Sustainable seafood management in the restaurant sector:

A case study on Hong Kong

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- April 2017
Signed Statement

Declaration:

“I declare that this Dissertation has not already been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree. It is the result of my own independent research except where otherwise stated”.

Signed: _____________________________

Date: _______________________________
Abstract

This dissertation discusses the depletion of the planet’s marine ecosystems and how it has been a rapidly increasing problem for the fishing industries and the growing demand for seafood by consumers. The topic was chosen because the researcher discovered that the overall knowledge of sustainable seafood and where to find it in HK is limited, and therefore very little is being done to conserve the oceans’ species from endangerment or extinction. Shark fin soup is a famous delicacy for Chinese culture and is the main reason for the shrinking shark populations and the ever-growing shark fin trade. Consumption of live reef fish is another whole area of exploitations needing to be resolved.

HK’s ports are an ideal trading station for people involved because of their direct access to Mainland China, where these products are in the most demand. This dissertation reveals what methods conservationists are taking to change seafood consumer diets to be more sustainable. This is compared to the opinions of restaurateurs, challenged by the conservationists to change, but being otherwise dictated by consumers who lack the knowledge to make a clear judgment.

Five interviews were conducted in order to collect the data for this dissertation. The aim was to identify the attitudes towards the consumption of sustainable seafood and how one can implement sustainable change by comparing the views of restaurateurs and marine conservationists in HK. The study concluded that there are many factors. Raising awareness has been declared as the most important factor because if more people knew the facts about marine life, they would change the way they live. It was suggested that the most effective way to raise awareness was to use social media to reach the public internationally and free of charge. Conversely it was noted that this way of spreading information only reached the younger generations, as social media is used more frequently by younger generations. The researcher however declared that it was more important for the younger generations to understand sustainability, as they are the ones who will be living further into the future and will experience the damaging effects if they do not change. Other components of raising public awareness include documentaries, seminars, eco-labelling products and other methods.

Factors affecting sustainability revealed during this study are the interaction with restaurants and their consumers to reduce the demand, the government involvement to regulate the trade in HK and to fund conservation research projects on the current situation of the marine ecosystems and lastly, finding alternatives to catching wild-caught seafood and prevent wastage.

Word Count: 13,860
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Katarzyna Minor for her involvement in this dissertation. She has been there for me every step of the way and has kept me on track with what I have needed to do in order to achieve my aim. I am truly grateful for her support and direction and it was a pleasure working with her.

My thanks also go to my sister, Emily, for her help with participating in my research and linking me to the other participants in the study. This dissertation could not have been feasible without her support and information she has passed on throughout this process.

My gratitude is for my five participants for giving up their time for me to interview them. They were all very responsive with emails and honest with their answers. I would not have been able to complete this research project without them and my understanding of the HK sustainability spectrum would be impaired.

My appreciation goes to my mum and my other sister, Annabel, for helping me through the final stages with moral support and motivating me to complete everything on time.

Thank you ADMCF for spawning my interest for sustainable seafood during my internship last summer, which lead me to choosing this topic.
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Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter introduces the topic of the dissertation and the rationale of the research. It identifies the aim and objectives for the study and uses HK as a case study, briefly outlining the present status of its fisheries and trade. This chapter summarises understanding of the general situation of sustainable seafood in HK, and the effects of shark finning and overfishing on marine ecosystems.

1.2 Study rationale

The objective of this study is to identify current attitudes towards consuming sustainable seafood and what is being done to raise awareness of the cause. Populations of commercially important marine species are in decline from overfishing, not to mention the undue suffering caused (Goble, 2005). HK being tariff-free provides a unique conduit for fishing vessels to smuggle their goods to Mainland China, making any data gathered on regional fisheries unreliable and an underestimate at best (Dwivedi 2013).

The topic of this dissertation: sustainable seafood is an issue that is increasingly salient in the world today. A key factor is that people are often unaware of the global problems due to lack of awareness or impact on them personally (Lindgreen et al., 2017). The reach and impact of unsustainable living is somewhat downplayed by today’s society. They live in the here and now, resulting in the rapid depletion of the world’s resources, irrespective of what will be left for their children (DeSombre and Barkin, 2011). This dissertation outlines the dangers of the sale and consumption of unsustainable seafood, and the associated fishing methods. Given the projected rise in population, 9 billion by 2050 (FAO, 2009), food security implications are clear.

The word ‘sustainable' has now become more frequently used in households, however the true meaning of the word is one that people struggle to grasp. Much of the
population believe that being sustainable entails actions like recycling plastic, or taking public transport instead of driving. In reality, it is more complex. By the most accurate definition from WCED (1987), it means: meeting the “needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987 [online]). The argument for sustainable development has become integrated into daily life owing to the visible damage inflicted on the planet from the actions of humans. “There is now worldwide evidence that the human enterprise is increasingly overloading the capacity of the natural world to supply, replenish and absorb” (Goldie and Furnass 2005, p.17). The resources that humans have exploited are finite and will greatly affect future generations (Bougsty, 2012).

1.3 Sustainable fishing and Hong Kong
This dissertation looks at HK as a case study, as “Hong Kong International Airport and HK’s container port facilities are amongst the easiest to use, as well as the busiest in the world, due in part to the City’s ‘free trade’ policy” (ADM Capital Foundation [ADMCF] 2015, p.4). ‘Free trade’ here refers to the lack of import-export tariffs for importing into and exporting out of HK, as well as the ease with which trade is conducted (Dwivedi, 2013).

Nearly all seafood consumed in HK has been imported because the territory itself “is almost entirely dependent on imported resources for its needs” (Cheng 1990, p.244). In fact, HK now imports 90% of its seafood. The free trade policy arguably facilitates the trade of illegal products- given how there is little government involvement (Soulé, 2005).

Quotas were one of the first and most effective techniques to control the size and weight of the species of seafood caught. Such measures have been introduced so the fish can reach maturity and reproduce before being caught, thereby sustaining the populations. Quota systems in the EU have been introduced to reduce overexploitation of their fisheries (Fish Fight, 2017). Currently, “as much as 50% of reef fish are being taken from the water before they have had an opportunity to reproduce” (WWF, 2016 [online]), significantly impacting these populations. This
overfishing is largely taking place in Asia, which has yet to catch up to the EU and other quota systems.

Comparing HK to the EU in regards the populations’ awareness of sustainably sourced seafood reveals marked differences. According to a Mintel study (2015), consisting of 1,701 Internet users aged 16+, 76% “expect retailers to ensure all their fish/shellfish is sustainably sourced”. This is mainly due to the above mentioned quota system regulating the size and weight of seafood caught within EU waters (Grafton et al. 2010, p.420). This is a key difference between consumers in HK and the EU; the former have to search for the appropriate eco-labels printed on the packaging declaring that the seafood has been sustainably sourced in HK (Ward and Phillips 2008, p.78), whilst the latter, sustainability is increasingly assumed.

Hong Kong locals are also heavily acquainted with blatantly unsustainable fisheries as a matter of course (Mora, 2015). One such example is the shark fin trade (Liddick, 2011).

Today, half of the world’s trade in fins passes though HK, much going to Mainland China (Vannuccini 1999). Displayed and eaten during traditional banquets as a symbol of their wealth and status, shark fin soup is considered by Chinese as a delicacy with inherent cultural roots (Hinkelman 1994). It is possible that lack of awareness of the overexploitation of sharks contributes to the continued consumption of this dish. In Mandarin [the most widely-spoken language in China], the literal translation of shark fin soup is ‘fish-wing soup’ (WildAid, 2017), denoting that some consumers of the soup may not know exactly what they are eating.

Nonetheless, the consumption of shark fin is but one contributing factor to the depletion of marine resources.

A further catalyst is the lack of education surrounding the whole concept of sustainable development. It seems as if they have a different interpretation of the notion to Western societies, perhaps due to the difference in backgrounds or culture values. To them, sustainability means, “simply having enough to eat” (Brubaker, 2012 [online]). By adopting aggressive harvesting and fishing techniques they managed to
lift 400,000,000 people in China out of poverty in 2012. Whilst this was an effective short-term plan, the government has not thought about how this drastic uplift in food resources will affect future generations.

Sustainability should not be understood to mean ‘unlimited’ resources for all. Therefore China has attempted to reduce poverty and increase sustainable development through the introduction of aquaculture (fish farming). The practice aims to fill the growing gap between demand and supply while providing more jobs for local fishermen. “Many lack the means to survive the competition against Chinese imports, which make up about 80 per cent of fish sold in the markets” (Zaragovia, 2010). With this in mind, WWF set up an eco-fish farming scheme to help local fishermen farm and sell fish with no chemicals or genetic modifications, whilst allowing them to make enough money to support their families (WWF, 2017). Generally, in these communities, earning a living ranks far above sustainability or being ‘eco-friendly’. WWF, however, has provided an opportunity for doing both. With its eco-fish scheme proving a success, it shows that other fishermen can adopt this approach to conserve their marine resources whilst earning a living.
1.4 Aim and Objectives

**Aim:**
This dissertation’s aim is to identify the attitudes towards the consumption of sustainable seafood and how one can implement change to become sustainable by comparing the views of restaurateurs and marine conservationists in HK.

**This aim will be achieved by the following objectives:**
1. To critically review the literature of sustainable fishing and the effects it has on the hospitality industry.
2. To identify conservationists’ strategies: on how they are preventing overfishing from an environmental standpoint and the ways they convey the information to the restaurateurs, public and the government for implementation.
3. To compare this with the restaurateurs’ point of view on the effectiveness of their persuasion and their help to implement change.
4. To evaluate the findings and make recommendations to all stakeholders with regards to sale and consumption of alternatively sourced seafood.
Chapter Two Literature Review

2.1 Introduction
This chapter hones in on the subject of sustainable seafood and fishing regulations in the EU and Mainland China. It explores this under the headlines of: geographical and legal disparities and external non-governmental organisations; and discusses Chinese culture and attitudes towards the shark fin trade and the role of culture and traditions that contribute towards the depletion of marine resources.

2.2 Illegal fishing practices and how to prevent them
“China is the world’s leading exporter of fishery products, with an export value of USD18.2 billion in 2012... while HK makes up the 10th largest global importer [USD3.7 billion in 2012]. This is significant given the size of Hong Kong” (ADMCF 2015, p.13). Due to HK’s “free port status” (Mills 2012, p.104) since the 1960s, a symbiotic trading relationship has arisen between Mainland China and HK.

Fifty-five percent of all fishing vessels globally operate in the South China Sea, employing roughly 3.7 million people and supplying both the Mainland and HK. However, this figure “does not account for fishers involved in Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing” (ADMCF 2015, p.9). IUU fishing occurs globally, targeting any species to circumvent quotas, legal declaration and national jurisdiction (FAO, 2000). IUU fishing means technically stealing fish, cheating the ‘system’ in order to make a profit. It not only interferes with industrial fishing, but displaces local fishermen’s source of revenue (Palma, 2010). There are many factors that are to blame for the existence of IUU fishing, such as

“excess fishing capacity, the payment of government subsidies, strong market demand for particular products, weak national fishery administration, poor regional fisheries management, and ineffective monitoring, control and surveillance capacity, including the lack of vessel monitoring systems” (Schofield et al. 2014, p.433).
If all catches were reported, it is said that statistically, the total volume of seafood caught would increase by 70% (ADMCF, 2015). This number equates to billions of dollars’ worth of fish being caught under the radar (Schofield et al., 2014).

2.3 The EU quota system
As previously mentioned, the EU has a strict quota system, whereby each fishing boat has a specific size, weight and species (Shotton, 2001) in order to prevent overfishing (Cunningham and Bostock, 2005). These quotas are closely monitored and regulated, which is why sustainability is often assumed.

One of the reasons why quota systems were put in place is because improvements in technology have enabled “larger, faster ships, sonar, better nets and other similar improvements have increased the ability of commercial fishermen to catch more fish and put the survival of species in danger” (Sloan et al. 2013, p.3). Although these improvements were good for the fishermen’s livelihood, the future of the fish stocks was ignored, despite the fish populations beginning to decline dramatically (Shotton, 2001).

Comparing the EU quota systems to HK is noteworthy as “there are no import quotas, no licensing and no import surcharge” (Moen 1983, p.111), although HK sources significantly less of its own seafood than does the EU, having overexploited its waters (Seabo, 2017). The few fishermen may go back and forth repeatedly without the government-taking note of what species and volumes in their cargo load. This lack of transparency leads HK to act “as a gateway for the legitimate and illegal trade to mainland China” (Grafton et al. 2010, p.178).

HK’s lack of import regulations has clearly had a negative impact on marine populations in the region. Conversely, EU quotas create a different problem for their marine life: fishermen need to catch the correct size and weight of a certain species, excluding much of what is actually caught. This is known as by-catch (Eayrs, 2007).
2.4 By-catch

By-catch is the unwanted species that the fishermen have inadvertently caught in their nets whilst targeting other species of fish (Eayrs, 2007). Unwanted species are often thrown overboard dead or dying, as they have been out of the water for too long to survive. They are discarded because they will not sell in markets due to lack of demand for certain species and therefore are a waste of space and excess weight on their boats. “These discards are often small, not yet reproductive, or low-value species that are more often than not accounted for in anyone’s ledgers” (Leclerc and Hall 2007, p.431).

By-catch is common in EU waters due to the quota system as stated above. This law exists to regulate the amount and size per species caught, enabling the fish to grow to their full reproductive state before being caught. However other species are caught at the same time due to the widespread use of large fishing nets, hauling in great amounts of fish without differentiating them until after they have perished from being out of the water for too long (Grafton et al., 2010).

Problems with the EU quota system highlight whether HK would indeed benefit from a quota system of their own or whether it would create unnecessary waste. HK may be better to regulate the weight of the haul of fish regardless of the species, or if not then at least limit the number of boats or how frequently they can go out rather than the weight or size per species. Or alternatively, they could adopt the Fish Fight regulations whereby discarding unwanted fish is disallowed and therefore these fish are not wasted either (Fish Fight, 2017).

2.5 The Live Trade

“Hong Kong fishing vessels bring in a wide variety of fish for sale in bother the wholesale fish markets as well as directly to retail in the case of live-fish for consumption” (Mottershead 2004, p.508). “Today, The Great Barrier Reef is renowned as one of the natural wonders of the world” (Love 2001, p.5), and is a large contributor
to HK’s live reef trade. These “increasing rates of population growth and consumption, especially in tropical coastal nations, are putting greater pressure on coral reef ecosystems” (Nichols and Williams 2009, p.109), as more live fish are being demanded from consumers. This is causing the Great Barrier Reef and many other reef ecosystems to becoming depleted, causing an upset to the marine populations and having a knock-on effect to other, larger species.

The Live Trade, otherwise known as the Live Reef Food Fish Trade (LRFFT) simply means the trading of live fish for consumption (ADMCF, 2015). The fish are placed in tanks that are visible to the consumers and they are permitted to select the fish they would like to eat and it is then cooked and prepared for them or it may be taken home to serve fresh later (Sadovy et al, 2003). It was once a luxury for people to have in the 1960s when it was first introduced, although by the 1990s it was very much “commonplace” (Freidberg 2009, p.269) and the fishing grounds had to quickly respond to the demand. Depleted in HK reefs was almost immediate and then the search spread to the Pacific and Indian Oceans once the market-sized fish were diminished and so on (Sadovy et al, 2003). Not only are too many in general per species being caught, nearly 50% of reef fish killed are too young to have even reproduced by this point in their lives; it immediately cuts off that reproductive line and decreases the reproduction rate for that species (WWF, 2016 [online]).

Due to the heavy demand for these species, fishermen are now “sourcing [the fish] from unmanaged and poorly regulated fisheries throughout Southeast Asia. As a result, in many places it is biologically unsustainable and ecologically damaging” (ADMCF 2015, p.2) and they are then bringing these unsustainably sourced fish back into HK waters, passing them through the unregulated system, re-exporting them and creating this vicious cycle.

