

Endangered Species Advisory Committee
Confirmed Minutes of Meeting

Date : 12 December 2006 (Tuesday)
Time : 9:30 a.m.
Venue : Room 701, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Headquarters

Attendance

Chairman

Dr TAM Wing-kun, BBS, JP

Members

Mr CHIU Ching-cheung

Dr Craig Kirkpatrick

Mrs Justina LEUNG NGAI Mou-yin, JP

Prof. Albert LEUNG Wing-nang

Ms Katherine MA Miu-wah

Prof. Frances MAHR Ching-ki

Dr SUN Mei

Mr TSANG Sau-yuen

Mr Thomas WONG Cheung-chi

Mr WONG Hing-keung

Mr LAU Sin-pang, JP	Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
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Mr C.C. LAY	Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Conservation)
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Miss Florence CHAN	Senior Administrative Officer (Conservation Division) 2, Environmental Protection Department
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Secretary

Mr Hubert CHOW

Assistant Secretary (Boards)1 (Acting), AFCD

In Attendance

AFCD

Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun

Senior Endangered Species Protection Officer

Miss Pauline TONG

Endangered Species Protection Officer/Enforcement

Mr Alfred WONG

Endangered Species Protection Officer/Licensing 1

Miss CHAN Yu-nam

Endangered Species Protection Officer/Licensing 2

CUSTOMS & EXCISE DEPARTMENT

Ms KWOK Ngan-ping

Senior Superintendent (Office of Mgt Services) (Acting)

OCEAN PARK, HONG KONG

Ms Suzanne M. Gendron

Director, Zoological Operations & Education, Ocean Park

Mr Timothy Ng

Assistant Director, Zoological Operations & Education,
Ocean Park

Absent with Apologies

Dr Paul SHIN Kam-shing

Mr CHOW Kwong

Assistant Commissioner (Boundary and Ports), Customs
& Excise Department

Opening Remarks by the Chairman

25/06 The Chairman welcomed all members to the first meeting for the new term, as well as Ms Suzanne M. Gendron and Mr Timothy Ng from Ocean Park who attended this meeting for agenda item IV. He also took this opportunity to thank six retired members, viz. Prof. Kelvin CHAN Kam-chuen, Mr LI Ying-sang, MH, JP, Dr Alice LUI SO Yee-lai, Prof. SHAW Pang-chui, Prof. TONG Yao and Mr Thomas WONG Kwok-fun, for their contribution to the Committee.

Agenda Items

I. Declaration of Interests and Transparency Measures

26/06 Mr C.C. LAY introduced a reference file which included membership and terms of reference of the Committee, copies of the related convention, legislation and guidelines about the protection of endangered species for members' reference and retention.

27/06 Mr LAY drew members' attention to the guidelines on declaration of interests and declared interests when necessary. He also asked members to note transparency measures that were currently in force to upkeep the transparency of the Committee.

28/06 Members noted that membership and terms of reference of the Committee, notices, agendas and confirmed minutes of meetings would be uploaded onto AFCD's homepage.

II. Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 7 April 2006

29/06 The minutes of the last meeting held on 7 April 2006 were confirmed without amendments.

III. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

(a) Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Para. 05/06)

30/06 Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun informed that the new Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586) was gazetted on 10 March 2006 and took effect on 1 December 2006. Before commencement of the new Ordinance, circular letters had been sent to traders and other concerned parties. The Department received quite a number of phone calls concerning issues of local possession of a scheduled species and had responded to all questions. As the traders were well informed about the legislative amendments, licensing work under the new Ordinance was functioning quite smoothly. Regarding the import of live Humphead Wrasse, as some traders tried to fully utilize the export quota imposed by Indonesia for 2006, they had submitted a larger number of applications for this species recently.

(b) Education and Publicity Work in 2006 (Para. 6/06)

31/06 Miss CHAN Yu-nam reported that a series of publicity work had been conducted to tie in with the implementation of the new Ordinance. Before commencement of the new

Ordinance, circular letters were sent to traders and other concerned parties. Details of the Ordinance had been uploaded onto AFCD's homepage for public viewing. To introduce the new Ordinance and its relevant controls to the public, the Department had issued press release and made announcements on TV and radio. Announcements had also been arranged in public transport, including buses, MTR and KCR stations and trains. To facilitate the public to acquaint with the new Ordinance, two new pamphlets highlighting the general control of endangered species and the new Ordinance were introduced to members. Miss CHAN added that the Department had also put in place a Guangdong-Hong Kong joint education and publicity programme, under which seminars for traders and training courses for enforcement staff were organized. The coming traders seminar would be held on 15 December 2006.

32/06 In response to a member's enquiry, Miss CHAN Yu-nam replied that new posters and light boxes had been put up at border control points reminding passengers that import and export of endangered species were regulated.

33/06 Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun informed that apart from the two new pamphlets published, the Department would produce 5 to 6 more pamphlets on specific topics, including traditional Chinese medicines, ornamental plants, marine species and tourist souvenirs made of endangered species. These thematic pamphlets would enable the public to gain a better understanding of the legislation. The Department was seeking resources to distribute to the public the pamphlets on the new Ordinance together with the water tariff demand notes.

IV. Update on Giant Panda (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/6/2006)

34/06 Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/6/2006 which provided an update on two giant pandas, Jia Jia and An An, which have been inhabiting at Ocean Park's Giant Panda Habitat since 1999.

35/06 Ms Suzanne M. Gendron went on to elaborate the husbandry care and behavioural training to Jia Jia and An An, as well as the education, research and conservation efforts for pandas.

36/06 In response to a member's enquiry, Ms Suzanne M. Gendron replied that the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong was a combination of the former Ocean Park Conservation Foundation and the Hong Kong Society for Panda Conservation. Apart from pandas, it had a strong effort towards conservation of marine mammals and other wildlife in Asian region.

37/06 Ms Suzanne M. Gendron went on to introduce the new giant panda facility within Ocean Park's Master Re-development Plan named "Astounding Asia". The new facility was targeted to be completed by end 2008.

38/06 Answering a member's enquiry on any educational programme for secondary students, Ms Suzanne M. Gendron replied that the Ocean Park Academy was an integrated learning system working with the education curriculum in Hong Kong. It offered participatory and fun-filled programmes on nature and conservation from kindergarten to senior secondary level. It could modify and create programme directed towards the needs of individual schools.

39/06 In response to a member's enquiry, Ms Suzanne M. Gendron replied that the current thinking was that pandas could live up to 20 to 25 years old in the wild, while 22 to 27 seemed to be the average age in a zoological facility. The oldest panda recorded in China was 37. Due to the advancing age of Jia Jia, they had developed new aspects of husbandry care for old age pandas. Similar to the current procedure for marine mammals, on the death of Jia Jia, necropsy samples would be taken with a view to gathering more knowledge on the biology of pandas. Ms. Gendron thanked Dr SUN's suggestion to consider preserving the genetic tissues of Jia Jia in frozen form.

40/06 Members had no further comments and questions. The Chairman thanked Ms Suzanne M. Gendron and Mr Timothy Ng for attending the meeting.

(Ms Suzanne M. Gendron and Mr Timothy Ng left the meeting at this juncture.)

V. Report on CITES Meetings (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/7/2006)

41/06 Miss CHAN Yu-nam presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/7/2006. Members noted the content of the document.

VI. Summary Progress Report of CITES Work (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/8/2006)

42/06 Miss Pauline TONG presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/8/2006 which reported AFCD's work in relation to CITES during the period from 1 February 2006 to 31 October 2006. She highlighted a number of significant cases involving import and transit of endangered species without licences for Members' attention.

43/06 A member remarked that the seizure of 335 pieces of wild orchid during the past 9 months was quite serious, as the survival of the species was critical. She suggested that more efforts be made to identify all species, trace the sources collected and the people involved. Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun advised that most of the specimens came across were of common artificially propagated species. For wild origin specimens seized, the information gathered would be passed back to the CITES Authority in Mainland China for investigation.

44/06 Answering the member's enquiry on the care of seized orchids, Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun replied that the specimens were kept in Tai Tong Nursery which was purpose-built to keep seized orchids.

45/06 In response to a member's enquiry on the genuineness of "bear bile powder (claimed)", Miss Pauline TONG replied that the legislation provided that a thing that was claimed to be or to contain a scheduled specimen would be treated as such a specimen. Therefore, the composition of "bear bile powder (claimed)" would not be verified.

46/06 Answering a member's enquiry on the source of bear bile powder, Mr CHEUNG Chi-sun advised that the specimens were seized in local traditional Chinese medicine shop. According to other sources, it was believed that the specimens originated from Mainland China.

47/06 In response to a member's enquiry, Mr C. C. LAY advised that Buddhist Pine was not an endangered species under CITES. However, it was protected by the Forests and Countryside Ordinance in Hong Kong.

VII. Serving the Community - Service Standards Committee 23rd Monitoring Report (Committee Paper: CP/ESAC/9/2006)

48/06 Miss CHAN Yu-nam presented Committee Paper CP/ESAC/9/2006. Members noted that the department could not meet all the performance targets which came under the jurisdiction of Endangered Species Advisory Committee for the quarter ending March 2006 and September 2006 respectively, which were caused by deploying some licensing staff for the backyard poultry operation and an increase in the number of application of licences/certificates issued as compared to same period in 2005.

VIII. Any Other Business

49/06 A member noted that the common names of endangered species were used in working papers. He suggested that the scientific names be added wherever possible.

IX. Date of Next Meeting

50/06 The Chairman said that members would be informed of the date of next meeting in due course.

51/06 The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

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