

Country and Marine Parks Board
Summary Report of the Marine Parks Committee

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper informs members of issues discussed at the Marine Parks Committee meeting held on 21 March 2012. Major issues discussed at the meeting are summarised below:

2. Hong Kong Reef Check 2011

2.1 Members were briefed on the survey method and results of Hong Kong Reef Check 2011. Members were informed that the results indicated that the growth and condition of corals at all 33 survey sites were generally stable. Coral cover ranged from 20% to 77.5% and the highest were recorded at Sharp Island North and Bluff Island. The majority of survey sites within marine parks had been recorded with high coral coverage (i.e.>50%) and high species diversity. Members noted the survey report.

2.2 A member suggested that AFCD work together with the diving industry to provide training for divers taking part in the survey to enhance their ability to identify fish and corals. Members were informed that AFCD had produced a smartphone application and a handbook as reference for the participating divers. The handbook contained photographs of corals, fish and invertebrates, which would help divers identify marine species, especially dangerous or poisonous ones, during the survey. The Department would include more information in this year's handbook.

3. Pilot Scheme of Marine-based Eco-tours in Lamma Waters

3.1 Members were informed that AFCD had invited a fishermen organisation and a non-governmental organisation (the contractor) to operate the second phase of the pilot scheme of marine-based eco-tours in the form of a service contract. Lamma waters were selected as the testing site. A total of 70 marine-based eco-tours had been organised by the contractor and a total of 50 fishermen had received relevant training under this scheme.

3.2 Members were briefed by a representative of the contractor who planned the pilot scheme in Lamma waters on the details of the scheme, as well as the consolidated views and recommendations of participants and participating fishermen.

Members were informed that the pilot scheme had yielded satisfactory results. Preliminary results indicated that the scheme was successful in helping some fishermen switch to eco-tourism business and increasing public understanding of local culture and practices of fishermen communities. The contractor also put forward some recommendations on improving the pilot scheme, e.g. to arrange more demonstrations featuring fishermen culture and representative materials from the daily life and work of fishermen, and to extend the pilot scheme to other parts of Hong Kong waters such as the northwestern and southwestern waters of the New Territories so that more fishermen could participate.

3.3 The Chairman asked about the effectiveness of the pilot scheme in helping fishermen switch to other operations. Members were informed that the pilot scheme was part of the Department's long-term initiative to help fishermen switch to other operations in line with the fishing moratorium and the trawl ban to be implemented in Hong Kong waters.

4. The Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park Biological Monitoring Programme

4.1 Members were briefed on the details of the Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park (SLMP) biological monitoring programme to be carried out from February 2012 to January 2013. Members were informed that the programme aimed at updating the current status of ecological resources in SLMP and included dolphin monitoring, fishing surveys and coastal ecological surveys.

5. Progress Report on Marine Parks and Marine Reserve

5.1 A representative of AFCDC presented the work of the Country and Marine Parks Authority in marine parks and marine reserve during the period from 1 November 2011 to 31 January 2012. Members noted the content of the paper.

6. Presentation

6.1 This paper is prepared for members' information.

Country and Marine Parks Authority

May 2012

K101