

HONG KONG NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

December 8 2013 TONG FUK TO NAM SHAN CHRISTMAS HIKE

Under cloudy skies 18 members and two guests (Kitty from Inner Mongolia and Alicia from Spain) met at the seaside village of Tong Fuk where some of the early birds enjoyed a cappuccino while waiting for others to arrive. We started the hike at 11.00 walking along a dry creek leading up to the South Lantau Trail. This track was a village path and quite a nice walk although some parts were quite steep; luckily there were ropes to help you.



We soon reached the water catchment road and the start of the South Lantau trail where we had a break before heading up a very steep section which was 1.4 km in length and 380 meters above sea level. It took most members about 1 hour to complete the ascent and at the top we had a break and enjoyed some Xmas cake and mince pies. Although it was a tough climb the rest of hike was on the same contour with rewarding views of the Outlying Islands (thru the haze). We also walked over rocky rivers, past scenic water holes and waterfalls.



We

stopped at Pak Chung Au (meeting up with two more members) for lunch and then headed to Nam Shan via the low road as no one seemed too keen on the higher one to Tai Tung Shan (Sunset Peak). This section would have had great views except the haze once again got in the way. However, natural history sightings included a mole-like creature at the side of the path, later identified as a shrew, but difficult to say whether a musk shrew (*suncus murinus*) or a grey one (*crocidura attenuate*). Some small fish in a stream were later identified as *Linparhomaloptera disparis*, a kind of algae-eating loach. This particular fish was rather brightly coloured so is perhaps a courting male. We arrived at Nam Shan about 4.30pm where the hike officially ended; however most members walked into Mui Wo via the old village path thru the villages. Peter Stuckey pointed out an old Watch Tower and gave a brief but informative talk. We all met up again at Como Lake Italian Restaurant where a badly sprained ankle was treated with ice, and a meal, good company and free bottles of red wine were enjoyed by all. **Frank Bradley**

