Supplementary data

Table S1. Locations and numbers of interviews

Province	City	Latitude	Longitude	Village	Respondents
Fujian	Fuzhou	26.049258	119.308521	4	93
Fujian	Xiamen	24.498319	118.132001	9	64
Guangdong	Shantou	23.376425	116.716649	7	67
Guangdong	Zhuhai	22.263209	113.503657	8	47
Guangdong	Zhongshan	22.514562	113.514212	1	14
Guangdong	Jiangmen	22.028373	112.856783	1	17
Guangdong	Yangjiang	21.830976	112.016140	3	41
Guangdong	Zhanjiang	21.201596	110.384622	7	73
Guangxi	Beihai	21.448607	109.114810	5	57
Guangxi	Qinzhou	21.753988	108.623631	2	27
Guangxi	Fangchenggang	21.602664	108.331126	2	14
Hainan	Sanya	18.279534	109.484281	1	49
Hainan	Ledong	18.513725	108.700484	3	23
Hainan	Dongfang	19.094893	108.633875	1	16
Hainan	Changjiang	19.431481	108.820103	1	20
Hainan	Danzhou	19.714216	109.217662	1	19
Hainan	Lingao	19.894219	109.528354	1	23
Hainan	Chengmai	19.977932	109.893896	1	19
Hainan	Wenchang	19.832555	110.836358	3	34
Hainan	Qionghai	19.227923	110.542475	1	20
Hainan	Wanning	18.795441	110.402419	3	26
Hainan	Lingshui	18.506447	110.029570	1	25
TOTAL:				**66**	**788**

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Fishermen questionnaire about marine wildlife in the South China Sea

DATE:_____ LOCATION:_____ INTERVIEWER:_____

The Chinese Academy of Sciences is undertaking an opinion survey related to fishers' knowledge about marine wildlife. The answers you provide will only be used for scientific research purposes, and no personal identity information will be recorded. The outcome of the survey will be published in a scientific journal but will remain anonymous. This survey is very important. We hope you can honestly answer all the questions. You have the right to terminate the interview at any time. Thank you for your participation!

Do you consent to participate in this study?

☐**Yes** ☐**No**

A: BASIC INFORMATION AND FISHERY

1) How old are you? _____Gender? _____ Ethnicity?_____

2) What is your education level? _____

3) How long is your fishing vessel? _____

4) **Fishing effort**:

a) How many years have you engaged in fishing?_____

b) Generally, how many days do you fish at sea each year? _____

c) Which months do you mainly fish at sea? _____

d) On a typical fishing trip, how many days are you usually out at sea for before coming back to land? _____

5) How much money per year do you usually earn from fishing?_____

6) What are your main sources of **income** (or, what is your main livelihood) when you don't fish? _____

7) Which **fishing gears** have you mainly used? _____

☐ 1. Drift gillnets ☐ 2. Fixed gillnets

☐ 3. Trawls ☐ 4. Purse nets

☐ 5. Light-trapping ☐ 6. Electric-fishing

☐ 7. Hooking ☐ 8. Long-line

☐ 9. Stow nets ☐ 10. Bomb-fishing

☐ 11. Other fishing gears or methods (Please describe: _____)

8) What are your main **target species** (please list three main species, which can include fish, crustaceans, and/or cephalopods)

_____

9) Do you think that any of the **populations** of these target species have changed since you first became a fisherman? Y / N / Don't know

a) If YES, which one(s)? _____

b) Have they increased or decreased? _____

c) By how much? (approximately) _____

d) Approximately which year did this happen?_____

10) Has the **body size** of any of these target species changed since you first became a fisherman? Y / N / Don't know

a) If YES, which one(s)? _____

b) Have they increased or decreased? _____

c) By how much? (approximately) _____

d) Approximately which year did this happen? _____

11) Do you think that **overall fish catch** (i.e. amount of fish caught on a typical fishing trip) has changed since you first became a fisherman? Y / N / Don't know

a) If YES, has it increased or decreased? _____

b) By how much? (approximately) _____

c) Approximately which year did this happen? _____

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12) **How far** out from the coast do you normally go when you're fishing? _____nm.

13) About **how deep** is the water where you go fishing? _____m.

14) **Where** do you typically engage in fishing? _____(Please write down the grid numbers)

a) Have you always fished in this region? Y / N

b) If NO, where did you previously go fishing?_____(Please write down the grid numbers)

c) Which year did you change the location of where you go fishing? _____

d) Why did you change the location of where you go fishing? _____

_____

B: Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, *Sousa chinensis* (show the pictures)

15) Do you recognize the species in this photo? Y/N _____

16) What is the name of this species? _____

17) How can you tell this species apart from other types of dolphin? _____

_____

18) Have you ever **seen** this species at sea?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently have you seen this species?