HK-China seafood trade is very lucrative and unrelenting because the demand is ever increasing (Kao, 2015). The live trade especially reaps over US$1 billion per year, whilst the shark fin trade has slowed with more people catching on to the shark fin cause (The Coral Triangle, 2016). “Ten years ago, HK imported more than 12,000 tons of shark’s fin, which collectively was dried, salted or preserved in brine. [In 2012], those
figures dipped to just one-third of that amount, according to official trade data” (Chen, 2013 [online]).

2.6 Identifying sustainably sourced products

2.6.1 Seafood eco-labelling

To find sustainably sourced products in HK, one must search for specific labelling stating officials have declared the product. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an example of a globally recognised organisation due to its involvement with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and other parties in preventing unsustainable fishing (ADMCF, 2015). In order for a fishery to be declared sustainable by MSC, they must “voluntarily apply to be assessed by independent, third-party certification bodies against the MSC’s rigorous environmental standard for sustainable fishing” (Ward and Phillips 2008, p.84). In order for the logo to be branded on the products, the whole supply chain must follow strict sustainable regulations from the fishery to the end-product. “This includes primary processors, secondary processors, wholesalers, distributors, importers, retailers, food service, restaurants, or any other business that handles MSC product” (Phillips et al. 2003, p. 35). This is because one expects “ocean to plate traceability” (Agnew, 2016 [online]), meaning a person or MSC should be able to trace the handling of the fish from the catch to the restaurant they are dining at and be able to see that it has been handled in an eco-friendly way (Phillips, 2013).

2.6.2 Consumer seafood guide

Consumer guides are regarded as an effective way to raise awareness about what type of seafood is sustainable to buy and consume in HK. This seafood guide is both a booklet and a mobile phone app available for anyone to download off the WWF website or the ‘app store’. WWF have created nearly 20 country appropriate guides (WWF, 2017). The HK guide for example shows all the seafood that has ever been sold for consumption in HK. It is laid out in 3 columns: red, yellow and green. These colours represent whether the population of a species is endangered, at risk or in plentiful supply.
2.6.3 Sustainable seafood listings

The International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN] is one of many conservation groups in the world that are trying countless ways to preserve the natural environment of the planet. The IUCN specifically has organised a list of all species that are categorised according to their threatened status and probability of extinction. “The Red List looks at the distribution, population status, habitat requirements, reproductive biology and major threats to species and applies this to a set of conservation criteria” (Lart, 2010 [online]). This list was primarily made to impose regulations for endangered species identified in order for consumers to identify the species that are endangered in order to for consumers to identify them and consequently avoid ordering them (IUCN, 2003).

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora [CITES] is an international agreement between governments to safeguard species’ survival (CITES, 2017). Similar to the IUCN lists, any animal that is listed on their appendices may not be caught without a licence.

In terms of HK, if a species is listed on CITES Appendices, the government will pay attention and put a law in place preventing fishermen to catch these certain species, or reveal a valid licence to the authorities if they are caught with one. If however, a certain species is not listed, the government are less inclined to do anything, as it is not scientifically proven that these species are endangered (AFCD, 2017).

2.7 Hong Kong Government

The HK government plays a major role in the decision making for restaurants and practices in general in HK. It is they who implement change to the laws and guidelines for trading purposes. Conservationists are constantly trying to persuade the government to be more aggressive with their regulations on the seafood trade. They now have declared that shark fin is banned from large-scale functions and banquets, as the majority of all fins are consumed at these events (Karacs, 2016).

The government is powerful and can instigate change to HK:
“AFCD administers various loan funds for fishermen and fish farmers for production and development purposes. In 2015, some 260 loans amounting to [HKD]$380.3 million were provided. The Government also set up a fund to provide grants to help the local fishing community move towards sustainable or high value-added operations. In 2015, six applications were approved, involving a total commitment of about [HKD]$28.3 million” (AFCD, 2016 [online]).

This demonstrates that the government has made some effort in changing HK fishing practices for the better. The conservationists on the other hand, are pushing for further legal revision and funding for extended research on marine ecosystem damage.

2.8 Shark fin trade

“Some shark populations have declined by up to 98% in the last 15 years and nearly one third of pelagic sharks species are considered threatened by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature” (WildAid, 2016 [online]).

2.8.1 Chinese culture and beliefs

Shark finning has been in practice since the 10th or 11th centuries (Schneider, 2011) and mainly aristocrats and emperors traditionally consumed the meat, as “shark fin symbolises wealth, power, prestige and honour among the Chinese. HK accounts for around 50-80% of all shark fin imports in the world (Shark Trust, 2009 [online], ADMCF, 2015) and the majority of this is exported to Mainland China. The Chinese shark fin gourmet is a show of respect, honour, and appreciation to guests” (Nyakupfuka 2013, p.114). Hitherto, it was a dish served on rare occasions such as ceremonies, banquets and weddings. In more recent decades, businessmen frequently order shark fin soup as a way of enticing their clients and impressing them with their wealth and status (Schneider, 2011). It is still the case now and commonplace, despite being expensive. “A single Whale Shark pectoral fin can sell for up to $20,000 USD and a Basking Shark pectoral fin can fetch up to $50,000 USD” (Shark Truth, 2015 [online]).
Another Chinese principle is that they consider it to be polite to have food still left on the plate when one is finished eating because if all the food has been eaten, it implies that the host has not been generous enough to their guests (Hinkelman, 1994). This makes things worse: the whole fin is not even consumed so a part of the USD100 tiny bowl of soup is wasted (Ellis, 2005).

2.8.2 The process
For fishermen to obtain fins, the sharks are caught on long lines or in large nets and hauled into the boat (Sea Shepherd, 2016 [online]). The fins are then removed and the other 98.5% of the shark’s body mass is discarded back into the ocean (Byron, 2014). “If still alive, the shark dies and slow painful death either from asphyxiation, blood loss, or at the hands of other predators” (Schneider 2013, p.8). A shark can die of asphyxiation even though it is an animal that breathes under water because they need their fins to push the water through their gills in order to breathe. Remove the fins and it is left to die, mutilated on the ocean floor (Assembly Bill 376, 2011 [online]).

2.8.3 Alternatives
Shark fin itself does not bring any flavour to the soup at all. It is “only used for texture which can be easily replaced with fake shark fin or vermicelli” (Shark Truth, 2015 [online]). This fact makes the decision to eat the fin so much more catastrophic from an ethical standpoint, as it is not even the fin itself that people enjoy. It is merely a status symbol (Spapens et al., 2016).

2.8.4 Acts of prevention
The shark fin trade has become a much-discussed topic in recent years, as “numerous campaigns have emerged across countries such as the United States, Europe and Canada to boycott seafood products, particularly shark fins” (Techera and Klein 2014, p.139). Celebrities are employed to be faces of, or associated with in certain campaigns, as it draws a lot of media attention (Richey and Ponte, 2015). Many celebrities have pledged to stop eating shark fin soup and are trying to persuade others to choose an alternative by explaining this on their social media pages, which have millions of followers. The most significant influence on China’s population was NBA all-star Yao Ming, although in spite of his fame and large fan-base; his statements
were infrequently printed in the Chinese Press. Gordon Ramsay created his own TV show exposing the shamefulness of shark finning and world-renowned, naturalist Steve Irwin stated that if he went to a Chinese restaurant to discover shark fin soup was on the menu, he would walk out and not dine there (Klaus, 2014).

There has also been an increase in public awareness about shark finning due to the actions and exposure of green groups such as WildAid and WWF, which have begun to make significant impact as more people join the movement (Vannucini, 1999). These green groups have specifically been “targeting the consumption of shark fin at wedding banquets, alongside a government bid to deter public officials from serving the dish at official events” (Karacs, 2016 [online]). Banquets are an essential element in traditional Chinese marriage ceremonies and it is insulting to the marrying family if it is not served (Schneider, 2011).

Cathay Pacific, HK’s leading airline, is highly regarded in the world for business and transporting goods to and from HK, and HK’s airport is one of the busiest airports due to HK’s ‘free trade’ policy (Werner and DeSimone, 2009). A setback for the shark fin trade was in June 2016, when Cathay Pacific and its sister airline DragonAir declared that they will no longer permit their airlines to transport shark fins. They are now “urging Hong Kong Airlines and Malindo Air to take a stance on shipping shark fin cargo and requesting that Fiji Airlines ditch their ‘sustainable’ shark fin policy” (Grundy, 2016 [online]).

2.9 Conserving marine ecosystems

Aquaculture is a type of farming used to breed certain types of fish. It has become more popular in recent decades, as it produces more fish biomass per surface area than wild fish because wild fish are being caught before they can reproduce meaning there are fewer fish in the sea (Dunham, 2011). That said, the word spread and more and more fishery areas became involved and started their own aquaculture programmes and now 50% of all fish consumed globally is due to aquaculture practices (FAO, 2009). There is a possibility that “aquaculture could be the key for providing global food security” (Dunham 2011, p.1). It may also provide nutritional well-being,
poverty reduction, and economic development by meeting all of these demands, and additionally accomplishing this with a minimum impact on the environment and maximum benefit to society” (Tidwell 2012, p.13). The need for aquaculture to save the future of fish has been recognised globally (OECD, 2010), and by creating more aquaculture farms will also provide more jobs to the local fishing communities. Furthermore it will enable the consumers to know exactly what is inside the fish when they eat it because it is hard to tell what a wild fish in the ocean has eaten and with higher levels of pollution for example, the fish itself may have some unhygienic substances inside it.
**Chapter Three Methodology**

**3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methods the researcher has taken in order to collect the primary data for this study. It describes the processes from choosing the type of method suitable for the study to the number and type of participants used to gather the correct and appropriate data to accommodate the study.

**3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative methods**

There are two types of primary research: quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative research is used to calculate numerical data and is often presented in graphs and charts for a clear comparison between participants and studies (Newman and Benz, 1998). Qualitative research on the other hand has been defined by Patton (1990) as “detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviours, direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and case histories.” (Patton 1990, p.22)

A qualitative research method was decided to be a more appropriate form of research for this study in particular because the researcher is trying to find out personal opinions and views of specific people in the industry and not facts and figures in which they would find out if they were conducting quantitative research (Creswell, 2014). The researcher believed that qualitative primary research would be able to give them the answers they need to complete this research project and fulfil the aim in discovering whether morals or money would be stronger in the decision making process on whether or not people should consume unsustainably sourced seafood (Hamilton, 2005). This is because it is “usually primary research that answers the important questions, the ones that other people also want answered” (Rugg and Petre 2007, p.32).
3.3 Selecting the research method

To compare and contrast the views of restaurateurs and conservationists, the researcher selected the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews (Galletta, 2013) to acquire the right information to understand the industry as a whole and how effective the prevention of unsustainable seafood consumption really is and discover new information that literature has not revealed.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the ideal method to use to collect primary data for a number of reasons. The first is that the interview is a type of qualitative research, meaning that the information gathered will be subject to the participants’ own personal views and opinions (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The information given is based on quotes, which lead to the final written report having a more flexible structure with more in depth analyses and complex justifications (Creswell, 2014).

The second reason is that the semi-structure of the questions would enable the researcher to expand from their initial set of questions if the interviewee has more information on a certain subject field. This semi-structure gives the interviewer the freedom to rephrase (Galletta, 2013) or “expand on any questions in order to explore a given response in greater depth” (Mitchell and Jolley 2010, p.277).

The researcher conducted a pilot interview with the primary contact to test whether the questions made sense, were cohesive and were appropriate to the study (Gillham, 2000). The researcher included this pilot interview in the results, as no changes were needed to improve the interview.

3.4 Sampling method

The researcher used snowballing and convenience sampling methods, which resulted in the recruitment of five participants: three marine conservationists and two restaurateurs.

The researcher originally believed that three of either side of the study would be enough information to compare and to be able to detect a correlation between the two sides (Emmel, 2013). However after interviewing two restaurateurs, she believed
that there was enough information to compare with the conservationists, and therefore did not need the third. The sampling method chosen is convenience sampling because it involves selecting people “on the basis of their availability and willingness in order to respond” (Gravetter and Forzano 2012, p.151), meaning that the researcher has chosen these participants because they have offered up their time to give their opinions and help the study advance.

The researcher personally knows a conservationist in HK who agreed to partake in the study and they also put the researcher in contact with other conservationists in HK who are the other two conservationists. Moreover they helped the researcher in seeking restaurateurs in HK who would be willing to participate in the study.

3.5 Ethics

As the researcher decided to conduct primary data to further research their topic, an ethics form, as shown in Appendix 1, was necessary to be completed and approved before conducting the interviews. This ethics form is primarily to foresee any problems that may occur during the research process, which could put the participant, researcher or the project itself at risk (Mertens and Ginsberg, 2009). For example, some of the questions in the interviews may not be appropriate for the study or for the participant and the data may be retracted and become unable to be used in the study. This ethics form reviews and approves these questions in order to avoid this issue and make sure that the research may be carried out (Melnyk and Morrison-Beedy, 2012).

Before conducting these interviews, the researcher asked their participants to fill out a consent form, which detailed what the researcher will do with the data. The participants ticked the boxes according to how comfortable they were to have their own names or the names of their organisation to be revealed in the final research. If they wished for their names to remain anonymous to the readers, the researcher has referred to them as Participant C1 or R1, which represent a conservationist (C) or a restaurateur (R) and the numbers indicate the different participants in that category.
This process is necessary to respect participants’ requirements to protect them from public knowledge of who they are and who they represent. Some of the participants wished to remain anonymous in this study resulting in the researcher keeping all of the names anonymous in the results to maintain the flow of the discussion and easier to follow as a reader.

3.6 Analysis method

The researcher has used a thematic method to analyse the data from the interviews because this method highlights the repetition in the phrases said between the participants (King and Horrocks, 2010). These repeated phrases and similar themes show the researcher the correlation between the answers of the different interviewees and enables the researcher to come to a conclusion about the data and see if their questions gave them the right information needed. This is a more lengthy process than a quantitative method because in qualitative research, “comparison is often much less explicit and transparent, yet comparison can deepen understanding and explanation of a particular phenomenon” (Guest et al. 2012, p.161) making it more challenging to identify the direct comparison points between the studies but reveals a more in depth result in the end.

3.7 Issues identified during data collection

There were a few limitations when collecting the primary data for this study. The first was that the researcher only had a limited time in HK to be able to interview the participants in person so only one out of the five interviews were done in person and the rest had to be done over the phone. This meant that it was a more impersonal environment and the researcher struggled to gauge a reaction from the participants because “in a face-to-face situation better explanations are possible as the respondents’ body language offers additional clues to the answer… [and] it is easier to maintain the interest of a respondent” (Hague 2004, p.123-124). Due to this
impersonal connection to the participant the researcher rarely asked questions that she had not previously prepared and trust the answers were viable.

Due to logistical constraints in order to gather the data from the final participant, the interview took the form of an exchange of emails with one of the participants. This was because the participant declared they would prefer to answer the questions by email in their own time. The researcher believed this was beneficial to her, as she did not have to write out a transcript of that particular interview, saving time in this process. On the other hand, the researcher noticed a significant difference in the development of the answers from the written interview and the spoken interviews. The spoken interviews have considerably more information to be extracted from it compared with the written because when answering a question in person, people tend to take longer to get to the point. When writing an answer, one can take their time to figure what exactly he/she wants to say and edit it to make it more precise. However the researcher believed that she collected enough data to complete the research project and achieve the aim.
Chapter Four Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the primary research taken in the form of interviews with participants in HK. The chapter compares opinions of the conservationists and restaurateurs to satisfy the objectives of the study while simultaneously comparing this to the literature review and new information to contrast or agree with what the participants have declared for themselves. This is to demonstrate how well the general secondary information is being disseminated to the public and how much it is being heeded. In so doing, the researcher can conclude what method has been effective and what new information needs to be revealed in order for the public to truly pay attention and make a change to the world.

