

Reporting on a Turtle's Death

ENVIRONMENT

Text Type: Newspaper article
Suggested finishing time: 25 mins

Let's Think! 

1. How often do you use plastic products?
2. How greatly will your life be affected if you stop using them?

26 May 20XX

B2 // Hong Kong Daily

Long-suspected Threat to Marine Life Confirmed for the First Time

by Judy Cheng

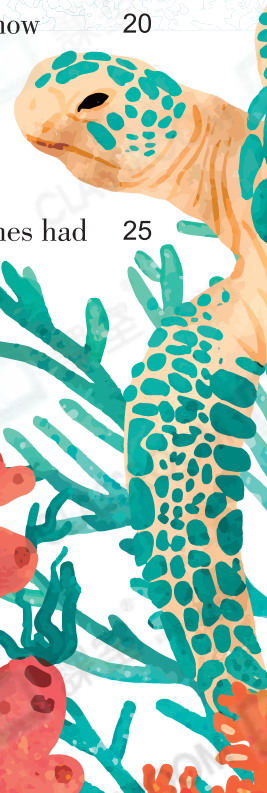
Yesterday at about seven o'clock in the morning, a green sea turtle was found dead on the sandy beach at Sham Wan. This unfortunate incident, determined afterwards to be related to the turtle's consumption of marine litter, reveals the fatal effects of plastic pollution on Hong Kong's marine life.

Known as 'turtle cove', Sham Wan, located in the south of Lamma Island, is famous for being the only remaining regular nesting site of green sea turtles in Hong Kong.

Unfortunately, none of them has been sighted nesting there since 2012. In fact, green sea turtles have become such a rare species that they have been classified as an endangered species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species and have retained this status since 1982.

As a means to promote the conservation of green sea turtles, Sham Wan beach and the adjoining shallow waters refuse entry between June and October every year so as to create a protected nesting area for them. However, many environmentalists have demanded the government to expand this restricted zone, now covering the sandy area only, to the entire bay.

On the day of the tragic incident, Mr Pang, a passerby, discovered the animal's carcass while strolling down the beach for a morning walk. Thinking that illegal animal killing might have been involved, he thereupon informed the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) of his discovery. Upon the AFCD officer's arrival, it was found that the turtle's stomach and intestines had been freshly rent open. Based on her observation and experience in similar cases, she asserted that hungry stray dogs might have been the cause of it.



Moral

People involved in **moral licensing** think they can act immorally just because of their having acted morally in the past:

'You have no right to tell me this is wrong. Don't you remember how I helped you last time when nobody else did?'

More to Take Away

The water in the oceans is enough to fill a cube (a 3D square) with side lengths of 1000 km!



What astonished her the most, however, was the tremendous amount of marine debris found inside the turtle's gut. It came in a great variety: nylon strings, plastic bags, straps, and packaging. All of them were synthetic products that can be found on popular beaches like the one where the body lay. 30

Dr Katerina Kwan, chief scientific officer of the Marine Society of Hong Kong, said that the discovery was decisive as a piece of substantial evidence that marine animals have been mistaking plastic waste for food for a while now. She explained how doing this may affect their digestive system 35

negatively: plastic cannot be digested once it has been ingested. It either stays in their body or goes out of it through excretion. If it stays, its sharp points may cut and damage the tissues of their digestive tracts. The result may be infection, inability to ingest normal food, and finally, starvation to death. With a shade of sadness on her face, Dr Kwan concluded that the turtle might have died as a result of the stated process. 40

To further support her view that plastic pollution is one of the major causes of the rapid decline in the amount of marine life in recent years, Dr Kwan cited UNESCO's statistics that more than 1.1 million marine animals die on account of ocean plastics every year. In a warning tone that seemed to be signalling a final call to action, she expressed her doubt over whether the ones that are still alive could remain so for a long time, given that every year 8 million tons of plastic waste goes into the oceans from coastal nations, according to National Geographic. When asked to give a piece of advice, she said, 'There are indeed many measures out there that can be taken to keep the problem from deteriorating. But I believe what goes around comes around. What will eventually put an end to the problem, I believe, is a sharp reduction in the use of plastics.' 45 50

~630 words

Looking into Grammar

In reported speech, the verb tenses are changed according to relative time. However, they remain unchanged if:

(i) the event is always true;

✓ Bill told his sister that two plus two **equals** (~~equaled~~) four.

(ii) the event happened at a fixed point of time in the past;

✓ Kenneth said his grandfather **passed** (~~had passed~~) away in 1984.

(iii) the reporting verb is in the simple present tense;

✓ My cousin always says Vanuatu **is** (~~was~~) the best place to go to.


? Underline a sentence in reported speech where the verb tense in the subordinate clause is unchanged in paragraph 6.

Part A Multiple Choice Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the newspaper article. Choose the best answer by blackening the appropriate circle.

