

Implementation of new fisheries management strategy in marine parks gazetted

The Government gazetted today (December 13) the Marine Parks and Marine Reserves (Amendment) Regulation 2019 for implementation of the new fisheries management strategy in marine parks.

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that to protect coral communities and enhance overall fisheries resources in Hong Kong, commercial fishing will be banned in the Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park (HHWMP), Yan Chau Tong Marine Park (YCTMP) and Tung Ping Chau Marine Park (TPCMP) in the eastern waters and the Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park (SCLKCMP) in the western waters under the new fisheries management strategy in marine parks. In addition, commercial fishing by registered local fishing vessels will be allowed to continue in The Brothers Marine Park and the new marine parks to be designated in the western waters through the marine park fishing permit system.

The AFCD will provide a transitional period of two years for fishermen to adapt to the new strategy. The AFCD will not grant new fishing permits for the HHWMP, YCTMP, TPCMP and SCLKCMP with effect from April 1, 2020, onwards. Existing fishing permits already granted will not be renewed with a validity period beyond the transitional period, viz. March 31, 2022. The affected permit holders will be granted an ex-gratia allowance. The commercial fishing ban mentioned above will not apply to fishing permits granted to local residents.

The AFCD commissioned a consultancy study in 2017 to review the existing fisheries management system in marine parks with a view to identifying enhancement measures. The study findings indicated that fishing operations within and near marine parks were not the major threats to marine mammals in Hong Kong. Rather, such fishing operations had relatively larger implications on the coral communities. The study also showed that coral communities are the major targets of conservation in marine parks in the eastern waters, whereas marine parks in the western waters are focused on conservation of marine mammals. The SCLKCMP in the western waters is also an important fish spawning and nursery ground. To meet the different conservation needs of different waters, the AFCD will implement the new fisheries management strategy mentioned above to better achieve the conservation objectives of individual marine parks.

In addition, the AFCD will implement other fisheries enhancement measures in marine parks such as artificial reefs and fish fry restocking, with a view to increasing fisheries resources within and near marine parks to facilitate rehabilitation of the ecosystem. The AFCD will also step up law enforcement to combat illegal fishing activities.

The spokesman said, "The commercial fishing ban in the HHWMP, YCTMP, TPCMP and SCLKCMP will enhance the protection of the coral communities as well as fish spawning and nursery grounds in marine parks. In the long run, the new strategy will contribute to a sustainable marine environment, increase fisheries resources and promote sustainable development of the fisheries industry."

The Marine Parks and Marine Reserves (Amendment) Regulation 2019 will be tabled at the Legislative Council on December 18 for negative vetting and come into effect on April 1, 2020.

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (December 13) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	36
Affected area involved	Jordan
High-risk exposure	Camel ride
Hospital	Kwong Wah Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative

Separately, the CHP reported that the suspected MERS case pending results yesterday (December 12), upon preliminary testing, tested negative for MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with

practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed relevant symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

[Special traffic arrangements on Hong Kong Island](#)

Police will implement special traffic arrangements this Sunday (December 15) to facilitate a public order event to be held on Hong Kong Island.

The following roads will be intermittently closed from 11am until the crowd has dispersed and traffic resumes normal:

- Eastbound Yee Wo Street;
- Causeway Road;
- Westbound Leighton Road; and
- Keswick Street.

Vehicles may not be permitted to leave car parks along the route during the road closure period.

Actual implementation of the traffic arrangements will be made depending on traffic and crowd conditions in the area. Motorists are advised to exercise tolerance and patience and take heed of instructions of the Police on site.

[Designation of Southwest Lantau Marine](#)

Park gazetted

The Government gazetted today (December 13) the designation of the Southwest Lantau Marine Park (SWLMP).

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that the designation of the SWLMP would have a positive effect on the protection of the overall marine environment and marine mammals (e.g. Chinese white dolphins) in Hong Kong waters, and would increase the area of managed marine habitat which would be conducive to maintaining marine biodiversity and sustainability.

