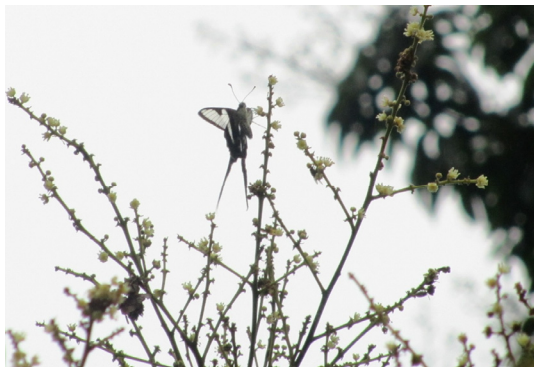


Hong Kong Natural History Society
Report on April 2013 Outing to Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve

25 members set off to Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve in Tai Po on a mild cool day. When we got there, we were shocked to discover that the area was surrounded by the construction of some high-rise buildings, near to the entrance of the Reserve.

After we entered the Education Centre, the speaker - Hugo - gave us a briefing of the morning's programme. Then, we were led into a small lecture room where Hugo started by showing us a slide of the Dragon Tail Butterfly - a rare specimen which can only be found at Fung Yuen, Ng Tung Chai and Tai Po Kau in Hong Kong. He continued to show us some other species of Hong Kong butterflies, telling us about their life-cycle and how to distinguish the difference between butterflies and moths (by their antennae and whether open or closed wings at rest). We were informed about the international research work on the migration of butterflies done between Taiwan and Japan, and were surprised to learn that butterflies could fly so far. The most exciting part of the talk was the viewing of the metamorphosis of a pupa turning into a butterfly. After the talk, we went outdoors to observe the real thing. In fact, this time of the year (March-April) is the best time to catch a view of some very rare species of butterflies.



Dragon Tail



Metallic Cerulean

We were taken to 3 main areas in the Reserve. The Nectar Plant Garden has plants including *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*, *Lantana camara* which are food sources for butterfly adults. In the Fung Shui Woodland, different butterfly host plants had been planted to provide food for larvae, while *Illigera* are planted in the White Dragontail (*Lampropter acurius*) Garden. We were told that the tree sap of the old citrus trees attracts butterflies like *Satyridae* and *Nymphalidae*. We also spent some time in the Common Birdwing (*Troides helena*) Garden. Some members spotted the Dragon Tail, some took pictures of a Devil-face moth caterpillar and some caught sight of other rare species. We learned that there are 200 species of butterfly in Fung Yuen (80% of all the species in Hong Kong).



Devil-face moth caterpillar



Punchinello



Hugo conducting the tour for the 'Unique Specimen'

After taking 30 minutes lunch break at the Centre, we set off to Brides Pool at about 1:30 pm. When we arrived at the starting point of the Pat Sin Leng Nature Trail, it was drizzling with rain, but 23 brave souls began the hike with no worries. Although we were a bit disappointed that we could not see any panoramic views of Plover Cove, we enjoyed taking note of the Quartz lines in the rocks and the local vegetation of Ferns, Rose Myrtle and Mountain Dwarf. If the current of the stream under the bridge had not been so rapid after the rain, by looking close enough, we could perhaps have also seen the Hong Kong Newt. Taking every step cautiously, everyone arrived at the Spring Pavilion safely with only a few minor slips along the journey. We had a drink in Tai Mei Tuk where the coach picked us up at about 5:20pm.

The group dismissed in Central at 6:30 pm, bringing home with us some knowledgeable good memories, apart from the sloshy-muddy puddles!!

Reported by Mak Wei Ming

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