

Endangered Species Advisory Committee
Confirmed Minutes of Meeting

Date : 10 January 2012 (Tuesday)
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Room 701, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Headquarters

Attendance

Chairman

Dr Paul SHIN Kam-shing

Members

Dr CHIU Sein-tuck

Professor CHU Lee-man

Dr Kenneth LEUNG Mei-yee

Professor Albert LEUNG Wing-nang

Mr TSANG Kwok-keung

Mr TSANG Sau-yuen

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP

Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
(Acting)

Ms Sian LI

Senior Administrative Officer (Nature Conservation),
Environmental Protection Department

Secretary

Mr Patrick TSANG

Assistant Secretary (Boards)1, AFCD

In Attendance

AFCD

Mr Y K CHAN	Senior Endangered Species Protection Officer
Mr Alfred WONG	Endangered Species Protection Officer/Enforcement
Ms Karrie WU	Endangered Species Protection Officer/Licensing 2

Customs and Excise Department

Mr CHAN Chun-pong, Ricky	Senior Inspector
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Ocean Park Hong Kong (OP)

Mr Timothy NG	Director, Zoological Operations & Education
Ms Loretta HO	Registrar

Absent with Apologies

Mrs Justina LEUNG NGAI Mou-yin, JP

Ms Erica LO Lai-shan

Ms Katherine MA Miu-wah

Mr Thomas WONG Cheung-chi

Mr C C LAY	Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Conservation)
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OPENING REMARKS

01/12 The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting, in particular, Ms Sian LI, Senior Administrative Officer (Nature Conservation) of Environmental Protection Department, who attended the meeting for the first time.

02/12 The Chairman informed members that, as an established practice, to facilitate the taking of meeting minutes, sound recording would be made during the meeting. The audio records would be destroyed after the meeting minutes had been confirmed.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 20 May 2011

03/12 The minutes of the last meeting held on 20 May 2011 were confirmed without amendments.

II. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

(a) Placement of Pets of Endangered Species handed over to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) (Para. 70/11)

04/12 Mr Alfred WONG reported that SPCA had received 22 live animals, mainly tortoises and lizards, from AFCDC since the scheme commenced in June 2011. Meanwhile, four live animals were also handed over by members of the public to SPCA. Most of these animals had been rehomed to suitable persons as pets. He remarked that the scheme had run smoothly and AFCDC would continue to monitor its effectiveness.

05/12 In response to a member's enquiry about micro-chipping the animals before adoption, Mr Alfred WONG advised that SPCA would micro-chip rehomed animals as long as it was feasible and acceptable from animal welfare perspectives. SPCA would consider other measures, such as leg rings for birds, for those animals which were not suitable to be micro-chipped.

(b) Updates on the Animal Acquisitions Plan of Ocean Park (Para. 74/11 to 98/11)

06/12 The Chairman declared that Ocean Park Conservation Fund Hong Kong (OPCFHK) had been sponsoring his study on horseshoe crabs. Members noted.

(Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP attended the meeting at this juncture)

07/12 Mr Timothy NG informed members that OP collaborated with the Chengdu Zoo for a 3-year loan agreement for two captive bred young female golden snub-nosed monkeys for exhibition at OP. The exhibition aimed to advocate conservation of the species and protection

of their habitats. The monkeys would arrive tentatively in January 2012 and would be quarantined for at least 45 days. They would live in Giant Panda Habitat (GPH) next to An An and Jia Jia. The GPH would be renovated during 1 February to 12 March 2012 so as to provide naturalistic environment with extensive climbing structure for the monkeys.

08/12 Mr NG added that noise barriers and curtains would be installed during renovation so as to minimize disturbance to An An and Jia Jia. Desensitization training would also be provided for them. OP also had a contingency plan to relocate An An and Jia Jia to Giant Panda Adventure for temporary holding if necessary.

