**Hong Kong Natural History Society**
**Report on 19 June 2011 Boat Outing to Double Island**

Twenty four people arrived at the Ma Liu Shui Public Pier, twenty two members along with two guests, ready for their boat trip to Wong Wan Chau or commonly known as Double Island. It was a bright sunny day, perfect for getting sunburnt. However, for a brief time, a sunshower sent a few people inside the boat but most of us were on the top deck enjoying the breeze and fresh air. We travelled along the Tolo



Channel for about an hour before turning around the Plover Peninsular towards Double Island to an isolated beach where Mr Lee moored his boat. He then transported us in small groups to the beach where he kindly left us a sun umbrella and some other beach items which we could sit on. Some of us swam ashore, enjoying the cool of the water.

At this stage the group divided into smaller groups depending on what they wanted to do. Some people stayed on board, making the most of the shelter of the boat. There they sat around, talked, sunbathed and swam around the boat, or else to shore then back again. Others decided to go for a walk, but as one member said afterwards, "scrap the section that says there is a track around the island." It was overgrown and they were unable to find it. Some people started on the trek but gave up and returned, others persevered and explored what they could get around.



After a glorious swim, a group of us decided to explore the inlet. First of all, we walked along a track until we came to a stop. Our choice was to return or wade through the water. We chose to return. Along the



track we came across a 'pineapple tree', or pandanus, a tree that looks like it has pineapples growing from it. We also came across very pretty rose myrtle with pink flowers which bloom at this time of the year. Back at the tributary of the inlet, we decided yes, we would wade through the water. This we did, grateful that we had our swimming gear on as in parts it was above waist deep. We explored the area, noting the long thin bean-like pods of the mangrove trees nearby, floating in the water.

Later, while searching around the rocks at the other end of the beach, some of us noticed several shellfish on the rocks. We watched with fascination a larger one moving across the rock and down the sides into the water, continuing down below water level.

The rest of the day was spent swimming, sunbathing and chatting on the beach. Although there was a lot of vegetation inland, it was small tree-like shrubs, so there was

very little shelter. However, we noticed that some 'Christmas' trees had been planted on the edge of the beach but they were still too small to provide the necessary shelter. Some people made 'furniture' out of what rubbish they could find and set up base in whatever shade they could find.

Towards mid-afternoon three of us ventured back to the inlet. The tide had gone out and where earlier it was over waist deep, it was now ankle deep. This allowed us to watch the different creatures that moved around either in the sandbanks or in the shallow water. We observed some tiny striped tiger-like fish that camouflaged effectively against the small pebbles on the seabed. We also saw small red and green crabs called a fiddler crab which scampered over the sand and hid under the rocks. Sadly, we also noticed the polystyrene and other litter that lined the water line. Fortunately, it was not as bad as we have seen on some other beaches. Mr. Lee, the owner of the boat, spent some time gathering litter and placing it in a rubbish bag to take back to base.

We then returned to the boat around which some of us had our final swim. The trip back was spent socialising with wine, beer and snacks, provided for by very kind people. This trip was the last one for some of our members and frequent guests who are departing Hong Kong at the end of the academic year. We wish Daphne, Jan Berry, Jolanta and Marnie all the very best in their future endeavours.

Report by Christine Mills, Outing Organiser
With thanks to Frank Bradley for photographs