

LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Installation of Coral Marker Buoys at Sharp Island,
Shelter Island and South Ninepin Island**

Purpose

This paper is prepared to seek Member's endorsement on the proposed installation of coral marker buoys at Sharp Island, Shelter Island and South Ninepin Island.

Background

2. Installing coral marker buoys has been widely adopted and proven to be an effective measure to eliminate or alleviate the problem of coral damage due to boat anchor and unregulated diving activities. The program of installing coral marker buoys has been adopted in Whitsunday Islands of Australia since 1994 and documentation to date shows an 80% success rate in eliminating impact of anchor damage to coral within the marker installed areas.

3. Locally, coral marker buoys were installed at Ung Kong Wan, Sharp Island and Port Island since 2001 for coral protection. Results of underwater surveys showed a significant reduction in coral anchor damage. Coral communities within these "no-anchoring" areas now grow prosperously after installation of the coral marker buoys.

Proposal

4. Taking the past experience of installation and success of the measure in terms of coral protection, we propose to extend the coral marker buoys system to three more areas in the Sai Kung region including Sharp Island, Shelter Island and South Ninepin Island. Sharp Island and Shelter Island are situated at inner Port Shelter, which is about 2 km and 6 km from the Sai Kung town centre, respectively. South Ninepin Island is situated in the south-east of Hong Kong waters, which is about 16 km from the Sai Kung town centre. Location maps for coral marker buoys deployment are provided in Appendix A.

5. Four coral marker buoys are deployed at each site (i.e., total number will be 4 x 3 sites = 12) to prevent corals from further anchoring damage (i.e., a relatively high coral damage has been reported, ranging from 7.5% to 11.8% in these areas). Their locations are shown in Appendix A.

6. Appropriate signs will be displayed at the proposed coral marker buoys to facilitate easy identification. Sample diagrams of the marker buoys and helix anchoring system are given in Appendix B. The buoys are imported from Australia and are made of plastic material which is of international safety standard for marker buoys. They are designed to be breakable if strongly impacted by vessels. The Helix anchor system has shown to be not detachable by external forces from the seabed in our past marker buoy installation experience. The installation sites are near shoreline remote areas. These areas can be accessed only by small boats in low speed.

7. The coral marker buoys serve to demarcate the extent of coral areas and notify the marine users to avoid anchoring in these areas. It will not impose any restrictions and impacts on water recreational and boating activities such as diving and surface navigation within the coral marker area. In addition, the coral marker buoys covered with reflective material will not affect nearby water channel, vessels navigation and their safety.

8. We have already consulted the key stakeholders on the proposal, including diving communities and some local fishermen, through letter and discussion meeting. The representatives of these two sectors supported this proposal. We have also consulted the Marine Parks Committee (including representative of diving and fishing community) in its meeting on 8 December 2014 and members in general also supported the proposal. Related supporting documents are provided in Appendix C.

9. All the three sites proposed above are located within some future proposed Marine Parks in Sai Kung waters and all the coral marker buoys are deployed in the shallow coastal waters to avoid/minimize disturbance to the marine operators. The Marine Park, once designated, would be regulated by the Marine Parks Ordinance (Cap. 476) and its Regulations. At these sites, there is no existing legislation under Marine Department or Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to enforce the no-anchoring requirement for the purpose of protecting coral. The coral marker buoys act as warning signs to

persuade the boaters not dropping the anchors in the coral zone. Past experience shows that the boaters are aware of the coral marker buoys and show their cooperation.

Way Forward

10. The periodic post installation monitoring shall be carried out at 6 month (Month 9 of the project), 12 month (Month 15) and 18 month (Month 21) periods. The results of these surveys shall be compared in order to assess the effectiveness of such coral marker buoys. From then on, i.e., from Month 22 to Month 33, will be the maintenance period. We will ensure that the installed coral marker buoys are remained in their original positions integrally and will not cause any adverse impacts to other stakeholders.

