

Animal Encounters

What you should do if you encounter a wild animal at our parks or nature areas.



Monkeys

The most commonly seen monkey in Singapore is the Long-tailed Macaque. There have been frequent sightings in places such as the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve and Central Catchment Nature Reserve.



Photographs by Ang Wee Foong



Refrain from Feeding the Monkeys

Monkeys are meant to forage for food in the forest, where there is sufficient food for them. Feeding them will cause monkeys to associate people with food and become aggressive towards humans.



What should you do if you encounter a monkey?

- Stop whatever you are doing immediately.
- Remain calm and quiet. Do not make sudden movements and do not maintain direct eye contact with the monkey.
- Look away and back off slowly. Do not turn away from the monkeys and run.
- If you are holding an object that is attracting the monkeys, discard or conceal it.
- Keep away from the area until the monkeys have left.



Wild Boars

Wild boars can be found in the forests of Central Catchment Nature Reserve. They are voracious feeders, eating seeds, young plants and even small animals. Their weight ranges from 50 kg to 100 kg. They can live for over 20 years. Wild boars start reproducing from a young age, producing four to eight piglets a year. The population of wild boars has increased greatly in recent years because of the lack of natural predators such as tigers and leopards. This has led to increased interaction with humans.



Photograph by Robert Teo



What should you do if you encounter a wild boar?

- Be calm and move slowly away from the animal. Do not approach or attempt to feed the animal.
- Keep a safe distance and do not corner or provoke the animal. Do not use flash photography to take pictures of the animal, as the sudden bright light may provoke it.
- If you see adults with young piglets, leave them alone. These are potentially more dangerous because they may attempt to defend their young.

For more information on wild boars and what you should do if you encounter them, you might like to visit our website:

www.nparks.gov.sg/wildboar .



Monitor Lizards

The most common species of monitor lizard in Singapore is the Malayan Water Monitor. It can grow up to 3 m long. Monitor lizards can be found in nature reserves or even parks. The monitor lizard uses its venomous bite to kill small prey. Its venom has a relatively mild impact on humans.

