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INCREDIBLE ANIMAL PORTRAITS



From Barren Hill to Haven of Hope
Conservation Champion Extraordinaire
A Tribute to Jimmy Chew





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NSS Exco's Message

NSS is celebrating our 70th anniversary in 2024. It is with great gratitude and pride that we reflect on and commemorate the remarkable journey of the Society. For seven decades, NSS has stood as a beacon of hope, advocacy, and action for nature conservation, dedicated to protecting the natural treasures of Singapore and the region.

The 'body' of NSS comprises its structure. Just as nature evolves and adapts, NSS has and will continue to do so. Over the last year, NSS has embarked on a journey of evolution and adaptation as we seek to be more effective and relevant. We have conducted strategic planning retreats to guide us in our focus areas over the next five years. Taking in members' feedback and inputs, we have formulated our vision and mission statements. You might have noticed your contributions in our refreshed logo and tagline Planet | People | Partners. We have adjusted our policies and work processes as well as grown our staff team to meet the increasing demands and workload of the Society.

The 'heart' of NSS – our shared core values and commitment to conservation – remains firmly grounded, amidst the changes to the NSS 'body'. Aspiring to be Singapore's leading advocate of tropical biodiversity and habitats, NSS continues to be committed to our mission of conservation, engagement, education, advocacy, and research. Through partnerships and an evidence-based approach, we aim to create a sustainable and resilient future for Singapore's natural heritage and wider ecosystem. Our advocacy, engagements, and flagship programmes such as the Rewilding Project, Every Singaporean a Naturalist (ESN) programme and the annual Singapore Bird Race cultivate a growing love for nature, especially amongst our students and youth who will become the next generation of leaders. This June, we are honoured to be hosting the 5th IUCN International Horseshoe Crab Conference (www.iucnhsc2024.org.sg). This powerful platform will gather marine scientists and conservationists from around the world to discuss science and formulate plans to better protect horseshoe crabs.

Finally, the 'soul' of NSS – our members, volunteers, and staff – is what sustains the Society. It is through the tireless efforts of our people and the generosity of our donors that we can achieve many meaningful milestones in our conservation journey. As we navigate the next phase, we wish to express our deepest gratitude to our past and present members, volunteers, donors, partners, and staff who have contributed to NSS in our 70-year history. Singapore's nature areas and wildlife are better because of you. Continue to join us in this exciting journey, in whatever ways you can, to safeguard our natural treasures for generations to come.

Here's to 70 sterling years of conservation, to all of you whose passion and dedication have made it possible, and to more good years to come.



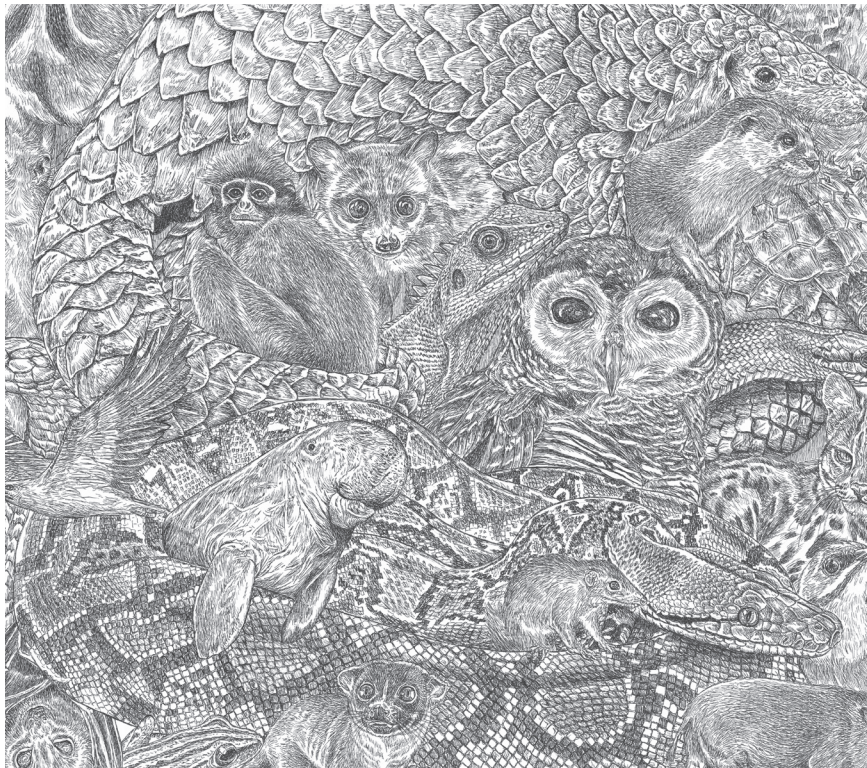
With utmost gratitude,

Albert Liu

Executive Committee Member

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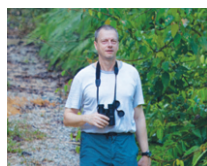
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NATURE WATCH

Official Magazine of Nature Society (Singapore)

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We welcome your articles, surveys, studies, observations, artworks and photo essays on biodiversity, natural history, conservation and related fields. Please email your story proposal to contact@nss.org.sg. Do include samples of your photographs (maximum 20 images per submission). We require high resolution JPEG images (ideally uncropped) in the largest size available, labelled with a descriptive file name.

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Incredible Animal Portraits

With ever meticulous strokes, wildlife artist **Qiu Quan**, known to friends as Joe Ong, captures the portraits of animals with incredible detail. This former zookeeper shares with *Nature Watch* the inspiration and motivation behind his art.

By **QIU QUAN**

I became interested in art as a child, watching my older brother sketch and tell stories. Then I started drawing on any paper I could get my hands on. Even the tear-off daily calendars that were common in those days were filled with my doodles.

I went on to study at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and graduated with a Diploma in Graphic Design. However, I preferred working outdoors rather than indoors and became a zookeeper instead. That was when I developed a passion for wildlife and conservation.

As a keeper at Mandai Wildlife Group for some 20 years between 2001 and 2023, I cared for a wide range of taxa, from mammals like the Sunda Slow Loris, Clouded Leopard and African Lion, to reptiles, fishes and birds. I am particularly drawn to snakes because of their diversity, beauty and mesmerising movements. Naturally, I often capture the serpentine form in my artwork.

My preferred medium is ink on paper using the Rotring technical pen. Through my art, I aim to highlight the beauty and diversity of wildlife. My ultimate goals are to foster an appreciation for our natural heritage and raise awareness of conservation threats.



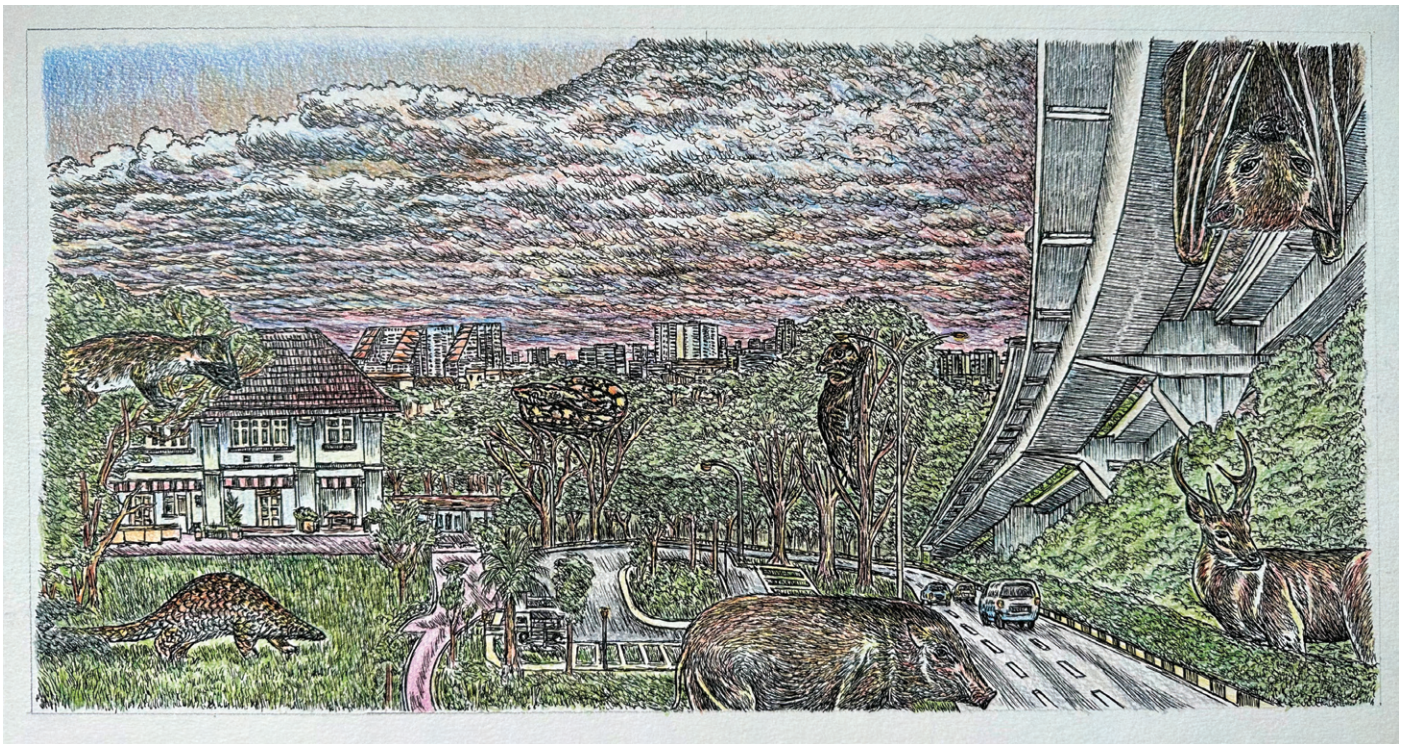
Qiu Quan (Joe Ong) is a Singapore-based visual artist who is particularly interested in wildlife. He graduated from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) in Singapore with a Diploma in Graphic Design, after which he pursued his passion for wildlife.

Between 2016 and 2018, I lived in Western Australia for a year and a half and was involved in native wildlife rehabilitation. During my sojourn, I had the opportunity to pursue my art full-time, incorporating Australian wildlife into my repertoire. I was privileged to showcase my work in several Australian exhibitions including Heartwalk 2018 which featured a collection of murals in Kalgoorlie as well as at Fremantle Art Centre between 2018-2019.

Aside from intricate animal portraits, I illustrated two children's books *Hidden Creatures* and *Quirky Creatures* written by Eliza Teoh and Mary-Ruth Low. Both books feature Singapore wildlife. I was a finalist in the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation's Wildlife Artist of the Year 2022 competition. In 2023, I collaborated with two zookeeper colleagues to produce a 178 cm by 84 cm montage of animals for the Singapore Zoo's Golden Jubilee celebrations. In October that year, I was deeply honoured to hold a solo exhibition *Wild Visions – A Zookeeper's Artistic Odyssey* at Studio Miu and The Centrepoint for the first time.

Having left the zoo, I now assist with wildlife rescue and management in Singapore. You can find me on Instagram @qiu_quan. Here, I present a selection of my wildlife drawings with descriptive notes. 🌿

Facing page: TAXA: FELIDAE – I worked with numerous felid species during my years at the Singapore Zoo. Felids are rather difficult to draw especially their coat patterns.



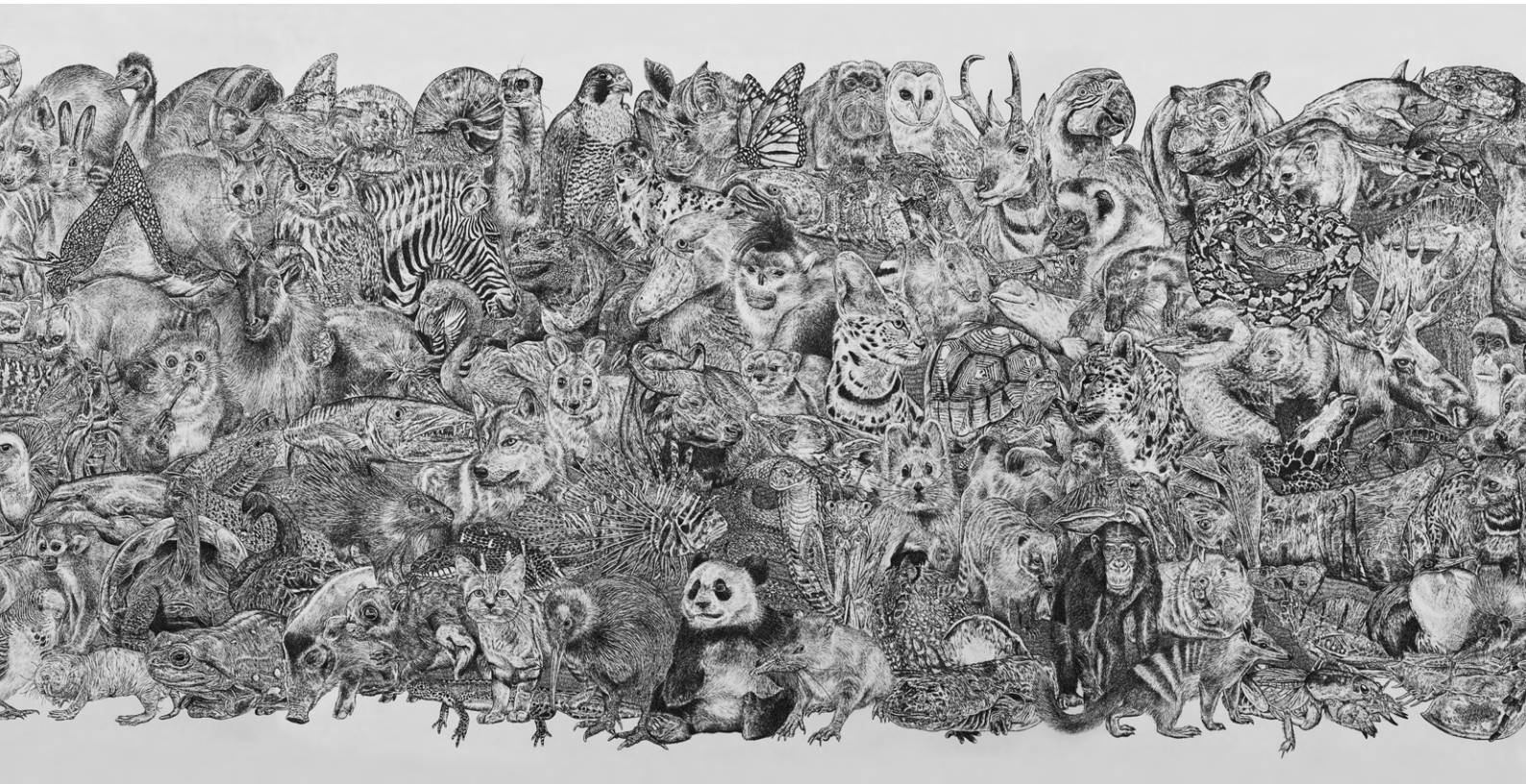
Above: Illustration taken from the children's book *Hidden Creatures* published in 2020 by Epigram. The story is about discovering the nocturnal animals living amongst us.

Right: A Brahminy Blind Snake discovers the wonders of the world around her, including meeting a Bamboo Bat. Illustration taken from the children's book *Quirky Creatures* published in 2022 by Epigram.



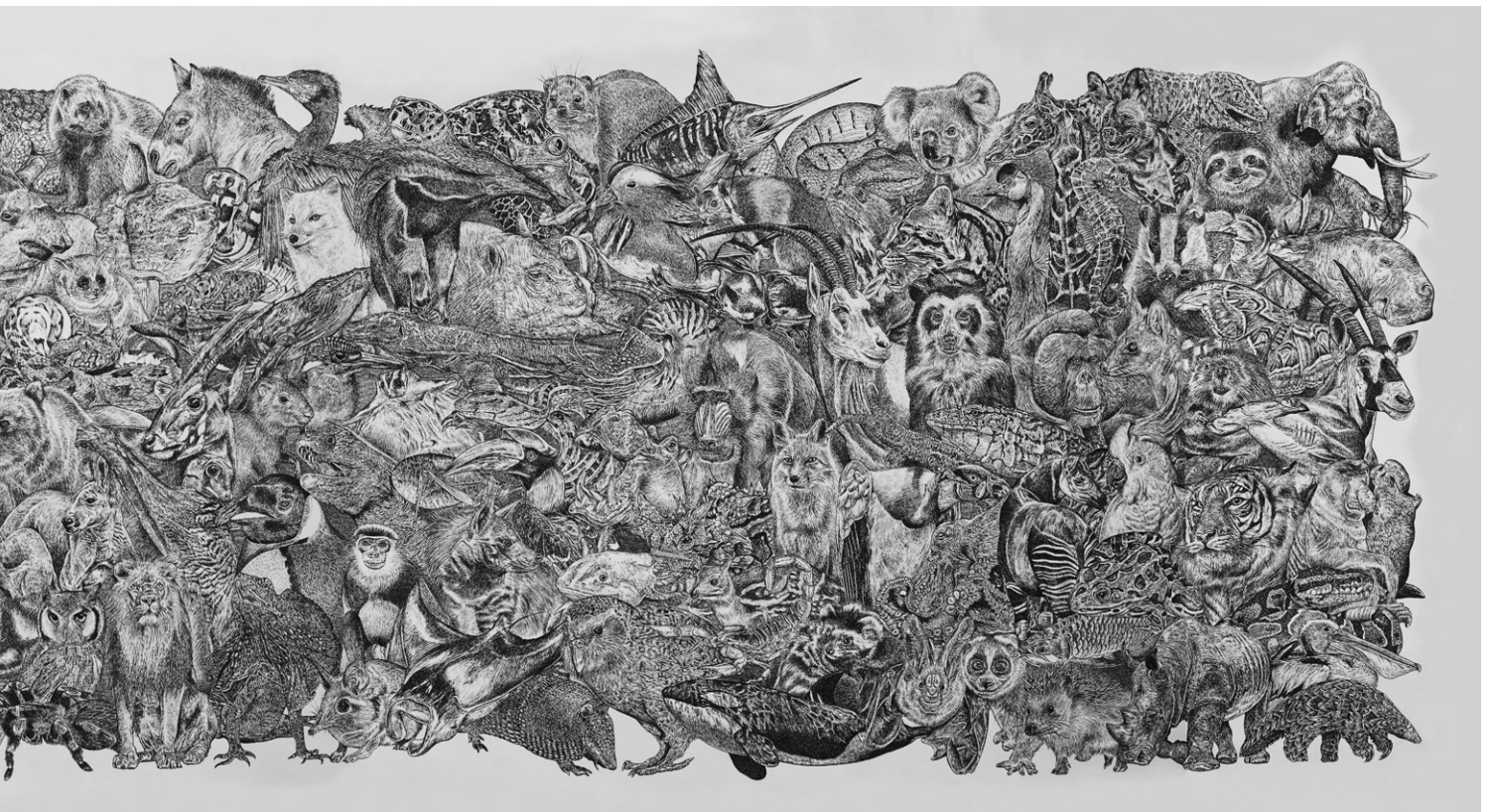
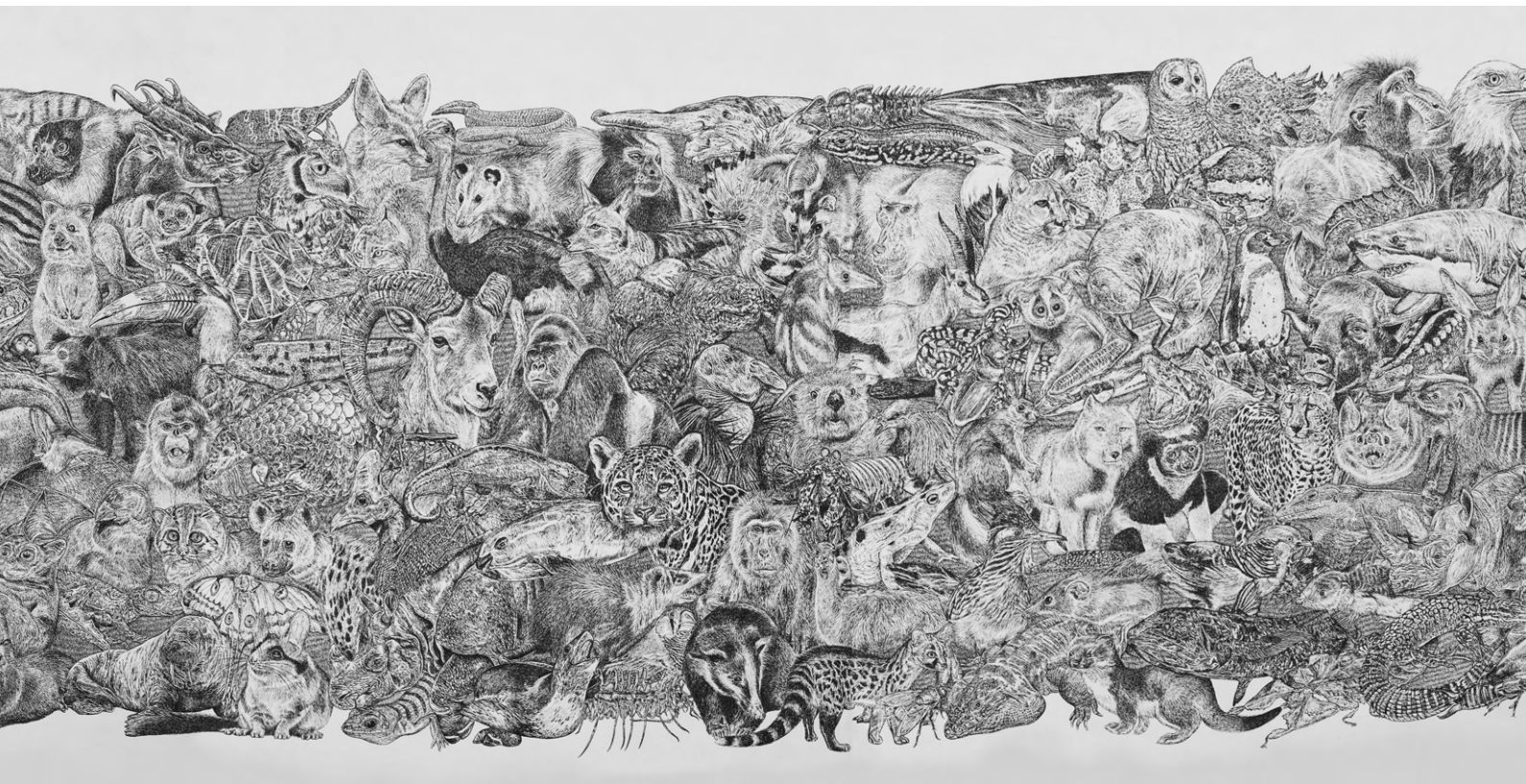


AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE – This piece was done for the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Art Prize 2018. It features fauna from across Australia.

