

COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD

Summary Report of the Marine Parks Committee

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper aims to inform members of the issues discussed at the Marine Parks Committee meeting held on 2 March 2018.

2. Management of Cape D'Aguilar Marine Reserve – Challenges Due to Increase in Visitors

2.1 The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) briefed members on the impacts of the surge of visitors in D'Aguilar Peninsula on the Cape D'Aguilar Marine Reserve (the Marine Reserve) and the actions taken by AFCD and other government departments to address the issue. Representatives of the Swire Institute of Marine Science (SWIMS) of the University of Hong Kong also attended the meeting to share their experience and concerns with regard to the increased number of visitors.

2.2 Members were aware that although no significant direct impact on the Marine Reserve had been recorded so far, the increased human activities in the vicinity could have potential indirect influence on the marine resources and ongoing scientific research studies at the Marine Reserve. The majority of the members were of the view that education and publicity measures should be strengthened to build up public understanding of the valuable ecology and geology of the Marine Reserve and the related regulations to be compiled with when visiting the Marine Reserve and the surrounding areas. Members also agreed that a standardised visitor route could be suggested to tourist groups and individual visitors in order to avoid inadvertent entry into private properties and ecologically sensitive areas. The conservation values of the terrestrial area of Cape D'Aguilar could also be studied to assess whether stringent land-use zoning would be justified for its long-term protection.

2.3 Furthermore, members expressed sympathy for SWIMS for the

disturbances arising from the increase in visitors and provided them some recommendations, such as displaying more prominent “private property” signs.

3. Hard Coral Restoration at Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park – Report on Progress

3.1 AFCD and the Project Team from SWIMS updated members on the progress of the Hard Coral Restoration Study at Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park (HHWMP). Members were pleased with the latest progress of the *Platygyra* restoration and *Acropora* re-introduction under the study, and that the overall status of coral communities in HHWMP remained stable with no new partial mortality event seen during the monitoring period. The Project Team exchanged views with members on the coral restoration work and answered their questions.

3.2 Members supported the proposal of the Project Team to conduct a small scale trial of deploying small-sized 3D-printed artificial reef units at Moon Island which aims at providing more hard substrates for coral attachment. There were some discussions on the scale of the project, size of the 3D artificial reef structure and selection of the deployment site. Members in general agreed that the 3D printing project should start with an experimental scale first.

3.3 In the discussion, members also learnt that AFCD had regularly obtained data on the status of coral communities in Hong Kong through the annual Hong Kong Reef Check in collaboration with the Reef Check Foundation. In 2017, AFCD had also commissioned an 18-month consultancy study of coral bleaching and bioerosion in Hong Kong. Based on the data, the overall health condition of local corals is stable.

4. Hong Kong Marine Classroom

4.1 AFCD introduced to members the “Hong Kong Marine Classroom” which was an educational programme launched in 2017 to consolidate all activities and services related to marine conservation and marine parks organised by AFCD and promote these activities to local schools under the same platform.

4.2 Members commended the efforts of AFCD on marine conservation

education and suggested AFCD to make use of the social media platforms that were commonly used by students nowadays to promote the education and publicity activities under the programme.

5. Advice sought

5.1 This paper is prepared for members' information.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
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