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) How many times have you seen it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible) _____

c) If NO, how do you know what it is? _____

19) Are there any areas where you have seen this species more often than other places?

If YES, describe where: _____

20) Do you tend to see this species more at a particular time of year? Y / N

a) If YES, when? _____

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21) When did you last see this species at sea?

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

22) Do local people ever try to **catch** this species? Y / N / Don't know

a) If YES, how regularly is it targeted?

1) Very often 2) Often 3) Sometimes 4) Rarely 5) Very rarely

b) What is it used for? _____

c) Is it used locally, or traded? _____

23) Have you ever **caught** this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, was it accidental or were you trying to catch it? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you caught it in the past five years? _____

c) If YES, what sort of fishing gear does it get caught in? _____

d) Are there any areas where this species gets caught more often than other places? If YES, describe where: _____(Please write down the grid numbers)

24) When did you last catch this species:

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

d) What kind of fishing gear? _____

e) Was it alive or dead？ _____

25) Have you ever seen this species getting **stranded**?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

26) If YES, how many times do you know that it's stranded in the past five years? _____

a) How many of these strandings did you see yourself? _____

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27) If YES, when was the last time you saw about a stranding of this species:

a) Was it alive or dead?_____

b) Which year?_____

c) Where?_____

28) Have you ever **eaten the meat** of this species? YES/NO_____

a) If YES, how frequently do you eat this species:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) If YES, how many times have you eaten it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

c) Which year was the last time when you ate it？ _____

29) Do people **sell the meat** of this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently do people sell this species:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) Have you ever sold the meat of this species? YES/NO_____

c) If YES, how many times have you sold it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

d) Which year was the last time when you sold it?_____

30) Have you ever used this species for **any other purpose**? Yes / No

a) If YES, what purpose? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you done this in the past five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

31) Do you think that the **population** of this species has changed since you first became a fisherman?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, has it increased or decreased? _____

b) By how much? _____

c) Approximately which year did this happen? _____

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32) Has this species disappeared from any areas where it used to be found?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, where?_____

b) Which year did it disappear?_____

c) What do you think made it disappear?_____

33) What will you do if you **find a stranded individual**? _____

1)Free alive 2)Discard dead 3)Sell 4)Inform local fisheries administration 5)Eat 6)Don't know 6)Other choices (Please describe: _____)

C: Indo-Pacific Finless Porpoise, *Neophocaena phocaenoides* (show the pictures)

34) Do you recognize the species in this photo? Y/N _____

35) What is the name of this species? _____

36) How can you tell this species apart from other types of dolphin? _____

_____

37) Have you ever **seen** this species at sea?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently have you seen this species?

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) How many times have you seen it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible) _____

c) If NO, how do you know what it is? _____

38) Are there any areas where you have seen this species more often than other places?

If YES, describe where: _____

39) Do you tend to see this species more at a particular time of year? Y / N

a) If YES, when? _____

40) When did you last see this species at sea?

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

41) Do local people ever **catch** this species? Y / N / Don't know

a) If YES, how regularly is it targeted?

1) Very often 2) Often 3) Sometimes 4) Rarely 5) Very rarely

b) What is it used for? _____

c) Is it used locally, or traded? _____

42) Have you ever **caught** this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, was it accidental or were you trying to catch it? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you caught it in the past five years? _____

c) If YES, what sort of fishing gear does it get caught in? _____

d) Are there any areas where this species gets caught more often than other places? If YES, describe where: _____(Please write down the grid numbers)

43) When did you last catch this species:

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

d) What kind of fishing gear? _____

e) Was it alive or dead? _____

44) Have you ever seen of this species getting **stranded**?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

45) If YES, how many times do you know that it's stranded in the past five years? _____

a) How many of these strandings did you see yourself? _____

46) If YES, when was the last time you saw about a stranding of this species:

a) Was it alive or dead?_____

b) Which year?_____

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c) Where?_____

47) Have you ever **eaten** the meat of this species? YES/NO_____

a) If YES, how frequently do you eat this species:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) If YES, how many times have you eaten it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

c) Which year was the last time when you ate it? _____

48) Do people **sell the meat** of this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently do people sell this species:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) Have you ever sold the meat of this species? YES/NO_____

c) If YES, how many times have you sold it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

d) Which year was the last time when you sold it?_____

49) Have you ever used this species for **any other purpose**? Yes / No

a) If YES, what purpose? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you done this in the past five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

