



世界自然(香港)基金會

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“Management of Marine Parks”

Hong Kong has an impressive Country Park system which provides important opportunities for conservation, recreation and education. It is estimated that some 11 million visitors enjoy the beauty of these 23 Parks annually. As such, the 7 visitor and education centers at our Country Parks play a vital role in educating visitors about the value of our natural environment and hence the need for conservation and protection.

Visitor Centres in Marine Parks

The designation of the first 3 Marine Parks and 1 Marine Reserve in Hong Kong in 1996 has provided an excellent opportunity to extend conservation and environmental protection to the marine areas of Hong Kong which have high ecological value. However, long-term protection of these marine sites will depend on greater public understanding of the value and benefits that marine conservation will bring to the local community.

WWF Hong Kong considers that visitor centres should be established at each of these designated Marine Parks to promote greater awareness of Hong Kong's beautiful marine environment and to educate future generations on the need to conserve our precious natural heritage. Hence, WWF Hong Kong has been closely working with the relevant government departments, academics as well as marine and education experts to build Hong Kong's first Marine Life Centre at Hoi Ha Wan. The key objective of the Centre is to increase public awareness and appreciation of Hong Kong's marine environment. Upon the opening of the facility, it will provide marine education and awareness programmes to some 16,000 people, including primary and secondary students, annually.

Long-term management of Marine Parks in Hong Kong

Our Country and Marine Parks have grown to be very popular with the local people and overseas visitors. The situation was exacerbated by the SARS outbreak in Hong Kong; these Parks acted as the “green lungs” for the people who were desperate to get out of the confines of the city and take a breath of fresh air.

WWF considers this growing popularity to be an encouraging sign of increasing public



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appreciation of our natural heritage. It is important that this interest and appreciation should be seen as an opportunity to raise public awareness of the conservation and ecological value of these areas.

Unfortunately, the current infrastructure and supporting facilities at some Parks have proved to be inadequate to meet the sudden demand from the growing number of visitors. This must be also be addressed, but within the overriding requirement to balance the growing number of visitors to the Country and Marine Parks and the need to maintain the ecological and cultural value of these sites.

WWF Hong Kong suggests a review be conducted to ensure an effective management strategy is developed so that the Country and Marine Parks are managed in a sustainable manner. Special working groups with representatives from relevant government departments, stakeholders and any others can provide constructive views in the following areas:

- The maintenance and enhancement of the ecological value of these sites
- The minimisation of the negative impacts caused by increasing tourism and public usage
- The promotion of programmes aimed at raising the awareness of the ecological value of Country and Marine Parks to the general public

WWF Hong Kong believes that these conservation objectives could be achieved by joint effort and consensus building of all interest groups and relevant parties. Well-managed country and marine parks can bring long-term benefits to the people and wildlife of Hong Kong.