



Environmental Life Science Society

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Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene Meeting on 8 March 2011 Submission on Supporting the Ban on Trawling

Environmental Life Science Society, SS, HKUSU (hereinafter referred to as ELSS) supports the proposed ban on trawling in Hong Kong waters, for the following reasons:

- 1. The ban will greatly benefit the ecosystem of Hong Kong waters.** Trawling is considered one of the most destructive and non-sustainable fishing method, as it damages the seabed habitat and disturbs the ecosystem balance by overfishing. The biomass in Hong Kong waters has decreased drastically in the past few decades. However, the ecosystem can recover after discontinuation of trawling, as was shown in a study by School of Forestry and Environmental Studies of Yale University in 2009(Jones and Schmitz). Hence, banning trawling will be the key to restoring the ecosystem in Hong Kong waters.
- 2. The ban will benefit fishermen and related businesses in the long run.** The ban on trawling and the practice of sustainable fishing will increase the biomass in Hong Kong waters and hence the quantity of sustainable catches of fish, which will benefit fishermen and related businesses in the long run. Proposed management measures, such as registration system, will also do good to the fishermen who remain in the business.
- 3. The ban helps promote sustainable operation.** ELSS welcomes the proposed measures including compensating fishermen who voluntarily surrender their vessels and helping them switch to more sustainable operations. Various cases have shown that the level of income rises for fishermen who switch to sustainable jobs such as eco-tourism and recreational fishing.

ELSS fully supports the proposed ban on trawling, and sincerely hopes that the Government would try their utmost to protect the environment and conserve the biodiversity in Hong Kong. ELSS also welcomes efforts to educate the general public on how to make sensible choice of aquatic products.



Environmental Life Science Society, SS, HKUSU

Reference:

Jones HP, Schmitz OJ. 2009. Rapid Recovery of Damaged Ecosystems. PLoS ONE 4(5): e5653.