

# Hong Kong and Mainland experts jointly study first discovery of dinosaur fossils in Hong Kong (with photos)

The Development Bureau (DEVB) and the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology (IVPP) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) today (October 23) signed the Framework Agreement on Deepening Exchange and Collaboration regarding Stratigraphy, Palaeontology and Prehistoric Sites (Framework Agreement) to conduct scientific research, specimen management and identification, training, and exchanges in the fields of palaeontology, palaeoanthropology and palaeolithic sites. The study of dinosaur fossils discovered on Port Island is the inaugural project under the Framework Agreement.

Witnessed by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, the Framework Agreement was signed by the Commissioner for Heritage of the DEVB, Mr Ivanhoe Chang, and the Vice Director of the IVPP of the CAS, Mr Liu Jun.

Dinosaur fossils were discovered for the first time in Hong Kong. The site is on Port Island in the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark in the northeastern waters of Hong Kong. Ms Linn said that the discovery is of great significance and provides new evidence for research on palaeoecology in Hong Kong.

The Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) of the DEVB was informed by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) in March this year that the sedimentary rock on Port Island might contain suspected vertebrate fossils. The DEVB then commissioned experts from the IVPP to come to Hong Kong to conduct field investigation, study fossil specimens, recommend management plans and discuss follow-up actions.

Experts from the IVPP, officers from the DEVB, the AMO and the AFCD conducted site visits to Port Island to collect specimens which contain suspected vertebrate fossils. After taking a preliminary osteohistological analysis of specimens by the IVPP experts, the specimens have been identified as bone fossils of large aged dinosaur. Thereafter, IVPP experts prepared specimens containing dinosaur bone fossils, and it was initially confirmed that the fossils dated to the Cretaceous period (about 145 million to 66 million years ago). Further studies will have to be conducted to confirm the species of the dinosaur.

The AMO and the AFCD, together with the IVPP, will jointly take forward the study of dinosaur fossils, including excavation of the fossils on Port Island and preparation of the fossils. They will also collaborate with universities in Hong Kong and other places to conduct scientific research, and construct the story of dinosaurs in Hong Kong.

The AMO will hold talks tomorrow (October 24) afternoon at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre (HKHDC), where experts from the IVPP will talk about dinosaurs in China and relevant research. Participants will have the chance to preview the dinosaur fossils prepared at the HKHDC after the talks. The dinosaur fossils will be on public display at the HKHDC from October 25. In addition, the temporary workshop and exhibition space being built in the courtyard of the HKHDC is expected to open by the end of this year for the public to observe the experts' preparation work and the fossils prepared. The Government will also devise plans for the long-term display of the fossils to enhance the public's interest and knowledge in palaeontology.

To facilitate future investigations, excavations and research on Port Island, the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation announced the closure of the entire area of Port Island within Plover Cove (Extension) Country Park from today until further notice pursuant to the Country Parks and Special Areas Regulations (Cap. 208A). Patrols have been arranged together with the Marine Police. During the closure of Port Island, except approved experts and relevant personnel, no person shall land or enter Port Island. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$2,000 and three months' imprisonment upon conviction.



