

SiGHTiNGS!

LANGKAWI DOLPHIN RESEARCH

LDR Project turns 10!

IKI SEAGRASS ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PROJECT

MareCet embarks on a New Project!

COVID-19 & OUR SEAS

Short Feature Article



WORDS FROM THE HELM



Fairul and I grew up in the 1990s and had both attended national schools. One of the big things that took centre stage in those schooling days was the ideology and concept about Vision 2020 (aka Wawasan 2020). There was even a theme song to go with it, which we would hear played over the radio and on television. The year 2020, we were told, was going to be full of wonder, Malaysia would be a fully-developed country by then, and there might even be flying cars. The years go by, and we grow up, and life carries on with not much thought given to Wawasan 2020. Then as 2019 came to a close, everyone was incredibly excited to usher in not just a new year, but an entirely new decade. We weren't exceptions to that. And then, as the world welcomed that new decade, news started emerging of a deadly unknown virus we all now know as COVID-19. At that juncture, neither of us imagined that we as a species, would soon become prisoners of our own doing. In fact, our team still managed to get out into the field in February 2020 to conduct a cetacean survey, and that was to be the last one for a very long time. Who would've guessed, eh?

So 2020 was a tremendously tough year for everyone in every aspect. So many businesses and enterprises went under, so many losses of sorts, and so many unknowns around every bend.

The mere fact that you are reading this copy of SiGHTiNGS! is enough reason for us to be rejoicing, because it means that we survived that awful year to be able to put this together for you! Although it wasn't easy being confined indoors for many consecutive months, and having had to cancel our marine education programmes in schools, and not being able to run our marine excursions, we truly have so much to be grateful for. Thank goodness to technology and the Internet, we were able to quickly adapt our work plans and spent many hours curating online content for all our followers and beyond. Despite everything that didn't quite feel normal, what remained normal for us was the love and support that you gave - we could be here now because you contributed to MareCet and continued to believe in our cause and in the positive impact we want to deliver to our community and society.

We can't be sure what 2021 will look like right now, but, it would be our immense privilege and honour to have your continued support as we navigate our way through the troughs of each wave that comes along. The world may not be exactly the same again, but, we do hope that our work can carry on as much as it used to. So please stay with us for the ride.

Fairul & Louisa

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BEST OF 2020

9

Features of MareCet and marine conservation work in media including virtual talks, online articles, newspaper article, radio station and podcast interviews

3

Virtual events organized by MareCet - Marine Mammal Veterinary Webinar, World Oceans Month 2020, Sayang-Sayang Seagrass Virtual Festival Week

44

Activities conducted including talks, webinar, workshop, infographics sharing, videos, documentary screening, panel discussion, storybook reading, drawing and colouring contests across 3 MareCet-organized virtual events

55,771

Audience reach and engagement through various virtual events

2,125

Hours spent for preparation and running virtual events



Langkawi Dolphin Research & The WHALE Project Surveys

Shortly before the entire world descended into a pandemic in early 2020, our team were out in the field in Langkawi collecting important ecological data on dolphins, porpoises and whales for almost one month in February. It would be the only field survey we were able to conduct for 2020. We collected important acoustic data on dolphins and documented various animals with healed but severe wounds from past traumatic injuries. We sighted some of our regularly seen Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin individuals - Grace, Flop, Kai, Chameleon, Gasha and Nostrils, to name a few.

After spending nearly three weeks around Langkawi and Perlis' coastal areas collecting data on dolphins, we ventured further offshore for a week in search of whales. Unfortunately, no whales were sighted, but we recorded our first ever sighting of spinner dolphins! Everyone onboard was so excited to be able to check off a "new" species off their list, while Dr P was very happy to see some "old friends" - about 15 years ago, she had studied spinner dolphins in the Sultanate of Oman for her PhD research. We managed to record the clicks and whistles from the spinner dolphin group and hope to write it up into a short scientific note soon.



Morris Animal Foundation grant secured for LDR

In March 2020, our Langkawi Dolphin Research Project was awarded the Morris Animal Foundation grant from the USA. The Morris Animal Foundation, named after the passionate veterinarian Dr. Mark L. Morris Sr., was established in 1948 and remains one of the largest and highly respected animal health organizations in the world. The foundation has invested in over 2700+ studies around the world which have led to significant breakthroughs for the health of companion animals, horses and wildlife.

Our application that won this grant is titled, "Stressful sounds- Assessing the impacts of underwater noise on dolphins' acoustic behaviour in Northwestern Peninsular Malaysia". Through this project, which will be led by our bioacoustician Saliza, we aim to collect dolphin sounds and use this information to help determine stress levels of the animals which will eventually be used to assist with local conservation planning.

Although we are extremely thrilled to receive this highly competitive grant, the commencement of this project, which was meant to be in December 2020, has to be temporarily on hold due to the pandemic. We can't wait to begin this project and are ready to go once the travel restrictions lift!



Langkawi Dolphin Research Project TURNS 10!!

In the blink of an eye, a decade flew past.

What started out as an exploratory project by two young aspiring marine mammalogists (Dr P and Fairul) has since grown and blossomed into a mature and comprehensive research and conservation project on cetaceans around the Langkawi archipelago and the Perlis-Kuala Kedah mainland coast. We couldn't be prouder of all that we've achieved in our Langkawi Dolphin Research Project in the last 10 years. Most of our core team members in MareCet had all had their first taste of cetacean fieldwork with LDR when they joined as volunteers, and today Vivian, Jol Ern and Sandra hold important roles in the organization.

