

wetlands

Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve • Wetlands is sponsored by IANIGLA • Issue 1/2005



"Come forth
into the light of things

Let Nature
be your teacher".

William Wordsworth



Naturally close to our hearts

Wetlands Vol 10:4

EDITORIAL

Many of us, many a time, would have marveled at the natural wonders of the world which we might have seen in books and pictures. Some of us would have had the privilege of seeing them in person. As you ponder over this thought now, let me invite you to think and reflect on something close to our hearts — natural heritage. We too, in this little island we call home, have a natural wonder — a lavish array of mudflats, secondary forests, associate mangrove and mangroves. The mangroves are the hallmark of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. An intricately linked web of life goes on to make this wetland reserve the unique and special place we have endearingly come to know as our natural heritage. My colleagues and I have often reveled in the richness and diversity found in the wetlands. Every community of living things, habitat and ecosystem offers something that enriches us. Let us get to know our land and our natural heritage for what it is, to find its heartbeat, and with joy and pride, let us perpetuate the importance of this natural heritage to the next few generations to come.

— Jeanne Tan

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The sponsorship of 'Wetlands' is one such effort to help promote a better understanding and appreciation of wetland ecology such as Sungei Buloh and its importance to our natural landscape.

Please call 6530 1845 if you wish to know more about HSBC's Care-for-Nature Programme. Or write to us at:

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Striped Keelback by Tay Soon Lian



EDITOR: Jeanne Tan CONTRIBUTORS: Ng Sock Ling, Linda Goh, James Gan, Jeanne Tan, Mok Wei Chi, Andrew Tan
DESIGN: Amphibios Creative PHOTOS CREDITS: Linda Goh, Tay Soon Lian, Mok Wei Chi, Andrew Tan, Jeremy Ang, James Gan, Ramakrishnan, Wong Tuan Wah

Did you know?

The Nature Cove

Ng Sock Ling,
Assistant Director



Have you ever been captivated by the sight of shorebirds in flight while at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, and wished that you knew more about these fascinating creatures? Or wondered how man and the wetland ecosystem are interlinked?

If you visit Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve today, you will find a cosy 'Nature Cove' welcoming you to learn more about the wetlands. Situated next to the Information Counter at the Visitor Centre, this little reading corner aims to complement the visitor's outdoor exploration with a little more in-depth knowledge of the wetlands.

At Nature Cove, you can learn about the wetlands, its inhabitants, and the issues threatening the ecosystem's survival. Find out what you can do to safeguard the wetlands near you. Or find out what the wetlands can do for you if you'd like to pick up a new hobby like landscape painting or nature photography.

Nature Cove is open to visitors from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm daily.



Nature Cove is proudly sponsored by the Press Foundation of Singapore and was officially opened by Professor Leo Tan, NParks Board Chairman, on 4 Dec 2004.



"For in the true nature of things, if we rightly consider, every green tree is far more glorious than if it were made of gold or silver."

(Martin Luther, 1483-1546)



Introduction

"Reforestation and Reachout"

Jeanne Tan, Senior Outreach Officer



Students hard at work by the freshwater pond habitat

Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve's "Reforestation and Reachout" started in August 2004, with the generous sponsorship of Toyota Motor Corporation and the participation of five schools. The programme aimed to involve students in reforesting the area around the outdoor classroom and to create educational materials based on their experience. It was hard work in the beginning sourcing committed and willing activists. However, we did still manage to secure five schools willing to participate and commit at least six to eight months of their time for this project.

We had a good range of participating schools, both local and international, with an age range of 10 to 18 year olds. The student activists were made up of Singaporeans and a diverse group of other nationalities, which include UK, Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The role of the activists was to learn first hand about reforestation and rally their friends to join them in planting a new generation of trees and shrubs at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. Each school had eight activists to represent their school in this project

The area around the Outdoor Classroom at SBWR showcased the diverse habitats of the Wetland Reserve, namely the mangrove, back mangrove, secondary forest and freshwater pond. Each of these habitats had its own uniqueness, which supported diversities of flora and fauna. A small spice garden was also planted to help the visitor link his new experiences of the Reserve's plants to something he is likely to be familiar with.

From August 2004 to November 2004, the activists underwent a series of workshops conducted by SBWR staff and volunteers. These workshops included an orientation programme to familiarize them with their respective sites and to explain the need for reforestation. Through sessions on plant drawing, public speaking and presentations,

Their Say....

"My favourite moment...my group members together with 25 others from different levels went to Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve to do reforestation".

Doan Hoang Anh, 16,
Hillgrove Secondary School



Groundwork!

"To be able to be part of this team of young nature ambassadors may bear much responsibility but it also enriches my quest for knowledge and perseverance to continue this long and winding road of nature conservation in Singapore"

Ada Yen, 16,
Naval Base Secondary School

"It was the first time any of us had ever planted a tree. I will never forget the experience!"

