



Wetlands

Sungei Buloh Nature Park, Vol.4 No.3 November 1997. MITA(P) No.280/12/96



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Sungei Buloh
Nature Park

We're turning 5 in
1998!

With the 5th Anniversary around the corner, we've been very busy planning for next year's events and in upgrading the Park facilities.

Read on to find out more about the new amenities of the Park and the up and coming events.

Cover Photograph by
Mr Michael Aw
Picture of a *Bruguiera gymnorrhiza* flower.

Coming up...

5th Anniversary

by Ong Chui Leng

Turning 5 is good cause for celebration for the conservation of 87 hectares of wetlands in land scarce Singapore, Sungei Buloh Nature Park, home to the migratory birds and a multitude of wetland flora and fauna.

We are working with our corporate sponsors for the production of a new pamphlet and a Handbook on Sungei Buloh Nature Park to be launched in December 1997. New publications to be launched next year will include a Guidebook on Sungei Buloh and a Coffee Table Book.

There will be lucky draws for children below 16, Science projects to involve the schools and the annual BirdWatch programme that will include workshops on bird sketching.

As part of our amenities upgrading programme, we are also re-designing our Nature Gallery.

Expect changes, good ones, for 1998 as we work towards increasing awareness of and generating interest on the precious piece of natural heritage that we have.

Trail Guide to the Mangrove Boardwalk

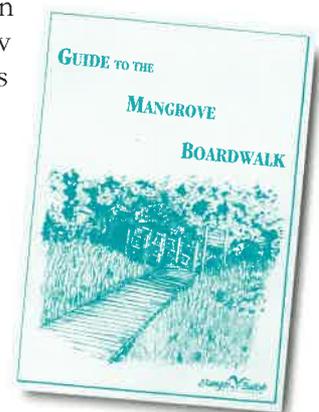
by Colleen Goh

With the new guide booklet to the Mangrove Boardwalk, visitors can now go on a self-guided tour of the Mangrove Boardwalk at the Visitor Centre.

This 24-page booklet is filled with interesting pictures and information on the flora and fauna that can be encountered as the visitor walks along the Mangrove Boardwalk. Locations of these plants and animals are clearly marked out along the route and in the booklet. There are also useful tips on how best to spot the well-camouflaged animals of the mangroves.

Booklets (@\$0.50) are available from the cafeteria.

Note: Pre-booked groups may place an advance order for the booklets and collect them from the Ticketing Counter upon admission. For more information, contact the Education Unit at 793 7377.



What happened...

Welcome...

Our new Volunteer Committee

- Chairperson : Mr Keith Hillier
- Honorary Secretary : Mr Allan Teo
- Assistant Secretary : Mr Yeo Swee Cheong
- Publications : Ms S. K. Kwan
- Treasurer : Mr Wong Kum Sang
- Project Co-ordinators : Mr Keen Wong
Mr Thng Hui Hong
- Committee Members : Ms Loh Jing Ling
Ms Joyce Sia
Mr Alex Teo
Mr Amos Teo
Mr David Teo
Ms Thng Hui Hien
Mr Winston Wong Swei-Sen

Help!

by James Gan

We hope you will never encounter an occasion when emergency assistance from the staff should ever be required. However, should you require assistance, be assured that we have a system in place - the Emergency Walkie-talkie System.

Walkie-talkies are mounted in various hides and shelters around the park. In the event of an emergency, you will have easy access to a walkie-talkie and be able to communicate with the Park staff. Instructions on how to use the walkie-talkie are clearly stated on signs.

However, this is perhaps the only Park facility we hope you will never need to use!

Luncheon Meet II

by Linda Gob

The date

Hazy it may be, that Sunday morn.
Yet home bound you were not.
Your word was your honour.

Lords of the air

The stage was set,
We met to stare.
Birds of foreign air.

Your calling

Many were called
but few were chosen.
You gave as you were called upon.

Feast

The table was prepared,
the food overflowing.
It's time to celebrate.



Photograph by Ms Hatilab Ahmad

Use me if you need help.

Common Redshank (Trin

Bio Data

Length	:	27-29 cm
Weight	:	85-155 g
Wingspan	:	59-66 cm
Plumage & bare-parts	:	grey-brown
Bill and legs	:	orange
Under-parts (non-breeding)	:	pale with streaked breast



Photograph by Mr. Michael Au

The Common Redshank can be identified by its orange legs.

