

University Sponsorship Programme 2005-06: Student's diary
Project : Chinese White
Dolphin– Population Monitoring
Date : 5 to 15 February 2006
Student: Vivian Lam



5th February, 2006 (Sunday)

Dear Diary,

It has truly been an exciting day. Was quite nervous before setting off, been having problems with my luggage through immigration, the officials kept wanting to check my luggage as I had so many books and pamphlets in my bag. They didn't quite believe me when I told them they're all about dolphins and that we were going to participate in a dolphin research!

Guangxi was just as I remembered through the fog-misted windows of the airplane, miles and miles of different coloured strips of farmland stretched out before us. At the airport, we were met by Qin Lau Shi and Xiao Long (A high school student working on dolphin populations for his research project). We had a 2-hour car ride before arriving at Sanniang Bay but it was all worth it in the end. It is a quaint little fishing village that's right by the seaside, we later learned that it houses 1,700 people.

We will be staying with the Yeung Family for the next few days at Sanniang Bay until the weather decides to give up on us, then we would have to move to the headquarters at Chongzuo where Prof. Pan is. They are great hosts. We have a room to ourselves with 3 beds and an amazing sea view. We had a walk around the village



and beach before dinner with Qin Lao Shi and he told us more about what we were going to do for the next few days. There are many fishing boats around the area and the villagers seem to be living quite well. At dinner, we found out Mr. Yeung made boats for a living and are doing particularly well recent years since the area has been protected. Before, people practiced “frying fish” but since laws have been made, much more fish are found in this area and the fishing industry bloomed. We also got to know a bit more about a fisherman’s life. They had to wake up 2-3am every morning to go fishing but it mostly depends on the season. One of the villagers we interviewed had worked in a fishing boat in HK 10 years ago but came back to work in Sanniang Bay. The best season to fish would be in the summer. A truck would be sent here to collect their catch and take it to places in the country to sell.

The villager also told us about the dolphins he saw around the area. He emphasized mostly about the dolphins being juveniles (black/grey), therefore showing that this might be an important breeding ground for CWD. This could mean a very high juvenile: adult ratio.

Another thing that I noticed was that the villagers are very friendly towards Qin Lao Shi/, as this shows that they are supportive of Professor Pan’s work. They also mentioned that they know the fishing industry in this area is uncontrolled and would most probably damage fish stocks. When asked about dolphin behaviour, they seemed proud to say that they can see them at a very near distance and also in large numbers (~100).

Still got some reading to do as Qin lao shi just gave us an annual report as well as the GPS manual, so I’m going to go work now. The sound of the waves outside (we kept the window open) is lulling me to sleep...

