



Conserving Our Biodiversity

Singapore's National
Biodiversity Strategy and
Action Plan

National Parks Board 2009



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Introduction

“Conserving Our Biodiversity” maps out Singapore’s master plan for biodiversity. It aims to promote biodiversity conservation, keeping in mind that as a densely populated country with no hinterland, we would have to adopt a pragmatic approach to conservation and develop unique solutions to our challenges. It intends to establish both policy frameworks and specific measures to ensure better planning and co-ordination in the sustainable use, management and conservation of our biodiversity.

Biodiversity conservation cannot be achieved with only efforts from one agency. A holistic approach must be adopted and the inputs of various public sector agencies and nature groups have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this document. The master plan also fulfils our regional and international commitments, primarily the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)¹.

Singapore Today — A Garden City, A Haven for Biodiversity

Singapore’s green policies, beginning with the “Garden City” plan in the 1960s, and continuing into the next century as a “City in a Garden” vision, have transformed the city-state into a distinctive and vibrant global city. The clean and green environment mitigates the harsh concrete urban environment and improves our quality of life. This has allowed Singapore to meet the lifestyle and recreational needs of an increasingly sophisticated population, and enhanced Singapore’s attractiveness as a destination for foreign businesses and talents.

With careful planning, Singapore has been able to increase its green cover² from 35.7% to 46.5% between 1986 and 2007, despite the population growing by 68% from 2.7 million to 4.6 million. Currently, close to 10% of the total land area is set aside for parks and nature reserves. This sense of green space in the city is further enhanced by integrating natural ecosystems into parks, clustering parks with complementary ecosystems and activities, and connecting them in an island-wide network of green links.

The lush green cover and warm tropical climate make Singapore a haven for rich biodiversity despite our small land mass. The island has more than 2,000 native vascular plant species, some 57 mammals species, 98 reptile species and 25 different amphibian species. Some 355 species of birds also soar through our skies, along with 282 over species of butterflies.

Our inter-tidal mangroves and mudflats are home to hundreds of fish species, which live in the root systems of more than 31 true mangrove plant species. Seagrass meadows still remain, with 12 of the 23 Indo-Pacific species found within Singapore’s waters. More than 100 species of inter-tidal sponges have been recorded, and many more are likely to be observed in the sub-tidal areas, along with the 256 different species of hard corals.

Nestled in the midst of the Indo-Malayan rainforest (one of three last remaining rainforest blocs in the world), and at the focal point between the South China Sea and Indian Oceans, Singapore is well-placed to showcase the richness of the region’s biodiversity in an easily accessible urban setting.

¹The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international agreement established by the United Nations. The CBD currently has 191 Parties. Singapore signed the CBD on 12 June 1992 and subsequently became a Party on 21 December 1995. For more information on the CBD, please visit www.cbd.int

²This refers to the area covered by greenery. This is based on a study conducted by the Centre for Remote Imaging, Sensing and Processing (CRISP), National University of Singapore.

Our Biodiversity — A Valuable and Precious Resource

Some of us may take for granted how our survival depends on biodiversity. The tropical rainforests in the Central Catchment Nature Reserve protect our water catchment so that we can have clean water. Plants play important roles like cleaning our air through the capturing of carbon dioxide, lowering the ambient temperature by shading, and reducing soil erosion. Insects function as important pollinators so that we can enjoy fruits. Birds act as seed dispersal agents. Mangroves serve as nurseries for crabs, prawns, cockles, and many of our marine organisms. Coral reefs harbour several of our favourite seafood. The natural ecosystems found in Sungei Buloh, Bukit Timah, Pulau Ubin, etc., cater to our recreational, educational, and psychological needs.

A Holistic Approach to Nature Conservation

Singapore has adopted the policy to legally protect representatives of key indigenous ecosystems within our Nature Reserves, namely, the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve (lowland dipterocarp forest), the Central Catchment Nature Reserve (including freshwater swamp forest), Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (mangroves) and Labrador Nature Reserve (coastal hill forest). In addition, one of the reserves, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, holds the distinction of being an ASEAN Heritage Park, as well as an important link in the chain of stop-over sites for migratory birds from as far as Siberia. Together, the four nature reserves cover more than 3,000 hectares or 4.5% of Singapore's land area. A network of green space, parks and park connectors, comprising an additional 4.5% of our land area, supports and buffers these Nature Reserves.

