

AFCD restocks fish on National Fish Releasing Day 2024

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) launched a fish-restocking exercise today (June 6), the designated National Fish Releasing Day, concurrently with other exercises nationwide, with an aim to restore and enhance aquatic resources as well as raising public awareness of the conservation of aquatic resources and the need to improve the aquatic habitat.

At the launching ceremony, the Under Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Miss Diane Wong, said, "Today is the National Fish Releasing Day designated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Hence, fish restocking exercises are launched nationwide concurrently to restore and enhance aquatic resources. To actively respond to this initiative, we are launching a fish restocking exercise locally.

"In the Blueprint for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Fisheries released by the Government in collaboration with the agriculture and fisheries sectors last December, the implementation of restocking, that is releasing appropriate fish species with a science-based method to let them grow and breed in a natural environment for the conservation and enhancement of marine resources and ecology, was put forward," Miss Wong added.

She pointed out that the AFCD has been reminding members of the public to think carefully before participating in animal release activities to avoid affecting the ecological environment or causing unnecessary suffering to animals.

She stressed that the AFCD encouraged members of the public to consider, in lieu of animal releases not properly conducted, other virtuous actions and living habits such as environmental protection, tree planting, forest protection and vegetarianism, etc. The relevant publicity and education work has achieved significant results. Through this public activity, the AFCD encourages members of the public to support and participate in science-based restocking, with a view to raising public awareness of the conservation of marine resources and the ecological environment, and replace animal releases not properly conducted.

The AFCD today released some 18 000 Hong Kong grouper (*Epinephelus akaara*), star snapper (*Lutjanus stellatus*) and black seabream (*Acanthopagrus schlegelii*) fingerlings in Yan Chau Tong Marine Park (YCTMP). These released fingerlings, being native species with declining populations, are from reputable hatcheries and in good health. With artificial reefs, natural rocky reefs and boulders as habitats, and a ban on commercial fishing in place, YCTMP provides a favourable habitat for the released fingerlings. The AFCD will conduct underwater visual surveys regularly to monitor the condition of the released fingerlings, and expects that the restocking exercise can raise the population of the relevant native fish species.

The fish restocking exercise today, supported by the Hong Kong Buddhist Association and the Hong Kong Fishermen Consortium, brought together about 100 representatives from religious groups, fishery bodies and green groups, etc. The AFCD will also arrange for students to take part in other restocking exercises later this year.