

WWF Hong Kong has been proposing a conservation trust for Hong Kong since the early 1990s to enable better and more coordinated management in the long term of small and scattered biodiversity hotspots. When the new policy was announced in 2004, the government also indicated that the practicality of establishing a nature conservation trust would be investigated. The major advantage of a conservation trust is that long-term conservation management on these different sites under a Management Agreement or a PPP could be centralized for more effective and efficient implementation.

Recently, Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG) has studied the National Trust and the National Trust for Scotland in the UK and produced an excellent report on the function and the legal, structural and operational requirements of a conservation trust for Hong Kong. KFBG also organized a workshop on this in March 2006, involving different stakeholders. Meanwhile, the New Territories Heung Yee Kuk (HYK), the official body representing the rural residents, especially the indigenous people of Hong Kong, also wants a conservation trust. The Vice-chairman of HYK, Hon. Cheung Hok Ming, tabled a motion in the Legislative Council on 15 June 2005 concerning the conservation policy. In his motion debate, he urged the government to set up a conservation trust for Hong Kong. In August 2006, in the HYK's submission to the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR concerning the 2006/07 Policy Address, the same request was made.

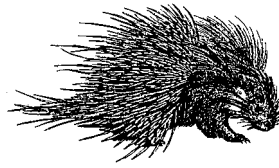
Environmental NGOs and the HYK used to stand on the opposite sides in previous conservation battles in Hong Kong, in fights between biodiversity conservation and land owners' rights for development. Despite differences in opinion on the structure, function and operation of the conservation trust between the two sides, it has been agreed that the first step is to get the government to agree to the establishment of a trust, other issues to be sorted out later. At the time of writing, the two sides are trying to come up with a joint statement to push the government on this issue. The consensus in the public domain is apparent. The major set-up funds of the trust, if not coming from the government, will come from the PPP developers. Now that the PPP scheme is stuck, the pressure is on the government. Hong Kong has long positioned itself as Asia's world city² and it is shameful that biodiversity conservation is not recognized as a "public purpose" in a world city in the 21st century.

Billy C. H. Hau

¹ <http://www.afcd.gov.hk/misc/NewNatureConservationPolicy/eng/index.html>

² <http://www.info.gov.hk/info/sar5/easia.htm>

Porcupine!



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Editorial

In August 2000, Richard Corlett and I first took over the reins from *Porcupine's* then-Chief Editor Graham Reels and his colleagues at KARC and DEB. DEB had recently moved into the new Kadoorie Biological Sciences Building and we were busy adjusting and adapting to our new living space. The legacy we took on with *Porcupine!* was one that sought to disseminate information on wildlife observations, provide (provoke at times) a forum for discussion, and communicate environmental and ecological research and issues. Going back over the 12 issues since we started, I am pleased to say that we have stayed fairly well on track.

What has changed since 2000 is the relative number of environmentally related articles, many of them reflecting concern for various environmental issues, increasingly articulated by students. We have also become web-based and this has meant that web searches have access to our articles, greatly extending our reach, and that we can make better use of the lovely colour photos that we formerly had to reproduce in black and white. We now have a new and vibrant Environmental Life Science Society, which formation clearly addressed a real need by ELS students, and, there is new editorship for *Porcupine!*

Dr. Billy Hau and Dr. Kenny Leung have graciously accepted the *Porcupine!* challenge. They will be expertly assisted by Ms. Rachel Wong and Ms. Laura Wong, who, over the years, have assembled, massaged and webbed-up *Porcupine!*, learning with us as we moved from hard to soft formats and completely into the electronic age. Rachel and Laura have been, and will continue to be, invaluable members of the *Porcupine!* team, and we are most grateful to them both for all their hard and patient work over the years. Thank you! Finally, a big 'thank you' to all who have contributed articles, letters, insights, comments and materials over the years. Please continue to support *Porcupine!*

Over and out, Yvonne and Richard



News from DEB

Welcome back, to a new semester, a new academic year, a new Dean of Science, and some exciting postings for several of our 'old' colleagues. The Faculty of Science welcomes Professor Sun Kwok to HKU from the University of Calgary in Canada. Professor Kwok joined the Faculty in February, and is a renowned astronomer. We congratulate Dr. Andy Cornish for his move from DEB and SWIMS to WWF-HK in the important role of Director of Conservation, and Dr. Yixin Zhang, until very recently a Research Assistant Professor in DEB and our salamander expert, who has just started his new Faculty position at the State University of Texas at San Marco. Congratulations and good luck to both Andy and Yixin in these important moves. Dr. Yvonne Sadovy is now the Deputy Head of DEB with a special responsibility to work towards our integration into the new School of Biology. The School, which will unite the three biological departments under one umbrella, will become a reality on 1 July 2007. The current scheme for organization of the School (as approved by the University Senate) envisages that DEB will largely continue as a 'Division of Ecology & Biodiversity', along side two other Divisions. I am also pleased to announce my reappointment as Head of DEB.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to say goodbye and thank you to Richard Corlett and Yvonne Sadovy as co-editors of *Porcupine!* After presiding over 12 issues, both feel it is time to pass on the pen (or, increasingly, the PC) for others to shape the issues. Dr. Billy Hau and Dr. Kenny Leung have, generously, taken up the *Porcupine!* challenge.

David Dudgeon

Feedback

Dear *Feedback*,

We refer to the book review on "A Field Guide to the Amphibians of Hong Kong" published in the latest issue of *Porcupine!* 33. We are pleased to see that our book has captured the attention of your reviewer and will make good use of his constructive comments in a future revision of the book. Nevertheless, we are deeply disappointed by the approach adopted which, to our concern, would prejudice fellow readers of *Porcupine!* against the field guide before they have the opportunity to read it. Wording and remarks such as "some hooligan at AFCD or Cosmos Books", "migraine-inducing dog's dinner", "ghastly, clamorous jumble of overlapping amphibian photographs" and "recommend it to non-epileptics" are certainly out of place for a newsletter of the reputable Department of Ecology and Biodiversity of The University of Hong Kong.

We respect *Porcupine!* as a highly acclaimed newsletter which has a large readership in particular among fellow ecologists and nature enthusiasts in Hong Kong. However, we regret to see that a book review with such inappropriate wording is being published. We sincerely hope that any book reviews in *Porcupine!* in future could be done in a constructive and respectful manner.

Simon Chan, K.S. Cheung, C.Y. Ho, F.N.
Lam, W.S. Tang
(Herpetofauna Working Group, Agriculture,
Fisheries and Conservation Department)

Michael Lau
(Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden)

Anthony Bogadek
(St. Louis School)

Authors of "A Field Guide to the
Amphibians of Hong Kong"

[**Editor's note:** It should be noted that views expressed in all articles published in *Porcupine!* represent those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Ecology & Biodiversity.]

Dear *Feedback*,

I refer to Graham Reels's review of the 'Field Guide to the Dragonflies of Hong Kong' by Keith DP Wilson in *Porcupine!* 32: 20-21. Although Graham was, on the whole, complimentary about the book, for which I am grateful, he gave the impression that the book was largely a one-man production. The book, now in its second edition, was written in collaboration with Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation