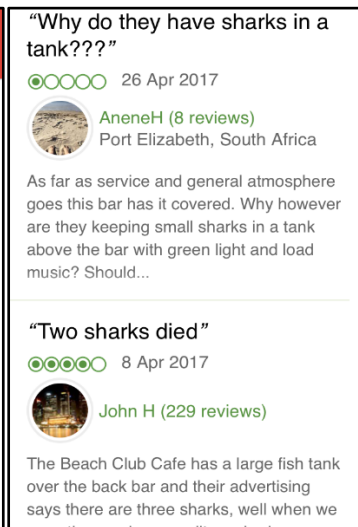


Fig. 26

FIGURE 21: The Beach Club Café in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 22: The shark tank above the bar at Beach Club Café with black tip reef sharks in it, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 23: The relative size on the shark tank above the bar at the Beach Club Café, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 24: My email to Marissa Avila, the assistant manager at the Beach Club Café raising my concerns regarding the sharks, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 25: My email to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Hong Kong, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 26: My review on Tripadvisor for the Beach Club Café, (A. Hanley, 2017).

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD<sup>6</sup>) responded by saying the following: *'Dear Anene Hanley, Referring to your email on 03.03.2017, staff of Kowloon Animal Management Centre inspected your mentioned location, however, no evidence was found as you alleged. Nevertheless, the person in charge of the restaurant was informed about your concerns. To facilitate the collection of evidence, if anyone find any suspected act about cruelty to animals, please contact Police at 999 immediately'*.

I subsequently emailed the department again with photos of the sharks posted on the Beach Club's website as my pictures were not of good quality, to show three sharks in the tank. I also sent a review by a customer in March 2017 which stated that two sharks had died. I am awaiting their response.

Sea Shephard Hong Kong via Facebook was also contacted as well as the SPCA but I have not heard back from them at this stage regarding the sharks except that the SPCA requested an address for the bar from me. The email sent to the Assistant Manager, Marissa Avila at the Beach Club Café <sup>7</sup> (Fig. 24) is yet to receive a response. I basically explained my concerns and requested that they do not purchase more sharks to replace the dead ones (according to the barman when we had our conversation, this is a possibility in the near future). I also wrote a review about the bar on TripAdvisor concentrating purely on the shark issue (Fig. 26). Another good place to contact for assistance would be the Hong Kong Shark Foundation, Suite 2406, 9 Queen's Road, Central, Hong Kong or [info@hksharkfoundation.org](mailto:info@hksharkfoundation.org).

Some further information about laws in Hong Kong that I discovered are as follows: According to the Hong Kong e-legislation website (Hong Kong, 1935), *'any person who—cruelly beats, kicks, ill-treats, over-rides, over-drives, overloads, tortures, infuriates, or terrifies any animal, or causes or procures or, being the owner, permits any animal to be so used, or, by wantonly or unreasonably doing or omitting to do any act, causes any unnecessary suffering or, being the owner, permits any unnecessary suffering to be so caused to any animal; shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$200,000 and to imprisonment for 3 years<sup>8</sup>'*.

However the law also states that-  
*'Nothing in this section shall apply to the commission or omission of any act in the course of the destruction, or the preparation for destruction, of any animal as food for mankind, unless such destruction or such preparation was accompanied by the infliction of unnecessary suffering<sup>8</sup>'*.

According to Shuping Ho, this means given that black tip reef sharks are a non-CITES, non-native species, it is not against the law to possess, display or even eat them, as long as when it was done, no unnecessary suffering was caused.

Unfortunately, the laws in Hong Kong are extremely antiquated and do not adequately protect many animals.

At the end of the day, even if my attempts fail but I have made it harder for the Beach Club Café to keep these animals, I have already achieved a great deal. In my opinion, sharks should be in the ocean, not swimming around like goldfish in a small tank with green lights and loud music for the entertainment of customers.

## **Part II: My Declaration of Environmental Awareness and Responsibility**

I declare that in the past I have completed the following activities and will continue to do these activities to the best of my ability to improve my immediate, and hopefully, distant environment. I take responsibility for the footprint that I leave on this earth. By doing this I know I have done my part so that future generations can enjoy the same privileges I have enjoyed.

- ✿ I use electricity and water sparingly and use energy efficient light bulbs in my home.
- ✿ I recycle plastic, metals, glass, paper including mail, electronics & batteries and food waste (reduced to 99.8% water vapour and some CO<sub>2</sub> and thus landfill waste & CO<sub>2</sub> output is reduced in this way)(Moni Tong<sup>1</sup>, 2017). I recently requested that my bank (HSBC) stop sending me mail via the post and to rather send me emails online in order to reduce my paper trail. To my surprise, I received a letter in the mail saying '*thank you*' for requesting the paperless method. I thought this was quite ironic.
- ✿ I donate the clothes I no longer use. I also try and avoid clothes made from polyester that has a large CO<sub>2</sub> footprint (Brodde, 2017). Hand-me-down clothes I get from a good friend for my baby.
- ✿ I use material 'Real Nappies' (Fig. 27) for my baby half of the time. I also use biodegradable wet wipes (Fig. 28). This reduces my disposable nappy output tremendously as it takes between 200-500 years for disposable nappies to degrade (Kirby, 2001). I also buy second hand toys and kids furniture.
- ✿ I try not to support companies that choose to act unsustainably or sell products that are unsustainable. I do not support the local fish markets and traditional Chinese pharmacies because they sell either live sharks or dried shark fins for example. Some of the methods of shark fin harvesting is not only cruel but the rate at which these animals are being killed is not sustainable (Racing Extinction, 2015).
- ✿ I check the labels of my food purchases and try to make sure the food comes from sustainable resources. I stopped buying Quaker Oats for example because they use palm oil from Indonesia that causes habitat destruction of orangutans in the area (Rahmawati, 2016). I replaced my purchase with Jungle Oats which labels no use of palm oil in their product.

