

AFCD appeals to public not to enter Sham Wan Restricted Area during restricted period

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) reminds members of the public today (April 1) not to enter the Sham Wan Restricted Area, Lamma Island, from today to October 31 to protect nesting green turtles.

The Sham Wan Restricted Area includes a beach of about 0.5 hectare and a sea inlet of about 98.2 hectares adjoining the beach at Sham Wan (see Annex). The restricted period is seven months, from April 1 to October 31.

An AFCD spokesman said, "The green turtle is an endangered species protected by the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) in Hong Kong. It is also the only sea turtle species that nests in Hong Kong. The sandy beach at Sham Wan on Lamma Island is the only site in Hong Kong and one of the few sites in the South China Sea at which green turtles nest from time to time. Green turtles are known to stay in waters adjacent to their natal beaches before and in between their nesting. During the period, breeding green turtles are particularly sensitive to human disturbance, which may frighten them and cause them to abandon nesting. Designating the Sham Wan Restricted Area helps protect endangered green turtles and their breeding ground. It can bring about a positive impact on the survival and breeding of green turtles in the long run."

The spokesman pointed out that AFCD staff will conduct patrols to prevent unauthorised entry to the area and monitor the occurrence and nesting activities of green turtles. Unauthorised entry to the restricted area is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 upon conviction.