

Injured pink dolphin will die soon if not treated immediately, says expert

By **Laurel Chor** January 23, 2015 / 14:05 HKT
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(Photo: Leszek Karczmarski)

Though clearly everyone just wants this poor little dolphin to recover fully, experts are butting heads over deciding the best course of action. Last week a horrifically injured pink dolphin was **spotted** off of Lantau Island's Tai O.

Believed to have collided with a tour boat's motor, the animal sustained deep cuts across its back, with its tail almost severed.

(Video: Gary Stokes/Sea Shepherd)

While the **Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society** (HKDCS) believes more information is needed before an intervention can be made, others say the animal needs to be captured and treated ASAP.

Leszek Karczmarski, a professor with HKU's [Cetacean Ecology Lab](#), said in a letter to the media that based on his observations, “the dolphin has hardly any chance to make it if not given a direct medical attention”.

“I estimate that if not helped, the animal will likely die within a week or so, and it will be a very painful death,” he stated.



(Photo: Leszek Karczmarski)

He also claimed that his research team witnessed the dolphin going very close to small fishing boats, where it appeared to be “begging” for food.

Though dolphins have been observed foraging for fish behind trawlers, this is the first time they’ve been seen trying to scavenge by a small fishing boat, according to the professor.

“This observation on its own indicates that the animal is hungry and resorts to overcoming its natural fear of humans and boats in hope to get whatever little food he can”.



(Photo: Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society)

Samuel Hung, the founder of HKDCS, said that their researchers are conducting an evaluation to determine whether there is any need for humans to step in.

Hung further explained that if a need is indeed confirmed, then they are open to options for interventions, including euthanasia, corralling the dolphin into a sea pen, administering antibiotics to the dolphin in the wild, or bringing it to Ocean Park for treatment.

The local chapter of [Sea Shepherd](#), a marine conservation organisation, agrees with Karczmariski's assessment, and on Wednesday urged the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) to "intervene as soon as possible".

The Ocean Park Conservation Foundation (OPCF) handles marine mammal issues for the AFCD, and thus treatment options would likely involve the theme park's vets and facilities. (Full disclosure: I used to work for OPCF's Cetacean Stranding Response Team.)



(Photo: Sea Shepherd)

The organisation says that the dolphin's wound near its tail "appears to go almost half the way through the tail", leading the animal "unable to dive or move at any speed".

We're just happy that our little dolphin friend has made it this far and we hope that it recovers soon, however that may happen.