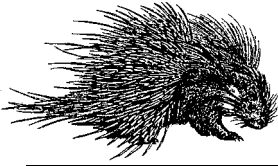


# Porcupine!



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Newsletter of the Department of Ecology & Biodiversity, The University of Hong Kong

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## Editorial

Environmental, as well as consumer, awareness is growing in Hong Kong. Look out for the brand new book by David Dudgeon and Richard Corlett on "The Ecology and Biodiversity of Hong Kong" (full reference is on p. 27). Check the WWF-HK website for their consumer education campaign on the humphead wrasse ([www.wwf.org.hk](http://www.wwf.org.hk)), and visit the related display at the atoll reef exhibit of Ocean Park. A voluntary set of standards for the capture and handling of live food is being developed by several NGOs and should be released shortly, and there are other local projects on consumer awareness around the corner. A new magazine on the marine aquarium trade, Aqua-Zone, carries a conservation as well as hobbyist message ([info@aqua-zone.com.hk](mailto:info@aqua-zone.com.hk)). Good news, indeed, for those of us who want to know more about Hong Kong's biodiversity or who, though avid, would also like to be responsible, consumers.

YS

## News from DEB

Another academic year has finished and, once again, the staff of DEB have managed to survive the marking of nightmarish piles of examination scripts and student dissertations. The students too seem, on the whole, to have come through the exam ritual more-or-less intact. Examination marking can be a disquieting experience: things that you thought had been taught clearly turn out to have been rather muddled, and matters which were passed over in a few moments in lecture 7 have somehow acquired momentous import. Fortunately, for every student who seems determined to answer the exam question that you did not set, there is at least one who quite brilliantly answers the question you actually did set. I was pleased to discover that one undergraduate scored a combined mark of 95% in the assessments for 'Freshwater Ecology'; this was a notable achievement since I had not taught the course before and there were no crib notes or prior exam papers for students to rely on. Another student managed to obtain an outstanding 100% in 'Ecology of Hong Kong' taught by Richard Corlett. Hopefully, this means that we are doing some good.

The issue of what we, as a department, are achieving is at the forefront of my mind at present. Not just because another research assessment exercise is looming, but also because July 1 2004 is the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Department of Ecology & Biodiversity. So however well we do what it is that we do, we have now been doing it for a decade. Ten years may sound like a long time but to me – and, I suspect, those colleagues who have been in the department since it was established – it does not seem long at all. I recall vividly the feeling that we were setting out on a new adventure, and (perhaps a less pleasant recollection) the experience of trying to carve out a departmental office in a cramped and over-crowded academic building. Thank goodness we now occupy spacious premises in the Kadoorie Biological Sciences Building.

Before I finish a couple of other matters should be mentioned. First, is to welcome of Dr Ming Sun, a Croucher Foundation Fellow from Huazhong Agricultural University who will be working on the molecular biology of bacteria with Dr Ji-dong Gu's research group for six months. And, secondly, DEB would like to welcome back to Dr Yvonne Su, who obtained her PhD last year under the supervision of Dr Richard Saunders. She rejoins DEB in mid-June as a Post-doctoral Fellow working on plant systematics.

It remains for me to wish DEB a happy 10<sup>th</sup> birthday!

**David Dudgeon**

### Lim Chi Lan

It is with sadness that we report the death of Ms Lim Chi Lan, Gillian, who recently completed her studies in the second year of the Environmental Life Science Programme. Gillian was travelling in Tibet with friends at the time of her death. I am sure that readers of *Porcupine!* will join me in expressing condolences to her family and friends, and deep sympathy for her loss.