

13 November 2016

**Number of Butterflies at Yuen Tun Ha Hit Record in Latest Butterfly Survey**  
**“Butterfly Wonderland” Showcasing Butterfly Metamorphosis in Upcycling Junk Wood**

This year’s “**Shell Nature Watch - Butterfly Explorer**”, which is co-organised by Green Power and Shell (HK), collaborates with renowned local wood sculptor artist **Mr. Wong Tin Yan** to showcase the “Butterfly Wonderland” Upcycling Art Parade, which has been joined by around 30 local art organisations to hold a handicraft market. A ceremony is held today in iSQUARE, attending guests include: **Mr. Wong Kam-sing, GBS, JP, Secretary for the Environment; renowned local wood sculptor artist, Mr. Wong Tin Yan; Mr. Daniel Ng, Chairman of Shell Hong Kong Limited; Dr. Man Chi Sum, Chief Executive of Green Power, and Butterfly Ambassadors, artists Ms. Shiga Lin and Mr. Gregory Wong.**

**Mr. Wong Kam-sing, GBS, JP, Secretary for the Environment** said, “The Government is actively developing biodiversity conservation measures, including for the conservation of butterflies. Hong Kong’s first ‘Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan’ will be released soon, and will strengthen biodiversity conservation. Hong Kong is rich in butterflies and butterfly watching is a highlight in raising public awareness of the local ecology. Matching with the second annual Hong Kong Biodiversity Festival, this may trigger ‘butterfly effect’ and further aid the promotion of biodiversity conservation.”

**Mr. Daniel Ng of Chairman of Shell Hong Kong Limited**, one of the co-organisers, said, “In 2004, Shell Hong Kong Limited started collaborating with Green Power in the ‘Shell Nature Watch - Butterfly Explorer’ project, which is currently in its 13th year. Shell Hong Kong has always placed great emphasis on sustainable development and ‘Shell Nature Watch - Butterfly Explorer’ is one of our projects that promotes biodiversity and ecological conservation. Using butterflies as an entry point, we hope to engage people when promoting messages on ecological conservation and protection, thus build a sustainable future.”

**Numbers of butterfly species have risen by 50 percent**

The organisers announced the latest results of the butterfly survey <sup>(1)</sup> which was conducted from June to October this year, encompassing ten butterfly hotspots, with 170 species of butterflies recorded, representing around 65% of the total number of butterflies in Hong Kong <sup>(2)</sup>.

The three butterfly hotspots with the highest numbers of butterflies are Yuen Tun Ha, Sha Tau Kok and Luk Keng, with 132, 117 and 113 species of butterflies, respectively, while Yuen Tun Ha has the most rare species of butterflies. The numbers of “rare” and “very rare” species of butterflies are 18 and 10, respectively.

**Matthew Sin, Senior Environmental Affairs Manager of Green Power,** said the numbers of butterfly species found in a number of hotspots were higher than last year’s record. It is worth noting that the annual butterfly survey starts in June, when butterflies are most active, and continues until May in the next year, meaning the five-month survey this year has already recorded more butterfly species than the annual record in the previous year at eight out of ten sites, with the increases ranging from 2% to 54%. The number of total and rare butterfly species recorded at Yuen Tun Ha reached a historic high, with the former increasing by 20% and the latter increasing by 40% compared with last year.

In addition, Matthew pointed out two special records of this year: *Euthalia niepelti* and **Silver Forget-me-not** (*Catochrysops panormus*). *Euthalia niepelti* was first recorded in 2008, and had a sparse distribution in Hong Kong, but was surprisingly found at Luk Keng, Wu Kao Tang, Lam Tsuen and Sha Tau Kok this year. Silver Forget-me-not, a “very rare” species, was only recorded in literature at southern Hong Kong Island, Sha Lo Wan and San Shek Wan, and formerly found at Fung Yuen. Its first record at Luk Keng in the current survey is a very important discovery.

Matthew was pleased about the survey records this year, as the increases in both total and rare butterfly species suggest the hotspots' environments were generally well protected. “In the past, we revealed destruction at the butterfly hotspots and reported them to the government at once for follow-up,” he said. “The butterfly data we collected was also sent to the government for establishing conservation measures for butterflies. This year’s survey record shows our work is effective in stabilising butterfly diversity.” He believes more butterfly species will be found in the future and hopes previous records can be broken.