50) Do you think that the **population** of this species has changed since you first became a fisherman?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, has it increased or decreased? _____

b) By how much? _____

c) Approximately which year did this happen? _____

51) Has this species disappeared from any areas where it used to be found?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, where?_____

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b) Which year did it disappear?_____

c) What do you think made it disappear?_____

52) What will you do if you **find a stranded individual**? _____

1)Free alive 2)Discard dead 3)Sell 4)Inform local fisheries administration 5)Eat 6)Don't know 6)Other choices (Please describe: _____)

D: Dugong, *Dugong dugon* (show the pictures)

53) Do you recognize the species in this photo? Y/N _____

54) What is the name of this species? _____

55) How can you tell this species apart from other types of marine wildlife? _____

56) Have you ever **seen** this species at sea?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently have you seen this species?

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) How many times have you seen it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible) _____

c) If NO, how do you know what it is? _____

57) Are there any areas where you have seen this species more often than other places?

If YES, describe where: _____

58) Do you tend to see this species more at a particular time of year? Y / N

a) If YES, when? _____

59) When did you last see this species at sea?

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

60) Do local people ever try to **catch** this species? Y / N / Don't know

a) If YES, how regularly is it targeted?

1) Very often 2) Often 3) Sometimes 4) Rarely 5) Very rarely

b) What is it used for? _____

c) Is it used locally, or traded? _____

61) Have you ever **caught** this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, was it accidental or were you trying to catch it? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you caught it in the past five years? _____

c) If YES, what sort of fishing gear does it get caught in? _____

d) Are there any areas where this species gets caught more often than other places? If YES, describe where: _____(Please write down the grid numbers)

62) When did you last catch this species:

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

d) What kind of fishing gear? _____

e) Was it alive or dead？ _____

63) Have you ever seen of this species getting **stranded**?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

64) If YES, how many times do you know that it's stranded in the past five years? _____

a) How many of these strandings did you see yourself? _____

65) If YES, when was the last time you saw about a stranding of this species:

a) Was it alive or dead?_____

b) Which year?_____

c) Where?_____

66) Have you ever **eaten** the meat of this species? YES/NO_____

a) If YES, how frequently do you eat this species:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) If YES, how many times have you eaten it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

c) Which year was the last time when you ate it? _____

67) Do people **sell the meat** of this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently do people sell this species:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) Have you ever sold the meat of this species? YES/NO_____

c) If YES, how many times have you sold it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

d) Which year was the last time when you sold it?_____

68) Have you ever used this species for **any other purpose**? Yes / No

a) If YES, what purpose? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you done this in the past five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

69) Do you think that the **population** of this species has changed since you first became a fisherman?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, has it increased or decreased? _____

b) By how much? _____

c) Approximately which year did this happen? _____

70) Has this species disappeared from any areas where it used to be found?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, where?_____

b) Which year did it disappear?_____

c) What do you think made it disappear?_____

71) What will you do if you **find a stranded individual**? _____

1)Free alive 2)Discard dead 3)Sell 4)Inform local fisheries administration 5)Eat 6)Don't know 6)Other choices (Please describe: _____)

E: Whale shark, *Rhincodon typus* (show the pictures)

72) Do you recognize the species in this photo? Y/N _____

73) What is the name of this species? _____

74) How can you tell this species apart from other types of marine wildlife? _____

_____

75) Have you ever **seen** this species at sea?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently have you seen this species?

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) How many times have you seen it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible) _____

c) If NO, how do you know what it is? _____

76) Are there any areas where you have seen this species more often than other places?

If YES, describe where: _____

77) Do you tend to see this species more at a particular time of year? Y / N

a) If YES, when? _____

78) When did you last see this species at sea?

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

79) Do local people ever try to **catch** this species? Y / N / Don't know

a) If YES, how regularly is it targeted?