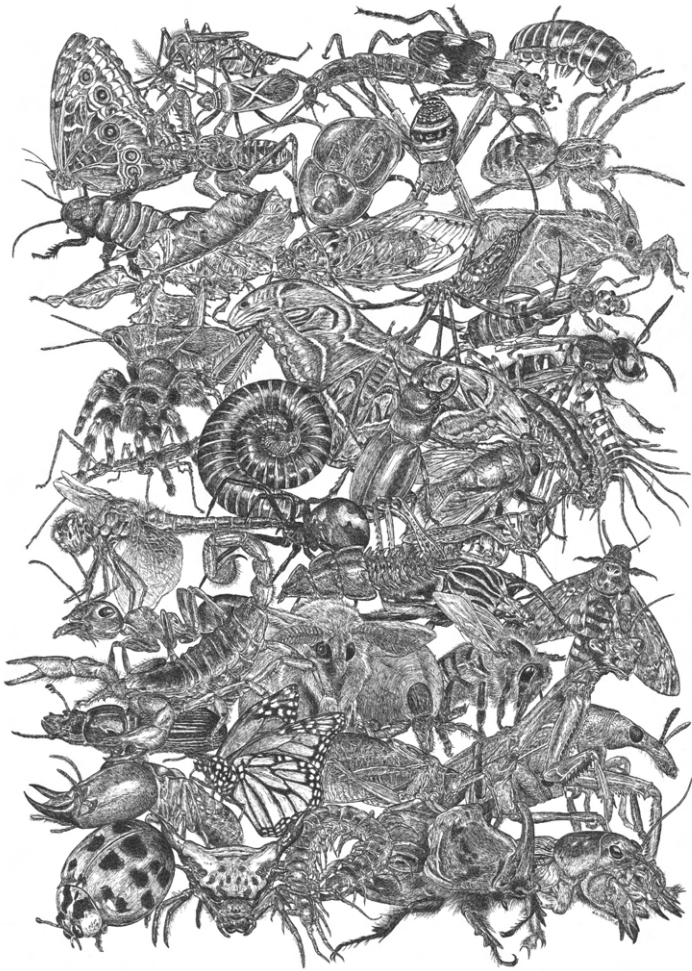


ONCE A ZOOKEEPER – This artwork was created during my time in Australia when I was on hiatus from being a zookeeper. It depicts biodiversity in all its glory, both vertebrates and invertebrates.

Editor's Note: The original piece is 10 m long. Two segments are presented across this double page spread, with a small portion left out due to space constraints.



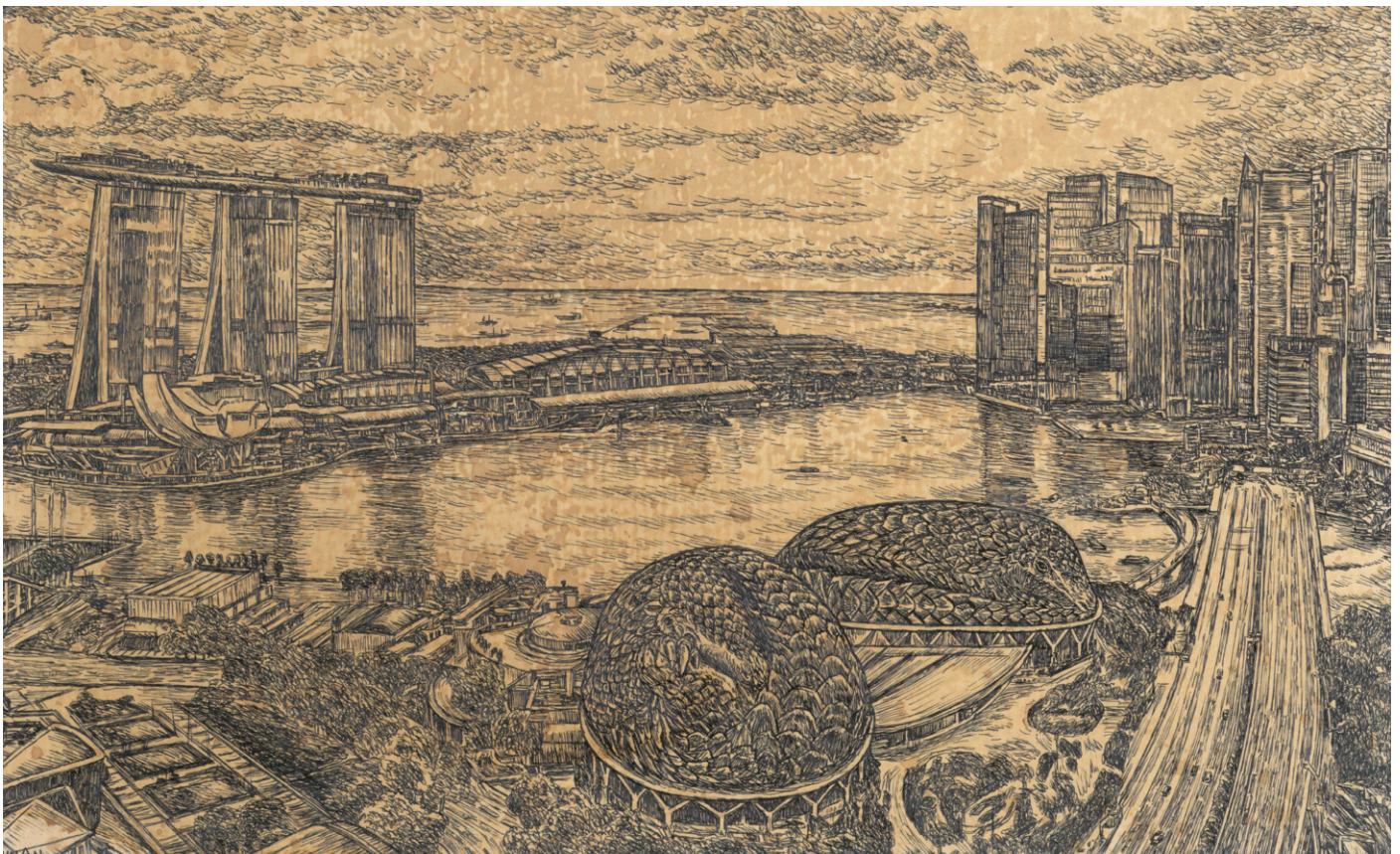
As a keeper at Mandai Wildlife Group for some 20 years between 2001 and 2023, I cared for a wide range of taxa.



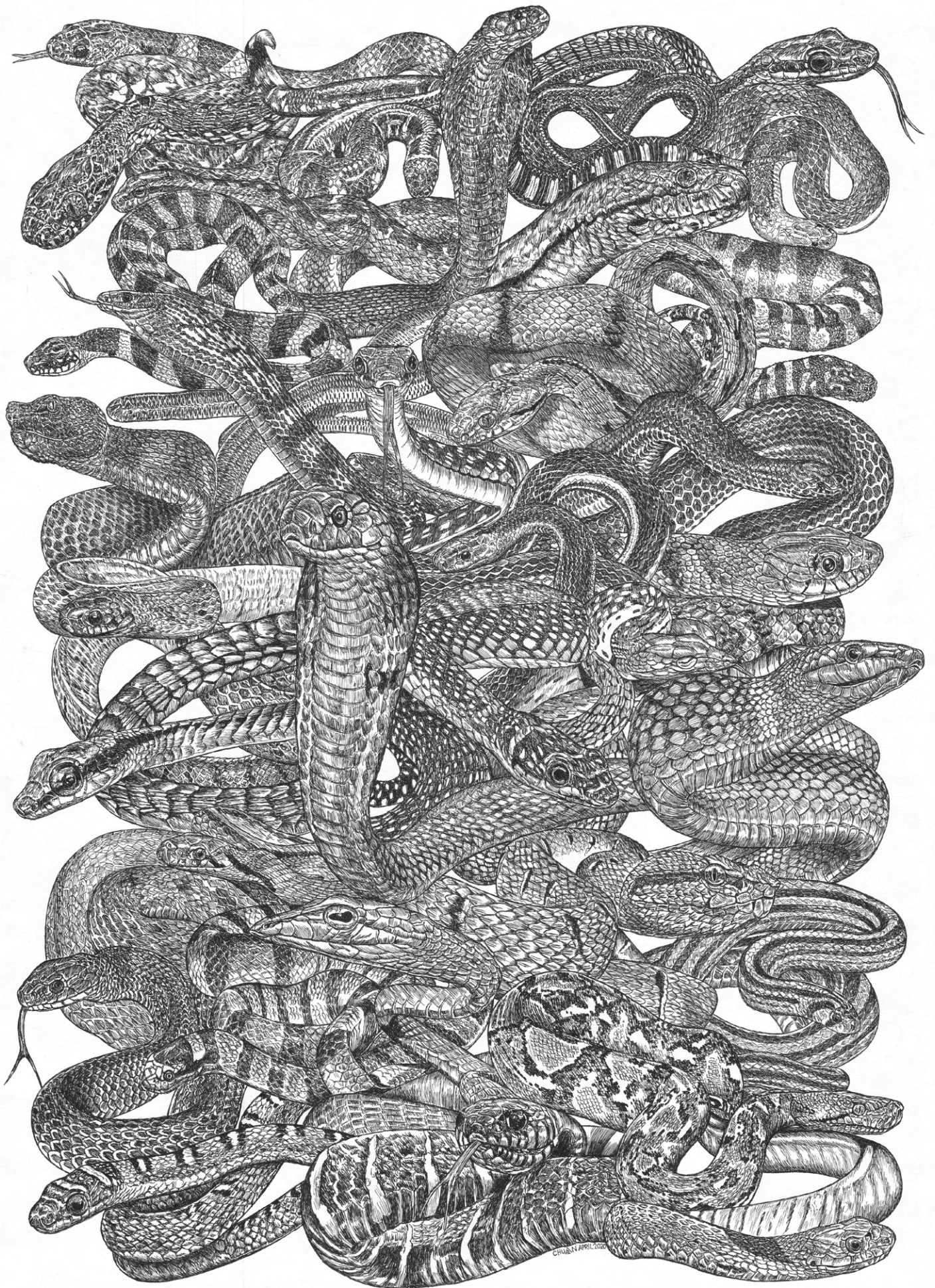
TAXA: ARTHROPODS – Arthropods are fascinating but difficult to place within a collage due to their many legs.



