

University Student Sponsorship Programme in Wildlife Conservation 2012/2013

The University Student Sponsorship Programme in Wildlife Conservation 2012/2013 is sponsored by the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong (OPCFHK), in collaboration with the Biology and the Environmental Science Programmes, School of Life Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), with the aim of giving university students an opportunity to get involved in overseas conservation works. This programme is now on its 6th year at CUHK.

In this part of the programme involving CUHK, six students will be selected to participate in three projects (two students each) funded by OPCFHK.

Selected students are expected to participate in the research work at the project sites for about 2 weeks at a time to be agreed upon with the local contact person (project PI). A preferred time period of visit is suggested. The expenses of these students will be covered by OPCFHK and in return, the followings are expected from the students:

1. To participate in the Orientation Event to be held in Nov 17, 2012 (Sat) in the Ocean Park.
2. To plan the schedule of visit and arrange details with the respective project PI.
3. To prepare an album in OPCFHK Facebook Page and hand in a 2-page written report at the end of the programme.
4. To prepare a powerpoint presentation about their experiences and to share their nature conservation messages that they learned from their trip.
5. To produce a 5- to 10-minute documentary video clip which will be uploaded to OPCFHK's YouTube Channel and Facebook page for public awareness.
6. To organize in-school sharing (to be confirmed).
- 7. To attend media interviews arranged by OPCFHK to further promote nature conservation messages to HK public.**

CUHK students majoring in any Life Science programmes (e.g. BIOL, ENSC, etc.) are encouraged to apply. Priorities will be given to Year 2 or above students with some experiences in research and environmental works. Interested students should complete the online application form at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dGFoWHZXQjJaMFQwbFQtTXZQUmlBZ2c6M> [A](#). [A sample application form showing the requirements and information needed is attached for your easy reference.] The **deadline for online submission is Oct 29, 2012 (Mon) at 09:00. No late submission will be accepted.**

Depending on the number of applicants, a first screening will be made to **shortlist up to 15 students** in total. An **interview** will be arranged on **Nov 7, 2012 (Wed) in Room SC297 from 18:00 to 21:00**. Shortlisted students will be informed of their interview schedule on Nov 2, 2012 (Fri) by email. It is therefore important to provide a correct email address. Please make yourself available for the interview. No additional interviews will be scheduled. Members of the interview panel include Prof. PO Ang, Prof. LM Chu, Miss KM Yam and representative(s) from OPCFHK.

Project A

Title : Conservation of the Chinese Giant Salamander (*Andrias davidianus*). Phase II: A study of factors impacting this species' reintroduction
Species : Chinese Giant Salamander
Location : Shaanxi, China
Period : Apr-May 2013



At up to 1.8 meters in length, the Chinese giant salamander (*Andrias davidianus*) is the world's largest amphibian. It diverged from all other amphibian lineages 170 million years ago and represents the very root of the amphibian tree of life. Once widespread in the mountain tributaries of the Pearl, Yellow and Yangtze Rivers in central/southern China, the giant salamander is now Critically Endangered (IUCN), having suffered an 80% population decline since the 1950s due to habitat destruction, water pollution and over-exploitation for its meat and body parts. This project aims to monitor dispersal, habitat selection, climate variables, reproduction, and disease prevalence of giant salamanders released into the wild.

Possible tasks and requirements:

Conduct field work to assess distance and rate of dispersal patterns, record spatial and temporal habitat use of the reintroduced giant salamanders.

Project B

Title : Mitigating human elephant conflict through research and community interface in Golaghat District, Assam
Species : Asian Elephant
Location : Assam, NE India
Period : Jan to May 2013



The Asian elephant is listed as Endangered and is struggled to survive in northeast India, including Golaghat district of Assam, primarily because of conflict with human beings. There is a need to assist locals and help enhance the knowledge on the conflict patterns and explore possibilities of co-existence with people ensuring the elephant's future. This project will primarily assess the habitat usage patterns both in the forests and in villages, mapping human elephant conflict to understand the underlying conflict pattern and to identify the key drivers of conflict.