1. In line 8, the word 'consumption' means _____.

- A. the amount used
- B. the amount eaten
- C. the act of using
- D. the act of eating

 2. Which of the following is NOT true about the place where the turtle was found?

- A. It is never open to the public.
- B. It is on Lamma Island.
- C. It is also called 'turtle cove'.
- D. It has a unique quality.

2 Look for words in the newspaper article to match the keywords in each option.

3. Green sea turtles are given special attention because they _____.

- A. nest regularly in Hong Kong
- B. are attacked by stray dogs
- C. are only found in Hong Kong
- D. are decreasing in number

4. Read line 27. The word 'it' refers to _____.

- A. Mr Pang strolling down the beach
- B. the turtle's organs being rent open
- C. Sham Wan being a nesting site
- D. the turtle found lying on the beach

5. The marine debris found in the turtle's stomach _____.


- I. ripped the dead body open
- II. is made from artificial materials
- III. comes in many forms
- IV. is substances found in nature

- A. I only
- B. I and IV
- C. II and III
- D. II, III and IV

5 What does the word 'synthetic' mean?

6. What is the main idea of paragraph 6?

- A. Excretion does not help sea turtles remove plastics from their bodies.
- B. This case is important as scientific evidence.
- C. Sea turtles do not have a strong digestive system.
- D. What happened to the sea turtle saddened Dr Kwan.

 7. Dr Kwan thinks that _____.

- A. plastic producers are unethical
- B. coastal nations are solely responsible for plastic pollution
- C. most marine species will soon be extinct
- D. sea animals are dying more quickly because of plastic pollution

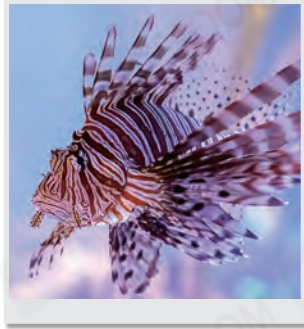
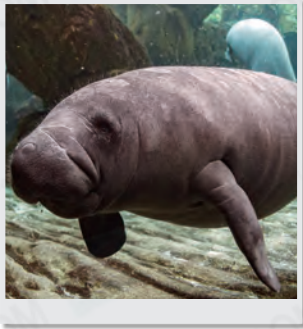


Please scan the QR code on P.6 to access the checklist for evaluating your own reading progress.

Part C Vocabulary Bank

Label the photos below with the names of marine animals from the word box.

orca stingray pufferfish great white shark
 hammerhead shark manatee lionfish bottlenose dolphin

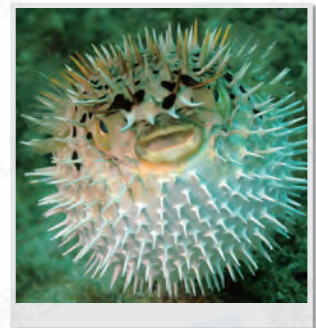
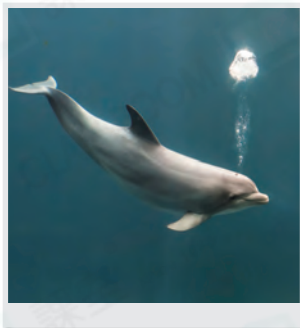


1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Word Craft

Some idioms include the word 'fish'. Can you guess what the following mean?

- e.g. fish in troubled waters
 fish or cut bait
 be neither fish nor fowl
 be a different kettle of fish

Let's Discuss!

- Other than reducing plastic waste, what else can we do to alleviate the dire situation?
- Do you think the government has provided the public with sufficient information regarding the problem of plastic waste in Hong Kong?

Part D Cloze Passage

Complete the aquarium signage below with the appropriate nouns introduced on the previous page.



Kaleidoscope of Ocean

(1) _____

Its body is what makes it 'invisible' to its predators: its flatness enables it to bury itself in the sand, while its colour provides camouflage because it resembles the seafloor's.

(2) _____

It is prominent for its large round inflatable body. It is venomous as its body parts contain toxins that are deadly poisonous.

(3) _____

At the top of the food chain, it preys on various kinds of sea animals. It is notorious for snatching seals right off the ice. It makes a wide range of sounds in order to locate other sea creatures.

(4) _____

Known as 'sea cow', it is usually seen alone or in small groups. Although it looks bulky, it can swim swiftly and gracefully.

(5) _____

The sensors on its distinctive head help it scan a vast area for food. It also uses its head to pin down its prey on the seafloor.

(6) _____

It has bright colours and long fins in peculiar shapes. Though small, this alien-looking creature is deadly and venomous. It simply preys on everything in its way.

(7) _____

With its curved mouth, it appears as if it is constantly smiling. This might be one of the reasons why it looks so adorable and friendly. It is often seen flipping out and crashing into the water.

(8) _____

It is one of the top predators on Earth. Its sharp sense of smell enables it to hunt effortlessly.