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From: Nedim [REDACTED]

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Subject: Artificial island construction

Hello

I've heard about the project that HK government are intending to build an artificial island between Lantau island and Lama island, and I would like to shed some light and experience from similar projects I witnessed while living in Dubai for over 29 years before relocating to HK in 2017.

Growing up in the UAE especially Dubai in the 1980s and 1990s, I remember that Dubai's coast was full of coral reefs and pristine water. There was an abundance of fish and a very healthy ecosystem. But in the late 1990s they started building the palm islands and world island, (and in 2006 to 2009 they built moon island about 60km offshore). And by doing so reclaiming vast areas of coastal waters. Being an avid diver and a marine biologist, I witnessed the majority of the coral reefs of Dubai get submerged under very fine sand and almost completely disappear, (there is only one small patch of coral reef that has survived about 1km long in the location of Jebel Ali, although it's only a fraction of what it used to be), on top of that the water quality has completely deteriorated from the time they started the projects all the way up to 2017 (10+ years after the reclamation stopped). While in the past the water was clear, now a days there is so much silt in the water that every time the sea is rough it takes about 1 week for all that sand to settle down and for the water to clear up. It's also worth noting that Dubai had one of the best fishing grounds for Sailfish globally in the 80s and 90s and that fishery completely vanished by 2004 where the last sailfish has been caught or seen. The same has happened to several other smaller species of fish, while they haven't completely been wiped out, there population have become negligible.

Over the past year I have been diving almost every weekend around HK. My boat is moored in Aberdeen, and I usually dive between Stanley and Lantau.

I was surprised to notice the abundance of marine life (corals both soft and hard, fish, urchins, muscles, sea weed, crustaceans and sea shells) in conditions where visibility is usually very low and turbidity very high,

however I did notice that many larger fish are below normal levels and that is probably attributed to the lack of regulations on fishing and diving, (size limits, quantity limits, or even seasonality limits) and hence the majority of large edible fish are below optimal level.

Taking in all the experience I have been through in Dubai and seeing a healthy marine eco system crash, I would like to voice my concern about the new project that is being drafted in HK to reclaim a huge body of water between Lama and Lantau. While I understand that \$\$\$ are on the investors minds, the environment should not be overlooked, and according to data 74% of HK land is still not built, hence there are other options than destroying / wiping out a huge area of the sea and also severely damaging a large portion of the coastal waters.

I hope my message can reach the right people. And if you would like me to contribute more facts and information, please feel free to reach out to me on my email.

Regards,
Nedim

Sent from my iPhone