11. We will monitor the effectiveness of the measure following the installation of the coral marker buoys at the three sites. These will include regular sea patrols to record the level of compliance of the system and ecological monitoring to assess the health condition of the corals within the marker installed areas.

12. We will disseminate the message of coral protection and the existence and functions of coral marker buoys at these sites through education and publicity.

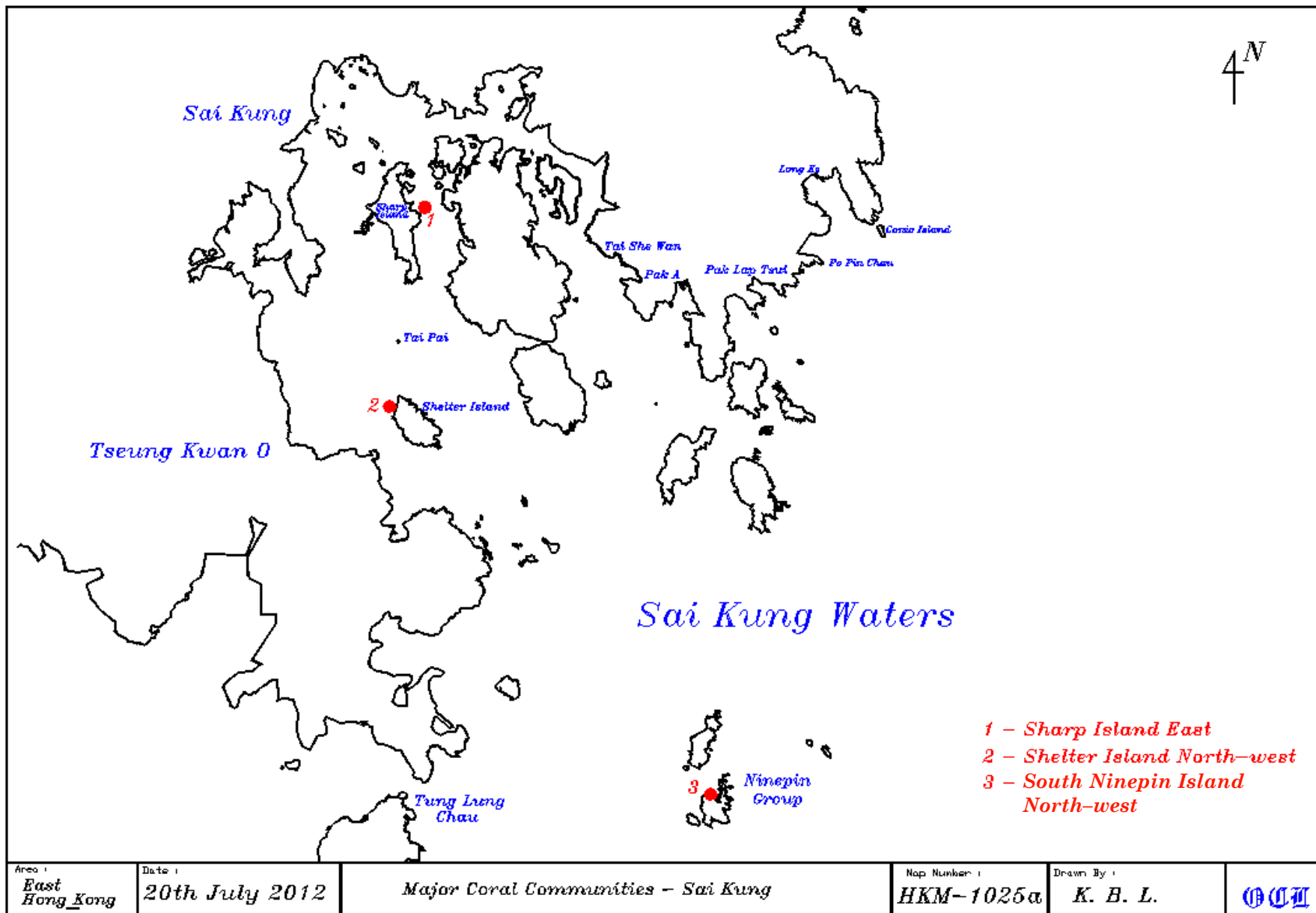
13. There is no further plan at the meantime to install more coral marker buoys at these three sites or any other coral areas in Hong Kong.