Possible tasks and requirements:

- Assist in data collection
- Understand community interface in human elephant conflict mitigation
- Interaction with locals, sharing ideas with them
- Develop a short video documentary on the project activities
- Assist in mapping with GIS

Project C

Title : Impact of Traffic Noise on Spotted Seal (*Phoca largha*)
Species : Spotted Seal
Location : Liaoning, China
Period : Mar to May 2013



Spotted Seal is the Grade two national protected species and the only pinniped animal that naturally breeds within the Chinese waters. The ice district at Liaodong Bay, Bohai, was the southernmost breeding ground of Spotted Seal, which are inherited with a unique evolutionary status. Historical studies showed the abundance of spotted seal dropped from more than 8000 individuals in 1940s to 1000-2000 individuals currently, indicating the urgent need for protection. Traffic noise from the sea and land is an important threat to wild spotted seal and there were no related studies. Shuangtaizi Estuary at northern Liaodong Bay is one of the important relic habitat and feeding ground for spotted seal and it is also the activity area for new-born cubs. Economic development requires a highway crossing Shuangtaizi Estuary, linking between Liaodong peninsular and Liaodong east coast areas. How would the traffic noise from the highway impacting the spotted seal? This study would focus on this issue and find out the solution.

Possible tasks and requirements:

- The pinniped population survey is usually focused on their haul-out sites which is a fixed-point observation
- Not to get seasick easily

Timeline for this year's programme:

Briefing and sharing session: Date: Oct 17, 2012 (Wed)
Time: 17:30-19:00
Venue: SCL3

Online application deadline: Oct 29, 2012 (Mon) 09:00

Email notification sent to shortlisted candidates: Nov 2, 2012 (Fri)

Interview of shortlisted candidates: Nov 7, 2012 (Wed) [Time: 18:00-21:00, Venue: SC297 to be confirmed]

Email notification sent to selected participants: by Nov 14, 2012 (Wed)

OPCFHK Orientation: Nov 17, 2012 (Sat), Ocean Park, Hong Kong

Visit to Project Site: Subject to mutual agreement between the coordinator of individual project and the student participants.

For enquiries, please contact Prof. PO Ang, Jr at put-ang@cuhk.edu.hk or Miss KM Yam (May) at kwanmeiyam@cuhk.edu.hk.

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Sponsored and Organized by
Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong (OPCFHK)
in Collaboration with
Biology and Environmental Science Programmes, School of Life Sciences, CUHK

SAMPLE APPLICATION FORM ONLY
PLEASE APPLY ONLINE

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dGFoWHZXQjJaMFQwbFQtTXZQUmlBZ2c6MA>

I. Personal Particulars

Name in English:
Name in Chinese:
Major: BIOL/ENSC/LSCI/Others
Year of Study: 1/2/3/4/MPhil/PhD
Student No.:
Mobile Phone No.:
Email Address:

II. Choice of Projects

Prioritize (1 to 3, 1=first choice) the projects you wish to participate in. Please kindly make sure that no two projects are with the same ranking. The dates indicated are the preferred dates of visit to the project site.

Project A: Conservation of ...

Project B: Mitigating human elephant conflict through ...

Project C: Impact of Traffic Noise on...

III. Research Experiences

Itemize and describe your previous/current experience(s) or involvement in research project(s) (including Experimental or Directed Research) or environmental project(s) sponsored by department(s) of the Hong Kong Government, green groups or academic societies.

IV. Mission Statement

In not more than 400 words, explain your choice in Part II, why you would like to participate in this programme, what you would expect to learn from it and how you think you could contribute to this programme and the conservation work in Hong Kong.

V. Wildlife Photo and Short Description

Provide a wildlife related photo (BW or Colour) taken by yourself with a short description (<100 words).

VI. Scholastic Records

Have you taken/are you taking the following courses?

Ecology/Ecology Laboratory/Marine Biology/Conservation Biology/Field and Environmental Biology

Provide a copy of your COMPLETE academic records at CUHK.

Deadline: Oct 29, 2012 (Mon) 9 AM. NO LATE APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED!

Send in the wildlife related photo and your complete academic records to opcf.ussp.cuhk@gmail.com. Please kindly mark "Application-{Your LAST NAME} {First Name}-{Student ID}" in the subject and be reminded to include the attachment named "Attachment-{Your LAST NAME} {First Name}-{Student ID}.pdf". Submit the rest online.