

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 15 December 2023.

2. Appreciation of the Diversity of Marine Life

2.1 Since the subsiding of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had launched a number of public appreciation and educational programmes to promote the ecological features of marine parks, including the Hong Kong Underwater Photo and Video Competition, Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Marine Life Drawing Competition, Citizen Scientist Programme, Marine Parks Ambassador Scheme, eco-tours and field studies, as well as a number of seminars and workshops. The AFCD introduced the activities one by one at the meeting.

2.2 Members put forth a number of suggestions. Regarding a Member's suggestion of providing experiential facilities, such as virtual reality and stationary underwater cameras, the AFCD would conduct feasibility studies to appropriately enrich the form and content of educational activities. The AFCD agreed with Members' recommendations to reach out to more target audience and carry out passive promotion through various media and publicity networks. It would also step up its promotion targeted at schools and collaborate with strategic partners and organisations to maximise promotion and education efficiency. As for the cetacean education activities and the dissemination of information about dolphins in the Greater Bay Area, the AFCD was going to organise exhibitions and workshops in Q1 2024 to promote care, respect and appreciation of marine life. The AFCD had liaised with the Forestry Administration of Guangdong Province with a view to strengthening the exchange, information sharing and co-operation in cetacean conservation work between the Mainland and Hong Kong in the future.

3. AOB – An Update on the 2022 Coral Bleaching Event

3.1 Widespread coral bleaching was observed in Hong Kong in July 2022. The incident was reported at the MPC meetings in September and December 2022. The AFCD and the representative from the research team of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) summarised the event and reported on the latest development at this meeting. After investigation, it was suspected that the incident was triggered by hyposalinity of seawater and exacerbated by high temperature of seawater. As at the end of 2022, 82% of the coral had fully recovered and the coverage had not declined. Members were pleased to note that most of the coral had recovered. In response to a Member's enquiry about the long-term solution to prevent constant coral bleaching due to global warming, the AFCD and CUHK representative pointed out that the solution to the problem of coral bleaching required a multi-pronged approach, including appropriate conservation strategies, continuous protection of the marine environment and strengthening public education.

4. Presentation

4.1 This paper is prepared for Members' information.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
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