

Green living

Overview

Hong Kong abounds in unexpected and delightful contrasts. Although renowned as a fast-paced business hub, Hong Kong offers a variety of landscape and scenic vistas rarely matched in such a small territory, ranging from sandy beaches and rocky foreshores to open grasslands and mountain ranges.

Countryside and Hiking

- 40% of Hong Kong's 1,108 square kilometres of land is protected country park and special areas for the purpose of nature conservation.
- Hong Kong has five Marine Parks and one Marine Reserve to conserve local marine environments.
- Many Hong Kong hiking trails are near urban areas and easily accessible. Urban districts and the countryside are often very close. For example, it takes less than 20 minutes by bus from the bustling urban area on eastern Hong Kong Island to reach the start of the Dragon's Back trail, which has been rated Asia's "Best Urban Hike".

Astonishing Biodiversity

- Hong Kong has over 3,300 species of vascular plants; 55 species of terrestrial mammals; 550 species of birds (one-third of all bird species recorded throughout China); 110 species of amphibians and reptiles; 240 species of butterflies and 125 species of dragonflies.
- There are more than 1,000 species of marine fish and 84 species of hard corals – a greater number of hard coral species than there is in the Caribbean.
- Some species are endemic to Hong Kong, such as the Hong Kong Balsam (*Impatiens hongkongensis*), the tiny Romer's Tree Frog (*Liuixalus romeri*), the rare Bogadek's Burrowing Lizard (*Dibamus bogadeki*) and the Hong Kong Tusk-tail dragonfly (*Fukienogomphus choifongae*).
- Rich and wonderful biodiversity is a precious natural resource. The government on average plants more than one million trees and other plants in the countryside and urban areas annually to green Hong Kong.

Low Carbon and Emission Reduction

- A range of environmental protection policies and measures mitigate environmental pollution, promote environmental technology and green building, advocate energy saving and "waste less", and strengthen environmental education to build a sustainable future.
- Major strides are being made to achieve the ambitious target of reducing Hong Kong's carbon intensity by 65% to 70% in 2030 compared to the 2005 level.
- Measures to improve air quality include phasing out 82,000 old diesel commercial vehicles by end-2019 (over 80% are already off the road), promoting the use of electric vehicles, requiring ocean-going vessels to switch to low-sulphur marine fuel, and strengthening co-operation with the Mainland.
- These measures are bearing fruit, particularly at the roadside. Since 2013, levels of major air pollutants (including roadside nitrogen dioxide and PM2.5) have been reduced by around 30%.

Green Building Design and Technology

- Green building design and technology can help address the problem of climate change.

- In 2012 statutory standards were introduced for the energy efficiency performance of new buildings and buildings undergoing major renovation. The latest standards will take effect in 2019 and will increase energy efficiency by 18% compared to 2012 standards.
- The government has invested in energy efficient infrastructure, including the District Cooling System (DCS) in Kai Tak Development, which is 35% more energy efficient than traditional air-cooled air-conditioning systems. The feasibility of developing DCSs in other new or redevelopment areas will be studied.
- Opened in 2012, the Zero Carbon Building at Kowloon Bay was the city's first building with a zero carbon footprint. It has over 80 kinds of green technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- The T · PARK sludge treatment facility at Nim Wan, Tuen Mun, opened in 2015 and is one of the most technologically advanced facilities of its kind in the world.
- Heat produced from incinerating sludge is recovered for electricity generation, thus transforming waste into energy, which is also used to provide heating for spa pools established within its Environmental Education Centre at T · PARK, for the public to enjoy free of charge.

Waste Management

- The government introduced a charging scheme on plastic shopping bags, which has reduced their use.
- Premised on the "polluter pays" principle, the Producers Responsibility Scheme (PRS) on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment was implemented in August 2018 while a PRS on glass beverage containers is in the pipeline to promote recycling and resource recovery.
- The government plans to introduce municipal solid waste charging to drive behavioural change in waste reduction, and has been developing "Community Green Stations" in each district to enhance support for waste reduction and recycling.
- The government has been promoting a "food wise" culture to reduce food waste.
- Under the Food Waste Plan, the Organic Resources Recovery Centre Phase 1 (O·PARK1) started receiving commercial and industrial food waste since July 1, 2018. O·PARK1 can treat 200 tonnes of food waste per day and convert it into biogas for power generation, and process the digestate to produce compost. About 14 million kWh of surplus electricity, enough to power about 3 000 households, can be generated by O·PARK1 and transmitted to the grid annually.
- Substantial investment in sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure has vastly improved the water quality of Victoria Harbour.

Ecological Protection

- To phase out the local ivory trade and deter illicit trade in endangered species, the Government is imposing heavier sentences and stepping up co-operation with Mainland authorities under the new Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants (Amendment) Ordinance 2018 that came into effect on May 1, 2018.
- A new Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2021 is being implemented to strengthen conservation of biodiversity.