

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

**1. Purpose**

1.1 This paper seeks to inform members of issues discussed at the Marine Parks Committee meeting held on 11 August 2011. Major issues discussed at the meeting are summarised below:

**2. Pilot Scheme to Help Fishermen Pursue Fisheries Related Ecotourism Activities – Results Summary**

2.1 Members were informed that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had launched a pilot scheme in the form of service contracts to invite fisherman organisations and non-governmental organisations (contractors) to operate eco-tours on the theme of fisheries. The northeastern (NE) New Territories and Sai Kung waters were selected as trial points. Over the past 9 months, a total of 120 fisheries guided eco-tours had been organised in the above two water areas by the contractors and more than 80 fishermen had received related training through the Scheme.

2.2 Representatives of the contractors who planned the eco-tours in the above two water areas presented to members contents of the tours and a summary of recommendations and suggestions collected from participants and fisherman participants. Members were informed that the Pilot Scheme had achieved good results. Initial results showed that the Scheme was effective in helping fishermen to pursue eco-tourism and could increase public awareness of local culture and fishermen practices. The contractors suggested improvement measures such as strengthening fisherman training and expanding the Scheme to other waters for more fishermen to participate.

2.3 AFCD representatives introduced to members the second phase of the Pilot Scheme. Work included expansion of the Scheme to Lamma Island waters, inviting more fishermen to participate in guiding eco-tours, and adding commercial elements to the second phase of the Pilot Scheme in order to help fishermen to further understand and assess the feasibility of operating fisheries guided eco-tours commercially.

2.4 A member enquired about pricing of the second phase guided eco-tours. Members were informed that AFCD would continue to sponsor students to participate in guided eco-tours free of charge. However, contractors would be required to add commercial elements to some of the guided eco-tours.

2.5 A member proposed to include shopping activities in guided eco-tours so as to boost revenue for fishermen and to attract more fishermen to support the Scheme.

### **3. The Arrangement of Aviation Fuel Receiving Facility at Sha Chau after Operation of Permanent Aviation Fuel Facility in Tuen Mun**

3.1 Members were briefed by AFCD on the sequence of events regarding the incident of Aviation Fuel Receiving Facility (AFRF) at Sha Chau, and the arrangement of AFRF at Sha Chau after the Permanent Aviation Fuel Facility (PAFF) in Tuen Mun came into operation.

3.2 Members were informed that AFRF was designed to serve as an emergency backup facility from its planning stage and after its approval. It had been planned for it to go on and become back-up facilities for emergency. Based on the above, there is no evidence to suggest that the current arrangement of AFRF had deviated from its original planning purpose.

3.3 Members were concerned that if AFRF at Sha Chau was used as an emergency backup facility, the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) might consult the Committee again in future for maintenance seabed dredging at the turning circle of AFRF.

3.4 The Chairman summed up the Committee's discussion and pointed out that (1) it must be explicitly recorded in this Minutes of Meeting that the Committee would not approve AAHK's application for maintenance seabed dredging at the turning circle of AFRF at Sha Chau easily for the protection of Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park; (2) the Committee would write to AAHK to make clear its stance on the carrying out of maintenance seabed dredging at the turning circle of AFRF at Sha Chau, and suggest AAHK to consider the reprovisioning of AFRF as a long-term solution.

#### **4. Physiological Comparison of Healthy Stony Corals and Corals with Growth Anomalies Using Molecular Biological Techniques**

4.1 The representative of AFCD presented the details of a study on growth anomalies of coral colonies and its preliminary results.

4.2 Members were informed that Coral Beach and Gruff Head of Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park were of the highest prevalence, where about 40% of *Platygyra carnosus* suffered from growth anomaly. Though there was evidence that prevalence of growth anomaly was host density dependent, Moon Island in Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park had similar host density but much lower prevalence (about 20%). The study was conducted in the form of transcriptome sequencing and proteome analysis and found that 19 proteins associated with cellular functions, structures and energy metabolism showed differential expression between the healthy and anomalous corals. These proteins were known to respond to environmental stresses, such as heat shock, cold shock, hypoxia, excessive UV exposure etc, which would normally occur in the local coral habitats. In particular, in Coral Beach and Gruff Head, the coral communities are located in very shallow water and hence changes in water temperature and UV would be dramatic and the corals would be exposed to heat or cold stress easily. These environmental changes may contribute to the more severe growth anomalies in coral community in these areas than other places.

#### **5. Progress Report on Marine Parks and Marine Reserve**

5.1 The representative of AFCD presented the Country and Marine Parks Authority's work in marine parks and marine reserve for the period from 1 February to 30 June 2011. Members noted the contents of the paper.

5.2 Members were concerned that the fines imposed on local fishermen for illegal fishing were heavier than that on Mainland fishermen. Members were informed that the court would give its verdict by nature of each case and as to whether the defendant had previous convictions or was a second offender. It was hard to conclude whether the penalties imposed on local fishermen were heavier or not. In addition, upon deportation to the Mainland, Mainland fishermen would be punished in accordance with Mainland regulations, e.g. paying fines or confiscation of their boats. They might have to pay again in order to get back their boats.

5.3 Members were informed that illegal fishing activities in Hong Kong by

Mainland fishermen were on the decline.

**6. Presentation**

6.1 This paper is prepared for members' information.

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