

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (May 29) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches (see Note 1) and one non-gazetted beach (i.e. Discovery Bay, see Note 2).

Twenty-eight beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1) and 11 as Fair (Grade 2).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Cafeteria New Beach	Lower Cheung Sha Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach*	Pui O Beach*
Chung Hom Kok Beach	Repulse Bay Beach*
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Shek O Beach*
Clear Water Bay Second Beach*	Silver Mine Bay Beach*
Deep Water Bay Beach*	Silverstrand Beach
Discovery Bay	South Bay Beach
Hap Mun Bay Beach*	St Stephen's Beach
Hung Shing Yeh Beach*	Stanley Main Beach*
Kadoorie Beach	Tong Fuk Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Trio Beach
Kwun Yam Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Lo So Shing Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Golden Beach*
Approach Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Big Wave Bay Beach	Lido Beach*
Butterfly Beach*	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach*
Casam Beach*	Ting Kau Beach
Castle Peak Beach	

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The

latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Note 1: The Leisure and Cultural Services Department has announced that 15 gazetted beaches (marked with an asterisk above) have reopened since May 23, while all the other beaches will remain temporarily closed until further notice.

Note 2: Discovery Bay is a non-gazetted beach without lifeguard service.

Residential mortgage survey results for April 2020

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced the results of the residential mortgage survey for April 2020.

The number of mortgage applications in April decreased month-on-month by 16.8 per cent to 10 838.

Mortgage loans approved in April decreased by 2.1 per cent compared with March to HK\$32.4 billion. Among these, mortgage loans financing primary market transactions decreased by 23.9 per cent to HK\$5.9 billion and those financing secondary market transactions increased by 9.1 per cent to HK\$20.7 billion. Mortgage loans for refinancing decreased by nine per cent to HK\$5.9 billion.

Mortgage loans drawn down during April decreased by 16.6 per cent compared with March to HK\$17.3 billion.

The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to HIBOR increased from 88.7 per cent in March to 90.5 per cent in April. The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to best lending rates decreased from 8.2 per cent in March to 6.4 per cent in April.

The outstanding value of mortgage loans increased month-on-month by 0.3 per cent to HK\$1,464.3 billion at end-April.

The mortgage delinquency ratio remained unchanged at 0.03 per cent and the rescheduled loan ratio remained unchanged at nearly 0 per cent.

Monetary Statistics for April 2020

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

According to statistics published today (May 29) by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, total deposits with authorised institutions increased by 0.8 per cent in April 2020. Among the total, Hong Kong dollar deposits and overall foreign currency deposits increased by 0.5 per cent and 1.1 per cent respectively. Renminbi deposits in Hong Kong decreased by 1.5 per cent to RMB654.3 billion at the end of April. The total remittance of renminbi for cross-border trade settlement amounted to RMB540.2 billion in April, compared with RMB645.7 billion in March.

Total loans and advances increased by 0.7 per cent in April. Among the total, loans for use in Hong Kong (including trade finance) edged down by 0.1 per cent, while loans for use outside Hong Kong grew by 2.6 per cent from a month ago. The Hong Kong-dollar loan-to-deposit ratio decreased to 88.7 per cent at the end of April from 90.1 per cent at the end of March, as Hong Kong dollar deposits increased while Hong Kong dollar loans decreased.

Hong Kong dollar M2 and M3 both increased by 0.5 per cent in April, but dropped by 1.0 per cent compared to a year ago. The seasonally-adjusted Hong Kong dollar M1 increased by 0.3 per cent in April, but dropped by 1.7 per cent compared to a year ago, reflecting in part investment-related activities. Total M2 and M3 both went up by 0.9 per cent in April, and expanded by 2.0 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively from a year earlier.

As monthly monetary statistics are subject to volatilities due to a wide range of transient factors, such as seasonal and IPO-related funding demand as well as business and investment-related activities, caution is required when interpreting the statistics.

Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (May 29) that the total assets of the Exchange Fund amounted to HK\$4,096.0 billion as at April 30, 2020, HK\$1.4 billion higher than that at the end of March 2020. Foreign currency assets increased by HK\$67.3 billion while Hong Kong dollar

assets decreased by HK\$65.9 billion.

The rise in foreign currency assets was mainly due to the mark-to-market revaluation on foreign currency investments and purchase of US dollars under the Currency Board arrangements. The decline in Hong Kong dollar assets was mainly due to a decrease in Exchange Fund Bills and Notes issued but not yet settled.

The Currency Board Account shows that the Monetary Base at the end of April 2020 was HK\$1,708.7 billion, increased by HK\$28.7 billion, or 1.7 per cent, from the end of March 2020. The rise was mainly due to the sale of Hong Kong dollars under the Currency Board arrangements and the issuance of Certificates of Indebtedness.

The amount of Backing Assets increased by HK\$30.8 billion, or 1.6 per cent, to HK\$1,912.2 billion. The increase was mainly attributable to the purchase of US dollars under the Currency Board arrangements and the issuance of Certificates of Indebtedness. The backing ratio decreased from 111.99 per cent at the end of March 2020 to 111.91 per cent at the end of April 2020.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of May 2020, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

May 7 (Issued)	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
May 14 (Issued)	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
May 29	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
May 29	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) released today (May 29) the analytical data on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's foreign currency reserves and foreign currency liquidity as at the end of April 2020 (Annex). These data are published monthly in the Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of May 2020, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

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