

Hoi Ha Wan –

the Marine Kaleidoscope of Hong Kong

Teachers' Notes

(1) Suggest the factors for Hong Kong to be successful in tourism industry.

The success of the local travel and tourism industry can be attributed to numerous factors, such as the unique culinary delights, compact diversity of attractions, fascinating blend of East and West, traditional and modern, etc. Hong Kong's image as a modern, exciting and culturally rich city is also a major factor which helps attract overseas visitors.

(2) What is the definition of “sustainable tourism development” according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO)

Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support system.

(3) State what Hoi Ha Wan really refers to and its literal meaning.

“Hoi Ha Wan” refers to the bay next to the sea. The literal meaning of “Hoi”, “Ha” and “Wan” are “the sea”, “beneath” and “the bay” respectively and thus the literal meaning of “Hoi Ha Wan” is “the bay beneath the sea”.

(4) When and why was Hoi Ha Wan designated as a marine park and what attractions does it include?

On 5 July 1996, Hoi Ha Wan was designated as one of the first two Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's (HKSAR) marine parks, specifically to protect its delicate coral communities. Its attractions include sandy beach, coral reefs, mangroves, lime kilns and the Hoi Ha Village.

(5) What are visitors not allowed to do in Hoi Ha Wan ?

Visitors are not allowed to touch or to remove any marine life in water or on the beach. To further protect marine lives, certain recreational activities including water skiing, water scottering, jet skiing and recreational fishing are prohibited.

(6) What is the use of mangrove areas for juvenile fishes and other intertidal and subtidal invertebrates ?

Mangrove areas commonly act as nursery grounds for juvenile fishes and other intertidal and subtidal invertebrates.

(7) State the material and the use of lime.

Lime is refined from either oyster shells or coral skeletons for construction and agricultural uses.

(8) Why is Hoi Ha Wan suitable for kayaking, scuba diving and hiking ?

The bay is sheltered and is a perfect place for kayaking. With improving water quality, Hoi Ha Wan is one of the best easily accessible scuba diving areas in Hong Kong. Hoi Ha Wan is one of the favourable places in Hong Kong suitable for short hikes mainly because of sunny dry weather with cool temperatures.



(9) State and explain the facilities or services that have been made marked improvement in recent months.

While access is considered not good when the park was firstly designated, marked improvement in public transportation is seen in the last several months. The disastrous SARS had made the Marine Park a hot spot by weekends of the SARS months (March to June 2003) when most families wanted to avoid crowded shopping centres. Its sandy beach, coral-watching tour and eco-walks (organized by the AFCD during weekends, free of charge) makes Hoi Ha Wan an attractive place for leisure and relaxation hence increases its popularity. Fame improves accessibility. While good access remains mainly in weekends and public holidays, it is now relatively convenient to travel to Hoi Ha Wan by public transportation and the transportation fee is relatively low. Hence more and more people love going to Hoi Ha Wan to spend their weekends.

(10) Suggest the services for tourists involved by the local people.

There are originally only two residences turn small store-eateries in the marine park. Visitors can only get simple food and basic groceries such as soft drinks and breads there. These two store-eateries also rent diving equipment and offer fresh water shower stalls for swimmers. The increase of visitors prompts more local residents turn their residence to store-eateries. There are a total of four store-eateries in the marine park now. While menus are still restricted to basic fast food and noodles, there is a 30 – 50% increase in prices, particularly “changing room” and “fresh water shower” services. Service, on the other hand, has seen a 50% deterioration.

(11) Identify the negative impacts caused by tourists.

There is an increasing number of public transportation including buses, mini-buses and taxis going in and out there. These vehicles emit waste gases, such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and sulphur gases, which result in air pollution. The situation is worsened when taxis leave their engines on while waiting for customers.

Water pollution also exists in the form of waste water (from showering water and dish washing water of the local stores and eateries) going into the nearby stream then into the bay area. All these actions cause a lot of damage to marine lives.

