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**Common Archduke has Established a Stable Population on Lantau island
Lantau Development Plan Unveiled at the End of the Year
Concerns for Threats to Butterfly Habitats**

Butterfly surveys at Sha Lo Wan, San Shek Wan and Shum Wat

Green Power previously expanded the butterfly survey to cover Sha Lo Wan, San Shek Wan and Shum Wat on Lantau; all are on the margin of Lantau North Country Park. From May to July, three surveys were carried out and a total of 84 butterfly species were recorded, including two very rare and eight rare butterfly species. There were also two important findings: Common Archduke (*Lexias pardalis*) and Common Banded Demon (*Notocrypta paralysos*), both of which were only found in Hong Kong recently and have yet to be classified for their rarity. The former species was recorded at all three sites in the present survey, with females, males and individuals of different generations. Over 20 individuals were recorded in the same period. **Mr. Matthew Sin, Senior Environmental Affairs Manager of Green Power,** remarked that this was an exciting discovery and it was likely that Common Archduke had established a stable population in the woods of Sha Lo Wan, San Shek Wan and Shum Wat. These might be the largest habitats for the species in Hong Kong.

Matthew pointed out that Sha Lo Wan, San Shek Wan and Shum Wat are all lowland woods that are basically free from development and hence have their natural ecology well preserved. In addition, their links to Lantau North Country Park make a connected highland and lowland woodland habitat, nurturing the thriving butterfly populations. Regarding the butterflies on Lantau, Green Power has previously conducted yearly butterfly ecology surveys at San Tau, Tung Chung; and Mui Wo, recording 115 and 98 butterfly species at the sites, respectively. In winter last year, a new overwintering site for Danaids was discovered in Lantau south, with an estimated population of over 10,000. In addition, according to earlier literature records, there are over 10 butterfly hotspots in Lantau, sheltering 199 butterfly species, which is about 80% of the total in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, most of the hotspots are at the margins of country parks – such as Pui O, Tong Fuk and Shui Hau, and coastal sites such as Sha Lo Wan, San Shek Wan and Shum Wat in the present survey. These are all vulnerable to development and destruction. "The government has become eager to develop Lantau in recent years. We are yet to see plans and actions from the government to protect Lantau ecology, particularly the butterflies," Matthew said.

Among the confirmed development plans for Lantau, large scale projects include the Hong Kong - Zhuhai - Macao Bridge Hong Kong Section, Tuen Mun - Chek Lap Kok Link and Tung Chung New Town Extension. The former two will be completed soon. The public consultation for Tung Chung New Town Extension is coming to an end. The upcoming development of Tung Chung west will cover the lower course and estuary of Tung Chung River, near the San Tau butterfly hotspot.

Development blueprint to be announced at the end of 2016

Besides, the government has tabled several proposals to develop Lantau, covering every corner of the island. It plans to announce the development plan and timetable for Lantau by the end of this year. Several development plans boosted by the government are likely to be included, such as the East Lantau Metropolis development. According to information released by the government, a 1,000 hectare artificial island will be built in the waters between the east coast of Lantau and Hong Kong Island west. The area is equivalent to 80% of the airport island and will be used mainly for commercial purposes. This will bring about many road developments, such as a road connecting the island and Mui Wo on Lantau south, or even linking up with the present North Lantau Road. By then, not only Mui Wo but also the neighbouring communities such as Pui O and Cheung Sha will be urbanised by the new commercial area. "This will bring disastrous damage to the environment, ecology and culture of Lantau," Matthew remarked.

In addition, the Lantau Development Advisory Committee proposed opening up Tung Chung Road and South Lantau Road, to further develop the island. Once the East Lantau Metropolis development is confirmed, this will catalyse the suggestion of opening presently closed roads. Matthew emphasised that the current restriction on road vehicles holds significant role in protecting the whole environment of South Lantau, and traffic improvement should not be an excuse for opening up the roads.

Recently, there has also been news that the government has planned a strategic road network on the north coast of Lantau. Matthew said that according to past experience, once rural roads are built, development and illegal landfills will be out of control. The recent cases of She Shan and Sha Tau Kok are typical examples. Large scale land reclamation occurred after She Shan Road was opened up. The formerly closed frontier area of Sha Tau Kok also saw a surge of unplanned development such as car parks and war games fields after its opening up, damaging the local environment. "Lantau residents will not welcome foul air, sewage and mountains of construction waste," Matthew said. "They will not want to see the scenic landscape losing its attractiveness to visitors and have Lantau's tourist business ruined."



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As most butterfly hotspots on Lantau are not covered by statutory plans, Matthew urged the government to include country park enclaves such as Sha Lo Wan, San Shek Wan, Shum Wat, Tong Fuk and Shui Hau in the Development Permission Area Plans, and produce Outline Zoning Plans to regulate land use and prohibit developments that will threaten the local ecology. In addition, Green Power will strengthen monitoring of the butterfly hotspots on Lantau.