

Hong Kong Offshore LNG Terminal Project Marine Conservation Enhancement Fund (MCEF)

**“Managing Pak Nai's ecologically important habitats to preserve its natural beauty and sensitive biodiversity (Phase 2)”**

(1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024)

**Completion Report**



*(Cover photo: An endangered Chinese Horseshoe crab and its foraging route on the restored mudflats at Pak Nai. In the background, a rehabilitated oyster reef, constructed by the project team and TNC volunteers, is visible.)*

The Nature  
Conservancy



大 自 然 保 護 協 會

Prepared by:  
Tom Chan, Community Conservation Manager  
The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hong Kong

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> February 2025

**Project Name**

Managing Pak Nai's ecologically important habitats to preserve its natural beauty and sensitive biodiversity (Phase 2)

**Application Number**

MCEF22105

**Duration of Funded Project**

1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

**Organization**

The Nature Conservancy Hong Kong Foundation limited (TNC)

**Brief Description of the Funded Project**

To build on the success and lessons learned from the “Managing Pak Nai’s ecologically important habitats to preserve its natural beauty and sensitive biodiversity” (MCEF20009) project supported by MCEF, TNC proposes this Phase 2 extension (13 months) to continue improving the management of Pak Nai’s mudflats for endangered and threatened species and address growing threats from unregulated tourism, unsustainable fishing practices and invasive species. Examples of these threats include trampling of seagrass and horseshoe crab habitat, unmanaged recreational harvesting, rapid growth of invasive cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) and discarded ghost nets and illegal snake cages.

The four key objectives for Phase 2 are scientific research, habitat management, public engagement and regional collaboration. These aspects are crucial for formulating a longer-term management plan for Pak Nai and providing science-based justifications to encourage the Hong Kong government to include the Pak Nai mudflats in the future Coastal Protection Park (CCP) under the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy.

**Reporting Period**

1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

**Executive Summary and Way Forward**

Pak Nai is one of Hong Kong’s important ecological hotspots. It is a critical nursing ground for endangered Chinese Horseshoe Crabs (*Tachypleus tridentatus*), threatened Mangrove Horseshoe Crab (*Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda*), threatened Beccari’s seagrass (*Halophila beccarii*) and multiple Hong Kong oyster species. Despite its ecological importance, Pak Nai suffers from inadequate management and is threatened by unregulated tourism, unsustainable fishing practices, marine debris and invasive species.

Recognizing the importance of Pak Nai’s mudflats in 2021, and with generous funding support from MCEF and other supporters, TNC was able to adopt a community-based and ecosystem focused conservation approach and carry out the “Managing Pak Nai’s ecologically important habitats to preserve its natural beauty and sensitive biodiversity”. The project phase 1 (MCEF20009) and phase 2 (MCEF22105) ran from May 2021 to April 2023 and December 2023 to December 2024 respectively.

In phase 2, TNC focused on scientific research, habitat management, public engagement, and collaboration. Apart from delivering direct conservation impacts, these efforts also contributed to the formulation of long-term management recommendations for Pak Nai within the context of the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy.