

**Question on the environmental impacts
of the three-runway system project of the airport
(Paper IDC 98/2016)**

Written Reply from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Reclamation and marine works would inevitably lead to habitat loss or disturbance. However, when a declining trend in Chinese white dolphin (CWD) number was first confirmed in 2011 for the period from 2003 to 2010, there had not been much reclamation or marine works going on within the habitats of CWD in Hong Kong. This factor thus seemed unlikely to be the only cause of the decline of CWD detected in Hong Kong waters.

From 2006 to 2015, the number of cases of CWD stranding in Hong Kong ranged from 5 to 17 per year, with an annual average of about 10. In 2016, only three cases of CWD stranding have so far been recorded. There were fluctuations in stranding cases over the years with no apparent increasing or decreasing trend. The number of stranding is therefore not considered as an accurate indicator of the status of CWD in Hong Kong.

To further protect CWD in Hong Kong, the Government plans to designate more marine parks expeditiously. One new marine park at The Brothers in north Lantau will be designated in 2016 and two additional marine parks, at Southwest Lantau and Soko Islands respectively, are also expected to be ready by 2017. With these marine parks in place in the near future, the amount of important CWD habitats in Hong Kong under active management and statutory protection would be much increased. This would help much in ensuring their continued occurrence in Hong Kong waters and long term viability in the Pearl River Estuary.

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