

SIGHTINGS!

APRIL 2016: Issue 4

Dugong Research

*Find out the latest news
on our Dugong research
and conservation project*

Langkawi Dolphin

Research

*It's back on track with a
new research topic!*

Lil' MareCet Shop

*We've got new
merchandise. Come
check it out.*

Dive for MareCet!

*Fund raising with
volunteers*

Words from the helm...

Wow. Where has the year gone? It has been quite an eventful 2015 involving research, community workshops, governmental consultative meetings, booth events and travels to faraway lands for conferences and study visits. Our research programs continue to grow with some significant progress made for both our Matang Dolphin Research Program and Dugong Research and Conservation Program. New plans are also brewing for the Langkawi Dolphin Research Program. We've even used the experiences gained in managing these programs to assist our colleagues in establishing a similar program in Vietnam!

In between all the fieldwork and data processing, our team has also been busy being out and about organizing and attending events, spreading awareness on the plight of marine mammals and the marine environment, attending numerous meetings and participating in various conferences. Participating in these activities is important to us for it allows us to meet and interact with all of you, our fantastic supporters.



Louisa Ponnampalam, PhD
Chairperson



Fairul Izmil Jamal Hisne
Vice-Chairperson

It is always great for us to be able to meet and share our work with you and in 2015 we definitely had plenty of chances to do just that! From fundraising events, to training workshops, to scientific conferences, we enjoyed being a part of each and every one of them. Read all about our 2015 activities in the coming pages.

Of course, none of our work would have progressed as far as they have without all of your support. We've been privileged to have formal collaborations with various esteemed organizations from around the world, great local businesses, and amazing individuals. Your support means the world to us and we hope to continue our conservation journey together well into 2016 and beyond!

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Ongoing Projects



We would like to welcome Ms Sandra Teoh who will be conducting research on the social structure of Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins in the Langkawi Archipelago and adjacent Kedah mainland coast as part of her doctoral dissertation. We are incredibly honoured to have the collaboration of Dr Dipani Sutaria, a freelance marine mammal scientist from India who specializes in the study of social structure in small cetaceans and Dr Amy Then from University Malaya, a fisheries scientist and statistician. Among the questions we will be asking through this new research topic are, “What is the social structure of the dolphins in the project site?”, “Do animals seen around Langkawi mix with animals seen off the mainland coast?”, “What are the ranging patterns of these dolphins?”, and “How strongly socially associated are individuals within the population?”. Keep an eye out on our Facebook page for volunteer opportunities to join us in the field!

MareCet’s flagship project, the Langkawi Dolphin Research Project (LDR) took a hiatus in 2015 as our team had to focus on the dugong research project and also work on analyzing all our LDR data collected since 2010. While we are still in the midst of writing up our initial LDR work, this year, we will be cranking up our engines again and getting back into the field.



We had a great year in the field thanks to the tremendous generosity of our amazing volunteers and supporters who donated to MareCet after the 2014 capsizing incident, enabling the Matang Dolphin Research team to complete another year of boat and interview surveys. In March, May, July and September 2015, we recorded a total of 150 cetacean sightings over 40 days of boat surveys, giving us a better understanding of the coastal cetacean population in Matang's waters.

We are also thankful to Perak State Forestry Department officers who have been very supportive of our dolphin research work in the Matang mangroves. In July 2015, we had the opportunity to collaborate with them as well as the Larut & Matang District Forestry Office and Paya Laut Kuala Sepetang Small Forestry Office for five days of boat surveys in Matang. They loaned us an outboard boat for the research vessel and three Forestry officers assisted us on the survey as skippers.



On the 30th of June 2015, we encountered the carcass of an Indo-Pacific finless porpoise. It was about 1.09m long and relatively fresh. We buried the carcass and made a report to the Department of Fisheries Malaysia. Carcasses like this are invaluable to researchers in understanding the ecology of cetaceans. With the permission of the Department of Fisheries Malaysia, we were able to sample the stomach contents of humpback dolphin carcass we found in Matang in 2014. What we identified suggest they feed mostly on fishes, particularly sciaenids and marine catfishes as well as squid. It has always been a great pleasure for us to meet wonderful people while working in the field. A big thank you goes to our MDR volunteers in 2015:

An Irrawaddy dolphin neonate (newborn with visible fetal folds) was observed swimming among a pod of Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins. In the past, we have observed Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins and Irrawaddy dolphin feeding in the same area, but this was the first time that we observed such close inter-species interaction. We nicknamed the little one "Sesat" [meaning lost in Malay language].

Sandra, Kayleigh, Cheah Hup, Arvin, Boon Leong, Gwen, Jonathan and Vu Long for their assistance during MDR boat surveys. We are also thankful to our captains: Mr. Lim, Mr. Zul, Mr. Rani, Mr. Zahwari, Mr. Jusry and Mr. Khairul.

Matang Cetacean Survey

We recorded 150 sightings of cetaceans over 40 days of boat surveys in March, May, July and September of 2015





MareCet's dugong and research and conservation project is progressing well after two years of work thus far. In 2015, we conducted three aerial surveys to record the number and distribution of dugongs, sea turtles and other marine megafauna such as sharks and rays. We also conducted a three-week acoustic survey with our collaborator Dr Kotaro Ichikawa from Kyoto University in Japan, the results of which are still under analysis. Dugong 'chirps' were frequently heard during our survey dives, and we were even treated to a sighting of a group of 18 dugongs on the final day of our acoustic survey. The MareCet team also conducted basic seagrass mapping and located what we have termed as the dugong 'cafeteria', a subtidal seagrass meadow near Sibul Island with previously undetected feeding trails. Our aerial surveys are showing a rather consistent pattern of dugong distribution throughout the year, and we are still in the midst of analyzing the effects of tidal state (high tide / low tide) on the distribution pattern of the animals.

Perhaps the "highlight" of last year's dugong surveys was finding dugong fecal matter! Strange as it may sound, us scientists got incredibly excited over...yes...you thought it right.....dugong poop! As dugongs are vegetarians, consuming only seagrass, their fecal matter is very much like that of an elephant's – fibrous and dark green in colour. So what can one do with dugong poop? We will be teaming up with Dr Jillian Ooi, a seagrass scientist from University Malaya to try and determine what species of seagrass the poop is made of. There is also possibility that dugong genetic material may be extracted from the fecal matter. In 2016, we will be shifting our focus towards working up our data to be fed into roundtable discussions on establishing a marine reserve for the dugongs and their seagrass habitats around the Johor east coast islands. We are working with social scientists from Universiti Putra Malaysia to study stakeholders' opinions on the matter, and have already had several meetings with the relevant government authorities who have shown keen interest on establishing the reserve. So we have a lot of work cut out for us, but we are determined to make this dugong and seagrass marine reserve come to fruition (and be a functional one). It will be the first of its kind in Malaysia!

