

Hong Kong S. A. R.

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Location and area

Hong Kong S. A. R. is a Chinese Special Administrative Region and former British dependency in eastern Asia, on the South China Sea, bordered by China on the north. It is made up of many islands and a portion of the mainland, and has considerable territorial waters. It has a land area of 1,076 km².

Topography

Hong Kong is partly situated in the Zhu Jiang, or Pearl River, delta, and the Sham Chun River forms the border with China. Much of Hong Kong is hilly, the highest elevation being Tai Mo Shan at 957 m. Substantial areas of the low-lying terrain are made up of land reclaimed from the sea. Shortage of fresh water is a serious problem, with most of the supply being piped from mainland China.

Climate

Although within the Tropics, Hong Kong has a subtropical climate because of the southwestern monsoon, a moist, warm, equatorial wind that brings a rainy season between May and August. The mean annual temperature is 22° C, with a range from 15° C in February to 28° C in July. Average annual precipitation is about 2,225 mm.

Land use

Only about 12 % of Hong Kong is forested, mostly with conifers. Mangroves and swamp vegetation are also found. Only 7 % of Hong Kong is arable land. Farming is largely confined to the New Territories, the northern mainland part of Hong Kong (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Peatlands

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in Hong Kong and 585 km² of gley soils.