

AFCD staff patrol animal release hotspots (with photos)

With a view to safeguarding animal welfare, staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) were sent today (May 15) to patrol sites where mercy release activities often took place in the past, including Wun Yiu, Tai Po; Ng Tung River, Sheung Shui; Sai Kung Public Pier and Sai Wan Ho Ferry Pier, and distributed educational leaflets there to remind the public to think carefully before participating in mercy releases of animals.

A spokesman for the AFCD said, "If members of the public engage themselves in mercy release activities during which animals are not released in a proper manner, including releasing them into an unsuitable habitat, survival of these animals may be affected."

Under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap. 169), it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to animals by releasing them not in a proper manner. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for three years upon conviction.

No cases involving suspected animal cruelty caused by animal releases were found today.

The spokesman stressed that members of the public must think carefully before participating in animal release activities to safeguard animal welfare. The AFCD will launch a fish restocking exercise on National Fish Releasing Day on June 6 to release fish fingerlings in Yan Chau Tong Marine Park to enhance local marine resources and ecology. The department will promote to the public the benefits of fish restocking to the environment, with a view to engaging them in supporting and participating in these science-based restocking exercises in lieu of animal releases not properly conducted. They may also consider other charitable activities such as planting trees or participating in volunteer services with animal welfare groups and environmental organisations.

The AFCD will continue to patrol places where animal releasing activities are likely to take place, take enforcement action when necessary, and carry out publicity and education work.

