



33/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
香港灣仔告士打道5號稅務大樓33樓

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New Measures for the Management of Wild Pigs

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the latest progress since the Government's introduction of new measures for the management of wild pigs in November 2021 and seeks Members' views on the various measures.

BACKGROUND

2. Generally speaking, wild pigs are by nature wary of human contact. However, once they get accustomed to feeding by humans which leads to a change in their behaviour, not only will they cause nuisance by proactively seeking food from humans, they will even develop aggressive behaviour, posing threats to public safety. Feeding is the main cause of wild pig nuisance in recent years. The number of reports on wild pig sighting or nuisance received by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) in recent years is shown in **Table 1 of Annex 1**.

3. AFCD commenced the Wild Pig Capture and Contraception/Relocation Programme (CCRP) since end 2017¹, in which AFCD sterilised or administered contraceptive vaccines to captured wild pigs under suitable conditions, and relocated them to remote countryside areas. However, the effectiveness of CCRP

¹ Before 2017, there were two civilian wild pig hunting teams for hunting wild pigs in countryside areas. Due to the safety concerns of hunting operations, and the fact that less than one wild pig was hunted per operation on average, AFCD suspended the operations of the wild pig hunting teams in 2017 and terminated the hunting operations of the hunting teams in 2019.

was limited as contraception/sterilisation was far from catching up with the reproduction rate of wild pigs. As further revealed by AFCD's investigation, once wild pigs get accustomed to feeding by humans, they would lose their innate fear of humans and frequently linger in urban or residential areas. Even after being relocated to remote countryside areas, they would return to the urban or residential areas relentlessly to seek food from humans, leading to an increase in nuisance cases. In 2021 alone, AFCD handled in total 60 urgent cases of wild pig appearance or nuisance, and half of them (30 cases) involved wild pigs that reappeared in the urban or residential areas after relocation.

4. At the same time, the number of injury cases caused by wild pigs also showed a significant increasing trend in recent years. Over the past decade (i.e. from 2012 to 2021), 45 injury cases were recorded involving a total of 56 victims, and 87% of them (i.e. 39 cases) happened between 2018 and 2021. There were 20 injury cases in 2021 alone (See **Table 2 of Annex 1** for the numbers of injury cases and victims). Wild pigs may also transmit zoonotic diseases, such as tuberculosis, hepatitis E, influenza A and *Streptococcus suis* infection, thereby posing threats to public health. It is necessary for the Government to take decisive actions to tackle wild pig issues.

NEW WILD PIG MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Wild Pig Capture Operation

5. In response to the festering nuisance problem of wild pigs, on the premises of safeguarding public safety and maintaining environmental hygiene, AFCD rolled out new wild pig management measures in November 2021. AFCD will conduct regular wild pig capture operations as well as special operations upon receiving reports of wild pigs appearing and causing nuisance in urban or residential areas. Veterinarians will use dart guns with anaesthetics to capture wild pigs and dispatch them humanely by the injection of medicine, with a view to effectively controlling the wild pig nuisance situation in Hong Kong.

6. Under the new measures, priority will be given to blackspots with large numbers of wild pig sightings, and those with past injury cases or with wild pigs posing risks to members of the public. Regular wild pig capture operations will be conducted to safeguard public safety and maintain environmental hygiene.

Furthermore, upon receiving reports about wild pig sightings in urban or residential areas from members of the public or other government departments, AFCD will immediately conduct special operations to capture wild pigs which pose potential danger or cause nuisance to members of the public. In the eight months from November last year to August this year, AFCD has conducted more than 70 operations, and humanely dispatched a total of more than 160 wild pigs that caused nuisance or posed potential danger to members of the public in urban areas and near residential areas (see **Table 3 of Annex 1**). After these operations conducted by AFCD, according to AFCD's latest monitoring record up to August this year, among 11 major black spots in urban area that have seen a large number of wild pigs², the number of wild pigs at three of the black spots has reduced to five or below, while the number of wild pigs at six other black spots has also reduced to ten or below. AFCD will continue to closely monitor the above major black spots, and continue to conduct capture operations at the remaining two major black spots which still record a large number of wild pigs (i.e. Mount Parker Road in the Eastern District and Repulse Bay in the Southern District. AFCD has already conducted a total of six wild pig capture operations at these two sites).