09/12 Mr NG advised that OP planned to import one captive bred male and one rescued female walrus from Japan in the second quarter of 2012. He remarked that the rescued female originated from Russia and had been under human care in Fukushima Aquarium Japan for eleven years. As her mate died in the tsunami in March 2011, Fukushima Aquarium collaborated with OP to pair up the two walrus at OP. The design of Polar North was being revised to enlarge the dry area for the two walrus.

10/12 Mr NG supplemented that OP planned to acquire captive bred CITES Appendix II species, including snowy owl, Chinese sturgeon and emerald tree boa, in the first half of 2012.

11/12 Mr NG informed members that OP maintained 846 individuals of 106 CITES listed species, including 12 CITES Appendix I and 89 CITES Appendix II species, as at 31 December 2011.

12/12 Mr NG updated members that all four Giant Pandas were stable. The aged An An and Jia Jia were receiving medication so as to alleviate their suffering due to degeneration. Besides, all four red pandas were stable and became sexually mature. OP had been working out a breeding programme for the breeding season in the winter of 2012.

13/12 Mr NG briefed members on the up-to-date conditions of other CITES animals. He pointed out that OP had propagated 18 stony corals from May to December 2011 as a result of advancement in captive breeding techniques. The ultimate goal of OP was to maintain its stony corals collection through captive breeding and exchange with other aquariums.

14/12 Mr NG briefed members on OPCFHK's efforts on conservation. He informed that OPCFHK had provided fundings of HK\$4.9 million in sponsoring 41 new projects on 27 threatened species in the Asian region in 2011/12. He invited members to apply for research funding for 2012/13 before the deadline of 31 January 2012. He also updated members on conservation projects for giant panda, red panda and golden snub-nosed monkey.

15/12 Mr NG briefed members on OP's education work. He remarked that OP delivered courses to some 600,000 local students in the last 34 years. In addition, 94% of guests who took the exit survey expressed that their commitment to protecting animal and environment were enhanced by the animal exhibitions.

16/12 Mr NG invited members to attend the 17th Ocean Park Conservation Day with Chinese White Dolphin Conservation Symposium on 14 January 2012 organized by OPCFHK. [Post-meeting note: The secretary sent the invitation email of OPCFHK to members on 11 January 2012.]

(Representatives of Ocean Park left the meeting at this juncture.)

**III. Report on the 25th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee and the 61st Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee
(Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/1/2012)**

17/12 Mr Alfred WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/1/2012.

18/12 In response to a member's enquiry about the exemption from permit requirement for endangered species of personal and household effects, Mr Alfred WONG advised that Hong Kong followed closely the exemption provided in CITES. The import, export or re-export of specimens (other than a live specimen) of an Appendix II species of personal and household effects shall be exempted from licensing requirement provided that the place of export or import also implement similar exemption. There was limitation on quantity for certain exempted species, for example, 125 grams per person for caviar of sturgeons and 4 specimens per person for crocodiles. He supplemented that the information about the exemption was available on AFCD's website and publicity materials.

**IV. Report on the Repatriation of live Pig-nosed Turtles to Indonesia
(Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/2/2012)**

19/12 Mr Alfred WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/2/2012.

20/12 A member commended the remarkable work of both AFCD and Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG) in the repatriation. He proposed to put the commendation on record.

21/12 The Chairman pointed out that a country would be reluctant to admit that the confiscated animals were smuggled out of its territory. Both AFCD and KFBG had made a breakthrough in collaborating with Indonesian government to repatriate the turtles. He agreed to the member's proposal.

22/12 A member also agreed to the member's proposal. He enquired about whether AFCD had previously repatriated live animals to their home country and whether AFCD would repatriate live animals in the future.

23/12 Mr Alfred WONG replied that AFCD had been endeavouring to repatriate live animals to their natural range as far as possible. He informed that AFCD successfully repatriated 300 *Testudo horsfieldii* (四爪陸龜) to Pakistan and 107 leopard tortoise (豹龜) to Tanzania in 2009. He highlighted that AFCD would usually request the exporting countries to consider receiving confiscated animals if there was sufficient evidence to show that the animals were actually originated from its territory. If repatriation was not feasible, AFCD would explore other options including donation to local or overseas institutions so as to maximize their uses for conservation, education or scientific purposes.

