

25 June 2015

**“Shell Nature Watch - Butterfly Explorer” Activities Launch**  
**Announcement of butterfly survey results at**  
**Ho Sheung Heung, Long Valley and Lok Ma Chau**  
**“7.14 We Love Butterflies” BUTTERFLY X ART Installation Art Exhibition**

The latest year plan for **“Shell Nature Watch - Butterfly Explorer”**, co-organized by **Green Power** and **Shell (HK)** was launched today. The organisers released the results of recent butterfly surveys at Ho Sheung Heung, Long Valley and Lok Ma Chau, and officially included the three sites into the Butterfly Surveyor Scheme for long term monitoring. Ho Sheung Heung and Long Valley are at the core of the North East New Territories New Development Areas, while Lok Ma Chau is a former Frontier Closed Area which is now opened up with all manner of developments being planned, particularly around the “Loop” area. By gaining a fuller picture of butterfly diversity and more ecological data at the three sites ahead of developments, we can monitor and assess these future developments’ impacts on butterflies.

At the same time, the organizers also announced that this year’s “7.14 We Love Butterflies Day”, a **BUTTERFLY X ART Installation Art Exhibition** will be held in collaboration with renowned local glass artist Mr. Wong Kwok Chung. Waste glass will be made into over 3,000 glass butterflies, to display the connection between butterflies, art, environmental protection and creativity. The exhibition will be held in different corners of Hong Kong, to spread the message widely.

**One-fifth of HK butterfly species found at Ho Sheung Heung, Long Valley and Lok Ma Chau**

The 6-km survey route starts from Ho Sheung Heung, crossing Sheung Yue River to reach the centre of Long Valley, and extending to Liu Pok via Tai Shek Mo. Preliminary data <sup>Note 1</sup> showed that a total of 50 butterfly species were found at the three sites, accounting for 19% of the Hong Kong total, including four rare species such as a Swallowtail (*Papilio xuthus*), Cornelian (*Deudorix epijarbas*) and Grass Demon (*Udaspes folus*). According to

records by butterfly lovers, some rare species such as Comma (*Polygonia c-aureum*) have also been spotted at Ho Sheung Heung and Long Valley.

Ho Sheung Heung and Long Valley, which are covered in the Butterfly Survey route, are part of the North East New Territories New Development Areas. According to the planning details announced in July 2013 by the Planning Department and Civil Engineering and Development Department, there will be three new development areas: Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling. Kwu Tung North New Development Area, totalling some 450 hectares (about 23 times the size of Victoria Park), includes Ho Sheung Heung, Long Valley, Kwu Tung and Pak Shek Au. Of these, the southern part of Ho Sheung Heung and Long Valley are green belts, and hence become the subject of controversy. They are also sites of high value for butterflies.

The planning study indicated that in Kwu Tung North New Development Area, land by Fanling Highway will be used for Commercial, Research and Development Purposes. As for Long Valley, the central area is in general of high ecological value. The government planned to create a 37-hectare Nature Park there. It will function as the green lung of the new development areas. There will be a visitor centre, and the public can also participate in wetland farming. The north and south sides of the park will be used for “agriculture”.

**Mr. Matthew Sin, Senior Environmental Affairs Manager of Green Power**, said that from an ecological conservation point of view, the land next to Fanling Highway was already developed in the 1960s and 1970s. Hence, further and limited development may not pose too much impact on the natural ecology. He also welcomed the government’s concern regarding conservation of Long Valley. However, he remarked that it would be most important to maintain the existing wetlands—and the agricultural activities—at Long Valley, when converting the central area into Nature Park. He said, “The high ecological value of Long Valley has resulted from previous agricultural work. Once the agriculture is interrupted, damage to the ecological value will be hard to recover.”

**Mr. Sin** criticised the government for previously damaging the habitat of Dark Brown Ace (*Halpe porus*) due to the building of a cycling track at Long Valley North. The species is very rare and there are only a few places with records in Hong Kong. Ho Sheung Heung is the one with the largest and most stable population. “Earlier, the government built a cycling track through a bamboo grove at Long Valley North. Although only some of the bamboo was damaged, Dark Brown Ace (*Halpe porus*) has since disappeared. We failed to spot this

butterfly during recent visits to the site. The incident is frustrating, as the cycling track project was carried out with a passed environmental impact assessment but we still lost the precious habitat,” **Mr. Sin** remarked. He said the incident reflected the problem that the government and the consultant responsible for the environmental impact assessment lacked information on butterfly ecology, and there is an urgent need to conduct baseline surveys of butterfly ecology at the site.

### **More butterflies to be found at Lok Ma Chau**

As for Lok Ma Chau, the former Frontier Closed Area was opened up in June 2013. As much as 710 hectares (37 times the size of Victoria Park) were opened up. Apart from fishponds, abandoned farmlands and low density village houses, almost all is undeveloped land. Up to now there is no clear development project. However, Lok Ma Chau Loop was among the 10 Major Infrastructure Projects in the Policy Address of 2007. In fact, the government has commissioned a Planning and Engineering Study on Development of Lok Ma Chau Loop, and announced potential development of a tertiary education institute and high-tech research facilities. So we will likely see development in the near future.

**Mr. Sin** remarked, “We expect that the future development at Lok Ma Chau will centre around the Loop. After the implementation of the North East New Territories Development Project, economic activities at Lok Ma Chau will become more active and development pressure will increase. As the area was formerly a Frontier Closed Area, it was not easily accessible, so there are few ecological records. We hope to fill up the gap of butterfly record as soon as possible by conducting surveys. It is likely that we will find more butterfly species. This will provide ecological data to protect local butterflies when land use planning is carried out in future.”

**Mr. Sin** further pointed out that the three sites – Ho Sheung Heung, Long Valley and Lok Ma Chau – are ecologically connected. Therefore, for conservation, we must take the three together into consideration. Ho Sheung Heung and Long Valley are mostly fish ponds or under conventional farming which may not be home to many butterfly species. But Tai Shek Mo, and the nearby old villages with their woodlands and burial grounds, provide a high diversity of vegetation which boosts butterfly diversity at Ho Sheung Heung and Long Valley. On the other side of Tai Shek Mo is Lok Ma Chau. The linking up of the three sites helps the butterflies to survive and reproduce in a larger and more holistic environment.

### **“7.14 We Love Butterflies” -- BUTTERFLY X ART Installation Art Exhibition**

The organizers announced the details for this year’s “7.14 We Love Butterflies”. A **BUTTERFLY X ART Installation Art Exhibition** will be held in collaboration with renowned local glass artist Mr. Wong Kwok Chung. Discarded glass will be made into over 3,000 glass butterflies to display the connections between butterflies, art, environmental protection and creativity.

Since 2013, the organisers have designated 14 July as the “**We Love Butterflies Day**”, the first of its kind in celebrating for the conservation of a specific group of wildlife. This year, the event enters its third year and so using the figures of “3” and “714”, we will prepare 3,714 glass butterflies, all of which will be handmade – unique and cherished as the butterflies in Hong Kong.

The exhibition will take place in different parts of Hong Kong from July to October. The public can learn about local butterflies through the exhibition, as well as participate in workshops at the exhibition sites to put colours on the glass butterflies, and the finished products will be displayed as well. At the end of the exhibition, members of the public can make donations to buy the glass butterflies, to support butterfly conservation work in Hong Kong. For details, please visit the Hong Kong Butterfly Net website: [www.shell-greenpower.net/714](http://www.shell-greenpower.net/714) or call 3961 0200.

Note 1: Four preliminary surveys were conducted from May to June, 2015.