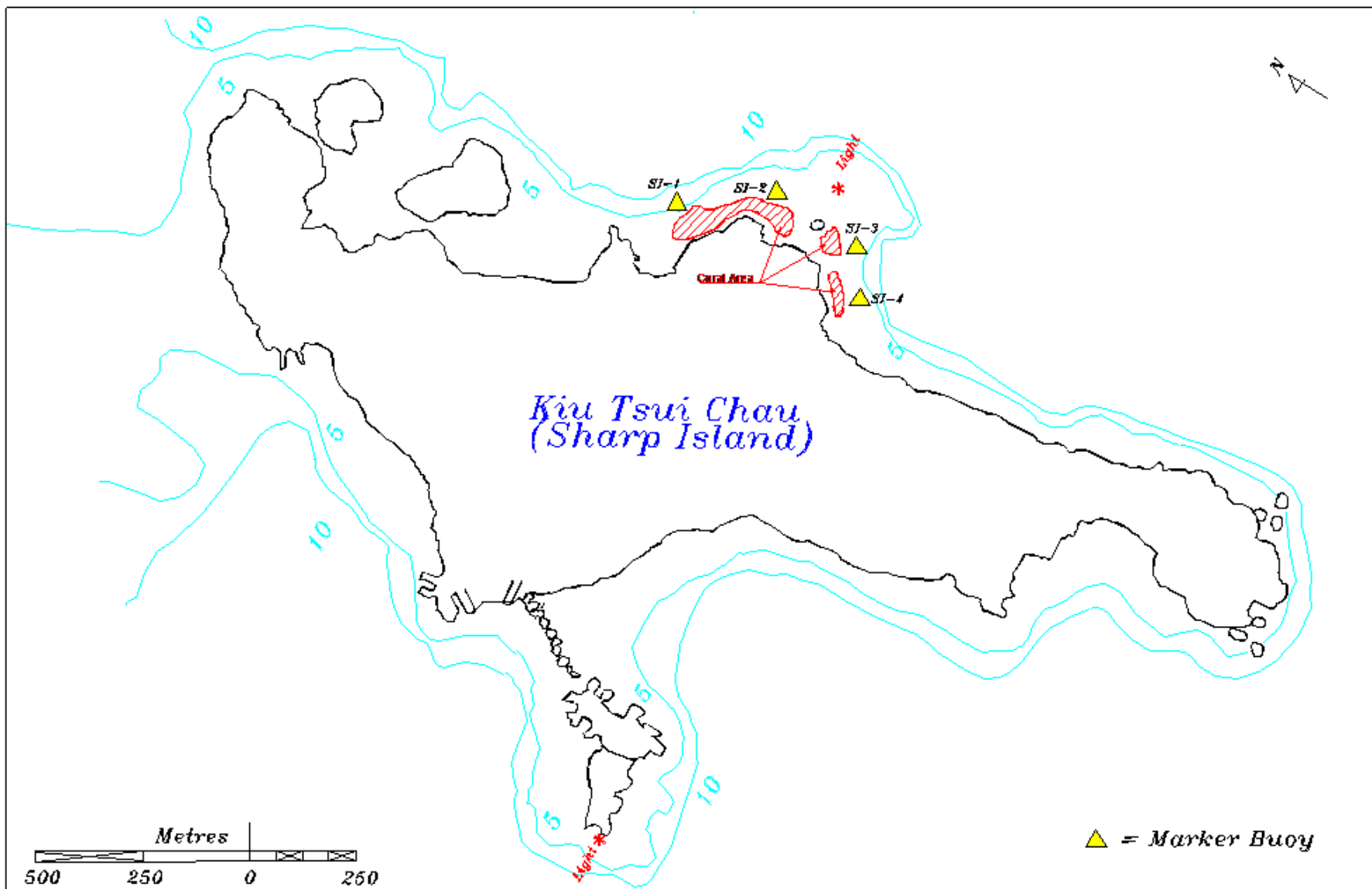
Endorsement Sought


14. Members are invited to comment and endorse on the proposal in