



Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society
香港海豚保育學會

March 10, 2011

Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Special Meeting on 15 March 2011

Dear Panel Chair,

HKDCS's Submission on Views of Trawl Ban Proposal

Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society is a local charitable organization and is the only society dedicated to the conservation of whales, dolphins and porpoises of Hong Kong through scientific research and educating the public. Our society fully supports the initiative of introducing a trawl ban and related fisheries management measures in Hong Kong waters.

In the past decade or so, we have been conducting a long-term monitoring study on local Chinese white dolphins and finless porpoises, and we have witnessed the deterioration of the living habitats for dolphins and porpoises as well as other marine creatures, due to a myriad of threats including the non-selective trawling operations. Our precious dolphins and porpoises also suffer greatly from the overfishing problem mainly due to the non-selective trawling activities, and some of them were even victimized as by-catch during interaction with the local fishing trawlers.

A complete halt of trawling activities in Hong Kong will certainly a great positive step to restore our once-vibrant marine environment, and send a powerful message to local community and overseas that Hong Kong government is making affirmative effort to achieve sustainable use of our natural resources as a world-class city. Although It may take years for our marine environment and fisheries resources to recover from the horrific damage of non-selective trawling activities, we need to start somewhere to achieve this ultimate goal, and this is a timely decision to take this important decision forward. Therefore we strongly urge the Hong Kong government to implement trawl ban and other fisheries management measures as soon as possible.

We certainly are aware of the intricate issue of compensating the affected



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fishermen for the loss of their fishing right in relation to the trawl ban and other fisheries management measures. To strike a balance between the livelihood of affected fishermen and proper use of public resource for voluntary buy-out scheme as well as ex-gratia allowance, we sincerely hope that the involved parties can reach an appropriate consensus in view of the overall public interest in Hong Kong. Certainly, we believe that most Hong Kong people are in support of more conservation effort by the Hong Kong Government to protect our marine environment, and we sincerely hope that the monetary compensation will not become the only huge hurdle for this trawl ban proposal to be taken forward.

We also recommend the Hong Kong government to take more initiative to ensure that proper enforcement measures are in place when the trawl ban will be taken into effect. For example, more patrols will be needed throughout the territorial waters to ensure that no fishing boats from neighbouring Chinese waters can come into Hong Kong and take advantage of the increasing fisheries resources as a result of the trawl ban and other fisheries management measures. Scientific study to collect quantitative information on our fisheries resources before and after implementing the trawl ban will be needed to evaluate the effectiveness of this important conservation measure. Moreover, to be in line with the overall goal of the trawl ban for better conservation of our marine environment, Hong Kong government should formulate a long-term strategic plan to regulate coastal development and other marine activities that also pose great threats to our marine creatures such as the Chinese white dolphins. We certainly hope to see the trawl ban being the first important step to revive and conserve our marine environment, with more positive conservation effort to come in the near future.

Regards,
Samuel K. Hung, Ph.D.
Chairman, Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society