

Nature Photography

Nature photography is more than just taking some pictures of wild animals, plants and landscape. It is a process to document or record the diversity of plants and animals we have in nature. It is also a process whereby the nature photographers will learn more about nature e.g. a photographer would need to study the ecology and behaviour of an endangered bird species before he or she would know when and where to capture the images of that bird. Lastly, the beautiful pictures produced will also raise the public's awareness and appreciation of nature.

The aims of this exhibition are to bring you into the world of nature photography and to show you some rare or protected species in Hong Kong; the diversity of wildlife we have in HKU and the adjacent Lung Fu Shan Country Park. The last section of the exhibition shows you the secretive animals we have in and around HKU using pictures captured by infra-red auto-triggered cameras.

Code of ethics of nature photography

- Do not disturb or harm animals, plants and their habitats for the sake of taking pictures;
- Beginners are recommended to go with experienced photographers to learn the skills of observing wildlife.



廣瀨妹蟴 Four-spot Midget (Orange form) (*Mortonagrion hirosei*) Credit: Allen To
Classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Only occur in Hong Kong and Japan.



紅腳鷸 Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)
Credit: Billy Hau
Passage migrant and winter visitor in Hong Kong. Can be seen at Mai Po. Heavily streaked at lower body and has red legs, red and black bill.



花姬蛙 Marbled Pygmy Frog (*Microhyla pulchra*) Credit: Allen To
Nocturnal frog, tiny, feeds on ants and termites. Transverse banding on four limbs.



箱河魨 Yellow Boxfish (*Ostracion cubicus*)
Credit: Allen To
Juvenile. Adult is relatively rare and has different body color and pattern.



Rare and Endangered Species in Hong Kong



苧麻珍蝶 Yellow Coster (Male)
(*Acraea issoria*) Credit: Allen To
First discovered in Hong Kong in 2002. It is the only member of the Acraeinae(珍蝶科) in Hong Kong.



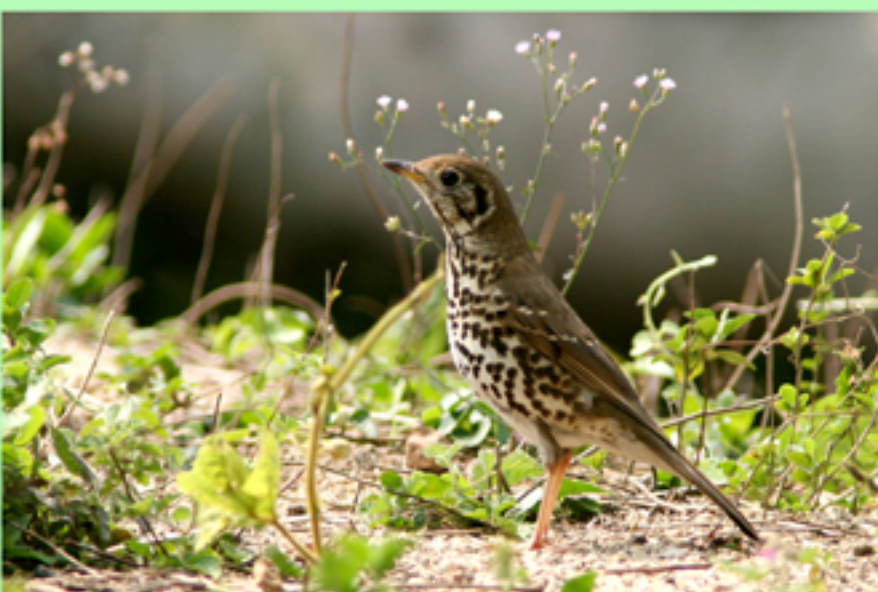
黑臉琵鷺 Black-faced Spoonbill
(*Platalea minor*) Credit: Billy Hau
Global population is around 1300. Over 300 could be found in Hong Kong in winter. Classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.



短腳角蟾 Short-legged Toad
(*Xenophrys brachykolos*) Credit: Billy Hau
Classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Easily identifiable by the dark triangle marking between eyes.



棕尾褐鶇 Ferruginous Flycatcher
(*Muscicapa ferruginea*) Credit: Billy Hau
Very rare passage migrant in Hong Kong. Identified in flight by bright rump and tail. The first record in Lung Fu Shan was made on 22nd March 2006.



寶興歌鵲 Chinese Song Thrush
(*Turdus mupinensis*) Credit: Allen To
Only two records in Hong Kong so far. Clear black dots on underpart. Resident in South China.



赤胸鵲 Brown-headed Thrush
(*Turdus chrysolaus*) Credit: Allen To
Very rare winter visitor in Hong Kong. It stayed at Lung Fu Shan for more than half a month from mid February to early March in 2006.



Lung Fu Shan Wildlife

Lung Fu Shan Country Park, designated in 1998 by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, is the smallest (43 hectares) and newest country park in Hong Kong (AFCD 2006). It is located just behind the main campus of The University of Hong Kong. The majority of Lung Fu Shan is covered by forest. However, these forests are only 30 - 50 years old. The last major destruction to the vegetation of Lung Fu Shan happened during World War II when trees and shrubs were cut as firewood. Soon after the war, the government planted a lot of Brisbane Box (紅膠木 *Lophostemon confertus*) to repair the damaged land there (AFCD 2003). Brisbane Box is the most commonly planted exotic tree in Hong Kong and was introduced from Australia. After many years of protection from hill fire, natural regeneration also took place. The current forest is a mixture of Brisbane Box plantation and naturally regenerated native forest. The dominant species in the native forest include Short-flowered Machilus (短序潤楠 *Machilus breviflora*), Woolly Machilus (絨毛潤楠 *Machilus velutina*), Acronychia (山油柑 *Acronychia pedunculata*) and Ivy Tree (鵝掌柴 *Schefflera heptaphylla*).