paragraphs 4 and 5 above.

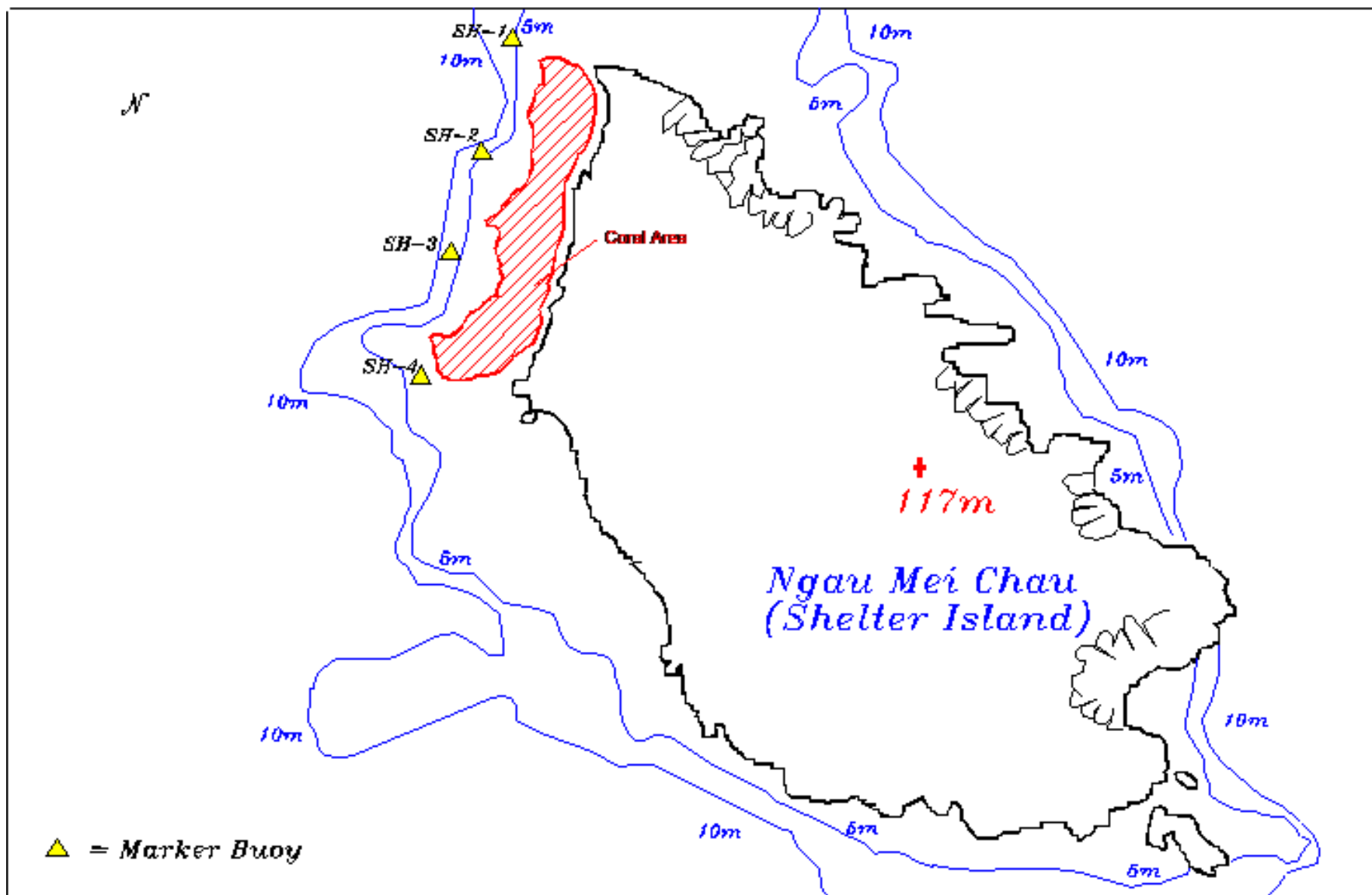
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
February 2015


