

## Government to remove oyster rafts not authorised to temporarily remain in Deep Bay starting from next month

The Government's inter-departmental working group responsible for tackling management issues of oyster rafts in Deep Bay announced today (May 23) that in accordance with the first phase of the management plan, existing oyster rafts in Deep Bay without authorisation to temporarily remain (i.e. oyster rafts without markers) will be removed starting from next month.

The working group announced on July 25, 2023 that a freezing survey of the number and locations of oyster rafts in Deep Bay had completed. Last September, based on results of the freezing survey, the working group requested relevant local oyster farmers to submit records of their oyster cultivation activities. Subsequently, the working group provided markers with unique identification numbers to farmers which had submitted records, and required them to attach these markers to their corresponding oyster rafts for the working group to inspect.

Oyster rafts attached with markers provided by the working group may temporarily remain in Deep Bay, and the working group will handle these rafts in the next phase of the management plan. Other oyster farmers in the area must remove oyster rafts without the said markers and all associated items on or before May 31. Otherwise, the working group will take appropriate action starting from next month under the Shipping and Port Control Ordinance (Cap. 313), including removal of such rafts.

A spokesman for the working group said, "Oyster rafts without markers provided by the working group are not permitted to remain in Deep Bay after May 31. Otherwise, they will be removed accordingly, and relevant persons may also be legally liable. The working group will assess factors such as navigational safety, water quality, and environmental conditions in Deep Bay, as well as the condition of oyster rafts authorised to temporarily remain in the next stage. With reference to this assessment, the working group will determine the culture area, actual number of oyster rafts, and culture locations to be permitted for oyster cultivation in Deep Bay under the management plan."

The Government's inter-departmental working group consists of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Lands Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Marine Department, the Environmental Protection Department, and the Home Affairs Department. Members of the public can call 2150 7093, fax to 2314 2866 or email [mailbox@afcd.gov.hk](mailto:mailbox@afcd.gov.hk) to contact the working group.