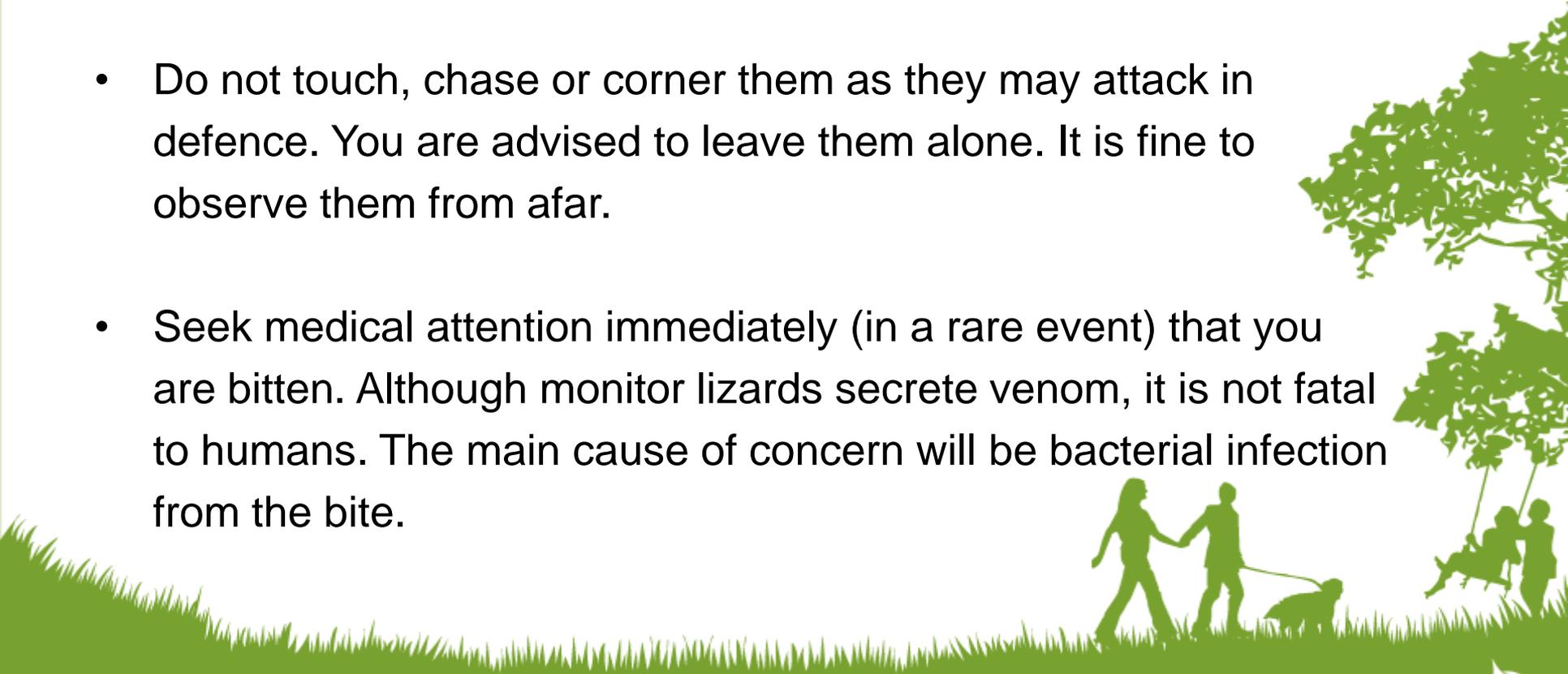


Photograph by Robert Teo



What should you do if you encounter a monitor lizard?

- Do not be alarmed. These animals will not attack humans unless provoked or cornered.
- Do not touch, chase or corner them as they may attack in defence. You are advised to leave them alone. It is fine to observe them from afar.
- Seek medical attention immediately (in a rare event) that you are bitten. Although monitor lizards secrete venom, it is not fatal to humans. The main cause of concern will be bacterial infection from the bite.



Snakes

There are over 60 species of snakes that are native to Singapore. Most of them are usually found in nature reserves, such as Bukit Timah Nature Reserve or Central Catchment Nature Reserve. Snakes can be occasionally seen at parks as well.



Wagler's Pit Viper
Photograph by Ang Wee Foong



What should you do if you encounter a snake?

- Keep calm. Snakes would rather not encounter humans, and it is probably as scary for them as it is for you.
- Slowly move away from the snake. When you are a safe distance from the snake, stamp your foot on the ground. In most cases, the ground vibration would cause the snake to leave.
- Do not try to handle the snake on your own. Snakes usually leave humans alone, but will defend themselves if they feel cornered or threatened.