Appendix A: Maps of the Three Proposed “No-anchoring Areas” in Sai Kung

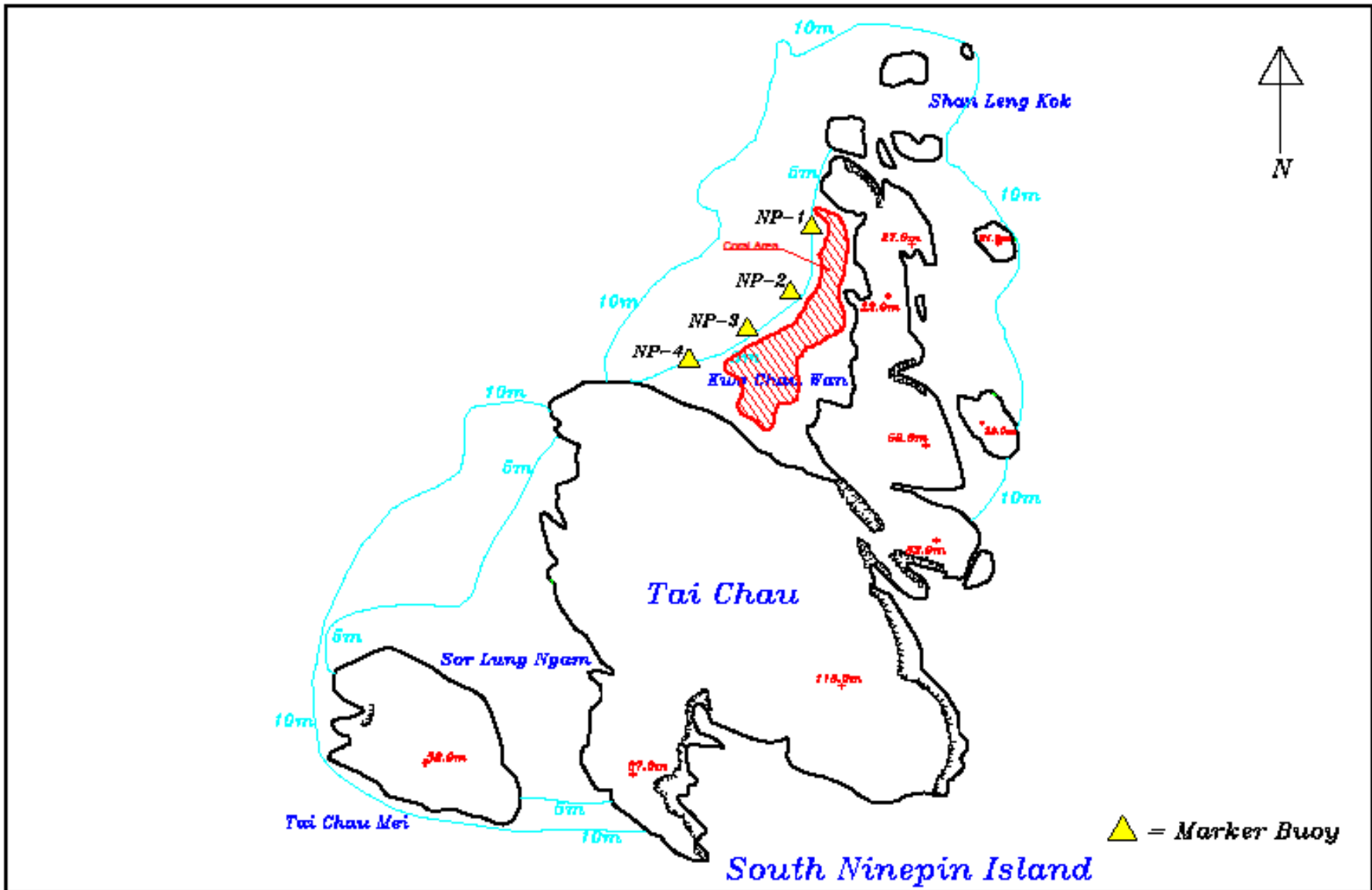





Area: <i>East Hong Kong</i>	Date: 20 Feb 2014	<i>Proposed No-anchor Markers Sharp Island</i>	Map Number: HKM-876d	Drawn By: C.H.W.	
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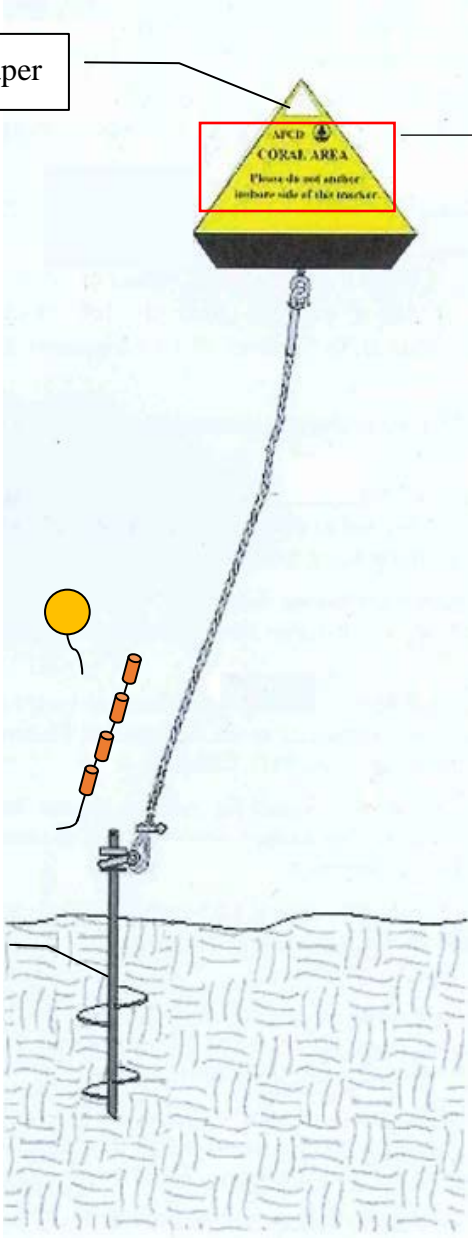
Area East Hang Kong	Date 20 Feb. 2014	Proposed No-anchor Markers Shelter Island (Ngau Mei Chau)	Map Number HKM-874d	Drawn By C.H.W.	
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Area: East Hong Kong	Date: 20 Feb 2014	Proposed No-anchor Markers South Nine Pin	Map Number: HKM-1026d	Drawn By: C.H.W.	
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Appendix B: Design and Wordings of Coral Marker Buoys

Reflective paper



HELIX anchoring system



English version:



Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

CORAL AREA

Please do not anchor inshore side of this marker

Chinese version:



漁農自然護理署

珊瑚區

請勿在此浮標以內水域拋錨

Appendix C: Related Supporting Documents

Letter from Chairman of Hong Kong Underwater Association



香港潛水總會

HONG KONG UNDERWATER ASSOCIATION (Operated by Hong Kong Underwater Association Ltd.)

Member of: Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China
Member of: Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (World Underwater Federation)

28 November 2014

Our ref. No.: UAO/14/0159

Mr. Paul Hodgson
Oceanway Corporation Limited
Unit 3, G/F., No. 34,
Tai Chung Hau Village,
Sai Kung, N.T.