Dominick Choo Wan Sheng, 15,
Naval Base Secondary School



Mud pies, anyone?

"I want to spread the message of reforestation even further than it has ever gone. There is a real threat to wetlands and we have to help restore them. This program has definitely been memorable and I encourage more schools and children to join in the wonderful learning experience!"

Dara Jeyasundaram, 13,
Canadian International School



Secondary Forest planting

resource searching and creating educational materials, they broadened their "outreach" scope. Given a list of plants to start with, the activists were encouraged to go a step further to find out more about the ecology of the area, and the benefits of reforestation.

The session on public speaking enabled and equipped the activists with necessary speaking and presentation skills. They embraced the message of nature conservation - what this wetland reserve has, the importance of trees - and brought forth a call to their peers to join them for a day of reforestation, at the Outdoor Classroom.

Apart from an ecological need to increase the diversity of flora and fauna near and around the Outdoor Classroom site, our other intention was to encourage more users, especially school groups, to use this area as an accompaniment to their academic school work or research.

The activists successfully rallied their peers to come back to SBWR over three days in December to assist in the reforestation of their respective habitats. For many of these students, reforestation was something only read about and known to them through their textbooks, so you could see and sense their excitement when they took a young sapling or shrub, and placed it purposefully into the ground. I know for many of them, it was a once in a lifetime experience, and something many of them will learn to cherish in their minds and hearts for a long while.

It is our hope that through this "Reforestation and Reachout" programme, the young generation of today would take stock of what is left of their natural heritage, and learn to take stewardship of it. Wilderness and forests around the globe are being depleted rapidly, and are becoming confined primarily to islands, parks and reserves. The health of our planet's forests will depend on how well we manage and protect the few remaining areas we have left. Forests are not only sanctuaries of wildlife, but of the human spirit. Every tree adds vibrancy, colour, magnitude, and they are vessels of health and vigour. Here at the Outdoor Classroom, with an effort rooted in togetherness, the students from the five participating schools have selflessly given their physical and mental energy to this "Reforestation and Reach Out" programme. These students are more aware now that the plants they have reforested are important in different ways to their individual habitat, but all united as living components which play their part for one vital ecosystem...

I would like to thank all staff and volunteers of SBWR who have given much of their time and effort in the preparation of this programme. Special thanks to Tay Soon Lian, Halilah Ahmad, Jeremy Ang, Deborah Tay, Linda Fang, Mok Wei Chi, Ng Sock Ling, Thi Ha Zan, and Supardi Mohd Shariff.



Purple herons and Whimbrels

Bird Ringing in Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve in 2004

James Gan,
Senior Conservation Officer

No new species of birds were ringed at SBWR in 2004. Although the absolute number of birds trapped had decreased, the year still saw some interesting species ringed. They are the Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Blue-eared Kingfisher, Eastern Crowned Warbler and Grey-tailed Tattler. Notably, it is the second time in 2 years that a Blue-eared Kingfisher has been mist netted and ringed at SBWR. Other birds ringed include the Pintail Snipe, Chestnut Munia and Striped Tit Babbler.



Pintail Snipe

Bird ringing has been conducted at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (SBWR) since 1990. This article gives an overview of some of the results of the bird ringing effort at Sungei Buloh over the past year. In 2004, a total of 373 birds from 50 species were ringed. The ringing field work was carried out on scheduled days and nights throughout the year. A summary of the number of birds ringed in 2004 (and the previous four years) is provided in Table 1.

The most commonly ringed bird species were (numbers ringed in brackets) : Pacific Golden Plover (103), Common Redshank (32), Yellow-vented Bulbul (28), Plain-throated Sunbird (18) and Scaly-breasted Munia (13). Compared to the previous year (2003 ringing results), the number of birds ringed has decreased from 517 to 373. The decrease is attributed to fewer hours of mist netting. As was the case in 2003, no Curlew Sandpipers were ringed but numbers of Common Redshank ringed have bucked a 3-year downward trend to register a slight increase.

Regular bird counts in SBWR have revealed no decrease in shorebird numbers. In fact, numbers have increased in 2004 and the Curlew Sandpipers and Mongolian Plovers that were noted to have avoided the wetland in 2003 had returned with peak counts of 206 and 175 birds respectively. Several habitat management measures to increase the attractiveness of the wetland for shorebirds over the past year looks to have been successful. These measures will continue. Ringing work and shorebird counts over the next few years will help to determine if the measures continue to be effective.

No new species of birds were ringed at SBWR in 2004. Although the absolute number of birds trapped had decreased, the year still saw some interesting species ringed. They are the Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Blue-eared Kingfisher, Eastern Crowned Warbler and Grey-tailed Tattler. Notably, it is the second time in two years that a Blue-eared Kingfisher has been mist netted and ringed at SBWR. Other birds ringed include the Pintail Snipe, Chestnut Munia and Striped Tit Babbler.