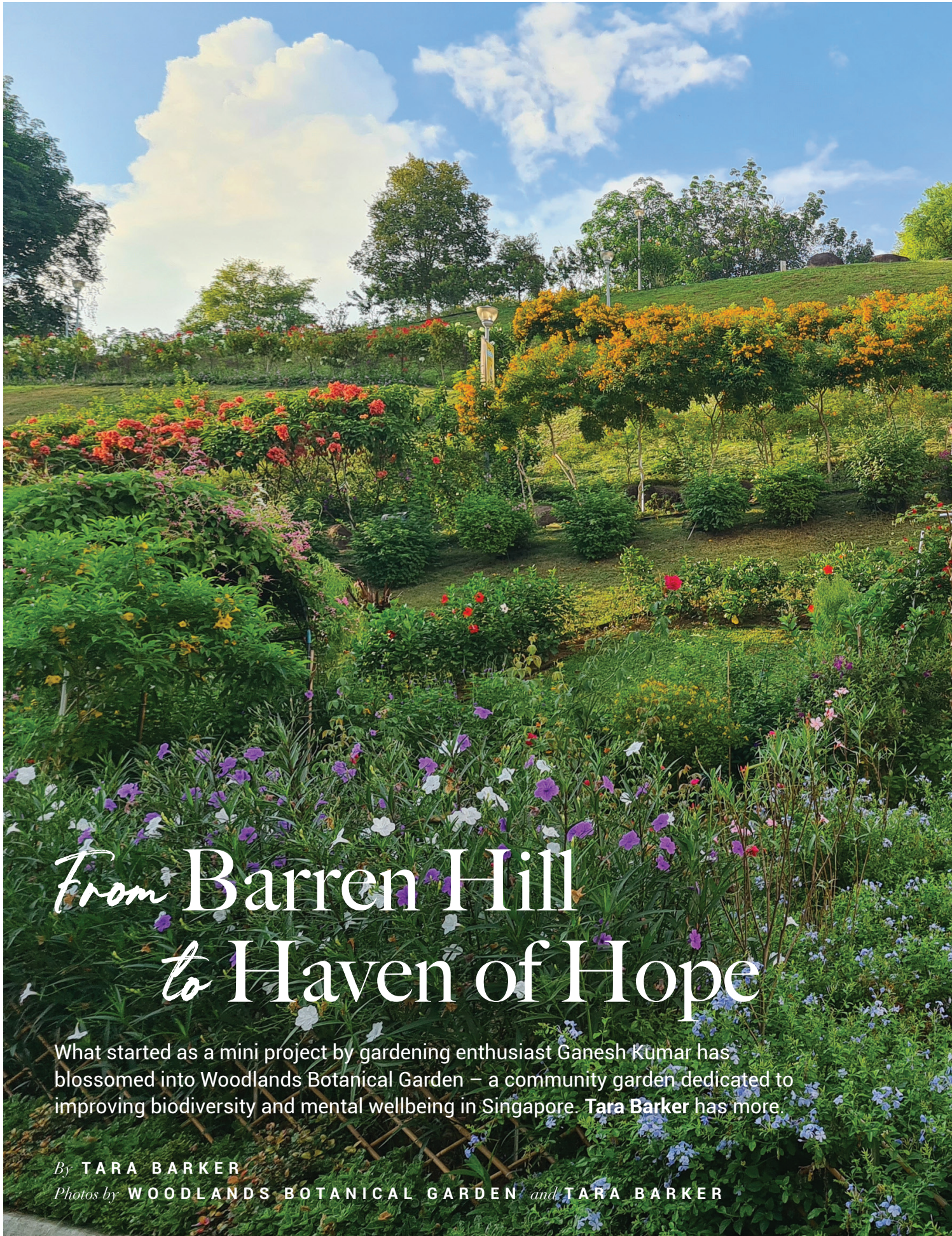
TAXA: UNGULATES – My job used to involve caring for ungulates like giraffes, oryxes and zebras. They can be challenging to look after, given their naturally distrustful nature and their sensitivity to disturbance.



SOME SAY DURIAN I SAY PANGOLIN – The Esplanade is said to look like a durian, but to me it resembles a pangolin.



Singapore Snakes are my favourite subject matter.



From Barren Hill *to* Haven of Hope

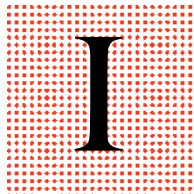
What started as a mini project by gardening enthusiast Ganesh Kumar has blossomed into Woodlands Botanical Garden – a community garden dedicated to improving biodiversity and mental wellbeing in Singapore. **Tara Barker** has more

By **TARA BARKER**

Photos by **WOODLANDS BOTANICAL GARDEN** and **TARA BARKER**

Woodlands Botanical Garden (WBG) is an award-winning community garden spanning over 4,000 square metres. Located at Woodlands Town Park East, it covers a hill about nine storeys high with flowers and trees.





It all started in 2020 when full-time chemistry tutor Ganesh Kumar lost his mother. To cope with his grief, he planted a few of her favourite Hibiscus flowers (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) on a grass patch at the northern slope of Woodlands Town Park East. “There was only wild Lalang grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) growing at that time. Few walked there. It was a very quiet space and felt sad. So I thought, why not plant some colourful flowers to cheer people up? Planting flowers brought back good memories. My earliest recollections are of gardening with my parents and grandparents,” Ganesh reflected.

As he worked the earth, neighbours stopped by to admire the flowers and chat. “Something about being in nature opens people up,” Ganesh said. “It was surprising how many folks shared their stories. I realised that everyone faced their own problems in life. That was when I became inspired to make the space into a mental wellbeing garden. A place where people can reconnect with nature. We all go through difficult times, but with gardening we can make something beautiful out of them.”

Ganesh applied to the National Parks Board (NParks) for permission to make the garden permanent and reached out to more volunteers. Today his little gardening project has grown manifold to become Woodlands Botanical Garden (WBG), an award-winning community garden spanning over 4,000 square metres. It covers a hill about nine storeys high with flowers and trees. WBG is home to 350 plant species including 250 ornamental plants. It offers a spectacular range of flowering plants not commonly found elsewhere. Native bees, butterflies and birds call it home.

Biodiversity in Bloom

Ganesh has always loved flowers. He admitted that his interest in biodiversity came later. “My gardening then was very neat and manicured. If a flower was pretty, I planted it. I did not think about what butterfly it could feed. Then the world went into Covid lockdown. It was hard to get out and weed the garden. It became quite messy in places,” Ganesh recalled. “At first, I was upset. But then I saw that it was a blessing in disguise. More bees and butterflies appeared. I realised that birds prefer nesting in messy trees as the profusion of leaves and branches provide more shelter. That was when I decided to actively encourage biodiversity.”

Today it is hard to imagine that this hill, located next to an HDB (Housing Development Board) estate, used to be barren and empty. Birds and butterflies now zip through the dappled shade, while ponds shimmer with fish and dragonflies. Many are endangered beauties, including the black and yellow Common Birdwing (*Troides helena Cerberus*), the largest butterfly in Singapore.



“Something about being in nature opens people up. It was surprising how many folks shared their stories. I realised that everyone faced their own problems in life. That was when I became inspired to make the space into a mental wellbeing garden.”

Founder of WBG Ganesh Kumar poses next to a Blue Bell Vine, planted to attract bees as they see the colour blue best.

Ganesh confessed that he had no idea that it was endangered until one of his gardening volunteers told him. “He is half my age but he is so knowledgeable about butterflies. He supplied information on the vines and flowers that the Common Birdwing needs for it to thrive.”

Teamwork Grows Success

This spirit of collaboration is the key to the garden’s success. Botany and wildlife experts from specialist groups shared tips on how to attract rare local bees and birds. A roster of volunteers does the gardening and maintenance. They include student groups from Republic Polytechnic, police cadets, mental health advocates, musical groups, animal befrienders and more. “People like to be involved because it is uplifting to be outside in nature. Sometimes we feel that we cannot do much about global warming or animals facing extinction. But when people see that even a small biodiversity garden can make a difference, they realise that their efforts can have a big impact,” Ganesh mused.

Even when surrounded by blooming joy, Ganesh acknowledged that it is not easy to manage a community garden. There is the constant struggle for funding, the tireless work of maintenance, and even the ordeal of vandals. Plants have been stolen, yanked up and tossed aside to die. He found this especially upsetting because many of the



A sampling of some of the plants thriving at Woodlands Botanical Garden.



Regular volunteers at WBG have shaped it into a community garden dedicated to improving biodiversity and mental wellbeing.

plants were carefully nurtured from seeds or cuttings by volunteers.

Despite the setbacks, Woodlands Botanical Garden has gone on to win numerous awards. For example, in the latest NParks Community in Bloom competition in 2022, it picked up various accolades including the Platinum and Outstanding Ornamental Garden awards, as well as the highly prestigious Garden of the Year award. This was high acclaim indeed as the garden was barely two years old



Certain weeds are allowed to flourish and produce seeds to feed and shelter wildlife.



Many volunteers show up every Saturday to weed and maintain the garden.



A volunteer from Republic Polytechnic planting Snakeweed, a good nectaring plant for insects.



Seven Ways to Attract Wildlife to Your Garden



Ganesh shares here some tips to attract an array of wild animals into your garden or balcony.



1 Observe & Ask Questions

To attract more wildlife into your garden and make it more nature-friendly, it helps to ask the experts. NParks has various online resources on local biodiversity such as bees, dragonflies, lizards and birds. NSS also has special interest groups such as the Butterfly and Insect Group, Bird Group, Vertebrate Study Group, Plant Group and more which you can join and meet like-minded hobbyists. You can also visit Woodlands Botanical Garden and ask questions. "When you visit any garden or park, watch which plants attract butterflies or birds. Nature is your best teacher," Ganesh said.

2 Grow Different Plant Species

Growing more species of plants in your garden attracts more insects, as they all feed on different vegetation. "I have multiple varieties of Snakeweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*) to invite in different insects. Pink Snakeweed is as tall as a human, while Red Snakeweed sticks closer to the ground. They lure in insects that fly at different

heights. When we started this garden, we counted just five butterfly species. Now, our record is over 80 species due to the huge range of plants we have."

3 Note Sunny & Shady Spots

The lower slope of WBG is surrounded by housing blocks. As such, parts of it become shaded at different times of the day. "We studied where shade would fall and planted species that naturally like those conditions," Ganesh revealed. "Do not be afraid to experiment. Parts of WBG can be very sunny. We experimented with growing the evergreen Lady Margaret passion flower, a hybrid of *Passiflora coccinea* and *Passiflora incarnata*, which has tougher leaves to withstand the strong Singapore sun. At first the butterflies ignored it, but after a year they started feeding on it."