1) Very often 2) Often 3) Sometimes 4) Rarely 5) Very rarely

b) What is it used for? _____

c) Is it used locally, or traded? _____

80) Have you ever **caught** this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, was it accidental or were you trying to catch it? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you caught it in the past five years? _____

c) If YES, what sort of fishing gear does it get caught in? _____

d) Are there any areas where this species gets caught more often than other places? If YES, describe where: _____(Please write down the grid numbers)

81) When did you last catch this species:

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

d) What kind of fishing gear? _____

e) Was it alive or dead？ _____

82) Have you ever seen of this species getting **stranded**?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

83) If YES, how many times do you know that it's stranded in the past five years? _____

a) How many of these strandings did you see yourself? _____

84) If YES, when was the last time you saw about a stranding of this species:

a) Was it alive or dead?_____

b) Which year?_____

c) Where?_____

85) Have you ever **eaten** the meat of this species? YES/NO_____

a) If YES, how frequently do you eat this species:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) If YES, how many times have you eaten it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

c) Which year was the last time when you ate it? _____

86) Do people **sell the meat** of this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently do people sell this species:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) Have you ever sold the meat of this species? YES/NO_____

c) If YES, how many times have you sold it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

d) Which year was the last time when you sold it?_____

87) Have you ever used this species for **any other purpose**? Yes / No

a) If YES, what purpose? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you done this in the past five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

88) Do you think that the **population** of this species has changed since you first became a fisherman?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, has it increased or decreased? _____

b) By how much? _____

c) Approximately which year did this happen? _____

89) Has this species disappeared from any areas where it used to be found?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, where?_____

b) Which year did it disappear?_____

c) What do you think made it disappear?_____

90) What will you do if you **find a stranded individual**? _____

1)Free alive 2)Discard dead 3)Sell 4)Inform local fisheries administration 5)Eat 6)Don't know 6)Other choices (Please describe: _____)

F: Sea turtle (show the pictures)

91) Which species do you recognize in these photos? _____

92) What is the name of this/these species? _____

93) How can you tell this/these species apart from other types of turtle? _____

_____

94) If you saw more then one species, which one is the most common species you have seen? _____(following questions only refer to this species)

95) Have you ever **seen** this species at sea?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently have you seen this species?

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) How many times have you seen it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible) _____

c) If NO, how do you know what it is? _____

96) Are there any areas where you have seen this species more often than other places? If YES, describe where: _____

97) Do you tend to see this species more at a particular time of year? Y / N

a) If YES, when? _____

98) When did you last see this species at sea?

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

99) Do local people ever try to **catch** this species? Y / N / Don't know

a) If YES, how regularly is it targeted?

1) Very often 2) Often 3) Sometimes 4) Rarely 5) Very rarely

b) What is it used for? _____

c) Is it used locally, or traded? _____

100) Have you ever **caught** this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, was it accidental or were you trying to catch it? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you caught it in the past five years? _____

c) If YES, what sort of fishing gear does it get caught in? _____

d) Are there any areas where this species gets caught more often than other places? If YES, describe where: _____(Please write down the grid numbers)

101) When did you last catch this species:

a) Which year?_____

b) Which month?_____

c) Where?_____

d) What kind of fishing gear? _____

e) Was it alive or dead？ _____

102) Have you ever seen of this species getting **stranded**?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

103) If YES, how many times do you know that it's stranded in the past five years? _____

a) How many of these strandings did you see yourself? _____

104) If YES, when was the last time you saw about a stranding of this species:

a) Was it alive or dead?_____

b) Which year?_____

c) Where?_____

d) Did you see this yourself, or just hear about it? _____

105) Have you ever **eaten the meat** of this species? YES/NO_____

a) If YES, how frequently do you eat this species:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) If YES, how many times have you eaten it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

c) Which year was the last time when you ate it？ _____

106) Have you ever **eaten the eggs** of this species? YES/NO_____

a) If YES, how frequently do you eat the eggs:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) If YES, how many times have you eaten it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

c) Which year was the last time when you ate it？ _____

107) Do people **sell the meat** of this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently do people sell the meat:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) Have you ever sold the meat of this species? YES/NO_____

c) If YES, how many times have you sold it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

d) Which year was the last time when you sold it?_____

108) Do people **sell the eggs** of this species?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently do people sell the eggs:

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) Have you ever sold the meat of this species? YES/NO_____

c) If YES, how many times have you sold it in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

d) Which year was the last time when you sold it?_____

109) Do people **use or sell the shell** of this species?

1) Yes, use locally 2) Yes, sell 3) Yes, use locally AND sell 4) No

5) Don't know

a) If YES, how frequently?

1)very often 2)often 3)sometimes 4)rarely 5)once only 6)don't know

b) Have you ever used or sold the shell of this species?

1) YES, used 2) Yes, sold 3) NO

c) If YES, how many times have you done this in the last five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine)

Used _____ Sold _____

d) Which year was the last time you did this?