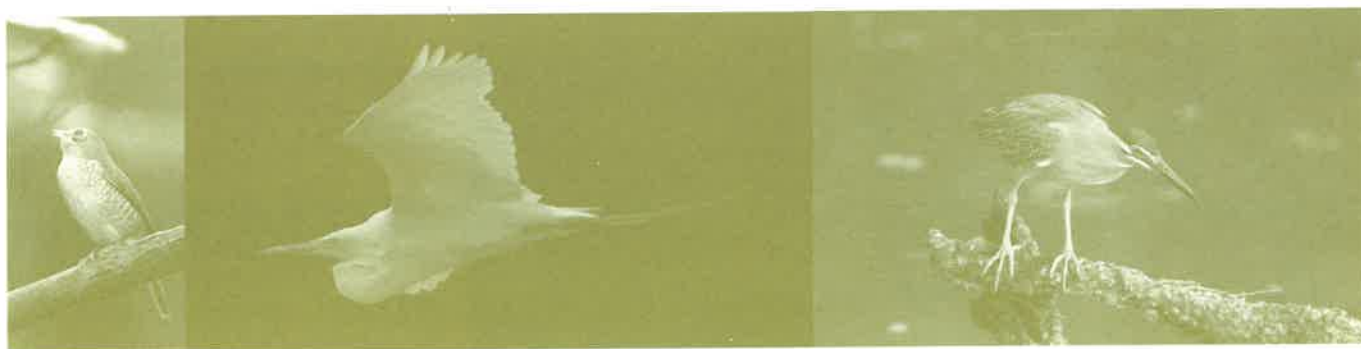
The ringing work has continued to bear fruit with retrap rates of over 10% of all individual birds trapped for each of the past three years. The retrap rate has ranged from 4.5% (2000) to 15.3% (2003). In 2004, the retrap rate was 13.9% (2004). There were 60 retraps from 20 species that had been ringed before 2004. The Pacific Golden



Table 1

Summary of individual birds ringed and retraps at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve in 2004 and preceeding years (2000 to 2003)

S/N	Species	Ring 2000	Retrap pre-2000	Ring 2001	Retrap pre-2001	Ring 2002	Retrap pre-2002	Ring 2003	Retrap pre-2003	Ring 2004	Retrap pre-2004
1	Abbott's Babbler	2		2	1	3		0		0	
2	Arctic Warbler	3		2		0		2		0	
3	Ashy Minivet	0		0		0		1		0	
4	Ashy Tailorbird	20	1	18	2	19	4	19	6	12	2
5	Asian Brown Flycatcher	2		0		0		1		1	
6	Asian Dowitcher	1		0		0		0		0	
7	Asian Glossy Starling	53	1	18		23	1	20		7	
8	Asian Koel	2		1		0		1		0	
9	Asian Paradise Flycatcher	0		1		1		1		1	
10	Baya Weaver	60		22	3	23		16		7	1
11	Black Bittern	5		3	1	4	1	5		2	1
12	Black-browed Reed Warbler	1		0		0		0		0	
13	Black-capped Kingfisher	6		3	1	4	1	5	1	5	1
14	Black-naped Oriole	5		2		2		2		1	
15	Black-tailed Godwit	1		0		0		0		0	
16	Blue Magpie	1		0		0		0		0	
17	Blue-eared Kingfisher	0		0		1		0		1	
18	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	3		1		0		1		1	
19	Blue-throated Bee-eater	6		2		6		4		3	
20	Blue-winged Pitta	0		0		0		1		0	
21	Brown Shrike	4		7		1	1	1		0	
22	Brown-chested Jungle-Flycatcher	0		0		1		1		0	
23	Chestnut Munia	2		0		0		0		1	
24	Chestnut-winged Cuckoo	4		2		0		0		0	
25	Cinnamon Bittern	5		0		2		2	2	3	
26	Cinnamon-headed Pigeon	1		0		0		0		0	
27	Collared Kingfisher	43	8	48	12	32	16	26	16	11	11
28	Collared Scops Owl	5	1	5	2	3	4	3		3	
29	Common Flameback	1	1	2		3	3	1	2	1	
30	Common Greenshank	0		2		1		1		0	
31	Common Iora	6		5	1	4		2		0	
32	Common Kingfisher	15		13		4	2	7	1	6	1
33	Common Redshank	263	24	117	21	72	13	26	2	32	4
34	Common Sandpiper	9	1	17	3	5	3	6	3	4	3
35	Common Tailorbird	15		14	1	16	3	13	2	6	1
36	Copper-throated Sunbird	0		1		9	1	2	1	2	
37	Crimson Sunbird	0		0		0		1		0	
38	Crow-billed Drongo	1		0		0		1		0	
39	Curlew Sandpiper	26		34		9		0		0	
40	Dark-necked Tailorbird	3		1		0		2		0	
41	Drongo Cuckoo	1		0		0		0		0	
42	Eastern Crowned Warbler	0		0		0		2		1	
43	Emerald Dove	13	1	3	6	2	1	2		5	
44	Eurasian Curlew	1		0		0		0		0	
45	Forest Wagtail	0		1		1		0		0	
46	Greater Sand Plover	1		0		0		1		0	
47	Grey Heron	0		0		1		0		0	
48	Grey-tailed Tattler	0		1		0		1		1	
49	Indian Cuckoo	0		1		0		0		0	
50	Japanese Sparrowhawk	2		1		0		1		0	1
51	Javan Munia	80		124	3	60	2	35		10	1
52	Laced Woodpecker	4		3	2	3	2	5	4	5	1
53	Large-tailed Nightjar	1		4	1	4	3	4	2	0	
54	Lesser Coucal	1		1		0		0		0	
55	Little Bronze Cuckoo	1		1		0		0		0	
56	Marsh Sandpiper	25		60	5	48	3	46	9	5	



