

## 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 fishes, 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

Kwok Hon Kai saw two **Javan Mongooses** (*Herpestes javanicus*) that had swum to an 'isolated island' in fishponds at Shan Pui on 3 June 2003.

Five **Javan Mongooses** (*Herpestes javanicus*) were seen by John and Jemi Holmes, playing on a concrete path between the AFCD warden and the tower hide in the Mai Po Nature Reserve on September 6 2003.

On 5 October 2003 at 6 am Dylan Thomas noticed a **Mongoose** (*Herpestes* sp.) cross the road and go into a building site in Braemar Hill, North Point.

John and Jemi Holmes took photos of a single **Mongoose** (*Herpestes* sp.) in Fung Lok Wai, Yueng Long on the afternoon of 2 November 2003.

On 22 September 2003 at 10 pm, Valery Garrett saw a **Porcupine** (*Hystrix brachyura*) on Mount Kellet Road near Matilda Hospital, walking with spines erect.

Martin Cadman and Dave Shepard saw a **Porcupine** (*Hystrix brachyura*) on the footpath between Lion Rock and Beacon Hill at around midnight on 21 October 2003.

While walking in Repulse Bay Gap on January 9 2004, Laura Wong and friends found freshly blood-stained **Porcupine** (*Hystrix brachyura*) spines, some attached to skin and muscle, spread over a distance of more than 200 m. The animal itself was not found.



At 5.25 pm on 26 December 2003, Tom Glenwright, Koji Hoshi, Yoshimi Hoshi and Yasuko Hoshi saw two adult **Porcupines** (*Hystrix brachyura*) and one small juvenile at the car park on the Pat Sin Leng Nature Trail near Ha Tsat Muk Kui.

A **Common Otter** (*Lutra lutra chinensis*) was sighted by Simon Dover on 14 October 2003 at 1.30 pm, crossing a village road at Tung Tze, Plover Cove. It was sighted at a distance of about 40-50 m and seemed to be a juvenile.

A **Chinese Leopard Cat** (*Felis bengalensis*) was seen on a road near Wah Shan Tsuen, Sheung Shui by John and Jemi Holmes on 24 October 2003, at 1.43 am.

Dylan Thomas found a dead **Masked Palm Civet** (*Paguma larvata*) in the open lawn area of Mt Austin Park on 25 November 2003. It was a young male, approximately 1 metre long.

On Sunday 14 December 2003 at about 5.30 pm John Allcock saw two **Barking Deer** (*Muntiacus* sp.) on the trail alongside Shek Pik Reservoir. He heard 2 other animals running into the woods further along the trail, probably also barking deer.

Ashley Whitfield found a dead **Ferret Badger** (*Melogale moschata*) on 1 January 2004. It was on the plateau between Ngong Ping and Pyramid hill in Ma On Shan Country Park.

Eric Chan saw a **Porcupine** (*Hystrix brachyura*) in Shing Mun Country Park (near the tourist centre) at around 6.30 pm on 7 January 2004.

### BIRDS

Kwok Hon Kai reported seeing the following birds:

A pair of **Mountain Bulbuls** (*Hypsipetes mccllellandii*) in Tai Po Kau in July 2003.

A flock of **Grey-checked Fulvettas** (*Alcippe morrisonia*) in Tai Po Kau on 20 September (20 birds) and 27 September 2003 (5 birds).



A **Chinese Pond Heron** (*Ardeola bacchus*) which caught and ate an **Indigo Dropwing** (*Trithemis festiva*) in a stream near the Yuen Yuen Temple on 19 November 2003.

Two **Lesser Shortwings** (*Brachypteryx leucophrys*) in Tai Po Kau on 29 November 2003.

A dead **Lanceolated Warbler** (*Locustella lanceolata*) on the way to Mai Po (near Tam Kon Chau) on 19 November 2003.



Captain Wong, Alan Leung and Mathew Sin watched two **White-bellied Sea Eagles** (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) mating at Sham Chung at about midday on 29 October. It lasted for about 10 seconds. Aggressive calls and wing beating were noted during the mating.

### FISH

On 26 July 2003, David Poon spotted a large number of the **Sea Urchin** *Salmacis sphaeroides* being beached upshore during low tide at Ting Kok. They were found by Jacqui Weir, Billy Hau and Aidia Chan in the same place the next day but were dead and being consumed by scavengers.

In summer 2003, Andy Cornish and Karen Qiu saw a **Filefish** (*Aluterus scriptus* Osbeck, 1765) at the marina in Clear Water Bay. It was about 15 cm long. The fish is locally rare (Sadovy and Cornish, 2000), but another individual was encountered in an intertidal area within Cape d'Aguilar Marine Reserve by Avis Ngan and Jasmine Ng.



Kwok Hon Kai and Captain Wong saw two male **Gobies** (*Stiphodon* sp.) at a lowland stream in Starling Inlet on 19 November 2003. This genus has not previously been recorded in the New Territories.

### AMPHIBIANS/REPTILES

Robert Davison saw a young **King Cobra** (*Ophiophagus hannah*) at 4 pm on August 23, on a Water Services Department access road in Shatin. It was about 45 cm long.

Dylan Thomas found a dead **Coral Snake** (*Calliophis maccllellandi*) at Mt Austin on the Peak on the morning of 15 October 2003. It was just under 50 cm long. He also found a **Rufous Burrowing Snake** (*Achalinus rufescens*) at the end of October; it was about 15-20 cm long.



A **Python** (*Python molurus bivittatus*) was photographed in Sai Kung on 18 October 2003, regurgitating its prey. Photos were sent by Gary Ades. See *Porcupine!* website.



### INSECTS

Laura Newman, plus Martin, aged 6 and Nicholas, aged 3, of Discovery Bay, raised an **Oleander Hawk Moth** (*Daphnis nerii*) caterpillar in early November. It became a moth around 10 cm in diameter. It may be the first record of the Oleander Hawk Moth from Lantau Island.

