



18 May 2021

Dear students,

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The 22nd of May marks the International Day for Biological Diversity. On this day, we remind ourselves to do our part, big or small, to protect the plants and animals that live all around us.

2 Singapore is a small country, but did you know that we have more than 400 species of birds and almost 340 species of butterflies on our island? This is about two-thirds of the bird species and more than five times the butterfly species found in Great Britain, even though Great Britain is more than 300 times the size of Singapore! Isn't that amazing?

3 We owe much of this to the hard work of our National Parks Board (NParks) and our partners in the community. With their help, we have been actively protecting the living environments of our native animals in our nature reserves. We have also been creating new nature parks to provide these animals with more spaces to live in, where they can look for food and water and meet their other needs. In fact, many of our native animal species, such as the Raffles' Banded Langur, the Singapore Freshwater Crab, and the Green Tree Snail, can be found only in Singapore and nowhere else in the world! So, we must do our best to take care of them, by continuing to improve and restore the natural areas where they live. Like us, they too call Singapore home.

4 Our plants and trees are important too! They provide us with clean air, help to cool our environment, and make our green areas enjoyable for exercise and leisure. Through our OneMillionTrees movement, we will work with Singaporeans young and old, to plant a million more trees across Singapore between 2020 and 2030. This will bring the total number of trees in Singapore to more than 8 million! It will also help our natural spaces to recover from the impact of climate change and urbanisation.

5 All of us, including students like you, can play our part in protecting our wildlife and plants. It is never too early to start! For instance, you can take part in the upcoming virtual activities organised by NParks and our partners to celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity. These include webinars, storytelling sessions and an arts and crafts activity, which are taking place online from the 15th to the 29th of May. You can find out more about these activities at go.gov.sg/nparks-idb. When the situation permits, NParks will invite schools to carry out tree-planting sessions within their school compound, contributing to the OneMillionTrees movement.

6 Let us all work together to make our Singapore a City in Nature, so that we will enjoy living alongside our greenery and native wildlife for many years to come.

Yours sincerely,

DESMOND LEE