

Provisional Local Vessel Advisory Committee

Proposed Tung Ping Chau Marine Park Information Paper

Introduction

This paper is prepared to provide information on the proposed Tung Ping Chau Marine Park in Mirs Bay.

Background

2. The coastal and sea area of Ping Chau in Mirs Bay was recognized as an area with high conservation value. It was identified as one of the potential marine park by a working group of the former Country Parks Board, Agriculture and Fisheries Department in 1990. In 1998 the Agriculture and Fisheries Department commissioned a study on the environment and ecology of the coastal and sea area of Tung Ping Chau. The study was completed in 1999 and the results indicated that the coastal and sea area around Tung Ping Chau is suitable to be designated as a marine Park.

Conservation Value

3. The area of Ping Chau has extensive coral formations and seaweed bed. The diversity of algae, corals and other invertebrates and fishes is also high. The fringing coral formation, measuring 1.8km² is one of the largest in Hong Kong. The seaweed bed is also extensive, measuring some 2 km². At least 124 species of reef fishes have been reported from the island and some 55 species of fish were recorded in the study.

4. Study indicated that fringing corals were found on the eastern side of the island while seaweed beds were found on the western and southern sides of the island. The study also revealed that coral diversity coverage in A Ma Wan and A Ye Wan is richer than other sites.

5. The waters around Ping Chau are clean and with no obvious pollution from domestic source. Besides, Ping Chau is famous for its sedimentary rock formation which has produced many magnificent coastal land forms, which are worthy to be protected.

The Proposed Area

6. The area of the proposed marine park is about 270 hectares. This includes a general use area (262.6ha) and a core area (7.4ha), most part of the land area of Ping Chau Island were designated as country park (Plover Cove Country Park Extension) in 1979.

7. In view of the high ecological value of A Ma Wan and A Ye Wan, it is necessary to protect this area from disturbance or damage. It is planned to establish two core areas with 5.2ha and 2.2ha respectively as delineated at Appendix 1 for the purpose of better protection.

8. The four corners of the proposed marine park would be demarcated by marker buoys meeting Marine Department standards. The boundary of the core area would be marked on a map.

Management of the Proposed Marine Park

9. When the area is designated as a marine park, this department will be responsible for litter collection, daily patrol, protection of habitats and enforcement of relevant regulations and provision of information for education and tourism.

10. Fishing would be controlled in accordance with the provisions of the Marine Parks Ordinance. Like other existing marine parks trawling will be prohibited. Local villagers and *bona fide* fishermen can apply for a fishing permit if they wish to continue fishing in Tung Ping Chau Marine Park. However, it would be specified in the fishing permit that no fishing is allowed with the core area.

11. Recreation activities such as swimming, diving, boating and canoeing which is non-destructive to the environment would be allowed. Other activities such as water skiing, jet skiing and water scooting and sports fishing would be prohibited in accordance to the Marine Parks and Marine Reserves Regulation. Within Marine parks there is a speed limit of 10 knots. In order to protect corals in the core areas, anchoring would be prohibited in the core areas.

Way Forward

12. After consulting relevant parties and organizations a draft map of the proposed Tung Ping Chau Marine Park would be prepared. A notice would be gazetted and the public would have 60 days to give their views on the draft map. The final decision will be made by the CE in Council.

13. We anticipate that the coastal and marine ecology and habitats of Tung Ping Chau area would be better protected and conserved when waters around Tung Ping Chau have been designated as a Marine Park.

Presentation

14. Officers of AFCD, accompanied by Mr. K.C. CHAN of the Marine Department, will present the paper.

Marine Department
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