24/12 Mr Alfred WONG answered to the member's enquiry that the National Park in Merauke was a natural habitat of the turtles and the location was chosen because the chance of being re-captured was low.

25/12 In response to the member's enquiry about whether AFCD would request Indonesian Administration to provide survival rate of the turtles in the future, Mr Y K CHAN remarked that it was difficult to keep track of the turtles after release. He added that the turtles could be better protected if the Indonesian government and people attached importance to their conservation. He noted that the heads of the villages had taken part in the release and showed commitment to protecting the turtles.

26/12 Mr Y K CHAN elaborated that AFCD seized live animals in large quantity from time to time. While AFCD would try to identify suitable holding facilities for these animals, euthanasia was sometimes the most humane option available in view of their poor health conditions and the limited holding facilities in Hong Kong. Moreover, tremendous efforts had to be made to provide proper husbandry care for the animals. He thanked KFBG for the essential assistance provided to AFCD for temporary holding and care for the turtles.

V. Education and Publicity in 2011
(Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/3/2012)

27/12 Ms Karrie WU presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/3/2012. She invited members to visit the renovated Endangered Species Resource Centre after the meeting.

[Post-meeting note: Members visited the renovated Endangered Species Resource Centre after the meeting and were satisfied with the new facilities installed there.]

28/12 Ms Karrie WU replied to a member's suggestion that AFCD should consider taking part in Hong Kong Flower Show held at Victoria Park annually. Mr Y K CHAN supplemented that AFCD had been providing advice to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department about endangered species protection and trade regulation before the Show.

29/12 In response to a member's suggestion of displaying eye-catching models at control points, Mr Y K CHAN explained that eye-catching models might attract travelers to cluster around the models and obstruct the passageway. To make best use of the limited space available for the publicity event, the number of words used on exhibition panels was minimized for easy reading, and AFCD staff were deployed to distribute advisory pamphlets to travelers.

VI. Summary Progress Report of CITES Work
(Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/4/2012)

30/12 Mr Alfred WONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/4/2012 on AFCD's work in relation to CITES implementation in Hong Kong from 1 April to 30 November 2011. He highlighted the significant cases involving import, possession and re-export of endangered species without licences. Members noted the Paper.

VII. Review on Fees for Licences and Certificates Issued under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/5/2012)

31/12 Mr Y K CHAN presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/5/2012.

32/12 Mr Y K CHAN answered to a member's enquiry that the costing review was conducted about two years ago.

33/12 Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP elaborated that according to the government policy on fees, the fees charged by the Government should be reviewed every year against the updated costs. Revision of fees would be considered if the discrepancies were significant. He explained that the Government had frozen fees because of economic downturn in the past few years. This had resulted in significant discrepancies between the existing fees and updated costs for some licences and certificates. In accordance with the government policy on fees, it was considered necessary to revise the fees with a view to attaining full cost recovery in a gradual manner.

34/12 In reply to a member's enquiry about whether AFCD would take the value of shipment per licence into account when reviewing the fees, Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP said that the government policy on fees did not consider the shipment value and AFCD would follow the policy.

35/12 In response to the member's enquiry about whether AFCD would revise the fees to attain full cost recovery in one time, Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP explained that the government policy on fees was to attain full cost recovery in a gradual manner.

36/12 Mr Y K CHAN supplemented that a reasonable fee level would encourage compliance to the regulation of trade in endangered species.

37/12 A member remarked that the increase was considered not significant in terms of actual dollars as the value of the shipment per licence was usually high. He believed that the increase was acceptable to the traders.

VIII. Serving the Community – Service Standards Committee 33rd Monitoring Report (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/6/2012)

38/12 Ms Karrie WU presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/6/2012 on AFCD's performance for the quarter ending June and September 2011. Members had no comment on the Paper.

IX. Any Other Business

39/12 There was no any other business to be discussed.

X. Date of Next Meeting

40/12 The Chairman advised that members would be informed of the date of next meeting in due course.

41/12 The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

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