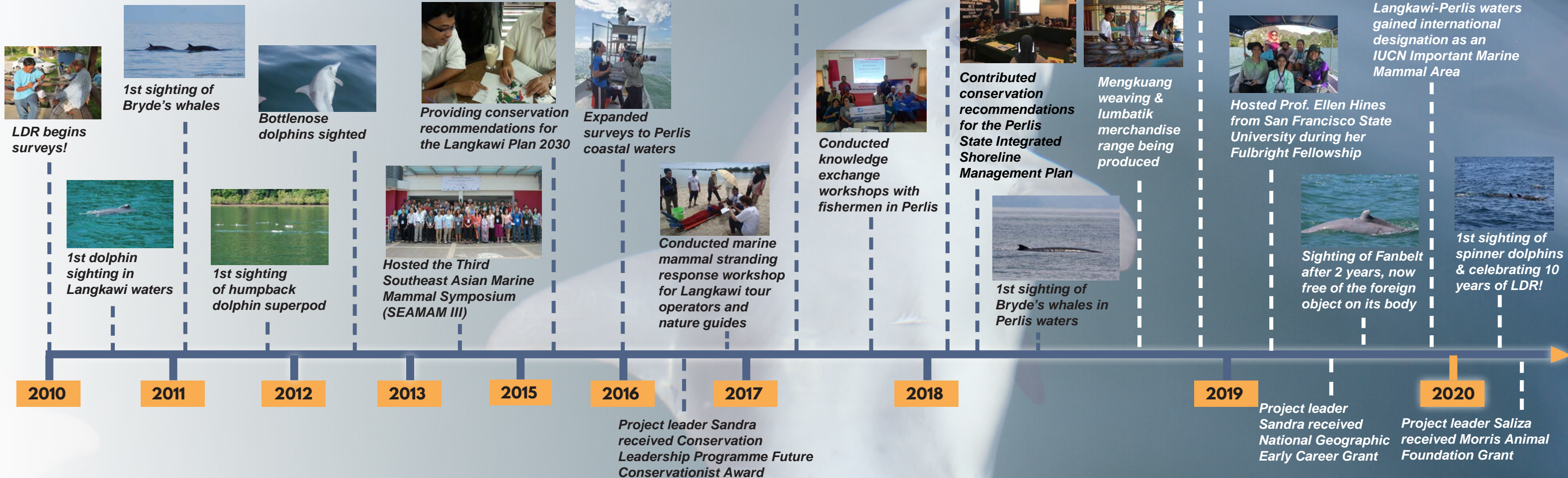
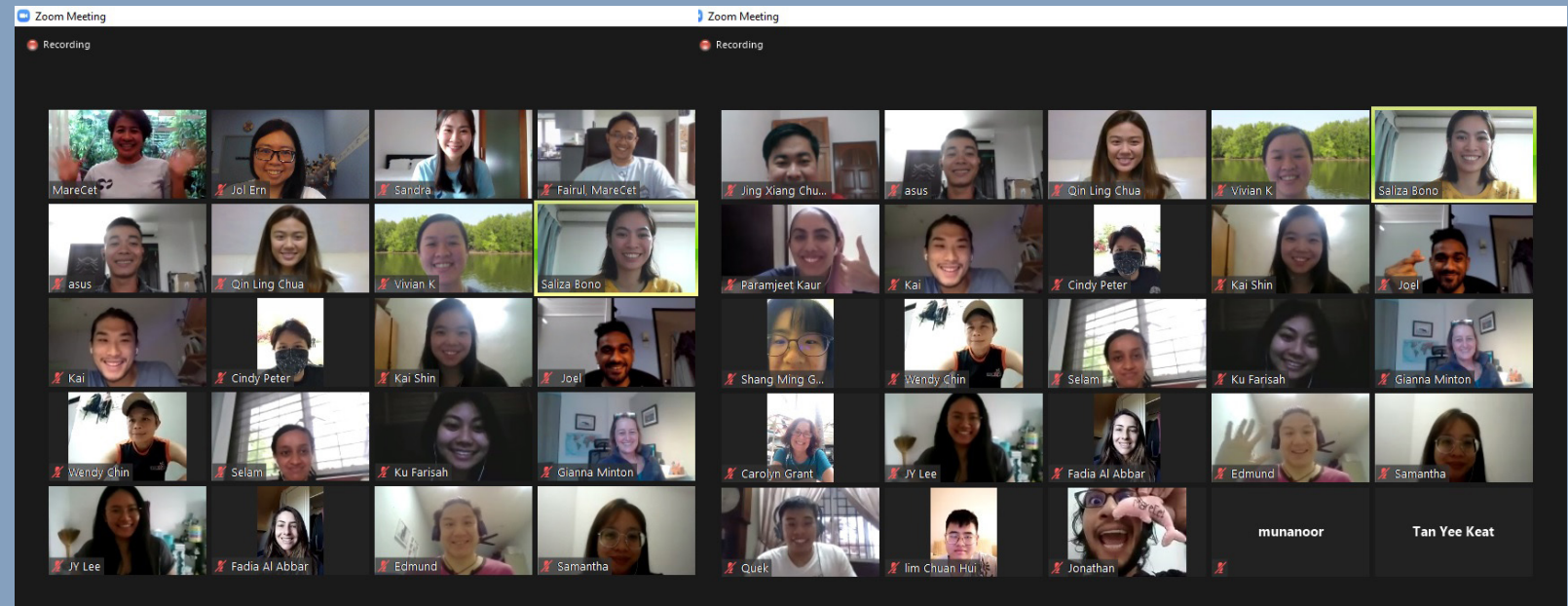
In terms of research, we now have a good understanding of where cetaceans are distributed in our study site, how the three species are able to co-exist in the same areas and what the human threats are to the animals.

We have used the data acquired to provide inputs in various local and national management plans and successfully obtained international designation of our site as an IUCN Important Marine Mammal Area.

