

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

The restricted period of the restricted area at Sham Wan, Lamma Island commences today (April 1) till October 31. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) reminds members of the public not to enter the Sham Wan Restricted Area during the restricted period and note the expansion of the restricted area.

To step up protection of breeding green turtles, the Sham Wan Restricted Area has been expanded from the 0.5 hectare beach to including the sea inlet adjoining the beach (about 98.2 hectares of waters) at Sham Wan (see Annex) since last year. The restricted period is also extended to seven months (i.e. from April 1 to October 31) each year.

An AFCD spokesman said, "The green turtle is an endangered species and 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 this period, breeding green turtles are particularly sensitive to human disturbance, which may frighten them and cause them to abandon nesting. These measures help strengthen protection of endangered green turtles and their breeding ground. It can bring about a positive impact on the survival of green turtles in the long run."

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