

For information

**Meeting of the Legislative Council
Panel on Environmental Affairs on 28 May 2018
Administration's Response to the
Motion on Protection of Green Turtles**

At the Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs meeting on 28 May 2018, Members passed a motion moved by Hon HUI Chi-fung to expand the Sham Wan Restricted Area during the nesting season of Green Turtles (full text of the motion at Annex). This paper provides the Administration's response to the motion.

2. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has been implementing a Green Turtle Species Action Plan (SAP) since 1998 with various conservation measures to protect Green Turtles and their nesting site. These include listing Green Turtle as a protected wild animal and designating its nesting site in Sham Wan as a Restricted Area under the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap.170); carrying out patrol, surveillance and habitat management in the nesting site; undertaking scientific studies; removing abandoned fishing nets conducting publicity and education programme, as well as making regional and international collaboration.

Designation of Sham Wan as a Restricted Area for protection of Green Turtle

3. During the public consultation by the AFCD on the designation of Sham Wan Restricted Area in 1999, some locals considered that the proposal would affect the operations at Sham Wan by the local fishermen and the development potential of the area, and objected the designation of the whole Sham Wan as a Restricted Area. Taking into consideration the concerns of the locals, the Government eventually agreed that only the beach area of Sham Wan was designated as a Restricted Area so as to expedite the conservation of Green Turtles.

4. At present, the sandy beach of Sham Wan is a Restricted Area from June to October each year, during which the access to Sham Wan beach is prohibited. The AFCD conducts regular patrol during the restriction period and monitor the conditions of nesting site.

5. Furthermore, Sham Wan is a Speed Restricted Zone for vessels with a speed limit of 5 knots. This restriction helps protect Green Turtles from being hit by vessels navigating in high speed. If any water activities (e.g. driving speed boat, banana boating or water skiing) exceeding the above speed restriction is identified during patrol, the AFCD will immediately report to the Marine Police or the Marine Department to follow up. Besides, every year prior to the commencement of the Restricted Area, the AFCD will issue letters to local marinas and boat renting companies to remind them of the control measures related to the Sham Wan Restricted Area and the Speed Restricted Zone in order to reduce disturbance to sea turtles by boats.

Way Forward

6. In recent years, the AFCD noted an increase in frequency of fishing and leisure activities in Sham Wan during the nesting season, which may cause disturbance to Green Turtles. To effectively protect Green Turtles, taking into account their nesting records and the fishing and leisure activities at Sham Wan, the AFCD is reviewing the Green Turtle SAP, including the extent and period of the Sham Wan Restricted Area.

**Environmental Protection Department
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
July 2018**

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Motion passed under agenda item IV on “Receiving public views on the protection of endangered species of animals and plants” at the Meeting on 28 May 2018

Given that at present, the waters off the Sham Wan Restricted Area has become a hotspot for pleasure vessels during the nesting season of green turtles, this Panel urges the Administration to expand the existing statutory Sham Wan Restricted Area to the waters off the beach, so as to prevent the noise and light pollution caused by the vessels and people congregate there from hindering the nesting of green turtles on the shore.

Moved by: Hon HUI Chi-fung