The draft map of the SWLMP was made available for public inspection for a period of 60 days from June 23, 2017, to August 21, 2017. The Country and Marine Parks Authority received two objections during the period. In accordance with section 12 of the Marine Parks Ordinance, an objection hearing was conducted on October 20, 2017. After careful deliberation of relevant submissions provided and views expressed at the hearing, the Country and Marine Parks Board rejected the two objections and considered that no amendment to the draft map was necessary.

The draft map was approved by the Chief Executive in Council on April 17, 2018. Copies of the approved map were deposited at the Land Registry, the headquarters of the AFCD and the headquarters of the Marine Department for public inspection. The deposit of the maps was notified in the Gazette on March 15, 2019.

The spokesman said, "Covering an area of about 650 hectares, the SWLMP is an important habitat for Chinese white dolphins. Activities in the waters concerned will be regulated by the Ordinance and the Marine Parks and Marine Reserves Regulation after the designation. It will be conducive to providing an improved habitat for marine life as well as conservation of Chinese white dolphins and marine biodiversity in the long run."

The Marine Parks (Designation) (Amendment) Order 2019 in respect of the designation of the SWLMP will be tabled at the Legislative Council on December 18, 2019, for negative vetting and come into effect on April 1, 2020.

TD invites tenders for operation of "Central-Hung Hom" and "water taxi"

licensed ferry services

The Transport Department (TD) invites tenders for operation of the "Central-Hung Hom" and "Water Taxi" licensed ferry services (Tender Reference: TD 45/2019).

In response to public views for more in-harbour ferry services and the suggestion of provision of "water taxi" in the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry, the Government is preparing for the re-commissioning of the "Central-Hung Hom" ferry route and launching of "water taxi" ferry services plying Kai Tak, Hung Hom, Tsim Sha Tsui East, West Kowloon and Central.

The "Central-Hung Hom" ferry service will ply between the Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier and Central Pier No 8 (Western Berth). The Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier adjoins the Hung Hom (Hung Luen Road) Public Transport Interchange and the Whampoa MTR Station. The proposed ferry service will provide commuters with an alternative transport option. Those taking the ferry service and landing in Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier can interchange for various routes of franchised buses, green minibuses or the MTR for access to places in Kowloon and the New Territories.

For the "water taxi" ferry service, there will be five calling points for its main route, including Kai Tak Runway Park Pier Landing No 1 or 2, Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier, Tsim Sha Tsui Landing No 2 or 5, Central Pier No 8 (Western Berth), No 9 or 10, and marine landing facilities at the southern waterfront of West Kowloon Cultural District. Passengers can freely hop on and hop off at any calling points. To allow more flexibility for scheduling of sailings, interested ferry operators may recommend the operation period for "water taxi" ferry service. The potential ferry operator shall operate at least three sailings of the main route daily, one of which must depart from Kai Tak at or after 7pm to allow passengers to enjoy the night view of Victoria Harbour. To cater for the needs of passengers in some areas, the operator may also propose operating short-working routes to observe calling points or other berthing facilities on both sides of Victoria Harbour. The TD will take this into consideration in the tender assessment.

In addition, in support of the Government's development of a smart city, interested operators are required to submit proposed measures in the tender documents, including dissemination of real-time arrival/departure information of ferry routes via mobile phone applications, opening up such data in machine-readable format for use by the public under the data.gov.hk portal, as well as provision of free Wi-Fi on board and at designated ferry piers.

To improve the air quality of Victoria Harbour, interested operators are expected to introduce environmental protection features to the two licensed ferry services. They have to submit a plan on provision of greener ferries after making an assessment of their financial viability.

Tenderers must submit their tenders in sealed envelopes. The cover of

the tender submission should be clearly marked with the tender reference and the subject of the tender (but should not bear any indication which may relate to the identity of the tenderer). The tender submission should be addressed to the Commissioner for Transport and placed in the TD Tender Box situated next to the reception counter of the TD on the 10th floor of South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon, before noon on January 24, 2020 (Friday). Late tenders will not be accepted.

Interested parties may obtain the tender documents starting from today (December 13) during office hours at the Ferry and Paratransit Division of the TD on 14th floor, South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon.