

20 January 1987

His Excellency Sir David Akers-Jones, K.B.E., C.M.G., J.P.,
Acting Governor of Hong Kong.

Your Excellency,

Amalgamation of the Grades of Fisheries Officer
and Research Officer

We received a letter from the Administration dated 7 August 1986, seeking our advice on a proposal to amalgamate the grades of Fisheries Officer and Research Officer, into one grade of Fisheries Officer. This letter sets out our recommendations concerning the proposal and the reasoning behind them.

2. The Fisheries Officer and Research Officer grades are classified under Group II of the Professional, Degree and Related Grades. The existing structure and establishment of the two grades are as follows :

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Pay Scale</u>	<u>Establishment</u>	<u>Strength</u>
	(MPS)	(as at 22.7.86)	
Senior Fisheries Officer	48 - 51	2	1
Senior Research Officer	48 - 51	1	1
Fisheries Officer	31 - 47)	8	7
Assistant Fisheries Officer	20 - 25)		0
Research Officer	31 - 47)	9	8
Assistant Research Officer	20 - 25)		0

The Assistant rank in each grade forms a combined establishment with the first functional rank in that grade.

3. The qualification for entry into the Assistant rank of either grade is identical : a degree in an appropriate subject in Applied or Natural Science or Economics from a university in Hong Kong or Britain, or the equivalent.

4. Fisheries Officers were first appointed in 1950 and their duties were to take charge of the Fisheries Branch of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department and to undertake any duties connected with fisheries which fell within the scope of the department. On the other hand, the original duties of the Research Officer grade, which was first created in 1960, were to form part of a research team investigating South China Sea fisheries, to supervise the work of Assistant Research Officers and to accompany a fisheries research vessel on her scientific cruises from time to time.

5. Subsequent to a request made by the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries to amalgamate the two grades to allow greater flexibility in the deployment of staff within the Fisheries Branch, the Civil Service Branch has carried out a review of the grades. The findings indicate that the demarcation between the two grades has become less distinct over the years.

6. This convergence of the functions of the two grades has come about as the result of a gradual decline in importance of the research function within the Fisheries Branch, as evidenced by the decommissioning of its research vessel, the Tai Shun, at the end of 1984. Research Officers are now engaged mainly in the investigation of fisheries in the South China Sea, marine and freshwater fish culture and other fishery problems. The present multi-disciplinary approach to fishery research, requiring both specialised expertise and experience in management and development in the industry, contrasts with the exploratory, fact-finding approach taken in the 1960s. Current job descriptions of Senior Research Officers, Research Officers and Assistant Research Officers are attached at Annex I.

7. The main duties of Fisheries Officers now include the planning and supervision of supporting services to aid the development of the fishing industry, the provision of an advisory service to fishermen regarding fishery technology, the management of a credit service to fishermen and liaison with other Government departments, fishermen's organisations, trade associations and international fishery-related bodies. Current job descriptions of Senior Fisheries Officers, Fisheries Officers and Assistant Fisheries Officers are at Annex II.

8. These job descriptions demonstrate that the duties of Senior Research Officers and Senior Fisheries Officers are similar, as are those of Research Officers and Fisheries Officers. Until 1984, the Fisheries Branch had comprised a Fisheries Development Division, staffed by Fisheries Officers, and a Fisheries Research Division, staffed by Research Officers. In 1984 the Fisheries Branch was reorganised into three new divisions : the Offshore Fisheries Division and the Territorial Fisheries Division, each of which is staffed by both Fisheries Officers and Research Officers, and the Fisheries Services and Management Division, which is currently manned solely by Fisheries Officers, although Research Officers could also be deployed to staff this division. The pre-1984 and current organisation charts of the Fisheries Branch are shown at Annexures III and IV respectively.

9. Subsequent to a request made by the Secretary for Economic Services in November 1984, a "value for money" study was carried out as a separate exercise. Implementation of its recommendations has begun and is expected to take about two years to complete. This process will eventually lead to a total staff saving of 175 posts throughout the whole of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, and the Fisheries Branch itself will relinquish 26 posts, including five Research Officer posts. However the current existence of two separate grades has hampered reorganisation of the Branch by restricting staff redeployment, which in turn will prevent full implementation of the recommendations of the "value for money" study, unless the two grades are amalgamated as proposed.

10. In view of the considerations stated in the preceding paragraphs, it is our view that the Administration's proposal is justified. We recommend that the new Fisheries Officer grade should have the following pay and structure :

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Pay Scale</u>
	(MPS)
Senior Fisheries Officer	48 - 51
Fisheries Officer	31 - 47
Assistant Fisheries Officer	20 - 25

In line with present practice, the Assistant Fisheries Officer and Fisheries Officer ranks in the new grade should form a combined establishment. Proposed duty lists of the ranks are given at Annex V.

11. If our proposal is accepted, we recommend that it should be implemented from a current date. Speedy implementation may facilitate redeployment of the five displaced Research Officers, to whom we refer in paragraph 9.

We have the honour to be
Your Excellency's obedient servants,

(S.Y. Chung)
Chairman

Kim Y.S. Cham

Therese H.C. Chan

Sunny Choi Shun-shing

Stanley G. Elliott

Victor K.K. Fung

Vincent H.C. Ko

Alice Lam

Gordon M. Macwhinnie

Poon Chi-fai

Andrew K.W. So

Encls.

Existing Job Descriptions

1. Senior Research Officer

- (a) Management of a division in the Fisheries Branch;
- (b) Planning and management of multi-disciplinary research and development programmes;
- (c) Inter-divisional liaison;
- (d) Liaison with Government Secretariat, departments, the fishing industry, post-secondary institutes and international bodies; and
- (e) Control of expenditure of funds allocated to the division and preparation of divisional estimates.

2. Research Officer

- (a) Management of research sub-station(s);
- (b) Planning and conducting research in the fisheries of the South China Sea, marine and fresh water fish culture, and other fisheries problems;
- (c) Investigating and reporting problems and recommending remedial measures;
- (d) Supervising and training technical and minor staff; and
- (e) Preparation of estimates and control expenditure in respect of the sub-station(s) under his supervision.

3. Assistant Research Officer

Mainly deployed on assisting the Research Officers in a research team to investigate :

- (a) the fisheries of the South China Sea;
- (b) marine and fresh water fish culture; and
- (c) other fisheries problems.

Annex II

Existing Job Descriptions

1. Senior Fisheries Officer

- (a) Management of a division in the Fisheries Branch;
- (b) Planning and co-ordinating research and development programmes;
- (c) Liaison with other divisions;
- (d) Liaison with departments and international bodies; and
- (e) Control of expenditure of funds allocated to the division and preparation of divisional estimates.