DEALING WITH

Mealy Bugs

"I was tempted to spray it with chemicals to finish off the bugs. Instead, I decided to work with nature, fertilising the plant to make it healthier and cutting away most of the infested branches to let in the wind, sun and feeding birds. The plant duly recovered."

4 Avoid Chemicals to Let Nature Bring Balance

One of Ganesh's favourite flowering shrubs was overrun with mealy bugs. Like little vampires, these tiny sap-sucking insects can dry and kill plants. "I was tempted to spray it with chemicals to finish off the bugs. Instead, I decided to work with nature, fertilising the plant to make it healthier and cutting away most of the infested

branches to let in the wind, sun and feeding birds. The plant duly recovered. Now, my gardening philosophy is to help a bit and let nature do the rest of the work," he said.

5 Try Companion Planting

Companion planting is a technique that mimics natural ecosystems. This is when you grow plants together that naturally help each other. For example, Ganesh plants red Blood Flowers (*Asclepias curassavica linn*) to feed Plain Tiger butterflies and to protect other flowers. A Thai visitor told him and his volunteers that they grow Blood Flowers around their flower farms as mealy bugs prefer this species to other vegetation. In applying the lesson, Blood Flowers have been planted near the garden's Hibiscus plants. "Mealy bugs can kill the Hibiscus plant, but Blood Flowers are very tough and will not succumb as easily," Ganesh said.

6 Add a Water Feature

Ganesh fought hard to create nature ponds in WBG so that birds and animals can drink. But what about mosquitoes and dengue fever? "We consulted an expert in dragonflies and damselflies. He said that a dragonfly can eat up to 100 mosquitoes a day. He taught us to grow plants like reeds for dragonflies to perch on while hunting," Ganesh revealed.

The ponds are stocked with small fish donated by fish fanciers. Together with tadpoles, they consume mosquito larvae. "Our volunteers worked closely with NEA and NParks to monitor the ponds. The frogs and dragonflies appeared by themselves. We also use biologically safe mosquito tablets that do not harm wildlife," he said.

7 Move the Plants Around to Find the Best Spot

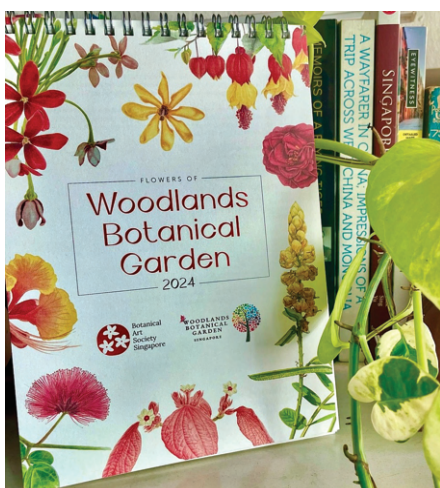
You may have a certain planting plan in mind, but plants will tell you if they are happy or not. Watch them and adapt your gardening plan. Ganesh loves strongly-scented Damask Rose. He admitted that they proved tricky to grow at first. "I had to shift them around three or four times before they found a place they liked and started growing well. You have to work with nature and trust the process," he said.



A Carpenter Bee pollinating a Golden Rattlebox Flower, grown from seed to attract butterflies and bees.




“Older folks tell me that they used to sit at home and get bored as they had nothing to do except watch TV. But now, they look forward to coming every day. One uncle told me, ‘Sometimes, I can’t wait for the sun to rise to see what’s new in the garden!’”




Botanical Art Society Singapore collaborated with WBG on a fundraising calendar featuring flowers grown in WBG.

ADDRESS

Woodlands Town Park East, 134 Marsiling Road, Singapore 730134.
Located behind the HDB block, all visitors welcome!

 www.instagram.com/woodlandsbotanicalgarden/

 facebook.com/WoodlandsBotanicalGarden

then and was participating in a competition for the first time. Ganesh is unwaveringly optimistic. “I’m very thankful that N Parks bothered to hear me out and give this kind of garden a try. I love it when I see people walking in the garden, especially families and seniors. Older folks tell me that they used to sit at home and get bored as they had nothing to do except watch TV. But now, they look forward to coming every day. One uncle told me, ‘Sometimes, I can’t wait for the sun to rise to see what’s new in the garden!’ It sounds melodramatic. But I get it, this garden is a special place. It has a heart.” 🌿



WBG holds a free concert every first Saturday of the month helmed by musicians from @jungleflow music.



Tara Barker used to be a magazine editor and now works in marketing. Always a keen gardener, she took up watching birds and butterflies during lockdown. Today,

she grows nectaring and host plants in her balcony garden to support bees, butterflies and bird biodiversity.

Conservation Champion Extraordinaire

The US-based Society for Conservation Biology conferred the prestigious Early Career Conservationist Award to prominent local conservation biologist Dr Yong Ding Li in July 2023. This award is presented to scientists who have made significant contributions to conservation efforts within 10 years of completing their academic qualifications. **Kellie Lee** chats with Ding Li to find out about exciting developments on the conservation front.

By **KELLIE LEE**



Dr Yong Ding Li (right) was in Rwanda to receive the Early Career Conservationist Award, the Oscars for newcomers of the biodiversity world, at the 31st International Congress for Conservation Biology. Next to him is Sayam Chowdhury, a leading conservation biologist from Bangladesh and a close collaborator.

Congratulations on winning this prestigious award, the first in Asia to do so and just six years after receiving your PhD in biology from the Australian National University in 2017. How do you feel about it?

When I got the letter, I thought it was spam mail. But the award did not come with prize money, so maybe it was real after all. My gut feeling was that I may not have deserved it. I am not sure if I have indeed contributed more than my peers, many of whom have made significant contributions to conservation. I questioned why did he or she not get the award. But the choice has been made, and I am deeply honoured and grateful for the recognition from the Society for Conservation Biology. This award is not mine alone, but also goes to the dedicated colleagues I have worked closely with, such as my long-time collaborator Sayam U Chowdhury, and many others.

I believe that it was not any single project, but the collective efforts of working on multiple projects that have made the difference. In my work as Asia Flyways Coordinator at BirdLife International, I started six projects in six countries in the last six years. These projects conserve migratory birds like the Nordmann's Greenshank and Spoon-billed Sandpiper and their habitats around Asia, namely in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Malaysia. I also set up a project to understand how hunting has affected wild birds across Southeast Asia. By 2019, we had formed two multi-stakeholder groups represented by 10 countries to look into how hunting is threatening birds regionally and developed initiatives to address the issue. These are just a few highlights amongst the more than 100



Knee deep in mud with Nguyen Hoai Bao, a prominent Vietnamese ornithologist and conservationist, when surveying the mangroves of the Mekong Delta for shorebirds.

I discovered birds when I was 10 years old. One day, a Black-naped Oriole flew into my classroom. I was quite shocked by it. I thought to myself 'how could there be such a colourful animal?'

initiatives and projects that I am involved in or have worked on for migratory birds in Asia. Every one of these projects added value to conservation, be it in big or small ways.

How did you get started in nature?

I have always been interested in animals. Back when there was no internet, the logical thing for a kid fascinated with nature to do was to go to the library or bookstore. I had an encyclopaedia of animals when I was eight years old. There

were sections that were sub-titled “Found in Southeast Asia” or “Found in Malaysia”. Simply realising that I could observe some of these striking animals in my own backyard was a life changer for me.

In 1995, when I was 12 years old, I came across *Nature Watch* magazine and bought a copy. On the last page was a membership form for Nature Society (Singapore). I cut it out and asked my dad for a cheque to join the Society. Because of that, I received the NSS newsletter *Nature News* where I learned of and signed up for my first nature walk at the Singapore Botanic Gardens led by long-time volunteer Goh Si Guim. That was how it all started. I still have a whole pile of *Nature News* at home. I have been active in NSS for nearly 30 years now, serving in the Bird Group where I lead birding trips and bird censuses as well as running workshops such as the Straw-headed Bulbul Conservation Workshop in 2019. I also contribute to activities by other groups.

In fact, I was already a birder before I joined the Society. I discovered birds when I was 10 years old. One day, a Black-naped Oriole flew into my classroom. I was quite shocked by it. I thought to myself ‘how could there be such a colourful animal?’ Figuring out the identity of this bird from the available books got me interested in birds.

I lived in two countries when young, Singapore and Malaysia. Every school holiday, four times a year, I would take the KTM train from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur. It was an eight-hour journey each direction. While staring at the lush vegetation along the way, I realised that I could watch birds from the train. During each trip, I could easily spot 20 species of birds, including kingfishers, coucals and Black-shouldered Kites. That may not be possible now as the trains are much faster.

How has bird and nature watching changed since you became a birder 30 years ago?

In a word, I would say that bird-watching has now become mainstream in Singapore. This hobby was an oddity in 1995 when I was starting out. Birdwatchers then



Staking out the seagrass beds and mudflats in the southeast coast of Cambodia with a team of Cambodian conservationists to survey migratory shorebirds.



Ding Li delivering a presentation on the conservation of waterbirds in Asia at the World Coastal Forum in Jiangsu, China.

were mostly expatriates or middle-aged men. In those days, only one or two other young people were into birding. Fast forward 20 years and birdwatching has morphed in a way few could have imagined. It is no longer just expat workers who are attracted to it. Uncle-types are still prominent, but joining them are many more young people. Some are drawn to photography while others pursue chalking up sightings of birds. A lot more just observe birds casually in their spare time.

Broadly speaking, society has become more aware about and involved in nature, although not necessarily in conservation. But of course, we need to have nature engagement first before we can actually stimulate an interest in conservation.

What conservation and environmental issues are you most concerned about?

Three things need to be highlighted time and again: sea-level rise, light pollution, and plastic pollution. Sea-level rise due to climate change is bound to happen. Just because the waters increase by



Ding Li (second from left) with waterbird conservationists from Southeast Asia, Ko Lay (left), Nguyen Son Bach (second from right) and Cao Quoc Tri (right).



Discussion on the distribution of hornbills in Sumatra and Borneo with Indonesian hornbill experts at the BirdLife-Malaysian Nature Society Helmeted Hornbill Conservation Workshop in 2019.

one millimetre per year does not mean that there is nothing to worry about. Cumulatively, the rise will be enough to do a lot of damage in 50 years. Surging sea levels will affect coastal wetlands and millions of people. We can try to protect the wetlands from development, but we also need to think about how these wetlands will be impacted by much higher sea levels years from now.

Light pollution affects migratory birds, as the bulk of them migrate at night. This is something to be concerned about in cities. Bird species that fly lower are particularly susceptible to becoming disoriented by excessive city lights and reflective glass panes. Millions of migratory birds are killed by collisions with buildings each year in cities around the world. Turning off unnecessary and decorative city lights at night will help save our migratory birds.

Plastic pollution in our seas is something that I also find disconcerting. Surely scientists were already thinking about microplastics 20 years ago. Yet, there are still a lot of single-use plastics and microplastics ending up in the oceans.



