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## SWIMS tidings....

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This December saw SWIMS celebrate its first anniversary since its reopening in 2003. It has been a hectic, but productive, year, now documented in our Annual Report (available in PDF format from our website [www.hku.hk/ecology/swims/index.htm](http://www.hku.hk/ecology/swims/index.htm)). To celebrate this event, staff and students enjoyed an extended Christmas party at which Dr Jonathon Stillman (University of Hawaii) gave a talk on the thermal physiology of Porcelain crabs, followed by traditional party fare! There was also an informal showing of a recent Pearl Report, TVB programme which focused on marine conservation. This programme went on air in early December and featured the research and teaching of SWIMS staff and students. Many of the students made cameo appearances but the real stars were Valerie Ho and Karen Lui who gave very polished and professional performances, highlighting their research and the importance of marine conservation. The party was also a good opportunity for the new higher degree students, Wallace Choi, Allen To, Anna Situ, Vivienne Bao Wei Wei and Kevin Kwok to join the SWIMS team and move into the institute. In mid-December we welcomed Olivia Starck from Oldendorf in Germany, who has joined SWIMS to conduct her MSc project. It has also been good to welcome back Drs Liu Min and Wai Tak Cheung who both returned in October to undertake Post Doctoral research at SWIMS. Over December, members of staff and students also participated in the Marine Biological Association of Hong Kong's Annual Meeting, presenting their work at the Scientific meeting, and joining colleagues from other institutions for the dinner afterwards.

The most exciting development has been the launch of a new partnership with Ocean Park Conservation Foundation (OPCF) to establish a University Internship Programme. Students from SWIMS and our Environmental Life Science programme had the opportunity to apply for this programme which sponsors them to work for 7-10 days on OPCF projects in the SE Asia region. Mr Timothy Ng coordinated the OPCF programme and, together with staff from SWIMS, held an introductory seminar and then conducted interviews to select the candidates. Competition was intense and 6 students were finally chosen: SWIMS postgrads Wallace Choi, Anna Situ and Kevin Kwok, and Environmental Life Science undergraduates Heidi Lau, Karen Chan and Katy Ho. These students joined projects establishing a marine mammal stranding network in Cambodia and working on the conservation of the Irrawaddy dolphin population in the Mekong River. They were formally presented with their internships at Ocean Park's Conservation Day in January, officiated by Prof Paul Tam (Pro Vice Chancellor, Research) representing HKU, Prof Nora Tam (City University) as the

Trustee Chair of OPCF and the OPCF Ambassador Andy Lau! We are extremely grateful to OPCF for establishing this unique opportunity for our students. These students are just returning from their trips and are giving seminars on their experiences which I am sure will excite and enthuse others to apply for the programme next year! (See photo below.)



Gray A. Williams  
Hon. Director SWIMS

## MISCELLANY

### “Reef Check 2004” a big splash at Sharp Island

by Allen To and Anna Situ

Just a month after the Big Fish Count in late June, commenced another local marine event, Reef Check Hong Kong 2004. Reef Check was originally developed as a way to monitor coral reefs around the world. This event is now carried out in over 60 countries and territories (Reef Check, 2004). The aim of the present annual event is to raise public awareness on marine protection. It also helps gather important information about marine life such as abundance of certain indicator fish species (e.g. wrasses, groupers, sweetlips), invertebrate species (e.g. cucumbers, crabs) and percent coverage of coral communities, and their health. We two, teaming up with Kenny Leung, Polly, Kiwi, Wai Tak Cheung, Jasmine, Karen Lui and a few HKU graduates, who are also interested in marine life, joined the event. Long Ke was our survey site on 28 Aug.

When our boat arrived at Long Ke in the morning, we were surprised by the colour of the water. It was totally brown or even red in some areas! As Dr Leung suggested, dinoflagellates of the species *Prorocentrum micans* had spread to this area and formed the red tide. A very large area