



The ABC clean-up crew (by Wayne Robinson)



Maggie Kwok briefs Club volunteers (by Wayne Robinson)



The dinghy cavalry (by Kevin Lewis)

Coastal Watch Project: ABC Volunteers Turn Out to Clean Up Beaufort Island

By Wayne Robinson, ABC Team Leader, Hong Kong Coastal Watch

I am very pleased to report that the ABC had a tremendous turnout on 28 September, the appointed day for our team of volunteers to clean up our assigned beach, Beaufort Island. The ABC junk quickly filled up – I am really sorry we had to turn away volunteers. I was overwhelmed with volunteers' enthusiasm and camaraderie. I hope those who missed out this time can make the next outing in the New Year – this campaign has plenty more for us to do.

Team ABC, Operation Coastal Watch

As discussed in the September 2014 issue of *Horizons*, the beach clean-up is part of a territory-wide two-year WWF programme that aims to survey Hong Kong's marine litter and collate ecological marine data. This effort of course is combined with a general coastal clean-up. The purposes of this huge data collection exercise is to try to establish the sources of all our marine litter and the impact it has on our marine life, and to help the Government set strategies for a cleaner Hong Kong.

The ABC team is just one of 27 working on a particular beach or coastline site identified throughout Hong Kong. A team scientist leads each team, which

all follow the same survey protocols and information-collection methods.

Our clean-up day began with a briefing on the junk from our team scientist, Maggie Kwok from the WWF, ably assisted by WWF's Patrick Yeung and also two other helpers.

Practice, practice, practice

As planned, the junk departed the main Clubhouse at 10 am, proceeding to Middle Island where we all alighted for a quick and effective briefing from Maggie. She and the WWF team would go ashore first and lay a 100-metre line at the upper tide line, parallel with the shore. From that line they would lay, down to the water's edge, a number of random transects – the team was to study only a number of these areas. Then Maggie had the 30-plus ABC volunteers split into smaller groups of five or six. Each small group was given a specific task ranging from ecological survey to macro debris and macro debris collection and recording. This part of the operation was to last around an hour before the *big* clean up.

Soon we were back on our way to Beaufort, enjoying croissants, coffee and tea supplied by Philippe. After about an hour's pleasant motoring under blue skies

across a flat sea we arrived in the beautiful bay on Beaufort Island's southwestern shore. A common initial thought shared as we ate lunch onboard before setting off was "That's not a very big beach, is it?" However, views can be deceptive from a boat as once we'd landed we found it was quite large with much rubbish to clear.

Maggie marshalled her troops well and all got on with their allotted task. The beach began to look like a cross between a recycling plant and a bric-a-brac stall! Soon it was lined with rows of plastic bottles, bundles of ropes and fishing nets, piles and piles of polystyrene and all manner of miscellaneous "stuff" that included a five-foot long plastic fender, a toilet seat complete with lid, a whale's vertebrae and empty propane gas canisters. All of it had to be sorted, counted, photographed and weighed.


Fresh troops

By 2:30 pm the ABC team had nearly completed collection of the scientific and ecological data, and we all began the clean-up proper. Just as we were beginning to feel a bit weary and tired under the hot sun, the cavalry arrived in the form of our dinghy sailing instructor, Kevin Lewis, with a team of fresh troops.

These much younger volunteers had sailed in the club's dinghies from MI and were now ashore helping out with the rubbish collection. Their presence and contributions were very well-received.

The journey home

In spite of all the rubbish bags supplied by WWF plus about the same number of extras supplied by the ABC's Stephen Ng, we ran out!!! The beach looked much cleaner for our efforts and so we piled all our booty up on one side of the beach high above the high-tide line to await collection the next day by Government services. Then we all returned to the junk for a restful return trip to ABC with a few iced green teas courtesy of Philippe and the Club.

I would like to thank all those who turned out on the day. Many expressed appreciation and gratitude for the chance to become involved in such a worthwhile cause. I believe it was a great core activity for our Club and that we could do more. Major thanks go to Maggie and Patrick and their WWF assistants whose professional organisation of us certainly eased my burden as team leader. I hope we repeat this success in our follow-up clean-up of Beaufort in some six months. To see more photos of the effort, please check out the ABC website's Gallery page. 



Dinghy Sailors Pitch In

By Kevin Lewis

Dinghy sailors were keen to support the beach clean-up, so 12 members met at the ABC at 8 am to rig their boats and sail upwind to Beaufort Island in the expected light airs.

It took the five Laser 2000s and one RS500 around four hours to arrive at the beach, time that included a little towing off Stanley as the breeze faded. We arrived shortly before our target time of 2 pm, to be greeted with good news: a whole lot of food was left over on the club junk for us to eat before the clean-up!

As we did not have the luxury of engines to get home, and I insisted we sail the *whole way* back, time on the beach was limited. After a briefing from Coastal Watch's Maggie Kwok, everyone got to work. Even after the earlier volunteer's efforts, it was amazing how much flotsam and jetsam were still on the beach to be collected. Separate teams collected various categories of rubbish, noting assessments and analyses.

The two-hour sail home was downwind all the way, allowing all to hoist their gennakers, including two new sponsored "FH" Fragrant Harbour sails. We arrived back at Middle Island at 6 pm. It was a long day, but a great sail and a worthwhile trip.

Thanks to Wayne Robinson for getting ABC involved in the Coastal Watch project, thanks to Maggie Kwok at the World Wild Fund's Coastal Watch for organising the day, and thanks to the other members who kindly left us some lunch! And a special thank you to David at Fragrant Harbour for the sponsored sails – I am sure you will be seeing more of them in future.

The Coastal Watch Project

By Maggie Kwok, World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong

Two years have passed since the 2012 plastic pellet spill disaster, yet marine litter remains an ongoing problem for Hong Kong.

While the plastic pellet disaster led thousands of volunteers to take large-scale collaborative action, marine debris of all shapes and sizes continues to cover our shorelines, and the pellets are still easily found on beaches across Hong Kong.

To address the problem, in June WWF-Hong Kong launched a large-scale ecological/marine litter survey and coastal clean-up programme called Coastal Watch. This programme aims to educate, conserve and raise awareness within the general public to cherish our marine ecology and actively keep it clean.

Over 800 volunteers have already taken action at Coastal Watch's sites "adopted" across Hong Kong.

Through ecological and marine litter surveys, the Coastal Watch team hopes to trace back marine litter to its source, in order to assess its true impact on Hong Kong's coastal environment. After the completion of site work, we will then analyse our data and pass the results to the appropriate government sectors, with the aim of establishing long-term marine-conservation strategies.

Ms. Wing Ng, a volunteer for the Coastal Watch project, said, "I never thought that materials as tiny as plastic pellets and metal wires could have such dramatic impacts on our marine ecology. This project made me realise that we only need to think a little more and do a little more to ease the marine pollution problem."

In addition to volunteering for the ABC's clean-up project on Beaufort Island, if you find any coastal areas affected by marine



Cleaning up the 2012 plastic pellet disaster

litter, you can also make photo records and send them to coastalwatch@wwf.org.hk. Make sure to tell us when and where you took the photo, and what you found there. Coastal Watch will use your information to create an online coastal map pinpointing the marine litter black spots in Hong Kong for further actions.