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**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release**

## **HKU Professor Kenneth Leung awarded the prestigious Biwako Prize for Ecology by the Ecological Society of Japan**

September 3, 2017

Professor Kenneth Mei Yee LEUNG of the Swire Institute of Marine Science and School of Biological Sciences of The University of Hong Kong (HKU) was just awarded the 19<sup>th</sup> Biwako Prize for Ecology jointly by the Government of Shiga Prefecture and the Ecological Society of Japan. The award presentation was held at the Lake Biwa Museum in Japan. This award aims to recognize outstanding ecologists, who are under an age of 50, have made academically and socially significant achievements in the field of aquatic ecology in Asia, and demonstrated great potential to become a central figure in ecology.

The Biwako Prize for Ecology has been established since 1991, with a total of 36 awardees up to now. Born and raised in Hong Kong, Professor Leung is the third ecologist in Hong Kong to receive this award. Professor David Dudgeon, Director of School of Biological Sciences, HKU and Professor Wen-xiong Wang, Division of Life Science, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology are former recipients of this award in 2000 and 2003, respectively.

Research interests of Professor Leung include marine ecology, ecotoxicology, eco-shoreline engineering, marine biodiversity and conservation. Up to now, he has published more than 170 peer-reviewed articles on these subjects. One of his main research focuses aims to understand how marine organisms respond to chemical pollution with consideration of natural variations in temperature, salinity and pH. Based on the research findings of his research team, they developed novel scientific methods to derive site-specific water and sediment quality criteria of chemical contaminants for protecting marine ecosystems in different parts of the world. For example, he developed a novel approach called the field-based species sensitivity distribution (f-SSD) to derive ecologically relevant and site-specific sediment quality guidelines of chemical contaminants that can provide better protection to marine benthic ecosystems. This f-SSD method has been adopted as a means for deriving supplementary sediment quality guidelines in New Zealand, supporting the European Water Framework Directive Quality Standards for metals, and also being employed by the US Environmental Protection Agency to develop freshwater quality criteria for nutrients and conductivity. Professor Leung has also made contributions to the development of marine water quality objectives in Hong Kong, and is currently collaborating with the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences to refine the water quality criteria system in China.

Professor Leung also devotes his time and effort to various community services, especially in environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Marine Parks Committee, the Fisheries Enhancement Fund Management Committee and the Marine Mammal Conservation Working Group, while he is a member of the Advisory Council on the Environment, the Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene, and the Red Tide/ Harmful Algal Bloom Expert Advisory Group. He also serves as a member of the Appeal Board Panel (Town Planning) and the Board of the Ocean Park

Corporation. Owing to his professional achievements and community services, he was selected as one of the "Ten Outstanding Young Persons" in 2010 by Junior Chamber International Hong Kong.

The Chairman of the Selection Committee of the 19<sup>th</sup> Biwako Prize for Ecology, Professor Shin-ichi Nakano gladly expressed "Professor Leung's works have made great contribution to both science and society, and he is very well deserved for winning the Biwako Prize for Ecology".

Professor Leung was very ecstatic to receive this prestigious award, and said: "I am immensely gratifying and honoured to be selected for this award, and being recognised as one of the outstanding aquatic ecologists in Asia. This award is a brilliant recognition of my research team for our great research achievements over the past. It also encourages me to keep on achieving a new high in research excellence."

The Ecological Society of Japan currently has over 3900 members, and is one of the largest professional societies in Japan. For more details about the Biwako Prize for Ecology, please visit [https://www.esj.ne.jp/esj/award/biwako/e\\_info.html](https://www.esj.ne.jp/esj/award/biwako/e_info.html)



Image 1: Professor Kenneth Leung (left) receiving a certificate of the Biwako Prize for Ecology from Mr. Eiji Nishijima (right), the Vice Governor of the Government of Shiga Prefecture of Japan.



Image 2: A group photo after the award presentation of the Biwako Prize for Ecology. Professor Kenneth Leung (awardee) in the first row, third from the left.

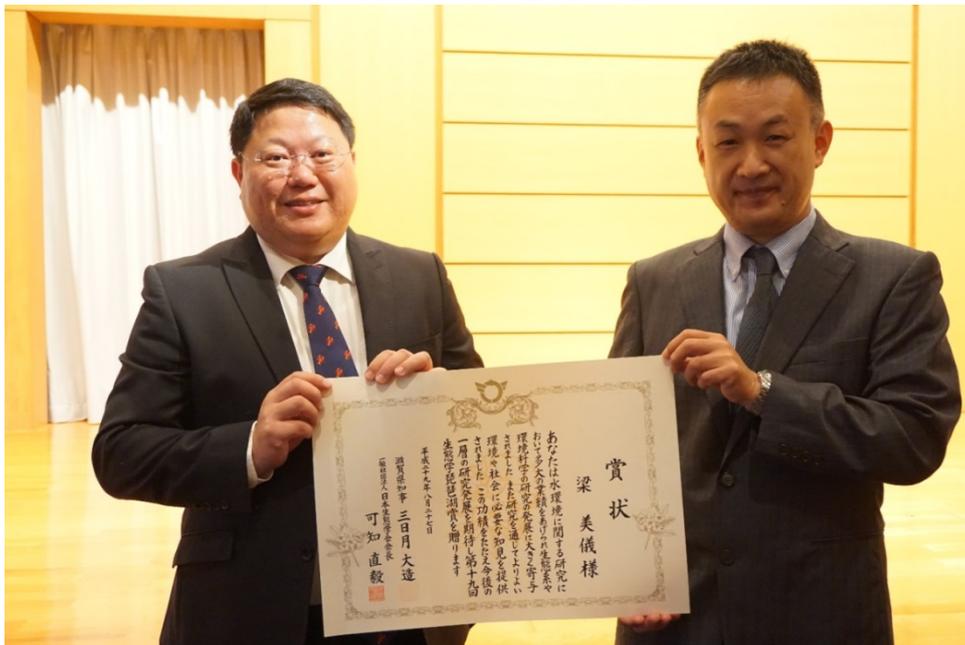


Image 3: Professor Kenneth Leung (left) holding the certificate of merit of the Biowako Prize for Ecology with one of his nominators, Professor Ichiro Takeuchi of Ehime University, Japan. The other nominator is Dr. Moriaki Yasuhara from School of Biological Sciences of The University of Hong Kong.

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