



世界自然基金會  
香港分會

WWF-Hong Kong

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## Chairman and Members of Panel on Environmental Affairs, Legislative Council

(c/o Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs)

Legislative Council Complex,

1 Legislative Council Road, Central, Hong Kong

19 November 2020

(By post and e-mail)

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Re: Panel on Environmental Affairs Meeting on 23 November 2020, agenda item #VI “Enhanced protection of green turtles”**

We understand the above captioned will be discussed during the meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs on 23 November 2020. WWF-Hong Kong (WWF) very much welcomes the strengthening of conservation measures for the protection of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in South Lamma Island. To help further fulfil Hong Kong’s obligation in protecting the green turtle under the city’s Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) and the UN’s Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), we recommend the following actions be taken:

#### **1. Tackle waste issues to take plastics out of our oceans**

Marine litter remains one of the biggest threats to the survival of green turtles. A recent conventional necropsy of a sea turtle carcass found in Gemini Beach, Sham Tseng, revealed large amounts of marine plastic debris, such as plastic bags and bottle labels, along its entire gastrointestinal tract. Although in this case the specific cause of death could not be clearly determined, having a stomach filled with plastic will have serious health implications for any animal and marine litter is well documented to be a serious threat to marine turtles. Apart from implementing weekly clean-ups of ghost nets and marine litter, the government should reduce marine litter at its source. WWF urges the government to ban single-use plastic tableware in the F&B industry and supermarkets by 2022 and implement effective recycling and extended producer responsibility schemes.

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## **2. Enhance enforcement to tackle illegal fishing activities**

The measures to reduce the impacts of fishing on the green turtles depend critically on effective compliance and enforcement, but it remains challenging to prosecute illegal fishing activities as illegal fishing boats are difficult to catch by enforcement agencies. WWF suggests the government deploy updated monitoring technology, such as drones, beach- and buoy-mounted infrared cameras (trail cameras) and work with local communities to develop effective community surveillance networks. Moreover, during the restricted period, the government should monitor commercial fishing activities that employ extensive fishing nets at the mouth of Sham Wan, which is currently not covered in the restricted area.

## **3. Holistic Marine Protected Area (MPA) network**

MPA networks need to be developed and managed within a broader program of marine spatial planning and watershed management. A robust MPA network will ensure a healthy and productive marine environment and is an essential component of an effective green turtle recovery plan. WWF urges the Hong Kong government to urgently commit to a network of Marine Protected Areas to cover a minimum of 30% of Hong Kong waters by 2030 with no-take areas as a foundation. Only 5 per cent of Hong Kong's waters is designated or planned to be established as MPAs by 2023. This is not enough to fulfill Hong Kong's responsibilities under the CBD commitments.

## **4. Facilitate cross-border collaboration**

The government should work with other governments to ensure that green turtles are afforded adequate protection throughout their range and migration.

WWF is looking forward to seeing holistic MPA conservation plans and management objectives that adapt and respond to ensure improvement of the health of our marine ecosystem and the recovery of green turtles.

Yours faithfully,



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Director of Conservation  
WWF-Hong Kong



Laurence McCook  
Head of Oceans Conservation  
WWF-Hong Kong

Cc: Mr KS Wong, Secretary for the Environment  
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