

## AFCD enhances promotion of do's and don'ts when encountering monkeys in country parks (with photo)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) is mounting a joint operation with the Hong Kong Police Force this weekend (April 6 and 7) in Kam Shan and Lion Rock Country Parks where leaflets regarding the do's and don'ts when encountering monkeys are distributed to visitors and to combat illegal feeding of monkeys and other wild animals.

An AFCD spokesperson stated today (April 6), "Currently, there are approximately 2 000 monkeys in Hong Kong. They are primarily found in Kam Shan, Lion Rock, and Shing Mun Country Parks. Due to intentional feeding by humans, some monkeys have lost their fear of humans and have become used to seeking food from and causing nuisances to passers-by. Under normal circumstances, monkeys will not harass people if they think there is no food available. Therefore, when encountering monkeys, a person should refrain from eating, properly pack food and plastic bags such that they will not be seen by monkeys, and avoid direct eye contact as it may be seen as a provocation by monkeys. He or she should slow down, maintain a distance, and calmly walk away without approaching or making physical contact with monkeys when they approach."

The spokesperson reiterated that it is illegal to feed monkeys and other wild animals under the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170). Upon conviction, the maximum penalty is a fine of \$10,000. Last year, the AFCD took enforcement action against 196 individuals involved in the illegal feeding of wild animals. A total of 167 persons were involved in illegal feeding of monkeys, of whom 110 were convicted and fined between \$300 and \$3,000. The AFCD strongly urges the public not to feed monkeys as it does not only violate the law but also disrupts the natural behaviour of monkeys, making them reliant on humans for food and causing nuisances to the public."

The AFCD has put up warning signs and banners in the concerned country parks to remind visitors not to feed monkeys. Additionally, AFCD staff patrol the concerned country parks on a daily basis, and additional staff will be deployed for patrol at night or on holidays as necessary. Enforcement action will be taken against anyone found illegally feeding monkeys and other wild animals. If members of the public are disturbed by monkeys, they can call 1823 to report the incident to the AFCD for follow-up. In case of emergencies, the public should call 999 for immediate police assistance.

