

AFCD steps up enforcement to combat illegal feeding of wild animals and feral pigeons (with photos)

Since the newly amended Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) came into operation on August 1, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has stepped up patrols and enforcement operations with a view to combatting illegal feeding of wild animals and feral pigeons.

The newly amended Ordinance expands the prohibition on feeding wild animals to cover feral pigeons. The maximum penalty for illegal feeding is increased from a fine of \$10,000 to a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year with a fixed penalty of \$5,000 introduced. The scope of enforcement officers is also expanded. In the first month after the new prohibition came into operation (i.e. between August 1 to August 31), enforcement officers first gave a verbal warning to any person who was found to engage in illegal feeding of wild animals or feral pigeons. From September 1 onwards, enforcement officers would take immediate enforcement action without verbal warning against any person in breach of the feeding ban.

The latest prohibition on feeding wild animals and feral pigeons is applicable to all places in Hong Kong, including private places or premises. The AFCD has stepped up patrols throughout Hong Kong according to intelligence and reports, especially at locations with previous records of illegal feeding activities, and takes appropriate enforcement action as necessary, inclusive of weekends, public holidays and non-office hours. In addition, the AFCD has also established an interdepartmental working group on feeding ban enforcement with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Housing Department, and has conducted a series of joint operations with relevant departments with a view to combatting illegal feeding activities.

Between August 1 and yesterday (October 1), the AFCD and relevant departments issued fixed penalty notices at various locations including those with previous records of illegal feeding activities, such as Yuen Long Nullah, the vicinity of Hang Hau MTR Station, Kam Shan Country Park and Lion Rock Country Park, to a total of 39 offenders engaged in illegal feeding. Details are as follows:

	Number of fixed penalty notices issued
Illegal feeding of monkeys	19
Illegal feeding of wild pigs	4
Illegal feeding of feral pigeons or wild birds	16

A spokesman for the AFCD said, "Feeding wild animals and feral pigeons brings negative impacts on animals themselves and public health, such as leading animals to rely on human feeding and the congregation of animals near residential areas, which causes a nuisance to members of the public and increases the risk of disease transmission. The leftover feeds may also cause environmental hygiene issues."

The AFCD has launched a series of publicity and education activities, including producing online publicity videos; placing advertisements; sending staff to arrange seminars in schools, elderly centres and housing estates; setting up educational booths; displaying banners and posters; and distributing relevant leaflets at locations with previous records of illegal feeding activities. In addition, the AFCD has jointly conducted publicity and education activities with members of the Legislative Council and District Council in various districts to bring the message of "All For No Feeding" into the community.

The spokesman reiterated that feeding wild animals and feral pigeons is an offence. The Government will continue to step up efforts in combatting illegal feeding activities. Members of the public may report any suspected illegal feeding activities by calling 1823.



