

Hong Kong Natural History Society
Report on Guided Butterfly Walk, Lamma Island - Sunday 24 March 2019



Thirteen members (including 2 guests) were greeted by Dr Tim Bonebrake and Dr Toby Tsang of the School of Biological Sciences, HKU, at Yung Shue Wan Public Pier at 10:30am. After Tim's briefing to the group, we set off on the path in northern Lamma. We first stopped on a path where our guide told us he often saw Romer's Tree Frogs during the walks before. Here, Tim told us that the best temperature to see butterflies is around 22 degrees. We doubted if we could see any as the temperature was much lower on that day. He explained that the behaviour of butterflies is very much affected by climate change. The colours of their pattern change from wet to drier seasons. The common colours for the different families are yellow, blue, black, orange and brown.



Dr Tim Bonebrake – what a wonderful job to have!

We started seeing butterflies on the way to Tai Peng Old Village. Tim and Toby chased and caught a few in their net, holding them in a proper way without injuring them or damaging their wings. We had a good study and observation of a Large Faun, a Pale Grass Blue, a South China Bush Brown and a Common Mormon. Further on our way to Pak Kok Village, we discovered a Common Grass Yellow with very bright scales, which indicated he was relatively young. We also closely observed a

Red Helen and Common Gull – a less common species. We felt very excited to have such a close encounter with the butterflies. Please see Tim’s own account at the end of my report for fuller identification of the butterflies we saw.



Common Mormon



Large Faun



Toby assessing the catch



S China Bush Brown



Common Grass Yellow

We all felt it had been a fruitful day and thoroughly enjoyed our late lunch at the seafood restaurant afterwards, with most of us taking the 4:00 ferry back to Hong Kong.



*Text by Mak Wei Ming
Photos by Mak Wei Ming and Patricia Mak*

NOTE: * Do **not** catch or hold butterflies unless instructed by an expert how to do so without injuring them or damaging their wings.

Lamma Island butterfly walk on 24 Mar 2019

Report by Timothy Bonebrake

On a cold (approximately 15°C) Mar 24 Sunday we searched north Lamma Island for butterflies. The walk was led by myself and Toby Tsang, both of the University of Hong Kong. Beginning in Yung Shue Wan we walked towards Tai Peng village through the “snake path”. No sign of butterflies (or snakes). But after Tai Peng we went to the cable road towards the village of Pak Kok.

Very soon after arriving at the cable road we found our first butterfly, the Large Faun (*Faunis eumeus*). The Large Faun is a large Nymphalidae butterfly, dark with a line of white spots and orange flashes on the top of its wings. We found many along the cable road and in one stretch found dozens flying. Not long after finding the Large Faun we found our second species, the Pale Grass Blue (*Pseudozizeeria maha*). This small blue species of the Lycaenidae family is among the most common species of butterfly in Hong Kong. On the cable road we also found the South China Bush Brown (*Mycalesis zonata*), the Common Grass Yellow (*Eurema hecabe* of the Pieridae family), and the Common Mormon (*Papilio polytes*, of the Papilionidae family). We also spotted a larval *Papilio* that looked like bird droppings.

Closer to Pak Kok, the northern tip of Lamma, we had more luck and found a few relatively uncommon species. Next to the beach we found the Red Helen (*Papilio helenus*) and the Common Gull (*Cepora nerissa*). In the village we also caught an Indian Cabbage White (*Pieris canidia*). The walk back to Yung Shue Wan was relatively quiet though the South China Bush Browns and Pale Grass Blues were abundant.

The cold weather limited the abundance of butterflies and the number of species observed. However, we still managed to confirm eight species across four families of butterfly in the day.