4.2 Raising awareness

The results from the interviews clearly indicate that raising awareness is the most important factor that needs to be addressed in order to make a change to a more sustainable way of life. This raising awareness is the key to solving the unsustainable fishing problems and indefinitely banning the consumption of endangered species. A Mintel study in the UK revealed that 63% of fish and shellfish consumers would change their diets and eating habits to avoid consuming species they knew were endangered (Mintel 2015). This however only applies to the UK; the residents of HK and Mainland China on the other hand have been less responsive due to the lack of awareness on the subject of sustainability and which species are endangered.

4.2.1 Social media and celebrity endorsements

The results have suggested that celebrity endorsed social media campaigns can be an effective way of raising awareness to the public. Social media has become one of the most influential forms of communication in modern day society in terms of getting information out to the public in a matter of seconds and making an immediate impact on their lives (Zarella, 2010). As of 2016, nearly a third of the world’s population uses
Some form of social media and a high proportion of this figure accesses social media through mobile devices, due to them being at one’s side at all times and are updating every second (Mintel, 2016).

The idea of celebrity endorsements to raise awareness engendered more controversial opinions from the participants. C1 believed that engaging the general public in discussions about sustainability would be a more effective way of getting the sustainability message across, arguing that people should be asked:

“specific questions on sustainability or the rationale rather than just putting an icon [as the face of a campaign] that they can follow”.

Therefore, C1 questioned the true understanding of the meaning behind the campaign, whilst suggesting that people may not be paying attention to sustainability issues behind the campaign, but paying attention to it because a celebrity is fronting it.

C2 disagreed by saying celebrities are an important influence on the public’s awareness of unsustainable consumption of seafood. C2 offered the following rationale:

“People are more likely to remember an ad that has someone they recognise in it (...) [We] produced two short videos featuring celebrities and an ad campaign using posters in MTRs [equivalent to the subway or underground]”

C2 argued that these celebrities were famous in China and HK and were well followed on social media. Consequently, C2 believed that this would have been successful in grabbing more of the public’s attention and increased the profile of what is sustainable and what is not. Yet she also said that this is difficult to interpret because this type of information cannot be measured specifically.

C3 agreed with C2 and gave the example of Yao Ming [world famous basketball player], who campaigned against the shark fin trade. As stated in the literature review,
Ming teamed up with WildAid to help the shark fin cause become more publicised. His involvement caused the nationwide ban of shark fin soup in restaurants to reach 91% per cent in China – as a result of this immediate positive response “the campaign has been credited with cutting the number of sharks killed for their fins by 50 percent” (Wanjuki, 2015 [online]). C3’s example and how shark fin demand decreased considerably showed that this campaign was extremely successful and justifies the literature review on how celebrities can make a significant impact. This opposes C1 stating that the public would not understand the true meaning of the campaign, and simply follow the icon.

Conversely, referring to the same campaign, its success was based on the fact that Ming’s campaign was on the issue of shark fin rather than on sustainable seafood. C1 believed that sharks get more media coverage than any other marine animal because they are “iconic to people”. This to a certain extent was also confirmed by C3 who stated:

“There’s a large body of people over the last 20 years or so who have started to study sharks and so there’s a lot of information on the biology of sharks. (...) People are fascinated by sharks, they just attract attention. They’re not ordinary fish.”

By which they mean sharks get more media coverage because people “are scared of them but they’re curious about them” hence they are more intriguing. As highlighted in the literature review, the inhumane concept that they are alive when finned and thrown back into the ocean, is also a key reason.

Lack of comprehension of sustainability was thought to be particularly present in older generations, who were viewed as not engaging with social media. C1 noted that younger generations refuse to consume the soup, but are pressurised to do so by their elders due to traditional social values:

“there is still a demand to some point and so for some people its really difficult to make sure they understand [the meaning of being] sustainable, (...) [they will consume shark fin] because of habit or because of culture or tradition (...) [and they] must have it because it showcases their status”
The gap in understanding of how to be sustainable and why to stop consuming shark fin was also highlighted by R2, who explained they are:

“a big follower to ban shark fin in HK and Asia in general so I think it's a crime... the older Chinese population still wants to see [shark fin being served] but I think that a large part of the population, the younger generation understands that sustainability is important. They don’t order shark fin soup. They want to preserve [the shark populations].”

Educating them on these issues will implement change (Hill, 2001). By using several forms of media and tactics, awareness will undeniably spread. C1 has noticed himself that the newspapers in HK will only have a small spread of the local seafood problems. In contrast, they will save the front page and the larger article spaces for issues of government and politicians because these are considered more important and the publication is likely to get more readers and subscribers with these sorts of headlines.

This therefore suggests three salient points. Firstly, social media with or without celebrity endorsements can be a successful means of raising awareness, as results have shown a significant correlation between the younger generation and social media influence. Secondly that social media is not successful in reaching older generations for whom the consumption of shark fin is still an important way to express wealth and status. Finally, that the urgency of the topic is considered less important than other factors and therefore will only have a small impact on readers.

4.2.2 Marches and costumes
C3 stated she has found that involving the public in the sustainable awareness movement by actively doing something to include them will make the cause more memorable. She herself has participated in marches with local celebrities and dressing up in bright, entertaining costumes to catch the public’s attention in unique and inventive ways. “Well-attended demonstrations and street marches nearly always attract media attention by virtue of their sheer size” (Chapman 2007, p.231). This confirms C3’s attempts to attract the media and therefore enticing more of the public
to join them in making a difference to the world’s attitudes towards the environment and much needed conservation.

4.2.3 Documentaries
As previously discussed, the use of videos and documentaries to spread awareness about sustainable seafood has been relatively effective, although it is difficult to measure how many people were effected from this type of information (Sohlberg and Mateer, 2001). C1 agreed and noted the Chinese population will pay little attention to a western made documentary with Chinese subtitles and up until around 4 years ago there were no:

“Chinese or HK documentaries that [were] made by [a] Hong Kong broad casting company (...), it’s always from the BBC, CCN or Discovery Channel and then they are just (...) putting in Chinese narration and that’s all. They don’t have their own production to make their own documentaries to make it more for the Chinese [viewers]”

C3, who was involved in the production that was originally in Cantonese and then later on translated and released in English, reflected on being

“surprised about how interested people were [in marine ecosystems] and they just had no idea [about the current issues with it until after watching the documentary]”.

This suggests that documentaries about marine life can help educate people on the subject, providing that they make them in a way that is accessible and comprehensible by their target market. This can be supported by an example of Planet Earth II, where the opening episode drew in 9.2 million viewers to BBC1 (Jackson, 2016) and showed a very positive response from the views on social media sites.

4.2.4 Seafood guide
When interviewing C1 and C2, they both mentioned the WWF seafood guide as an extremely effective way of implementing change to the publics buying behaviour when shopping for seafood or dining. In addition, R2 stated he regularly uses seafood
guides as an indication of what kind of seafood he should be ordering into his restaurant and serving to his guests:

“Right now I have several apps on my phone. One of them is MSC (...) and I can just click on any fish I want, I can just punch the name in and see where the best fishing practices take place, which ones are [sustainable and] that should be used. (...) It’s very easy just to click on the sustainable seafood guide and it gives you, really a lot of information on what kind of seafood you should be using and why.”

Both R1 and R2 reflected that these guides were easy to use and very informative. These seafood guides have been a useful addition to referencing for the public and even to restaurateurs like R2 who can quickly access this information whenever they want (Albarran, 2013) and see which species is endangered and therefore which they should avoid. R1 has also declared that he checks his seafood stock with the MSC seafood guide colours as explained in the literature review, and will only choose from ones that are in the green section and very rarely from the yellow. This is because certain species such as HK squid are all becoming endangered and are therefore in the yellow column. But the demand for it by diners overrides the desire for its sustainability and so R1 feels pressurised to order from that column. However he has said that he is searching for new international suppliers for a similar species that is in the green column to become 100% sustainable.

C1 and C2 are currently working together to try and create another seafood guide for the public to use, specifically aimed at the wet markets in HK, as this is where most of the HK population buy their seafood because it is cheap and plentiful. If the public could use this guide to identify which seafood they should and shouldn’t buy, it will hopefully reduce the demand and therefore take pressure off the endangered species. These guides will be published online, on social media sites and in a little booklet that can fit in a wallet so it is aimed at all generations. The wallet-sized booklet is also useful because when a buyer in the market goes to pay for the seafood they have chosen, they will be able to see the booklet and quickly check to see if they are indeed buying a sustainable species or from a declared sustainable source.
4.3 Conservationist and restaurateur interaction

The results from the interviews indicate that there is a strong relationship between the conservationists and the restaurateurs in regards to how the message is conveying to the restaurateurs and the public from the conservationists. This section shows the many ways that the conservationists are trying to do so and the response from the restaurateurs.

4.3.1 Seminars

C1 and C3 have been involved in putting on seminars for restaurateurs and the public. C1 said he was working

“with other NGOs on promoting sustainable seafood [in] different sectors on seminars [such as on a] corporate [level] and also public seminars”.

These seminars are to explain to the staff and public about what they are truly eating, what they should think about before ordering something and how they should change to become more sustainable.

As previously highlighted, the understanding of sustainability in Chinese culture differs from Western understanding. C2 explained that her “biggest challenge” was testing the public’s understanding that their interpretation of the word sustainable, means the eternal supply of seafood on offer (Wilson Peacock, 2008). She emphasised the need to change the understanding of the word within the culture. She noted:

“In Cantonese, it means something along the lines of ‘everlasting’ or ‘continuous’, which doesn’t really have the right connotations for what we’re going for.

There have been signs that the seminars have started to make a difference. According to C1 at least 10 chain hotels in HK requested that he come to their hotel and give a
seminar to teach their staff about their attitudes towards change and sustainability.

C1 explained

“the manager [of the hotels] actually found out the staff’s lack of awareness and they invited us to come and explain the issue and to do a seminar (...) to explain what is sustainable seafood. And even when I was there, I talked to the chef, I talked to retail people and then they [agreed] in general they [had] no idea on their consumption [of unsustainable products]”

These seminars then educate the staff and then they relay the message to the public and motivate them to move towards a more sustainable life style. Other writers have also confirmed this by saying “to be able to influence the decision-making process, the public has to be environmentally educated and well-informed” (Council of Europe 1998, p.74). Consequently by targeting the restaurants and hotels first, the public will have no choice but to follow suit, as there will be few places in HK that will be serving seafood from the unsustainable spectrum.

4.3.2 Restaurant actions

C2’s organisation ran a seafood festival in HK in 2015. She explained that “all the participating restaurants had to serve at least one sustainable dish” encouraging the restaurants to introduce sustainably sourced dishes and adapt their menus to become more environmentally aware. As a direct result of this festival, several restaurants in HK have turned fully sustainable and many others have “sped up their sustainability plans” (C2, 2017). Loyal customers of the restaurants will take note of the change in menu and learn about the benefits of sustainably sourced products and will also look to adapt to this lifestyle, justifying the previous statements.

Adopting a slightly alternative take on encouraging seafood sustainability, one sushi restaurant in HK “charges HK$10 (US$1.28) per left over sushi” (Sloan et al. 2013, p.75) in an attempt to reduce waste and therefore be more sustainable with their food, as demand for more food will be reduced as customers will not want to waste their money. This however is rather controversial to the Chinese culture the
researcher has previously mentioned that it is impolite to finish all the food on one’s plate (Healthy Travel Blog, 2017).

C2 has produced a website to inform the public about what sustainable seafood is and where you can find it in HK in terms of supermarkets and restaurants and she explains that it has “proven fairly popular by its Google analytics”. This is to promote sustainable restaurants in HK to the public and boost their popularity over the restaurants that have not yet become sustainable.

4.3.3 WWF involvement

There has been a significant correlation between all the interviews regardless of whether it was a conservationist or a restaurateur participant. This correlation stems from the fact that the WWF has played some part in facilitating their transition to sustainability or acting as a support foundation for the smaller conservation groups trying to get their voice heard.

C1 praised the WWF’s actions and he thought it

“was very smart (...) [that the] WWF took it to the next level (...) [because they] have developed a consumer guide and also they have a list of suppliers and it can help show which supplier can source sustainable seafood and then they work directly introducing them to seminars, corporate events and they can connect each other”

They then declare which suppliers are working sustainably and which ones are not, so then the public and restaurants can decide for themselves of which they would prefer. The WWF taking the initiative is not a foreign concept, as the literature review also gives details of their other projects such as the fish farming schemes they have set up for local fishermen.

Their consumer guide is specifically for the wet markets and the species of fish to avoid eating and additionally lists the sustainable restaurants in HK. This was noted by C3 who mentioned:
“[If I want to go out for a sustainably sourced seafood dinner, I would be able to find it pretty readily on WWF].”

R1 and R2 explained that the WWF’s involvement was the reason that they could change into more sustainable restaurants. This is because WWF connected them to suppliers that could facilitate their sustainable requirements. R1 declared they

“always cross check with WWF once we put a new fish on the menu or a new seafood item and then we check what they think about it and then we decide either to take it or not”.

R2 agreed and added:

“every time we change seafood, we go back to WWF and get a control mechanism in place where my assistant can check with the WWF and see what the impact is on the seafood before we put it on the menu”.

This is a clear indication of his conscious efforts to be as environmentally friendly as possible and the importance of the role of WWF in facilitating change once the restaurateur has taken the initiative to contact them.

To promote their more sustainable dishes to consumers, R1 said:

“we print [the WWF logo] on the menus. I mean most people are used to this now (…), so we just put it on our menu that this is 100% sustainable when there is a logo next to it and there’s very very few that won’t have that logo next to it”.

WWF has had a major influence on these restaurateurs and the public’s overall opinions and knowledge of sustainable seafood in HK and in other parts of the world. Kronenberg and Bergier (2010) support this in saying “their activities are usually understood as being for the common good or moving society towards greater public order” (Kronenberg and Bergier 2010, p.346).
R2 credited MSC in that he has been using their tri-coloured column seafood guide app, explained in the literature review, on his phone. MSC is another credible source as; “results of independent DNA testing on MSC labeled products show that over 99% are correctly labeled, confirming supply chain integrity for MSC certified sustainable seafood” (Engle et al. 2017, p.89). These new, easily accessible revelations are clearly helping and making a difference to people’s conscious decisions with what they choose to consume (Barth and Wolff 2009).

4.4 Price

Price plays a major role in the conscious efforts to become more sustainable whether one is a supplier, wholesaler, restaurateur or consumer. “Being seen as too expensive is the biggest reason for not eating more fish or eating fish at all” (Mintel, 2016 [online]). This statement implies this could be the solution to prevent seafood from being over fished because there will be less demand for it if it is too expensive for most although this is based on UK data. From a HK perspective, this contradicts the entire concept of the famous shark fin soup, as it is one of the most expensive dishes one can order, which is one of the main reasons of its popularity. This demonstrates that it is not the price of seafood that should be changing, it is the attitudes of the consumers who should be thinking about what impact they are making on the environment before ordering something that is endangered.

C3 previously mentioned that she can readily find sustainable seafood in HK which is listed on the WWF website. Subsequently, she says that the restaurants serving sustainable seafood “tend to be the more expensive ones”, which would put the average consumer off dining at the sustainable restaurants and would more likely steer them towards the cheaper, unsustainable restaurants. Conversely having said that, the average consumer does not regularly dine on shark fin and other unsustainable products, meaning the restaurants that serve shark fin already have their established wealthy customer base. If the restaurant were to turn sustainable and therefore more expensive, the regular diners who spend that amount on shark fin will be more lenient to spend money on other expensive seafood.
R1 supports C3’s opinion on the increased price putting off people ordering sustainably by saying:

“If [the price] is too disproportionate between the sustainable fish and the non sustainable fish then you might opt for not taking that fish altogether. If you can’t sell it then there’s no point”.

