

FRIDAYS AT 16:00 IN 3N01 - ALL ARE WELCOME!

ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY SEMINAR SERIES



PORTIA WONG

I am a conservation biologist interested in using population genetics methods to understand anthropogenic impacts on wildlife. I received my Bachelors and MPhil in Ecology and Biodiversity at HKU in 2021 and 2024 respectively, primarily focusing on conservation genetics of trafficked Asian pangolins under the supervision of Prof. Tim Bonebrake. Currently, I am a PhD student in Entomology at Cornell University under Dr. Melissa Guzman, working on integrating population modelling and landscape genomics approaches to better understand responses of butterfly populations to environmental change.

Date: WEDS, Dec 17th

Time: 16:00

Venue: 3N01 (no Zoom)

Social: 17:30-? @ Central Piers
(between 3 & 4)

Value and utility of opportunistic samples in biodiversity conservation research

One of the major challenges in biodiversity conservation is that non-model organisms are often data-limited, in terms of data type (e.g. demographic or genetic), or in spatial and/or temporal dimensions. While there are many possible reasons for this (e.g. rarity, difficulties in sampling, historical lack of study etc.), the lack of data makes it difficult to assess extinction risks of these species as well as identify mechanisms that are driving population changes. With the development of advanced statistical models and sequencing technologies in recent years, these data gaps can be addressed by appropriately using opportunistic samples, such as seizure materials, citizen science data, and museum samples. This talk will explore how I have integrated opportunistic samples and population genetics approaches to tackle conservation questions that would be difficult to answer otherwise, spanning my MPhil work on pangolins as well as introducing some of my ongoing PhD work on US butterflies.

