

COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD

Summary Report of the Country Parks Committee

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper aims to inform members of the major issues discussed at the Country Parks Committee (CPC) meeting held on 25 February 2019.

2. Enhanced Management of Wild Pigs

2.1 The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) gave members an overview of the current wild pig situation in Hong Kong and informed them of the enhancement measures taken by the Government to address the nuisance caused by wild pigs.

2.2 Members noted that wild pigs were native wild animals commonly found in Hong Kong, particularly in country parks and rural areas. In recent years, owing to habitat improvement, absence of natural predators, termination of recreational hunting in the 1980s, as well as a combination of the characteristics of wild pigs, including high reproductive rate and opportunistic feeding pattern, wild pigs gradually grew in number and extended their range to some outlying islands. Besides, wild pig occurrence in urban areas increased in recent years because of the attraction of food residue in refuse collection facilities and feeding by the public.

2.3 To control the nuisance and threats caused by wild pigs, AFCD and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) had taken several measures to reduce their food sources in urban areas. These measures included improvement of the public refuse collection facilities, removal of food residue at black spots of wild pig nuisance, and display of banners to remind the public not to feed wild pigs. Both AFCD and FEHD had also strengthened enforcement against feeding activities in feeding ban areas and those causing hygiene problems respectively. Moreover, AFCD would continue to carry out the pilot Capture and Contraception/Relocation Programme, under which wild pigs causing nuisance to the public would be captured for contraception and/or

relocated to remote countryside areas. The Department would also enhance the monitoring of the population and distribution of wild pigs and undertake a survey to estimate their total population in Hong Kong with a view to gathering more information for formulating future management strategy. In terms of publicity and education efforts, AFCD would continue to educate the public on the negative impacts of feeding wild animals and the dos and don'ts when encountering wild pigs.

2.4 Overall, members supported the Government's approach to tackle the problem at source by reducing the sources of food in urban areas. They advocated taking vigorous enforcement actions against illegal feeding of wild animals, and suggested AFCD and FEHD to deploy more staff to patrol the feeding black spots and install surveillance cameras at suitable locations to collect evidence for prosecution. They also recommended AFCD to publicise the successful prosecution cases widely so as to send a strong deterrent message to people who intended to participate in the feeding activities.

2.5 Furthermore, members supported AFCD to enhance the monitoring of the wild pig population in Hong Kong and provided some suggestions on the survey method. Some members pointed out that wild pigs not only posed threats to people in the urban areas but also to farmers and their crops in the countryside. Therefore, they recommended AFCD to provide the farmers with suitable assistance.

3. Country Parks Public Education Programme: Take your Litter Home

3.1 AFCD reported to members on the preliminary results of the Country Parks Public Education Programme "Take Your Litter Home" (the Programme). The Programme was launched in 2015 to encourage the public to take their own litter away after visiting country parks and develop a sense of responsibility towards the environment. All litter containers and recycle bins along hiking trails in country parks had been removed in accordance with the action plans of the Programme by the end of 2017. According to AFCD's observation, after the removal of litter containers and recycle bins, the hygiene conditions of the trails were well maintained so far. Besides, there was a reduction in the amount of litter collected at the 11 trails selected for intensive monitoring. The overall amount of litter collected in country parks also exhibited a decrease.

3.2 Members noted that the promotion gradually raised the awareness of the public towards waste reduction. AFCD would carry out several measures to continue to promote waste reduction and recycling in country parks. These measures included adjusting the distribution and number of litter containers and recycle bins in major recreation sites, providing food waste recycling facilities, installing drinking water dispensers at suitable locations, requesting the operators of refreshment kiosks/café in country parks to stop giving out disposable plastics utensils, etc.

3.3 Members appreciated the outcomes of the Programme and supported the above-mentioned measures to promote waste reduction and recycling in country parks. They reminded AFCD to closely monitor the hygiene conditions of the food waste recycling facilities. They also suggested AFCD to strengthen the promotion of using handkerchiefs instead of tissues, and consider reducing the number of vending machines in country parks in the future. AFCD responded positively to these suggestions.

4. Any Other Business

4.1 AFCD and the convenor of the Working Group on Sai Wan Management updated members on the progress in the implementation of the Sai Wan Management Plan, including the restoration work after the super typhoon Mangkhut, the follow-up actions taken on unauthorised structures and the implementation of the Management Agreement at Sai Wan, etc.

4.2 Members also noted that the star gazing site reported at CPC earlier was now under construction at a foothill near Sai Wan and the construction was expected to be completed in March 2019. Members shared their views on the design of the star gazing site. Some of them thought that the design should be simpler and more naturalistic, while some of them considered that the current design might meet the needs of certain groups of people and could promote star gazing activity in Hong Kong.

5. Advice Sought

5.1 Members are invited to note the content of this paper.