Other than plants, the forest of Lung Fu Shan is also full of wildlife. There are more than 150 bird species roosting and feeding there (AFCD 2006). Common species such as Crested Bulbul and Japanese White-eye can be seen all year round. Many migrants like Grey-backed Thrush and Asian Brown Flycatcher can be found in the winter time. Ferruginous Flycatcher was recorded in Lung Fu Shan for the first time in March 2006. Brown-headed Thrush and Mugimaki Flycatcher are some rare wintering species of Lung Fu Shan. In the summer, insects, reptiles and amphibians are more active. Various species of butterflies, damselflies, frogs and snakes can be found. Mammals such as porcupines, civets, squirrels and barking deers are also living there and can be seen occasionally .

References:

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). (2003) The Peak. Friends of the Country Parks and Cosmos Books Ltd.
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). (2006) Available at: <http://www.afcd.gov.hk/>. Accessed on: 5 June 2006



香港湍蛙 Hong Kong Cascade Frog
(*Amolops hongkongensis*) Credit: Billy Hau
Classified as Near Threatened in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
Large, conspicuous adhesive discs on all digits.
Males with white and spiny nuptial pad on the first digit when breeding.



香港南海溪蟹 (*Nanhaipotamon hongkongense*)
Credit: Billy Hau
Easily identifiable by the red body colour.
Widely distributed in local streams.
It is partially terrestrial and can be found far from streams after heavy rain.



Lung Fu Shan Wildlife



灰背鶇 Grey-backed Thrush
(*Turdus hortulorum*) Credit: Allen To
Common winter visitor to Hong Kong. Identified by the red flank and black dots pattern at throat.



網絲蛱蝶 Common Mapwing
(*Cyrestis thyodamas*) Credit: Billy Hau
Can be found all year round. Female appears yellowish while male appears whitish.



棉紅椿 Hong Kong Stink Bug
(*Dysdercus cingulatus*) Credit: Billy Hau
Feeds on Malvaceae (錦葵科) plants. Characterised by distinctive blackspot on each of the wings. It will eject a smelly spray when disturbed.



大綠蛙 Green Cascade Frog (*Rana livida*)
Credit: Billy Hau
Common in Hong Kong. Found in streams in Lung Fu Shan. Secretes toxic and caustic milky fluid when disturbed or under stress



斑腿泛樹蛙 Brown Tree Frog
(*Polypedates megacephalus*) Credit: Allen To
Common in Hong Kong. Female frog will lay eggs on trees, shrubs or rocks. Pale brown in colour. Sometimes has a pale "X" marking on the back. Feeds on insects like beetles and flies



黑面神 Waxy Leaf (*Breynia fruticosa*)
Credit: Billy Hau
A common native shrub with oval leaves. Leaves will turn black when dried up. Roots and leaves are used as herbal medicine.



Infra-red Cameras

Camera-trapping

In biodiversity study, there are two methods for surveying larger mammals like civets and porcupines. They are live-trapping and camera-trapping by using infra-red triggered cameras. Camera-trapping is a more preferred technique than live-trapping because it causes no harm to the animals. Injury to the animal is sometimes unavoidable in live-trapping. This infra-red triggered camera works very well in forest and tall shrubland but it cannot be used in more open habitats where the cameras will be triggered by solar radiation.

Limitation

The most critical factor affecting the success of this method is the selection of trapping site. Setting cameras facing paths and roads where animals will walk is the most promising but most remote paths in Hong Kong are often used by hikers and disturbance to the cameras is common. Some cameras were stolen in the past. Thus, choosing less conspicuous paths inside the forest that are used mainly by animals is critical and may require some field experience.

The most common mammals 'captured' by camera traps include civets, barking deers and porcupines. It is also common to see birds like Blue Whistling Thrush and Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush.



赤麂 Indian Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*)

Credit: Elsa Lee

It is also called barking deer due to their distinctive barking calls. Common and widespread on hillsides areas in Hong Kong. It feeds on ripen fruits that dropped onto the ground.



黑喉噪鵲 Black-throated Laughingthrush (*Garrulax chinensis*)

Credit: Yau Ching Man

The bird is characterized by its white cheek and black throat. It is active in forest and shrubland understory and on the ground. Therefore, it is sometimes trapped by infra-red camera.



Infra-red Cameras



果子狸 Masked Palm Civet
(*Paguma larvata*) Credit: Dr. Corlett
Characterized by the dark and white pattern on its face and the white stripe running from the top of the head between the ears to the back. Produce a pungent odour when being attacked.



豪豬 Malayan Porcupine
(*Hystrix brachyura*) Credit: Elsa Lee
Nocturnal species living in ground caves and crevices in forests. Long quills on the bodies will be erected when threatened. Its diet includes fruit, bark, roots, leaves and succulent plants.



赤腹松鼠 Pallas's Squirrel
(*Callosciurus erythraeus*) Credit: Dr. Corlett
An arboreal rodent with long flexible bushy tail. Mainly feeds on figs and seeds in Hong Kong. This photo shows that the squirrel is attempting to steal artificial eggs in a nest.



黑緣齒鼠 Sikkim Rat
(*Rattus sikkimensis*) Credit: Elsa Lee
A common rat on Hong Kong's hillside. This one was caught red-handed stealing the bait from a camera trap.



七間狸 Small Indian Civet
(*Viverricula indica*) Credit: Elsa Lee
Characterized by black bands on the back and the tail. Feeds on birds, frogs, rodents, fruits and roots at night. The anal scent gland will give out a musky odour when the animal is disturbed.

