

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**CSTB197**

**(Question Serial No. 3008)**

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Recreation and Sports

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism

Question:

As far the current state and latest developments of Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens (HKZBG) is concerned, would the Government advise this Committee of:

1. the annual attendance figures of the HKZBG and the respective proportions of local, mainland and overseas visitors, in tabulated form, for each of the past 5 years;
2. the total number of species of animals and plants kept by the HKZBG, as well as their respective numbers in tabulated form for each of the past 5 years;
3. whether the Government has drawn up an event plan and a long-term schedule to attract more local visitors and tourists to the HKZBG, which can be rebranded as a tourist attraction, given the orderly relaxation of social distancing measures as part of risk mitigation alongside the receding epidemic in recent months; the details and estimated expenditures if so; and
4. whether there is collaboration in the pipeline between the HKZBG and overseas zoos such as exchanging animals of varying species for time limited exhibitions; the details if so, and if not, the reasons behind this?

Asked by: Hon HO King-hong, Adrian Pedro (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

1. Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens (HKZBG), the most historical park in Hong Kong, is lavishly planted with distinctive trees and flowering plants and is home to an array of animals, thereby gaining huge popularity among local and overseas visitors alike. Before the epidemic in 2020, the annual attendance figure of the HKZBG had remained steady at around 1.2 million, with about 80% of visitors being locals and the rest coming from overseas (approximately 240 000). During the epidemic over the past 3 years, such an attendance figure had slightly dropped to around 1 million per year.

2. Currently, there are a total of 297 animals, including mammals, birds and reptiles, housed in the HKZBG, with details set out at **Annex**. The HKZBG grows plants of over 1 000 species, including trees, shrubs and herbs. Both the species and numbers of shrubs and herbs to be grown will adjust in a timely manner based on the season of the year and the maintenance work. Such being the case, the HKZBG does not keep the breakdown for such plant species and numbers. As regards tree management, in addition to planting more flowering trees for environment enhancement, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will also introduce native tree species for conservation and educational purposes. The numbers of trees planted over each of the past 5 years are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Tree</b>
2018	370
2019	371
2020	451
2021	445
2022	452

3. To attract more members of the public and tourists, the LCSD plans to organise over 300 zoological and botanical activities such as guided visits, “Meet-the-Zookeepers” activities, themed exhibitions, educational talks and fun days at the HKZBG in 2023-24 for the participants to learn more about animals and plants. The estimated expenditure involved in such activities is around \$400,000.
4. The LCSD has participated in international endangered animal species conservation breeding programmes. From time to time, the HKZBG exchanges surplus endangered animals with overseas zoos to establish suitable breeding pairs of endangered animals for conservation breeding work. For examples, the HKZBG introduced an endangered Golden Lion Tamarin, White-faced Saki and Cotton-top Tamarin in 2018 from overseas zoos through the arrangement of a studbook keeper. The HKZBG also introduced an Asian Small-clawed Otter, Red-necked Wallabies and Great Curassow in 2021 and 2022.

**Species and number of animals housed in Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens between 2019 to 2023**

	<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>		<b>2021</b>		<b>2022</b>		<b>2023</b>	
<b>Type of Animal</b>	<b>Number of Species</b>	<b>Number of Animal</b>	<b>Number of Species</b>	<b>Number of Animal</b>	<b>Number of Species</b>	<b>Number of Animal</b>	<b>Number of Species</b>	<b>Number of Animal</b>	<b>Number of Species</b>	<b>Number of Animal</b>
Mammals	14	67	14	70	14	75	15	78	16	89
Birds	40	157	32	156	35	157	37	179	39	187
Reptiles	5	23	5	23	5	23	5	23	5	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>297</b>

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