

Press release

For immediate release

## Swire Coastal Outreach Hub Opens to Promote Marine Conservation and Research

31 October, 2024



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The Swire Coastal Outreach Hub (SCOH), developed by the Swire Institute of Marine Science (SWIMS) the University of Hong Kong (HKU), and funded by The Swire Group Charitable Trust (Swire Trust), officially opens its doors to the public who visit the Cape d'Aguilar Marine Reserve (Hok Tsui). The grand unveiling of the SCOH was celebrated with an opening ceremony on 31 October.

Nestled within the Cape d'Aguilar Marine Reserve, Hong Kong's only marine protected area with significant importance for the protection and conservation of marine species, the SCOH will start accepting on-site tour bookings in early November. Under the banner of "Sharing Science to Save our Seas", the tour highlights the importance of conserving biodiversity and provides a unique insight into the cutting-edge coastal research conducted at SWIMS.

David Baker, Associate Professor and Interim Director of SWIMS, welcomed esteemed members of the Swire Group Philanthropy Council and stated, "Cape D'Aguilar Marine Reserve may only be 20 hectares, or about 0.01% of Hong Kong's sea area, but has an impact that belies its size. It is a vital laboratory where we can test the effects of no-take marine reserves on protecting our biodiversity. Similarly, the SCOH may be small in size, but it aspires to achieve a major impact in elevating the ocean literacy amongst our populace."

The grand opening ceremony featured a traditional ribbon-cutting led by Professor David Baker, Mr Richard Sell, Chair of the Swire Group Philanthropy Council, and Professor Ian Holliday, Vice-President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) of HKU. The ceremony not only marked the launch of the SCOH but also commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of the inauguration of the Swire Institute of Marine Science, which took

place on 10 November 1994, officiated by Sir John Swire, Professor Qu Geping and Professor Wang Gungwu, former Vice Chancellor of HKU.

Richard Sell, Chair of the Swire Group Philanthropy Council, remarked, “Marine conservation is at the heart of Swire Trust’s community work. Since the 1990s, we have supported HKU in promoting marine science through the establishment of the Swire Marine Laboratory, now known as SWIMS. We are delighted to witness the opening of SCOH, which will further enhance SWIMS’ community outreach capabilities, and enable the Hong Kong community to gain a deeper appreciation of the city’s rich marine biodiversity and take further steps to protect the ocean.” Swire Trust provided funding for the establishment of SCOH and its daily operations, as well as the launch of a school programme which cultivates youngsters’ interest in marine science.

In a farewell toast, Professor Gray A Williams, who has been studying Hong Kong’s marine biodiversity since the inception of SWIMS in 1989, stated, “given the pressures imposed on our rich marine biodiversity, the only way we can hope to save it is to help people care about it; this visitor area will do that by sharing the wonders of Hong Kong’s marine life with the general public”.

### **About the Swire Institute of Marine Science (SWIMS)**

Since the completion of SWIMS’ 2021 expansion, which was also funded by Swire Trust, outreach staff have been active in marine science education, hosting more than two thousand local and international secondary school students to participate in science workshops about marine biodiversity, microplastic pollution, and coastal ecology. SWIMS has also led and continues to co-host collaborative outreach events with organizations such as the Hong Kong Maritime Museum and Victoria Recreation Club’s Beach Bay Ocean Foundation. SCOH is SWIMS’ next step towards reaching an even broader public base about the importance of climate change and marine biodiversity research.

For details on how to arrange a visit, please click [here](#).

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