R2 however contradicts this and said

“[the sustainably sourced fish] is more costly (…) [but] we help with our pricing (…) the fact of the matter is that the seafood we use is probably at about 90% [sustainable] (…) there’s a pricing level that goes for all the seafood, I don’t make it cheaper at all”.

This suggests that he doesn’t alter the price of his dishes if the unsustainable fish that he served was cheaper than the sustainable. This would mean that his guests do not differentiate between the dishes in terms of their price, making them order what they prefer to eat rather than being determined by price.

4.5 Aquaculture

Literature suggests that aquaculture as a solution to over-fishing has been positive and seems as if it has been effective. Nevertheless the conservationists had contradicting views on aquaculture being as effective as compared to the literature review. C3 stated:

“aquaculture is growing because it is filling the demand supply gap. In other words we continue to take stuff from the sea but it’s not enough for growing demand and the growing population so we have to supplement that and aquaculture helps to supplement what we take from the wild”.
This is suggesting aquaculture is helping the cause with keeping up the supply of seafood to fulfil the demand however is not a solution to the depleting marine populations.

C2 declared that it is temporarily filling the demand-supply gap yet she lead to saying that if society carried on with the same demand, even the aquaculture farms will not be able to keep up. This proposes society should either alter their diets to accommodate the diminishing populations or marine biologists should try and develop a different solution to maintain the supply.

Furthermore, C3 identifies that these types of farmed fish are carnivorous, meaning they eat other fish; therefore the fishermen must still go out and catch smaller fish for the farmed ones to eat. C2 adds to this statement by saying that scientists must find another feed that is “100% independent from wild-caught fish” otherwise this situation is simply adding to the problem.

C1 contributes to this argument by adding that these fish that are taken from the wild to feed the farmed fish are juvenile, meaning they are not fully developed (Morrissey et al., 2016), as a result it is not actually reducing the pressure on the fish populations, it is just causing another problem for a different species.

The aquaculture farming technique seems to be a temporary solution to fill the demand-supply gap; nevertheless C3 believes the wild fish caught to feed the farmed should just go directly to the consumers to save the energy and yield that is wasted when passing through two species. R2 said that wild caught fish also have a much longer shelf life than farmed, which is another incentive for him to want to buy wild caught and therefore supports C3 in this sense. Yet he then said that maybe wild fishing should be halted and

“maybe provide a very good tasting alternative which is farm raised and give our oceans a break and have our populations come and then we can go out and fish wild fish again”.
This reiterates the literature review whereby aquaculture could be an effective alternative to wild fishing and take pressure off the wild populations. On the other hand it cannot go as far as being the full solution for the diminishing fish populations.

4.6 Government
The HK government plays a significant role in the implementation of regulations and of the highest authority to control all endeavors that occur in the HK area. They are a funding platform for worthwhile projects as explained in the literature review, they have the ability to fund major fishing projects to help their local community. This is why conservationists are trying to unite with them to fund more of their research and awareness projects.

4.6.1 Funding
Having the HK government on the same page as the conservationists whereby they have an understanding of what the conservationists are trying to do to change the public’s knowledge base of what sustainable seafood really is, is of an upmost importance. This is because the government primarily funds the projects and research that the conservationists are doing along with other NGOs and investors to further their knowledge of the oceans and marine life and gauge the current status of the underwater populations (Harris, 2012).

C1 said he has worked with the government to address the issues with the shark trade and how to prevent imports of fins coming into HK. From this he suggested they set up “trading sections” such as surveillance booths and product examiners to develop more on the enforcement side to regulate the trade. Moreover they need help to identify which shark fins have been illegally cut off sharks that have been listed on the CITES Appendix I, meaning they cannot be touched or if they have a permit to hunt species listed on the other Appendices, as stated in the literature review (CITES, 2017). The government responded because of how much information there is on the shark fin trade and how much public attention the trade has received.

C3 has also been pushing the government to fund her projects and declared:
“One of the things that really gave us the traction on getting heard by the government at least and also getting funding to do more work was the fact that one of the live fish trade species, the Napoleon fish was listed on CITES Appendix 2 and that really made a difference. It’s sort of ensured that the species is taken seriously.”

In other words, without strong data and evidence, adapting to a sustainable way of life is difficult to implement. If there is no evidence for the diminishing populations and the prospects of what will happen in the future, then the public will carry on as they always have and their attitudes will stay the same. This is why the involvement of the government on their funding projects to gather the appropriate data in imperative.

C1 is currently working on two projects involving looking at the distribution of species in the surrounding seas of HK and then this can lead to establishing which species are in fact endangered. He can then show this data to the HK government and address the wet market suppliers to regulate what type of seafood they are allowed to bring into HK and sell and label. This is because “Not only is the problem one of overfishing, but once the fish arrive in HK it is difficult, or nearly impossible, to identify where the fish were caught” (Mottershead 2004, p.508).

4.6.2 Hong Kong legislation

Literature claims HK currently has no import and export laws or fishery management legalities, which is why the seas surrounding the HK area have been completely overfished and therefore the HK population has to import their fish from international sources (Zarrouki, 2015).

Fishery management is not something that HK has ever done according to C1 because of the free trade ports and the lack of import tax regulations from shipping containers bringing in their haul of products down to the tiny fishing boats with their fish stocks that will barely feed themselves. He however goes on to say that a regulation on quotas for fishermen has created a problem for the EU and their fish stocks because of the wastage it has caused from the discarding of the wrong fish. This has supported
the literature review whereby the EU quota system has seemed to be a solution to the number of fish caught per species, consequently has caused other species to perish unintentionally due to the problems with by-catch and therefore has affected their populations as well (Debating Europe, 2017).

C1 suggested that what HK should do instead of imposing a quota system is that they should look at the fishing technique itself. They should perhaps make the size of the nets smaller or change the technique to a more sustainable way of fishing such as pole and line to reduce the amount on unnecessary fish being caught (Fontaubert and Lutchman, 2003). This change in technique would mean that fewer fish would be caught in general leading to them becoming more expensive. This is a potential problem for restaurants, as it will dramatically affect their revenue and profit margins if they choose to maintain their price distributions.

R2 conversely noted that he does not alter his price distributions whether the seafood is sustainable or not in his restaurant and he believes that “if we continue [to catch] wild caught (...) we are going to be in trouble”, thus supporting the movement to aquaculture farms or the change in fishing techniques to “give the oceans a break”.

C2 on the other hand proposed that seafood eco-labeling in all markets and restaurants in HK would be beneficial for the population to understand what they are eating. However, she believed that “the Hong Kong government would be very difficult to persuade” to put regulations on the fishermen and display the logos on the different species in the markets. R1 supported C2 in that he displays logos on his menus if they are WWF certified as 100% sustainable and he noted that “most people are used to this now”, additionally suggesting that the public would accept the logos as a useful guide in the markets.

C2 explained that illegal fishing practices must be stopped before anything else can happen as these illegal practices has created issues with marine population analysis. These illegal fishing practices are not only the fishing of CITES listed species, but Morton (1997) as well claims that these fishing practices also include poisons and dynamite, which are illegal in HK and surrounding waters.
Additionally, C3 said “the shark group of IUCN have been very effective” in putting more species of shark onto the CITES lists. Then again she later declared that one can still get a permit to hunt CITES listed sharks and if they aren’t listed at all, then the trade is still legal. This supports the evidence explained in the literature review however as of 2013,

“only three shark species were listed on CITES Appendix II, despite the major role that international trade has played in driving the declines. Basking and whale sharks were protected by CITES in 2002, followed by great white sharks in 2004” (Techera and Klein 2014, p.187).

This demonstrates that the CITES Appendices in theory, may help the decline of shark populations, nevertheless the three species listed are the most valuable types on fin one can get in the trade as previously declared in the literature review, meaning that fishermen will be targeting those species specifically and illegally importing them (Camhi et al., 2008).

With informing the government on the current data about the marine ecosystems, conservationists and the government should be able to implement a change to the overall attitudes towards sustainable seafood. Banning shark fin from banquets and introducing fish farms for local farmers, as stated in the literature review, were the first positive steps towards a more eco-friendly HK, however there is a long way to go before they can get there.
Chapter Five Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of findings and conclusions
There has been a clear indication from the findings that the most urgent issue that needs to be addressed is the attitudes and understanding of the public on the subject of sustainable seafood. From the research carried out, raising awareness has not only been the biggest challenge to implement, but also the primary factor that is essential to move in a positive direction to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

The results highlight social media as an effective way of raising awareness, however this only reaches the younger generations, meaning the older generations are still preserving their traditional beliefs and consuming unsustainable seafood. This on the other hand can be seen as a positive because the younger generation recognises the urgency of the marine ecosystems and they will be the ones affected in the future if they carry on with the same demand, not their elders.

In an attempt to preserve the marine species and help regenerate the fish populations, aquaculture has had a more negative view from the conservationists compared to what literature suggests. The negative side to introducing more aquaculture farms and making this known to the public is that it runs the risk of the perception that farmed fish is the solution to preserving the fish populations. Aquaculture is merely supplementing the demand whilst in fact not helping the populations at all. C2 believes that it could become a relatively effective solution if the farmers could develop a feed for the farmed fish that is non-carnivorous as currently; they are fishing smaller fish from the wild to feed the farmed fish, which are often juvenile, which creates more sustainability problems.

Alternatively the conservationists all made a similar suggestion on the regulation side of HK’s ports and trading facilities. They believe that the ports should regulate the trade or at least supervise what goods are being exchanged to reduce the amount of illegal goods being shipped to Mainland China and propose a tax on species that are endangered but not yet illegal.
The whole issue about the attitudes towards shark fin and the CITES Appendices comes down to the fact that the fishermen and consumers don’t know any better because of the lack of awareness about the marine populations and how the species are becoming endangered or even extinct. If the consumers knew not to order shark fin soup because of how damaging it is to the shark populations, the demand for them would decrease and consequently the fishermen would not need to trade as many fins as they do now. Some of the consumers themselves do not necessarily know that they are consuming a shark fin at all. Because the literal translation to Chinese is ‘fish-wing soup’, the understanding of the species and how it is fished is unknown to these consumers. Hence, finding an alternative to the fin such as the vermicelli replacement would be ideal for those ordering it because they like the taste. Those who order it for the wealth and status side however, would be less convinced to change their ways.

The HK government has conversely helped this cause by officially banning the soup from traditional banquets. Major chain hotels have also begun to remove the soup from their menus to discourage their customers from consuming it as well, in the hope that others will follow in their place. What’s more is the CITES Appendices play an important role in the government’s actions in the sense they command that a fisherman must have a permit to catch species listed on the Appendices otherwise it is banned. Conservationists however still believe that the government is holding back their authority with the trading ports and illegal products are flowing in and out with little observation and even less regulation, which is fuelling the illegal traders and making that trade more lucrative.

Price is a factor that is important when changing to a more sustainable way of living. Both the conservationists and restaurateurs have noted that the sustainable seafood is more expensive than the unsustainable. Yet this affects more of the wet market buyers rather than the upscale restaurant diners. This is because the wet markets are known for cheap and plentiful species of fish, whereas the upscale restaurants that have already been serving expensive dishes such as shark fin soup or grouper will introduce sustainable dishes that would be around the same price or cheaper. This means that the consumers and therefore the demand will remain the same, regardless of the price.
Seafood eco-labelling has been declared that it is a useful addition to helping the public decide on what food they want to have. C2 thinks it will be an immense improvement to the seafood populations if they were displayed in the wet markets in HK. These labels are used by R1 in his restaurant and by many others on the island and consumers are starting to recognise them in supermarkets on certain packaging. The seafood guides produced by the WWF, C1 and C2 will direct consumers to the right products to buy and the right dishes to consume to be more sustainable with their lifestyle choices.

The researcher feels as if the research carried out has achieved the aim of identifying the attitudes towards the consumption of sustainable seafood and how one can implement change to become sustainable by comparing the views of restaurateurs and marine conservationists in HK. She concludes the younger generation have a more positive attitude towards ethical consumption of seafood and that the conservationists are developing many new ways of implementing change and aiding those who are being challenged to adapt. She deduces that the conservationists have been an effective platform in aiding restaurants to adapt to being more sustainable. This has been primarily due to the work of the WWF with their connections to sustainable suppliers and their seafood guides that the public and restaurateurs have been using to facilitate their sustainable change.

5.2 Recommendations for future research
The researcher has identified a few factors that would be useful for future research beyond this dissertation. The first would be that one should contact the WWF itself for an interview, as they have had a significant involvement in the seafood situation in HK. She also proposes there should be more participants in the study whereby there should be an opposing opinion, by way of that the researcher should request to interview a restaurant that has specifically not changed to become sustainable and ask if they have ever been nearly persuaded to change by conservationists. She believes that this will enhance the research and reveal the true effectiveness of the conservationists methods of persuasion, as currently she interviewed restaurants that
had already been persuaded by their own research and knowledge on the sustainable seafood in HK.

The research could be expanded more on other rejuvenation techniques to sustain the marine populations other than aquaculture and the change in fishing practices. This would demonstrate a broader range of information and the explanation that there are very few methods that can be taken to save the marine species.

The researcher recommends that primary research should be undertaken in the wet markets specifically and note how they have evolved and if whether they have started to introduce eco-labeling on the products available. Additionally suggesting that one should interview workers in the wet markets about whom their suppliers are and how they know whether or not their products are sustainable.

Another recommendation would be to discover how to reach the elder generation on the education of sustainable seafood seeing as their younger’s have learnt this from their constant usage of social media. This is an important factor to the study as the lack of awareness issue is the immediate problem that needs to be addressed.
Appendix 1

Ethics approval and documentation relating to the primary research

[Document Image]
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.

The document Ethics application guidance notes will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website. The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

PLEASE NOTE:
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Hannah Botsford</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Katarzyna Minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>Cardiff Metropolitan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>20065017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>International Hospitality Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Sustainable seafood management in the restaurant sector. A case study on Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected start date of data collection:</td>
<td>12/09/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate duration of data collection:</td>
<td>1 month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?:</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Will the study involve human samples and/or human cell lines?:</td>
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<th>Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain: No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human samples: No</td>
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**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**
**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**

| Practice based not involving human participants (eg curricular, practice audit) | No |
| Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg: initial Teacher Education) | No |
| A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS) | No |

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.
If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form.

In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project.
This dissertation will be a research project using primary and secondary data collection. The researcher will be conducting approximately 6 semi-structured interviews. The participants will be restaurant managers and marine conservationists, with the aim of comparing and contrasting their opinions on sustainable fisheries management. The researcher has chosen to research more in depth in this area as it is a current issue and they think it would have great impact on the public's attitude towards consumption of unsustainably sourced seafood.

**DECLARATION:**
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework.
I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

**STUDENTS:** I confirm that I will not disclose any information about this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of the applicant:</th>
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<td>7/12/16</td>
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**FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of supervisor:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L. MINOR</td>
<td>7th Dec 2016</td>
</tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Signature of supervisor:</th>
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**Research Ethics Committee use only**

<table>
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<th>Decision reached:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project approved</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project approved in principle</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision deferred</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project not approved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project rejected</td>
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Project reference number: Click here to enter text.
### CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

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<th>Name: Click here to enter text.</th>
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<td>Signature:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Details of any conditions upon which approval is dependant:</td>
<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
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**PART TWO**

#### A RESEARCH DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Click here to enter text.</td>
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</table>

A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project:

This project has will demonstrate the different attitudes towards consumption of sustainably sourced seafood and the ways of preventing the unsustainable techniques of catching seafood.

