



## 海龜拯救隊

# HARD KNOCK LIFE

With government plans to further protect sea turtles around Hainan recently kicking in, are local attitudes towards the creatures finally flipping? **Jamie Fullerton** visits Haikou's only turtle hospital to investigate

隨著加強保護海南島海龜的官方計劃開始推行，當地人對於這種生物的態度會否逆轉？**Jamie Fullerton** 走訪海口市唯一的海龜醫院，詳細了解箇中情況







**T**he main campus of Haikou's Hainan Normal University feels much like any other major Chinese uni. Book-clutching students saunter between classroom high-rises slurping bubble tea. Lecture schedules are taped to noticeboards, and a few signs add dashes of colour to the landscape of grey concrete and green lawn.

Then, you notice the barbed wire – laid on fences, encircling what looks like an inconspicuous garden.

Lin Liu, a 38-year-old biology professor, unlocks a padlock on the metal gate leading to the closed-off area. This, it turns out, is part of the university's turtle recovery centre, the only one of its kind on Hainan, the tropical and subtropical island province on China's south coast.

"These turtles are valuable," says Lin, pointing at the ominous wire. He smiles as he clicks the lock shut behind us. "And cute." It's hard to disagree – entering the turtle hospital feels like landing the Pokémon Go mother lode.

Lin walks to a huge blue vat filled with sea water, in which a massive turtle is swimming around, gently slapping its fins against the plastic sides. This is Pang Pang, who Lin estimates to weigh 150kg. The name means "fatty", Lin says, not needing to elaborate further on the



rotund creature's moniker. It could get even bulkier – members of the omnivorous species can weigh up to 180kg.

This turtle is one of around 20 currently being cared for in the centre, where Lin works alongside eight other university staffers and some 20 student volunteers. They operate under the guidance of biology professor Shi Haitao, a legend in turtle circles, having set up the facility in 2013 and studied the animals since 1989. At the time of writing, 83 turtles have been treated here.

Patient Pang Pang looks happy enough, chomping the carrot sticks we chuck to him. But the ailment he is recovering from is a worrying indicator of how difficult life can be for Hainan's endangered turtle species, which include hawksbill turtles, green sea turtles and loggerheads.

It's illegal in China to trade or own any of the five species of endangered

turtle found in the country, the other two being leatherback turtles and olive ridley turtles. This fact isn't always known or appreciated by tourists visiting Hainan. As well as trips to Haikou's beautiful beaches and charmingly laid-back Old Town, purchasing turtle-derived souvenirs is often on visitors' to-do lists.

When members of the public report seeing injured turtles to authorities, or when the police confiscate them from owners or poachers, they are taken here for recovery. Pang Pang was given to Shi's team after being confiscated from a local who was exhibiting him at an event. Unable to swim straight because he had eaten so much plastic before he was taken from the ocean, he's being kept here until he can swim in a way that doesn't look like he's drunk.

"Most of the turtles here have bodily injuries," Lin says, showing me a smaller

# “Entering the turtle hospital feels like landing the Pokémon Go mother lode”

## 一來海龜醫院，感覺就像登陸Pokémon Go遊戲的精靈聚集處



turtle with a towel on its shell, to help it recover from what was probably a blow sustained at sea. Fishing has remained a major industry on Hainan, dovetailing with the rise of the tourism industry to compound the risk to turtles. “The animals get injured by fish nets and propellers,” Lin adds. “We care for them, and these days usually release six or seven per month back to the wild.”

Most turtle treatments are straightforward, such as simply keeping them safe and fed in buckets while they recover from flesh wounds. Some are more complicated. In a room upstairs from the garden, a student administers an intravenous drip to a green sea turtle, with a bag of liquid nutrients suspended above the animal via a metal pole.

While other students diligently work on turtle data logs, Professor Shi arrives. Smartly suited, the 56-year-old has slick

**Left to right:**  
A turtle data log;  
biology professor Lin  
Liu with a recovering  
turtle; the façade of  
Hainan Normal  
University

**左至右：**  
一本海龜數據記錄簿；  
生物學教授林柳正在照顧  
海龜康復；海口市海南師  
範大學大門

海口市海南師範大學的主校園區，與中國其他大學擁有相似的風景。拿著書本的大學生，一面遊走於高高的教學樓，一面啣飲珍珠奶茶。課堂時間表張貼在告示板上，而校園內的政治宣傳語句，則為灰色的混凝土和翠綠的草地添上一抹紅調。

接著，你會注意到柵欄上的鐵絲網，圍著的位置看似一個不起眼的花園。

現年38歲的生物學教授林柳，打開鐵閘上的鎖，進入這片封閉地帶。這裡原來是該大學的海龜復康中心，全海南島只此一間。

「這些海龜極之珍貴。」林柳指著鐵絲網說。他面帶微笑地關上背後的鎖。「而且牠們還很可愛呢。」沒錯，一來海龜醫院，感覺就像登陸Pokémon Go遊戲的精靈聚集處。

他走到一個盛滿海水的藍色巨

盆旁，裡面一隻大海龜正在游來游去，鰭部輕輕拍打塑膠盆邊。這是紅海龜「胖胖」，根據林柳估計，牠體重達150公斤。林柳說，「胖胖」當然就是肥胖的意思，一看到這隻渾圓的海中生物，也不用多作說明了。不過，胖胖的體重其實還有上升空間。這種雜食性物種，最重可達180公斤。

林教授解釋，每逢餵飼時間，胖胖就會顯得特別興奮，故此會出現可愛的拍鰭和噴水動作。林柳連同另外八位大學人員和20多名學生義工，現時在中心照顧大約20隻海龜，胖胖便是其中之一。他們在海龜保育界傳奇人物——生物學教授史海濤的指導下謹慎工作。史教授自1989年起一直從事海龜研究，並於2013年成立保育設施。截至撰文期間，中心已治療過83隻海龜。

胖胖這位海龜病員，大聲咀嚼我們遞給牠的紅蘿蔔，狀甚滿足，但牠仍處於康復階段，其傷患也令人擔憂海南島的瀕危海龜品種，如玳瑁、綠海龜和紅海龜——要生存是何其艱辛。

在中國，買賣或擁有國內五種瀕危海龜的任何一種，即屬違法。除了上述三個品種之外，還有棱皮龜和蠟蟻龜（又稱太平洋麗龜）。然而，到海南旅遊的人，往往未必知道或賞識這條法例。旅客的指定活動，當然包括遊覽海口的優美海灘和迷人間適的舊城區，另外也會經常購買由海龜衍生出來的紀念品。

當目擊受傷海龜的民眾通知有關當局，又或者警方將海龜從飼主或偷獵者手上沒收時，牠們就會帶到中心接受治療。胖胖本來





grey-flecked hair and an expression instantly giving away his love of the animals under his care. He grins as he examines a pizza-sized turtle, checking its yellow and white underbelly.

Sea turtles such as these spend almost all their lives at sea, with females only coming to land to lay eggs. Shi says that they used to nest on Hainan, but none have done so for around 40 years. Rampant commercial development on the island, largely in the cities of Haikou and Sanya, has led to the animals avoiding beaches they used to lay on.

"The turtles feed around Hainan but now they breed on isolated islands in the South China Sea," Lin says. "We hope that one day they'll come back."

To see a baby turtle poke its head through an egg on a Hainan beach is Shi and Lin's dream. But the island's real estate rush is only part of the reason why this doesn't happen. Sea turtles, Shi says, are often seen as status trophies in China, and myths about their qualities as food have fuelled an illegal trade industry. It's still possible to find full taxidermied hawksbill turtles in Haikou tourist stores, as well as jewellery made from their patterned skin.

"Ten years ago, it was even easier to see these turtles live in markets, and stuffed turtles in shops," Shi says. He explains that according to myths, eating turtles gives you longevity, and there was a rise in this practice after China's economic

**Above:** Haikou's scenic beaches are a draw for local tourists

上：  
海口市的優美海灘一直吸引著無數的觀光遊客

由一名當地居民持有，並將牠在一項活動上展出，充公後交由史教授的團隊照料。胖胖還在海洋生活時，因為吞下太多塑膠物質，導致在水中不能以直線游動，現時牠在中心休養生息，直至能夠擺脫「醉泳」姿勢為止。

「這裡多數海龜都有身體上的損傷。」林柳說。他向我展示一隻體型較小的海龜，牠早前應該是在海中遭受重擊致傷，龜殼上包裹著一塊毛巾保護身體。捕漁業一直是海南島的主要行業，加上旅遊業崛起，對海龜的生命帶來雙重危機。「牠們經常被漁網和船隻的螺旋槳弄傷。我們很用心照料牠們，近來每月平均把六至七隻海龜送返大自然。」林柳補充道。

大部分護理都較為簡單直接，例如保障海龜的安全，以桶餵飼食糧，同時讓牠們身上的傷口慢慢復元。然而，有些治療程序卻

較為複雜。在花園樓上的一個房間內，一名學生以金屬柱掛起一袋營養液，為一隻綠海龜進行靜脈輸液。

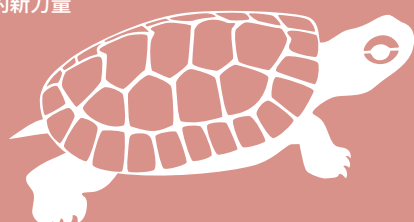
正當其他學生勤快地記錄數據時，史教授就來到了。這位現年56歲的學者一身西裝打扮，梳理整齊的髮型帶有幾撮銀髮，臉上流露出對海龜的愛護之情。他檢查一隻薄餅般大小的海龜，察看其黃白相間的腹部，期間不禁微笑起來。

海龜一生大部分時間都在海中度過，只有雌龜會登上陸地產卵。史教授說，牠們曾經以海南島為築巢地點，但過去40年已經跡跡島上。由於海南島的商業發展速度驚人，特別是海口和三亞兩個城市，導致海龜對其熟悉的產卵故地避之則吉。

「海龜在海南島一帶覓食，但現在只會選擇於南中國海的孤島上繁殖。」林柳說。「我們希望



**HOW YOU CAN  
HELP SEA TURTLES  
ON HAINAN**  
成為保護海南島海龜  
的新力量



#### Adopt one from Sea Turtles 911

This will help provide funds for the creatures' nutrition and rehabilitation, as well as maintaining a healthy environment to ensure a safe habitat for injured turtles.

透過「國際海龜救助組織」助養你的助養行動能為該組織提供基金善款，惠及傷病海龜的營養膳食、復康治療和健康棲息環境，讓牠們可安全地休養生息。[seaturtles911.org](http://seaturtles911.org)

#### Refuse to buy products made with sea turtles

Poaching is the biggest threat to the various turtle species, who are hunted for their shells and meat. Going out of your way to avoid products made from sea turtles will help curb this illegal trade.

拒絕購買以海龜製成的物品旨在獲取龜殼和龜肉的偷獵行為，乃各個海龜品種面臨的最大威脅。拒絕購買以海龜製成的物品，有助減少相關的非法貿易。



**“I just want turtles to live in their natural habitats and not have people disturb them”**

**我只希望海龜能在自然環境下生活，不受人類干擾**

reform resulted in more and more wealthy Chinese. “They didn’t know how to spend the money, so they ate rare species. They thought that showed wealth: trying a special food.”

There are no official turtle population statistics for Hainan, but Shi says that such attitudes, along with the ongoing issue of fishing-related accidents, have taken their toll on the numbers.