I have also stopped using Johnson & Johnson products and Pepsi for the same reason (Rahmawati, 2016). I plan on ordering products from JustPure for both my baby and I, which provides me with all natural and sustainable ingredients. I recently signed a petition and sent a message on Facebook to HSBC, to request that they stop funding palm oil companies in Indonesia and as it turns out, the petition worked and HSBC has promised to stop their funding.

- ✿ I post issues I am passionate about on Facebook to 'spread the word' and create awareness.
- ✿ I always take re-usable bags when I go shopping so that I don't purchase plastic bags when I leave there.
- ✿ I support and donate to Greenpeace International on a monthly basis.
- ✿ I grow some of my own herbs (Fig. 29) but am unable to grow vegetables because I am limited for space.
- ✿ I use eco-friendly cleaning products (Fig. 30) such as dishwashing liquid and toilet cleaner.
- ✿ I use public transport or I walk where I need to go. I currently do not own a car.
- ✿ I am currently doing a BSc in Genetics and Microbiology and I would like to get involved in bioremediation when I am finished.



Fig. 27

Fig. 28

Fig. 29

Fig. 30

FIGURE 27: Real material nappies, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 28: Biodegradable baby wipes, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 29: Basil grown in my apartment, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 30: Eco-friendly cleaning products, (A. Hanley, 2017).

I have also taken on some new activities after starting this module and I have made the following changes in my life:

- ✿ I have created a Whatsapp group called 'Eco Activists' with 23 participants on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017 (Fig. 31-33) and we have discussed everything from consumption, biodegradable products, global warming, recent news articles relating to the environment, plastic and micro plastics as well as recommended environmental documentaries to watch. This is to create awareness of these important issues.
- ✿ I no longer buy from H&M (clothing store that sells fast fashion) and in general I have cut down on the amount of clothes I buy for my family as well. I commit to the clothes that I do buy on a long-term basis now.

IF my husband needs a clothing item, I will be buying it from Vissla (Vissla.com), who use coconuts and plastic bottles to make clothes (upcycling). I also do not spend money on black Fridays as I believe this promotes consumerism.

- ☺ I requested that friends do not buy anything new for my daughters 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday Party in terms of presents (19<sup>th</sup> April 2017), but instead give unwrapped second hand gifts wherever possible (Fig. 34). I also avoided buying decorations and unnecessary items and used biodegradable paper cups and reusable plates, knives and forks for eating. I plan on doing the same for my Birthday but with a donation to a Rhino fund instead of presents for myself.
- ☺ I only eat beef once a month and I have cut lamb meat out of my diet completely. The emissions from eating cows & lamb and the space needed to keep them contributes a great deal to global warming (Before the Flood, 2016). I eat more organic fruit, vegetables and chicken now.
- ☺ When travelling abroad in future I will book green/eco hotels wherever possible.
- ☺ I participated in Earth Hour for the first time this year and will continue to do so in coming years.
- ☺ I have replaced some of my cleaning products with home-made products. For example, I use a mix of vinegar and baking soda in a spray bottle to clean my shower doors.
- ☺ I am a lot more aware of the packaging I purchase that comes with my food. I am trying very hard to reduce this waste and I have signed petitions but it is difficult when the 'big' companies won't change their behaviour. Buying from the local street markets is another option as they do not wrap their produce as extensively as the supermarkets do. Hong Kong is particularly bad when it comes to packaging because very little is produced/manufactured here and most produce is imported, so hence the extensive packaging regime.
- ☺ I am also more aware when ordering items online. I take into account the 'footprint' such an order might leave and thus only order when absolutely necessary.