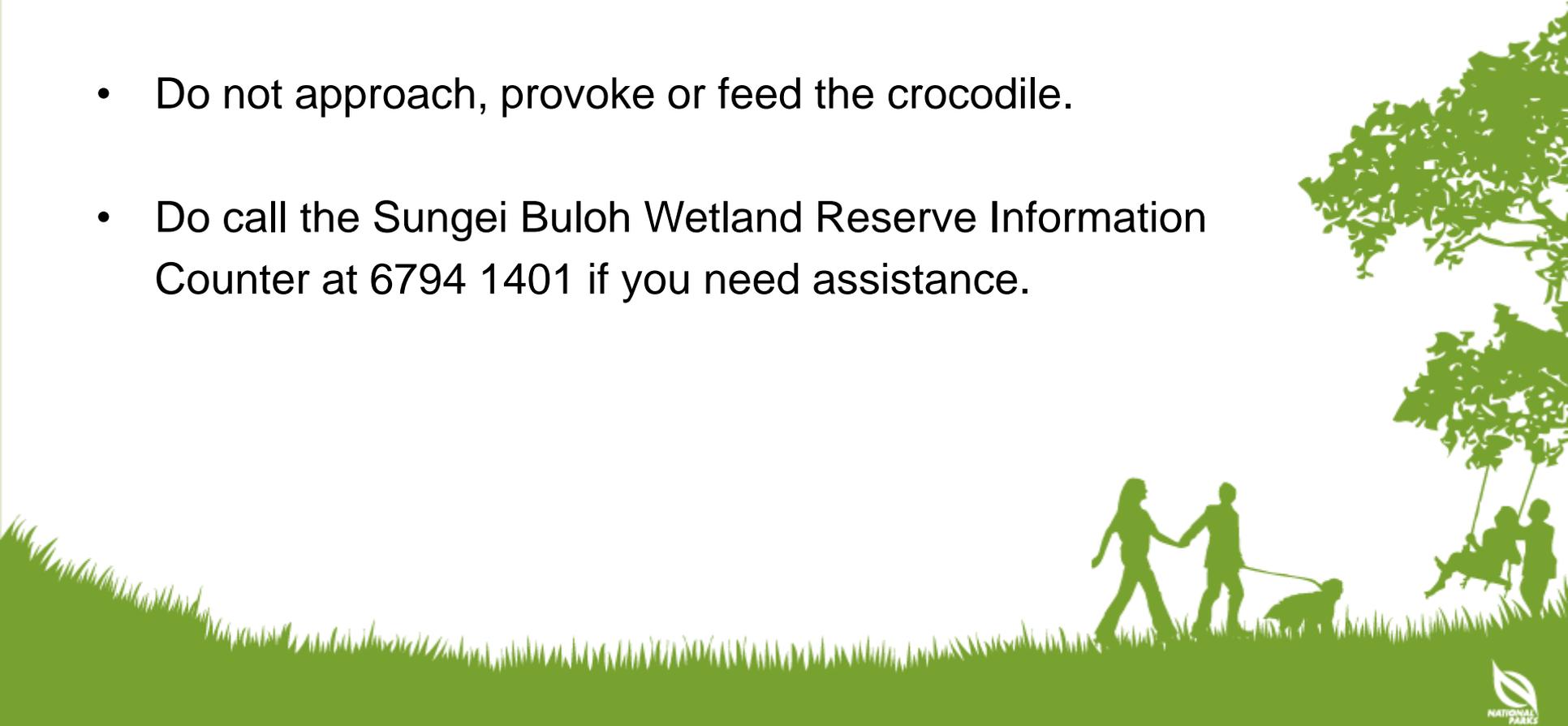
Crocodiles

The crocodile is an amphibious creature that spends most of the day basking at the water's edge or concealed among vegetation. It hunts mainly at night in the water for fish and other small animals, but also scavenges on carrion (the flesh of dead animals). Its eggs are laid in a specially constructed nest of vegetation and are guarded by the female. There have been sightings of an Estuarine Crocodile at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve.



What should you do if you encounter a crocodile at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve?

- Do stay calm and back away slowly.
- Do not approach, provoke or feed the crocodile.
- Do call the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve Information Counter at 6794 1401 if you need assistance.



Turtles

A sea turtle that is often spotted in Singapore waters is the Hawksbill Turtle. The upper jaw of the Hawksbill Turtle protrudes far beyond the lower one, giving its mouth the distinctive beak-like shape from which it gets its name. Females have also been known to come ashore at East Coast Park to lay eggs.