Some tourists touch the marine animals to satisfy their curiosity. Some selfish tourists even take home corals, shells and starfish as souvenirs.

(12) What should the government do to tackle the problem of insufficient supporting facilities ?

To tackle the problem, the government should build more sanitary washrooms and changing rooms (with lockers) to ease the current pressure. From a long term planning perspective, the government should study carefully the capacity of the marine park and impose entry restrictions. Admission charges may be considered. The revenue collected can be used to maintain the marine park. AFCD eco-tours (currently free of charge during weekends) should be an attraction when the marine park charges admission.

(13) Suggest measures to upgrade the quality of services in Hoi Ha Wan.

They may include measures such as to increase the number of facilities (by helping locals to set up), to provide training to local servers, to impose price regulation. Government involvement is of utmost importance in this part as such large scale and long term planning would be beyond the ability of any local community and/or organization.

(14) State the objectives to designate marine parks and reserves in Hong Kong.

The Marine Parks Ordinance, Chapter 37 (1995) allowed the Hong Kong Government to designate marine parks and reserves with the following objectives:

- To protect, restore and enhance marine lives and marine environment therein,
- To regulate the uses of resources in marine parks to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations
- To provide opportunities for educational and scientific studies on marine lives and the marine environment
- To facilitate compatible recreational activities in marine parks.

(15) What are the major threats in Hoi Ha Wan ?

To Hoi Ha Wan, the greatest threat overall is from pollution of eastern shores with concomitant reclamation, dredging for marine sands, dumping of dredged materials at sea, effluent discharge and a dramatic overall decline in inshore water quality.

Hoi Ha Wan is close to the entrance of the Tolo Channel. The Wan Tsai peninsula was used as a borrow area between 1983-1986 and caused water

pollution of Hoi Ha Wan with silt lost into the bay, through run-off, smothering the corals on the eastern shores. Much of this pollution thankfully sweeps past Hoi Ha Wan and only slowly diffuses into it.

The third threat is local fishermen who use almost every conceivable means to catch fish of every size, shape and age. Fishing with explosives is banned in Hong Kong, but the practice continues. Small fish traps are set by villagers and sampans catch fish fry in fine nets for subsequent growth in the cages of mariculture rafts. An auxiliary threat is the growing band of scuba divers, many of whom spearfish and collect shells and coral.

(16) Describe the use of artificial reefs and the deployment of artificial reefs in Hong Kong's marine parks.

The main aim of developing artificial reefs is similar to putting up artificial nest boxes: creating and providing a suitable environment for wildlife. Artificial reefs can encourage growth and development of a great number and variety of marine organisms, particularly useful for enhancing the variety and abundance of coral reef fish, which are influenced by the limited number of habitats in Hong Kong's sea-bed.

Twenty vessels, 216 tyre units and 131 concrete modules, including "Reef Balls" and 8 quart rocks were carefully prepared as artificial reefs surfaces and sunk into Hoi Ha Wan and Yan Chau Tong Marine Parks.

(17) Do artificial reefs achieve their objectives in Hong Kong ?

All deployed artificial reef surfaces are heavily encrusted with a rich growth of invertebrates, including barnacles, bivalves, tube worms, sponges, bryozoans and squirts (tunicates). Juveniles of many high value reef fish have established impressive populations and have also taken up residence. Over 110 species of fish have been recorded on Hong Kong's artificial reefs.

(18) Find a case to show the negative impact of tourism for a local store owner.

A local resident complained that government policy has disrupted her normal life. She owns a convenient store in the front portion of her house. The store had been running for over 30 years and is her income source. She has to close down the shop now as if she wants to continue her business, she has to get a relatively expensive license from the government. In addition, she also needs to adorn her store in order to meet the new requirements. She thinks the cost was so great that she is not able to afford it. Thus, she decided to give up the store. She is now unemployed.

(19) Find a case to show the positive impact of tourism for a local store owner.

Another local resident supports the government policy. He is a local restaurant/stall owner. Since Hoi Ha Wan has become a marine park, more tourists come; his business increases, especially in the peak seasons. He is glad that Hoi Ha Wan has been designated as a protected marine park. He said that the designation has made Hoi Ha Wan famous and brought more tourists and hence more income to him.

(20) Why does WWF choose Ho Ha Wan to set up Hong Kong's first Marine Life Centre and put up a fund raising campaign in order to attract tourism?

Firstly, there are more than 50 coral species found in this tiny 260 ha bay, which makes Hoi Ha Wan a unique site in terms of the diversity in marine lives. Easy accessibility of the park enhances enjoyment and education purposes. Secondly, WWF has decided to make Hoi Ha Wan a regional training center for marine resources management. Finally, more tourists should be allowed to enjoy beautiful environments of Hoi Ha Wan.

(21) Why did the government choose Hoi Ha to build the new center? Instead of choosing other marine parks?

Comparing to the other 3 marine parks of Hong Kong, which are difficult to access, Hoi Ha Wan is convenient. One can go there by public transportation and private cars.

(22) Will the government fund the construction of the new center?

The government will not contribute much money. Construction of the Center has been generously funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club and the Hong Kong Bank Foundation through a funding commitment of HK\$38 million and HK\$14.5 respectively.

(23) How are Western Australia's marine parks zoned to ensure that users do not impinge on each other's activities ?

Sanctuary zones are areas where visitors may 'look, but not touch'. No fishing of any kind is permitted in these areas, and all marine plants and animals are totally protected. Recreation zones exclude commercial activities but generally permit recreational activities such as fishing, provided that fishing

regulations are followed. General use zones provide for commercial fishing and other uses that are consistent with conservation.

(24) What are Marine Protected Areas?

Marine protected areas are coastal, estuarine or oceanic areas managed to conserve biodiversity. They range from small, highly protected areas that focus on species or community protection, to large multiple use areas that include complex linkages of ecosystems and habitats. Marine protected areas may include reefs, seagrass beds, rocky platforms, mangroves, estuarine waters, mudflats, salt marshes, shipwrecks, archaeological sites, and coastal and offshore areas of airspace, seabed and water.

(25) State the benefits of marine protected areas.

Research has shown that marine protected areas can have positive effects on the ecosystems, habitats and species under protection and may also have other benefits including:

- improved fish stocks as a result of the protection of habitats critical for commercially and recreationally important species
- dispersal of larval recruits and genetic diversity to surrounding areas
- sites for education
- increasing community awareness and understanding of marine conservation issues
- provision of scientific reference sites for research and long-term monitoring.

(26) What are the principles for establishing a representative system of marine protected areas ?

Comprehensiveness: the degree to which the areas encompass the full range of marine biological/biophysical diversity and habitats found within and across all marine bioregions.

Adequacy: the capability of the areas to maintain biodiversity and ecological patterns and processes and other values, given both natural and human-induced disturbances.

Representativeness: the extent to which the areas selected for inclusion in the system reflect the range of biological/biophysical diversity known within the region.

A **precautionary** approach will be adopted in marine protected areas management, consistent with the principle for ecologically sustainable development and use. The absence of scientific certainty will not be used as a reason for postponing measures to establish or manage marine protected areas. If an activity is assessed as posing a risk of causing serious or irreversible impacts, or if there is insufficient information with which to assess fully and with certainty the magnitude and nature of impacts, decision making will be conservative and cautious.

Planning framework

The Interim Marine and Coastal Regionalisation for Australia report provides the general planning framework for developing the NSW Representative System of Marine Protected Areas. This identifies five marine bioregions and one marine province in NSW, and this has been used as the basis for establishing and managing the NSW Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (IMCRA Technical Group, 1998).

(27) Suggest the requirements of effective management of marine protected areas.

The requirements include the protection of conservation values and ecological processes and also the sustainable use and public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment.

(28) How to make the local community to contribute to the success of the marine protected areas ?

