

Chairman's Message

NParks' role is to balance the needs of nature and Singaporeans for mutual benefit. By caring for and managing our natural assets, we not only help protect biodiversity, but also beautify the urban landscape, promote tourism and enhance liveability.



The National Parks Board's vision is to transform Singapore into a City in a Garden, to build a metropolis in which the urban environment is interwoven with nature. Our focus on sustainable urban development is unique, especially since urbanisation is often equated with habitat and biodiversity loss. The consequences of this loss and the corresponding importance of protecting biodiversity were highlighted by the United Nations General Assembly in their decision to designate 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity.

Although Singapore is one of the world's most densely populated countries, close to 10% of our land area is dedicated to parks and nature conservation. Despite our small size, Singapore has a rich biodiversity that benefits us all. Singapore is home to over 2,000 plant species, 52 kinds of mammals and 370 types of birds – slightly more than 60% of the 568 species listed in the UK, or 75% of the 467 species found in France. Indeed, the entire country is an urban forest; its rich tapestry of greenery supplies clean air, provides shade, lowers ambient temperature, reduces soil erosion, acts as a carbon sink and beautifies our city.

Our experience of growing a city sustainably has not only served Singapore and local biodiversity well. We have been able to contribute our learnings to the international community, for example in our work with the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity. NParks has also engaged 30 cities worldwide to help pioneer the world's first international self-assessment tool for cities to evaluate and benchmark their biodiversity conservation efforts. Endorsed in 2010, the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity was named in recognition of our country's leadership in this effort.

Obviously, NParks cannot single-handedly protect and enhance local biodiversity. Our partnerships with other government agencies and non-governmental organisations have borne fruit in terrestrial and marine conservation efforts. Over the past year, the Banded Leaf Monkey, once believed to be near extinction, has been found to be thriving in our forests. Recent research has also found 40 species of dragonflies living in our parks – a demonstration of how wildlife can thrive in urban settings.

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All of NParks' spaces and efforts serve to connect people with nature. New nature spaces, such as Tampines Eco Green, provide many opportunities for education and recreation alike. Our iconic and beloved Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve will also be rejuvenated to create new spaces for visitorship and outdoor learning. Creating opportunities for personal enjoyment and appreciation is also the first step in NParks' public education programme. In addition to our usual outreach activities, NParks organised over 200 activities to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, starting with the "BiodiverCity" photo competition and exhibition.

As we look ahead toward the transformation of Singapore into a City in a Garden, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of NParks' staff, partners, sponsors and friends. Thank you all for your commitment, hard work and your continued support of our work at NParks.



Mrs Christina Ong
Chairman
National Parks Board