Aerial surveys completed! MareCet team and our pilots from the Royal Selangor Flying Club

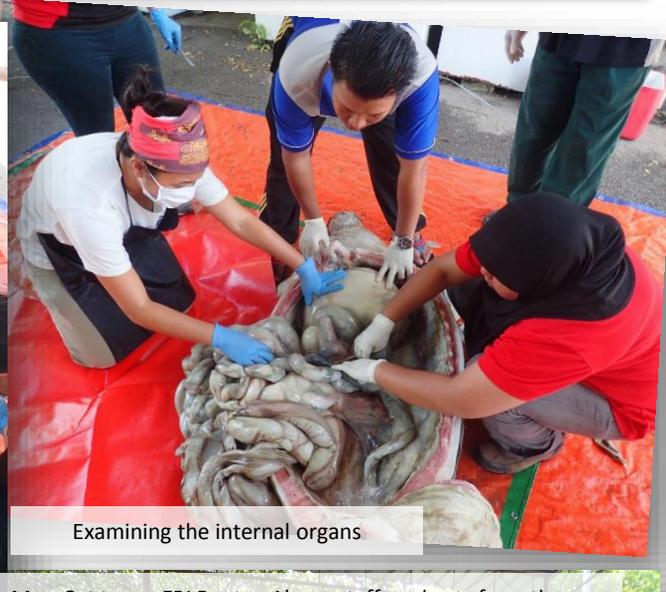


The Dugong acoustic survey team (MareCet, partners from Kyoto University and Reef Check Malaysia, and supporters from the local community)

MareCet investigates the unfortunate death of a dugong

The Johor east coast hosts a small but thriving population of dugongs (*Dugong dugon*). Small because they number less than 100, thriving because they are observed to be reproducing and there appears to be a significant number of calves in the population. On 17 October 2015, we were informed that the Department of Marine Parks Johor had just stumbled upon the carcass of a dead dugong somewhere between Pulau Sibul and Pulau Tinggi. The carcass was brought to the Turtle and Marine Ecosystem Centre (Department of Fisheries Malaysia; DOFM) in Rantau Abang, Terengganu. The MareCet team were subsequently invited by the DOFM to participate in the necropsy of the dugong on 2 November 2015.

After a thorough examination of the carcass alongside veterinarians from the Department of Veterinary Services, we found that the dugong was a young female that had yet to attain sexual maturity. At 150kg and measuring less than 2 m in length, she was probably less than 10 years of age and had never reproduced before. The cause of her death was due to boat strike, as evident from gashes on her face and body typical of propeller strike wounds, as well as a missing half of her face. The MareCet team collected important biological samples that will be analysed for genetics, dietary studies and other histopathological analyses. The death of this dugong is a big blow to the small local population, as it takes approximately 15 years to replace a dugong within a population. Discussions are ongoing between MareCet and the authorities on implementing speed limit zones around the main jetties at Sibul and Tinggi Islands, which are areas where dugongs are observed to frequent.



Blast from the Past - MareCet's 2015

SMM 21st Biennial Conference at San Francisco, USA

In December 2015, MareCet was truly honored to have had the opportunity to participate in the Society of Marine Mammalogy (SMM) 21st Biennial Conference held in San Francisco, USA. The conference was a great experience for the team especially learning about new discoveries, research methods and conservation issues occurring around the world. The team kept busy throughout the conference with Dr. Louisa chairing a session, Vivian presenting a poster on the diet of Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins in Matang, and closing the week with Fairul's presentation on role of conservation tools as business drivers for marine mammal conservation. MareCet had also set up a booth to share our work and experiences with other participants of the conference.

The conference also provided the best opportunity for MareCet to meet with our esteemed colleagues who are doing great work around the world. There were many meetings held during the week, with many ideas discussed and collaborations forged for the future which MareCet is very excited to be involved in.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Faztina Fazaldin for her help in operating the booth throughout the conference. MareCet is especially grateful to SMM for the travel grants, Mr. Duncan Lang, and Environmental Resources Management (M) Sdn. Bhd. for their kindness in providing financial support that allowed us to be a part of this very prestigious event. Thank you also to OPCFHK and SMRU Asia Pacific for the travel and lodging support. SMM is the leading organization relating to marine mammal science with a mission to "promote the global advancement of marine mammal science and contribute to its relevance and impact in education, conservation and management". SMM has been hosting biennial conferences since its establishment in 1981 to gather the brightest minds from around the world to exchange ideas in advancing the field of marine mammal science. To learn more about SMM and their activities, visit their website at www.marinemammalscience.org.



Marine conservation and stranding response workshop with veterinary students

MareCet was privileged to be invited by the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Zoologico Club for the second year running to conduct a 1-day workshop for its members on marine conservation and marine mammal stranding response. The workshop was held in early December 2015 at the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences, UPM. Participants were veterinary students from UPM. This year, we decided to provide a few lectures on basic marine mammal biology, the issue of marine debris, marine conservation, and played a documentary on the severe global problem of overfishing. We also gave brief lectures about marine mammal stranding response, accompanied by a short video on how a stranding event should be handled.

The final part of the workshop was to introduce the participants to the anatomy of dolphin skeletons and a practical session on marine mammal stranding response. Participants had to choose a role to play during the practical, from being the person answering calls on the stranding hotline number, to being “the stranded dolphin”, to being members of the first response team. Needless to say, everyone had very positive things to say about the workshop and went away enriched with new knowledge and skills about marine mammals, marine conservation and marine mammal stranding response. Thank you UPM Zoologico Club for the invitation and we hope that we can make such workshops an annual affair!



MareCet assists with cetacean research in Vietnam

MareCet lent its flipper to the Vietnam Marine Mammal Network (VMMN) last year, when our Chairperson Dr Louisa, and Honorary Secretary Jol Ern were appointed as the Project Advisor and Research Associate respectively for VMMN's research project in Phu Quoc Island, southwest Vietnam. The project titled "Conservation of cetaceans in the Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve" is being funded under a Conservation Leadership Programme grant awarded to VMMN's leader Mr Vu Long. We are honoured to be a part of an important conservation-based research project on cetaceans in a country where data on cetacean distribution and ecology remains scarce though the pressures on the environment due to human activities are rapidly increasing.

Ocean Awareness Outreach 2015 @ USM

MareCet was invited to the Ocean Awareness Outreach (OAO) 2015 event at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang for the third consecutive year on the 9th and 10th of May. MareCet set up an exhibition booth to share knowledge about marine mammals in Malaysia and spread awareness on marine conservation among the university students. There was also a charity run with the theme "Make A Splash" where participants can run and fundraise for their choice of NGOs, including MareCet. MareCet was also interviewed at the event by Guang Ming Daily, a local Chinese press, to share insights on our dolphin research projects in Langkawi and Matang and threats faced by marine mammals in our Malaysian waters (article link: <http://www.guangming.com.my/node/256406?tid=9>).

