

Press Release

Choose Right – Choose Wrong

Endangered and Threatened Live Reef Food Fish are still available in our Hong Kong wet markets!



HD images & press materials can be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/2AXQNCM>

Hong Kong, 7 December 2017 Imagine a world without fish? Then imagine explaining to your children what the oceans used to look like when they ask: “What did you do to save our ocean?” In a recent Live Reef Food Fish (LRFF) wet market survey across Hong Kong, a total of 17 species listed as Threatened, Endangered or Vulnerable under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, were found**.

Threatened species were counted from both markets: 7 Threatened species, 5 Vulnerable species, and 2 Endangered species, including groupers and a wrasse species**.

These results reveal the prevalence of threatened species in Hong Kong’s wet markets and indicate a need for urgent and collective conservation action from both the government and the general population.

Hong Kong has a population of just over 7 million people, and on average each Hong Kong person consumes 65.5kg of seafood every year, ranking Hong Kong as the 2nd largest per capita consumers of seafood in Asia, and the 8th largest in the world.

Before the 1980’s almost all Hong Kong’s LRFF was caught locally. As popular species became increasingly overfished in local and adjacent waters, Hong Kong began importing more of its live reef fish from other countries.

Research indicates a historical local fondness for groupers, many of which are threatened with the risk of extinction, either now or in the near future and yet 80% of live locally caught groupers were found in Hong Kong wet markets including sexually immature juveniles.

In the late 1980’s 1,800 metric tonnes (mt) of Live Reef Food Fish were imported. By the mid 90’s this figure was 13,600mt and today it is between 20,000 to 30,000mt. As stocks in exporting countries are depleted, our voracious appetites shift the trade to exploit other regions around the world.

Records from the Census and Statistics Department of the Government of Hong Kong SAR (C&SD) show that Hong Kong currently imports LRFF from over 40 countries & territories worldwide.

In 2000, the Identification Guide to Fishes in the Live Seafood Trade of the Asia-Pacific Region was published in a joint project between WWF and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department of the Government of Hong Kong SAR. A long overdue updated guide will soon be available in the 1st quarter of 2018. This update will help us understand the types of LRFF that are being eaten here in Hong Kong.



CHOOSE RIGHT TODAY
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This updated Live Reef Food Fish Guide, and the recent Wet Market study, will be two of the tools used to educate the public about the dangers of over-fishing, and go some way towards fulfilling some of the goals in Hong Kong's current Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP). These include: Stepping up enforcement against wildlife crime, improving sharing of knowledge, promoting biodiversity awareness and promoting sustainable consumption.

Recent studies have also discovered the mislabeling of LRFF in many local markets. This extends to both identifying fish as a more expensive species, thus over-charging consumers. Hong Kong's current attitude to Live Reef Food Fish and the expanding consumption of imports is un-sustainable.

Overfishing is a worldwide phenomenon that affects every country rich and poor. The solution can only be found by Governments exploring strategies to more effectively manage the trade and fisheries of threatened species but more importantly, by a concerted consumer effort to do the right thing today, to **Choose Right Today**.

Glossary of Definitions (IUCN Classification)

Established in 1964, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species has evolved to become the world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species. It is a critical indicator of the health of the world's biodiversity. The term 'Threatened' is used collectively for species that are Threatened, Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU).

Threatened	<i>Species that are endangered (EN), vulnerable (VU) and critically endangered (CR)</i>
Critically Endangered (CR)	<i>Extremely high risk of extinction in the wild</i>
Endangered (EN)	<i>High risk of extinction in the wild</i>
Vulnerable (VU)	<i>High risk of endangerment in the wild</i>

ABOUT CHOOSE RIGHT TODAY (CRT) :

In September 2016, ChooseRightToday.org (an initiative of the ADM Capital Foundation) was launched as a bi-lingual platform to educate businesses and consumers about sustainable seafood. Contrary to popular belief, this is not farmed seafood, but seafood captured or farmed in a way that minimizes harm to the marine environment.

The Choose Right Today website provides guidance about sustainable seafood for consumers in Hong Kong, why it is important, what it is and where to find it. The site contains important up to date information on eco-labels, what to eat and what to avoid.

The website also provides a guide to Hong Kong's major supermarkets, online stores and lists a wide selection of restaurants carrying sustainable seafood.

ABOUT ADM CAPITAL FOUNDATION (ADMCF):

Established in 2006, ADM Capital Foundation (ADMCF) aims to promote equity and environmental conservation in Asia. Through research, it identifies environmental challenges and then work towards solutions across five key areas: marine conservation, water security, air quality, wildlife trade and forestry conservation finance.

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