

the public to reduce disturbance to this vulnerable species. (Mingpao Daily, 3.8.2003)

The Housing Authority (HA) developed a new technique which need not remove natural plantations to stabilise slopes. (Oriental Daily, 6.7.2003)

To improve cross-border efforts in tackling air pollution, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, which control the emission of greenhouse gases, were extended from the Mainland to Hong Kong. Although the protocol has not yet come into effect, it was anticipated that it would bring far-reaching social and economical implications. (SCMP, 29.5.2003)

Greenpeace campaigned for the introduction of mandatory labeling of genetically-modified (GM) ingredients in baby-food. However the government insisted that safety reviews on GM products could be taken into account prior to their release into the market and that such labeling should be voluntary. (SCMP, 28.4.2003)

Three, including the alpha-male which is the leader, from a pack of wild monkeys were trapped by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) in Tai Wai after complaints from the neighbourhood were received. It was pointed out that the monkey population in Hong Kong grew by about 5.5 % to 7.8 % a year, and the Department was testing contraceptive injections to control the monkey population. (SCMP, 2.6.2003)

Over ten thousand reptiles – 10,260 Malaysian box turtles and 17 box tortoises – were seized by Customs officers at Kwai Chung. With only four surviving reptiles, they had been intended for live sale in Guangdong. (SCMP, 11.7.2003)

Hong Kong SARS experts questioned why forestry officials in Guangdong decided to lift the ban on trade and transportation of wild animals, even though microbiologists detected SARS virus in civets and nearly 90 % of Guangdong residents were in favour of such legislation. (SCMP)

To find cleaner fuels and to improve air quality, Cheung Kong Infrastructure (CKI) and a Canadian-based company, Stuart Energy, invested in a one-year trial of a hydrogen-powered bus. Over the test period, the cost effectiveness of the vehicle and the technical feasibility of using the potential clean fuel, hydrogen, will be reviewed, and if it proves successful, this technology might be applied to buses in Hong Kong and on the mainland. (SCMP, 12.7.2003)

A Hong Kong triad was linked to the execution-style killings of two Hong Kong businessmen in Fiji in an apparent dispute over the shark fin trade. There is a billion-dollar-a-year trade between the South Pacific and Hong Kong. There is a lucrative shark fin trade operating out of Suva, the Fijian Capital and the murders were possibly due to a price war. (SCMP, 24.8. 2003)

WILD CORNER

Any sightings of civets, mongooses, ferret badgers, leopard cats, barking deer, pangolins and porcupines – live or dead – should be reported. Rare birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, or unusual behaviour by common species, are also of interest, as are rare or interesting invertebrates and plants. If you think it is interesting, our readers probably will! Please give dates, times and localities as accurately as possible

MAMMALS

On 11 April Kwok Hon Kai and Vincent Lai saw a **Javan Mongoose** (*Herpestes javanicus*) trying to attack a **Common Rat Snake** (*Ptyas mucosus*) on a fishpond bund near the embankment of the channelised Shenzhen River near Ho Hok Wai. The mongoose failed.



Paul Crow obtained an infra-red camera trap picture of a **Dog faced Fruit Bat** (*Cynopterus sphinx*) feeding on nectar of a banana flower in the lower agricultural/residential area of Tai Po Kau nature reserve. It was photographed on 26 March.



Yu Yat Tung, Jacqui Weir and Aidia Chan saw a **Small Indian Civet** (*Viverricula indica*) in shrubland near the top car park of Tai Mo Shan at around 10.30 am on 5 August. It was causing great disturbance to birds in the area.

Billy Hau and Jacqui Weir noticed a **Masked Palm Civet** (*Paguma larvata*) on the podium of the Kadoorie Biological Sciences Building, HKU, at around 8.45pm on 17 August. It appeared to move down the steps into the garden area below.

BIRDS

Kwok Hon Kai reported the following bird sightings:

A flock of 4 **Mountain Bulbuls** (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*) in Tai Po Kau on 29 March 03. Only six birds were seen in Tai Po Kau throughout winter 02/03.



Two juvenile **Rufous-capped Babbler** (*Stachyris ruficeps*) begging food from their parents in Tai Po Kau on 27 April.

