

PORT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

**Installation of Boundary Buoys for
the Proposed Southwest Lantau Marine Park**

PURPOSE

This Paper aims to brief members on the installation of boundary buoys for the proposed Southwest Lantau Marine Park (SWLMP).

BACKGROUND

2. The Government announced in 2000 a plan to designate the waters of Southwest Lantau as marine park for the protection of Chinese white dolphins (CWD) and for the long-term conservation of the marine environment there. To take forward the proposal, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) conducted extensive consultation exercises covering a diverse group of stakeholders between 2000 and 2002 and in 2009. In early September 2014, the Government re-affirmed its intention to the designation of SWLMP. Between 2014 and 2016, AFCD conducted a detailed study on the design and management of SWLMP with a new round of stakeholder consultation. The up-to-date information re-confirms that the waters of Southwest Lantau are important habitat of CWD. Findings of the detailed study and views gathered in the stakeholder consultation have been taken into consideration in designing the boundary and management plan of the proposed marine park.

3. For effective management and enforcement of the marine park, a minimum of three light buoys has been proposed and requires to be laid for the demarcation of the boundaries of SWLMP. The recommendation has considered both existing and planned facilities and marine traffic characteristics of the waters surrounding the SWLMP. A clear demarcation of the boundary and management zone within a marine park is essential to avoid ambiguity in future law enforcement and subsequent prosecution given the fact that

most of the fishing boats operating in the area are small open sampans without any position-fixing equipment.

4. Further consultation with the consultative committees of Marine Department, including High Speed Craft Consultative Committee, Local Vessels Advisory Committee, Pilotage Advisory Committee & Port Operations Committee was conducted in May 2016. Some marine operators have concern about the potential hazards imposed by boundary buoys, especially during foggy weather or when the buoys are damaged. The boundary buoy at the southeast corner of SWLMP has raised the most concerns because of the close proximity to the recommended Traffic Separation Schemes South of Lantau (SLTSS) which is the main route for high speed ferries plying between Hong Kong and Macao.

5. In August 2016, the Chief Executive in Council has directed, in accordance with section 7(1) of the Marine Parks Ordinance (Cap 476), the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation to prepare a draft map showing the proposed SWLMP and commence the statutory procedure for the marine park designation. With support from the Country and Marine Parks Board in April 2017, the Government published in the gazette on 23 June 2017 a notice about the draft map of the proposed SWLMP in accordance with the Marine Parks Ordinance, with an aim to completing the statutory procedure for marine park designation by 2018. The boundary of the proposed SWLMP is shown in *Figure 1*.

PROPOSAL FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF MARINE PARK BOUNDARY BUOYS

6. Activities inside marine parks shall comply with the Marine Parks Ordinance (Cap. 476) and the Marine Parks and Marine Reserves Regulation (Cap. 476A). Major regulations related to marine users and fishermen include 10-knot vessels speed limit, prohibition of any activities causing nuisance to marine water and marine lives, and control of fishing, etc. During the stakeholder consultations, some consulted groups in particular fishermen strongly requested that buoys should be deployed to clearly demarcate the boundary of marine park in the sea. Therefore boundary buoys are essential for the management of the proposed marine park in order to let the park users, in particular fishermen operating in small fishing sampans which do not possess navigation aids, such as Global Positioning System onboard to recognize the park boundary.

7. As a follow-up of the joint consultation in May 2016, AFCD has committed to provide Members of this Committee with a revised plan of boundary buoys for the SWLMP. The boundary buoy at southeast corner of the SWLMP is proposed to relocate at 700m away from SLTSS. The boundary of SWLMP and the proposed locations of the boundary buoys are presented in *Figure 2*.

8. The revised plan of boundary buoys for the SWLMP was further circulated to High Speed Craft Consultative Committee (HSCCC Paper No. 1/2018) and Local Vessels Advisory Committee (LVAC Paper No. 1/2018) for comment in January 2018. No comment was received from HSCCC while a LVAC member, through a further discussion meeting on 14 March 2018, agreed on the revised plan of boundary buoys and suggested a review after a year of implementation in view of navigation safety in the adjacent waters.