At the same time, he suggested that the increase in butterfly species may be related to the more abundant rainfall this year. Until October 2016 (latest information from the Hong Kong Observatory), the total monthly rainfall records of several months this year were higher than same-period records in recent years. Abundant precipitation encourages plant growth, and is thus beneficial to butterfly reproduction and growth.

## “BUTTERFLY WONDERLAND” – The first butterfly handicraft market in Hong Kong

The organisers invited renowned **local wood sculpture artist Mr. Wong Tin Yan** to use “Junk Wood·Upcycling; Butterfly·Beautiful Metamorphosis” as theme to create pieces for the “BUTTERFLY WONDERLAND” Upcycling Art Parade, and exhibited the art pieces alongside the first butterfly-themed handicraft market in Hong Kong on the ground and third floors of iSQUARE in Tsim Sha Tsui. Around 30 local art organisations participated in the market.

Wong Tin Yan is good at upcycling discarded wood in his creations, and has made five art pieces: Caterpillar, Pupa, Metamorphosis, Common Tiger and Tailed Jay this time. The largest sculpture is three metres tall, and all the sculptures could be touched, some could be entered or even climbed on, making them very “friendly” art pieces.

Wong Tin Yan said using junk wood is most suitable for showcasing butterfly metamorphosis, “Junk wood and pallets are often seen as rubbish, but with some thought and effort, they can be turned into beautiful art pieces which everybody appreciates. Just like butterfly caterpillars, which are often neglected or make people fee; disgusted. But as time passes, they will turn into beautiful butterflies which everyone loves.” It was his first time to use butterfly as the theme of creativity, and the hardest part was to use the hard lines of junk wood to represent the curves and softness of butterflies. He decided to exaggerate their specific features, such as segments in caterpillars, empty room in pupa and tiger pattern on Common Tiger, etc., and turned the hard junk wood into sculptures with the appearance and bearing of butterflies. He hoped the exhibition can trigger the “Butterfly Effect”. “What I did might seem trivial, but as the message propagates, more people will be influenced and start to care about local butterflies.”

Around 30 local art organisations participating in this handicraft market, including those which work on tie-dyeing, pottery and sewing. Apart from purchasing different butterfly handicrafts, members of the public can also join free handicraft workshops, including upcycling old wine boxes into vintage butterfly knickknacks, upcycling old book pages into butterfly decorations and sewing caterpillar figures.

Two “Butterfly Ambassadors” – **artists Ms. Shiga Lin and Mr. Gregory Wong** – made wooden butterflies and caterpillars at the event. They cut and polished junk wood with equipment, assembled the material into butterflies and caterpillars and coloured their pieces. “Girls are normally scared of caterpillars, but in fact they are the stage which butterflies must go through as



they grow. I hope everyone will care about the caterpillars.” Shiga said. Gregory hoped more people start to care about butterflies through the event, “Butterflies are important natural resources in Hong Kong, and should be treasured and protected by our citizens.”

(1) Butterfly survey is conducted by Butterfly Surveyors. The Surveyors belong to the first butterfly survey team formed by the general public in Hong Kong. Butterfly Surveyors, launched in 2008, is an activity under Shell Nature Watch – Butterfly Explorer. The team invests substantial efforts to collect data on butterfly ecology in long term. Currently there are 248 qualified surveyors. The number of butterfly hotspots started with three at the beginning, increased by one each year and reached ten now, including San Tau (Lantau Island), Luk Keng (Fanling), Wu Kau Tang (Tai Po), Lam Tsuen (She Shan and Ng Tung Chai, Tai Po), Yuen Tun Ha (Tai Po), Shum Chung and Yung Shue O (Sai Kung), Sha Tau Kok, Pak Sha O and Lai Chi Chong (Sai Kung), Mui Wo (Lantau) and Lok Ma Chau-Long Valley-Ho Sheung Heung.

(2) The total number of butterfly species in Hong Kong is about 265.

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