

Red tides sighted

Four red tides have been sighted over the past week, an inter-departmental red tide working group reported today (February 1).

The first red tide was spotted by staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) on January 29 at Tolo Harbour. The second red tide was spotted by a member of the public on January 30 at Inner Port Shelter and Port Shelter including the Ma Nam Wat Fish Culture Zone. The third red tide was spotted by staff of the Environmental Protection Department on January 31 at Sha Tin Hoi. These three red tides still persist.

In addition, staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department spotted a red tide at Silverstrand Beach, Sai Kung, on January 31. The red flag was hoisted immediately at the beach. The red tide has dissipated.

No associated death of fish has been reported so far in all four red tides.

A spokesman for the working group said, "All four red tides were formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*, which is commonly found in Hong Kong waters and is non-toxic."

The AFCD urged mariculturists at the Yim Tin Tsai, Yim Tin Tsai (East), Yung Shue Au, Lo Fu Wat, Ma Nam Wat, Kau Sai, Kai Lung Wan, Tai Tau Chau and Leung Shuen 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.