ADVICE SOUGHT

9. Members' comments and support are sought with regards to the proposed deployment of boundary buoys at SWLMP.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

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Figure 1

Proposed Draft Map of the Southwest Lantau Marine Park

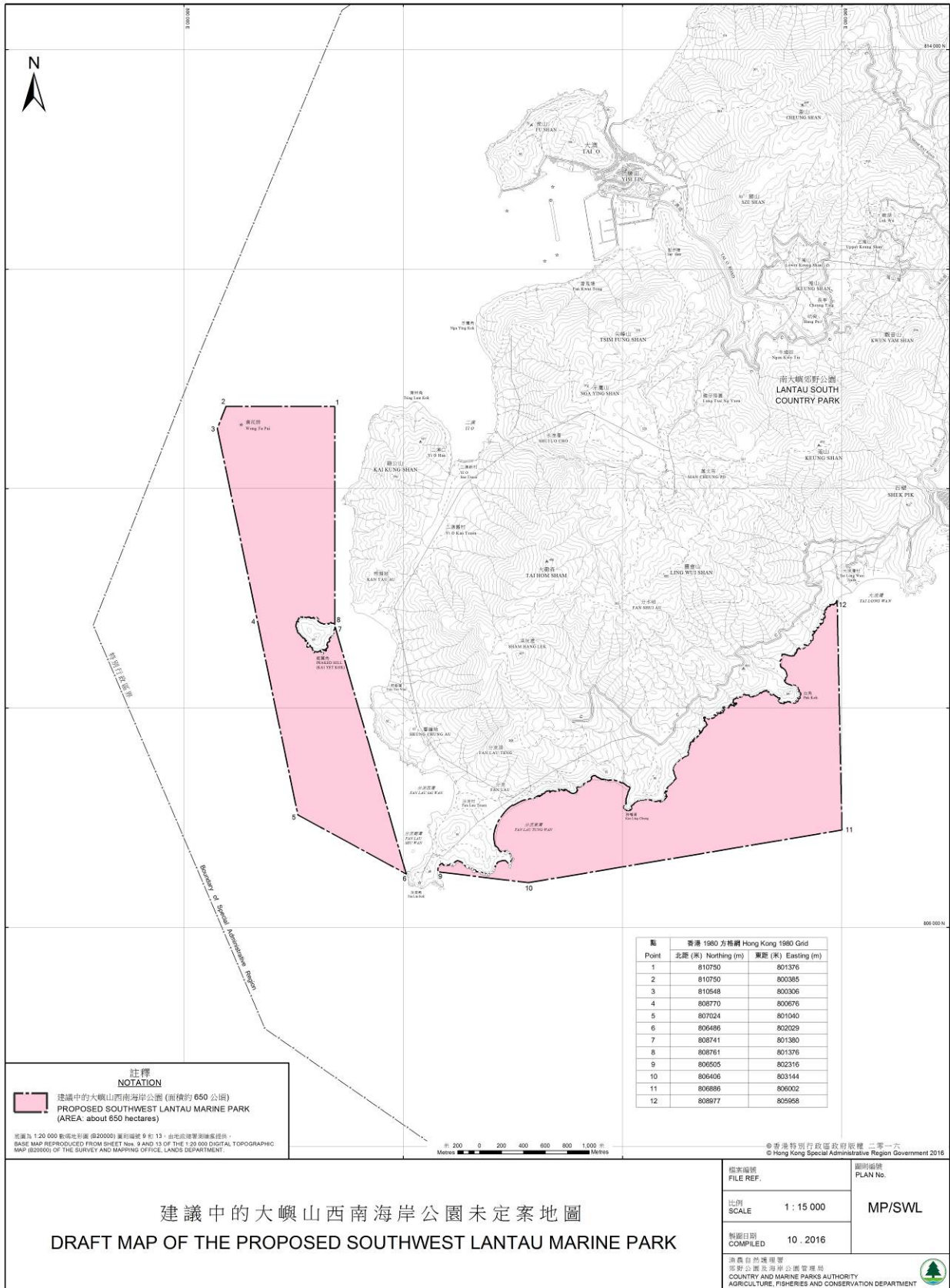


Figure 2

Locations of Proposed Boundary Buoys at the Southwest Lantau Marine Park