Local attitudes are changing, though. In the late 2000s, turtle rescue NGO Sea Turtles 911 was set up on Hainan by Chinese-American Frederick Yeh, who was born on the island.

The organisation operated a floating turtle hospital and hosted turtle conservation events, even getting basketball legend Yao Ming to release a green sea turtle on a Sanya beach in 2014. “It’s very important to raise awareness in our country about protecting wild animals and passing it on to our next generation, like my daughter,” Yao said.

Also over the past decade, the implementation of laws protecting endangered species has improved on Hainan, with police cracking down on poaching and trade. Shi, who has written a turtle identification book, has also helped by distributing the guide to officers for free.

Cogs are turning in Beijing, too. In January the central government published the Sea Turtle Conservation Action Plan (2019–2033), outlining long-term plans for the animals’ protection, including proposals to crack down on illegal fishing nets that damage turtles. As part

海龜終有一天會歸來。」

史海濤和林柳的心願，就是親眼目睹小海龜在海南島的沙灘上破殼而出。然而，島上的房地產發展，僅是令此夢想未能成真的部分原因。史教授說，海龜在中國視為身分象徵，人們也盲目相信其食療價值，令非法貿易持續猖獗。時至今日，海口市不少遊客紀念品店內，仍然可見整隻玳瑁標本，以及採用佈滿斑點的玳瑁殼製成的首飾。

「十年前，市集裡更容易看到活生生的海龜，商店裡也有很多海龜標本。」史教授解釋，人們相信進食海龜有增壽功效，而自從中國改革開放後，富有的人多了，也有更多人吃海龜。「他們不知道錢如何花，所以就開始吃這些珍稀物種，以為吃了特別的食物，就能炫富。」

史教授說，海南島沒有官方海龜統計數字，人們因而形成疏忽的心態，加上因捕漁而引起的意外頻生，令海龜數目每況愈下。現在，海口的市場經常有非瀕危品種的活龜出售，普遍程度有如雞隻和蔬菜，可見牠們在當地被視為普通食材。

儘管如此，當地人的態度已有所轉變。於2000年代後期，非政府機構「國際海龜救助組織」正式在海南島成立，創辦人為生於海南島的美籍華人葉政廷。該機構營辦一所海上海龜醫院並舉辦保育活動，如曾於2014年邀請到籃球巨星姚明，在三亞的海灘放生一隻綠海龜。姚明說：「我認

為，在我國培養保護野生動物的意識，並將這種意識傳承給像我女兒這樣的下一代，是非常重要的。」其女兒當時只有四歲。

再者，過去十年，海南島在實施保護瀕危物種條例方面，亦有所改善。當地公安致力瓦解海龜偷獵及買賣活動。而曾經撰著龜類檢索圖鑑的史教授，也為此盡一分力，將圖鑑免費提供予公安人員參考。

就連首都北京也開始推動海龜保育。今年一月，中央政府頒佈了海龜保護行動計劃（2019年至2033年），概述長遠保育方案，包括提出嚴懲非法捕漁網的使用者，減少對海龜的傷害。該計劃亦提及限制捕漁，藉此保護海龜的遷移路線。

至於計劃能否有效實施，目前仍言之尚早，但史教授抱持樂觀態度，並指出海南島在實行海龜貿易法例方面，已持續改善。他

**Top to bottom:**  
Professor Shi Haitao with a sea turtle;  
feeding time for turtles

**上至下：**  
生物學教授史海濤拿起海龜檢視；海龜餵飼時間







**Left:** Basketball legend Yao Ming releasing a turtle on a Sanya beach

左：  
中國籃球巨星姚明在三亞  
一個海灘上放生綠海龜

of the plans, turtle migration routes may be protected via fishing restrictions.

It remains to be seen if these plans will be effectively implemented. Shi is optimistic, once more pointing out that implementation of turtle trade laws has improved locally. "Lots of people went to jail here recently for illegal animal trade," he says. "Our country has become more conservation-aware. Things have changed, but we need to do more."