Art for Grabs 2015

MareCet participated in the Art for Grabs event second year in a row, this time at The School @ Jaya One, Petaling Jaya. Art for Grabs is a locally organized bazaar that provides local artists and craftmakers to showcase and sell their products. It was a fantastic way to meet new people, talk about our work and sell our handmade merchandise to raise funds for conservation! We are always on the lookout to participate in fun and relevant art bazaars or flea market events. If you know of any and think we should know about it, do let us know by e-mailing to ask.marecet@gmail.com.

MareCet being interviewed by Guang Ming Daily



Booth exhibition



World Ocean Week 2015

In conjunction with World's Ocean Day, MareCet was invited by the National Oceanographic Directorate to participate in their World Ocean Week 2015 (WOW'15) event themed "Healthy Ocean, Healthy Planet" on the 13th and 14th of June at National Planetarium, Kuala Lumpur.



Kids participating in a colouring activity



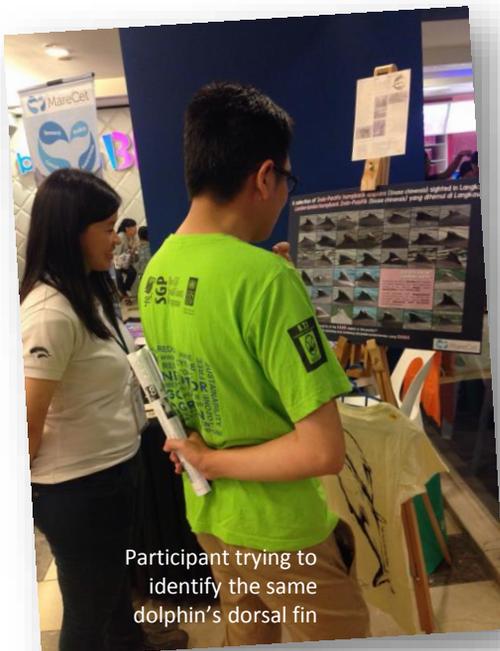
Dolphin vs Trawler – an educational game for kids

MareCet managed to reach out to the public to promote marine conservation and share knowledge about marine mammals through our booth exhibition and interactive booth games.

Kuala Lumpur Eco Film Festival 2015

It was MareCet's second time participating in the 8th International Kuala Lumpur Eco Film Festival (KLEFF) 2015, one of the biggest annual film festivals in Malaysia, on October 17 and 18 at Publika. KLEFF empowers people to learn and engage in environmental issues through screening of environmental films, green performance and exhibitions by

environmental NGOs and green vendors. It was a pleasure for MareCet to be a part of the event to reach out to the public and engage with the crowd to promote marine and environmental conservation. MareCet was grateful to be invited to the event and would like to thank Tanamera Tropical Spa Products for sponsoring our booth.



Participant trying to identify the same dolphin's dorsal fin



MareCet merchandise on sale

GEF Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project Inception Workshop at Colombo, Sri Lanka

MareCet participated in the Project Inception workshop which was held in Colombo from 20 – 21

October 2015 with participation from all Project Partners, UNEP/ GEF and UNEP/ CMS representatives, and various experts in dugong and seagrass research.

MareCet is part of the Malaysian delegation and is responsible for the delivery of scientific outputs for the dugong and seagrass research component of the Malaysian project based in Johor, Malaysia.

The Project Inception workshop was organized by the Project executing agency, the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund based out of Abu Dhabi, and was attended by representatives of the Project Partners from the eight dugong range state countries of Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mozambique, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste and Vanuatu. The Workshop helped the Project Partners to meet each other and understand the scope of this initiative. Through the workshop, we realized how our actions are part of a larger collective and how great (or how poor) the outcomes of our projects will ultimately impact the dugongs and the seagrass habitats elsewhere in the world. MareCet is fully committed to the goals of this initiative and will definitely play our part to make the Project goals a reality in the near future.



Fairul with GEF Project coordination team, Maya Todorova & Dr Donna Kwan



This Project is executed by The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, with financing from the GEF and implementation support by UNEP. The project execution is technically supported by the UNEP CMS Dugong MoU Secretariat

Department of Marine Parks Malaysia Research Seminar 2015

MareCet was invited to the Department of Marine Parks Malaysia (DMPM) Research Seminar 2015 at EDC-UUM Hotel, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah on the 16th and 17th of December. MareCet team member, Jol Ern, gave a presentation sharing the preliminary results of MareCet's work on dugong ecology and conservation in the Johor East Coast Archipelago and the importance of the protection of dugongs and their seagrass habitat in the area. MareCet would like to thank the Department of Marine Parks Malaysia for the invitation to share our work with all participants who attended the seminar.



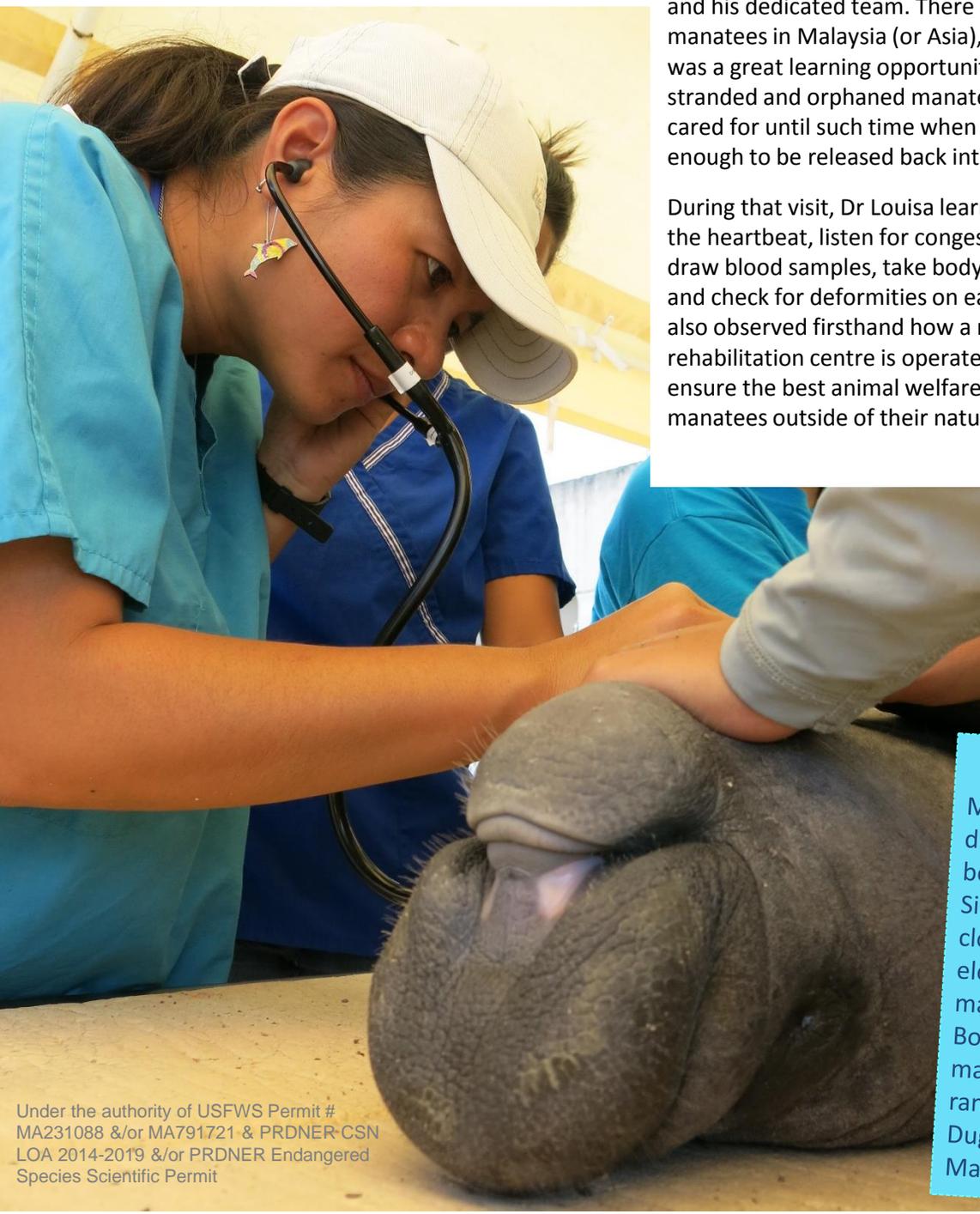
- THE BASICS OF (MULLI)
- Marine mammal grouped in the Order
- Only extant species within the Family
- Breathe air, give birth to live young (e)
- Seagrass community specialist – feeds Cymodocea
- Maximum recorded lifespan is 73 years
- More closely related to elephants than
- Global status is "Vulnerable" (IUCN I Malaysia status is "ENDANGERED")