- The researcher will conduct 6 semi-structured interviews – 3 from marine conservationists and 3 restaurateurs.
- This will ensure that a correlation between the data will be identified, as the same questions will be asked to each participant. It will be less likely that conflicting views will occur with 3 participants and can more likely be regarded as an anomaly, not verifiable data.
- Convenience sampling is the chosen method as there are few participants who will have the time to be interviewed in the time that the researcher has allocated for the primary research.
- The researcher has contacted restaurants and conservation parties in Hong Kong to inform them of the project and have asked if they could participate. Their participation will be no longer than 1 hour.
- The researcher will ask them if they would like to remain anonymous in the study and their confidentiality will be respected if they wish to remain anonymous.
- The interviewer will record the interview so as to be able to connect with the interviewee instead of having to quickly note down the responses.
- The researcher is hoping to interview 6 participants, as it will generate enough qualitative data to compare and reach a conclusion.
- The researcher has contacts in Hong Kong who will connect them to organisations and restaurant managers who will be willing to be interviewed.
- The researcher will be using the thematic method to analyse their data because it is a qualitative data analysis method that will identify the key words and quotes that are mentioned in the interview that is relevant to the study.

A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research? | No |
A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research |
| Click here to enter text. |

A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications? | No |
A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them |
| Click here to enter text. |

### B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

1 An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here

*Application for ethics approval v6 October 2025*
**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**  
**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The researcher has previously conducted primary research for an integrated project the previous year involving questionnaires being distributed to the public domain.</td>
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</table>

| B2 Student project only  
What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have? |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kasha Minor has utilised semi-structured interviews as a method for gathering primary data for the completion of BA and MSc dissertations in Hospitality Management, and currently is using interviews and as methods to gather data towards her PhD.</td>
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<th>C POTENTIAL RISKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 What potential risks do you foresee?</td>
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</table>
| There may be a risk that a participant will not share their true opinions on the questions asked which will affect the data results.  
The interview may be an inconvenience to the participants, as it will presumably be conducted during their working hours.  
The risk of not meeting the deadlines as the researcher has a small window to interview these participants in person during the university winter holiday period.  
The data results may be intercepted and released to the public and confidentiality will be exposed.  
The interviewee may not show up for the allocated time slot for their interview. |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?</th>
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| Ask the participants to share their true opinions and if they are worried of the outcome, they may stay anonymous in the revealing of the results.  
Offer the projects’ data results to the organisations as a way of thanking them for their participation and they may use it for their own benefit to recognise their effectiveness with persuasion on restaurateurs’ opinions?  
Consent for the interviews will be gained via a participant consent form, which will be signed before the interview. Interviews times will be arranged in advance at a time and place convenient for the interviewees. The researchers’ whereabouts will be known to a third person.  
Be organised and ahead of schedule so as to not be put under as much pressure to complete the project. All raw data will be held on a secure password protected external hard drive and paper copies will be kept in a locked cupboard. Access to the raw data will be restricted to the researcher. Email/s confirming that key people have agreed to be interviewed are attached. |

When submitting your application you **MUST** attach a copy of the following:  
- All information sheets  
- Consent/assent form(s)  
An exemplar information sheet and participant consent form are available from the Research section of the Cardiff Met website.
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Sustainable seafood consumption in Hong Kong

Cardiff Metropolitan University Protocol Number:

Project summary
The purpose of this research project is to establish the current situation on the consumption of sustainable seafood in Hong Kong. Your participation will enable the collection of data which will form part of a study being undertaken at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Why have you been asked to participate?
You have been asked to participate because you fit the description of the participants that are needed for this study.
You are a restaurant who is willing to share the information that you have with the researcher in order for them to collect the appropriate data for their research project.
During the interview you will be asked questions on the current status of the ways conservationists are trying to prevent consumption of unsustainable seafood and how this has reflected on your own choices in the restaurants in regards to what to serve to your customers.
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Project risks
The research involves an interview with you, the participant, which will take around half an hour to 45 minutes of your time and which will be recorded for later analysis. We are not seeking to collect any sensitive data on you. This study is only concerned with the attitudes towards the consumption of sustainable seafood and how the information is conveyed. We do not think that there are any significant risks associated with this study. However, if you do feel that any of the questions are inappropriate then you can stop at any time. Furthermore, you can change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time – we will completely respect your decision.

How we protect your privacy
All the information you provide will be held in confidence. We have taken careful steps to make sure that you cannot be directly identified from the information given by you. Your personal details (e.g. signature on the consent form) will be kept in a secure location by the research team. When we have finished the study and analysed all the information, the documentation used to gather the raw data will be destroyed except your signed consent form which will be held securely for 5 years. The recordings of the focus groups’ interview will also be held in a secure and confidential environment during the study and destroyed after 5 years.

YOU WILL BE OFFERED A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET TO KEEP

If you require any further information about this project then please contact:
Hannah Botsford, Cardiff Metropolitan University
Cardiff Metropolitan University email: st20065017@cardifffmet.ac.uk
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Sustainable seafood consumption in Hong Kong

Cardiff Metropolitan University Protocol Number:

Project summary
The purpose of this research project is to establish the current situation on the consumption of sustainable seafood in Hong Kong. Your participation will enable the collection of data, which will form part of a study being undertaken at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Why have you been asked to participate?
You have been asked to participate because you fit the description of the participants that are needed for this study. You are a marine conservationist who is willing to share the information that you have with the researcher in order for them to collect the appropriate data for their research project. During the interview you will be asked questions on the current status of the ways you are trying to prevent consumption of unsustainable seafood and how this has reflected on the restaurants choices of what to serve to their customers.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Project risks
The research involves an interview with the participant, which will take around half an hour to 45 minutes of your time and which will be recorded for later analysis. We are not seeking to collect any sensitive data on you; this study is only concerned with the attitudes towards the consumption of sustainable seafood and how the information is conveyed. We do not think that there are any significant risks associated with this study. However, if you do feel that any of the questions are inappropriate then you can stop at any time. Furthermore, you can change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time – we will completely respect your decision.

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YOU WILL BE OFFERED A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET TO KEEP

If you require any further information about this project then please contact:
Hannah Batsford, Cardiff Metropolitan University
Cardiff Metropolitan University email: s20085017@cardiffmet.ac.uk
Dear Sir/Madam,

I am an undergraduate student at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The title of my research project is Sustainable seafood management in the restaurant sector: A case study on Hong Kong. The aim of my study is to identify the middle ground between making a profit and ethical sustainable sourcing by comparing the views of restaurateurs and marine conservationists in Hong Kong. I will be comparing what conservationists are currently doing to encourage restaurants to become more sustainable with the restaurateurs’ point of view on how effective their influence has been. As part of my research, I would like to undertake research with people with a level of authority in their job who have the ability to influence or alter final decisions. I am writing to you because you fit the profile of this type of person needed for me to carry out my research. Before any primary data is collected this project will have been approved by Cardiff Metropolitan University and all data collection will be in accordance with the University’s ethics code of practice.

My purpose in writing to you is to ask if you would permit me to interview you in a brief half-hour interview about your knowledge of sustainable seafood in Hong Kong. Your participations would be entirely voluntary, neither you nor the company would be identified in the research results without your permission. You would also be allowed to stop the interview at any time.

The areas that would be covered in the interview include:
- The methods used to influence restaurateurs to become more sustainable
- The challenges faced with portraying this information and altering the menu to become more sustainable
- The availability of sharks fin soup in Hong Kong
- The public’s attitudes towards sustainable seafood
- Sustainable fishing techniques

I shall be delighted to make the results of my research available to you as a participant in the research when it is complete. If you would like to participate in this project and/or are interested in discussing it further, please contact me.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Botsford

st20065017@cardiffmet.ac.uk
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number: 
Participant name or Study ID Number: 
Title of Project: Sustainable seafood management in the restaurant sector. A case study on Hong Kong 
Name of Researcher: Hannah Botsford

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. [ ]

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. [ ]

3. I agree to take part in the above study. [ ]

4. I agree to the interview being recorded [ ]

Yes No

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications [ ] [ ]

6. I would like my organisations’ name to be anonymised in all publications [ ] [ ]

_______________________________________  ___________________
Signature of Participant  Date

_______________________________________  ___________________
Name of person taking consent  Date

_______________________________________
Signature of person taking consent
CONSERVATIONISTS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What different methods have you used to raise awareness of sustainable seafood to the public in HK?

Which approach do you think has been the most effective and why?

In your opinion, what has been the biggest challenge in raising awareness about sustainable seafood in HK, such as funding or publicity?

Is it hard to find restaurants that serve sustainable seafood in HK?

What percentage of the restaurants you targeted to become more sustainable has changed since you first started?

Can you name any of these restaurants and which techniques were the most effective?

Do you think using celebrities, as the face of campaigns is an effective way of catching the publics’ attention?

Do you know much about the EU quota system as a sustainable fishing regulation?

Do you agree with these regulations and do you think HK should introduce the same?

Why do you think shark fin has had so much media coverage in comparison to other marine life?

Why are restaurants still serving shark fin after knowing it is bad?

Chinese culture has always highly regarded shark fin as a status symbol, what do you suggest for their culture that will change their minds to becoming more sustainable?

Do you see aquaculture as solution to the decreasing number of fish in the world?

What other techniques do you know of that have been proven successful in helping fish populations from diminishing?

What projects are you currently working on that focus on reducing overfishing (if any)?

Out of these, which do you believe will have the most impact on fisheries?
RESTAURANT MANAGER QUESTIONS

Have you personally sought seafood that is sustainable for your restaurant and at home?

Is all the seafood on your menu sustainably sourced?

If not, do you encourage your customers to select a sustainable dish?

When did your restaurant start serving sustainable seafood?

Was it due to the work of conservationists?
  - If so, which organisations and what did they do?
  - **If not**, why did you change?

Does it cost the restaurant more money to buy sustainably sourced seafood?
  - If so, by how much and why?
  - If so, do you make those dishes more expensive and would consumers order that dish if it were more expensive but knew it was sustainable?
  - **If not**, why wouldn’t everyone else have it in their restaurants?

If the sustainable seafood is more expensive, do you believe you still make up the difference by positive association with sustainability?

If sustainable seafood was the same price and quality, would you serve only sustainable seafood and do you think everyone else would as well?

How do you know that all handling of the seafood you serve is sustainable from the wholesalers, distributors etc?

How do you pass the information to your customers?

Some restaurants include logos on their menus to prove they are from a sustainable source. Would you do this to let your customers know?

Do you think this is something consumers like to see or would they not notice?

Do your customers expect you to serve sustainable seafood?

Have any customers asked if the seafood they are eating is sustainably sourced?

Is it a more lengthy process for you, in order to have sustainable seafood supplied?

Do any of your customers ask if you serve shark fin soup?

Is all the fish you serve wild caught or farmed?

Do you know what technique the fishermen use to catch your fish and if it is 100% sustainable?
Appendix 2

Conservationist No. 1 interview

R: Umm.. So what different methods have you used to raise awareness of sustainable seafood to the public in HK?

P: Oh to the general public? So, we have like seminars and then we work with other NGOs like on like promoting sustainable seafood like different sectors on seminars like corporate and also public seminars and even also for example the most recent one is the Dive Expo, so which means its like they were talking about like diving and how it needs to relate to the ocean they might need to give a talk on conservation and then we talk about like what you can do like as a customer or a general even divers who will consume seafood and who should be aware of what is possible out there like possibility that you can choose sustainable seafood and what is sustainable seafood so..

R: Oh okay, what approach do you think has been the most effective and why?

P: Well, I think it is directly working with the catering sector is one of the, like I’ve seen like their work changes. So for example, a few years ago, in Hong Kong, so that’s the case like partly from like the WWF and also what we, I mean I will explain what we have done but from WWF I think that was very smart. So they have like something called the sustainable seafood guide, so I’m not sure if you have heard but this is the one

R: Yeah I have seen it

P: So they published this seafood guide based on the Hong Kong, like what you can find for the seafood and then they tell you which one is relatively and environmentally friendly and then people think it is a consumer guide, but actually like this friend of mine working in WWF took it to the next level. So he talked to the hotels, he talked to the catering sector, the restaurants like for example Maxim’s, so they talk, and then they ask what is the problem..? Why don’t they serve sustainable seafood and then he finds out, there are two things: Like customers didn’t know what happens so they would not initiate the initiative to request sustainable seafood so from the hospitality side, they will say and make a perfect excuse saying like “nobody asked for it so why are we selling that?” And then the other thing is like the source, which means the supplier, so WWF actually works with the suppliers and then they assess the seafood supply to see if they are sustainable and so actually now the WWF have developed a consumer guide and also they have a list of suppliers and it can help show which supplier can source sustainable seafood and then they work directly introducing them to seminars, corporate events and they can connect each other so that, I’ve seen like right now a lot of like especially the international brand hotels and then have like, well, one or two menus that provides certified buys sustainable seafood and that they also partner with WWF on the program. And what we did is we actually also so we mainly or mostly focus on the shark related conservation issue so in 2010/2009, we actually held workshops like with the hotels like management level people and then we talk about the situation and then they were sitting in the same room and they would talk about this issue
and then they understand there is a need to do something. And then after that meeting which is for the management level and then each like of these hotels, at least about 10 hotels and then they call us to do a seminar because sometimes they want to do something like for example they try to take the shark fin out of the menu but actually like you can still request it but like its just not on the menu. The manager was telling me like “oh we have a problem its like the staff like or the banqueting retail like session, they don’t know what the problem is” so they will still promote what they can sell because they want to make money and then they said like you can actually come up and do a seminar for the hotel so you can see the other way round is not us to pitch for the seminar, but the manager actually found out the staff’s lack of awareness and they invited us to come and explain the issue and to do a seminar and to promote and to explain what is sustainable seafood. And even when I was there, I talked to the chef, I talked to retail people and then they were like yeah in general they have no idea on their consumption and then now they understand what is happening to the oceans or something. It is really hard for some people, because for divers I can understand because they can see what is happening, but for other people, not everyone is a diver so how do they know what is happening, how would they even talk about protecting them so that’s... yeah.. I’ve seen yeah.. that they generally have an interest in the situation.

R: Okay, in your opinion, what has been the biggest challenge in raising awareness about sustainable seafood in HK, such as funding or publicity or messaging?

P: I think its like the lack of awareness like for the environmental issues in Hong Kong is one thing. Its like in the local newspaper I can like give you an example is whenever there is an environmental issue, the coverage is always like tiny compared to like political. Of course political is a big thing but like if you have seen those environmental related articles in the newspaper, in the local Chinese newspaper is like small, and also, like.. there is lack of awareness. Like I’ve.. well.. not two years ago but two years before two years ago there was like not even any Chinese Hong Kong documentary that is made by Hong Kong broad casting company or on the ocean side so they always like for example like normally when you see a documentary, it’s always from the BBC, CCN or Discovery Channel and the they are just narrating, putting in Chinese narration and that’s all. They don’t have their own production to make their own documentaries to make it more for the Chinese will become aware of this situation... so lack of awareness.

P: And the other thing is the funding side so I would say is also very challenging is because for example, in Hong Kong if you show people a picture of like children looking startled and then its really easy to get money because then people will feel something but if you show a dead fish in a wet market, to them it is like happening everyday, why do I have to give you money? And who cares? So yeah, funding would be the other difficulty.

R: Is it hard to find restaurants that serve sustainable seafood in HK?

P: I think today it is not very hard just the matter that are you going to find it or not.
R: Mhm, okay so what percentage of the restaurants have you targeted that have changed to become more sustainable? Have they changed because of your techniques and your raising awareness or have they just done it on their own?

P: I think both side because its like for example, I would say hotel catering sector is one of the things we have done on the shark related issues and then it is more than 60% of the hotels like in Hong Kong, high end hotels and then they have actually done something on the shark related initiatives and we have seen that.