Habitat

Coastal and inland wetlands, including salt marshes, wet grassland and muddy shorelines.

Diet

Insects and worms; in non-breeding season also molluscs and crustaceans.

Photograph by Mr. Michael Au



A flock of Mongolian Plovers in flight is a sight to behold.

Breeding

Breeding period	:	April to June
Nest sites	:	base of long grasses
Size of brood	:	3-5 (average 4)

Range

Different races are found in different regions. Can be found breeding from Iceland to Europe, Siberia, the Himalayas and East China. They spend the northern winter in Western Europe, the Mediterranean, tropical Africa, India, Southeast Asia and East Asia.

Photograph by Mr. Lee Titab Kee



The Common Greenshank can often be spotted at the Park.

za totanus)

by Lim Haw Chuan



Photograph by Mr. Michael Au

Curlew Sandpipers and Mongolian Plovers like to wade in the mud in search of food.



Photograph by Ms Wang Juan Kong

The Black-tailed Godwits have comically long bills.



Photograph by Mr. Michael Au

Redshanks and Greenshanks are commonly found in flocks.

Endless Summer: The Story of a Seasoned Traveller

by Ong Chui Leng

“Our home town is in the colder regions in the northern hemisphere. When winter sets in, we make our annual pilgrimage southwards to escape the cold winter...” (T.T)

The trail on our feathered friend, T.T. (Tringa totanus) the Common Redshank, is on again this migratory season. The booklet “Endless Summer - The Story of a Seasoned Traveller” complements the trail “Migratory Birds” along route 1.

Get a copy of the trail booklet (@\$0.50) and find out what T.T. goes through to arrive at the Park.

The trail booklet will be distributed free to children under 16 during our BirdWatch 1997 (30 November to 6 December 1997). Those who can uncover the secret message at the end of the trail will get a chance at a lucky dip for some souvenirs.



Mangrove - A Home to the Birds

by *Lim Haw Chuan and Kenneth B.H. Er*

To many, the mangrove forest has always been thought of as the dirty breeding ground of unattractive creatures. And it does not help that many of these mangrove areas are often covered with floating debris or have become dumping grounds for bulk goods.

However, there are many other things that you may not know about the forests. For example, they provide us with one of our favourite desserts - the attap seed (from the *Nypa* palm). The mangroves are also a valuable source of timber for boat-building and firewood, and they are a prime breeding ground for prawns.

Its usefulness aside, the mangrove forest has always been an integral part of the natural heritage of Singapore. In pre-settlement period, it covered 13% of the forested area of Singapore. Due to modern development, this has been reduced to a mere 488 hectares by 1993. This dramatic reduction has caused many plant species to go extinct (eg the epiphytic orchids) while others are still at risk (eg some *Sonneratia* sp). Of the 71 bird species that are known to occur in the mangrove forest, 11 are extinct while a further 12 are at risk.

Given the present state of affairs for the mangrove forest, Sungei Buloh Nature Park (SBNP) presents an excellent opportunity for conservation. Out of the 87 hectares in SBNP, approximately 29 hectares are mangrove forests. 26 true mangrove plants species can be found in the forest fragments in SBNP and 126 species of birds had been recorded at the time when the proposal for its conservation came out. With such a unique opportunity at hand, it is important to maximise the forest potential as a sanctuary of birds.

To a community of birds, its habitat is invariably one of the important factor that determines its nature. A habitat can be described in terms of landscape (size, shape etc), vegetative structure (description of the life form, height and density of plants found) and floristics (plant species composition). All three factors can have significant influence on what type of bird community you can find in a habitat. For example, a large patch of forest where there is a diversity of plants is more likely to have a healthy and diverse bird community. The large area ensures that even if birds in some areas have suffered due to bad weather or breeding

“With such a unique opportunity at hand, it is important to maximise the forest potential as a sanctuary of birds”

failure, the remaining birds or the birds from other parts can easily re-colonise the forest. The diversity in plants means that there is a diversity in resources that birds need, such as space, food and nest sites. A large forest also means that there is more space for bird species that prefer the interior environment (eg the Greater Flameback and the Oriental White-eye) and species that require a large area (eg. some owls).

