

Red tides sighted

Five red tides were sighted during the past week, the Inter-departmental Red Tide Working Group reported today (April 5).

On March 31 and April 2, staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) spotted two red tides at Repulse Bay Beach and Turtle Cove Beach on Hong Kong Island respectively. On April 3, LCSD staff spotted three red tides at Deep Water Bay Beach and Stanley Main Beach on Hong Kong Island and Golden Beach in Tuen Mun.

The red tides at Turtle Cove Beach and Stanley Main Beach on Hong Kong Island; and Golden Beach in Tuen Mun have dissipated, while the other two red tides at Repulse Bay Beach and Deep Water Bay Beach on Hong Kong Island are persisting. No fish deaths associated with the five red tides have been reported as of today.

A spokesman for the working group said, "The red tides at Repulse Bay Beach, Turtle Cove Beach, Deep Water Bay Beach and Stanley Main Beach on Hong Kong Island were formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*, and that at Golden Beach in Tuen Mun was formed by *Heterosigma akashiwo*. *Noctiluca scintillans* is non-toxic, while *Heterosigma akashiwo* might produce neurotoxins and kill fish by damaging their gills, according to overseas literature. The two algae are commonly found in Hong Kong waters."

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) urged mariculturists at Lo Tik Wan, Sok Kwu Wan, Po Toi and Ma 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.