

# **The Beibu Gulf Declaration on Global Horseshoe Crab Conservation**

2019.6.20

**【This version is for horseshoe crab ambassadors to read at the  
closing ceremony】**

In the coastal areas of Asia and Eastern North America, there live a group of strange ancient creatures. They are known as “marine mandarin ducks” in China for they often appear in pairs; they are heavily armed “warrior crabs” in Japan where people believe they carry the souls of samurai; in many areas, people believe they are monsters under the sea. They have different names all over the world – hòu(蚶), Kabutogani, Mimi, belangkas, Ram Laxman Kankada, ..... In Beibu Gulf, they are called “hāo”. They are horseshoe crabs, the character of today!

Horseshoe crabs were present 480 million years ago, when dinosaurs had not yet appeared. Across the long evolutionary history, horseshoe crabs have survived and thrived. They have become a very important part of coastal and marine ecosystems, and they play a beautiful role in the history of coastal cultures

around the world; from late 20<sup>th</sup> century, these blue-blood creatures also greatly benefit the medical wellbeing of human society.

There are four horseshoe crab species in the world: American horseshoe crab (*Limulus polyphemus*), tri-spine horseshoe crab (*Tachypleus tridentatus*), mangrove horseshoe crab (*Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda*) and coastal horseshoe crab (*Tachypleus gigas*). These “living fossils”, which have survived 480 million years and five mass extinctions, are now facing great challenges from humans: over-exploitation, habitat loss and destruction, intensive human interference, pollutions, etc. Natural populations of horseshoe crabs and their habitats are in crisis, especially the three species in Asia.

In March 2019, tri-spine horseshoe crab was just assessed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, becoming the first Endangered horseshoe crab species in the world. Even the American horseshoe crab, a species with abundant natural populations, was also assessed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. Another two data deficient species are still waiting to be officially assessed.

We, as representatives from 18 countries and areas, stand here today in Beihai, one of the major cities in the Beibu Gulf of Guangxi, for horseshoe crabs. In the past five days, we shared horseshoe crab research, conservation practices, and public engagement cases; we discussed our ideas about horseshoe crab conservation strategies; and we planned for the future of a co-existence of humans and horseshoe crabs.

At this moment, all of us read this declaration together, in Beibu Gulf, expressing our deepest hope for a more sustainable world, for horseshoe crabs, and for us.

We call for **strengthening of policy making and better enforcement**: upgrade the conservation status of horseshoe crabs in different countries and regions, and promote the revision of relevant laws and policies for better management and conservation; strengthen enforcement efforts on illegal harvesting and trading of horseshoe crabs to reduce direct threats.

We look forward to **more scientific investigations and research**: global distribution, population and habitat status of four

horseshoe crabs need long-term scientific investigations, so as to provide evidence for better management and conservation.

We advocate **sustainable management of horseshoe crabs**: TAL/LAL industries should regulate their blood extraction procedures to reduce mortality rates of harvested horseshoe crabs, and release properly afterward; horseshoe crab utilization should be greatly reduced or stopped in areas where horseshoe crab populations are in crisis; “No Horseshoe Crab Consumption Campaigns” should be promoted in crisis areas to educate people not to eat or to sell horseshoe crabs for food. We should reduce domestic and international trade of horseshoe crabs.

We suggest to **restore natural populations and protect their critical habitats**: In Asia, we encourage more artificial breeding and release to restore fragile natural populations of threatened horseshoe crabs; we shall identify and protect more key habitats for horseshoe crabs to breed, hatch, and grow up, and we shall promote the establishment and better management of more horseshoe crab reserves.

We will **promote public and multi-party participation in**

**horseshoe crab conservation:** we shall carry out more public education or participatory activities to deepen the public and stakeholders' understanding of horseshoe crab conservation, and encourage their engagement in conservation actions. We hope everyone can become “horseshoe crab ambassadors”.

Today, we are in the Beibu Gulf of Guangxi, an important gateway of “the belt and road initiative” in China, and homeland of tri-spine and mangrove horseshoe crab. The IUCN Horseshoe Crab Specialist Group declares that June 20th becomes the “International Horseshoe Crab Day”, and we call for an integrating effort in science, conservation and education. Let us take this declaration as a special gift from the 4<sup>th</sup> International Workshop on the Science and Conservation of Horseshoe Crabs. We thank all horseshoe crab ambassadors. Let us wish the best for horseshoe crabs together!