Summary of individual birds ringed and retraps at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve in 2004 and preceeding years (2000 to 2003)

S/N	Species	Ring 2000	Retrap pre-2000	Ring 2001	Retrap pre-2001	Ring 2002	Retrap pre-2002	Ring 2003	Retrap pre-2003	Ring 2004	Retrap pre-2004
57	Mongolian Plover	61	2	96	4	10	1	8	3	9	
58	Olive-backed Sunbird	1		15	1	4		1		2	
59	Olive-winged Bulbul	7		9	4	6	1	6	1	7	1
60	Oriental Magpie Robin	12	1	7	3	9	2	5	1	3	
61	Oriental Reed Warbler	2		2		1	1	0		0	
62	Oriental Scops Owl	1		0		0		0		0	
63	Pacific Golden Plover	27	1	86	2	52	8	87	12	103	14
64	Pacific Swallow	7		3		0		0		1	
65	Pallas' Grasshopper Warbler	0		2		0		1		0	
66	Pied Fantail	10	1	9	2	6	2	13	2	5	3
67	Pied Triller Warbler	1		1		0		0		0	
68	Pink-necked Pigeon	8		3		2		3		4	
69	Pintail Snipe	0		1		0		0		2	
70	Plain-throated Sunbird	73	4	47	14	36	3	26	9	18	6
71	Red-legged Crake	1		0		0		0		0	
72	Red-necked Stint	0		0		1		0		0	
73	Ruddy Kingfisher	1		1		0		0		0	
74	Ruddy Turnstone	0		1		0		0		0	
75	Rufous Woodpecker	0		2		0		2		0	
76	Rufous-tailed Tailorbird	15		10	3	8	1	6	1	2	1
77	Rusty-breasted Cuckoo	1		0		2		0		0	
78	Scaly-breasted Munia	45		49		23		7		13	
79	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	1		2		0		1	1	0	
80	Siberian Blue Robin	3		0		1		0		0	
81	Slaty-breasted Rail	1		0		0		1	0		
82	Spotted Dove	3		1		1		0		0	
83	Stork-billed Kingfisher	9		6	4	6	2	7	4	0	3
84	Streaked Bulbul	0		0		1		0		0	
85	Striated Heron	9		6	4	3		3	1	2	1
86	Striped Tit Babbler	0		0		3		1		2	
87	Terek Sandpiper	16	1	2		0		0		0	
88	Tiger Shrike	16		8		4		8	1	9	
89	Watercock	1		0		0		0		0	
90	Whimbrel	13		27		6		8	1	1	
91	White-breasted Waterhen	5	1	11	1	0		0	3		
92	White-browed Crake	1		2		0		0	2	0	
93	White-chested Babbler	0	1	0		0		0		0	
94	White-headed Munia	0		1		0		0		0	
95	White-rumped Shama	0		0		1		0		0	
96	White-throated Kingfisher	10		10	1	5	1	3	1	6	
97	Yellow Bittern	17		10	3	5	1	6	3	9	
98	Yellow-bellied Prinia	3	1	3	2	5	4	5	1	3	
99	Yellow-rumped Flycatcher	5		2		4		1	3		
100	Yellow-vented Bulbul	60	3	22	11	20	8	52	4	28	1
101	Zebra Dove	6		6		3		3		1	
TOTAL		1156	54	1003	124	595	99	535	97	373	60



Table 2

Longevity Records (Selected species)
At least 6 months for resident birds or 1 season for migrants



Species	Date Ringed	Date Recaptured	Interval (mths)
Pacific Golden Plover	3 Nov 90	30 Nov 04	169
Common Redshank	29 Oct 03	30 Nov 04	133
Collared Kingfisher	12 Jun 96	25 Nov 04	101
Common Sandpiper	15 Aug 97	15 Sep 04	85
Ashy Tailorbird	20 Jul 00	6 May 04	45
Laced Woodpecker	20 Sep 00	15 Jun 04	44
Common Tailorbird	19 Dec 00	14 Jan 04	37
Stork-billed Kingfisher	23 Mar 00	21 May 03	38
Japanese Sparrowhawk	26 Feb 03	24 Nov 04	21

