

Striving Towards a Modern Coastal Metropolis

The Adventure of a Sperm Whale

By Xu Zhuowei

On April 19th, a sperm whale stranded on the coast of Xiangshan touched the hearts of countless people. After a 21-hour rescue operation, the sperm whale successfully returned to the deep sea.

Rescuers called the mission "an unforgettable experience". "We watched the whale swim back into the depths of the sea in the light of dawn. May it never show up again—because that means it's safe and sound in its ocean home!"

An Intense Rescue

At 8 AM on April 19th, on a stretch of sea shore near Xiangshan's Shipu Science and Technology Park, fishermen found a stranded male sperm whale, measuring nearly 20 meters in length and weighing about 70 tons.

After receiving the news, local officials and rescue vessels arrived on the scene immediately. However, due to its large size and the shallowness of the water, the whale could not swim back into deeper waters, even when being towed.

As the tide ebbed, rescue became even more difficult. The whale was stuck on the tidal flat, and there were visible abrasions on its tail and head. Due to the lack of moisture, its skin was peeling. Its tail quivered feebly. The only thing rescuers and fishermen could do was continuously douse the whale with buckets of water and wait for the high tide. They also cleaned and administered medication to its skin wounds.

"When in the sea, the buoyancy of the water can support the weight of the whale's body evenly. But when stranded on land, the whale's muscles will press on its internal organs and eventually cause its death," said Wang Liangliang, a staff member of the Ningbo Yuren Aquatic Wildlife Rescue Center and one of the rescuers. "We carried out a whole-body examination on the whale and took samples from it. We also tied a buoy to



The sperm whale stranded on the beach.

[Photo by Xu Neng]

its body so that it could swim away more easily when the tide rises."

At 9:30 PM, as the tide rose, the whale started to float in the water, swaying its tail every now and then. Rescuers began to feel more hopeful. "We used three ships sailing side by side to tow the whale. To avoid the risk of towing too hard and causing additional injury, we sailed slowly at a speed of two nautical miles per hour and stopped every once in a while to check on the whale. It was very cooperative throughout the whole process, occasionally turning on its side and spraying, adjusting its body to the journey," said Ni Jianquan, deputy director of the Xiangshan County Water Conservancy and Fisheries Bureau.

As a golden dawn broke at 5:30 AM of the 20th, the whale was released in 28-meter-deep waters near Xiangshan's Nanjiushan Island, over 20 hours after being discovered. The rescuers severed the cords con-

necting the animal to the towing vessels, allowing it to dive freely into the safety of the deep sea. Before disappearing, the whale resurfaced several times, spraying and waving its tail, as if saying farewell to the rescuers on board.

How is the Whale Doing Now?

It has been several days since the stranded sperm whale was returned to the sea. The story of the successful rescue touched the hearts of countless people. Everyone hopes that the sperm whale could go on to live a safe and carefree life in the sea and never come back near the shore again.

How is the sperm whale doing now? Has there been any unusual occurrences in the last few days? The Xiangshan fishery department has been monitoring its surrounding seas continuously and encouraging fishing vessels to remain on the lookout for signs of the whale.

As of now, the whale has not been spotted since the day of the rescue; no unusual signs have been observed in Xiangshan's seas.

Zhai Hongchang, a senior engineer at the Second Institute of Oceanography of China's Ministry of Natural Resources, said that sperm whales are deep-sea animals that are not meant to linger in the shallows for long. If there are no sightings in ten to fourteen days, it can be concluded the whale has left the area for the open sea, where it truly belongs.

No one can say whether the whale has returned to its habitat in the depths, or whether it is still alive and healthy. However, for the time being, the calm sea seems to be the best answer, and no news may be the best news...

Why Do Whales Strand?

Professor Zhao Shenglong of Zhejiang Ocean University is

an expert in marine biology. He told our correspondent, "In recent years, there have been many whale strandings along the coast of Zhejiang. This stranding probably happened because the whale was injured or about to reach the end of its life. It might have been too weak to remain in the open sea and got washed ashore by the tides."

