

Three men given suspended jail sentences for trawling

Three Mainland men who used trawling gear to fish illegally on August 27 were convicted and sentenced to four weeks' imprisonment suspended for one year at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (August 29).

The Marine Police found a trawler suspected to be trawling in the waters off Conic Island at about 7pm on August 27 and intercepted the vessel for an inspection. Two hundred catties of fish and some trawling apparatus were seized on board the vessel.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) took over the case. Upon investigation, three Mainland men on the vessel were charged for contravening the Fisheries Protection Regulations by using prohibited fishing gear. They appeared at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts and were convicted and sentenced today. The fishing gear concerned was also forfeited.

An AFCD spokesman reminded the public that the ban on trawling came into force on December 31, 2012. Under the Fisheries Protection Ordinance, any person who contravenes the ban is liable to a maximum penalty of a fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

Trawling is a non-selective fishing operation which damages the seabed and marine ecosystems. A ban on trawling has brought this harmful depletion to an immediate halt, enabling marine ecosystems to be gradually rehabilitated to a sustainable level and be better conserved in the long run.

The spokesman said, "The AFCD and the Police will continue to carry out joint enforcement operations to crack down on illegal fishing activities."