

Red tides sighted

Two red tides were sighted during the past week, the Inter-departmental Red Tide Working Group reported today (January 26).

On January 19, staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department spotted the first red tide at Ting Kau Beach, Tsuen Wan. On January 25, staff of the Marine Department spotted another red tide at Sam Pak Wan, Lantau Island. The red tide at Ting Kau Beach has dissipated while the red tide at Sam Pak Wan persists. No associated fish deaths have been reported as of today.

A spokesman for the working group said, "The red tide at Ting Kau Beach was formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*, which is common in Hong Kong waters and non-toxic. The red tide at Sam Pak Wan was formed by *Phaeocystis globosa*, which is commonly found in Hong Kong waters. According to literature overseas, the algal species can produce foam that may affect fish."

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) urged mariculturists at Ma Wan and Cheung Sha Wan 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.