7. Under CCRP mentioned in paragraph 3, from 2017-18 to 2021-22, AFCD performed sterilisation or contraceptive treatment on about 90 wild pigs and relocated some 160 wild pigs to remote countryside every year on average (See **Table 4 of Annex 1** for relevant figures). However, the primary aim of contraceptive vaccination and surgical sterilisation is to prevent the passing of behaviour of habitual scavenging in residential areas or seeking food from humans to piglets, which will take a long time to become effective in population control. Besides, contraceptive vaccine is not 100% effective. Although the effect of surgical sterilisation is permanent, the process is complicated and requires a long preparation time. Site constraints (e.g. restricted space and difficult terrain) often make it difficult to perform such surgery. At the same time, wild pigs relocated to remote countryside often return to urban or residential areas relentlessly as they have been accustomed to being fed by humans. The above situation shows that contraception/sterilisation with relocation is unable to eradicate the problem of wild pig nuisance.

² These 11 major black spots in urban area are Kotewall Road, Kennedy Town, Magazine Gap Road in the Central and Western District; Siu Sai Wan, Mount Parker Road in the Eastern District; Moorsom Road, Coombe Road in the Wan Chai District; and Shum Wan Road, Nam Fung Road, Yue Kwong Road and Repulse Bay in the Southern District. According to AFCD's monitoring, more than 20 wild pigs have been recorded at these black spots.

8. Compared to performing contraception/sterilisation on wild pigs, capturing and humanely dispatching wild pigs can control the number of wild pigs in a swifter and more effective manner, thus thoroughly solving the nuisance problem and potential threats to public safety brought by wild pigs at source. AFCD will continue to conduct wild pig capture and humane dispatch operations, with a view to reducing the number of wild pigs causing nuisance in urban or residential areas.

PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE ADMENDMENT

9. AFCD adopts a multi-pronged approach in controlling the wild pig nuisance situation in Hong Kong. Apart from conducting capture and humane dispatch operations mentioned above to reduce the number of wild pigs at nuisance sites, we also need to curb wild pig feeding activities as they attract wild pigs to linger in urban areas and near residential areas. To this end, AFCD will expand the area where feeding of any wild animal is prohibited (Feeding Ban Area) designated under the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) (the Ordinance) to cover the entire territory of Hong Kong, and increase the penalty for illegal feeding as well as introduce fixed penalty for illegal feeding of wild animals within the Feeding Ban Area.

I. Proposed Expansion of Feeding Ban Area

10. Currently, wild pig nuisance is mainly caused by feeding activities. The Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation may, for the purpose of the conservation of wild animals, by notice published in the Gazette specify any place at which the feeding of any wild animal shall be prohibited under the Ordinance. Any person contravening the feeding restriction in the Feeding Ban Area designated under the Ordinance will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 upon conviction. The existing Feeding Ban Area³ was designated in 1999 for controlling the rapid expansion of monkey populations due to intensive feeding in the Kam Shan, Lion Rock and Shing Mun Country Parks and the nearby areas which cover the major monkey populations in Hong Kong.

³ The existing Feeding Ban Area includes the Kam Shan, Lion Rock and Shing Mun Country Parks, and part of the Tai Mo Shan Country Park, part of the Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve, Caldecott Road area near Tai Po Road, and Piper's Hill section of Tai Po Road.

11. Unlike monkeys, wild pigs are widely distributed in Hong Kong. In order to raise public awareness in this regard and increase the deterrent effect, we consider it necessary to amend the Ordinance to strengthen the curbing of feeding activities. To control the widespread feeding activities for wild pigs in Hong Kong, AFCD is proceeding with the legislative procedure to expand the Feeding Ban Area to cover the whole territory of Hong Kong with a view to completing the expansion by the end of 2022. The territory-wide coverage also aims to address the potential problem of feeders shifting the locations of feeding if only certain areas are designated as additional Feeding Ban Areas.

12. Due to the relatively small area of the existing Feeding Ban Area under the Ordinance, the amount of manpower and resources required for enforcement by AFCD is also relatively small. With the substantial expansion of the Feeding Ban Area, it is expected that AFCD will require more resources for enforcement work, alongside more manpower and resources for wild pig management. As the first step, AFCD will cope with the increased enforcement workload through internal resource redeployment and a risk-based enforcement strategy. Coupled with the increase in penalty for illegal feeding (see paragraphs 13 to 15 below), we expect to augment the overall deterrent effects on feeding activities for wild pigs. In due course, we will review the effectiveness of focusing our resources on risk-based enforcement work and the results of the expansion of the Feeding Ban Area.

