

Hong Kong Wetland Park opening soon

Commissioner for Tourism, Miss Au King-chi, announced today (3 May) that the Hong Kong Wetland Park (HKWP) would be open to the public on 20 May 2006 and its opening ceremony would be held on 19 May 2006.

"HKWP is our first major ecotourism facility aimed to promote green tourism, education on environmental protection and wetland conservation. The Park includes a visitor centre of about 10,000 square metres with three major exhibition galleries and fabrication of exhibition items and an outdoor park of 60 hectares of habitats for wildlife," Miss Au said.

"This will be a world-class ecotourism facility with over 500,000 visitors expected for the first year of operation. It will help position Hong Kong as the premier destination for family tourists in the region," Miss Au added.

HKWP is developed on an ecological mitigation area originally intended to compensate for the wetlands lost due to Tin Shui Wai New Town development. The project has upgraded the 60 hectares ecological mitigation area to a world-class conservation, education and tourism facility.

Miss Au said, "The works, testing and commissioning and other preparation for the opening of the Hong Kong Wetland Park have been going on smoothly. Before the opening, there will be a soft opening in the second week of May 2006 to fine-tune all operations."

"We plan to invite various groups from the community to take part in the soft opening, including the Legislative Council, the Yuen Long District Council, relevant advisory committees, local organisations and disadvantaged groups in Yuen Long, the travel trade, green groups and volunteers," she said. "We look forward to listening their views on the operation of the Park."

Miss Au added, "We are pleased to note that the Architectural Services Department has recently been awarded the Medal of the Year by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects for its design of HKWP. The layout of the Park has been carefully designed to ensure that it is in harmony with the surrounding environment and wild life will not be

disturbed.”

HKWP will open from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays to Sundays. It will close on Tuesdays (except public holidays). The admission fee is \$30 for adults and \$15 for children, students and senior citizens. There are discounts for group and family visitors. The public can obtain more details from the HKWP website at <http://www.wetlandpark.com>. Groups can also book their tickets on-line.

Ends/Wednesday, May 3, 2006