Our campsite on Mount Rorekautimbu for a series of expeditions to Sulawesi's Lore Lindu National Park in 2011-2012 where we discovered new bird species.

Trying to control and manage plastic pollution is difficult as the sea is everyone's common dustbin. There are targets to reduce plastic entering the sea, but they are definitely not enough. The effects of plastic in the environment may be felt for generations to come.

Being aware of these problems is the easy part. But to be concerned enough to take action is difficult. Human beings do not like to change. Creating behavioural change, be it in our choices, habits or lifestyles, is a big challenge for conservation.

Has the Singapore government paved the way for change to happen on the conservation front?

The government is definitely doing much more about the environment and nature conservation today than one to two decades ago. The view of our National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans in 2005 compared to 2024 is completely different. There are big changes afoot: new nature parks, new nature corridors, new eco-links, and new ecological connectors. All these things were unheard of when I was in secondary school.

In the 1990s to early 2000s, there were plans to develop Pulau Ubin and connect it to mainland Singapore. The whole of Chek Jawa (mangrove and intertidal habitats) was slated for reclamation. Of all the battles that NSS has fought for

Citizen science is probably the way forward and should be sustained. Most people will agree that from Singapore's point of view, schools are the way to start.

nature conservation in Singapore, I think the greatest win was buying time for Pulau Ubin's biodiversity by delaying large scale development. This was an important victory not just for marine ecosystems, but for the birds and other wildlife inhabiting the island.

For such a small country, I must admit that Singapore's forests and wetlands are relatively modestly sized. The biggest wetlands in Southeast Asia are not here. Our strength lies in our experiences managing our protected areas and how these experiences and knowledge can be shared with other conservationists in the region. Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve is the gold standard for a protected wetland. It has a boundary that is well defined, a management plan that is well-articulated, and a comparatively large team of people to manage it. Enforcement is relatively good

compared to other protected areas in Southeast Asia. There is sufficient funding to manage a fairly compact area. Many conservationists and birders visiting from abroad will make trips just to see this reserve.

Where do you see us going from here as a society?

Citizen science is probably the way forward and should be sustained. Most people will agree that from Singapore's point of view, schools are the way to start. Get students to become citizen scientists, doing regular walks around their schools and documenting the wildlife found. Citizen science has proven useful for children to acquire their first understanding of nature. Biodiversity and conservation need to be mainstreamed into the education system, and articulated more clearly as an integrated part of our heritage.

What about yourself, where will you go from here?

In my day-to-day job, I always find it very difficult to search for consolidated information on migratory birds. There are more resources for Europe and North America, but less so for Asia. So I want to write a book on migratory birds documenting the wonderful species in our region. I want to create a useful compendium to help policy makers and general nature lovers.

In the longer term, winning the award has really made me contemplate the next steps in my career. Should I move on because I have already reached a pinnacle? Or should I continue for another 10 years because of the pressure on me to do even more? The speech I gave at the awards ceremony was about being patient. I know I am in this for the long run. Because in conservation, you cannot do it in three or four years, the fight is for the long haul. 🌱



Kellie Lee is a wildlife anthropologist. She has worked with the private, public and academic sectors in researching present-day issues, to find new ways of peaceful

coexistence between persons, institutions and nature.



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Compiled by GLORIA SEOW



Applicable for all NSS Events

Participants have to be well on the day of the event, and must wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing. NSS reserves the right to turn away those who are unwell.



27 January, 24 February, 30 March 2024, Saturday

NSS Rewilding Project

Open to the Public

Join the NSS Rewilding Project to make the Rail Corridor a greener place. Get involved every step of the way, from the manual processing of grass to weed clearance and the planting of native trees. We aim to restore a continuous canopy cover to the Rail Corridor for it to be a better conduit for plants and wildlife. Participants need to be physically fit, including being able to lift at least 10 kg and withstand the hot sun. Time: 9 am to 12 pm. Venue: Rail Corridor opposite Jalan Bumbong. Please register at <http://tinyurl.com/NSSRewildingProject2024> for any of the dates offered. Contact Sylvia at HP: 9190 4849 for enquiries.

28 January 2024, Sunday

Birdwatching at Kranji Marshes

Open to the Public

Join Bird Group guides Lee Ee Ling and Wong Chung Cheong in exploring the core area of Kranji Marshes Nature Park. The paths and hides here offer excellent views across the freshwater marshes. Birding highlights include residents such as the Red-wattled Lapwing, Changeable Hawk Eagle and Gray-headed Fish Eagle as well as winter visitors like the Common and Black-capped Kingfisher. Time: 7.30 am to 11 am. Meet at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve where a hired bus will bring us to the site. Fees: \$15 per person to cover the transport cost; walk is free of charge. Maximum: 21 participants. Please register at www.tinyurl.com/NSSBGbirdwatching. Contact Ee Ling at ellee1584@gmail.com for enquiries.

18 February 2024, Sunday

Birdwatching at Kranji Marshes

Open to the Public

Join NSS President Dr Yeo Seng Beng to explore the core area of Kranji Marshes Nature Park. The paths and hides here offer excellent views across the freshwater marshes. Birding highlights include residents such as the Red-wattled Lapwing, Changeable Hawk Eagle and Gray-headed Fish Eagle as well as winter visitors like the Common and Black-capped Kingfisher. Time: 7.30 am to 11 am. Meet at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve where a hired bus will bring us to the site. Fees: \$15 per person to cover the transport cost; walk is free of charge. Maximum: 21 participants. Please register at www.tinyurl.com/NSSBGbirdwatching2. Contact Ee Ling at ellee1584@gmail.com for enquiries.

25 February 2024, Sunday

Birdwatching at Thomson Nature Park

Members Only

Join Bird Group Chair Veronica Foo for a morning bird walk at Thomson Nature Park. Located east of the Central Catchment Nature Reserve, this buffer park used to have a Hainan Village rich in cultural heritage. Today, it is

a key conservation site for the critically endangered Raffles' Banded Langur and home to forest bird species such as the Red-crowned Barbet, Rufous-tailed Tailorbird and Little Spiderhunter. Bring along a pair of binoculars, hat, drinking water, insect repellent, and rain gear. Time: 7.30 am to 10.30 am. Maximum: 20 participants. Please register at www.tinyurl.com/NSSBGbirdwatching3. Contact Ee Ling at ellee1584@gmail.com for enquiries.

2 March 2024, Saturday

SWWD Birdwatching at Lorong Halus Wetland

Members Only

Lorong Halus Wetland is part of the water infrastructure managed by PUB under its Active, Beautiful, Clean Waters (ABC Waters) programme. The mix of riverside, wetland and secondary forest habitats provides opportunities to see a fairly diverse mix of resident and migratory birdlife including sunbirds, bulbuls, waterbirds and raptors. Led by experienced birder Jimmy Lee, this walk is held in conjunction Singapore World Water Day (SWWD) and World Wildlife Day on 3 March. Bring along a pair of binoculars, hat, drinking water, insect repellent and rain gear. Time: 7.30 am to 10.30 am. Maximum: 20 participants. Please register at www.tinyurl.com/NSSBGbirdwatching4. Contact Ee Ling at ellee1584@gmail.com for enquiries.

17 March 2024, Sunday

Storytelling, Talk & Art Jamming: Bringing the Fabulous Flying Five to Life

Open to the Public

The *Fabulous Flying Five* is a spellbinding story of five flying animals that are 'not birds, bats, or bugs' and their thrilling forest adventure. It is an Amazon #1 Best Seller published by Marshall Cavendish International (Children) in January 2024. We will start with a captivating storytelling session by Timothy Pwee. Author Gloria Seow will then share her journey of writing and publishing this charming picture book, the first of the Awesome Asian Animals series of books for children 4 to 8 years old. Illustrator Kenneth Chin will then provide insights on his creative process, bringing the story to life with bold character depictions and dramatic scenes. Kenneth will teach adults and kids present how to draw one of the cute gliding animals in an art jamming session. Be sure to bring your own drawing materials (pencil, paper, eraser and a clip file). The picture book will be available for sale at a discount, with on-the-spot book signings by author and illustrator. They will donate 55% of the nett proceeds to NSS for its conservation work. Time: 3 pm to 4.15 pm. Venue: NSS Office @ The Sunflower. Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/NSSedcommworkshop>. For a book preview, please visit <https://lorisowl.wordpress.com/fabulous-flying-five>. Contact Gloria at gloria_seow@yahoo.com for enquiries.

23 March 2024, Saturday

Plant Walk at Berlayer Creek-Labrador Nature Reserve

Members Only

Join Sia Sin Wei from the Plant Group for a tranquil and picturesque walk to celebrate International Day of Forests. From Berlayer Creek to Labrador Nature Reserve, the path winds through diverse habitats, from mangroves to parkland and secondary forest. We will explore this hidden gem for its botanical offerings in a relatively easy stroll. Time: 9 am to 12 pm. Maximum: 20 participants. Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/NSSPlantWalk2>.

24 March 2024, Sunday

Birdwatching at Kranji Marshes

Open to the Public

Join Bird Group guides Jamie Chan and Lee Ee Ling in exploring the core area of Kranji Marshes Nature Park. The paths and hides here offer excellent views across the freshwater marshes. Birding highlights include residents such as the Red-wattled Lapwing, Changeable Hawk Eagle and Gray-headed Fish Eagle as well as winter visitors like the Common and Black-capped Kingfisher. Time: 7.30 am to 11 am. Meet at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve where a hired bus will bring us to the site. Fees: \$15 per person to cover the transport cost; walk is free of charge. Maximum: 21 participants. Please register at www.tinyurl.com/NSSBGbirdwatching5. Contact Ee Ling at ellee1584@gmail.com for enquiries.

30 & 31 March 2024, Weekend

SWWD Workshop: Introduction to Insect Macrophotography – Dragonflies & Damselflies

Open to the Public

Explore the world of dragonflies and damselflies under the guidance of nature photographer Mohamed Jusri. This immersive workshop offers insights into capturing the hidden beauty of these tiny predators. Learn about essential gear, field techniques, and composition tips to improve your macrophotography. There will be an outdoor hands-on session to sharpen your skills and connect with fellow enthusiasts. Held in conjunction with PUB's celebrations for Singapore World Water Day (SWWD), this workshop is suitable for DSLR and digital camera users but not intended for camera phone users. Beginners are welcome. Bring along your digital camera, camera flash, hat, small torchlight and water. You will need to know how to access your camera's settings for aperture size, shutter speed and ISO. Materials will be provided for making a simple diffuser. Time/Venue: 30 March – 10 am to 12 pm at NSS Office and 31 March – 9 am to 11 am at Lorong Halus Wetland. Maximum: 10 participants. Cost: \$5 for members or \$10 for non-members. Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/NSSInsectWorkshop>. Contact Kerry at kerry@nss.org.sg for enquiries.

31 March 2024, Sunday

SWWD: Dragonfly Walk at Lorong Halus Wetland

Open to the Public

Singapore World Water Day has been held on 22 March every year since 1993. It celebrates freshwater and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. Located along Serangoon Reservoir, Lorong Halus Wetland collects and treats water passing through the former landfill before it flows into the reservoir. It thus safeguards the quality of water in the reservoir. Join Robin Ngiam and Lena Chow to explore the water filtration ponds for various dragonfly species including Dancing Dropwings, Common Scarlets, Blue Perchers and Variegated Green Skimmers. This walk is held in conjunction with PUB's celebrations for Singapore World Water Day. Please register at www.tinyurl.com/nssdragonfly. Maximum: 15 participants. Bring along your hat, drinking water, sunblock, camera, notebook, writing materials and rain gear. Contact Kerry at kerry@nss.org.sg for enquiries.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

To become a NSS member or renew your membership, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/BeAnNSSMember>



Jimmy with his heavy camera equipment at Panti Forest in 2017. Photo by Alan Owyong.

A TRIBUTE TO

Jimmy Chew

Many of us have fond memories of Jimmy Chew who passed away on 8 January 2024 at 86 years old after a long illness. He was known for his zest for life, as a fascinating storyteller, and for his amazing bird photos which advanced various conservation causes. **Geoff Lim** and **Trixie Tan** unearth tributes and memories from far and wide.

By **GEOFF LIM** & **TRIXIE TAN**

Jimmy recorded life through his lens – the ever-changing built and natural environments, and the drama created when human and nature intersect. He was a pioneering figure in bird photography in Southeast Asia, capturing images since the 1980s, along the likes of the late Ong Kiem Sian. His photographs were used on countless occasions to advance the understanding and conservation of birds and habitats in Singapore and the region.

Two former Bird Group chairpersons, Wing Chong and Alan Owyong, affirmed that Jimmy was the go-to person for bird photographs. When the Bird Group wanted a birding app in 2013, they gravitated to Jimmy and prominent photographers like Lee Tiah Khee, Con Foley and Jonathan Cheah. These lens men gave of their images freely without any payment, to create the first bird app for the region.

Jimmy's photographs went on to grace the cover of the NSS publication *The Avifauna of Singapore*. Some 110 of his images were used in *A Field Guide to the Birds of Singapore*, a pamphlet that described the commoner birds found in the country. Jimmy contributed numerous pictures of Southeast Asian species to the monumental 16-volume *Handbook of the Birds of the World* published by Lynx Edicions. His photos also appear in other nature publications such as those authored by Dr Yong Ding Li. Jimmy's

records of the birds found on the grounds of Khoo Teck Puat Hospital were displayed to the public, as part of the hospital's greening achievement.

Jimmy made significant contributions to conservation projects. Together with conservationist Dr Ho Hua Chew and NSS stalwart Sutari Supari, the three men visited the forests of Tasek Temenggor to document the enormous flocks of Plain-pouched Hornbills (*Rhyticeros subruficollis*) traversing the Thai-Malaysian border, into the forests north of Perak River during foraging trips. At that time, the Plain-pouched Hornbill was relatively unknown to Malaysian ornithologists and birders. With Jimmy's photographs, coupled with Sian's videos, the team furnished overwhelming evidence that it was this species and not the Wreathed Hornbill (*Rhyticeros undulatus*) that accounted for the enormous flocks making these epic flights. The team made a systematic count, even observing 2,067 hornbills at one go.

Jimmy's images have played an outsized role in raising awareness for regional bird conservation, particularly in NSS conservation projects. In 2019, his photos of the Rail Corridor's habitat and wildlife helped produce the book *The Green Rail Corridor: A Biodiversity and Ecological Overview*. The publication spelt out NSS's position on the former railway line and pushed for its conservation in its entirety.

Jimmy also supported NSS projects in other ways. He spent time with dignitaries and guests at events such as at the NSS Kranji Adoption Opening Ceremony in 2008 and in helping out at Rail Corridor bird walks from 2011. Indeed, Jimmy is much loved in the Singapore nature community. Captured here is a fraction of the tributes and memories that poured in after his demise.

Trixie Tan first met Jimmy when she joined Singapore Airlines in 1992 where Jimmy worked as an aircraft engineer. Even after she moved to Australia in 2000, they remained fast friends. Jimmy went over to stay with Trixie's family shortly after he retired. They spent a few days chasing after



From left: Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), Van Hasselt's Sunbird (*Leptocoma brasiliana*).

Photos by Jimmy Chew.



Aussie birds. Jimmy's enthusiasm was indefatigable. It was reminiscent of their companionship in Singapore, where they would meet every weekend for breakfast at a *kopi tiam* (coffeeshop) before venturing into the forests and wetlands. Trixie was very happy to see Jimmy (for the last time) in June 2023, at a gathering with old friends Dr Ho Hua Chew, Sutari Supari and See Swee Leng. After a convivial lunch, they settled down to another of Jimmy's wildlife slideshows. Trixie will always treasure his memory.

Jimmy was a catalyst for many who were beginning their birding journey in the 1990s. Conservation biologist Dr Yong Ding Li was a student when their paths crossed. The ebullient and avuncular Jimmy took the young lad under his wings. They made countless trips to Pantai forest across the Causeway in Malaysia from the late 1990s to mid-2000s. These visits were crucial in cultivating Ding Li's keen understanding of birds. It culminated with Ding Li attaining his PhD and starting his career with BirdLife International.

For artist Teo Nam Siang, he first met Jimmy as an undergraduate and a newbie birdwatcher in the mid-1990s. Together with pioneering photographer Sian,

Nam Siang followed them into the forests of Pantai and Fraser's Hill on numerous road trips. Similarly, conservationist Dr Ho Hua Chew often bumped into Jimmy in *ulu* (rural) places in Peninsular Malaysia, accompanied by Jimmy's pal Sutari. Hua Chew was always struck by Jimmy's infectious energy, when regaling everybody with lively accounts of his various adventures. His energetic storytelling was welcome as they would have

just completed a hard day's slog through some remote forest.

Birder Tan Ju Lin recalled that despite being an orphan from young, Jimmy kept up his good spirits throughout life. She remembered many of Jimmy's stories, such as how he and his classmates would buy just one ticket and sneak into an open-air cinema to watch popular movies. Another tale was about his time in boarding school, where he would quickly place

Jimmy Chew (right) with Dr Ho Hua Chew in one of their many meals together after a good morning of birding.

Photo by Sutari Supari.

his hands over his dinner plate to protect his fruit from thieving hands whenever an electrical outage occurred. Jimmy would be full of mirth recalling his headmaster who had his banana filched during those moments when he failed to take similar precautions. Jimmy was indignant when he flew back from Hong Kong with a gleaming roast goose only to have it confiscated by a customs officer. The officer even had the audacity to demand the dipping sauce from our hapless engineer.

Our man's good humour and joie de vivre was not lost on Ding Li. Despite having to lug his massive camera equipment into the Malayan jungles, up the cold Sichuan mountains, and across the mudflats of Fujian, Jimmy was perpetually in good spirits. A lesser man would have complained under those circumstances. It was also in those Fujian mudflats all those years back that Ding Li, Jimmy and Alfred Chia successfully searched for the endangered Chinese Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bernsteini*).

Renowned bird guide and bird book author Lim Kim Seng spoke about Jimmy's gung-ho attitude when they travelled together across the region in search of birds. Even though Jimmy was already in his seventies then, Kim Seng marveled at how he would clamber up the steep slopes of Mount Kerinci in Sumatra with his full frame camera and heavy prime lenses. His mission was to capture the images of difficult birds. His reward for that particular trip was the stunning Schneider's Pitta (*Pitta schenideri*).

Alan Owyong recalled that Jimmy was generous with his time. Jimmy drove Alan and his daughter as well as others to Alan's first Fraser's Hill Bird Race in



the mid-1990s. Alan soon lost count of the car rides in Jimmy's Subaru 4WD to various birding locations in Johor, with friends from near and far.

Alan was particularly impressed with Jimmy's commitment to bird photography. On one occasion, he helped Jimmy set up his 'bazooka' to photograph a nesting White-bellied Sea-eagle inside Sime Forest. They could drive right up to the gate of Bukit Kallang Reservoir during those days. They then carried the heavy equipment a short distance down to a clearing. With two tripods, one supporting the lens and another for the camera, the set up was no small feat even for two men. After some waiting, Jimmy managed to capture excellent images of the eagle returning to the nest and feeding the eaglets. He was the happiest man that day as the late Loke Wan Tho had to construct a tower to get such a shot.

Alan recalled how he and Werner Peters made trips to Tuas to document nesting Black-winged Kites

(*Elanus caeruleus*) fighting off kleptoparasitic House Crows (*Corvus splendens*) that tried to make off with their chicks. As they were the first birders with these observations, their records were published, backed by Jimmy's dramatic photographs of the skirmishes.

Despite his illness, Jimmy continued to invite friends to his home to view his stunning images and admire his collection of rare and beautiful sea shells. During such times, he would reminisce about the good old days including his career with Singapore Airlines and recall many happy anecdotes. He remained cheerful and positive to the end. When asked why he pursued his hobbies with such zeal, birder Wong Chung Cheong was struck when Jimmy replied, "Do it while your fitness allows". Words of wisdom indeed. Those who knew Jimmy will remember his love of good food, adventure and life. His memory will always be in our hearts and his legacy lives on in his vast photographic collection. 🌳

Remembering Dr Horst Flotow

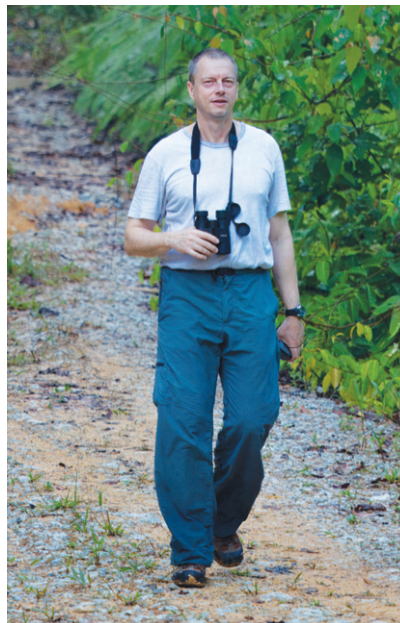
By MICK PRICE & DR YONG DING LI

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of long-time NSS member and our dear friend, Dr Horst Flotow in December 2023. Horst was born in Basel, Switzerland in 1961. His family relocated to Thailand during his teenage years, sparking his association with South-east Asian ornithology.

Horst joined the Bangkok Bird Club (now known as the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand) where he was secretary for some years. He worked closely with the legendary Dr Boonsong Lekagul, Thailand's leading conservationist in his time. Horst often regaled us with campfire tales of his field trips to Khao Yai National Park in his youth. There, he regularly encountered Asian Elephants, Indochinese Tigers, and even the enigmatic Clouded Leopard.

Under Dr Boonsong, he had the opportunity to study and record Khao Yai's bird life in great detail.

After his studies in Australia and work in several countries, Horst moved to Singapore in 1999 with his wife Sue and daughters Estella and Renata. He was active in NSS and a vital node in the nature community. Eventually, he became involved with the Bird Group, where he led or supported over a hundred bird censuses and walks between 2003 to 2017. During the Annual Bird Census, Mid-Year Bird Census, and Fall Bird Census, we made numerous trips to Nee Soon Swamp Forest, a site that was counted by Horst and



Dr Horst Flotow birding in Panti Bird Sanctuary near Kota Tinggi in Malaysia.

ourselves for the longest time. In the 16 years that Horst lived in Singapore, we must have visited Nee Soon easily 40 to 50 times.

Despite juggling his duties as a husband, father and research scientist in biomedical sciences, Horst always found time to birdwatch, joining us on trips around the region. These included day and multi-day NSS trips to Panti Bird Sanctuary near Kota Tinggi in Malaysia, where we spent countless hours searching for Horst's 'nemesis bird', the Giant Pitta. Shortly before he left Singapore for his new assignment in Germany in 2015, Horst also led the annual Raptor Count at Kent Ridge.

Horst tragically passed away in late December 2023, after a brief battle with a rare form of cancer diagnosed only a year earlier.

Although the pandemic made things challenging, we had managed to keep in touch while he was in Germany through frequent Zoom calls. As his close friends, we were shocked by his sudden passing. He was only 62 years old. Even towards the end, he remained positive that he would prevail, planning to pursue many more things once he recovered.

On behalf of NSS and the Bird Group, we acknowledge Horst's contributions to nature awareness and ornithology in Singapore. On behalf of his Singapore friends, we extend our deepest sympathies to Sue, Estella and Renata.



Snapshots of Past Events

By GLORIA SEOW



1 **Bird Group Volunteer Appreciation Gathering**, 7 October 2023. The birding community had a cosy get-together to thank volunteers of the various censuses organised by the Bird Group to monitor Singapore's birdlife. Capping an evening of food and conversation, Dr Yong Ding Li presented the results of the Bird Group's Parrot Count.



2 **Insect Walk at Fort Canning Park**, 7 October 2023. In support of the HeART for Nature festival, participants observed insects such as the Malaysian Bush Cricket, Valdez's Stingless Bee and Short-winged Rice Grasshopper in a morning walk at Fort Canning Park. They also learnt about the varied roles of insects and their adaptations to urban living. Photo: James Khoo.



3 **Birdwatching at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve**, 14 October 2023. Eleven participants recorded 53 species of birds including the Pacific Golden Plover, Whimbrel and Grey-headed Fish Eagle in a birdy morning at Sungei Buloh. They also snagged three kingfisher species – the Collared, Stork-billed and White-throated kingfishers – at Kingfisher Pod as well as one Salt-water Crocodile along the scenic coastal walk. Photo: Dr Yeo Seng Beng.



4 **NSS Rewilding Project**, 14 October 2023. Despite the scorching sun, 30 gung-ho volunteers sweated it out at the Rail Corridor clearing away a tall and dense grass patch. They were there to prepare the land for rewilding (via tree planting), led by Sylvia Tan, Kua Kay Yaw and Dr Ngo Kang Min. The group was rewarded with the sighting of a Common Flameback pecking a nearby tree. Photo: Sylvia Tan.



5 **Butterfly Walk at Bukit Brown**, 21 October 2023. Even though it rained halfway through the walk, 16 participants had a good morning at Bukit Brown spotting butterflies. They were led by NSS Vice President Dr Ngo Kang Min. Photo: Dr Yam Tim Wing.



6 **Migratory Bird Walk at Dairy Farm Nature Park**, 29 October 2023. The walk coincided with the migratory season where 23 participants observed forest birds on a stopover or overwintering in Singapore. They savoured good views of many birds including the Straw-headed Bulbul, Emerald Dove and the sexually dimorphic male and female Asian Fairy Bluebirds. Photo: Francis Goo.



Snapshots of Past Events

By GLORIA SEOW

KALEIDOSCOPE
NEWS AND HAPPENINGS AT NATURE SOCIETY (SINGAPORE)



7 **16th Raptor Watch**, 18 November 2023. Over 50 volunteers spread themselves out across nine sites including Jurong Lake Gardens, Kent Ridge Park, Telok Blangah Hill Park, Lorong Halus, Pulau Ubin, St John's Island, Tuas, Mount Faber and Gombak to count raptors. They recorded more than 450 raptors from over 10 species between 9 am to 4 pm. The best site was Tuas with raptor numbers exceeding a hundred. Photo: Veronica Foo.



8 **NSS Rewilding Project**, 2 December 2023. It takes a good deal of dedication and many hours in the sweltering sun to rewild a stretch of the Rail Corridor with newly-planted native trees. But first, the existing grassland has to be cleared. Leaders Sylvia Tan, Kua Kay Yaw and Dr Ngo Kang Min mobilised 25 volunteers to hack away and remove the elephant grass. Photo: Sylvia Tan.



9 **Birdwatching at Kranji Marshes**, 3 December 2023. Kranji Marshes is always a good spot for birdwatching. Yap Wee Jin led 18 bird enthusiasts to record 45 species in one morning. The 50-minute rainfall interrupting the walk was no real deterrent as some continued looking out for birds from the hide, while others shared their sightings and photographs. Birders were particularly pleased to see the Crimson Sunbird, Yellow Bittern, Grey-Headed Fish Eagle, and two Western Ospreys. Photo: Lee Ee Ling.



10 **Workshop: Introduction to Insect Macrophotography**, 16 & 17 December 2023. Seven participants learnt about the essential gear, field techniques, and composition tips to improve their macrophotography of intricate insects. Led by Mohamed Jusri, they also enjoyed making diffusers, an outdoor practice session using their DSLR and digital cameras, and spotting the huge Six-spotted Long-bellied Jumping Spider. Photo: Dr Ngo Kang Min.



11 **NSS Rewilding Project**, 23 December 2023. Held roughly once a month, 25 volunteers heeded the call for help to clear the grass in preparation for rewilding of the Rail Corridor. They were led by Sylvia Tan, Goh Si Guim, Dr Ngo Kang Min. Photo: Sylvia Tan.



12 **New Year's Eve Birdwatching at Satay by the Bay & Marina Barrage**, 31 December 2023. In one last birdwatching hurrah before the year ended, Chair of the Bird Group Veronica Foo led 18 participants to spot 37 species in a 3-hour birding spree. They did this despite the persistent drizzle, showing that birds could still be spotted if one was determined enough. Photo: Veronica Foo.

NATURE SOCIETY (SINGAPORE)

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NATURE
SOCIETY
SINGAPORE

VISION To be Singapore's leading advocate of biodiversity and habitats.

MISSION With our evidence-based approach and partnerships with agencies, peers, and corporates, we lead habitat and biodiversity conservation in Singapore and with partners in the region. Through engagement, education, advocacy, and research, we inspire and enable people to take action towards a sustainable and biodiverse planet.

Why Join NSS?

Nature Society (Singapore) or NSS is dedicated to the study, conservation and enjoyment of the biodiversity and natural heritage of Singapore, our neighbouring countries and the wider world. The Society is a non-profit, non-government organisation. Our members work with commitment and altruism to conserve Singapore's remaining nature areas such as forests, mangroves, wetlands and reefs.

NSS was formerly known as the Singapore Branch of the Malayan Nature Society (MNS), formed in 1954. In 1991, we became independent as Nature Society (Singapore). Both NSS and MNS continue to maintain strong links with each other.

NSS organises guided nature walks, horseshoe crab rescues, nature surveys, clean-ups, talks, exhibitions, and overseas nature trips. Going on an NSS outing allows you to meet people from all walks of life with a common passion!

Join NSS Today & Receive Nature Watch for Free!

The values that NSS upholds are a bulwark against the excesses of an ultra-materialistic society. If you too feel that protecting our biodiversity and natural heritage are important, join NSS today and support the Society in our work. Members will receive four issues of *Nature Watch* (NSS quarterly magazine) and a regular e-newsletter for free. Members also get to participate in fascinating nature-based activities and events which enable one to forge friendships with fellow nature lovers.

Follow us at:

- www.facebook.com/naturesocietysingapore/
- www.instagram.com/naturesocietysingapore
- www.youtube.com/@naturesocietysingapore3888
- www.linkedin.com/company/nature-society-singapore/
- www.nss.org.sg/

Nature Society (Singapore) Membership Categories

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

- S\$40 **Ordinary Member**
Age 18 and above
- S\$75 **Family Member**
Husband, Wife & Children under Age 18
- S\$18 **Junior & Student Members**
Age 12-18 & Full-time Students Age 18-35 enrolled in a Singapore-based institution
- S\$1,000 **Life Member**
Applicable to Ordinary Members who have joined for 10 years or more
- S\$200 **Affiliate Member**
Non-Profit Organisations & Schools
- S\$4,000 **Corporate Member**
Nominal Fee of S\$200 + Annual Tax-Exempt Donation of S\$3,800

How to Join NSS

To join as a NSS member, please fill in this form <http://tinyurl.com/NSSmembershipform>. It allows you to settle the membership fees within the link. Once your membership is approved by the Executive Committee, you will receive *Nature Watch* and the e-newsletter for free, as well as be able to attend all member-only events.

How to Join NSS as a Volunteer or Intern

- To join as a NSS volunteer, please fill in this form <http://tinyurl.com/NSSvolunteerform>.
- To apply for internship, please fill in this form <https://tinyurl.com/NSSinternshipform>.

Payment for Subscriptions & Donations

- Payment for donations can be made by PayNow or PayLah! by scanning the QR code or doing a PayNow transfer to Nature Society (Singapore)'s **Unique Entity Number (UEN) S61SS0142H**. Please enter your name, contact number or email address in the UEN/Bill Reference Number.
- Fund transfers can also be made to Nature Society (Singapore)'s **DBS Bank Current Account Number 0339023574**.
- For other modes of payment, please get in touch with us via email: contact@nss.org.sg.
- We also welcome individual and corporate donations to the Society. Please inform us via email (contact@nss.org.sg) of the amount you wish to donate, along with your name, title or organisation. Donations may be made by the payment methods mentioned above. Your generosity is much appreciated. Donations are tax exempt.





NSS works to protect the habitats of creatures, including the Common Rose (*Pachliopta aristolochiae*), a threatened butterfly whose caterpillar food plant remains scarce in Singapore. Photos: Yi-Kai Tea (main photo) and Amy Tsang



Let Singapore's Abundant Biodiversity Be Your Legacy

Have you loved nature all your life? Please consider helping our conservation work with a gift to Nature Society (Singapore) in your will.

How to make a gift to the Society in your will

You can choose to inform us if you have considered us in your will, but it is not strictly necessary. Please ensure that your solicitor writes in the full name of the Society. We suggest below suitable forms of words that can appear in your will:

*I give to Nature Society (Singapore) (hereinafter called NSS), **Unique Entity Number S61SS0142H**, _____ % of the residue of my estate*

OR

a specific gift of _____

and I direct that (i) the proceeds may be used for the general purposes of NSS and (ii) a receipt signed by a person for the time being authorised by the Executive Committee of NSS shall be a good and sufficient discharge to my executors.



EST. 1954

**NATURE
SOCIETY**
SINGAPORE