Fantastic study visit to the Centro de Conservación De Manatíes de Puerto Rico

In October 2015, our Chairperson Dr Louisa had the fantastic opportunity of a 1-day study visit to one of the world's leading manatee research, rescue and rehabilitation centres in the world, the Centro de Conservación De Manatíes de Puerto Rico, located on the campus grounds of the Inter-American University in Bayamón, Puerto Rico.

Although she initially thought she'd only be given a tour of the centre, turns out she ended up participating in the health assessments of three West Indian manatees (*Trichechus manatus*) under the expert tutelage of Dr Antonio Mignucci and his dedicated team. There aren't any manatees in Malaysia (or Asia), however this visit was a great learning opportunity to observe how stranded and orphaned manatees are treated and cared for until such time when they are old enough to be released back into the sea.

During that visit, Dr Louisa learned how to check the heartbeat, listen for congestions in the lungs, draw blood samples, take body measurements and check for deformities on each manatee. She also observed firsthand how a rescue and rehabilitation centre is operated efficiently to ensure the best animal welfare care for the manatees outside of their natural habitat.



FUN FACTS

Manatees and dugongs are related, belonging to the Order Sirenia. Both are more closely related to elephants than other marine mammals. Both dugong and manatee distribution ranges do not overlap. Dugongs are found in Malaysian waters.



Identification and Population Estimation for Marine Mammals

Workshop



Between the 12 and 18 May 2015, Jol Ern and Sandra, members of MareCet, attended the Identification and Population Estimation for Marine Mammals Workshop which was organized by The Marine and Coastal Resources and Development Institute (MCRDI), Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), Thailand, at the Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC). Participants from around the Southeast Asian region - Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei and Hong Kong came together to discuss and share their experience on the different techniques used to identify, survey, estimate populations, analyse data, and other related topics on marine mammal research. MareCet would like to express our gratitude to the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Thailand for the invitation and for sponsoring MareCet's two members.

1 Utama Weekend Exhibition

MareCet had made an appearance at 1 Utama Shopping Centre on June 27 and 28 to raise awareness on marine mammals in Malaysia and promote marine conservation. MareCet was delighted to see that their educational booth game, Dolphin vs Trawler – an interactive game that demonstrates to people the impact of overfishing and destructive fishing methods, was a hit with the crowd, especially kids. MareCet would like to thank 1 Utama for the space sponsorship and support of our work in marine conservation.



Collaborations

MareCet is a firm believer of collaborations with each of us playing our part to achieve our goal for a better planet. To that effect, MareCet is proud to announce our new collaborative agreements with the following organizations:

Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota, Florida, USA.

MareCet is collaborating with eminent scientists Dr. John Reynolds III and Dr. Dana Wetzel from Mote in our Dugong Research and Conservation project to assess contaminant levels present within sediments and seagrasses found within the project area. Mote is providing technical advisory and analyses assistance to the project which will help us to find out if the area is contaminated and the risk of any contaminants present pose to the dugong population.

(For more information on Mote visit: www.mote.org)

University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia

In collaboration with Dr. Christian Jones and his team from the Engage Research Lab (ERL) at the University of Sunshine Coast (USC), MareCet is developing digital awareness platforms which are targeted for release in 2016. The MareCet-ERL collaboration is particularly exciting as it involves some great collaboration happening between our team of ecologists with ERL's team of programmers and animators to help address marine conservation issues!

(For more information on Engage Research Lab visit: www.engageresearch.org/)

University of Nottingham, Malaysian Campus (UNMC), Semenyih, Malaysia

MareCet is collaborating with UNMC in the development of measures to reduce underwater noise impacts to marine mammals, particularly from activities within the oil and gas industry. In this collaboration, MareCet is working with UNMC's engineering faculty to help develop guidelines, procedures, and potentially new technology which can be applied by the industry in Malaysia to reduce their impacts to marine mammals.

(For more information on UNMC Semenyih visit: www.nottingham.edu.my/Engineering/Departments/M3/index.aspx)

EspressoLab Partnership & Launch Event

MareCet welcomes our new conservation partner, EspressoLab Taman Melawati, on 1st August 2015. The partnership was officially unveiled on 8th August 2015 through the launch of the 'Honey Latte' drink at the cafe which is the designated 'Official Partnership Drink'. The partnership sees EspressoLab Taman Melawati contributing RM 3.00 from each sale of the Honey Latte drink to MareCet in support of our work. The campaign is currently only being offered at EspressoLab Taman Melawati. So do head over there to "Drink Coffee, Conserve the Sea!".



Bulletin Board

Good News for all Donors!

MareCet is now officially a tax-exempt non-profit organization as approved by the Malaysian Ministry of Finance since early 2015. This is fantastic news not just for us, but also for any potential donors out there who are interested to make any monetary donations to MareCet! Your donations shall be tax exempt and receipts will be issued bearing our tax-exempted status.