II. Increase in Penalty for Illegal Feeding

13. Currently, the Ordinance stipulates that the maximum penalty for illegal feeding of wild animals is a fine at level 3 (\$10,000), of which AFCD prosecutes the offender by issuing summons. The penalty imposed in conviction precedents in recent years averages below \$1,000 (See **Table 5 of Annex 1** for the figures on prosecutions against illegal feeding of wild animals). To completely curb feeding activities, increase in penalty to enhance the deterrent effect is indispensable in addition to the expansion of the Feeding Ban Area.

14. To tackle illegal feeding of wild animals of a serious nature and magnitude (e.g. repeated offenders), AFCD will amend the relevant penalty by increasing the maximum penalty to a fine at level 6 (\$100,000) (viz. the highest penalty level under the Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Cap. 221)) and up to one year of imprisonment to strengthen deterrence. AFCD will also consider appealing to the Court for review on penalties that are considered too lenient under suitable circumstances.

15. In addition, apart from prosecuting illegal wild animal feeders, we will also introduce a fixed penalty for illegal wild animal feeding in the Feeding Ban Area. The fixed penalty is proposed at \$5,000 which is higher than the current fixed penalty related to contamination of public places⁴. The introduction of fixed penalty can standardise and allow swift handling of relatively straightforward illegal wild animal feeding cases by immediate issue of fixed penalty tickets to offenders, hence streamlining the prosecution procedure which is conducive to combating illegal feeding activities. At the same time, in cases of illegal feeding of a serious nature and magnitude, AFCDC will prosecute offenders by issuing summons with a view to imposing a higher penalty by the Court with regard to the seriousness of the offence, including the possibility of imprisonment.

IMPLEMENTATION OF OTHER MEASURES

I. Reducing Food Attraction

16. Apart from intentional feeding, the surge in wild pig nuisance cases is also related to wild pigs scavenging outdoor garbage. AFCDC commissioned a consultancy study with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Environmental Protection Department to improve the design of rubbish bins and litter containers with a view to reducing nuisance of wild animals scavenging in these facilities. The consultancy study was completed in March last year. Three new designs of rubbish bins and litter containers (See **Annex 2** for designs of roller fence rubbish bin, two fold rubbish bin and litter container with pedal) were tested and proven to be effective in reducing wild animal nuisance. FEHD has adopted the litter containers and rubbish bins of new designs, and has installed about 200 litter containers and rubbish bins of new designs at about 100 sites of frequent wild animal nuisance. FEHD is arranging the procurement of a new batch of litter containers and rubbish bins. The new batch of rubbish bins and litter containers is expected to be rolled out in the third quarter of 2022 and the first quarter of 2023 respectively. The target of FEHD is that there will be a total of around 990 newly designed rubbish bins and litter containers (including the new batch and those already installed).

⁴ At present, feeding activities outside the Feeding Ban Area are regarded as a problem of environmental cleanliness and hygiene. According to the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness Offences) Ordinance (Cap. 570), the fixed penalty is \$1,500.

II. Public Education

17. AFCD has been committed to promoting the importance of no-feeding of wild animals to the general public. Since 2018, AFCD has commissioned the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong to provide eco-educational activities and guided tours in the Feeding Ban Area, and extended the publicity and educational activities to kindergartens, primary schools and communities near feeding black spots since 2019, with a view to educating public members of various age groups, especially students, on concepts about prevention of wild animal nuisance and no-feeding of wild animals.

18. AFCD has also started a new round of public education and publicity campaign since November last year, educating the public that wild pigs are not pets but large wild animals with potential dangers. Feeding activities attract wild pigs to appear or even gather in urban areas, not only possibly transmitting diseases and posing threats to the feeders themselves, but also causing nuisance to other members of the public as well as daily lives of the community. AFCD has uploaded educational comics on social media platform, and posted publicity posters at MTR stations, bodies of trams and buses, and bus stations. AFCD will continue to strengthen public education on no-feeding of wild pigs and the risk behind feeding wild pigs through diverse ways and channels.

