

AFCD investigates Mainland fisherman deckhands and local coxswain suspected of using snake cages for fishing (with photo)

A joint operation was conducted by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) together with the Hong Kong Police Force and Zhuhai Municipal Marine Comprehensive Law Enforcement Team in the southern waters of Hong Kong yesterday (June 9).

During the operation, the AFCD personnel intercepted a local fishing vessel suspected of engaging in fishing using snake cages (a type of cage trap banned in Hong Kong waters) in waters off Cheung Chau at around 9.30pm for investigation. Some fishing gear (including snake cages and winches) on board was seized by the AFCD.

The AFCD is investigating a local coxswain and six Mainland fisherman deckhands on board suspected of engaging in fishing using snake cages, in violation of the Fisheries Protection Ordinance (Cap. 171).

Only a vessel registered under the Ordinance can be used for fishing in Hong Kong waters and only the fishing methods listed on its Certificate of Registration of Local Fishing Vessel can be employed for fishing by the vessel. The conditions of the Certificate of Registration of Local Fishing Vessel regarding cage traps also stipulate that any collapsible cage traps should not be connected in any way to another; or should not exceed five metres in any of its extended dimensions. Hence, it is unlawful to fish using snake cages. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

A spokesman for the AFCD stressed, "The Government is committed to combatting illegal fishing activities in Hong Kong waters. The AFCD will continue to step up patrols and take stringent enforcement action."

