

Project Update: June 2014

Our project in Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve went well. Within 30 days, we have conducted a boat-based survey with 22 transects which cover an area of 1800 km². There were a total of four direct sightings of the Irrawaddy dolphin (*Orcaella beirostris*) and one direct sighting of finless porpoise (*Neophocaena phocaenoides*). Data collected are being processed for analysis in Distance software and MARK software in order to estimate the abundance of those recorded species.



Figure 1: Boat-based survey with combination of Distance sampling and Photo-ID method

In addition, we have also visited seven local whale temples, two local museums and five dolphin shrines where local people store cetacean remains. As the result, four other

cetacean species have been recorded including Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*), pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*), sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) and unidentified baleen whales (*Balaenoptera* sp1.) There are also three cetacean skulls we were unable to identify to species. Currently, we are collaborating with several cetacean experts from IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group to identify these species.



Figure 2: Interviewing local people

We have interviewed 26 fishermen in Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve using a pre-designed questionnaire. All of the interviewees are fishermen who have lived in Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve for more than 10 years. All of them have seen cetaceans in this area. Primary analysis suggests that the main threat for cetaceans in this area comes from by-catch. Interview data is under analysis. During our interview survey, we realise that the local people awareness for cetacean conservation in this area is generally low.

We have also designed stickers of our project and distributed them when we do interviews. In total, more than 100 stickers have been provided to local fishermen and school children as well as public places such as restaurants, coffee shops and local ports. Our stickers have received positive feedback

from local communities. We are currently making more stickers and other materials such as posters, toys and calendars to achieve our objective.



Figure 3: Documenting cetacean remains in local whale temples