Coming soon! The BLUE Classroom by MareCet

MareCet is taking marine education to a new frontier by introducing The BLUE Classroom this 2016! The BLUE Classroom is a marine-centric education programme meant to provide anyone with an interest to learn about our oceans with an out-of-the-box learning experience. The idea is to move away from typical boring classroom lectures, and instead provide the student with hands-on learning about marine life and environment. We will run 1-day interactive classroom sessions in the Klang Valley area as well as multiple-day outstation programmes that will include both field and classroom components, customized to the interests of participants. We want to bring greater awareness and appreciation of our fragile marine environment through fun learning and unconventional methods of teaching. So stay tuned on our Facebook page for updates on The BLUE Classroom during 2016!

Let's 'Dive for MareCet'!



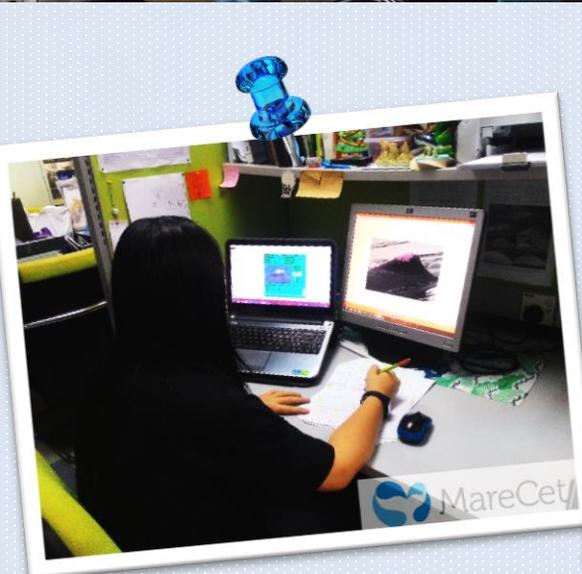
In 2015, Yee Keat, one of our most frequent volunteers initiated his very own 'Dive for MareCet' fundraising programme. Yee Keat is a certified PADI scuba diving instructor and decided to raise funds for MareCet through his instructorship. A small percentage of Yee Keat's dive certification course fees is donated to MareCet and goes toward supporting our research and conservation outreach work. If you're thinking about becoming an open water certified scuba diver and would like to be a MareCet supporter at the same time, then how about signing up as a student with Yee Keat? He can be reached at tanyeekeat@gmail.com. In the meantime, we want to heartily thank Yee Keat for his generosity and for diving for MareCet!



Bulletin Board

Marecet Receives A Donation Of Computers!

Last year, MareCet received a donation of 4 used but refurbished desktop computers from SOLS Tech 24/7 by way of ngohub.asia. We are incredibly grateful for the donation and are using the computers for our data entries, organization and some analyses of dolphin movements in our study sites in Matang and Langkawi. Thank you SOLS Tech and ngohub.asia!



Follow us on Facebook to know more @Langkawi Dolphin Research

DID YOU KNOW?

Releasing **HELIUM BALLOONS** into the air may be fun, but it poses **FATAL threats** to marine wildlife.

The released balloons (made of latex or aluminized plastic) will eventually float back down and mostly end up in the marine environment as **marine debris**.

1,248,892* balloons has been collected worldwide over the past 25 years, constituting **0.75% of the total marine debris items collected**.

Marine wildlife such as whales, dolphins, sea turtles and sea birds are at life-threatening risks of **accidental ingestion** of balloons and **entanglement** from balloon ribbons and strings.

*Info source: Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup

Marine debris clogging up marine mammals and their homes

As global human population continues to soar and human habitation along coastlines sharply increases, so has the amount of marine debris in the world's oceans.

According to the World Economic Forum, at least 8 million tonnes of plastic waste alone enters into the oceans annually. It is further estimated that there are more than 150 million tonnes of plastic waste floating around in all of the world's seas and oceans. If that is not enough to terrify you, scientists have done some calculations and found that by the year 2050, there could be more plastics in the oceans than fish if we don't do anything to combat this severe problem now. Beach clean-ups conducted by international NGO, The Ocean Conservancy, over the last 25 years have yielded almost 1.3 million helium balloons, which are made of non-degradable materials that have caused many incidents of death by ingestion and also entanglement of many charismatic marine organisms such as sea turtles, whales and dolphins. What may seem like 2 seconds of fun and amusement in releasing a helium balloon and watching it float up and away into the sky ends up causing a lifetime of pollution to the oceans and also its inhabitants. So the next time you want to have a party, we strongly encourage you to refrain from including helium balloons (or at least, ensure they are not set free!).

The MareCet team has also witness first hand the widespread occurrence of marine debris in Malaysia's fragile marine environment. Opportunistic beach clean-ups saw entire truckloads of discarded fishing nets and plastic waste being collected from coastal areas. We were also collected many pieces of plastic bags within dugong habitat in Johor – on the beach, on the water, in the water column, and on the seagrass bed. We have had several stranding events of whales and dolphins that were found to have died of plastic ingestion. In a study done by a group of International scientists in 2015, it was found that Malaysia ranked 8th in the world for the highest amount of debris entering the ocean from the land. That is rather embarrassing, and we urge everyone living in this beautiful country to do their part in ensuring that rubbish is disposed of appropriately and to lessen the use of plastics significantly. Together, we can maintain the cleanliness of our oceans and beaches, prevent unnecessary mortality of our marine organisms, and ensure that our seafood resources are not contaminated with toxins leached from marine plastics waste.

Publications, presentations and media coverage

As a research and conservation entity, it is important that our work is shared with the scientific community, governmental agencies, local communities where we work and the public at large. The following is a list of our publications (including contributed articles), presentations and media coverage to date. Some of these are available as electronic PDF files upon request to ask.marecet@gmail.com.

- Hoffman, J.M., Ponnampalam, L.S., Araújo, C.C., Wang, J.Y., Kuit, S.H. and Hung, S.K. 2015. Comparison of Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*) whistles from two areas of western Peninsular Malaysia. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 138(5): 2829-2835. doi: [dx.doi.org/10.1121/1.4934254](https://doi.org/10.1121/1.4934254)
- Hines, E.M., Strindberg, S., Junchumpoo, C., Ponnampalam, L.S., Ilangakoon, A.D., Jackson-Ricketts, J. and Monanunsap, S. 2015. Line transect estimates of Irrawaddy dolphin abundance along the eastern Gulf Coast of Thailand. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 2:63. doi: [10.3389/fmars.2015.00063](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2015.00063)
- Ponnampalam, L.S., Fairul Izmal, J.H., Adulyanukosol, K., Ooi, J.L.S. and Reynolds III, J.E. 2015. Aligning conservation and research priorities for proactive species and habitat management: the case of dugongs *Dugong dugon* in Johor, Malaysia. *Oryx* 49(4): 743-749. doi:[10.1017/S0030605313001580](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0030605313001580)
- Hines, E., Ponnampalam, L.S., Fairul Izmal, J.H., Whitty, T.S., Jackson-Ricketts, J., Kuit, S.H. and Acebes, J. 2015. Report of the Third Southeast Asian Marine Mammal Symposium (SEAMAM III). UNEP/CMS Secretariat Technical Series. Available online at: <http://www.cms.int/en/publication/report-third-southeast-asian-marine-mammals-symposium-seamam-iii>
- Ichikawa, K., Akamatsu, T., Ponnampalam, L., Alfian, K. and Arai, N. 2015. Heterogeneous movement of dugongs between a vocal hotspot and a seagrass bed in Johor, Malaysia. Abstracts of the 3rd Design Symposium on Conservation of Ecosystem (SEASTAR2000), 15 March 2015, Kyoto, Japan.
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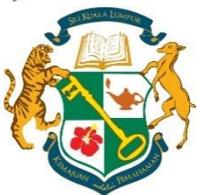
Thank you for all the support

We would like to record our heartfelt appreciation to all of our conservation partners. We could not do what we do without your support. Thank you for all your help and for sharing our conservation vision!

