

COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD

Summary Report of the Marine Parks Committee

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper aims to inform members of the major issues discussed at the Marine Parks Committee (MPC) meeting held on 5 May 2023.

2. Matters Arising – Study on Visitors Management for Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park (HHWMP) – Progress Report

2.1 Following the Study on Visitor Management for HHWMP reported in the last MPC meeting, the AFCD briefed members on four follow-up actions in HHWMP. They included providing safety support and kayak eco-tours to visitors, promoting a kayak code of conduct and conducting visitor counting survey. The details were reported in the meeting.

2.2 Members appreciated the quick follow-up of the AFCD and made some suggestions for enhancement, including considering sewage treatment facilities, monitoring the potential environmental impacts brought by toilet facilities and the food stalls, and adding signage to enhance public awareness of the Hoi Ha Visitor Centre. A member also suggested promoting water transport to Hoi Ha Wan (HHW). The AFCD responded that they had liaised with relevant departments and had been advised of the site constraints to construct new sewage treatment facilities at HHW. Water quality monitoring at HHWMP had been regularly performed and did not find any non-compliance so far. AFCD would also assess if more signage were needed for visitors and welcome alternative modes of transport, including land and water transport, to HHWMP. The AFCD would keep monitoring the visitor flow, the marine environment and the use of facilities in HHWMP.

3. Citizen Science Programme for Subtidal Habitats in HHWMP – Progress Report

3.1 The AFCD commissioned a project team from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in May 2022 to conduct a 24-month study to develop and implement a citizen science programme focusing on subtidal habitats of the HHWMP. The project covered five key tasks, including (a) designing and developing survey protocols for the citizen science programme; (b) identifying the approach for data collection, storage and sharing; (c) recruiting and arranging training for team leaders; (d) conducting trial sessions and actual implementation of the proposed citizen science programme; and (e) developing field guides and featured stories for education and publicity purposes. The project's vision was to assist the AFCD in managing marine parks and to collect data to complement the long-term education and public outreach programmes.

3.2 Members enquired about extending the programme to other marine parks. The AFCD would conduct a review after this pilot programme to assess the feasibility of implementation in other marine parks. Concerning the target participants and qualifications to join the programme, the project team explained that it aimed to recruit participants from different backgrounds, and fishermen were encouraged to participate. A member suggested leveraging Coral Academy's connection with secondary schools to promote marine conservation to students. The project team concurred with the suggestion and explained its public outreach strategies.

4. Report on Hoi Ha Festival 2023

4.1 The AFCD reported on the Hoi Ha Festival 2023. A spectrum of workshops and activities was held on 15 days in six weekends and public holidays in March and April 2023. The festival engaged stakeholders from neighbouring villages and kiosks, Friends of Hoi Ha, WWF Hoi Ha Marine Life Centre, Youth Hostels Association Pak Sha O Youth Hostel, Tolo Adventure Centre and two fishermen associations. The activities and promotion strategy were reported in the meeting. The AFCD summarised that the workshops received around 2 000 participants and the response was positive. The result of the visitor evaluation revealed that the activities helped to enhance participants' knowledge and promote a positive attitude towards marine conservation.

4.2 Members complimented the AFCD's effort in the festival. Some members suggested extending the festival to other marine parks and expanding the scale. A member recommended incorporating the content of the workshops into the education programmes for teachers and students. In response to a member's enquiry about the regularity of the festival, the AFCD said that the festival was one of the education and promotion programmes in Hoi Ha alongside others, such as the kayak safety and citizen science programmes. The department would continue to provide suitable programmes on marine conservation, taking into account the service needs and resources.

5. Presentation

5.1 This paper is prepared for Members' information.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
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