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This article is possible thanks to fellow ringers Ramakrishnan, Linda Goh, Charles Lim, Ray Knock, Mustaffa Hajar, Abdul Khalid and Chan Su Hooi for contributing to the ringing work. Many others assisted with the ringing including staff, volunteers and friends especially Halilah Ahmad, Ong Hai Chwee, Supardi Mohd Shariif, Jack Wong, Loke Wai Leng and Jeanne Tan. Jeremy Ang, Tay Soon Lian and Ramakrishnan took a number of photographs and catalogued them for documentation. I am grateful for the voluntary help from Nick Baker, Ray Knock, Lua Wai Heng and R. Subaraj who provided expert advice, sighting records or helped out during the ringing sessions.

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Plover had 14 retraps followed by the Collared Kingfisher with 11 and the Plain-throated Sunbird with 6. One use for the data obtained from retrap birds is the enabling of longevity records and the survival of different bird species in the wild to be determined. These records are provided in Table 2. Of special mention, a Pacific Golden Plover was recaptured after an interval of 169 months (14 years 1 month) breaking the previous record set in 2003 of 146 months (12 years 2 months). **This bird from Sungei Buloh is currently believed to be the world record holder for the title of the oldest ringed Pacific Golden Plover.**

Other retraps include the Black Bittern, Common Kingfisher and Japanese Sparrowhawk. **The sparrowhawk is the first raptor to have been recaptured at SBWR and is believed to be the first evidence of site fidelity exhibited by a migratory sparrowhawk to its wintering grounds.**

In summary, bird ringing in 2004 has continued to reveal surprises in the presence of bird species, their movements, abundance and survival in Sungei Buloh. Data collected are invaluable for the long-term conservation and management of the wetland reserve.

Comments or feedback? E-mail at sbwr@pacific.net.sg

A Creative Environmental Statement

- The Amazing Chase

Linda Goh,
Senior Outreach Officer
Currently on study-leave to pursue her Master in Environmental Studies in
Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia, Canada

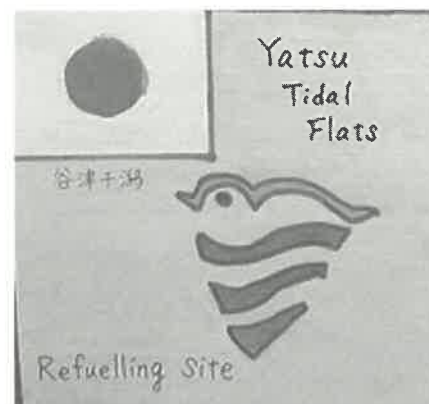


When our professor first communicated this assignment to us, my immediate thought was this presents the perfect opportunity to showcase and share about Singapore's shorebird conservation efforts and our wetland reserve to my Canadian counterparts. To illustrate the importance of wetlands as an important component of shorebird conservation, my game plan was to help my audience understand the migratory shorebirds on the East Australasian Flyway, Singapore's role in this flyway and the importance of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve in a more engaging way.

"As part of the tradition for the Master programme in the School of Resource and Environmental Studies at Dalhousie University, each first year student is expected to come up with a creative environmental statement to be delivered in class at the end of the term."

The audience were to be a part of the journey and experience the 'trials and tribulations' of the shorebirds. Just as it is important to have the cooperation of the different countries in the protection of wetlands to ensure the survival of the shorebirds, I pitched the idea to a fellow Japanese student and roped her in the quest of creating "The Amazing Chase for the Endless Summer' board game.