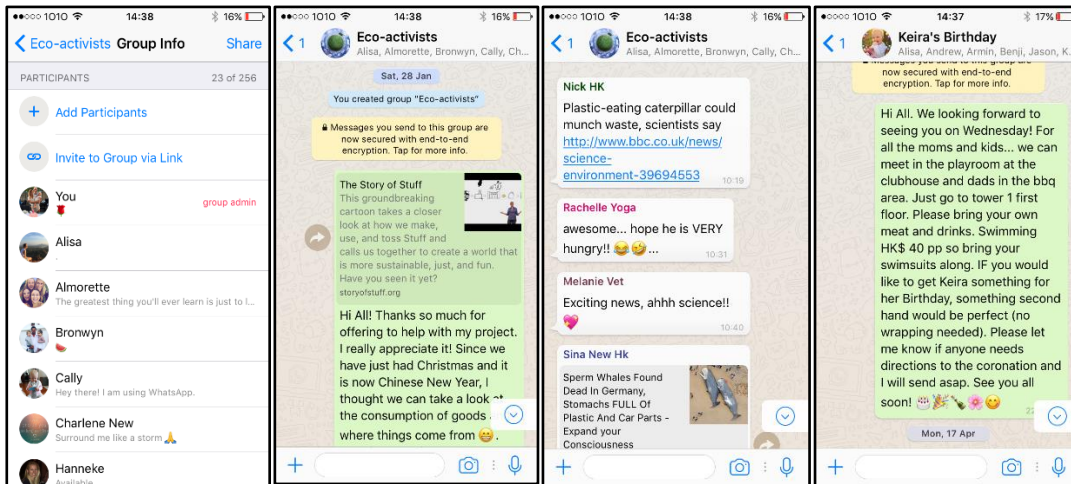


Fig. 31

Fig. 32

Fig. 33

Fig. 34

FIGURE 31: The Eco-activists Whatsapp group I created with 23 participants, (A. Hanley, 2017).  
 FIGURE 32: The first post as well as the date I created the Eco-activists group (A. Hanley, 2017).  
 FIGURE 33: Active participants in the Eco-activists group, (A. Hanley, 2017). FIGURE 34: The message I sent out for my daughter's Birthday to ask for second hand gifts and no wrapping, (A. Hanley, 2017).

## Conclusion

As you can see this module has had a big impact on me and I think the consumerism shock and the 'Story of Stuff' (The Story of Stuff Project, 2007) was particularly interesting because this is something that can be changed with immediate effect.

After my research into endangered species and the laws of the country that relates to them, I am a lot more aware of what is going on around me as well as who to report to when I do see something suspicious at the local fish markets/traditional Chinese pharmacies. This module has made me go the extra mile and I am more confident on reporting illegal/suspicious activities in my vicinity because I am more educated on the subject. I will take this on as an ongoing endeavour and keep my eyes open at all times to see where I can make a difference.

I believe that if I have changed the mind of just one person in my building regarding the consumption of species (endangered/other), through the distribution of my flyers, that I have done a good job. Making a change in one animal's life or making it harder for people to keep animals in tanks/small spaces that are not their natural habitat, might not change things on a large scale but it will certainly affect the quality of life of that one animal in particular. We have to win one battle at a time and continue doing so to make big changes.

Since I have concentrated mainly on China in my text, it should be stated that the Western world is not much better when it comes to the treatment of animals.

One thing I do agree with in the East, is that even though fish are sold alive in supermarkets and gutted and descaled right in front of your eyes once you've decided on which one you would like, at least the death of these animals are not hidden from you like in the Western world. The West gets a nicely packaged fish with no head or tail in our shops as if it was never alive in the first place. If you are not willing to kill these animals/see these animals being killed in front of your very eyes for food, should you be eating them? The convenience of the Western world in my opinion has made us look past the realities of modern day food consumption and what goes on behind the scenes.

Another point worth mentioning is that when searching for endangered species, every authority has a different opinion about their status. It is very frustrating when no conclusive agreement can be reached and some animals are critically endangered on some lists but not others. If we are to succeed, a universal agreement should surely be reached.

It needs to be mentioned that the brown *UNISA* USB flash drive armband (Fig. 35) that students get issued with for this course and made of plastic is unnecessary. I understand that some students may be in need of it, but perhaps *UNISA* can incorporate this into a yes/no, I do or do not need it question, when you register for this and other modules?



FIGURE 35: The *UNISA* USB flash drive, (A. Hanley, 2017).

In closing I would like to say that I do believe people and their beliefs can change but it may take some time. Giving up is not an option. Like the quote from the documentary *Racing Extinction* (2015) describes:

***'It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness'.***

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## NOTES

- 1 Information from electronic mailing (email letter) communications with Moni Tong, Assistant Property Officer, The Coronation Estate, Hong Kong, 14-17 February and 25 April 2017.
- 2 Information from my personal interview with Dr C. Spearman, a traditional Chinese medicine (*TCM*) doctor from Macau (Special Administrative Region of China), 23 February 2017.
- 3 Information from my personal conversation with Ng Hoi Tat (Ives), Concierge at The Coronation Clubhouse, The Coronation Estate, Hong Kong, 24 April 2017.
- 4 Information from my personal conversation with Tim (surname unknown), Dive Instructor, Alvaro Diving, Thailand, 8 April 2017.
- 5 Information from my electronic mailing (email letter) communications with Shuping Ho, Welfare Research & Developmental Officer at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Hong Kong, 18 April 2017.
- 6 Communication via electronic mailing (email letter) with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (*AFCD*), Kowloon Animal Management Centre, Hong Kong, 3 March, 12 April 2017 & 1 May 2017.
- 7 Communication via electronic mailing (email letter) with Marissa Avila, Assistant Manager, Beach Club Café, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong, 27 February 2017.
- 8 No page numbers were provided on this website