R: Can you name any of these restaurants and hotels that have changed?

P: Yeah the Peninsula, Shangri la, and then the Hyatt

R: So all the chain hotels in Hong Kong are mainly changing?

P: Yeah

R: Okay, um, do you think using celebrities, as the face of campaigns is an effective way of changing the publics’ minds about sustainable seafood?

P: I think in Hong Kong if we’re facing a problem now we don’t have many celebrities so I don’t see this as very effective in Hong Kong but I see it in Mainland china, that kind of approach would work but to Hong Kong people, I would say partly its because people like because of social media and also like a lot of middle class in Hong Kong, like they would really understand like going to ask like specific questions on sustainability or the rationale rather than just putting an icon that they can just follow, that’s what if seen in the general public.

R: Okay, do you know much about the EU quota regulation system?

P: A little bit

R: Um, do you find that these regulations are making a more sustainable approach of reducing the amount of wasted fish?

P: Well, I think um, so what I’ve heard because I’ve studied marine related things and if for the EU, every side has two sides. So the good sides is that the EU is putting management, fishery management in South East Asia is really not something that we have done or like in Hong Kong like if you ask, like we don’t have barely have any protection on like the marine fish species and also management on the fisheries on quotas so it’s a really good thing. But as far as I understand it also creates another problem because like something called degrading like in the EU, so some of the fishing boats, they have only a certain amount of quotas so they will actually discard a lot of different things and then to find the best so it is kind of another kind of waste is it creates another problem. But like yeah, its good to have a fishery management but how you actually enforce it and how you actually manage the fishermen to follow the quota, that’s the other thing.

R: So do you think Hong Kong should introduce this type of regulation because of the free trade policy or do you think its just creating another issue?
P: Well I mean Hong Kong, I would say I think Hong Kong has to implement other type of fishery management or managing the gears or like on for example the mesh size of the nets or something rather than quota at the moment.

R: Um, okay. Why do you think shark fin has had so much media coverage in comparison to other marine life?

P: Um, I think there are two things, one thing is the urgency of the animal, so which means like for example some divers they were like people, like they really want to see big things and that they really want to see sharks and that they really couldn’t find it in the ocean, so they realised that it is a problem. And like you can exaggerate by saying this and the other thing like, I’m talking about the example in Hong Kong and the Chinese area so on the sharks, because we are one of the biggest trade and consumption on the shark fin, so its really easy to get media cover and also like people like these kind of juicy things so its just like pointing fingers on people and I’m not surprised its always being talked about in Hong Kong. And then the last thing is like people always like iconic stuff so like panda, cute, fluffy, sharks are just as iconic to people. So I would understand why so like for example I have done... so I have done sea cucumber related research and we always want to like talk to people about sea cucumber. Like I have seen divers like, they don’t move, they are ugly so people generally don’t care and then the ecosystem function system is not many people actually understand. Even science studies haven’t been covered on that species so that’s why it makes it hard to pitch for funding or like even for studies but for shark, there are so many studies out there, like to understand. I mean I don’t think we know everything on sharks, but at least there are lots of studies saying like the ecosystems, like the ecological role and also other things.

R: Um, why do you think restaurants are still serving shark fin if they know it is already bad?

P: Um, I think that’s something to do with human being or human nature. To me it’s like, as long as there’s money, and there will be people asking for it. Well more if there’s money, then people will sell it. That’s one thing; the other thing is the demand. So like, yeah, there is still a demand to some point and so for some people its really difficult to make sure they understand sustainable, well the issues because of habit or because of culture or tradition and then or even they will believe it’s a conspiracy like all these NGOs are like brainwashing or something.

R: Because it is a status symbol in regards to Chinese culture

P: Yes, that’s what they believe like I still see like parents telling their kids like don’t want shark fin and the parents are like no this is something we must have because it showcases their status.

R: Yeah because studies have shown that children, um, have become more lenient to not consuming shark fin anymore so is it more of the older culture that won’t change their minds?

P: Yes.
R: Okay so what do you suggest for their culture that will change their minds to becoming more sustainable while keeping their status symbol?

P: Well I think that um, two things that, like well what were are doing so we are not saying like we have to ban the trade or like we are not asking you to not consume it at all but first of all like for consumers if you know what you are eating, like what species and where they are from like for example, like in Australia they have management. They really like fishery management. You can find like you have to understand species and where they are from. As long as you know, then fine, why not? And then like, the other thing is like to our culture is like, we talk about sustainability, we know, we want to keep the tradition but now we are catching and eating faster than they can grow so which means we are killing our tradition because we eat too much. Then they just have to understand that concept and then they, yeah hopefully they can change.

R: So its kind of a moral obligation to change your ways rather than...

P: Yeah, moral for the consumer and for yeah for the consumer. And also we work with the government to looking how to identify which one is illegal so on the regulation side and the enforcement side so we work with the government so like for example people don’t understand like how to, so by using only the shark fin, you can identify which one is illegal, which one is not sustainable relatively. So we help the government to build up trading sections with the customer people so like all sides, consumers and the Hong Kong government.

R: Okay, so changing more to the regeneration side, do you know much about aquaculture and do you see it as a solution to decreasing the amount of fish that is being wasted?

P: So yes and no. So for the yes side, if the aquaculture is sustainable then its fine then what I am talking about is because at the moment by definition by the UNFL definition, even if fish, this small fish gets caught from the wild and is put in your farm, and then you can raise it in like a year and then you give it to the market. This is still called an aquaculture farm fish but its from wild because it is juvenile so you are not reducing the fishing pressure from the wild population you are actually just taking it so it is a fully cycle and sustainable certified like aquaculture that can help but not all the aquaculture necessarily to be the solution. So and also if so like for example it also depends on what they put in the fish feed so if you are saving one species but you are killing other species that’s not helping at all.

R: What other techniques do you know of that have been proven successful in helping fish populations?

P: So umm, different places have different fishery improvement projects like I’ve heard in Australia and New Zealand but for Hong Kong side its one other thing because we are consumers so certification and if people like certification that is like one of the biggest help in Hong Kong for corporate to help choosing what to buy, what not to buy and also yeah.. so certification.

R: Is that certifications such as like MSC and all the different ones like that?
P: Yes MSC, ASC and then also others

R: Yeah okay, what projects are you currently working on to focus on reducing overfishing?

P: So we have two projects, one is to diving. We want to know what species and also their distribution so that data is relatively helpful and useful for actually looking at the status of the fish, the conservation status in Hong Kong. So for example, we are trying to count the fish underwater and to also look at the species like where are they. So and then it can help the Hong Kong government generate like to decide which species are threatened, which species are not so that’s one thing. The other thing on land, which is not in the water, on land we are working with ADMCF on wet market surveys so we are aiming to produce an identification guide for the general public to find what fish are available in Hong Kong markets which are sustainable and how to identify them.

R: Oh okay, so um out of these, which will have the most impact do you believe on the fisheries and the fish population? Or do you not have one?

P: You mean Hong Kong or?

R: Yeah in Hong Kong yeah, where most of the fish is sourced from.

P: Can you ask the question again sorry?

R: Which one do you believe, out of the diving and the distribution chains, which do you believe will have the most impact on the fisheries?

P: Well I believe all of them, which is why I am doing them. Well I mean that the reason why I am saying this is because you need a basic information like, we don’t even know what species do we have so how do we talk about protecting the fish so the diving is to provide the base line data of what is happening now and how you actually judge it if fish are threatened in Hong Kong or not threatened that if its okay to eat or not and therefore the wet market because we are the biggest consumers, so like one of the biggest consumers in the world of seafood so that could help people to think about what they are eating and how to identify them so.. I believe both are useful.

R: Ah okay, well I’ve finished with my questions now. Thank you for your participation.
Appendix 3

Conservationist No. 2 interview

What different methods have you used to raise awareness of sustainable seafood to the public in HK?

We’ve used a number of methods to try and ensure we cover every demographic, particularly those who we believe will be buying the most seafood, i.e. housewives/mothers. We have a website that we launched last year called chooserrighttoday.org that educates consumers on sustainable seafood. It has everything from where to eat to what to look for when shopping. So far it’s proven fairly popular by its Google analytics. We’ve also produced two short videos featuring celebrities and an ad campaign using posters in MTRs. In 2015, we had a seafood festival whereby all the participating restaurants had to serve at least one sustainable dish and based on the success of that campaign, we’re organizing another in September (some of the restaurants we involved are now fully sustainable). Can’t think of others right now, but feel free to check out our website which is newly revamped!

Which approach do you think has been the most effective and why?

For the website, it’s still a bit early to tell how effective it’s been. The other things like the videos and MTR posters, it’s quite hard to measure effectiveness. We’ve had a lot of interactions on social media with the videos and loads of people would’ve seen the posters, but it’s quite difficult to say how much of this translated into actual change. For sure it would have upped the profile of sustainable seafood. And, as I said already, our seafood festival was great at eliciting change in restaurants so we can only hope it translates to consumers as well. So ultimately, probably the festival was the more effective.

In your opinion, what has been the biggest challenge in raising awareness about sustainable seafood in HK, such as funding or publicity?

The biggest challenge we’ve found is the public perception of what sustainable actually means. IN Cantonese it means something along the lines of ‘everlasting’ or ‘continuous’ which doesn’t really have the right connotations for what we’re going for. Trying to explain what sustainable seafood actually is through engaging platforms in a way that people will understand I think is the biggest challenge here.

Is it hard to find restaurants that serve sustainable seafood in HK?

We have a website that lists sustainable restaurants, so for us, not really. However, it is harder to find evidence of sustainability the further you get from Central. Also in HK, restaurants don’t tend to write that their products are sustainable in the menus, so people could be eating it without actually knowing.

What percentage of the restaurants you targeted to become more sustainable has changed since you first started?
Difficult to say really. In our festival, Cali-Mex became fully sustainable and the Grand Hyatt sped up its sustainability plans. At this stage though I’m more focused on getting restaurants that are already sustainable to be listed on our website. Playing the long game is key here and I’m going to attempt to use the popularity of our website as an incentive for others to go sustainable and be listed on there as well.

Can you name any of these restaurants and which techniques were the most effective?

As I said, Cali-Mex just needed a bit of persuading and a list of sustainable suppliers to get in touch with. They even found it to be cheaper and better quality too.

Do you think using celebrities, as the face of campaigns is an effective way of catching the publics’ attention?

It really depends. Sometimes, in this case, it is really effective as people are more likely to remember an ad that has someone they recognize in it. However in cases of ivory, for example, some less intelligent people may misinterpret the ad and think buying ivory is the way to be like these celebs.

Do you know much about the EU quota system as a sustainable fishing regulation?

Not a huge amount, no. From my experience though, the EU tends to be the most extreme in its fishing and sustainability policies. Though it is admirable, they tend to be rather restrictive. Many places in Asia need to be worked with long-term to make their fisheries sustainable, rather than simply shutting them out.

Do you agree with these regulations and do you think HK should introduce the same?

Hard to say without knowing what they are, but I would say HK would definitely benefit from having more regulations. Seafood labelling, for example, is horrendous in HK – see the oilfish scandal for details! The HK government would be very difficult to persuade though.

Why do you think shark fin has had so much media coverage in comparison to other marine life?

Sharks are an apex predator that are fundamental to the health of oceans. Removing them would have dire consequences. Other marine life is not being slaughtered in quite the same way. Shark finning is cruel and unnecessary and it all boils down to conspicuous consumption which is honestly just a vanity rife in China. Plus there’s always Jaws – sharks are arguably the most recognized fish, everyone loves to read about a shark attack. Perhaps that’s why campaigns surrounding them always get so much attention.

Why are restaurants still serving shark fin after knowing it is bad?
Because they couldn’t care less. If customers want it and will pay huge sums of money for it, restaurants will serve it. It’s all about the money.

Chinese culture has always highly regarded shark fin as a status symbol, what do you suggest for their culture that will change their minds to becoming more sustainable?

Actually that’s a common misconception. Shark fin has only recently been enjoyed by common people in China. It used to be something only the Emperor ate, so therefore isn’t actually rooted in Chinese culture the same way that you would think. Because of this, culture is not a reason for it to remain on menus. It’s simply a status symbol. Displaying something equally valued would be just the same.

Do you see aquaculture as solution to the decreasing number of fish in the world?

Yes and no. Aquaculture has many problems and really until we can create a feed that is 100% independent from wild-caught fish, then it will only add to the problem. It also isn’t really filling the demand-supply gap. Demand will keep on growing and one day, there will be nothing left if we carry on at this rate. Even with aquaculture.

What other techniques do you know of that have been proven successful in helping fish populations from diminishing?

The best way is increased and improved enforcement. That’s the only way illegal and destructive fishing practices can be stopped. Also increased collaboration between countries who share fishing zones would make a significant difference.

What projects are you currently working on that focus on reducing overfishing (if any)?

We’re having a ‘track two dialogue’ with fisheries experts and government officials from countries in the south china sea to establish how everyone can work together for sustainable management of the oceans. We’ve also commissioned UBC to gather data on the east china sea. I’m working on a project in Vietnam where we are trying to teach coastal communities how to manage their fisheries properly.

Out of these, which do you believe will have the most impact on fisheries?

By far the first one. Ultimately, unless governments start cracking down on IUU fishing, the fish stocks don’t stand a chance.
Appendix 4
Conservationist No. 3 interview

R: So Yvonne, what different methods have you used to raise awareness for sustainable seafood in Hong Kong?

P: Uh, so you’re sort of talking about pretty much all the time that I’ve been here working on this issue.

R: Yeah so what different techniques like fundraisers and um different things like that.

P: Okay so, no I haven’t done any fundraisers. So we’ve done sort of research work I would say to describe the trade and understand the trade and um so you’re talking about just in Hong Kong you’re not talking...

R: Yeah just in Hong Kong and South east asia area

P: South east asia okay, so we’ve done a lot of research actually over the year I would say from about 2000 to describe the trade I mean literally just to see what’s going on and understand what’s happening and that sort of foundation if you like... information. Um, and then I have been working on particular species, which sort represent the face of the trade for example the Napoleon fish since 2004 it was listed on Cites appendix 2, which actually because Hong Kong has to take attention, pay attention to that particular species, it gave us sort of a lot of insight into the trade, what was going on and so we used that as an example. So again that’s sort of research but its also working with other groups so increasingly working with other NGOs, WWF, Traffic, ADM Capital foundation so you know a lot of the information has gone into other NGOs. We’ve done sort of variously participated in sort of public information things so it might be stuff on the streets, little costumes and things like that... umm just trying to think um... through my teaching of course. Public talks, seminars, newspaper articles, not so much now but maybe letters to the news for example. Also I do end up being able to talk to people coming in so big NGOs, TNC or other big NGOs who are interested in seafood so I get a chance to talk to them to let them know what’s going on. I also do research in the source countries and I can feed that information back into Hong Kong... just trying to think... and so I get funding to do various things, more on field work and research I would say.. yep.

R: So what approach do you think has been the most effective so do you think that your research has helped raise awareness the most or is more working with big names like WWF is that what people want to know?

P: I think it’s actually a combination of things. I think working with WWF, Traffic you know those big organisations that have already have a good reputation in the field and credibility is a very good way to I suppose help get the word out and also put some kind of pressure on the government in ways that I cannot as an individual do hwoever we cannot do that unless we’ve got very good science to back up what we’re saying. So I’m saying, I don’t think I could say one or the other I say that combination is very important. So one other thing I could tell you is we’ve starting
doing a Facebook, that’s more recently to get more information out so that’s an outreach thing so this is just a thing that takes over... just we think that the more people understand and know about these things the better so that’s more of a long term gain but I think that its important to get the message out to the public as well.

R: So you think Facebook is the thing that people will recognise because of how popular it is so do you think they see that the most?

