

Singapore's Biodiversity

Singapore's population grew from **2.7 million to 4.6 million** between 1986 and 2007. With more people and more buildings being constructed to house them, it is expected that our Green Cover would decrease. However, during that same period, our Green Cover increased instead from **35.7%** to **46.5%**!

Although small and highly urbanised, Singapore is rich in **biodiversity**. Our little red dot is home to over **2,000** plant species, **52** mammal species, **98** reptile species and **28** amphibian species. **364** species of birds, **295** species of butterflies and **117** species of dragonflies also live here. Despite being one of the busiest ports in the world, we have **12** out of the 23 Indo-Pacific species of sea grass, over **255** species of hard corals and **100** species of reef fish.

Amazing facts about our biodiversity:

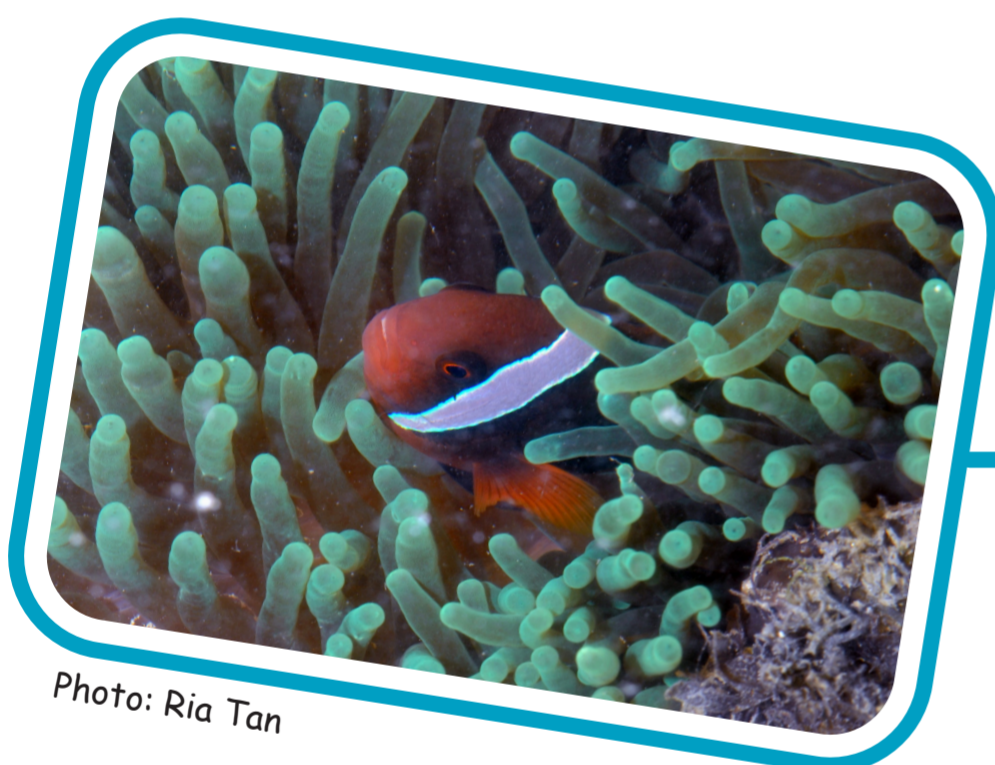


Photo: Ria Tan

Clown Fish

The Clown Fish is one of the few creatures with the ability to change sex. When its female partner dies, the male Clown Fish can turn itself into a female and pair off with another male Clown Fish! It may be small, but under the protection of the sea anemone, it is rarely eaten by other fish. The tentacles of the sea anemone sting other fish but not the Clown Fish, whose body is covered with a protective layer of slimy mucus.

The Clown Fish is found in southern islands of Singapore such as Kusu Island and Sisters' Island.

Sea Star

Commonly known as the Starfish, the Sea Star has remarkable regenerative powers. This means that it can re-grow lost limbs, and a new animal can even grow from one arm or a fragment of the body. It can do so because it houses most of its vital organs in the arms.

The Sea Star is found in Chek Jawa Wetlands and Changi Beach Park.



Photo: Ria Tan



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Moon Crab

The Moon Crab is nocturnal and is rarely seen in the day, being often buried in the sediments. It uses its paddle-shaped legs as 'spades' to dig into the sand and disappears into it in a blink of an eye. Even when buried deeply without surface contact, the Moon Crab can survive for up to four hours in moist shores and during low tides!

The Moon Crab is found in Changi Beach Park.



Photo: Lim Swee Cheng

Oriental Pied Hornbill

The Oriental Pied Hornbill disappeared from Singapore in the mid-1800s, possibly due to hunting and loss of suitable habitat. Once thought to be extinct in Singapore, the bird is re-establishing healthy colonies here. The Oriental Pied Hornbill can now be seen on Pulau Ubin, Changi and Bukit Timah.

Hornbills are known for their odd breeding method - the female seals herself in a tree hole for a few months, where she lays and incubates her eggs, while the male bird is responsible for feeding the female bird. The female bird breaks out only when the nestlings are fully fledged.

Malayan Colugo

The Colugo is also called the Flying Lemur although it neither flies nor is a lemur. Being a tree dweller, it has skin between its limbs that it uses like wings to glide from tree to tree in a steady, controlled manner.

The Malayan Colugo is found in Bukit Timah Nature Reserve and Central Catchment Nature Reserve.



Photo: Derek Liew



Photo: Olesen Bjorn

Sunda Pangolin

The Sunda Pangolin is also known as the Malayan Scaly Anteater. Its main diet consists of termites and ants. Although it usually moves on the ground, it can also climb trees and swim.

The Sunda Pangolin is found in Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, Central Catchment Nature Reserve and Western Catchment Area. It is also found in the rural and scrub areas of Bukit Batok, and on the islands of Pulau Ubin and Pulau Tekong.

Smooth Otter

The Otter belongs to the family Mustelidae, which includes weasels, badgers and skunks. This beautiful creature is more common than we might imagine. It is active both during the day and at night. Smooth Otters are generally sociable and live in pairs or family groups which include the parents and their young.

The Smooth Otter is found in Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Pasir Ris Park, Changi Beach Park and Pulau Ubin.



Photo: Mendis Tan



Photo: Jeremy Ang

Common Civet Cat

The Civet Cat is related to the mongoose. It is mostly nocturnal and is an omnivore with a particular fondness for fruits. As a fruit eater, it helps to disperse seeds, an act which aids in the regeneration of forests. Have you heard of "kopi luwak"? Possibly the most expensive type of gourmet coffee, it is made from coffee beans "processed" by a civet cat. Yes, the coffee beans are eaten and passed out by the Civet Cat, and are then collected to be made into "kopi luwak"!

The Civet Cat is found in forested areas like Pulau Ubin and Central Catchment Nature Reserve.