Dear Mr. Hodgson,

Re: Three more areas to be installed with No-anchor Markers

With reference to the proposed installation of no-anchor coral markers in the Sai Kung area including Bluff Island, Sharp Island and Port Island, Hong Kong Underwater Association has no objection on the three additional proposed areas to for the installation of no-anchor coral markers.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,


Alex Wong
Chairman



Letter from Chairman of Leung Shuen Wan Fish Culture Business Association

2014年6月25日

漁農自然護理署高級海岸公園主任收
九龍長沙灣道 303 號
長沙灣政府合署 6 樓

致陳先生：

就在橋咀洲、牛尾洲和南果洲設置珊瑚標誌浮標的建議，本會與漁農自然護理署在 2014 年 6 月 11 日已討論相關議題並了解下錨對珊瑚的破壞。

糧船灣養魚業協會對在上述三個地點設置珊瑚標誌浮標的建議沒有異議。珊瑚標誌浮標並不會影響漁民的捕魚活動，而且能很明顯地提醒漁民不要在珊瑚標誌浮標範圍內下錨。對此本會表示支持。

此致，

鄭景文
糧船灣養魚業協會主席



Summary Report of the Marine Park Committee (English version)

Working Paper: WP/CMPB/3/2015

Country and Marine Parks Board Summary Report of the Marine Parks Committee

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper informs members of issues discussed at the Marine Parks Committee meeting held on 8 December 2014. Major issues discussed at the meeting are summarised below.

2. Installation of Coral Marker Buoys at Sharp Island, Shelter Island and South Ninepin Island

2.1 Members were briefed by the consultant on the background, details and way forward of the proposal.

2.2 Members noted that the sites at Sharp Island, Shelter Island and South Ninepin Island supported high coverage and species diversity of coral communities with some uncommon coral species. Owing to high boating and recreational usage of those areas, a relatively high coral damage had been reported. To alleviate the coral damage problem of those areas, the AFCD proposed to install coral marker buoys at appropriate locations of each of those sites to mark off areas with high coral coverage and bring this to the attention of the marine users and boat operators, reminding them to avoid anchoring in those areas. The AFCD had already consulted the key stakeholders on the proposal, including diving communities and some local fishermen, and the representatives of those two sectors supported the proposal.

2.3 Members noted that the coral marker buoys were to be installed for coral protection outside the marine park as such buoys could serve to demarcate the extent of coral areas and notify marine users, including divers and fishermen, to avoid anchoring in these areas. In this connection, the coral marker buoys were to be installed as an advisory measure to marine users and boat operators, reminding them not to anchor in the areas concerned. The AFCD would carry out regular sea patrols to record the level of compliance of the system and ecological monitoring to assess the health condition of the corals within the marker installed areas. The experience of installing coral marker buoys at Ung Kong Wan, Sharp Island and Port Island over the past decade showed that fishermen and boat operators were aware of such

measure and operative in this regard. The measures had been proven to be effective and helped alleviating the coral damage by boat anchors significantly.

2.4 Members noted that the consultant had consulted the stakeholders and monitored water recreational and boating activities at the proposal sites. All proposed sites were very near the coastline to avoid fairways and waters utilised by high speed vessels, and the installation of such buoys would not impose any restrictions and adverse impacts on water recreational and boating activities such as diving and surface navigation with the coral marker area.

2.5 Members generally supported the proposal on installation of coral marker buoys at Sharp Island, Shelter Island and South Ninepin Island. The Chairman suggested the AFCD seek advice from the Marine Department on the feasibility and safety issues of installing coral marker buoys at the said three proposal sites, and strengthen publicity to the stakeholders by informing them of the installation of coral marker buoys at the aforesaid locations.

3. Hong Kong Underwater Photo and Video Competition 2014

3.1 Members were briefed on the background, results and post-competition events of the Hong Kong Underwater Photo and Video Competition 2014 and had a look of the winning entries.

4. Report on Release of Red Grouper Fingerlings in Yan Chau Tong Marine Park

4.1 Members were briefed on the background, purpose, release programme, post-release monitoring surveys, preliminary monitoring results and way forward of the release of red grouper fingerlings in Yan Chau Tong Marine Park.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 A member shared two of his study reports on the ecological risks borne by the Cape D'Aguiar Marine Reserve.

