

**Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong (OPCFHK)****Views on Proposal of Banning Trawling in Hong Kong Waters**

To ensure our precious marine resources can continually be used by us, the people of Hong Kong and our next generations, we are pleased to support the proposal of banning of trawling in Hong Kong waters. In addition, we recommend the government to provide proper compensation package and career training to the affected fishermen in order to help them adopt alternative livelihood.

Hong Kong waters was once rich in marine biodiversity and resources, whilst in the recent decades, the marine resources have decreasee drastically due to various factors, as noticed by both fishermen and scientists. There is an urgent need to further strengthen our regulation, management and enforcement towards the sustainable use of our fishery resources for our next generations.

Trawling is one of the most destructive fishing gears which takes not only the target catch but also juveniles of high commercial values as by-catch and discards. The trawlers also destroy the sea bottom habitats and severely reduce the diversity of marine inhabitants. The shallow waters in Hong Kong provides nursery grounds and food for the juveniles of the commercial species, and the fishery resources cannot be recovered if these important nursery grounds are not well protected against overfishing and habitat destruction. With the trawl ban, we believe the commercially important species can recover, and the underwater habitats can also recover and diversify. This will ultimately benefit the fishing community with more and bigger catches.

We understand that there will be impacts to fishermen's livelihood caused by this trawling ban, so we recommend the government to:

1. Develop comprehensive compensation package for affected fishermen and helpers in the buy-out scheme.
2. Provide adequate career training to affected fishermen to adopt alternative livelihood, this should be reviewed regularly to suit the changing demands in ecotourism, enforcers, mari-culture and relevant business environment.

In addition, the fishing activities in Hong Kong should be monitored and regulated in order to compliment with the trawl ban. We also recommend the government to:

1. Establish fishing vessel licensing scheme to regulate fishing efforts in Hong Kong waters and to limit new entry of fishing vessels.
2. Review and tighten the existing regulations to protect vulnerable marine resources for sustainable use, and to limit disturbance from coastal development, water pollution, and infrastructure construction.
3. Strengthen enforcement to combat illegal fishing. The affected fishermen can be trained and employed to help monitor and enforce the law and regulations.



4. Increase the marine protected area by designating more marine parks and fish nursery grounds in which fishing is prohibited.
5. Restore degraded marine underwater habitats adjacent to marine parks and reserves.

We hope the government can take these into serious consideration, for the future of a healthy marine environment, where our precious marine resources can be shared among all Hong Kong citizens and our next generations.

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