Our efforts have also extended to conducting various types of marine education programmes with local schools, tour operators, the local authorities and members of the general public. We would like to say a huge THANK YOU to all our supporters and volunteers over the last 10 years, without whom none of what we've achieved would be possible.

The pandemic situation did not permit us to host any celebratory party for this 10th year anniversary. Instead, we made a commemorative 10-minute video to look at the LDR project through the last 10 years, and hosted two web gatherings with our supporters and ex-volunteers to screen the video for them.

The video is now available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUare_laJUc



SAYANG SAYANG SEAGRASS VIRTUAL FESTIVAL

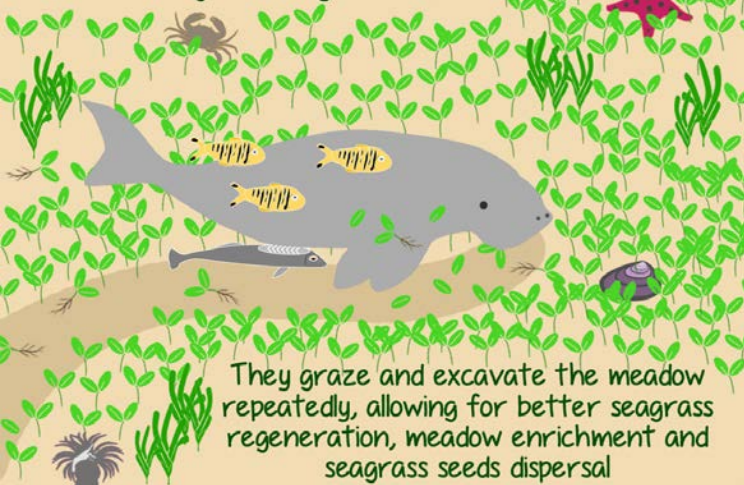
23 - 29 November 2020

Tune in to:



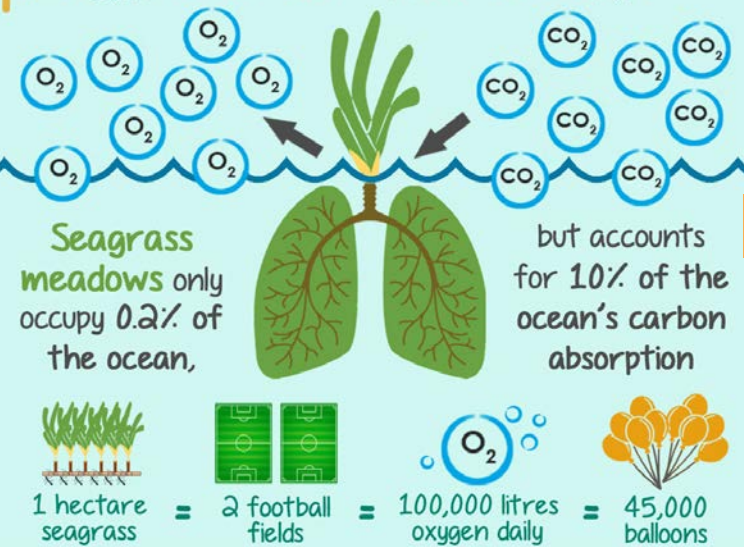
MEALTIME WITH DUGONGS

Dugongs help to maintain the health of seagrass ecosystems



They graze and excavate the meadow repeatedly, allowing for better seagrass regeneration, meadow enrichment and seagrass seeds dispersal

LUNGS OF THE OCEAN



IKI SEAGRASS ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PROJECT

MareCet joins the Seagrass Ecosystem Services Project

January 2020 saw the kick-off of the Seagrass Ecosystem Services Project, a new project initiative funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) from the German government, and managed by the Convention on Migratory Species/ United Nations Environment Program (CMS/ UNEP) Dugong Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Secretariat based in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

This four-year project involves a multi-disciplinary team of technical specialists in areas ranging from dugong and seagrass ecology, resource management, carbon assessment, policy development, to community engagement and business development. Led by the CMS/UNEP Dugong MoU Secretariat, the project involves research, monitoring, and stakeholder participatory activities in significantly important seagrass areas across five nations in Southeast Asia, namely Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Timor Leste, and the Philippines.

MareCet has been appointed as the National Partner for Malaysia for the project,

and is responsible for the overall delivery of the project activities in collaboration with local partners, to achieve the ultimate goal of conserving seagrass beds and the human, floral and faunal communities that depend on them. This project is aligned with MareCet's Dugong Research and Conservation program objectives and is a natural continuation to the efforts that have been made through DRC to date.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the project's initial momentum, discussions continued throughout 2020 to prepare detailed plans for the implementation of the project activities. The project will be starting field activities in 2021.

In November 2020, MareCet organized the Sayang-Sayang Seagrass Virtual Festival through various social media platforms as part of the outreach component of the IKI SES project to continue to raise awareness on the importance of seagrass. Through this festival, we produced various seagrass-related infographics, screened a documentary about seagrass, hosted 4 virtual talks given by guest speakers, held a seagrass ecosystems colouring contest for kids, a panel discussion on seagrass and an online book reading session.

For the virtual festival, we also produced a short video titled "Not Just Grass" which can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4OIOyEdH-g>

Seagrass Festival Acknowledgement:

Thank you to all who have contributed to our Festival!:

Juariah H. Muhamad
Dr. Adam Lim Chee Ooi
Dr. Jillian Ooi Lean Sim
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Juanita Joseph
Heng Wei Khang
Sharon Tan
Leong Yoke Mee
Ng Hong Jing [Penang Seagrass Project]

Len McKenzie
Nicola Piludu
Gary Hamaguchi
Ramu Productions Pty Ltd
KidZania Malaysia
Nature Classroom
Save Our Seahorses Malaysia



Try counting the leaf veins on this Halophila seagrass!



Welcome Dhivya Nair!

Hello! My name is Dhivya Nair. I am the new Research and Outreach Assistant here at MareCet and I will be mainly coordinating the IKI Seagrass Ecosystems Services Project. Just like anyone who works in conservation, I love everything there is to love about nature and wildlife, from the different ecosystems to the many different species of animals that inhabit planet Earth. I love all marine life but sharks have a special place in my heart (shhh don't tell MareCet!).

I remember watching Finding Nemo when I was six and being so mesmerized by the underwater world. So much so that I went on to watch it 13 times more. The ocean has always been really fascinating to me and I think getting to learn about and study it has been really inspiring.

When I'm not looking at animals with heart-eyes, I enjoy reading, art, hanging out in cafes or museums, and playing the piano. I drink coffee like its water and I have an intense love for Nandos.

I'm still quite new to the team but I am eager to be working in the line of conservation. I think I will be able to learn a lot from the MareCet team and the new experiences ahead. The past few months have already been a great learning curve for me as I've been able to be a part of so many different projects. I think NGOs are a key component to the conservation of species and being able to see the work it takes to make real change is very humbling and shows me how much more work there is to be done. It is also really empowering to be working alongside a great team of incredible women who I now look up to as I work through my very first professional job. I am grateful for the opportunity and really excited to see where I'll be able to go and what I can do with the MareCet team.

The verdant seagrass meadows of Pulau Sibul and Pulau Tinggi in Johor are important feeding grounds for endangered dugongs. Check out these feeding trails left behind by dugongs.

SHORT FEATURE ARTICLE

COVID-19 - A curse for humans, but what about the seas & oceans?

In 2020, humanity was brought to its knees by the rapid spread of a microscopic virus named SARS-CoV2 which turned into what is now the infamous COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses shut down, people were told to stay at home, and this carried on for months all around the world. It soon became evident that these lockdowns helped clear the air in some of the smoggiest cities and empty streets in towns and cities gave wildlife the courage to roam about, even in broad daylight. Many of us environmentalists sighed a cry of relief that our planet and natural environment was being given a break from the daily pressures of human footprints.

But what about the seas and oceans that were lying in wake during these times? Were the human pressures lifted off marine seascapes too? Perhaps for a short few months, the seas and oceans were a little quieter as less boats were out and about and cruise ships were docked, allowing marine life some peace and quiet. Meanwhile on land, it was estimated that the pandemic had brought about a monthly global use of 65 billion gloves and 129 billion face masks. The amount of face masks and gloves already made and to be made globally is thought to be able to cover all of Switzerland's landmass when those items are put together. During beach clean-ups held in 70 locations across Malaysia on International Coastal Clean-up Day in September 2020, a total of 1,109 disposable face masks were collected. There were also news reports during the earlier period of the pandemic of many disposable face masks and gloves washing up on beaches and found on the seabed in places such as Hong Kong and France.

In needing to keep ourselves safe, we all have had to use personal protective equipment (PPE); some, such as medical frontliners, more than others.

It's truly a vicious cycle - a pandemic was inflicted to all of us because of our negligence and disrespect for wildlife, causing us to flee into panic mode (cue toilet paper buying madness in some places) and necessitating the wearing of single-use face masks and other types of PPE, all of which are made from plastics. Staying at home has also meant that food delivery services became the norm for many, especially those who don't cook or do not have the means to. Sure, everyone needs to eat, and staying home to stay safe from the virus meant that food delivery services are essential. However, that has caused a significant rise in the amounts of single-use plastic wastes generated everywhere from the food takeout packaging.

It seems we are caught in a washout of the wave and it is tough to get out of it. So how can we try to do our part in mediating this issue of plastic waste, which, in a pre-COVID-19 world was already a massive global issue? There is no easy solution, but let's begin with simple everyday decisions to stop using disposable single-use plastics - bring your own containers to take away your meals, wear good quality reusable fabric face masks where possible, and dispose of your trash responsibly. We can also all be kind to the natural environment so as to avoid yet another pandemic. Let us be united for the health and security of our collective futures.

References:

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/10/07/10-million-masks-unearthed-on-international-coastal-clean-up-day>

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/24/us/plastic-pollution-ocean-covid-waste-trnd/index.html>

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/covid-19-has-worsened-the-ocean-plastic-pollution-problem/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-hongkong-environme-idUSKBN20Z0PP>



A MareCet World Ocean's Day 2020 Video

Throughout the month of June 2020, since we could not head out to the sea due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, we hosted a series of virtual events on our Facebook page, in conjunction with World Oceans Day celebrations.

Our online events comprised multiple online presentations, infographics about ocean importance, two original videos produced, a t-shirt tote bag making workshop, and a call for submission for "Your Ocean Moment" photographs.

Our 2020 World Oceans Day videos can be viewed at the following links:

Waste-To-Message -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XSbUdDjt1o>

