

**Report on HKNHS Hike in Lantau South Country Park:
Lantau Trail Sections 9 & 10 15 January 2017**



Just to prove we haven't become too reliant on our comfortable coach, we were asked to make our own way to the meeting point at the east end of Shek Pik Reservoir for this month's hike. Twenty one members and one guest proved we could still do it!

Before briefing us on what was planned for the day's hike, Malcolm told us about our important meeting place. The reservoir was built between 1957 and 1963 and can hold 24 million cubic

metres. It is the third largest in Hong Kong (High Island and Plover Cove Reservoirs being larger.) Also of interested was the number of prisons on Lantau Island (six) and we saw two on our hike. Fortunately, the last prison escape was in 1999!

The weather was a little grey but our spirits weren't as we set off to walk through Shek Lam Chau to Lo Kei Wan on the Lantau Trail Stage 9. The beautiful woodland was undulating with some testing short climbs but nothing we couldn't manage. At one point along the walk, we saw a White-bellied Sea Eagle soaring above us. It was a breathtaking sight or, on reflection, was the shortness of breath because of the climb. Either way, it was memorable.



It was democratically decided to have lunch on the beach and we were even entertained by a tightrope walker! We couldn't have asked for a better lunch spot!

Who would believe we were in Hong Kong? Our lunch spot was so far removed from the Nathan Road shopping circus!





Evidently, the Chinese tightrope walker has been coming to Lo Kei Wan Beach for several years to improve his skills. Very impressive!

After lunch, we turned in a northerly direction towards Shui Hau. It was at this point, at the end of Stage 9 that some members were able to finish their hike. Those of us continuing, followed the Lantau Stage 10 trail and headed north towards the Shek Pik Catchwater. We

followed the catchwater for five kilometres and then descended to the main road.

As we were heading downhill to the road, Jan spotted some Blue Magpies in the distance. Although Blue Magpies are large, common birds, many people are unaware of their existence so we were privileged to see them. When I asked Google, it told me *'the Blue Magpie is an attractive and distinctive member of the crow family which is also good at imitating the calls of other birds. They are a regular subject of Chinese painting.'*



After hiking for 14 kilometres, rather than continue on to Lower Cheung Sha Beach and seek out some well-earned refreshments, members decided to finish at the main road and catch their respective buses home. This was a really scenic and beautiful hike. Thanks to Malcolm for all his effort in organising this hike and to everyone for their company and conversation.

Report: Sue Shaw

Photos: Members (except magpie photo, courtesy of internet, source unknown)