

Red tides sighted

Fourteen red tides have been sighted over the past week, the Inter-departmental Red Tide Working Group reported today (April 14).

The first red tide was spotted by a member of the public on April 10 at the waters off the area from Cyberport to Waterfall Bay Park. On April 11, staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) spotted a red tide at Sheung Sze Mun (including Cape D'Aguilar Marine Reserve). On the same day, staff members of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) spotted eight red tides at Deep Water Bay Beach, Repulse Bay Beach, Middle Bay Beach, South Bay Beach, Shek O Beach, Big Wave Bay Beach and St Stephen's Beach, Hong Kong Island, and Pui O Beach, Lantau Island. On April 12, LCSD staff spotted four red tides at Stanley Main Beach, Hong Kong Island; Hung Shing Yeh Beach, Lamma Island; and Upper Cheung Sha Beach and Tong Fuk Beach, Lantau Island.

The red tides at Deep Water Bay Beach, Repulse Bay Beach, South Bay Beach and St Stephen's Beach, Hong Kong Island, as well as those at the waters off the area from Cyberport to Waterfall Bay Park, Sheung Sze Mun including Cape D'Aguilar Marine Reserve, and Pui O Beach, Lantau Island, are persisting, while the other seven red tides have dissipated. No fish deaths associated with the 14 red tides have been reported as of today.

A spokesman for the working group said, "The red tides at Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach, Hong Kong Island, were formed by *Noctiluca scintillans* and *Scrippsiella trochoidea*, while the other 12 red tides were formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*. Both algae are common in Hong Kong waters and non-toxic."

The AFCD urged mariculturists at Lo Tik Wan, Sok Kwu Wan, Po Toi, Cheung Sha Wan and Tung Lung Chau fish culture zones to monitor the situation closely and increase aeration where necessary.

Red tide is a natural phenomenon. The AFCD's proactive phytoplankton monitoring programme will continue to monitor red tide occurrences to minimise the impact on the mariculture industry and the public.