WAY FORWARD

19. While capture and humane dispatch operations on wild pigs has achieved some positive results since its introduction in November last year, wild pigs still cause nuisance and even injury cases in Hong Kong from time to time. As the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the operation works over the past period of time gradually fades, AFCD will step up the efforts in carrying out capture and humane dispatch operations more frequently. The Environment and Ecology Bureau/EPD, together with AFCD, will also review the results of various actions and explore the possibility of establishing performance targets, with a view to expediting the reduction of the number of nuisance black spots and controlling the situation of wild pig nuisance in Hong Kong effectively. In addition, AFCD will also amend the Ordinance for expansion of the Feeding Ban Area and raising the penalty of illegal feeding of wild animals, and is consulting relevant stakeholders in due course with a view to submitting the relevant legislative amendment

proposals as soon as possible to step up the tackling of wild pig feeding activities and strengthen the deterrent effect. The effectiveness of the above measures will also hinge on public cooperation in not feeding wild animals. AFCD will continue to educate the public of no-feeding wild pigs and other wild animals through different channels and activities.

ADVICE SOUGHT

20. Members are invited to note the progress of the Government's implementation of wild pig management measures and provide comments on the above measures.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
September 2022

Figures on Wild Pig Nuisance and Management and Illegal Feeding of Wild Animals

Table 1

Number of reports on wild pig sighting or nuisance received by AFCD in 2016 to 2022 are as follows:

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (Up to July)
Number of wild pig sighting and nuisance cases	583	738	929	1 184	1 002	1 417	530

Table 2

Figures of injury cases caused by wild pigs and victims from 2012 to 2022 are as follows:

Year*	2013	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (Up to August)	Total
Number of injury reports	1	2	3	7	9	3	20	24#	69
Number of victims	2	4	4	12	9	3	22	30	86

*: There were no cases in 2012, 2014 and 2015.

#: While there were 24 injury cases caused by wild pigs from January to August of 2022, 16 of them happened in the first four months on Mount Parker Road in the Eastern District. Targeting this black spot, AFCD conducted five wild pig capture operations there from January to April 2022. A total of eight wild pigs were captured and humanely dispatched. Since then, there has not been any injury report at this black spot.

Table 3

Figures of wild pigs captured and humanely dispatched for posing potential danger to the public or causing nuisance in urban areas or near residential areas, consolidated since the launch of new measures in November last year up to August this year, are as follows:

Operation Date	District	Operation Location	No. of Wild Pigs Humanely Dispatched
17 November 2021	Southern	Shum Wan Road	7
21 November 2021	Yau Tsim Mong District	Yau Ma Tei Public Cargo Working Area	1
21 November 2021	Southern	A gas station on Pokfulam Road	1
28 November 2021	Wan Chai	Tin Hau Temple Road	1
30 November 2021	Eastern	Pak Fuk Road	2
1 December 2021	Southern	A housing estate at Repulse Bay	2
6 December 2021	Southern	South Bay Beach	0
13 December 2021	Southern	South Bay Beach & Chung Hom Kok Beach	0
15 December 2021	Sai Kung	Near Po Lam MTR station	3
16 December 2021	Wan chai	A housing estate on Wong Nai Chung Road	3
16 December 2021	Central and Western	Ching Lin Terrace, Kennedy Town	3
23 December 2021	Central and Western	Kotewall Road	5
5 January 2022	Eastern	Sai Wan Terrace, Tai Koo	2
5 January 2022	Southern	Cape D'Aguilar Road	3
6 January 2022	Southern	South Bay Beach and Middle Bay Beach	0
8 January 2022	Eastern	A housing estate in Sai Wan Ho	1
11 January 2022	Wan Chai	A housing estate on Tin Hau Temple Road	1

