

Ecotourism in hong kong

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The image of Hong Kong is well known as “shopper’s paradise” and “Pearl of the Orient”. Further, according to the International Market Research Study, it shows that the lack of new appeals in Hong Kong is a significant reason for it not being considered as a vacation destination. Therefore, it is necessary to expand the appeals of Hong Kong. Why not use our existing natural resources as tourist attractions? To maintain the competitiveness, Hong Kong should build up its own unique and special character. Natural wonders of the territory provide a chance to show the uniqueness and international significance of Hong Kong ecology.

Green tourism, outdoors, hiking and nature are some of the new and promising products most needed by consumers. Building ecotourism could attract special interest tourists. It was found that nature-based activities or scenery is one of the top attractions which the visitors to Hong Kong are interested in. These natural attractions include trips to outlying islands, nature reserves (Mai Po), beaches, mountain hiking, urban nature trails and dolphin-watching. Hong Kong’s remote, unpolluted outlying islands are an attraction for tourists.

Many tourists are surprised that Hong Kong has dolphins in one of the world busiest harbors. In addition, a survey completed by the HKTA found that about 15% of tourists are interested in taking part in outdoor and hiking activities in Hong Kong. Since many overseas tourists are interested in seeing wildlife and beauty natural scenic, there is a potential market for ecotourism. About 70% of Hong Kong is rural area. Nature is right on the city’s doorstep. They are mostly accessible by buses and minibuses. Hiking,

swimming, scubas-diving and sailing are all possible just a short journey from urban area.

A total of 24 country parks have been designated for the purposes of nature conservation, countryside recreation and outdooreducation. There are 22 special areas created mainly for the purpose of nature conservation. The country parks and special areas cover a total area of 44 239 hectares. The country parks comprise scenic hills, woodlands, reservoirs and coastline in all parts of Hong Kong. The country parks are very popular with all sectors of the community and spending a day in a country park is one of the best recreational choices. About 12. million visitors were recorded in 2012 and most visitors engaged in leisure walking, hiking, barbecuing and camping. Hong Kong has glory and outstanding scenic beauty, and also rich ecology. These are striking advantages for promoting ecotourism. Besides, Hong Kong is characterized by hilly topography with less low flat land areas. It consists of undeveloped and unspoiled steep hills, some 230 outlying islands and also other geographical and ecological features of high scenic and amenity value on Government lands with unrestricted public access and proximity to the urban areas.

There is a wide variety of scenic views, landscape features and habitats including sandy beaches, rocky foreshores, mountain ranges, grasslands, valleys, shrub lands and so on. The sub-tropical climaticenvironmentand extensive undeveloped tracts of natural landscapes provide a wide range of habitats, and supports high biodiversity of flora and fauna, both resident and migratory. There are about 500 species of birds, one-third of all species of

birds in China. More than 230 species of butterflies and over 100 species of dragonflies can be found.

There are more than 2600 species of vascular plants, 50 species of mammals, 80 species of reptiles and more than 20 species of amphibians in Hong Kong (AFCD 2013). A high proportion of birds in Hong Kong are winter visitors and passage migrants in spring and autumn, followed by resident birds and summer visitors. Migration is a strong instinct, and birds (particularly water birds) are often able to traverse immense natural barriers, frequently migrating and making one or more stopovers en route.

In Hong Kong, we can watch butterflies in all seasons due to warm climate and the presence of a variety of habitats. There are over 230 butterfly species in Hong Kong and more than 130 species have been recorded in Hong Kong Wetland Park. The Butterfly Garden in the Hong Kong Wetland Park is planted with various larval food plants and nectar plants. It is an ideal place for learning butterflies. Dragonflies and damselflies are among the most beautiful and spectacular insects in the world.

Their lives are closely intertwined with wetlands. Up to April 2009, there are 115 species of dragonfly officially recorded in Hong Kong. During the Dragonfly Festival, Hong Kong Wetland Park will organize a series of activities for public to broaden their knowledge of dragonflies. These activities also aimed to promote dragonflies watching and encourage the public to engage in the conservation works of wetlands and dragonflies. Our bustling metropolis has more than 40% of its land designated as protected green areas.

Apart from providing habitats for our myriad wildlife, this verdant countryside is also home to world-class rock formations and geological features. A geopark is a unique natural area with special geological significance and natural and cultural landscapes, and can serve the three objectives of conservation, education and sustained development. The Marine Parks Ordinance protects and conserves the marine environment and a rich collection of aquatic animals and plants, such as corals, sea grasses and dolphins. In Hong Kong, there are 84 species of reef-building corals.

Reef-building Corals in Hong Kong with the splendid colors and graceful growth forms and they also build "homes" for a wide range of marine animals. At present, there are four marine parks and one marine reserve, including Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park, Yan Chau Tong Marine Park, Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park, Tung Ping Chau Marine Park and Cape D'Aguilar Marine Reserve. They cover a total area of 2 430 hectares and comprise scenic coastal areas, seascapes and important marine habitats. Marine parks and reserve can be managed for conservation, education, recreation and scientific studies.

In marine parks, visitors are encouraged to appreciate the beauty and diversity of marine life. Diving, snorkeling, swimming, canoeing, sailing, underwater photography and school visits are popular activities in marine parks. Educational activities such as guided tours, beach clean-ups, seabed clean-ups and public lectures are regularly organized. Tourists can take part in them. To conclude, there is a great potential for the further development of ecotourism in Hong Kong since the territory is rich in ecology with outstanding natural beauty.

Pure Ecotourism can include as one of the attractions in the trip to experience the green side of Hong Kong and to show the compact and variety of the territory. However, it is unsuitable to promote ecotourism without any development strategy. To ensure the ecological sustainability of nature and ecotourism, conservation should be in the first priority when developing ecotourism. For the sustainable development of ecotourism, it is important to let tourism industry, government, tourists and residents know what is the meaning of ecotourism.