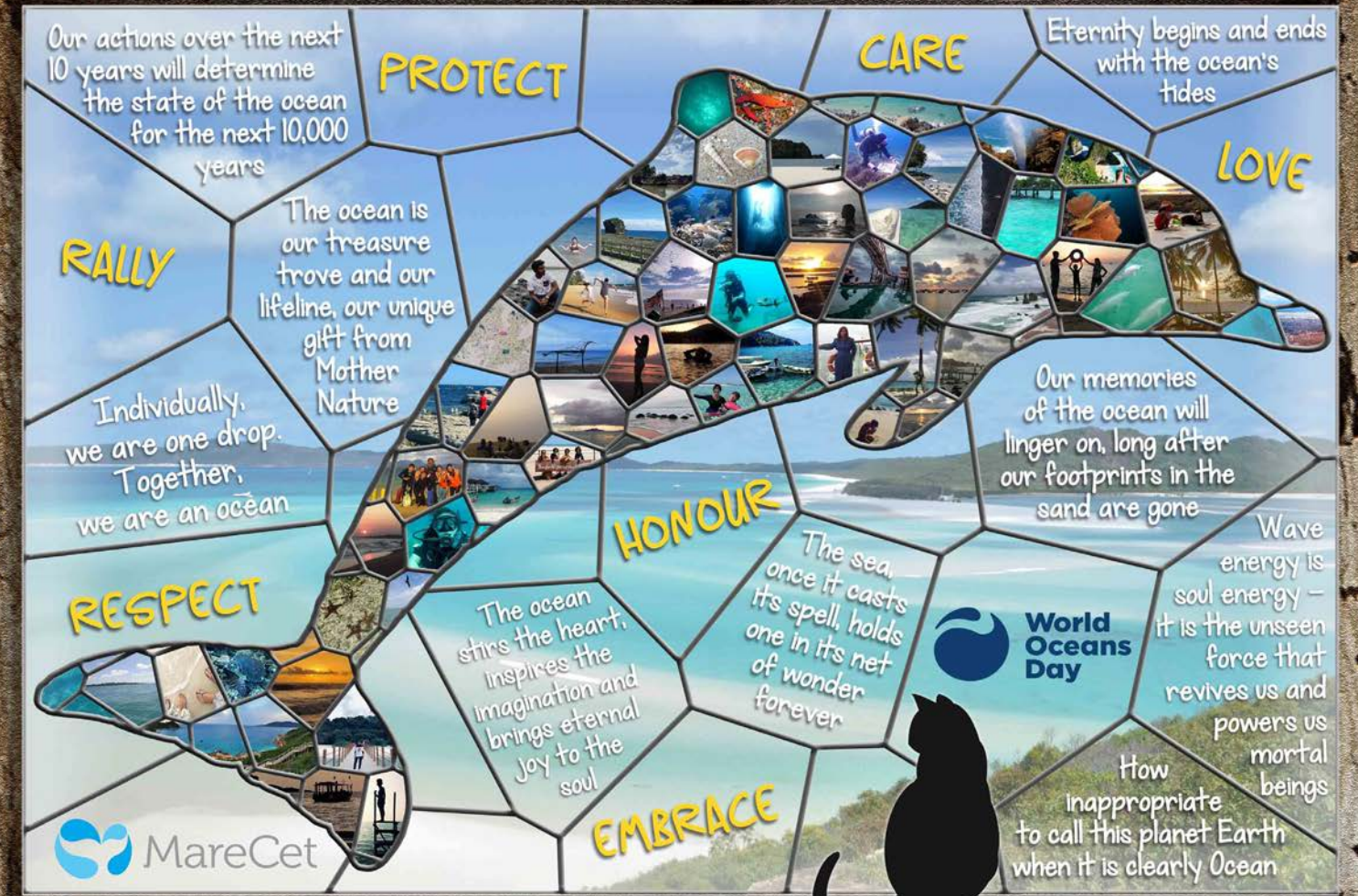
Three Simple Questions about the Ocean -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IB4CtWu7UHW>

Will the Ocean's beauty and function just be a fragment of our memories? Or do we want to enjoy it with our future generations?

THANK YOU FOR LENDING YOUR VOICE FOR MARECET'S WOD 2020 VIDEO!

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Amalia Abertini | Mario Sneyder Jimenez Segura |
| Apipoom Pankhum | Mark de la Paz |
| Azmina Kamal | Matt |
| Bence Szegedi | Mathew Walker |
| Bobbi | Miki Tanimura |
| Budoor Kamal | Nabilah |
| Cindy Peter | Nathan Fedrizzi |
| Courtney McGeachy | Nor Anita Rezle |
| Drew | Olga Filatova |
| Ebi | Onu Chison Joshua |
| Elsa Roumegous | Pablo Garcia Borborogly |
| Eujeania Kayla Ernest | Paul Ferreira |
| Gan Bin Qi | Polita Glynn |
| Giogia Gulotta | Premla Sandarasegeran |
| Gretchen Padamada | Rachael Lim Kyshien |
| Ivan Popov | Ramini Applasamy |
| Ivy | Rebekka Ariel Thorsdottir |
| Jason Hideki | Resson Kantai Duff |
| Jin Hee Kim | Rojaniah Jawalani |
| Joshua Chia | Sai Veerya |
| Katrina Ponnampalam | Shoaib Kiani |
| Kee Jaydania binti Kee Jebbie | Snur Hamid |
| Kenneth Gan Eng Keong | Swietenia Puspa Lestari |
| Khairul Anuar | Syed Ilyas Albar |
| Kiesha-Marie Chong | Syed Rayn Albar |
| Kotaro Tanaka | Tala |
| Kovin Sivanasvaran | Phan Minh Tâm |
| Lau Chai Ming | Thomas Sheridan |
| Leya Anne Vijayan | Tiana Haxton |
| Lim Ming Hui | Viena Mak |
| Lim Si Siew | Weerapong Laovechprasit |
| Lima | Yin Yin Htay |
| Man Chong Nam | Yuki Lui |
| Margari Garcia Simon | Zigi Lim |
| | Zion Lim |



SEA-RIOUSLY IN LOVE - YOUR SHARED OCEAN MOMENTS

We asked you 3 simple questions & these are your answers:



- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Aames Ng | Mei Ling Chen |
| Ahman-Isme Ibrahim | Nadzmie Zulkifli |
| Alia Syafiqah Ramlil | Ng Chee Khoon |
| Alyn | Nina Ijan |
| Carolyn Joan Lau | Nurul Azmeena |
| Chai Inn Ju | Nurul Iman |
| Cheryl Lim | Nurul Zarifah bt Kamaruddin |
| Cindy Foo | Phan Minh Tâm |
| Corrinne Lee | Quek Yew Aun |
| Darshini Kandasami | Ranusha Velavan |
| Dorothea Headley | Raynusha Chandran |
| Elaine Lee | Rojaniah Jawalani |
| Emylia Shuib | Rose Chanmugam |
| Fiona-Jane Gomez | Roseline Yap |
| Goh Hao Chin | Shenshen Yeoh |
| Grzegorz Kujawinski | Sher Lynn |
| Kamomedan | SP Loh |
| Katrina Ponnampalam | Suzanna Bono |
| Kovin Sivanasvaran | Vinothini Perampalam |
| Lam Ying Xian | Winson Wong |
| Lee Yee Mei | Wong Su-Ann |
| Lai Ming Yoon | Zulhaikal Ali |

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR OCEAN MOMENTS WITH US!



Let's do something
GOOD for the ocean

EVERYDAY



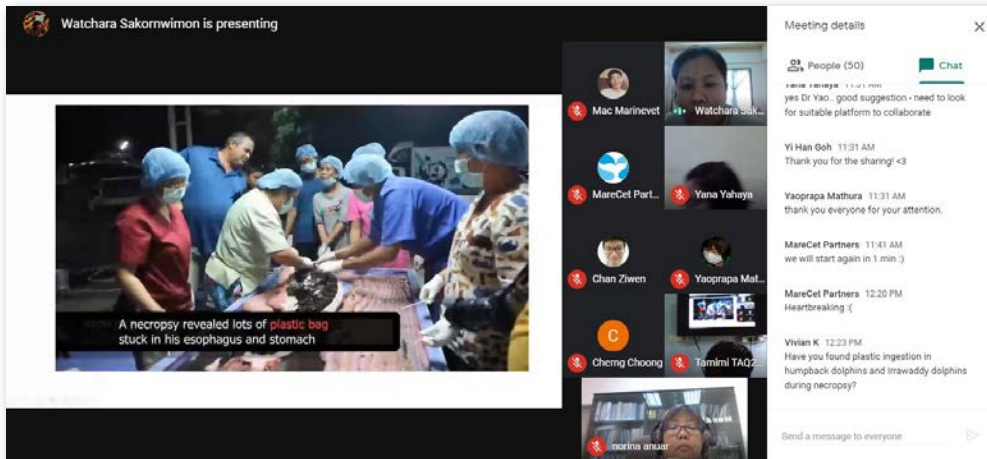
**World
Oceans
Day**

OUR WASTE-TO-MESSAGE VIDEO CAN BE VIEWED AT: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XSbUdDjt1o>

VIRTUAL EVENTS

Marine Mammal Veterinary Webinar

On 4 – 5 July 2020, we had the opportunity to conduct a marine mammal veterinary science webinar for a group of local veterinary science students, personnel from various Federal and State government agencies and other private entities that handle wildlife in Malaysia, all totaling 63 pax.



This webinar was made possible by the very generous time afforded to us by four of our Thai marine veterinary colleagues - Dr. Weerapong Laovechprasit, Dr. Watchara Sakornwimon, Dr. Yaoprapa Mathura and Dr. Chawanya Chiakwathanyu.

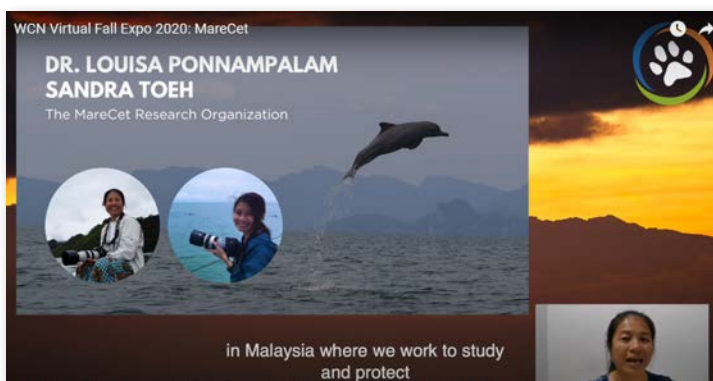
This webinar was especially valuable to the students as their university syllabus does not include marine mammal veterinary topics. The webinar included lectures on the anatomy of marine mammals, diseases, stranding response and rehabilitative care.

The Society of Bioacoustics 7th Annual Meeting

MareCet's bioacoustician, Saliza Bono, had the opportunity to attend and present her research at the 7th Annual Meeting of the Society of Bioacoustics which was held online via Zoom on 4 December 2020. The conference was attended by various researchers and experts whose expertise ranged from underwater bioacoustics to terrestrial bioacoustics. Saliza delivered her talk titled, "Whistle characteristics of Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins in northwest Peninsular Malaysia in relation to behaviour and anthropogenic activities" where she explained the dolphins' whistles in different group behaviours, group sizes and the changes in whistle rates in the presence of human activities.



Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) Fall Virtual Expo 2020



We were so delighted to have been invited to present at the Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) Fall Virtual Expo in October 2020. Although there was not an in-person expo, kudos to WCN for hosting such a wonderful event which still enabled all conservation partners and groups such as ourselves to interact with our supporters, potential donors and even reconnect with the wonderful conservationists we met at the WCN Fall Expo 2019 in San Francisco. At this virtual event, Dr P shared the e-stage with Sandra, sharing about their personal career growth experiences and the marine mammal conservation efforts at MareCet.

We would like to say thank you to WCN for the continued support of our work, and for providing us with so many opportunities to connect with enthusiastic wildlife supporters and donors from so many places!