A dead **Chinese Starling** (*Sturnus chinensis*) and a dead **Common Sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) right under a line designed to discourage cormorants from landing in fishponds in Lut Chau. The two birds may have died from collision with the line.

Yu Yat Tung mist-netted two **Large Grass Warblers** (*Graminicola bengalensis*) on Tai Mo Shan in July and early August. These birds have a restricted range in Hong Kong, and are found mainly in this area.

FISH

On 12 July, Captain Wong saw one **Raccoon Butterflyfish** (*Chaetodon lunula*) at Tung Wan, Double Island. Although this fish is regarded as rare in Reef Fishes of HK, this species has become more widespread in the few years since the publication of the book in 2000 (Andy Cornish, pers comm).

On 28 March, Ken Ching photographed a small frogfish at Kat O which was subsequently identified by Andy Cornish as a Striated frogfish (*Antennarius striatus*), a new species for Hong Kong. The frogfish was around 7-8 cm in length and was at 2 m depth.



AMPHIBIANS/REPTILES

One late afternoon in early May, Robert Davison saw two **Common Rat Snakes** (*Ptyas mucosus*) being mobbed by some sparrow-sized birds who seemed anxious to protect their nests. Many of the birds were in the area - in trees, bushes and on the ground, all chattering vociferously. One bird actually pecked one of the snakes.

Louis Cheung saw a **sea turtle** in Long Ke Wan, Sai Kung, on 10 August at around 11.30 am. It was about 100 cm in carapace width and was swimming about 20 m away from the rocky shore. It had a light brown head.

An adult **Big Headed Terrapin** (*Platysternon megacephalum*) was seen in a stream in Tai Mo Shan by Jacqui Weir on 31 July. It was resting on a rock and jumped into the water when approached.

Aidia Chan and Jacqui Weir found a road-killed **Chinese Slug Snake** (*Pareas chinensis*) in the upper car park of Tai Mo Shan on 6 August.

INSECTS

A rare male **dragonfly** *Rhodothemis rufa* was sighted by Kwok Hon Kai in a fishpond near Shenzhen River on 10 April.

Kwok Hon Kai saw a male *Rhyothemis triangulare triangulare* **dragonfly** in an abandoned fishpond near the Toll Plaza of Route 3 on 5 May. This species is uncommon in Hong Kong.



Recent Publications

Books, monographs etc.

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Hau, B.C.H. (2003). *Hillsides*. *Hong Kong Field Guides 3*. DEB & Wan Li Book Co. Ltd., Hong Kong.

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Lock, N.Y., & Hui, W.L. (2003). *Appreciating Wild Birds*. Friends of the Country Parks, Hong Kong.

Morton, B. (ed.) (2003). *Perspectives on Marine Environmental Change in Hong Kong and Southern China, 1977-2001*. Swire Institute of Marine Science, HKU, Hong Kong. [Details in the next issue].

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Williams, G.A. (2003). *Rocky Shores: Hong Kong Field Guides 1*. DEB & Wan Li Book Co. Ltd., Hong Kong.

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Zhang, L. (2003). An updated and annotated inventory of Hong Kong bryophytes. *Memoirs of the Hong Kong Natural History Society* 26: 1-133.

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Baker, D.B. (2002). On the identity of *Ceratina hieroglyphica* Smith (Insecta: Hymenoptera: Apoidea: Anthophoridae) [New HK species]. *Reichenbachia* 34: 357-373.

Bi, D.Y., Zhang, W.N., & Lau, C.S.K. (2001). Study on the walking stick insects (Phasmatodea) and the genus *Sipyloidea* from Hong Kong District of China. *Entomotaxonomia* 23: 253-258.

Bussaban, B., Lumyong, S., Lumyong, P., Hyde, K.D., & McKenzie, E.H.C. (2003). Three new species of *Pyricularia* are isolated as zingiberaceous endophytes from Thailand. *Mycologia* 95: 519-524.

Chan, B.K.K. (2003). Studies on *Tetraclita squamosa* and *Tetraclita japonica* (Cirripedia: Thoracica) II: Larval morphology and development. *Journal of Crustacean Biology* 23: 522-547.

Chandrasekar-Rao, A., & Musser, G.G. (1993). New distribution record for *Mus caroli*. *Mammalia* 57: 462-463. [Old and often overlooked!]