P: I don’t know, I honestly don’t know. I don’t even do Facebook myself but this is what my young students and colleagues are telling me so it something we’re trying so in a way we’re sort of trying everything. One of the things that really gave us the traction on getting heard by the government at least and also getting funding to do more work was the fact that one of the live fish trade species, the Napoleon fish was listed on Cites appendix 2 and that really made a difference. It’s sort of ensured that the species is taken seriously and it’s a face for the live fish trade so that’s been actually quite important.

R: Oh so that’s been branded and recognised as an endangered species so if its put on Cites then it’s been recognised as endangered?

P: It’s not so much that it... because I mean others have been also threatened but Cites is a convention which Hong Kong has to abide by. So they have to ensure that the trade is sustainable so they don’t have to bother about the other species. But because it’s on Cites, HK has to take it seriously.

R: Ah okay. So in your opinion what has been the biggest challenge in raising awareness... so you said you don’t do any fundraisers. Which is the thing that people respond to the most?

P: I think that um... if we were just to talk about live seafood, that its just fish, just fisheries you know people have heard all about that and a lot of people don’t really think there are a lot of issues around fisheries for various reasons. One the seas are so big, mariculture’s going to solve the problem all of this so to attract attention to fisheries’ problems even unsustainable fisheries is very difficult here. But again with Napoleon fish, it’s a face, so you know it’s cute, people are amazed when they see how big its gets and how lovely it is so it think that’s an element to attract attention. It sort of brings it a little more accessible I would say and less general and more specific. So I think that’s been quite important to give it a face and a character.

R: Yeah because I recognise that with the shark fin as well when I spoke to another conservationist he said “because sharks are one of the biggest animals in the ocean, people always want to see them and want to know about them but its when people don’t recognise the smaller fish” so the Napoleon obviously people will want to see it and want to know about it because it’s so different than most other species.

P: Mhmm, yeah exactly so its as I say that’s what I meant about give the... giving the seafood a face. It’s like a flagship species for the seafood trade in a way. And that actually, actually wasn’t the intention, it’s just you know that’s what I’ve learnt in following what needs to be done with these species.
R: So going over to more of the restaurant side a bit. Do you think it’s hard to find restaurant personally in HK that serves sustainable seafood?

P: There aren’t that many but they’re not hard to find. I mean so for example WWF would list them. So for example if I wan to go out for a sustainably sourced seafood dinner I would be able to find it pretty readily on WWF for example. And so there is more and more which is listing also we know that many of the fancy hotels also are trying to more sustainable sourcing so they’re easy to find. What the thing is is that there’s not that many and they do tend to be the more expensive ones.

R: Have you ever worked with restaurants to make them become sustainable or do you just involve yourself with research?

P: No I don’t directly work myself with the restaurants. I would say I work sort of one step behind. What I mean by that is that I work more behind the scenes. So I would be the kind of person who would be trying to raise awareness with the government to provide information to people in WWF or to work in a team with them. But I’m not the one that goes into the restaurant. But there was one exception which where I was trying to hook a trader up in Indonesia who has sustainably sourced fish with the Peninsula hotel here in HK and I met with their chef and their... what do they call it their... it’s the agent who buys the fish... procurer oh what was the name for it but it’s the one who buys... the buyer. And so that’s pretty much the only time I did that and it was very interesting because these guys, they clearly want to do the right thing and the chef, you know is clearly very committed. I mean he feels it’s a responsibility etc but they were struggling, this is with the live fish trade, they were really struggling to find a source of sustainably produced live seafood. So really you know they want to do the right thing but its very difficult with this kind of seafood to do that yet.

R: Okay yeah, and so going back to more raising awareness do you think using celebrities as the face of campaigns, do you think the public would respond to that because you said about the Napoleon fish that people would respond to that so do you think using celebrities, like HK celebrities.

P: Yes definitely. I think for HK that works well and I think from what I’ve seen in china that works well. So Yao Ming, as you know he was a face for... well actually for both for ivory and for shark fin I don’t know about other things, and I understand that those campaigns were successful, although I haven’t seen data but I have seen in HK first of all that youngsters in particular are very influenced by celebrities and I have actually said you about dressing up in costumes and things like that that I have actually done a couple of marches with one of our local celebrities, it does attract a lot of attention. And particularly attracts attention from the media I noticed. So a lot of these celebrities are quite well linked into the media and of course they are promoting themselves as well at least in the HK case. But it does attract the media and that helps us get into the media. So actually again thinking about your very first question, I’ve been very active talking to the media as well. So its government, media and so its that kind of space I sort of occupy. And we’ve also done another thing that also attracted attention was we did a documentary several years ago which I think a lot of people liked and I think for a lot of people it really opened their eyes about
seafood and again this was a documentary on a couple of things but one of the series of 5 documentaries was on Napoleon fish in Indonesia and I was quite surprised about how interested people were and they just had no idea. So I think there's just a lot of issues around here with just people not knowing about the species and not knowing about the issues and you know there's a lot we can do about that.

R: Yeah was that documentary aimed at the Western culture of HK or was it also translated into Chinese?

P: This was it was originally released several years ago in Cantonese and then a year later they did the... well it was... there was a mixed English and Cantonese version actually because of where they shot, and so both of them were bilingual but the first released one which actually won an award was in, was Cantonese and then they did the greater translation so it was released in English so we've got both, both languages.

R: Do you know much about the EU quota system and do you think it’s a sustainable fishing regulation?

P: I don’t know that much but I do know that as something which is sort of prompting source areas, whether it’s a source country or the processing country, you know obviously China is processing a lot of stuff. I tell you they’re taking very seriously in other words; I mean I’m not exactly sure what you mean but certainly in terms of the quality of fish. It matters a lot to China what the EU is requiring... I don’t... by quota what do you mean

R: So when the fishermen go out the catch the fish they only have a certain amount or certain weight that they can take back in per type of fish.

P: Oh, sorry I misunderstood so you’re actually just talking about the European union, you’re not talking about in relation to China

R: Well because do you think that China should introduce some sort of quota system like that to regulate how much of each fish is being caught because obviously they don’t have any regulations right now?

P: Do you mean, okay so, that’s… alright so that’s kind of complicated because a lot of the stuff that China processes and eats comes from other countries and China could not impose a quota on another country

R: Oh okay

P: So it’s not and would not be normal, at least not that I’m aware of for country to impose a quota on their own fishing vessels which are fishing somewhere else, I don’t think that really happens. So in terms of... in terms of quota, size limits, seasonal protection, special protection, MPA or whatever you’re talking about, that kind of stuff has to be done in the countries where the fishing occurs and that kind of measure would apply to both local fishermen and fishermen who are going to take
the fish out. So that’s a source country issue. What China needs to do is ensure that their fishing boats actually comply by the local regulations in source countries.

R: Yeah, that’s true. So I’m going to talk to you about shark fin now. Why do you think shark fin has so much media coverage in comparison to other marine life like you said about the Napoleon fish gets the attraction but shark fin has had much more impact than the live reef trade for example

P: Yeah, that’s a good point and I think... I mean my personal feeling towards it is a number of things, there’s a large body of people over the last 20 years or so who have started to study shark and so there’s a lot of information on the biology of sharks. On you know just generally on the fisheries and things like that. People are fascinated by sharks, they just attract attention. They’re not ordinary fish. Um, so I think just generally they are you know they are spectacular, people are scared of them but they’re curious about them so I think just as a sort of, I guess I would call that an aesthetic thing in a way? Just a gut thing in our response whereas you know the life fish trade they’re just ordinary fish, pointy at one end and flappy at the other and sort of ordinary so I think there’s an element there but also the shark specialist group of IUCN has been very effective. They’ve been very good they’ve had some very good people who are politically very savvy and so they manage to get those issues on the bigger global agenda and also through CITES. The first, some of the very first commercial species were marine one listed in 2002 and they were sharks. So that was very interesting and I think the other thing about sharks that really made a big difference was the fact that they are live finned

R: Yeah

P: and the fact that when a lot of people realise this there was first of all denial but then a lot of people realised that you have animals, which the fins are removed while they are still alive and then they’re dumped. It’s just wasteful, inhumane; you know there’s just a gut thing again around that. And of course people recognise because it’s a very distinctive trade it’s something, that it’s not just like a fish trade, seafood trade, but fins, you know for a lot of people I would say maybe outside of Asia you know it’s a luxury, it’s not necessary it’s... you know so I think there are a number of reasons why the sharks were taken more seriously at first and I think it’s a combination of those things.

R: Okay yeah and so why do you think restaurants are still serving shark fin after knowing that its bad for the environment and bad for the sharks’ population?

P: Well I think most, for them its just a business, you if they can legally sell the shark fin then the attitude is why not? I think many of them would stop if it were illegal but there would always be some who would continue. So I think its just business like anything, its like ivory, its like you know, these things go on all over the world. So I think it’s because it’s still legal to do it and if it’s a CITES listed species then if there’s a permit it’s still legal so I think that... and businesses here in HK, they’re very competitive as far as I understand it. They’ve got very narrow profit margins so they’re needing to make as much money as they can you know they’re battling high rents and the rest of it. So if this a was for them to make money then they’re going
to make money unless they really can’t. And if their customers are asking for it and expecting it and it is a traditional thing here then they’re going to do it. So it is understandable that it does continue.

R: Yeah because Chinese culture has always highly regarded shark fin as a status symbol so do you suggest anything personally that they should do to change their minds to become more sustainable because they’re still consuming shark fin even though they know that it’s bad

P: Well a lot of people wouldn’t know that it’s bad and wouldn’t believe that it’s bad an the traders, you know the traders are saying “no there’s no problem, we’re still getting them, there’s still plenty around and where’s the data?” and one of the big problems is that science is so important is that in many cases and many places around the world there are not, really good data on what’s going on. I mean there are, there is in some places and we definitely know there’s a problem but you know these are very difficult things to change unless you’ve got very very strong data. I think there’s also a mind set too in the region that you know these things are for use, they’re for trade. If they’re there, we use them and if they’re gone then we move onto the next thing. So I think it’s a very very different mind set about the use of natural resources.

R: Oh okay, so going over to the life reef trade, do you see aquaculture as a solution to the decreasing number of fish in the world?

P: Um no. So the role of aquaculture talking about marine culture, sort of marine fish culture so it’s growing, it’s growing enormously and amazingly in the last decade it’s quite fantastic how much it has grown but the thing is that for several reasons it’s not a solution. So the very obvious level aquaculture is growing because it is filling the demand supply gap. In other words we continue to take stuff from the sea but it’s not enough for growing demand and the growing population so we have to supplement that and aquaculture helps to supplement what we take from the wild. So that’s one level. There are problems with aquaculture and limits to aquaculture because most of the more profitable species are carnivorous. They eat other fish, and those other fish most of them have to eat those other fish coming from the wild. So it’s still pressure on wild populations like groupers or crokers or things like that and that’s a major major problem to actually supply enough feed and there’s a lot of debate now about whether the feed that goes into these fish that are traded at high value, whether this feed is better eaten directly by people rather than being put through other fish inefficiently, with a lot of energy loss so that’s the second thing. And then the third thing is, you know most of the maricultured species are quite valuable. It’s you know there’s a lot of incentive for more valuable species to culture them that’s fine, but we need wild populations because a great majority probably of the world, in developing countries at least depend on having wild fish around their own country to feed their families. So mariculture for me is a supplement to fill the demand supply gap but it’s really, you know it’s mainly developed countries that are benefitting from it and traders. It’s not, we have to manage our resources, our natural resources anyway, whether or not we have mariculture.
R: Okay and so what other techniques do you know of that have been proving successful-ish towards helping fish populations? So you said aquaculture was kind of filling the gap between wild caught and farmed.

P: Yes but that’s not actually helping wild populations you still have to... it’s a different activity so we have both mariculture and we have capture fisheries, we have them both. Mariculture does not, mariculture does not reduce pressure on wild fisheries anywhere. It doesn’t reduce pressure because we’re still catching wild fish, we’re just adding to that with mariculture

R: So that does supplement them

P: Yeah exactly yeah, it’s a completely separate activity other than for the fact that the wild fish give the... are used to feed aquaculture fish so they’re not separated completely.

R: So, anyway what currently are you working on right now like your project and your research that focuses on reducing over fishing?

P: Uh so, I guess just the science side which is you know, collecting the facts and seeing what happened to the fish populations under certain circumstances and then linking that with the supply chain. And then you get to the consumer side so there’s awareness. The CITES work which is... if you have a CITES appendix 2 listed species it means it can be traded because I’m all for trade, but it needs to be traded sustainably and it’s a quite, quite a hard-hitting international instrument for that. So I would say I’m working on lots of different levels, sort of the science, the awareness, the biology of the species themselves, you know what can they sustain. How many fish can you take out per kilometre square or something like that on a sustainable basis and then trying to link all those pieces up, how do we do it? You know how do we develop sustainably operated supply chains? So it’s actually a lot of those but I focus on two things: I focus on particularly vulnerable aspects of species so vulnerable species like napoleon fish, some of the groupers as a particular face for these fisheries and the other thing I’m focused on is something we call spawning aggregations so these are very large groups of fish that come together to reproduce and when they come together for a very short time every year, they are often fished and very heavily over fished and so that’s what’s you can call it sort of vulnerable species but it’s a vulnerable life history strategy so I sort of work on the vulnerable end of things and in the hope that if we can solve those vulnerable end of things, that will help us solve some of the bigger problems. And that vulnerable end of things also needs quite a bit of attention as well so there’s the two reasons we’re focusing on those.

R: Okay so you’re saying start small, target the smaller problems and then hopefully it will...

P: No, they’re not the smaller problems. They’re the problems that really need attention, so they’re quite urgent problems so the threatened species. If you focus on the more threatened species then hopefully those who aren’t threatened won’t get to a threatened stage. Plus which threatened species need more attention now,
so I focus on the things that are most in need of attention but hopefully in the assumption or in the hope that the lessons learned will help us with other species too.
Appendix 5

Restaurateur No. 1 interview

R: Have you personally sought seafood that is sustainable for your restaurant and at home as well?

P: Sorry, I didn’t catch what you said about the..

R: So do you as a consumer, consume sustainable seafood as well?

P: Yes, I do

R: Is all the seafood on your menu sustainably sourced or is there some that’s locally sourced that isn’t?

P: Well, it is that we strive for 100% sustainability. Some items as you might know might not, cannot be certified because various companies cannot actually source certain things or trace certain things. Like something that is big in Hong Kong for instance is fish balls so that consists of so many different types of fish when its put together, then it makes it not always traceable. But that’s really one of the few items, all the a la carte items, we strive for 100% sustainability or at least, there is 3 colours I think when you go for MSC and then there are only one or two items that are in the middle column.

R: And most of them are green?

P: Yeah

R: Okay

P: And we have chosen not to go for certifications because we really strive for it ourselves so we don’t need really anybody to 100% check it with us. We know what to check for it in that respect. We always cross check with WWF once we put a new fish on the menu or a new seafood item and then we check what they think about it and then we decide either to take it or not.

R: Oh okay, so do you encourage your customers to select a sustainable dish as opposed to the ones in the yellow bit?

P: Well, we don’t highlight that as such, we think it’s not for us to tell the customer, we’ve put all the err, basically on the menus, what they are about and then it’s up to the guests to choose this as such. Definitely for instance the first thing that was in Hong Kong already many years ago that is shark fin that went off the menu here for sure a long time ago. There is still a few restaurants in Hong Kong that will sell it but it’s less and less common.

R: Mhmm, okay so when did your restaurant start serving sustainable seafood?

P: Well I only joined here about 10 months ago so I cannot say exactly but its from a couple of years
R: Okay, so do you know much about when it started so do you know whether it was due to the work of a conservationist group such as WWF or was it their own personal idea to do it?