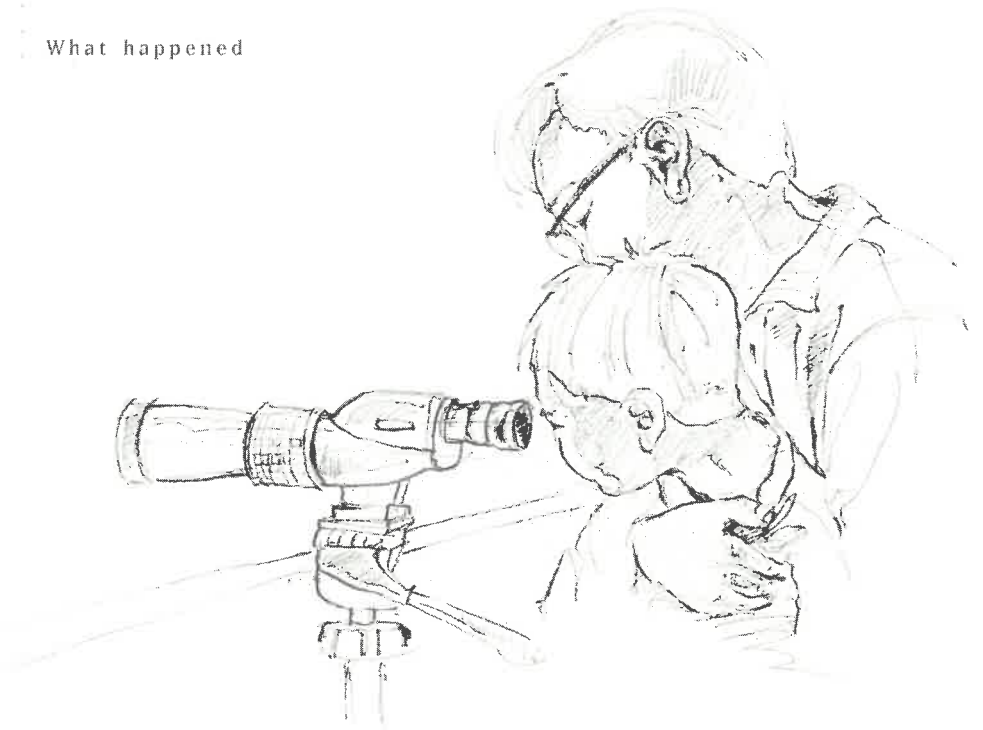
While the objective of the game is to be the first player to get the shorebirds from their breeding ground in Siberia to their wintering ground in Australia or New Zealand and back, the players will 'experience' the same threats these birds face as well as get some help along the way in the form of the protected wetlands in the East Asian Australasian Shorebird Site Network. The game was a hit when we presented it to the class and our professor gave us an A+ for it. The bonus would however be to bring this game to the local Canadian schools and spread the conservation message. This is the next project we are currently working on. With the wind beneath our wings, we are racing on. 



Created by Linda Goh and Ayako Takata

"If a child is to keep his inborn sense of wonder... he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in".

Rachel Carson



Practical Work Attachment

at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve

Mok Wei Chi, geography teacher with Pei Cai Secondary School and volunteer with SBWR

I just could not stop smiling to myself as I used my fingertips to touch the rostrum of the live prawn. I was trying to identify the prawn species. Apparently, if its rostrum is smooth at the bottom, it is likely to be a 'Greasy-back' prawn, and if its rostrum is jagged at the bottom, it is likely to be an 'Indian' prawn.

"What are you smiling about?" Asked my fellow attachment friend, Andy. Andy, along with Weiling, were both new employees of NParks, and they were on a one week attachment at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (SBWR). I, on the other hand, am a teacher on a five-week attachment with SBWR.

"Why are you smiling?" Andy probed.

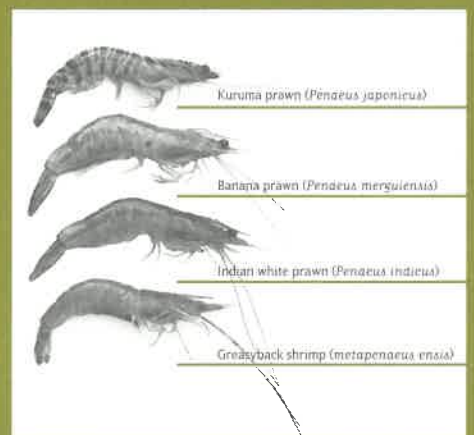
I grinned and replied, "Don't you find it very amusing? Prawns are something that we often eat and take for granted, and yet, now we are all grown adults here frantically trying our best to quickly sort the small live prawns into different sizes to measure their length and weight before releasing them, while they just keep on jumping around the table!"

Just as I finished my sentence, another prawn jumped off the table. I quickly retrieved it and tried to identify it.

"It's a Tamil Prawn!" I blurted innocently. All at the table burst out laughing, and started teasing. It did not help that a few minutes ago I just called the 'Greasy-Back' a 'Grizzly Bear'.

The prawn census was one of the most memorable experience that I would treasure and share as I return to teaching. Friends and colleagues were amused that I would be willing to give up my holidays to work at 'a mangrove place' and 'travel almost to Johor Bharu' each morning for five weeks. What they failed to see was the amazing learning opportunities that awaited me!

In a span of five weeks at SBWR, I witnessed for myself the rich natural heritage that we Singaporeans ought to be proud of. There is just so much wildlife and natural beauty around us!





People around me sometimes complained about living in a 'concrete jungle' with little or no natural beauty, and grumbled at the lack of wildlife in Singapore. Incidentally, they would be the same ones who would pack their bags during holidays, fly off to an exotic nature site in another country, and boast about their experience over dinner to their friends when they get back home. Such people may have witnessed the grandeur of the sunset at Grand Canyon or the majestic power of the Niagara Falls and yet sadly, they never bothered to explore their own backyard.

