

Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 6) Notice 2020 to commence tomorrow

The Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 6) Notice 2020, an effort to strengthen protection of green turtles by expanding the restricted area at Sham Wan, Lamma Island, and extending the restricted period, will take effect from tomorrow (April 1). The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) reminds members of the public not to enter Sham Wan Restricted Area during the restricted period.

To step up protection of breeding green turtles, the Sham Wan Restricted Area is expanded from the 0.5 hectare beach to the sea inlet adjoining the beach (about 98.2 hectares of waters) at Sham Wan (see Annex). The restricted period is also extended from five months (i.e. from June 1 to October 31) to seven months (i.e. from April 1 to October 31) each year.

An AFCD spokesman said, "The green turtle is one of the species listed as 'Endangered' under the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species and protected by the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) in Hong Kong. It is also the only sea turtle species that nests in Hong Kong. The sandy beach at Sham Wan on Lamma Island is the only site in Hong Kong and one of the few sites in the South China Sea at which green turtles nest from time to time. Green turtles are known to stay in waters adjacent to their natal beaches before and in between their nesting. During this period, breeding green turtles are particularly sensitive to human disturbance, which may frighten them and cause them to abandon nesting. These new measures help strengthen protection of endangered green turtles and their breeding ground. It can bring about a positive impact on the survival of green turtles in the long run."

The spokesman appealed to members of the public not to enter the restricted area during the restricted period. Patrols will be conducted to prevent unauthorised entry and to monitor the nesting activities of green turtles. Unauthorised entry to the restricted area is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 upon conviction.