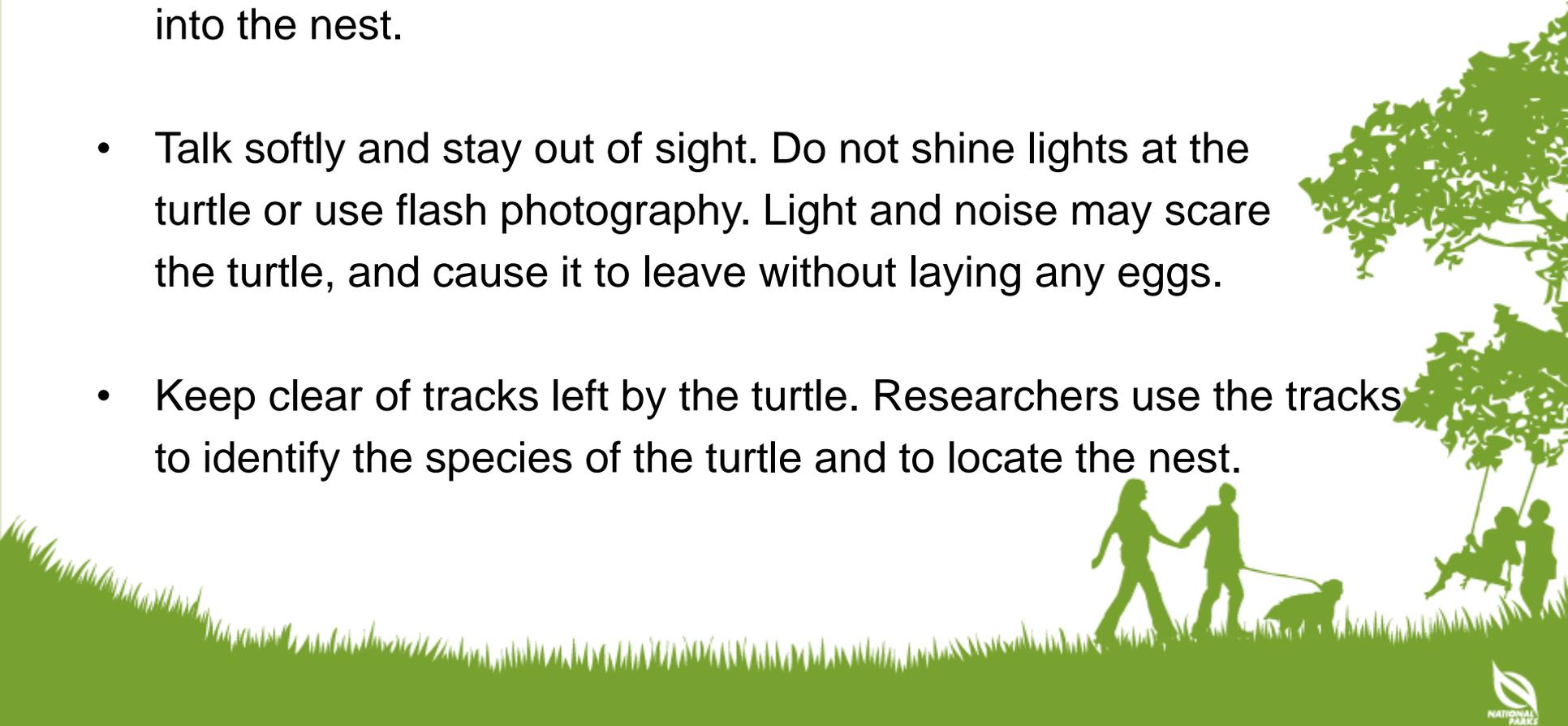


Photograph by Karenne Tun



What should you do if you encounter a nesting turtle?

- Keep your distance from the turtle and the eggs. Touching the turtle may scare or provoke it. Handling the eggs may introduce bacteria into the nest.
- Talk softly and stay out of sight. Do not shine lights at the turtle or use flash photography. Light and noise may scare the turtle, and cause it to leave without laying any eggs.
- Keep clear of tracks left by the turtle. Researchers use the tracks to identify the species of the turtle and to locate the nest.



For more information...

Check out this series of posters on animal encounters by AVA, NParks and Wildlife Reserves at www.nparks.gov.sg/animalencounters.

ADVISORY ON SNAKES

If you encounter a snake, try your best to remain calm! Snakes would rather not encounter humans, and it is probably as scary for them as it is for you. Do not try to handle the snake yourself.

If you're not sure what kind of snake it is, take a digital photograph and email to the Zoo at info@zoo.gov.sg or through our online feedback form at <https://www.fps.gov.sg/ava/avaos/feedback.aspx>.

What to do when there is a snake in the house?