P: I think it is usually driven by members and certain comments from members, I mean clubs always have to be seen fulfilling and sort of role model role within the community/ society so therefore they will always take a leading role as opposed to staff in the restaurant. We have thousands and thousands of members and at the same time of course we are a yacht club so we’re very much on and in the water so anything that comes with that, we take very seriously

R: Oh okay, yea so does it cost the restaurant more money to buy sustainably sourced seafood?

P: I don’t think so. It all depends which approach you take from the day you start if you look one on one to replace from a, lets say tuna or whatever fish you source and you change it 100% to the other sustainable fish and you don’t do anything about the price then your costs will go up. But especially if it’s just normal a la carte pricing, you just change the price accordingly so that it doesn’t, although it may cost you more then at least the customer has to pay more.

R: So it just depends on the type of seafood that you’re serving that depends on the price change?

P: Yeah and then if it is too disproportionate between the sustainable fish and the non-sustainable fish then you might opt for not taking that fish altogether if you can’t sell it then there’s no point.

R: So if this is the case for your restaurant so why do you think that nobody, I mean most restaurants in Hong Kong don’t serve, purely sustainable seafood as well, if it doesn’t change the price?

P: Well, it is definitely fish and seafood is on the top of the list in freshness in Hong Kong. Hong Kong its cuisine is known for its freshness and in particular its fish and so on. Very few countries serve it fresher as here and... how would I say... err... if you didn’t have to find an alternative then its much more expensive for the same type of fish then people might not choose that one. But us as a club we take the responsibility and increase the price or if it’s too much we take an alternative fish, not the same one.

R: Oh okay, so if the sustainable seafood is more expensive depending on which one do you believe you still make up the difference with positive association with sustainability, like the values of the club?

P: Well in terms of value yes for sure, I mean we have other initiatives as well like we’ve just banned all the use of single use plastic this year. So normally people go sailing and they take a bottle of water on the water, plastic, but then of course some will always appear in the water so that we cannot do anymore or straws is even worse. Buttercups and marmalade cups all these things we’ve banned. So all the
single use and now and slowly educate the members to bring their own bottle and fill it up with tap water and then take it on the boat and reuse the bottle again.

R: Yeah that’s good. How do you know that all handling of the seafood you serve is sustainable from the wholesalers, distributors and through the chain?

P: Well we do look for the certificate, to be honest we don’t go three distributors down the line we just go through the certification from the suppliers themselves if that is sufficient for us then we take it.

R: So from the WWF, you just check every time?

P: Yep, yep.

R: Okay, so how do you pass the information to your customers? Like do they ask if it’s sustainable or do they expect it?

P: No we print it on the menus. I mean most people are used to this now that well from us they know and in the market you see it as well so we just put it on our menu that this is 100% sustainable when there is a logo next to it and there’s very very few that wont have that logo next to it

R: Which logos do you use?

P: Umm, its WWF

R: Is it MSC or is it...

P: Just a second I can check it here... yeah from WWF.

R: Okay

P: yeah, not MSC because we are not using that although I am familiar with them

R: Yeah because I know that other clubs also use them like the Aberdeen Boat Club use MSC as their logo

P: Yep yep, just a matter of auditing and cost and documentation and we’re in the midst of big big renovations over the last two years so we can do without the admin and still look in the mirror and trust what we’re seeing.

R: Do you think the customers like to see the logos that are on... when they’re choosing the food do you think they like to see.. have the influence of a sustainably sourced logo or do you think they don't take any notice?

P: Yeah I guess, anything you contribute to consciously or unconsciously that you see makes the customer feel better right?

R: Yeah ha. So do your customers expect you to serve sustainable seafood straight away? Like so when did you start like putting the logos on the menu like did they used to ask for it?

P: Err ill have to ask... if you give me 10 seconds I’ll ask.
*background noises asking colleague for more info*

P: So around three years ago we started doing that.

R: Okay thank you.

P: And then pumping up the volume and the percentage of it each time so now we are pretty much most of it, I would say 90%. Basically the only things that are not sustainable are the ones you can’t buy sustainable.

R: Ah okay yeah. And that’s like the fish balls that you were saying?

P: Yeah that’s a major problem throughout Hong Kong if you look for that.

R: Is it a more lengthy process for you to order in sustainable seafood and check with WWF or do you find it would be easier just to locally source?

P: Now once you’re already there, I mean you don’t need to check. I mean in the beginning once you switch yes but after that not really. Because you just change one fish and you send one email and you check is this one okay yes or no and then we blatantly have an answer and then we move on.

R: Do any of your Chinese customers ask if you serve shark fin soup?

P: I don’t think so because everybody knows that we don’t do that anymore.

R: Um, did you used to serve it?

P: I’m sure they did but that’s way before my time. I mean most clubs have banned this at least 6 or 7 years ago so that will be as long here the same, or maybe even earlier.

R: Mhm, okay going back to the type of fish you serve, is it normally wild caught or is it farmed fish?

P: Combination.

R: just a combination? Is there a weighting onto one side or does it depend on the type of fish?

P: No it just depends on the supplier and yeah the type of fish. We don’t look specifically for one or the other so we just. When we see a nice wild caught turbot then we go for that one and we put it as such on the menu and then we stick to that wild caught otherwise we have to change the menus again.

R: Do you know the type of techniques that your suppliers use to catch the fish, like pole and line or in the nets?

P: No I do not know that personally but we just check if it is unsustainable basis how the fishing method they use I wouldn’t know.

R: Oh okay so you would expect them to use sustainable fishing techniques?
R: Um, if your restaurant is part of a national brand like WWF, then is sustainable seafood something that’s in line with their CSR policy?

P: Yep I think so

R: okay so I think that’s, I have no more questions to ask you

P: Okay

R: But thank you very much for you help, I’ve really appreciated it

P: Sure, once you finish the study can you, is it possible to get a copy of the whole study just out of curiosity and interest?

R: Yeah it is for my dissertation so it will be quite long but I will send it. It should be finished in about May?

P: Sure no rush

R: okay well thank you very much for the interview

P: alright, you’re welcome Hannah. Take care now bye
Appendix 6

Restaurateur No. 2 interview

R: So the first question, have you personally sought seafood that is sustainable for both your restaurant and at home as well?

P: The answer is yes.

R: Is all the seafood on your menu sustainably sourced?

P: The seafood is 90% because there are some things that I cannot yet find but I have contacts all over from British Colombia to you know.. and we’re constantly upgrading our menus every week and the primary objective is to be 100% sustainable

R: Do you have an example of one of your fish that isn’t sustainable?

P: Well right now we are changing it and one of the biggest problems I’m facing right now is, you know an example would be the tiger prawns from Thailand and have found some sources that are actually sustainable so we are on a quest right now working with a Swiss company that made the effort to actually you know participate. I think it’s not only just stable beyond the product itself but the social economic effort as well.

R: Oh okay so when did your restaurant start serving sustainable seafood?

P: About 5 years. We were one of the first ones I think, about 5 years ago.

R: You were the first ones in HK?

P: One of the first ones yes, if not the first one

R: Okay so was it due to the work of conservationists?

P: Not really, it was my own initiative and with WWF we teamed up and they had a lot of information about sustainable seafood in general and the impact on the population. You know catching them and also not sustainable, the impacts of both that as well. So we worked closely with them to start up and we’re still with them.

R: So you’re saying you did it on your own so you had the first initiative to do it but was it because you saw data from WWF that made you realise that you should go more sustainable?

P: No that wasn’t why I made my decision. I made it myself because I am very aware of it and I see it in the US also and I’m very sensitive towards that and I’m actually launching in about the next year or so my own secret initiative so I’m very sensitive to that.

R: Does it cost your restaurant more money to buy sustainably sourced seafood?

P: It is more costly but I think that, you know the cost is one part but also if for example we could get farmed fish and also wild fish, you know I don’t think you can actually use it as a set dollar amount, which of course is very important but also the
shelf life is so much better with fresh products and sustainable products and we can extend the fish coming in very often and a lot of them are cheap. They come in live into the restaurant

R: So with the unsustainable dishes, because you’re saying it’s cheaper to buy that but more morally good. Would you say that you make the sustainable dishes more expensive because it costs more?

P: Not at all, we don’t. We help with our pricing in and we don’t. The fact of the matter is that the seafood we use is probably at about 90% or something around there, sustainable. So there’s a pricing level that goes for all the seafood, I don’t make it cheaper at all.

R: So you encourage people to consume sustainable seafood rather than the unsustainable?

P: Yes, so I mean for us it was very easy to get them started with that and continue with it and before we actually put a new item on the menu we go back to, and every time we change seafood we go back to WWF and get a control mechanism in place where my assistant can check with the WWF and see what the impact is on the seafood before we put it on the menu.

R: So how do you know that all the handling of the seafood is sustainable from the wholesalers, distributors and the fishermen even?

P: Well because we research our own for example our fisheries and have a list of very good suppliers and we go pretty deep in finding out one what are the changes and the refrigeration changes that impacts, what are the fishing methods. We do all of that and then we select our products and specific items.

R: How do you pass the information to your customers about your sustainability?

P: Well it’s a known fact that we were one of the first ones to do that and also talk verbally with the customers that is the interesting part and I think we can do more about it. But you see we don’t promote it and our policy well my policy is always that I owe it to the customers for coming to café gray and we always return with the sustainability on seafood, what are the best practices for vegetables and meat so for the meat we do spend a lot of time on that and I think it is up to the chefs to take that initiative and show that message to the customer. I mean that’s really what we do.

R: So you’re saying you don’t promote it to your customers, but some people put logos onto their menus so…

P: We don’t promote it specifically, it’s part of the quality of the products we are using sustainable seafood from the get go so it was much easier for us to portray it

R: So your customers just assume that it is sustainable what they’re consuming?

P: Yeah they do to a certain extent, there are always ways to promote it but I think that right now we are doing what we can and I’m going back to HK on the 12th March
and it’s a good subject to bring up and I will definitely check with my head chef what we are doing after not being there for a few months but overall we are very sensitive towards that and it’s part of the raw foundation of what we are doing at Café Gray, the seafood is sustainable.

R: Okay so your customers won’t ask you specifically if they are consuming sustainable seafood directly?

P: It’s actually the other way around, we will probably tell them as well you know that it’s pretty much in line with sustainable seafood and that’s kind of what we do. I wish I could say that we are 100% sustainable but it’s not really possible but as much as we can and since I am personally very engaged in the initiative sustainability at hand, in particular seafood, I make it a personal quest of mine to go after a product that’s really sustainable and again that has a social economic impact on the seafood we are fishing then and then understand and are in line with the practice of sustainability. I mean I base, a lot of my research on MSC and I look at the guide on my phone and I can go to any seafood that I want to and get a very quick assessment of where’s the best practices, where do they actually source it and where to not source it so I am very much in line with that

R: So you’re saying because you’ve been doing it for so long that you have a lot of connections with the suppliers who can get you the most sustainable fish

P: Yeah, but also right now I have several apps on my phone. One of them is MSC, which is the Marine stewardship council and I can just click on any fish I want, I can just punch the name in and see where the best fishing practices take place, which ones are, that should be used. There are three categories which are the best, medium and bad and most of the time is very accurate information about any kind of seafood in general. And then I have well there’s Seafood Watch and that’s the one I am using right now, which is from the MSC, the Moray Bay Aquarium and it’s very easy just to click on the sustainable seafood guide and it gives you, really a lot of information on what kind of seafood you should be using and why. What other choices maybe to select other seafood items if the one you choose is not the right one so it’s a very good programme.

R: So how did you find this app? From MSC directly?

P: Well I found it from my research, the world seafood show and been to shows where its been heavily promoted by MSC and other organisations that do that as well. But MSC is kind of the top of the line and I look it up all the time and I cannot see the other one that I have here on my phone. I’ll just run you through the apps that I have on my phone. So there’s Seafood Watch, and the other one is... I just can’t see it here on my phone. But I have another one that is very good that is kind of in line with MSC but I do really think that MSC is the best one but there are also other ones that are very helpful. And then I actually find which one is the best and then go to various sites to make sure they are in line.
R: So are you saying that when you get a new fish into Café gray, so are you saying that you check the app on your phone, the MSC app and see if the fish is sustainable before you take it?

P: Yes, any seafood item that I want to use I can yeah. So for example just to see what it says here so the tiger prawn?

R: Yeah

P: Okay so I type tiger prawn and I click on it to see what they say. So giant tiger prawn, it says avoid giant tiger prawn from India, and prawns, giant tiger prawns from Indonesia and prawns and so, it’s actually it gives you also the giant tiger prawn world wide researching the aquaculture system and then you have the other giant tiger prawn with the shrimp with the farmed method with the local fishers so you see I have several that I can name based on all of that information

R: Yeah thank you, I’ll look at that after this. So have you ever served shark fin soup in your restaurant?

P: No we’ve never served that and I’m a big follower to ban shark fin in HK and Asia in general so I think it’s a crime, what’s going on with that. You know I think that, you know probably the older Chinese population still wants to see that but I think that a large part of the population, the younger generation understand that sustainability is important. They don’t order shark fin soup. They want to preserve it.

R: Yeah I agree. And so have any of your customers ever asked if you serve shark fin soup for one of their banquets?

P: No not really. We’re not that kind of restaurant. I’m sure upscale Chinese restaurants get that kind of request a lot but we are very different. That kind of restaurant we are serving very different kinds of food. It’s interesting you asking me that, you know I never really enquired with our service team if you know we have a lot Chinese or HK Chinese because our customer base is quite diverse, if they’ve ever asked that. It’s a good question for me to ask when I go back to HK

R: So you were saying that you have a mixture of wild caught and farmed fish, do you have any preference like is it more tasty or is it cheaper?

P: Sorry?

R: So is it more tasty for the customers to have a wild caught or farmed fish, does it depend or is it just the accessibility?

P: You know in general there are always arguments about wild caught being more tasty and I think that’s a fact. But you know I think we need to set that aside and say maybe give the ocean a break, maybe provide, you know, a very good tasting alternative which is farmed raised? And give our oceans a break and have our populations come back and then we can go out and fish wild fish again. I think that’s a very good example of caught fish, we know that the US have a set a bar for cod and made a rule for fishing however if you go to Iceland, I mean they have too much cod. You know, there’s a huge amount of effort that’s been done in the aquaculture and
the way these farming practices have been done including pollution off the coast and salmon fishing and so forth. I think there is going to be much more efforts done in that way and I think, you know it’s honestly a choice but if we continue just catching wild caught, I think we are going to be in trouble from then. I think aquaculture is a part of the development of that and the sustainability of that will ever be increased.

R: So you’re saying that we should leave the wild fish in the sea and just focus on aquaculture to save the population?

P: No because sustainability means to sustain the population and I think maybe that’s the wrong word but in order for us to give the necessary precaution for wild caught there needs to be strict order steps and limitations on the amount we can catch and Iceland are very good to set those standards and obviously they’re doing funding rights since the population is ever increasing especially all langoustines and many other fish. So it’s a group effort between scientists, fishermen, the chefs and the government in general that help sustain the population and certainly we have a good example in the US which is a main lost here. Main lobsters have been continuing growing in amounts because we remain to dip into cost to catch any female lobsters that carry the eggs so that’s a good example of how good sustainable management can actually increase a population of fisheries

R: Okay and so do you know what exactly the technique that the fishermen use to catch the fish for you restaurant? Do you know that it’s 100% sustainable?

P: Yes occasionally I do, in many ways we can see for example that in the fisheries, you know if its line caught, that they gone through the whole process. If it’s obviously we better look up the fisheries in HK that it was actually Brian Williams who asked if it was sustainable, if the fish was actually farm raised in HK and its been very successful there. And the fish that come in live, the shelf life is very good, it’s the best product and we are very happy with that and then we are also looking into those areas.

R: Okay well I think that’s all the information that I really need from you so thank you very much for participating and thank you for giving me an interview

P: Not a problem.
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