

Six persons using snake cages for fishing sentenced (with photos)

Five Mainland fishermen deckhands engaged in fishing using snake cages (a type of cage traps that has been banned in Hong Kong waters) earlier in waters near Shek Pik in southern Hong Kong, and a local coxswain on board were charged with breaching the Fisheries Protection Ordinance (Cap. 171) and convicted today (July 19).

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) noted that AFCD officers intercepted a local fishing vessel at around 11am on March 9 for inspection. The vessel was found to be engaged in fishing using snake cages in the abovementioned waters. Some fishing gear (including snake cages and winches) on board was seized. Charges were laid against the six men involved.

The six men, who were charged for breaching the Ordinance, pleaded guilty at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today and were fined \$4,000 each, with the fishing gear confiscated.

The spokesman said, "The Government is committed to combatting illegal fishing activities in Hong Kong waters. The AFCD will continue to step up patrols and take stringent enforcement action."

Only a vessel registered under the Ordinance can be used for fishing in Hong Kong waters and only the fishing methods listed on its Certificate of Local Fishing Vessel Registration can be employed for fishing by the vessel. The conditions of Certificate of Registration of Local Fishing Vessel regarding cage traps indicates that any collapsible cage traps should not be connected in any way to another; or should not exceed five metres in any of its extended dimensions. Hence, fishing using snake cages is in breach of the registration conditions. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