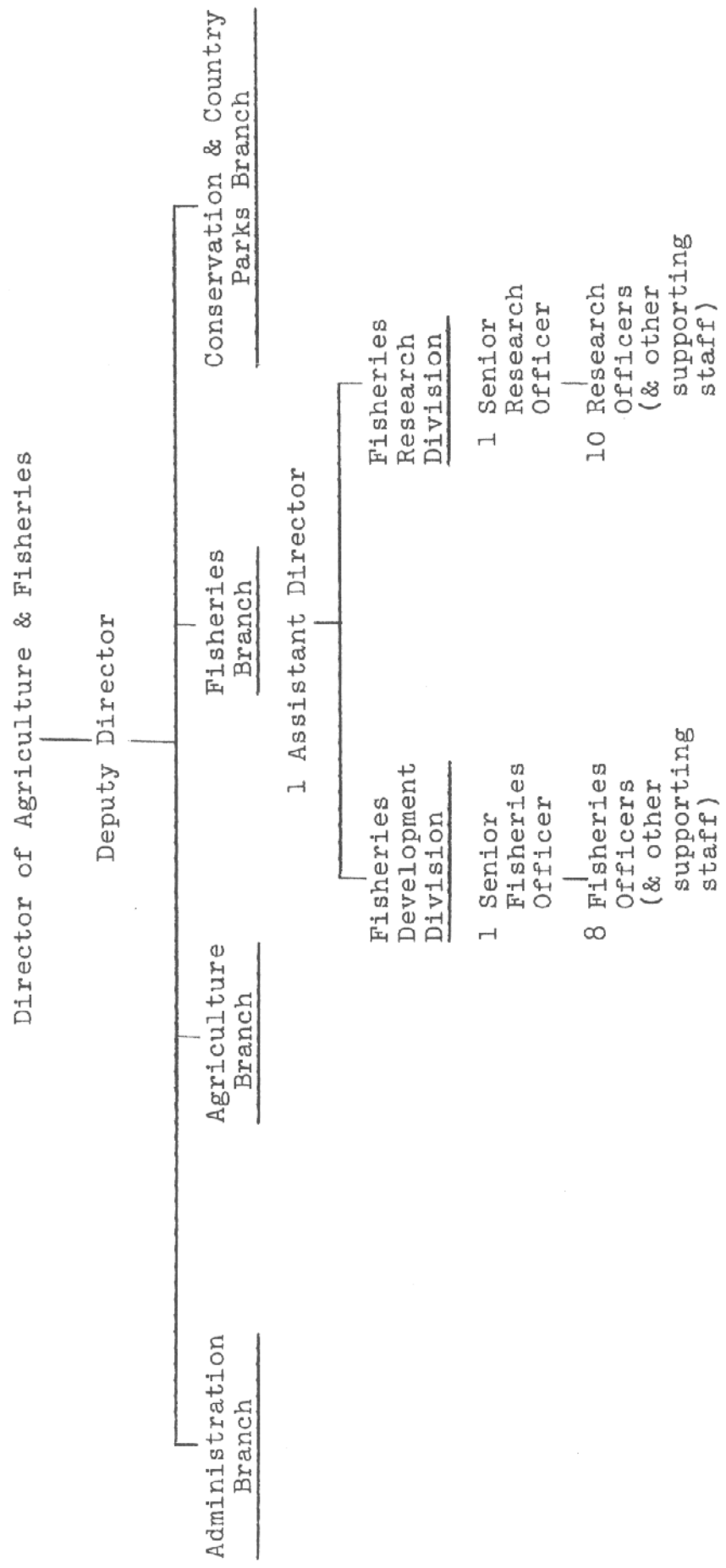
2. Fisheries Officer

- (a) Management of a section in the Fisheries Branch;
- (b) Provision and supervision of technical services;
- (c) Operating loans and grants to fishermen;
- (d) Compilation of statistics and planning of surveys;
- (e) Supervising and training technical staff;
- (f) Preparation of estimates and control of expenditure in respect of the section under his supervision;
- (g) Studying and dissemination of fisheries technology and training of fishermen; and
- (h) Studying problems for the purpose of formulating development projects and programmes.

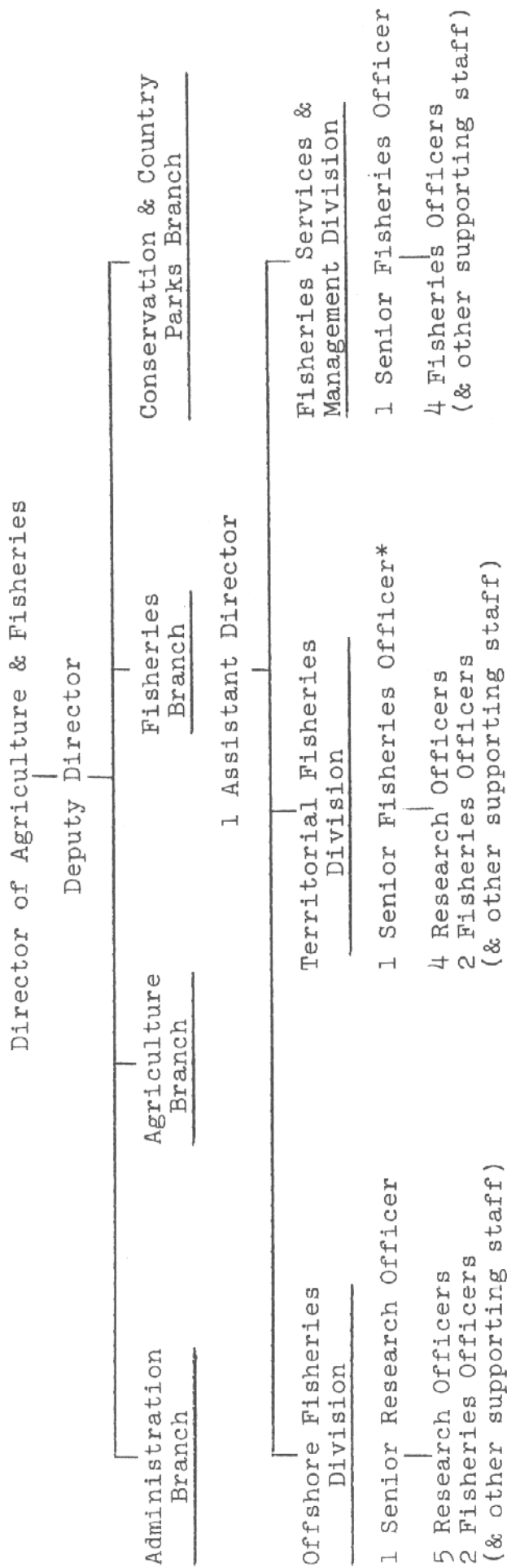
3. Assistant Fisheries Officer

Mainly deployed on assisting Fisheries Officers in extension, advisory, credit or development work in fisheries.

Pre-1984 Organisation Chart of the Fisheries Branch



Current Organisation Chart of the Fisheries Branch



*The post was created in December 1983 offset by the deletion of a Research Officer post in the former Fisheries Research Division.

Proposed Duty Lists

1. Senior Fisheries Officer

- (a) Management of a division in the Fisheries Branch;
- (b) Planning and management of multi-disciplinary research and development programmes;
- (c) Inter-divisional liaison;
- (d) Liaison with Government Secretariat, departments, the fishing industry, post-secondary institutes and international bodies; and
- (e) Control of expenditure of funds allocated to the division and preparation of divisional estimates.

2. Fisheries Officer

- (a) Management of a section in the Fisheries Branch;
- (b) Heading a research team to investigate the fisheries of the South China Sea, marine and fresh water fish culture, and other fisheries problems;
- (c) Supervising and training technical and minor staff;
- (d) Preparation of estimates and control expenditure in respect of his section;
- (e) Operating loans and grants to fishermen;
- (f) Studying and dissemination of fisheries technology and training of fishermen; and
- (g) Studying problems for the purpose of formulating development projects and programmes.

3. Assistant Fisheries Officer

- (a) Assisting Fisheries Officers to investigate the fisheries of the South China Sea, marine and fresh water fish culture, and other fisheries problems; and
- (b) Assisting Fisheries Officers in extension, advisory, credit and development work in fisheries.