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. TAd Marine Resort | 11. P.M. Gan | 23. Prof Ellen Hines |
| 2. Duncan Lang | 12. Guitar KL | 24. Dr John Reynolds III |
| 3. Tan Yee Keat | 13. Lydia Arshad | 25. Dr Dana Wetzel |
| 4. Fiona Kwok (My Ocean Home) | 14. Beatrice Flowers | 26. Dr Kotaro Ichikawa |
| 5. Society of Marine Mammalogy | 15. Jasmin Sudlow | 27. Dr Tomonari Akamatsu |
| 6. Kayleigh Hughes | 16. Rebecca Jane Harding | 28. Dr Lindsay Porter |
| 7. Yu Yok Pearring | 17. Yong Teck Ann | 29. Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Thailand |
| 8. Cheryl Lim Sze Hui | 18. Mark Darren Lee | 30. Perak State Forestry Department |
| 9. Ho Kok Yew | 19. Melissa Jillian Au | |
| 10. Badens | 20. Kavitha Mahadevan | |
| | 21. Siow May Ling | |
| | 22. Dr Antonio Mignucci | |



Handcrafted skin pampering for Earthlings



21st Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals



We Need Your Help!

In the last four years, we have managed to achieve so much which ultimately comes down to the support of our partners and volunteers. Yet, there is still a lot more to be done. Unknown to many, we are an organization run by volunteers. Our projects and activities are managed and implemented by a dedicated team of volunteers who does the work in their spare time. We believe we can achieve more with a permanent workforce, but we need your help.

Please contact us at partner.marecet@gmail.com to help us in achieving our challenge in 2016 to obtain the following:

1. RM 200,000 for operations (inc. salary for permanent staff and overheads);
2. RM 100,000 for 1-year boat-based field survey;
3. RM 100,000 for awareness programs;
4. RM 50,000 for policy advocacy and participation at conferences; and
5. RM 30,000 for 1-year rental of office space

Alternatively, be a MareCet fundraising champion through our Simply Giving page - <https://simplygiving.com/nonprofit/MareCet>



Purchase a **Honey Latte** at EspressoLab Taman Melawati and support MareCet!

Proceeds from every purchase will help support MareCet's efforts in conserving marine mammals (i.e. whales, dolphins, porpoises and dugongs) in Malaysia.

You read that right!

Whales, dolphins, porpoises and dugongs... in Malaysia!



Buy one now!



Learn more at MareCet's Facebook @ Langkawi Dolphin Research
This partnership is currently limited to EspressoLab Taman Melawati

Volunteers speak out!

All our achievements to date has been a testament to those who have dedicated their time and energy to help us in our work – our project volunteers! Many of them have returned time and again to offer their help. We'd like to say thank you and send our heartfelt appreciation to each and everyone of them for their hardwork, dedication, and passion to the cause!

2015 Volunteers

Sandra Teoh Zhi Yi

Kayleigh Hughes

Cheah Kim Hup

Arvin Karunakaran

Ooi Boon Leong

Gwen Chew Swee Theng

Vu Long

Jonathan Chandrasakaran

Tan Yee Keat

Faztina Fazaldin

Kee Alfian

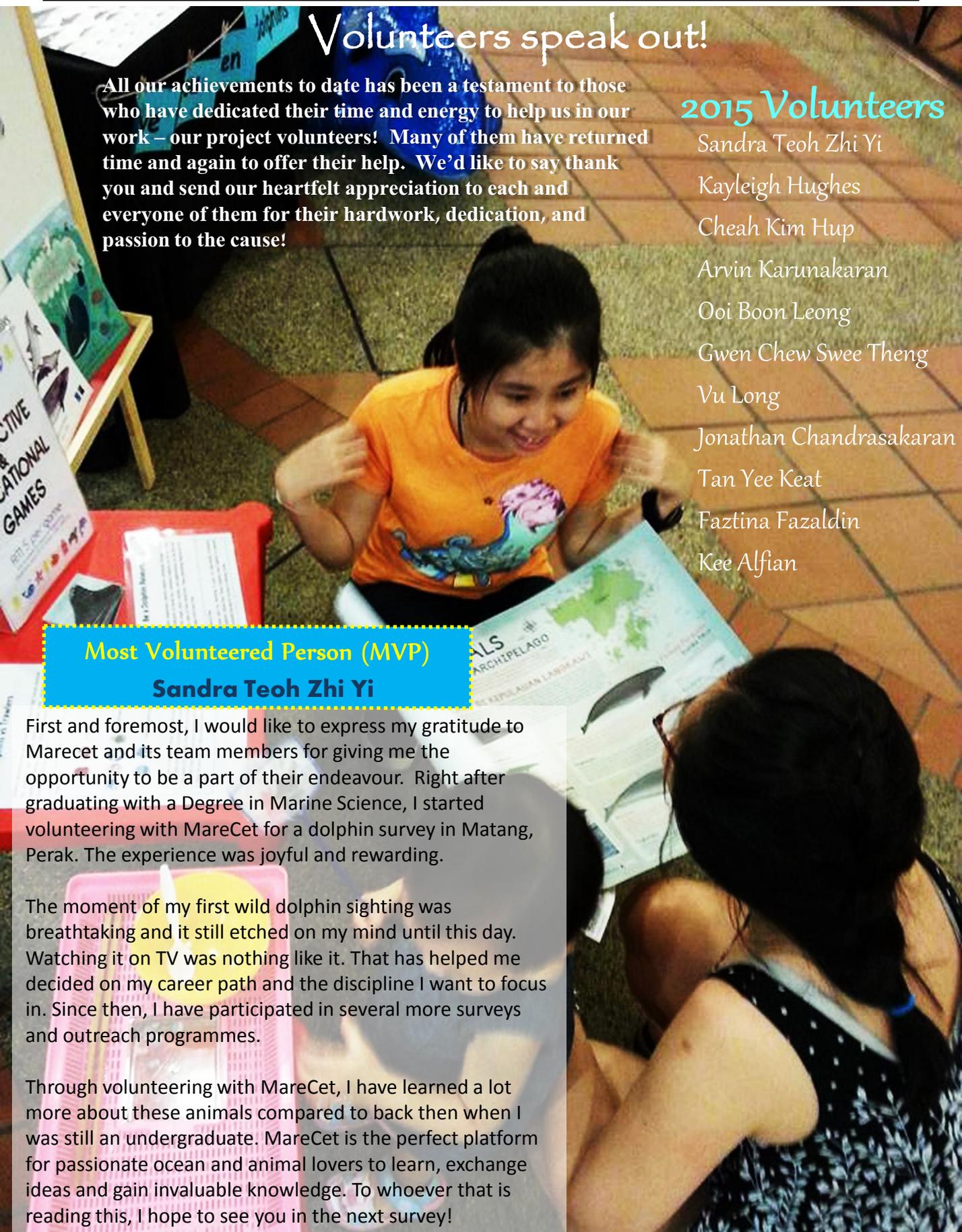
Most Volunteered Person (MVP)

Sandra Teoh Zhi Yi

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to Marecet and its team members for giving me the opportunity to be a part of their endeavour. Right after graduating with a Degree in Marine Science, I started volunteering with MareCet for a dolphin survey in Matang, Perak. The experience was joyful and rewarding.

The moment of my first wild dolphin sighting was breathtaking and it still etched on my mind until this day. Watching it on TV was nothing like it. That has helped me decided on my career path and the discipline I want to focus in. Since then, I have participated in several more surveys and outreach programmes.

Through volunteering with MareCet, I have learned a lot more about these animals compared to back then when I was still an undergraduate. MareCet is the perfect platform for passionate ocean and animal lovers to learn, exchange ideas and gain invaluable knowledge. To whoever that is reading this, I hope to see you in the next survey!



Volunteers speak out!

“It was an overwhelming, exciting and breathtaking experience. Not only I get to see wild dolphins (which of course were fantastic), I was also showered with valuable lessons and insight on the true working nature of a dolphin researcher. I definitely hope to volunteer again!” - **Sandra Teoh**



“Although I have been volunteering in several dolphin research projects in Southeast Asia since 2012 and my team also has an ongoing dolphin projects in Vietnam, volunteering with the Matang Dolphin Research (MDR) project still brings new experience, knowledge and unforgettable memories. The project leaders are very willing to share their experiences and knowledge on cetacean studies, which is very helpful for early stage marine mammologist. I had wonderful time working, learning, dolphin-watching and enjoying myself. I look forward to working with the team in the near future.”
- **Vu Long**

“It was a great opportunity to be able to join the MDR to learn more on how to study the population of dolphins in Malaysia. I enjoyed my time working with the team. The MDR may just be an annual thing that I do in the future as to remind me how science is done at sea. It was definitely a good refresher on how data is collected while on boat and how they were managed and reported. Students from any sort of environmental science background will benefit from this program.”
- **Jonathan Chandrasakaran**

“Working on the Matang Dolphin Research Project was a fantastic experience, I loved every minute of it. The survey is intense, it is hard work and tiring but you go to bed feeling happily tired and excited about the next day. The environment in which you are surveying is dynamic, the dolphins you see and the behavior you witness is different every time. Being so close to such magnificent creatures and being able to get a small glimpse of their lives and how they interact with each other is an incredibly rewarding experience. I hope to participate in this survey again in the future!”
- **Kayleigh Hughes**



“I have learnt a lot from the team. Thanks for the knowledge sharing and I would like to volunteer again in the future if there is opportunity.”
- **Gwen Chew**

“The costs of volunteering was nothing when compared to the experience and joy that I have gained and enjoyed so infinitely. I was really happy to volunteer and work without any pressure.”
- **Arvin Karunakaran**



Welcome to the lil' MareCet shop!

More exclusive merchandise has been added to the shop! All proceeds from the purchase goes towards supporting our continuous efforts in marine mammal research and marine conservation.

Email us at ask.marecet@gmail.com to make your orders today! The items may be posted to you (additional postage fee will be charged) or we could arrange a meet up, within the Klang Valley region only, to hand-deliver the items to you (payment can be made via bank deposit or cash-on-delivery).

"Passionate about Dugongs" t-shirt

Price: RM 40 each

Colour: Light green (emerald green tone)

Size: Regular fit (S – XXL); Ladies fit (S – XL)

Material: Fully-combed 100% cotton

New!



T-Shirt - Dolphin mother-calf pair sketch

(Design inspired by Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins sighted in Langkawi)

Price: RM40 each

Colour: Light yellow

Sizes available: Ladies fit (S - XL); Regular fit (S - XL)

Material: 100% cotton



T-Shirt - Meal time

(Humpback dolphins chasing fish)

Price: RM40 each

Colour: Soft orange

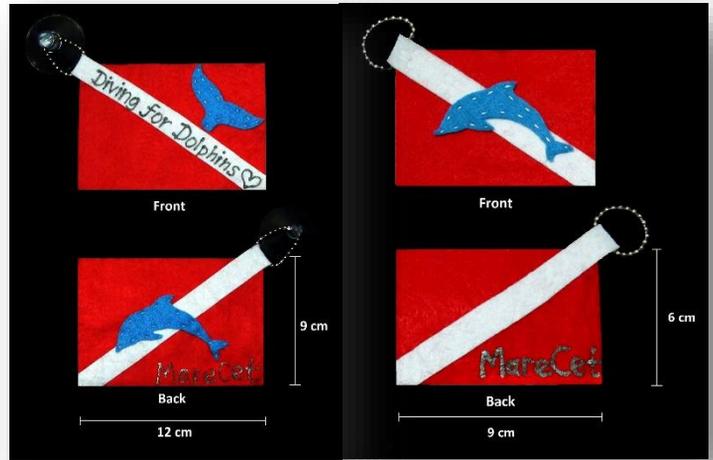
Sizes available:

Kids fit (S - L); Ladies fit (S - XL); Regular fit (S - XL)

Material: 100% cotton

Handmade "Diving for Dolphins" dive flag

Price: Small – RM 7 each; Large – RM 10 each
Material: Felt

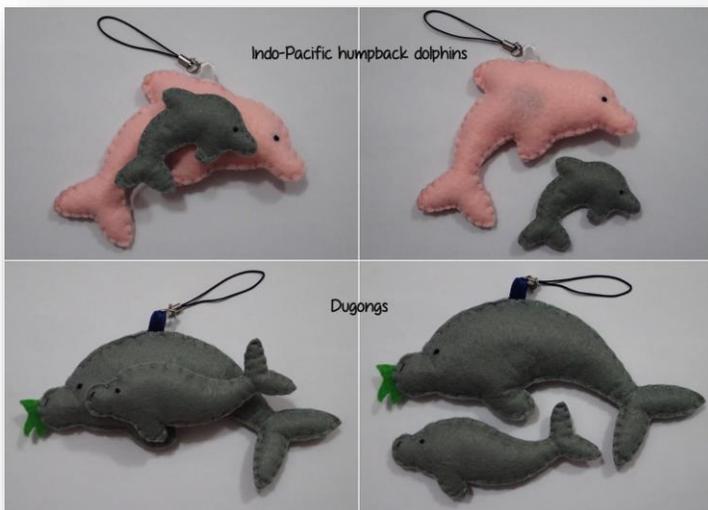


Designs by Vivian Kuit

Handmade Fins-Sew-Lovely felt charm strap/magnet/brooch pin (single animal)

Price: RM 15 each

Designs: Dolphin (grey, pink, blue), Dugong, Tail fluke, Blue whale, Irrawaddy dolphin
Material: Felt



Handmade Fins-Sew-Lovely felt charm strap (mum & calf - detachable)

Price: RM 25 each

Designs: Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins, Dugongs (calf is attached to mum with magnet)

Material: Felt

New items in the lil' MareCet shop!