To ensure effective management of marine protected areas, people who use them must be aware of and understand the values of the areas and comply with the management controls that protect those values. Therefore, there is a need for an education strategy that highlights the impact of human activity on the marine environment, the role of marine protected areas and the reason for management plans and special management arrangements.

Ongoing community and stakeholder participation in marine protected areas management is enhanced through advisory bodies representing key stakeholder groups and the community. These committees advise the relevant Ministers and marine protected areas agencies on, among other things:

- proposals for marine protected areas
- conservation of marine biodiversity and ecologically sustainable use within marine protected areas
- matters relating to the application of marine protected areas legislation
- planning and management of marine protected areas.

Indigenous participation and support is essential to effectively create, plan and manage marine protected areas. Indigenous representatives will normally be included on marine protected areas advisory committees, including the Marine Parks Advisory Council.

(29) How successful are the marine parks in Malaysia in raising the number of visitors ?

In the Marine Parks in Pulau Redang and Pulau Payar, the number of visitors was 4,375 in 1990. This number increased to 20,637 in 1993 and 125,040 in 1996. Tourism in these protected waters has provided unquantified spillover effects on the economy.

(30) How does Hoi Ha Wan compare with the Hainan Island, the Spratley Island and Pratas Reef in South China Sea ?

Compare the Hainan Island, the Spratley Island and Pratas Reef in South China Sea with Hoi Ha Wan in Hong Kong, Hoi Ha Wan is worth visiting since there are much more various kinds of coral reefs found. Its designation as a marine park has further enhanced its chance of a sustainable eco system. Hoi Ha Wan is indeed a much better coral colony when compare to other near shore coral colonies.

(31) How does Hong Kong compare with Australia and Malaysia in marine preservation and conservation?

There is almost no comparison when you put the Australian marine parks and reserves with the Hong Kong marine parks. Australia, being the world's best marine preservation and conservation country, has a very comprehensive code on preserving and conserving its marine resources. Australia is a role model for many countries that want to preserve and conserve their marine resources and Malaysia is one of these countries. Malaysia is now making good progress in preserving and conserving its marine resources, while developing her tourism as the same time. Hong Kong, being a toddler in marine preservation and

conservation, has actually a good start. Due to its large population and small area, Hong Kong faces the problem of water pollution that most other countries do not have to. The designation of the four marine parks signifies an important step of the Hong Kong government's determination in marine preservation and conservation.

(32) What facilities and services will be provided in the marine life centre established by the World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong ?

As the centre is situated at the north side of the small jetty, it provides opportunities for students to study the marine environment with minimum disruption to the flora and fauna within the bay area. Information concerning the importance of marine conservation will be displayed for students and members of the public. A film entitled, " Hoi Ha Wan – Bay Beneath the Sea", will be shown to visitors to the centre. This documentary will give non-diving visitors the chance to experience the marine life of Hoi Ha Wan throughout the year. Plans include a "touch and see" aquarium which will contain hardly intertidal animals that may be handled and examined by visitors. A "daylight reversal" aquarium will be another feature: here a tank will be artificially illuminated during the night and kept in dim lighting during the day. Many marine animals are nocturnal and their behavior is usually only observed by night divers. This display will allow these animals to be studied during their active phase. A "tide tank" will be set up to enable intertidal animals to be studied at different levels of dessication without the need to rely on natural tides. Educational pamphlets, booklets, posters and other materials produced by WWF HK will also be available and there is the hope that guided snorkeling tours of corals may be provided eventually at the Hoi Ha Wan Marine Life Centre.

(33) What urgent need is required in the future sustainable development of Hoi Ha Wan ?

From the response of some locals, sustainable tourism may not be what they really want. A good consultation programme is therefore in urgent need. Such a consultation mechanism will allow a balance strived between the government and the locals. Maybe some of the work, including the conservation work and the management work, is not perfect. A good consultation scheme will again help correcting the errors.

THE END