

Special operations conducted against improper use of bright light for fishing (with photos)

In July this year, the Marine Department (MD) has already mounted three special operations respectively on July 8, 16 and 19 to combat the improper use of bright light for fishing in the eastern and southern waters of Hong Kong. Among these operations, two of them were conducted with the Hong Kong Police Force.

During the operations, eight vessels were inspected, and five of them were suspected of using bright light improperly for fishing. The MD will further investigate the cases and gather evidence for prosecution in order to combat any relevant irregularities.

A spokesman for the MD reminded the public that under the Shipping and Port Control Regulations (Cap. 313A), vessels are allowed to use a bright light for fishing in areas where bright light fishing is permitted. However, the use of a bright light on any vessel for the purpose of fishing, or attracting fish in Hong Kong waters, shall comply with the requirements of Cap. 313A and the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (General) Regulation (Cap. 548F), i.e. a bright light shall be so constructed, shaded, installed and used that no light emitted from it shall be visible, whether directly or by reflection from any source other than the sea surface, above a horizontal plane passing through the lowest edge of the light source. A person who contravenes the related legislation commits an offence and is liable to a fine of \$5,000 upon conviction.

To ensure the order of marine traffic and navigation safety of vessels, in addition to daily patrols and enforcement actions in various districts of Hong Kong waters, the MD also maintains close co-operation with the Marine Police from time to time to conduct target-based joint operations, including inspections involving the suspected improper use of a bright light for fishing. From January to June 2024, the MD conducted a total of 31 special operations in areas including the waters of southern Lantau Island, southern Lamma Island, south of Hong Kong and east of Hong Kong, and 13 prosecutions had been initiated against vessels in relation to the improper use of bright light for fishing.

The MD will continue to step up patrols to combat the improper use of bright light for fishing activities to ensure safe navigation. The department will also meet with local fishery organisations from time to time to distribute relevant publicity and education materials to the trade. Information on the proper use of bright light for fishing is available on the MD's

website: www.mardep.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/publications/pdf/materials/publf.pdf.