Shi's team regularly gives talks to the public about turtle conservation. Local media covers turtle-releasing events, joyous occasions that see recuperated animals flip-flapping towards the ocean on Haikou's beaches. The argument that sea turtles are friends, not food, is finally being delivered.

"I've been studying turtles for 30 years, educating students and the public about them," Shi says. "I feel that now the public

and enforcement officials pay high attention to environmental conservation."

But what does the future hold for these animals on an island where widespread commercial development continues? Lin clarifies that wild sea turtle breeding on Hainan is a hope, not a goal. Maintaining the sea turtle population through education, and patching up injured animals, remains the priority for now.

"Breeding might not be our main goal, but we are still trying to find places where sea turtles might potentially breed," Lin says. "We'd like to educate more hotels, and maybe work together to preserve natural beaches for sea turtles. Maybe they'd come back to them."

"I just want turtles to live in their natural habitats and not have people disturb them," Shi adds. He lobs another carrot stick to Pang Pang, who slaps the water with delight.

#### WHERE TO STAY 住宿好地方

##### Qilou Huan Ke 1921

This elegant boutique hotel is in the heart of Old Town, Haikou's most interesting, colonial-style architecture-lined area. The minimalist, art-dotted reception area is definitely worth popping into for a photo.

##### 騎樓還客1921精品民宿

這間典雅的精品酒店位於騎樓老街心臟地段，該區到處都是殖民地風格建築，堪稱全市最有格調的地區。即使你沒有入住這裡，其洋溢極簡主義和藝術氣息的接待區，也值得你進內拍照留念。19 Zhongshan Rd; +86 0898 6610 0899

##### Hilton Haikou

Conveniently located in the city's downtown area and just a half-hour drive from the airport, the Hilton Haikou is a great base from which to explore the city and attractions like the Hainan Volcanic Crater Park.

##### 海口希爾頓酒店

海口希爾頓酒店位置優越，地處海口市中心濱海大道，距離機場僅半小時車程，是探索海口和海南火山口地質公園等景點的理想下榻地。除了必備的現代化設施外，酒店亦設有七間麻將室和一個兒童俱樂部，讓小賓客也能樂而忘返。hilton.com



說：「最近有很多人觸犯非法動物貿易而入獄。我國對生態保育的意識大有提升，相比以往進步不少，但我們仍需努力。」

由於葉政廷身處外地工作，故此國際海龜救助組織現時在海南島未算活躍。不過，另一邊廂，史教授的團隊定期為公眾舉辦海龜保育演講。當地媒體亦有報導放生海龜的新聞：看到康復健全的海龜置身海口市的沙灘，拍著龜鰭回到大海，令人感到無比喜悅。海龜是人類的朋友，不是食物之說，已不言自明。

「我研究了海龜30年，不斷教育學生和社會大眾相關知識。現時公眾和執法部門都更著重環境保護議題。」史教授說。

但隨著商業發展有增無減，海南島海龜的未來又會是怎樣？林柳指出，野生海龜選擇在海南島繁殖是一個希望，而非現在的主要目標。如何透過教育去維持海龜的數目，以及營救受傷的龜隻，始終是當下要務。

「雖然繁衍海龜未必是我們現時的主要目標，但我們仍會嘗試找尋海龜的潛在繁殖地點。」林柳說。「我們希望向更多酒店推行教育，又或者互相合作，合力保護適合海龜生活的天然海灘。或許牠們最終都會回歸。」

史教授補充：「我只希望海龜能在自然環境下生活，不受人類干擾。」他再向胖胖遞上一條紅蘿蔔，讓牠開心得拍打水面。



**Hong Kong Airlines flies to Haikou daily. For more information, visit [hongkongairlines.com](http://hongkongairlines.com)**

香港航空每日均設有航班往來香港與海口。查閱更多訊息，請瀏覽[hongkongairlines.com](http://hongkongairlines.com)