You can watch our expo presentation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnyndDffrzk>

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Destination GOOD by AirAsia Foundation



Destination GOOD, founded by the AirAsia Foundation, is a social enterprise shop which promotes local and regional artisans and supports good causes in Malaysia and throughout parts of Southeast Asia.

The shop carries a variety of well-crafted and responsibly-made goods, ranging from clothing and accessories to crafts, home decor, books and food. MareCet is delighted to be partnered up with AirAsia Foundation where we have some of our fundraiser dugong and Irrawaddy dolphin plushies on sale at Destination GOOD!

You can visit the Destination GOOD flagship store in RexKL, Kuala Lumpur or shop online at: <https://destinationgood.com/>

The Datai Pledge



THE DATAI pledge

MareCet has embarked on a partnership venture with The Datai Langkawi, a five-star resort nestled amidst the tropical rainforest of northwestern Langkawi, where it faces out to the Datai Bay and Thailand's Tarutao Island on the horizon. The Datai Pledge is an environmental initiative developed by the resort with the aim to preserve biodiversity and the environment, as well as to promote sustainability in Langkawi. The program consists of four pillars: Pure for the Future, Wildlife for the Future, Fish for the Future, and Youth for the Future.

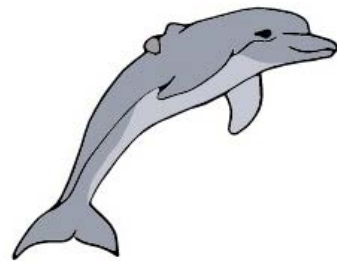
MareCet was invited to be the NGO partner under the Fish for the Future pillar. Through this partnership, we are able to promote awareness and appreciation for marine biodiversity and ecosystems to resort guests through a series of outreach activities and guided boat trips in search of dolphins and porpoises.



The latter enables us to continue our monitoring of the marine mammal populations in Langkawi. The Datai Pledge activities that are conducted at the resort's Nature Centre include short talks, educational interactive games, and a mini marine mammal lab. The Pledge also rolled out a dolphin adoption program for the resort guests, whereby eight regularly sighted Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins in Langkawi that are from our photo-identification catalogue are now up for "adoption" according to different tiers of donations.

We are thankful to The Datai Langkawi for this partnership and the support. We are excited and look forward to a long and fruitful endeavour together, creating lasting conservation impressions on the visitors to the resort!

Wildcards



In June 2020, MareCet was approached by Wildcards, a team comprised of a small group of passionate conservationists and technologists who are curating a social and gamified platform to raise funds for animal conservation. After some discussion, our partnership with Wildcards became official in July 2020, and in November 2020, our very own Wildcard in the form of an Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin named Flop, was launched. Flop recently obtained its first guardian who adopted it at \$7.50 with a 20% monthly commitment fee to MareCet.

We intend to nominate a dugong to be our next Wildcard.

To adopt Flop, click the link below:
<https://wildcards.world/#details/28>

And to find out more about MareCet's Wildcards page:
<https://wildcards.world/#org/marecet>



A Day out with Dolphins & Dolphin Researchers



A day trip to the Matang Mangroves (Perak) with the MareCet Team in search of dolphins and experience how dolphin research is conducted at our project site!

 MareCet

A day out with dolphins & dolphin researchers

Kuala Sepetang, Perak

Trip package is inclusive of boat trip & roundtrip transportation (Kuala Lumpur - K.Sepetang). Participant must be 18 years old and above (10-17 year olds are allowed but must be accompanied by parents or adult guardians). LIMITED spaces available.

Email us at outreach.marecet@gmail.com or Whatsapp to 011 1577 6802 to book a spot or for further enquiries.

**subject to MareCet team's availability and tide suitability*



The COVID-19 movement control order (MCO) in Malaysia, which began in March 2020 lifted momentarily at the end of July 2020, which allowed us to run two of our dolphin edu-tours in Matang, Perak in August and September 2020. However, in compliance with our government's COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedure, we had to reduce the maximum number of participants per boat from 22 to 12, and get everyone's body temperature checked before going onboard.

During the September 2020 trip, we encountered a group of Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins and spent a good 90 minutes observing them feeding and socializing in the turbid waters of Matang. Among the group, we recognized one of the dolphins (ID code: MTG15-LDF-009) to be an individual which was not seen very often. The dolphin was last seen in July 2016 prior to this trip, so it was rather exciting for us to be able to match its photograph with our catalogue of dorsal fins, and to see it again after 4 years. All participants were very excited and happy to experience a close encounter with the wild dolphins of Matang and enjoyed themselves very much throughout the trip.

We have yet to run any trips since then due to MCO 2.0 which was imposed in January 2021, but we are hoping to get back

and resume our dolphin edu-tours again soon once inter-state travel restrictions are lifted. Stay tuned to <https://www.facebook.com/marecetexcursions> for more updates and announcements of upcoming trip dates for the year!

MareCet is currently partnering with Buddyz, a local online travel booking platform for our dolphin edu-tours at Kuala Sepetang too. You can now sign up for the trips with us directly or book your trips through Buddyz at: <https://www.buddyz.co/en/experiences/discovering-dolphins-with-marine-biologists>



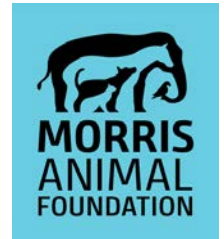
THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We would not have made it through the challenges of 2020 had it not been for your generous support for MareCet. We stayed afloat because you enabled us to.

Please know that we cherish each and everyone's contributions, no matter the size or form, and know that we could not do what we do, achieve what we achieve, and be without any of your help and support.

Thus we would like to close off the year that was and this newsletter by saying a huge TERIMA KASIH / THANK YOU / நன்றி / 谢谢 / TACK to all who have journeyed with us throughout 2020.