Wang Liangliang proposed another possibility: disorientation. In waters busy with human activity, whales' navigation senses may be disrupted by the dense electronic signals around them.

Chen Lu, a citizen of Shipu who lives near the whale stranding site, told our correspondent that according to the elders in her family, another whale got stranded in the town more than 20 years ago. It was much smaller and was also rescued successfully. "I hope this whale stays safe, just like the one before."



SPOTLIGHT

Fenghua Museum Shortlisted for National Award

By Gou Wen

Recently, the first round of selections for the award "China's Top Ten Museum Exhibitions" concluded. Ningbo's Fenghua Museum stood out from more than 200 museums nationwide to become a shortlisted candidate.

The first round was conducted from March 30 to April 10, 2022. 35 domestic exhibitions and 4 international exhibitions were chosen to enter the final selection.

The 39 shortlisted exhibitions represent a diverse range of themes, including history, art, prominent figures, natural sciences, and technology. The finalists will be announced on this year's International Museum Day.

Converted from a former thermal power plant, Fenghua Museum opened in 2020. Curator Wang Wei said that as a "young" museum, it was not easy for Fenghua to compete with some of the country's best museums, which was why they decided to play to their strengths by submitting an exhibition themed on Fenghua's local history and culture. Fenghua Museum is the only county-level museum to enter the final selection round.

Fenghua Museum is located on Dacheng Road in Ningbo's Fenghua District. It is part of the district's new urban center and an important cultural facility. In the 1980s, the museum building was the Fenghua thermal power plant. The architecture itself is an impressive sight.

The main body of the museum is a steel-concrete composite structure, measuring 28 meters from floor to ceiling, built in 1986 to house the generators. To its east, there is a large 80-meter chimney and a coal conveyor belt.

According to curator Wang Wei, the museum's exhibits reflect Fenghua's 6,000-year history, culture, and folk customs from the Stone Age to the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Notable displays include exquisite porcelainware, jade objects, Chinese painting and calligraphy works, and historical artefacts from prominent members of the Global Ningbo Community.

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双语汇 Different Tongues

许家山村: 石头的世界

By Dong Na

In the mountains in the eastern part of Ninghai County, there is a "stone house village" called Xujiashan Village. In 2010, the village was named a "Famous Chinese Historical and Cultural Village" in the title's fifth awarding round. It is the largest and best-preserved village of stone dwellings in Ningbo and a typical example of the stone architecture style in eastern Zhejiang's mountainous coastal areas.

在宁海县东部的大山里,坐落着一座“石头村”,唤作许家山村。许家山村在2010年获评第五批“中国历史文化名村”,是宁波现有建筑

群规模最大、保存最完整的石屋古村,也是浙东沿海山地石屋建筑群的典范。

Unlike other villages, most houses in Xujiashan Village are made of black basalt, which is unique to the area. The village has not only many intact stone homes, stone walls, stone alleys, stone bridges, stone-paved roads and stone benches, but also traditional ways of life: plowing the fields with oxen, making flour with sweet potato, making rice cakes by manual pounding, and crafting bamboo wicker objects.

和一般的水乡村落不同,许家山村中绝大部分是石屋,均以当地特有的黑色玄武岩堆垒而成。村内不仅保存着完整的石屋、石墙、石



Xujiashan Village./ 许家山村。

[Photo by Yan Long] 严龙 摄

巷、石桥、石路、石凳等,同时还延续着传统的生活方式,如牛耕田、制番薯粉、捣年糕、做竹编等。

Xujiashan's cluster of well-preserved, distinctive historical

buildings creates potential for the village to become a destination for rural tourism, cultural exchange, wellness, recreation, and sports.

许家山村现存古建筑群格局完整,特色鲜明,可打造成具有石村特色,集山村体验、文化交流、疗养度假、休闲运动等功能为一体的山村休闲旅游区。