12 January 2022	Sai Kung	Lung Ha Wan Road, Sai Kung	3
13 January 2022	Southern	Shek Pai Wan Road Playground	5
17 January 2022	Tai Po	Tai Wo Service Road West, Tai Po	2
20 January 2022	Sai Kung	Po Lam Road North	3
20 January 2022	Eastern	Mount Parker Road	1
26 January 2022	Sai Kung	Kau Sai Chau	4
26 January 2022	Central and Western	Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens	1
27 January 2022	Central and Western	Brewin Path Temporary Playground	1
27 January 2022	Central and Western	Pollock's Path, The Peak	1
27 January 2022	Southern	A housing estate in Aberdeen	1
29 January 2022	Sham Shui Po	Cornwall Street Park	1
3 February 2022	Sha Tin	Ma Kam Street, Ma On Shan	1
10 February 2022	Southern	A school in Stanley	1
14 February 2022	Eastern	Mount Parker Road	3
15 February 2022	Eastern	Mount Parker Road	1
15 February 2022	Eastern	A housing estate in Sai Wan Ho	1
19 February 2022	Eastern	Cape Collinson Road	1
1 March 2022	Eastern	Mount Parker Road	1
17 March 2022	Tsuen Wan	Tai Mo Shan Road	1
18 March 2022	Tai Po	A construction site in Shap Sze Heung	5
14 April 2022	Tai Po	A hospital in Tai Po	1
20 April 2022	Eastern	Mount Parker Road	2
21 April 2022	Southern	Shum Wan Road	1
21 April 2022	Southern	Nam Long Shan Road	1
23 April 2022	Wan Chai	Tin Hau Temple Road	1

25 April 2022	Wan Chai	Tin Hau Temple Road	1
28 April 2022	Sham Shui Po	Ching Cheung Road	3
5 May 2022	Central and Western	Mount Kellett Road	2
19 May 2022	Eastern	Siu Sai Wan Road	4
26 May 2022	Kwun Tong	Black Hill	8
31 May 2022	Central and Western	Shek Tong Tsui	1
1 June 2022	Southern	Shek Pai Wan Road Playground	7
1 June 2022	Southern	A housing estate in Stanley	1
15 June 2022	Central and Western	Conduit Road	1
21 June 2022	Sai Kung	Nam Wai, Sai Kung	4
29 June 2022	Southern	Shouson Hill	3
6 July 2022	Kwun Tong	Black Hill	7
11 July 2022	Sai Kung	Tseung Kwan O South Waterfront Promenade	1
13 July 2022	Eastern	Greig Road	3
15 July 2022	Sha Tin	A housing estate in Heung Fan Liu, Tai Wai	1
18 July 2022	Eastern	Wai Hang Street	1
18 July 2022	Eastern	Min Fat Street	1
20 July 2022	Sha Tin	A housing estate in Tin Sam, Tai Wai	8
23 July 2022	Tai Po	Pak Shek Kok	1
27 July 2022	Southern	Tai Tam Reservoir Road	4
30 July 2022	Central and Western	Central Ferry Piers	1
3 August 2022	Sai Kung	Tseng Lan Shue	5
3 August 2022	Eastern	Cape Collinson Road	1
5 August 2022	Central and Western	Kotewall Road	1
11 August 2022	Wan Chai	Mount Cameron Road	1
11 August 2022	Wan Chai	Moorsom Road	1

15 August 2022	Wong Tai Sin	Choi Hung Road Playground	1
18 August 2022	Eastern	Tai Koo Shing	1
18 August 2022	Sha Tin	Hin Tin Street	6
18 August 2022	Sha Tin	A housing estate in Hin Tin	4
24 August 2022	Central and Western	Hong Kong Park	1
Total no. of wild pigs			164

Table 4

Since the launch of the CCRP in 2017, figures of wild pigs handled under the programme are as follows:

Year	Number of wild pigs		
	Captured	Administered with contraceptive vaccine or surgically sterilised *	Relocated to remote countryside
2017-18	51	14	40
2018-19	115	64	81
2019-20	293	106	222
2020-21	344	165	270
2021-22	370	109	219
Total	1 173	458	832
Average per year	234	91	166

* The number of wild pigs administered with contraceptive vaccine/surgically sterilised may overlap with that of wild pigs relocated to remote countryside, as some wild pigs might be relocated after they had been administered with the vaccine/after the surgery.

Table 5

Figures on prosecutions against illegal feeding of wild animals (including wild pigs) in recent years are as follows:

Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Number of prosecutions *	26	50	111
Number of successful prosecutions *	28	31	89
Fine per case (\$)	1 500 - 2 000 (average: 1 536)	300 - 2 000 (average: 559)	200 - 1 500 (average: 833)

* Some of the prosecutions instituted in the latter part of the year might be processed in the following year.

Photos of Refuse Collection Facilities that Prevent Wild Animal Nuisance

Figure 1: Roller Fence Rubbish Bin



Figure 2: Two Fold Rubbish Bin



Figure 3: Litter Container with Pedal

