

Wild Animals Protection (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 to come into operation tomorrow

The Wild Animals Protection (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 (Amendment Ordinance) will come into operation tomorrow (August 1).

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said, "The Amendment Ordinance aims to expand the current territory-wide prohibition on feeding wild animals to cover feral pigeons, increase the maximum penalty for illegal feeding from a fine of \$10,000 to a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year, and introduce a fixed penalty of \$5,000, with a view to further curbing illegal feeding activities, thereby reducing the nuisance and environmental hygiene problems caused to the public by feeding feral pigeons and wild animals, and maintaining an ecological balance."

In addition, the Amendment Ordinance will expand the scope of the Government's enforcement officers for effective enforcement. Apart from AFCD officers and police officers under the existing arrangement, appointed officers of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Housing Department can also take enforcement action against illegal feeding. The AFCD and relevant departments will adopt a risk-based strategy and take appropriate enforcement action in accordance with intelligence and reports received.

The spokesman noted that in order to allow sufficient time for members of the public to understand the new requirements, during the first month after the Amendment Ordinance comes into operation (i.e. between August 1 to August 31), enforcement officers will first give a verbal warning to any person who is found to be illegally feeding feral pigeons or wild animals. If the relevant person continues the illegal act, enforcement officers will take enforcement action. Starting from September 1, enforcement officers will take enforcement action immediately without prior verbal warning if any person is found to be illegally feeding feral pigeons or wild animals.

The AFCD has launched a series of publicity and education activities with the theme of "All For No Feeding" to raise public awareness on the negative impact of feeding feral pigeons and wild animals, as well as the latest requirements under the feeding ban and its relevant penalties. Relevant information has also been uploaded to the AFCD webpage (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/conservation/con_fau/con_fau_wild_the.html). Members of the public may report any suspected illegal feeding of feral pigeons or wild animals by calling 1823.