Shǒu Hòu Dì Qíu, Hòu Huì Yǒu Qī!

(Means: Conserve horseshoe crabs in the world. Let us wish the best for horseshoe crabs!)

# 全球鲨保护北部湾宣言

2019.6.20

## 【第四届国际鲨科学与保护研讨会闭幕式共读版】

在亚洲和北美洲的东部沿海地区，生活着奇特的“活化石”生物。它们是成双成对的“海底鸳鸯”；它们是全副武装的“铠甲战士”；它们是令人望而却步的“海怪”。全世界各地，它们有着不同的名字，horseshoe crab, Kabutogani（日本），Mimi（印尼），belangkas（印尼/马来西亚/柬埔寨），马蹄蟹（香港），Ram Laxman Kankada（印度）.....在广西北部湾，当地人叫它们“hāo”。这就是“鲨”（hòu），我们今天的主角！

4亿8千万年前，鲨已经存在于地球上，当时恐龙尚未崛起，鲨跨越漫漫时间长河，存活至今。它们是滨海与近海生态系统中重要的一份子，蓝血的它们更是人类医疗安全史上的伟大功臣，它们还是沿海文化史上精彩的笔墨。

全世界现存四种鲨——美洲鲨、中国鲨、圆尾鲨和巨鲨（也称为南方鲨）。这些战胜四亿多年悠长时光，熬过五次生物大灭绝的“铠甲战士”，如今却危机重重：过度捕捞和利用，栖息地丧失和破坏，人类的过度干扰，环境污染.....鲨的族群和赖以生存的家园岌岌可危。这其中情况最为危急的，是分布于亚洲的三种鲨。

2019年3月，中国鲨（*Tachypleus tridentatus*）正式被 IUCN 红色名录评估为“濒危”(EN, Endangered)，成为第一种被列为“濒危”的鲨。哪怕是情况尚佳的美洲鲨（*Limulus polyphemus*）也早已被列为“易危”(VU, Vulnerable)。另外两种鲨——巨鲨和圆尾鲨的现状，目前尚缺乏数据。

2019年6月20日的今天，来自18个国家和地区的我们，因“鲨”而来，齐聚广西北部湾的北海。我们分享了各自关于鲨的研究进展、保护实践和公众教育案例；我们探讨着鲨对自然、对人类的重要性以及鲨保护的实际解决方案；我们集思广益为鲨及其栖息地的保护出谋献策。

此时此刻，我们为守护“鲨”和人类共同的未来，共同发此宣言：

我们呼吁**加强立法和执法**：联合多方之力，推动保育鲨的法规政策的修订，提升鲨的法律保护地位；加强打击鲨的非法捕捞和非法贸易的力度，从而减少鲨因此遭受的直接威胁。

我们期待**更广泛的科学调查与研究**：全球加强鲨野外种群及其栖息地的长期、科学调查，以全面了解世界各地鲨的种群分布、数量变化趋势及栖息地现状，助力鲨及其栖息地的研究和保护、以及自然资源管理。

我们提倡**鲨资源的可持续管理**：规范鲨试剂产业对野生鲨资源的利用，

减少采血过程中鲨的损伤与死亡,并科学放归；在鲨种群急剧下降的地区大幅减少鲨的利用或暂不利用；不吃鲨，不卖鲨，推动“不吃鲨消费倡导行动”。我们还呼吁减少任何国内或国际的鲨贸易。

我们建议**恢复鲨种群并保护其栖息地**：在亚洲地区促进鲨的增殖放流，以恢复脆弱的野生种群；并识别更多鲨的关键栖息地，促进鲨栖息地的保护，推动鲨保护区的建立和有效管理。

我们将**促进公众与多方参与鲨保护**：通过开展各种公众参与和公众教育活动，加深公众和各利益相关方对鲨的认识和重视，促进公众和社会各界参与鲨保护行动，鼓励人人都成为“守鲨大使”。

今天，我们在广西北部湾——中国“一带一路”倡议的重要门户，中国鲨和圆尾鲨的重要家园，正式宣布每年的6月20日为“国际鲨日”，促进鲨的科学研究、保护与公众教育。谨以本宣言，作为第四届国际鲨科学与保护研讨会的谢幕礼。感谢每一位守鲨者！让我们一起——

**守鲨地球！ 鲨会有期！**