

Conservation Committee: AGM Report (June 2006 – May 2007)

This is a very busy year for the Conservation Committee. Among other things, six reports/feedbacks were formulated and submitted to the relevant authorities, which as usual generates a flurry of meetings, surveys and gathering of information with the assistance of the various special interest groups and other interested and concerned members of the Society.

1) The Gardens by the Marina Bay

NSS was invited to the Focus Study Group to examine the two winning designs of the International Design Competition in September 2006. A feedback was submitted in October 2006. The feedback emphasizes that considerations be given to the natural elements that have colonised the reclaimed lands & that the designs should incorporate them into the imposed scheme of things to project a tropical appeal. A completely built and artificial setting with razzle-dazzle ambience should be avoided. The points brought out is more to be emphasized in the design for Marina East.

2) Meeting with Agri-food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) on Poaching

A meeting was held with AVA in September 2006. The following proposals were mooted & discussed: a) Reducing wildlife poaching via legal & other means; b) re-instating Asian Glossy Starling, Purple-backed Starling & Common Myna back into Wild Animals & Birds Act (WABA); and c) legal measures to prevent use of & disposals of fishing nets in coastal & inland bodies of water. The report for AVA is underway pertaining to issues raised in points a) & b). As to point c) AVA has expressed that the issues are beyond their jurisdiction.

3) Seletar Regional Air-Hub Project

A biodiversity feedback was submitted to JTC & Nparks on December 2006. The Air-hub requires 140 ha of land - most of them outside the military camp. The Feedback proposes retaining isolated tall/mature trees & groves of trees around the golf course and the housing estate. Also, that the streams in the area should be left untouched. 89 bird species in the area with 4 species and 10 uncommon. The rare species are: Changeable Hawk Eagle, Grey-headed Fish eagle, Spotted Wood Owl & Crested Serpent Eagle. A couple of meetings was held with JTC. JTC has revealed that only a part of the golf course with the trees and the stream will be retained. The haunt of the Spotted Wood Owl will be developed. About 45 % of the old houses will be retained --- mostly in the Oval area. The Grey Heronry will not be touched although the project has acquired a big chunk of military land.

4) Sg Buloh Wetland Reserve (SBWR) Master Plan

A meeting was held with Nparks in November and a feedback report submitted in December 2007. The objectives of the Master Plan among other things is to make SBWR more relevant to Singaporean, a national & regional wetland hub, a vehicle to showcase environmental sustainability & co-existence with nature. The feedback emphasizes that the Master Plan should reflect the priority of protecting wetland birdlife --- in particular migratory shorebirds as the area was gazetted a Nature Reserve for such a purpose. Features & programmes to be introduced should not undermine this priority. The plan has not been finalised yet.

5) Sentosa Coastal Forest

NSS participated in the meeting-cum- familiarising walk organised by Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC) & Resorts World (RW) on 17 March 07 and pertaining to the integrated resort project. The integrated resort project includes an area (2.9 ha.) of extremely rare coastal forest along the island's northern-eastern shore. During the session it was also announced that there will be reclamation work along the coast east & west of the cable-car tower. The Resort World's plan for the coastal forest is still open & they will be taking into account seriously feedbacks given. NSS stand on the coastal forest here is that it should be preserved as it is, i.e., as a natural eco-system and not be converted into a garden or park. A copy each of NSS report/feedback on the coastal forest was submitted to SDC & Resorts World & Nparks.

6) Sg Ulu Pandan Woodland

A report on the woodland was submitted on 29 March 07 to HDB, URA & Nparks. The eastern part of the 70ha mature woodland is earmarked for a HDB housing scheme. 36 species of birds recorded in a rapid survey with many forest species such as the Changeable Hawk Eagle (nesting) , Grey-rumped Tree Swift, etc. The report proposes that the small housing scheme be shifted to two school compounds north of Sg Ulu Pandan or alternatively to the western part of the woodland which is less interesting in terms of biodiversity. Also it proposes that the woodland should be made into a public park with a nature core. A group of residents is also campaigning to save the woodland.

7) Marina South & Marina East

A report on the biodiversity highlights of these reclaimed areas was submitted to URA & Nparks on 9 April 2007. No proposals for new Nature Areas in the Singapore Green Plan (SGP) were put in this report. It is intended as a eco-guide to development and where existing habitats are important to persuade that these be integrated into the development plans as much as possible. Of particular note are several patches of woodlands and freshwater marshes, whose boundaries are marked out on Goggle maps for reference. In **Marina South**, there are 67 species of birds, 20 species of dragonflies & 18 species of butterflies. There are rare/endangered species in each of these taxa. In **Marina East**, there are 92 species of birds, 18 species of dragonflies & 11 species of butterflies . There are also rare/endangered species in each of these taxa, some of which overlapped those in Marina South.

8) PUB's ABC Waters Programme

A feedback report was submitted to PUB in May after a visit to the PUB Exhibition and discussion, as well as a field trip with a group of Conservation Volunteers to the ecologically important sites covered in the Programme. The feedback was formulated because insufficient attention was accorded to the biodiversity dimension in the plans & designs shown in the Exhibition. Three waterbodies were covered in the feedback: a) the Kranji Reservoir, b) the Lg Halus Ponds & Serangoon River, & c) the Kallang River. The feedback emphasizes the conservation of the existing freshwater marshes and their biodiversity in these waterbodies and proposes ways whereby they could be adequately protected and enhanced.

9) The Horseshoe Crab Project

The Horseshoe Crab rescue project undertaken by the Conservation Volunteers is still ongoing --- now led by Hsu Chia Chi. About 20 volunteers on the average has rescued 20—30 Horseshoes trapped in discarded nets in each trip. The group has embarked on data collection with regards to size, sex, maturity, nursery & spawning distribution in collaboration with Dr Tan Koh Siang of the Tropical Marine Science Institute. This will be a long-term project.



Acknowledgements:

The Conservation Committee would like to thank the following members for their valuable hands-on participation, supportive comments, information supplies and/or conceptual feedback to the various activities & reports:

Ali Jaafar, Alfred Chia, Alan Owyong, Angie Ng, Ben Lee, Cheong Loong Fah, Ching Chabo, Cyril Ng, Geh Min, Goh Si Gium, Gloria Seow, Hsu Chia Chi, Jimmy Chew, Joseph Lai, Joseph Lim, Julia McLachlan, Kelvin Chen, Khoo Meng Kuan, Lam Hon Pui, Leong Kwok Peng, Leow Yoon Li, Lim Kim Seng, Lioe Kim Swee, Lye Lin Heng, Margie Hall, Richard Hale, R. Subaraj, Serene Tang, Shawn Lum, Simon Chan, Sutari Supari, Stephen Lau, Tan Beng Chiak, Tan Choon Ming, Tan Hang Chong, Tan Peck Chan, Tan Siew Kwang, Tang Hung Bun, Vilma D’Rozario, Vina Dharmarajah, Willie Foo, Yap Chung Kui, Yap Von Bing.

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