

Red tides sighted

Nine red tides were sighted over the past week, the Inter-departmental Red Tide Working Group reported today (December 27).

On December 21, staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) spotted the first three red tides at Lido Beach and Casam Beach, Approach Beach, and Ting Kau Beach in Tsuen Wan. On December 23, members of the public and staff of the Marine Department spotted two red tides in Deep Bay and Tai Lam Chung respectively. On December 26, LCSD staff spotted two red tides at Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach and Kwun Yam Beach in Cheung Chau respectively. Today, staff of the Environmental Protection Department and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) spotted two red tides in Victoria Harbour and Discovery Bay respectively.

The red tides at Deep Bay, Tai Lam Chung, Kwun Yam Beach in Cheung Chau, Victoria Harbour and Discovery Bay still persist, while the other four red tides have dissipated. No associated fish deaths have been reported as of today.

A spokesman for the working group said, "The red tides at Kwun Yam Beach in Cheung Chau and Discovery Bay were formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*, which is commonly found in Hong Kong waters and is non-toxic. The other seven red tides were 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 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.