If I were to bring these people to SBWR now, they might probably not be able to call out the name of their own giant mudskippers, and probably even identify monitor lizards as komodo dragons. They would see otters and think that they are big rats. They could witness their own estuarine crocodile half submerged in water and insist it to be a prop. During the migratory season, they would probably glance at hundreds and hundreds of pacific golden plovers feeding on the mudflats, and ask, "Where's all that beautiful chirping sound coming from?" But alas, it is only if these people would be willing to come with me to visit a mangrove.

The good news is, there are many other Singaporeans who appreciate our own nature spots. From my understanding, each year, at least 90 000 Singaporeans would make the extra effort to travel to Kranji to visit our very own wetland reserve. I believe sometimes we just need to stop in our fast-paced life and look around us. Nature can exist in small pockets. Every turn at SBWR and Kranji Nature Trail is picturesque. Stay at one spot long enough, and you would witness the place coming alive. As Singaporeans, should we not explore our own country and know it well first?

I am glad I have traded my travelling bags for this once-in-a-lifetime experience to work at SBWR. I was very grateful that SBWR was prepared for my attachment. There was a well-planned programme drawn out for me and staff at SBWR were briefed about my attachment prior to my first day. People were friendly, and were very willing to allow me to join them in their work. Several of the staff also took initiative to share their expertise, organisational values and conservation views with me. The organisation also took initiative to liaise visits with two other NParks Conservation Branches at Biodiversity Centre and Pulau Ubin. This enabled me to have a more holistic view of the conservation measures in Singapore.

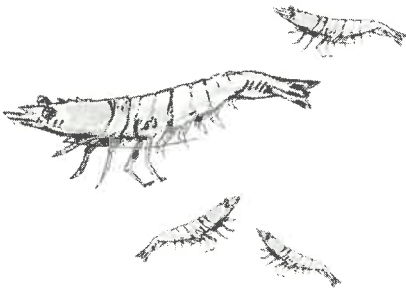
I had the opportunity to help out in SBWR research and educational programmes and activities. Some highlights of my attachment include helping out in bird census, bird ringing, prawn census, and conducting as well as participating in activities such as nature guiding, reforestation, coastal cleanup, teachers' workshop and a Young Naturalist Camp. By participating whole-heartedly in all work that was given, I experienced working as a visitor centre personnel, educational outreach officer, ranger, researcher, clerk and even had the opportunity to do manual work along with the contract workers.

My time of work with the conservation unit have made me more mature, and now I am beginning to truly appreciate the efforts and roles played by different people in our community. Through this attachment, I also had the opportunity to do a lot of reflection. I personally feel that the best insight that I had gained from this attachment is that I am now even more convinced about the role I play as a teacher. While I can contribute a bit to conservation by joining as a volunteer with SBWR, I believe I can do so much more by teaching my pupils well, and moulding them to be morally upright and environmentally conscious individuals who are proud of Singapore's own natural heritage. 



Calendar of Events

compiled by Jeanne Tan,
Senior Outreach Officer



Free guided walks

Join us for guided walks on Saturdays (9am, 10am, 3pm and 4pm) within a mangrove habitat and learn about the interesting inhabitants of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, their different adaptations and the relationship between mangroves and their associated marine life. The walks are weather-permitting. Admission charges apply.

Prawn Watch 2005

Dates: 19 March, 28 May, 11 June and 25 June

Come join us for an interesting and educational demonstration of traditional prawn harvesting. Learn how to identify the different types of prawns and other variety of fish and be amazed by how fertile the ponds are! This programme is weather-permitting.

Please call our mainline at 67941401 for more information. Admission charges apply.

Young Naturalist Passport (YNP) Camp

Dates : 3rd June 2005

Limited to 40 children between the age of 6-12 years old, this one day camp encompasses a series of fun-filled and educational indoor and outdoor learning of the wetlands and nature conservation issues through worksheets, nature walks and hands-on activities. Children will earn a stamp for every completed activity, and a full collection of stamps will earn them a series of cloth badges.

Each participant needs to purchase a young naturalist passport at 50 cents.

Registration of \$5 is applicable, and cheques will be returned upon completion of the camp. The fee will be donated to the SBWR education fund if the child fails to turn up for the camp upon registration and confirmation.

Admission charges (50 cents per child) apply.

For more information about the programme, log in to our website at www.sbwr.org.sg or call 67941401 for enquiries.

Look Who's Talking!

Would you like to know more about wild boars, water monitor lizards, bats and the various flora of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve? We have a series of talks catering for young children held at the community libraries this coming June holidays. Please call us at our mainline 67941401 for venue, dates and time of these talks.

Kubah National Park

Andrew Tan,
Visitor Services Officer

Hi, my name is Andrew and I guess most you will find me familiar because I am a "gatekeeper" at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. Being a nature lover, I have travelled quite a fair bit to several other national parks and nature areas such as Grampians National Park in Australia, Grand Canyon National Park in US and the most recent one, Kubah National Park in Malaysia.

