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Hong Kong's first Community Butterfly Surveyor Programme Catalogued over 100 Butterfly Species

Previously, butterfly surveyors started their first stage of butterfly survey at local butterfly hotspots including San Tau in Tung Chung, Luk Keng in Fanling and Wu Kau Tang in Tai Po. Up to the end of September, 104 butterfly species have been recorded, including 13 rare and 4 very rare species. This finding reinforces the special ecological value of these places. The “Butterfly Surveyor Scheme”, which is supported by local citizens, will continue to survey and gather important information that helps conserve butterfly hotspots in the long run.

“New Nature Conservation Policy” released by the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau in 2004 designated 12 Priority Sites for Enhanced Conservation, including Luk Keng and Wu Kau Tang. By that time, 64 butterfly species including 1 rare species were found in Luk Keng. Although only 59 butterfly species were recorded by butterfly surveyors, 2 very rare species and 5 rare species were found. Among them, Plain Banded Awl (*Hasora vitta*), Dark Brown Ace (*Halpe porus*) and Psyche (*Leptosia nina*) have very few local records. This is mainly because surveys are seldom conducted at Luk Keng. In addition, due to its remote location, few butterfly watchers visit for butterfly watching and photography. The richness of butterflies at Luk Keng had not been fully discovered, so the work of butterfly surveyors can supplement this gap in our knowledge.

According to the government’s past surveys, there were at least 137 butterfly species at Wu Kau Tang, of which 11 species were classified as rare. Our butterfly surveyors recorded 60 species at Wu Kau Tang. Although the number of species found was not as high as in the government’s records, 3 very rare butterflies including Shiny-spotted Bob (*Isoteinon lamprospilus*) and Lesser Forest Blue (*Taraka hamada*) and 6 other rare species were found. The findings enrich the original record, and reinforce the ecological value of Wu Kau Tang.

In the Environmental Impact Assessment report for Tung Chung - Ngong Ping Cable Car Project issued in 2003, the ecological assessment recorded 46 butterfly species. These included a rare species, White Dragontail (*Lamproptera curius*). Although the assessment took place over 11 days, which is longer than the survey carried out by butterfly surveyors, both survey teams recorded around the same number of butterfly species. Moreover, 3 rare butterflies were spotted by butterfly surveyors. This shows that the Butterfly Surveyor Scheme, which focuses on butterflies, can collect data more effectively. More interesting findings are expected in the coming



year.

67 butterfly surveyors were shortlisted by assessment, each of whom received comprehensive training. Dr. Cheng Luk Ki, Division Head of Scientific Research & Conservation of Green Power, said butterfly surveyors' findings are more than encouraging. They have proven the butterfly diversity at these locations. "The Butterfly Surveyor Scheme aims to inject human resources into a sustainable local butterfly survey," he said. "It helps support the conservation of butterfly hotspots by gathering ecological information." Dr. Cheng considered the Butterfly Surveyor Scheme has been playing its intended role since its commencement two months ago. He said butterfly surveyors will continue their work in San Tau, Wu Kau Tang and Luk Keng through the year, and there will be more discoveries in future.