It is with this in mind that we are currently conducting research studies to identify the habitat and landscape factors that will contribute most to bird diversity in the mangrove fragments found in the Park. In addition, we are also looking into differentiating groups of birds based on what they eat and what taxonomy groups they belong to. The information collected can then be turned into management guidelines.



Dining Table for the Birds by James Gan

Have you spotted the two green-roofed structures, mounted on long posts at the Visitor Centre yet?

They are the bird tables we have constructed. With fruits like papayas and bananas placed on them, they have been the centre of bird activity. The Yellow-vented Bulbul, Magpie Robin, Philippine Glossy Starling and the Black-naped Oriole have been helping themselves to the fruits daily. Watch them feast at these specially constructed dining tables.

With the success of these two tables, we will be introducing more such tables. Look out for them.

Photograph by Mr Wong Tian Wab



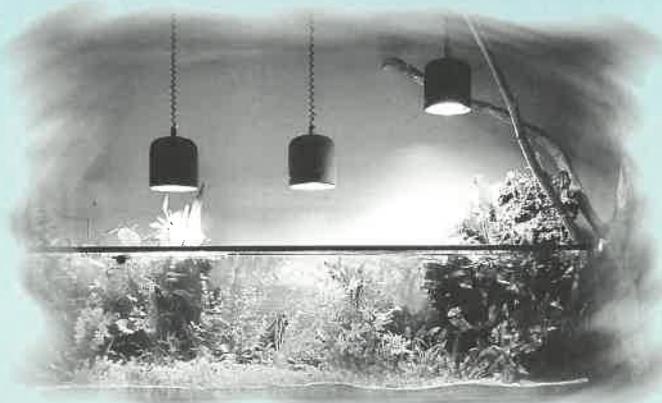
Yummy, fresh fruit for me!

New Freshwater Aquarium Exhibit

by Colleen Goh

Come visit the park the school holidays to see our newest addition to the Nature Gallery. This spanking new 7-foot tank aquarium houses various species of freshwater aquatic plants and animals.

Photograph by Mr Maibew Tan



Underwater forest at the Nature Gallery.

Aquatic flora include Hydrilla, Water Hyacinth, Water Lettuce, Oval Pondweed, Yellow Burhead, Water Banana and Aquatic Mimosa. The Rasboras, Platys and the Black Mollies are some of the fishes you can find.

An interesting feature of the display is the see-through acrylic panels under the tank. Text on the panels explain how various parts of the system work. There are also back-lit slides on both sides of the tank to help visitors with the identification of the flora and fauna found in the tank. Come visit us today. The fishes await you!

Gentle Reminder

by Linda Goh

Photograph by Ms Halilab Ahmad



The do's and don'ts of the Park.

Have you chanced upon it yet?
It is just hanging near the entrance.
No, it is not screaming for your attention.

Besides, it is only a composite sign.
A gentle reminder.
For you to abide by the rules.

So, don't sigh.
After all, Singapore is indeed a fine country.

You Asked For It!

by Linda Goh

1.3m tall, slim and solid.
Two big clear eyes
Capable of spotting you from afar.
Slot in a 20-cents coin and
Enjoy exciting view for 60 seconds.
Without your recommendation,
I won't even be here.
Who am I?
Check me out at the Main Hide
You can't miss me.

*Just in case
you still
can't figure
out,
I am the
new coin-
operated
binoculars
located at
the Main
Observation
Hide.*

Photograph by Ms Halilab Ahmad



*Slot a coin in me and
look for the birds!*

Park Information

Opening Hours

7.30 am to 7.00 pm on weekdays
7.00 am to 7.00 pm on weekends
and Public Holidays

Admission

\$1.00 per adult
\$0.50 per child/student/
senior citizen

Audio-visual Show

Mondays to Saturdays:
9.00 am, 11.00 am, 1.00 pm,
3.00 pm, 5.00 pm

Getting to the Park

Mondays to Saturdays
TIBS 925 from Kranji Dam
carpark (15 min walk to the Park)
Sundays and Public Holidays
TIBS 925 to the Park's entrance

Sungei Buloh Nature Park

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Fax: 793 7271
E-mail: sbnp@pacific.net.sg
Website: <http://www.sbnp.org>

Map of the Park



Map to the Park