Kubah National Park is very interesting and rather close to Singapore. The climate is almost the same as what we have here. In terms of accommodation and meals, I must say it is also 'budget-friendly' and with the existence of budget flights around this region, you can travel cheaply as well.

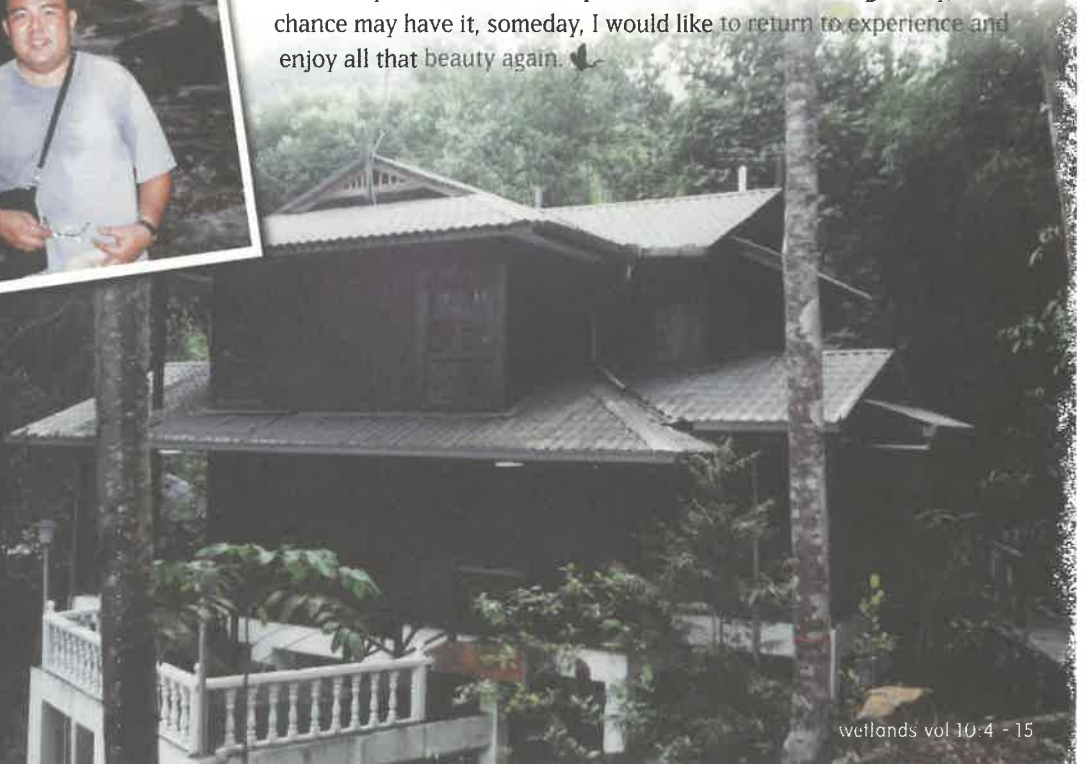
For those of us who have not the slightest idea where Kubah National Park is, it is situated in Sarawak, East Malaysia, about 20km west of Kuching, the capital of Sarawak. For those who love nature and have not been to Sarawak, there are about ten national parks there. It is a good place to visit because each National Park has its own uniqueness and you can see a vast variety of flora and fauna at each place.

Mixed dipterocarp forests predominate with patches of scrub and kerangas adding variety. It is rich in palms and orchids that include species of *Licuala*, rattans, Pantu, *Pinanga*, *Appendicula*, *Dipodium* and *Eria* are in abundance.

The cool forest, the nearby mangrove and the dissected terrain are home to a considerably large wildlife population. This includes the mouse deer, squirrels and the bearded pig. The loud calls of the black hornbills (kenyalang), could be distinctly heard when I were there. This venerable bird features prominently in many Iban religious ceremonies. Other notable inhabitants of the park are varieties of amphibians and reptiles.

I believe that if one is a nature lover and can afford to travel, East Malaysia is worth visiting and the best to enjoy is nature because not many of these places have been developed for high rise buildings. Visiting other National Parks has broadened my understanding and increased my appreciation for Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, our own natural heritage.

The beauty of nature in those parks beckons me for a longer stay, and if chance may have it, someday, I would like to return to experience and enjoy all that beauty again. 🌿



Reserve Information
Opening Hours: Mondays to Saturday from 7.00am to 7.00pm. Free entry except Sat, Sun, Sundays & Public Holidays. Admissions: \$1.00 per adult and \$0.50 per child/student/senior citizen. Audio-visual show. Mondays to Saturdays at 9.00am. Hourly from 9.00am to 5.00pm. Alight at Kranji MRT Station. TBS 925 will stop at the Reserve entrance.
Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, 301 Neo Tiew Crescent, Singapore 718045. Tel: 6791 401 Fax: 6791 7271
Email: sbwr@public.net.sg Website: http://www.sbwr.org.sg

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