Thank you for parting with your funds, your time and your muscles to give us a helping hand.



Supported by:



based on a decision of the German Bundestag



AIR Fund
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AND OUR VOLUNTEERS:

As always, MareCet cannot do a lot of the work that we do without the generous time and help given to us by volunteers. So we want to say thank you to all the following amazing volunteers we had in 2020! The memories made and friendships forged will not be forgotten for a long time to come.

Maimunah bt Mohd Noor
 Aqilah Nur bt Shahruddin
 Kovin Sivasvaran
 Tomoka Sagara
 Wakana Matsunami
 Goh Kai Zhi
 Priscillia Miard
 Nicole Lim Wei Chen
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Selam Solomon Gebreselassie
 Yee Cheng Haw
 Syazana bt Sirdar Ali
 Wong Wen Sheng
 Tan Shao Quan
 Xu YuXiang
 Aida Nadirah Ali Munauwar
 Anis Adlina Isman Rohimly

VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIALS



Most Volunteered Person - Goh Kai Zhi

Being able to volunteer for MareCet has always been one of the highlights of mine. Being able to work with a team of bold conservationists, and some of the brightest minds who are working through so much ambiguity to establish an environment; one that both marine mammals and citizens of Malaysia can coexist, is something I am both humbled and proud to be a tiny part of.

Come join MareCet!

Volunteering for MareCet was the highlight of my year. To be up close to these amazing creatures in a way that contributes to our knowledge about cetacean life is the best possible way to experience them. Add to that the priceless opportunity to assist and spend time with marine scientists and have all my burning questions answered. In 10 days I gained a better appreciation for the difficult but necessary job of gathering data and got to see first-hand the intense challenges marine mammals face in Malaysian waters. Getting to travel to Kuala Perlis and spend time in such a beautiful part of the country was a bonus. Whether you're a student considering a career in conservation or a nature and animal lover who wants to make a difference, this will be the most rewarding 10 days of your life.

-Maimunah Mohd Noor

I had a very good experience in Langkawi. I observed many dolphins up close and saw various other animals. I really enjoyed volunteering with MareCet.

-Tomoka Sagara

Volunteering in Marecet was just amazing and eye opening. Being able to join their team on field trips spotting dolphins is definitely something out of a movie. I got to see the hard work and passion behind their great success. They have an enthusiastic and strong team. I learned many things about marine cetaceans as well as other skills such as measuring depth, water PH and even tying knots. Will be more than happy to volunteer again in a heartbeat.

-Kovin Sivanasvaran

The experience of volunteering with MareCet has been very eye-opening to me on how conservation works. Conservation does not only revolve around conserving the animals but also creating awareness and empowering the local communities by involving them in MareCet's conservation efforts. Witnessing the dolphins leaping out of the water, playing with each other, swimming near us just because they were curious about us are the moments in my life that I do not want to forget. I hope MareCet will continue this effort for a long time so that the dolphins and not forgetting, the porpoises that I have not had the chance to meet, will always have a home in our sea.

-Aqilah Nur Binti Shahrudin



THE LIL' MARECET SHOP

You can support us through our fundraiser merchandise! Email us at shop.marecet@gmail.com or Whatsapp to **+6011 1577 6802** to make your orders today! You may opt for the items to be posted (additional postage fee will be charged) or arrange for self-pickup at our office in USJ 12, Subang Jaya.

The LUMBATIK Collection

Lumbatik is an original designed batik fabric by MareCet. The name '**Lumbatik**' is derived from the combination of the words **lumba-lumba** (meaning dolphin in the Malay language) and batik. The batik design is inspired by the dolphin species that we study - the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, and traditional motifs in Peninsular Malaysia where we work; and Lumbatik is made in Kuala Perlis, a coastal area on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, where we study and conserve the dolphins. Our range of **Lumbatik** products include tote bags, bucket bags, sling bags, purses and pareos. The purchase of these products support both our marine mammal conservation efforts in Malaysia, as well as local artisans.



The ConserWeavetion Collection

MareCet's *ConserWeavetion mengkuang* (sea pandanus leaves) products are handmade locally by the womenfolk on Tuba Island, Langkawi, Malaysia. The *mengkuang* used for the woven products are harvested and processed on Tuba Island during the hot and dry season, while the weaving of the *mengkuang* takes place during the wet season. The purchase of these products not only supports marine mammal conservation, but also helps to sustain the local livelihood and tradition on Tuba Island, and supports the local artisans on Langkawi Island.

The Endangered Dugong Plush Toy

Our dugong plush toy makes a spe-shell gift for babies, kids and even adults! The plush toys are inspired by one of the marine mammal species which we study in Malaysia - the dugong. These dugong plush toys are made by women in local communities in Malaysia at fair trade price.

The purchase of these plush toys not only supports MareCet's conservation efforts for the endangered dugong population in Malaysia, as well as the livelihood and empowerment of local women.










- Lumbatik bucket bag - RM 300
- Lumbatik tote bag - RM 250
- Lumbatik sarong - RM 200
- Lumbatik purse - RM 60
- The MultipurPurse - RM 40
- Purse Kecil - RM 20
- Mermaid's Purse - RM 20
- ConserWeavetion Pals - RM 15
- Dugong plush toy - RM 80

For more merchandise details and items, visit our Lil' MareCet shop at <https://www.marecet.org/merchandise>

Our biggest challenges for the ocean and for the planet are problems of perception. People need to understand that species extinctions, habitat destruction, ocean acidification, and pollution are all chipping away at the resilience of the thin layer of life that sustains us on Spaceship Earth

*Edith Widder, Oceanographer & Co-Founder
Ocean Research & Conservation Association (ORCA)*

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Spinner dolphins seen off the coast of Langkawi (2020)