

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 meeting held on 9 April 2024.

2. Fish Restocking in Yan Chau Tong Marine Park

2.1 As put forward in the Blueprint for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Fisheries recently released in December 2023, the Government was committed to implementing restocking to conserve and enhance fisheries resources, thereby improving the marine environment. At the meeting, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) introduced the restocking plan and the arrangement of monitoring surveys. The AFCD had liaised with some religious groups and fishermen organisations to explore the feasibility of engaging the public in restocking activities implemented by the Government and planned to conduct a two-year fish restocking trial programme with public participation in 2024 to 2025 with a view to promoting the protection of marine resources and environment through publicity and education. Tentatively, the restocking exercise in the first year of the trial programme would be conducted at Yan Chau Tong Marine Park (YCTMP) in June to July 2024. The AFCD would review the outcome of the trial before deciding on further arrangements.

2.2 Members enquired about the methods to enhance the survival of fish fingerlings and the monitoring of the effectiveness of the restocking. The AFCD said that YCTMP was protected waters and fish fingerlings would be released at the artificial reefs there to reduce the risk of being preyed on or captured. The AFCD would conduct no less than six months of monitoring surveys before and after the release of fingerlings to assess the effectiveness. Regarding the enquiries about the future development plan upon completion of the trial programme and the fishermen's participation, the AFCD responded that it would explore the feasibility of consolidating the government and non-government resources for continuous implementation of restocking exercises with public participation, as well as the suitable roles to be taken up by different parties in the exercises. A member suggested increasing the number of species and quantity of fish

fingerlings to be released. The AFCD explained that the restocking plan should carefully consider the conditions of the local environment and other relevant factors before increasing the number of species and quantity of fingerlings progressively. Moreover, the AFCD would formulate a long-term strategy of fish restocking in Hong Kong with a view to further enhancing the fisheries resources, and conduct territory-wide long-term monitoring surveys on fisheries resources in Hong Kong waters which could help assess the effectiveness of fish restocking in the long run.

3. Promotion of Sustainable Recreational Water Activities at Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park

3.1 The AFCD reported that the Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park (HHWMP) consultancy studies, completed in 2021 and 2023, put forward a number of recreation and education enhancement proposals. To follow up on these recommendations, the AFCD had implemented various new activities since 2021, including organising seminars on marine ecology and safety of water activities, developing the Kayaking Etiquette to provide guidelines on kayaking, providing safety support services, collaborating with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to co-organise the Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park Kayak Eco-tour and commissioning a research team from a university to conduct a survey on the passenger waiting time for minibus at Sai Kung and Hoi Ha.

3.2 Members were concerned about whether safety guidelines had been provided for swimmers in marine parks and the way to increase the participation rate in some seminars. The AFCD stated that HHWMP was not a gazetted beach with no lifeguards on duty. The beach was popular with kayaking activities in summer. As there had been a speed limit for vessels to navigate in marine parks and safety support services had all along been provided, there had only been sporadic accidents involving water activities in recent years. As some seminars were held during the epidemic, the number of on-site participants was relatively low. However, the content of seminars had been uploaded to the Internet and social media in order to enhance the effectiveness of publicity. The AFCD agreed to explore the feasibility of a Member's suggestion of collaborating with the local kayak operators to require kayak renters to take note of the relevant information and guideline regarding conservation, education and kayaking before renting. In response to a Member's suggestion of optimising the minibus routes in Sai Kung and Hoi Ha, the AFCD explained that the minibus survey aimed to understand the visitor pattern and collect data in order to provide visitors with useful information to help them plan their visits. The AFCD would review the survey results and communicate with relevant government departments and stakeholders to explore improvement measures.

4. Presentation

4.1 This paper is prepared for Members' information.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
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