5.2 A representative of the AFCD briefed the meeting on the proposal of the World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong on revising the boundary of the proposed Southwest Lantau Marine Park and the Department's response.

Summary Report of the Marine Park Committee (English version)

6. Presentation

6.1 This paper is prepared for members' information.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
February 2015

Summary Report of the Marine Park Committee (Chinese version)

工作文件：WP/CMPB/3/2015

郊野公園及海岸公園委員會 海岸公園委員會簡報

1. 目的

1.1 本文件旨在告知各委員海岸公園委員會在二〇一四年十二月八日會議上所討論的事項。會上討論的主要事項簡述如下。

2. 於橋咀洲、牛尾洲及南果洲設置珊瑚標誌浮標

2.1 委員聽取了顧問介紹有關建議的背景資料、詳情及未來路向。

2.2 委員得悉，橋咀洲、牛尾洲和南果洲均有相當大的珊瑚覆蓋範圍，珊瑚羣落的物種十分多樣化，並有一些不常見的珊瑚物種。由於上述地點的船艇和康樂活動使用量相當高，因此接到有關地點珊瑚受損的報告亦相對較多。為舒緩有關地點珊瑚受損的問題，署方建議在上述三個地點的適合位置，設置珊瑚標誌浮標，劃出珊瑚覆蓋率高的範圍，並藉此提醒及勸喻船隻使用者避免在有關地點碇泊。署方已就這項建議徵詢主要持份者(包括潛水人士和部分本地漁民)的意見，兩個界別的代表均支持這項建議。

2.3 委員得悉，設置珊瑚標誌浮標的措施，是為了保護海岸公園範圍以外的珊瑚，因為珊瑚標誌浮標可用作劃定珊瑚區的範圍，並提醒船隻使用者(包括潛水人士和漁民)避免在有關地點碇泊，因此設置的目的是純粹以勸喻形式，要求船隻使用者和船隻操作員，避免在有關地點碇泊。署方亦會進行定期海上巡邏，以記錄在設有標誌浮標的範圍內遵守相關要求的情況，並進行生態監察，以評估珊瑚的健康狀況。根據過往10多年在禧缸灣、橋咀洲和赤洲設置珊瑚標誌浮標的經驗，顯示漁民和船隻使用者都知道有關措施及十分合作，證明有關措施運作良好，能大幅減少船錨對珊瑚造成的損害。

2.4 委員得悉，顧問曾徵詢持份者的意見及監測建議位置的水上康樂及船艇活動，因此所有建議的位置，均非常接近岸邊，以避開航道及高速船隻會經過的水域，及不會對在設有珊瑚標誌範圍內進行的水上康樂及船艇活動(例如潛水及海面航行)做成任何限制或不良的影響。

2.5 委員普遍支持在橋咀洲、牛尾洲和南果洲設置珊瑚標誌浮標的建議。主席建議署方諮詢海事處上述三個建議地點設置珊瑚標誌浮標的可行性及安全事宜；以及向各持份者加強宣傳，使他們知悉在上述地點設置珊瑚標誌浮標。

3. 香港潛攝大賽2014

3.1 委員聽取了「香港潛攝大賽2014」的背景、比賽結果及後續活動，以及觀看得獎作品。

4. 在印洲塘海岸公園投放紅斑幼魚的報告

4.1 委員聽取了於印洲塘海岸公園投放赤點石斑魚幼魚的背景、目的、投放計劃、投放後的監察調查、初步監察結果，及未來路向。

5. 其他事項

5.1 一名委員分享他的兩份研究鶴咀海岸保護區所承受的生態風險的報告。

5.2 漁護署代表講述世界自然(香港)基金會就修訂大嶼山西南海岸公園邊界的建議及署方的回應。

6. 呈閱

6.1 請各委員參閱本文件。

郊野公園及海岸公園管理局

二〇一五年二月