Leather necklace (adjustable necklace cord)

Price: RM 15 each

Designs: Orca, Humpback whale, Tail fluke

Materials: Zinc alloy, synthetic leather cord



Small tail fluke earrings / necklace

Price: Earrings – RM 15 each pair; Necklace – RM 15 each

Colour: Gold / Silver
Material: Zinc alloy



Handcrafted "Tail fluke bracelet

Price: RM 18 each

Materials: Zinc alloy, hemp cord



Hook & Fluke earrings / necklace (adjustable necklace cord)

Price: Earrings – RM25 each pair; Necklace – RM 20 each

Materials: Zinc alloy, synthetic leather cord

New items in the lil' MareCet shop!



Keychain

Price: Hook & Fluke (gold) – RM 12; Dolphins in circle (bronze) – RM 10; Tail fluke/Humpback whale/Orca (silver) – RM 10

Material: Zinc alloy



Recycled paper notebook (cover design by local illustrator, Kazekami.S)

Price: RM 10 each

Size: A6 (approx 14.5 x 10 cm); 30 sheets / 60 pages

Material: Recycled kraft paper

The Whaley Useful Pouch

Price: S – RM 8; M – RM 12; L – RM 15

Sizes: Small (approx 15 x 14 cm); Medium (approx 23 x 20 cm); Large (approx 32 x 24cm)

Colour: Light blue / Denim blue / Pink

Material: Canvas

WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER A MARINE MAMMAL STRANDING?

When **one** or **more** animals (WHALE, DOLPHIN, PORPOISE or DUGONG)
found **washed ashore** or **distressed at sea**, **DEAD** or **ALIVE**



CALL THE



MareCet

HOTLINE: 011 1577 6802

Live stranding:

We will **guide you** on the **proper FIRST RESPONSE** to ensure the safety and welfare of the animal until the response team arrives.



Dead stranding:



You can provide us with information/assistance on:

(1) Basic stranding information

Date & time

Location (as detailed as possible)

On-site conditions

(at sea / on beach / rocky shore / vegetation area, tide, weather)

No. of animals

Species / species description

Carcass conditions

(freshly dead / decomposed / skeleton)

Last status of the carcass

(left at site / buried / towed / sunken)

(2) Photos

90° right-angle photos of **top/bottom** and **both sides** of
- full animal, head, dorsal fin
- other body parts
- any major or unusual external wound/injuries



(3) **Measurements**

Body length, body parts length, teeth count

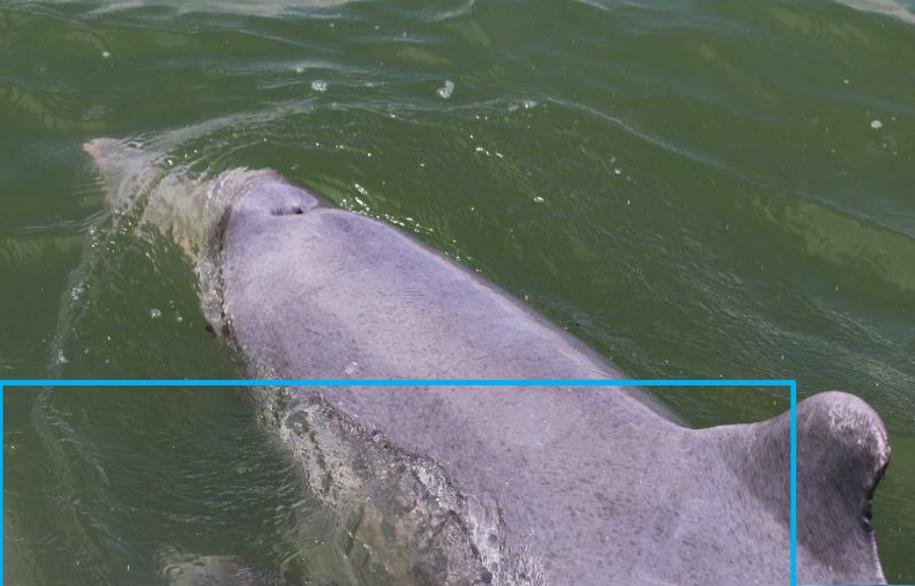


(4) **Samples collection & specimen preservation** (if possible)

Skin, body tissues, teeth, stomach content



By reporting a stranding, you are saving the life of an animal and/or contributing towards the research and conservation of marine mammals.



www.marecet.org



Comments/Activities:
 OPEN WATER DIVE 3 (No...)

(1) EDT Houdse Reef
 Dive no: 100
 Site: Riddgts
 Time: 6:20pm
 Date: 5/9/15
 S.I: 14hr 2min

Air IN: 200bar
 Air OUT: 100bar
 Temp: 29°C
 Dive Time: 13mins
 Safety Stop: 3mins/5m

Back-roll entry
 - Sit on the edge (balance)
 - near the flipped-there flipflop B
 - one hand on regulator
 - one hand ...

EDT = EAST DIVER Tioman

THINGS TO TAKE NOTE OF WHEN preparing

Gear up

1. Check Air of cylinder & Put shorter strap up than fit BCP onto cylinder
2. Check that the Ball of BCP is aligned to cylinder.

Renggis Tioman #3
 Dive no: 100
 Site: Riddgts
 Time: 9:10am
 Date: 6/9/15
 S.I: 14hr 2min

Air IN: 200bar
 Air OUT: 60bar
 Temp: 29°C
 Dive Time: 50min
 Safety Stop: 3min
 Weight: 4x2kg + 5m
 Max Depth: 11m

Comments/Activities:
 Instructor: Yee Keat
 Buddy: Phyllis & Cherie

Things to improve on

"The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction."
 - Rachel Carson

Open Water Dive #3

Saw sea turtle (Hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*)
 Experienced current underwater
 → mask remove & replace
 → hovering
 → fin pivot
 → longfinned
 → Baf-fish (*Platax tertia*)
 → Redbreast/Wrasse → *Acanthaluteres fasciatus*
 → Redbanded
 → robust staghorn coral (seafloor lifted)

MareCet

Research | Awareness | Policy | Consultancy

Yee Keat
 OWSI #29088