

Pesta Ubin Reflections: Kayaking Sungei Jelutong

Lim Kosei Miyano (12, Yumin Primary School)

It was a cloudy Sunday on 5 June 2022. The weather was perfect for my parents and myself to go kayaking. We signed up for a kayaking experience with the Nature Society (Singapore). The society organizes this kayaking activity for families and children during Pesta Ubin every year where volunteer guides would passionately introduce and share about our precious mangroves in Sungei Jelutong, Pulau Ubin.

When we reached the meeting place, we saw a beautiful black bird, the Drongo. While waiting for our kayak trip to start, we observed some mudskippers, hermit crabs and a few half-beak fish swimming near the water edge.

When it came to our turn, my father and I got into the kayak without much problem. But when we started to paddle, we struggled to move the kayak forward. We slowly got the hang of it and begin to enjoy the nature around us. While kayaking, we also saw a needle-like structure floating on the water. Our guide told us that it was a seedling from a mangrove tree. I was amazed as it was my first time seeing such a long seedling. Suddenly, I spotted a monitor lizard, I pointed it out to my dad. We watched the monitor lizard swim away. After kayaking, while making our way back to the jetty, we saw a huge Pulai tree. It was majestic!

We were glad the weather held up and it drizzled only when we were on the way home. We had a fun day and I learnt that kayaking needs coordination and it can be challenging.



Pic: Kosei with his father

Nishka Bharadwaj (12, Tanglin Trust School)

On a Sunday afternoon, my father, my sister, my uncle and I went kayaking on Pulau Ubin. Our father, who has a keen interest in mangroves, excitedly and quickly made us all leave immediately after lunch and head for the jetty at Changi Point where we took a bumboat to Pulau Ubin.

After reaching the island, we walked to the kayak launching site near Ah Mah's Drink Stall. During our paddle on Sungei Jelutong, our father explained some of the interesting things, including the way the mangrove leaves produce a salty substance at the base of the leaves. I did not try it that day, but I did try it previously, and it tasted mildly salty.

I was very energetic at the start of the trip, but once I started exerting myself and used all my energy to paddle, my arms started to ache. But it was a very memorable experience kayaking around the mangroves. Junyi Auntie, our guide, was very helpful as she guided us through the water carefully and also shared and explained many interesting things about the mangroves such as the way propagules are adapted to hang vertically above the water.

Some other things we encountered on the way to Jelutong Bridge were durians, sharp and spiky but rotting. Anyway, I find the concept of the toilet on stilts (located behind Ah Mah's Drink Stall) rather interesting.

Thank you to our guides, Junyi Auntie and Lisa Auntie and the Nature Society for organising such a fun and enjoyable event! I hope to do it again soon!



Pic: Nishka (seated front) and her father

Ruhi Bharadwaj (10, Tanglin Trust School)

I went on a kayaking trip in Pulau Ubin with my dad, uncle and sister on 5th June. The kayaking in the mangroves was organised by the Nature Society (Singapore). My dad, who is very interested in mangroves, brought up the idea of kayaking at Pulau Ubin's river! I was very keen on kayaking and immediately agreed.

We left after lunch on a cloudy yet warm afternoon and took a bumboat from Changi Point Ferry Terminal to Pulau Ubin. We took a 30-minute walk from the jetty and reached the kayak launching point near Jelutong Bridge next to Ah Mah's Drink Stall.

We waited for our pre-registered slot at 3:00 pm. My uncle and I paired up and went on a double kayak. We were unstable at the start and I ended up steering our kayak into a clump of mangroves. Our nature guide, Jun Yi, guided us through the clump and gave us advice on the proper way to paddle. I felt that the location, Sungei Jelutong, was a good choice because it was large and spacious and allowed us to paddle ourselves. Anyway, my uncle and I managed to

paddle all the way back to Jelutong Bridge! During the kayaking trip, my dad also let me try the salt crystals on the Avicennia mangrove plant and explained that when the salt is collected by the roots, one of the ways to expel the salt is through their leaves.

It was a truly joyous experience for me and my family and I learned more about mangroves!

My rating for the experience: 10/10



Pic: Ruhi and her uncle

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