

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 fish, 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

Maria Salas and Geoff Brown found a dead **Masked Palm Civet** (*Paguma larvata*) (40 cm in length, not including tail) on a small road by Tai Tam Reservoir. It was probably an adult and was quite recently dead.

Diane Bennet saw a **Porcupine** (*Hystrix brachyura*) and a few days later a **Masked Palm Civet** (*Paguma larvata*), both on Barker Road at The Peak in late October/early November. Both sightings were between 6.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m.

A freshly road-killed **Barking Deer** (Indian Muntjac, *Muntiacus muntjak*) was found by Kadoorie Farm staff on Lam Kam Road on the morning of 2 October. The body was of a one year old male and was still warm. The stomach was dissected and contents identified by Ng Sai Chit and Wicky Lee. They included: a fern head, probably *Cibotium barometz*, and fruits of *Ficus variegata* var. *chlorocarpa*. (Reported by Captain Wong)



On the 13 November at around 11.30 p.m. Paul McKenzie and Paveena Atipatha watched a **Masked Palm Civet** (*Paguma larvata*) on McDonnell Road for around 20 minutes. The animal, which was more than 1.2 m, was unusual as none of the characteristic white markings were observed on its face. It was very agile and moved effortlessly from the branches of one tree to another.

Captain Wong found about eight **Civet scats** and one **Porcupine quill** along the footpath on Wang Leng, Plover Cove on 17 November.

On 11 October around mid-morning, Annika Walters noticed a **Barking Deer** (*Muntiacus* sp.) in open grassland on Tai Mo Shan.

Yu Yat Tung, Mike Leven, Ying Hak King and Jacqui Weir saw an adult **Wild Boar** (*Sus scrofa*) and one juvenile walking on a road in Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden. They were seen at mid morning on 13 October.

A **Leopard Cat** (*Felis bengalensis*) was watched for a few minutes at around mid-day on 1 October, walking along a bund in the reedbeds of Mai Po. It was seen by Paul Leader, Ying Hak King, Jacqui Weir, Cheung Ho Fai and Shirley Lam. The animal appeared to be hunting, as it pounced on something at the side of the bund. It was also seen defecating. On noticing human presence it took cover in some vegetation and was no longer seen.

Apple Daily (1 November) reported the presence of a **Small Indian Civet** (*Viverricula indica*) in a catchment near Yuen Yuen Taoist Temple, Tsuen Wan on the previous day.

Apple Daily (21 November) reported an injured **Barking Deer** (*Muntiacus* sp.) at Hang On Tsuen, Ma On Shan, and village crops eaten by Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) in Lai Chi Kok.

Anita Tsang, William Trehwella and Emma Long saw a 60 cm long (not including tail) **Masked Palm Civet** (*Paguma larvata*) on Mt. Nicholson at 7:10 pm on 28 October. It was feeding on the fruits of a holly tree (see article for details).

BIRDS

On 26 October, Karin Chan discovered an immature **Black Stork** (*Ciconia nigra*) in pond number 11 at Mai Po. It was seen at around 7 a.m. so may have stayed there over night. It was not there in the afternoon of the same day.

Karin Chan saw a pair of **White-bellied Sea Eagles** (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) in Sham Chung, on the 29 October. One was carrying some nesting material.

Karin Chan also saw three **Common Starlings** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) at a Mai Po fish pond on the afternoon of 29 October.

Two **Eurasian Hoopoe** (*Upupa epops*) were seen by Kwok Hon Kai in Lut Chau on 7 and 8 October. He also saw two **Black-naped Terns** (*Sterna sumatrana*), one of which was a juvenile, in Mai Po gei wai number 24 on 8 October.

AMPHIBIANS/REPTILES

Robert Davison saw **Common Rat Snakes** (*Ptyas mucosus*) engaging in mating behaviour on the City University campus earlier this year and then on 8 November one dead juvenile (approx 0.6 m long) on campus. Its head was crushed and tail broken about 3 cm from the end, possibly by a foot or stray dog/cat biting. He wondered if it might be the juvenile of the snakes sighted earlier.

The following reptiles were sighted by Mike Kilburn:

80 cm long adult of a **Many-banded Krait** (*Bungarus multicinctus multicinctus*) hunting in Ng Tung Chai stream on 7 September.

A 30 cm long roadkilled **Coral Snake** (*Calliophis macclellandi*) on Ng Tung Chai Access Road on 23 August.

A 15 cm long (possibly juvenile) **Chinese Mountain Snake** (*Sibynophis chinensis chinensis*) on a steep path from Tai Mo Shan to Man Duk Yuen temple, Ng Tung Chai on 24 August.

PLANTS

Flowers of **Hong Kong Balsam** (*Impatiens hongkongensis*) Grey-Wilson (Balsaminaceae), **Wallich's Burmannia** (*Burmannia wallichii*) Hook.f. (Burmanniaceae) and an **orchid**, identified by Dr. Gloria Siu as *Malaxis latifolia* Sm. (Orchidaceae), were seen in Tai Po Kau (10 November) by Cecily Law and Roger Kendrick.



Impatiens hongkongensis

Thousands of *Codium* juveniles formed slicks off Power Station beach and within the harbour at Yung Shue Wan, Lamma Island in the weeks leading up to the 7 December noted Andy Cornish. Juveniles of *Codium macroalgae*, which are thin walled, translucent green balls, up to about 1.5 cm in diameter, are carried within the water column and eventually settle onto hard substrate and develop into the adult phase which is a more familiar branched seaweed. Such slicks have not previously been observed in these areas in recent years.

Recent Publications

Books, monographs etc.

AFCD (2002). *Hong Kong Biodiversity: Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department Newsletter, Issues No. 1-3*. Hong Kong. [The new AFCD newsletter!]

Ka, M. (2002). *Natural Wonders of Sai Kung*. Friends of the Country Parks and Cosmos Books, Hong Kong.

Lee, S.Y. (2002). *Forest in the Water*. Friends of the Country Parks and Cosmos Books, Hong Kong.

Suen, W.K.Y. (2002). *Lost Mammals*. KLH, Hong Kong.

Tsim, S.T. & Lock, F.N.Y. (2002). *Knowing Ramsar Wetland*. AFCD, Hong Kong.

Journal articles, book chapters and other published papers

Barros, N.B., Jefferson, T.A., & Parsons, E.C.M. (2002). Food habits of finless porpoises (*Neophocaena phocaenoides*) in Hong Kong waters. *Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*: 115-123.

Beasley, I. & Jefferson, T.A. (2002). Surface and dive times of finless porpoises in Hong Kong's coastal waters. *Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*: 125-129.

Blackmore, G. & Morton, B. (2002). The influence of diet on comparative trace metal cadmium, copper and zinc accumulation in *Thais clavigera* (Gastropoda: Muricidae) preying on intertidal barnacles or mussels. *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 44: 870-876.

Cai, S.Q., Su, J.L., Gan, Z.J., & Liu, Q.Y. (2002). The numerical study of the South China Sea upper circulation characteristics and its dynamic mechanism, in winter. *Continental Shelf Research* 22: 2247-2264.