1. Resist the urge to attack it with a broom or stick. Do not confront the snake and keep your distance away from the snake. The snake may try to look for a dark and secure area and you should observe to see where it hides, so that it can be removed by professionals.
2. Make sure that young children and pets like dogs or cats are kept away from the room or area where the snake is, as they may be curious and try to approach the snake.
3. Close all doors in the room, except for those that lead to the outside like your balcony, patio or front doors. Sometimes the snake will look for an escape route and will use these openings.
4. If the snake is in the garden, spray it gently with a water hose to send it on its way while keeping your distance. This will persuade the snake to leave the area. If you find a snake in your pool, you can use a long handled leaf skimmer to gently remove the snake, as it may not be able to get out on its own if it is small or exhausted from swimming.
5. If the snake is in an open area like the floor and not moving much, the best thing to do is to place an object over it like a heavy blanket or towel. Hold the towel/blanket in front of you when approaching it, and then firmly cast it over the snake. The snake should immediately calm down and will feel secure if it cannot see what is going on outside the blanket. If possible, place heavy objects around the edge to prevent the snake from slipping out from underneath the towel/blanket and escaping. This will buy you some time to get help.
6. If the snake is found in a drawer, behind furniture or somewhere difficult to access, leave it alone, move all family members away from the immediate area and, most of all, do not attempt to interact with it at all. Call for professional help. Have someone to keep an eye on the snake from a safe distance and note where it goes into hiding while you are contacting for help.
7. Next, find out why the snake came to your area. Do you keep rodents or birds? Are there birds nesting in your garden, do you have a rodent problem in the house or garden? Some snakes prey on small mammals like rabbits, rats and cats, as well as birds and amphibians.



You can call AVA at 1800-476-1600 and ask them to send an expert to deal with the snake.

If you are interested to know more, please get a copy of the local guide book "Guide to the Amphibians & Reptiles of Singapore" published by the Singapore Science Centre.

Photos by Francis Lim, from a Guide to the Amphibians & Reptiles of Singapore (Singapore Science Centre).



ADVISORY ON WILD BOARS

What are they? The wild boar is a native animal of Singapore which can weigh up to 100kg and has a lifespan of over 20 years. They are omnivorous, but feed mainly on seeds, tubers and young plants. Each female wild boar can start reproducing at 18 months of age and can produce 4 to 6 piglets a year. Their quick reproduction rates, presence of ideal foraging habitats and the lack of natural predators all contribute to their population growth. These days they are increasingly spotted all over the island.



Human-wild boar encounters **Damages caused by wild boars**

The increase in the population of wild boars may result in a higher frequency of human-wild boar conflict as they wander into parks, public roads and residential areas. Although they appear shy, they are still wild animals and are unpredictable in behaviour which could pose a risk to public safety.

Like many other wild animals, wild boars will only attack if they are cornered or if they feel threatened. Female wild boars are very protective of their young and can easily be provoked. Wild boars are strong animals that can run relatively fast. The canines in adult males can inflict serious injuries in case of an attack. Due to their solid body build wild boars are considered to be particularly dangerous when involved in car accidents.

With a lack of natural predators, the wild boar population has increased rapidly and may negatively affect our forests' regeneration. High numbers of wild boars may also decrease local biodiversity. Their natural behaviour to dig up the soil in order to find food, thus damaging tree saplings compromises reforestation and habitat enhancement efforts. These can have negative impacts on the long-term viability of small patches of forests such as our nature reserves if the wild boar population remains unchecked.

What to do when I encounter wild boars?

- ✓ Be calm and move slowly away from the animal. Do not approach or attempt to feed the animal.
- ✓ Keep a safe distance and do not corner or provoke the animal i.e. by using a flash while taking pictures of it.
- ✓ If you see adults with young piglets, leave them alone. These are potentially more dangerous because they may attempt to defend their young.

If you have further queries, please contact AVA at 1800-476-1600 or through our online feedback form at <https://www.fps.gov.sg/ava/avaos/feedback.aspx>.

Photos by Nick Baker.



NParks Helpline

In the event of emergency, you can call the 24-hour NParks helpline to request for assistance:

1800-4717300



Enjoy your Learning Journey to our Parks, Gardens and Nature Areas!

Website: www.nparks.gov.sg/education

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