Used_____ Sold _____

110) Have you ever used this species for **any other purpose**? Yes / No

a) If YES, what purpose? _____

b) If YES, how many times have you done this in the past five years? (give an exact number if possible; approximate number also fine) _____

111) Do you think that the **population** of this species has changed since you first became a fisherman?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, has it increased or decreased? _____

b) By how much? _____

c) Approximately which year did this happen? _____

112) Has this species disappeared from any areas where it used to be found?

1)Yes 2)No 3)Don't know

a) If YES, where?_____

b) Which year did it disappear?_____

c) What do you think made it disappear?_____

113) What will you do if you **find a stranded individual**? _____

1)Free alive 2)Discard dead 3)Sell 4)Inform local fisheries administration 5)Eat 6)Don't know 6)Other choices (Please describe: _____)

G: Show all five photos (dolphin, porpoise, dugong, whale shark, turtle):

114) Are any of these animals national protected species? Y / N / Don't know

115) If YES, which ones? Name all that you think are nationally protected_____

_____

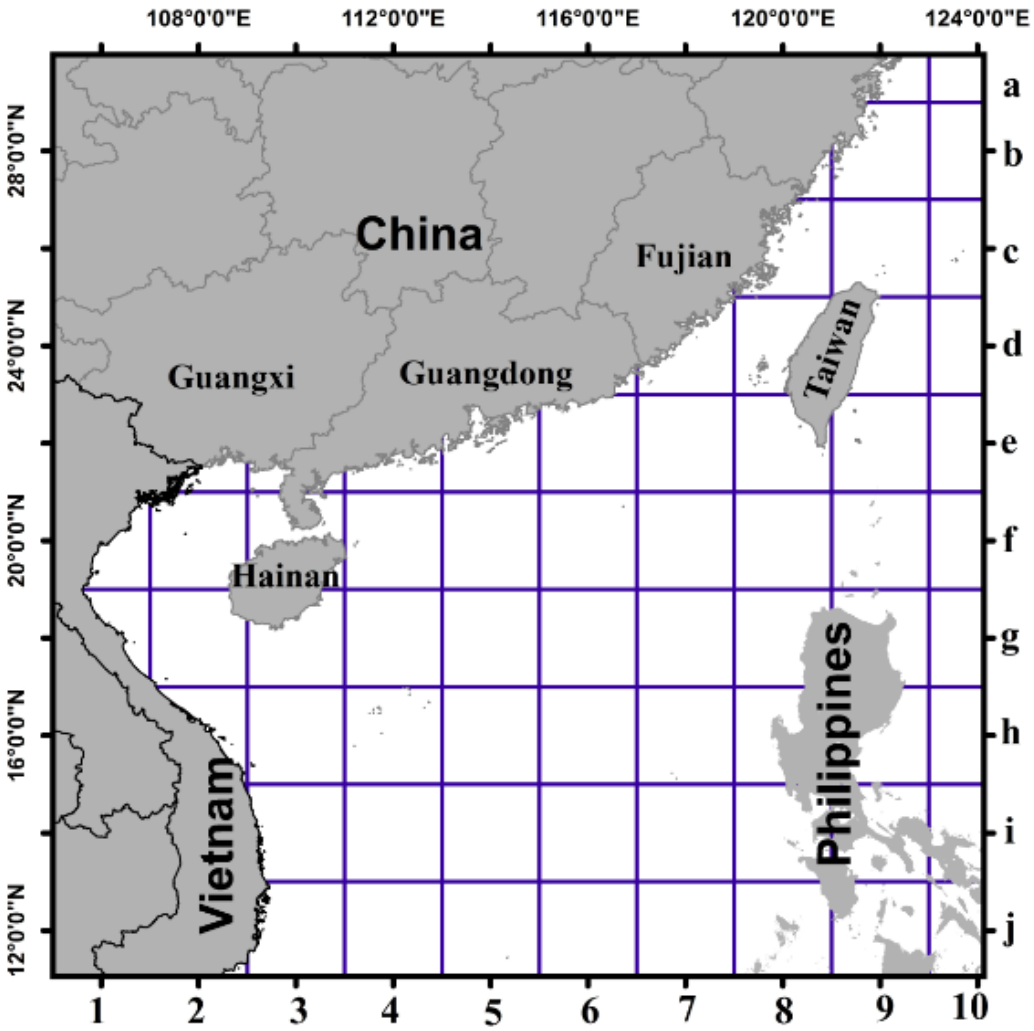

Figure 1 Grid map of the South China Sea

Please write down grid numbers according to the format "Letter + Number" (e.g. b4).

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