Looking forward, Singapore will need to continue to grow economically and demographically. But nature conservation need not necessarily suffer as a result if we can continue to find unique solutions to meet our set of challenges. For a city that is one of the most densely populated in the world, and which has no hinterland, the key challenge is to integrate nature without impeding economic growth. Hence, beyond developing infrastructure, Singapore has also paid due attention to conserving the natural biodiversity in the city. This requires a pragmatic approach in balancing development and biodiversity conservation, finding unique solutions to create a nature conservation model that champions environmental sustainability in a small urban setting. Projects like the plan to build a network of 300 km of park connectors, the promotion of skyrise greenery and the Active, Beautiful and Clean Waters Programme to softscape our waterbodies throughout the city provide exciting opportunities to weave nature deeper into the cityscape, and are illustrations of how we materialise the unique conservation model into reality.

Ultimately, our work in this area cannot be complete without the full and active support of the people. Community involvement is key to Singapore's long-term success in conserving our natural heritage. Already, there are many examples where the public, private and people sectors work hand-in-hand in successful projects to conserve our native flora and fauna. But to have a city where people and nature co-exist in harmony, we will need to press on to raise the appreciation of the wonders of nature within our urban setting.



Principles & Goals

PRINCIPLES

There is an increasing global awareness on the role of biodiversity conservation in improving the quality of life in cities. "Conserving Our Biodiversity" provides a framework that uses an integrated approach for the conservation of our natural heritage. It showcases Singapore's commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of its biodiversity resources. Our aim is to create an urban biodiversity conservation model that champions environmental sustainability in an urban setting with well-endowed natural heritage.

The following principles guide its implementation:

- The biodiversity resources of Singapore are our natural heritage and should be conserved for future generations.
- Considerations on biodiversity and ecosystems are factored into the national planning process.
- A balanced view is adopted of national priorities and international and regional obligations.

GOALS

The goals of Singapore's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan mirror the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

1. **Conserve and enhance biodiversity at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels.**

Singapore's habitats and ecosystems should be conserved for long-term sustainability of the ecosystems. The rates of decline in biodiversity should be slowed down as expressed in the World Summit on Sustainable Development target of reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. Concerted efforts should be made to conserve existing species, habitats and ecosystems, and to re-establish species known to have been present in the past.

2. **Ensure sustainable use of Singapore's biodiversity resources.**

The use of Singapore's biodiversity, including its benefits such as ecosystem services or by-products, should be sustainable. Multi-agency cooperation should be central to the assessment, monitoring and regulation of conservation processes.

3. **Ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits that result from the use of our genetic resources.**

Policies on sharing of benefits derived from the use of our genetic resources are to be formulated and implemented, at the same time balancing the twin goals of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.



Strategies & Actions 1

STRATEGY : SAFEGUARD OUR BIODIVERSITY

Conserve Singapore's habitats and ecosystems for long-term sustainability, so that Singaporeans can benefit from their multiple functions. Concerted efforts should be made to protect existing native species, habitats and ecosystems, and to re-establish species which once existed.

ACTIONS:

- 1.1. Implement species conservation and recovery programmes
- 1.2. Rehabilitate areas that have previously been degraded
- 1.3. Extend green corridors to counter fragmentation
- 1.4. Utilise parks for ex-situ conservation and to house or re-create ecosystems that have been lost





SPECIES CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY PROGRAMMES

Many activities are being carried out in Singapore, designed to conserve and recover native species. Current highlights include bird, dragonfly and plant conservation. Singapore's conservation work with Oriental Pied Hornbills has received national and international attention. Such work is now being extended to other species. With plants, we conserve rare species in their natural habitats; rescue plants from areas undergoing development; increase their numbers by seeds, cuttings and tissue culture, and plant them in secure areas. We established the Yishun Arboretum in 2008 for the ex-situ conservation of rare dipterocarp trees, and will continue with other tree conservation projects in different parks.

Dragonflies are important indicators of freshwater habitat quality. The 117 species found locally are being cultivated by enhancing waterbodies, such as ponds and streams, with plants important for dragonflies. The designs of parks such as Jurong Central Park, Admiralty Park and Gardens by the Bay are also being improved to enhance dragonfly habitats. All these improve the experience of park visitors, who can enjoy better surroundings and lively, colourful insects.

NParks also creates and enhances habitats, by replanting degraded areas, developing new grasslands for birds, and improving mangroves. These activities are carried out in conjunction with other agencies, in many parts of Singapore, so that sufficient habitat is available for the species we are striving to conserve.

MARINE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME: CORAL NURSERY PROJECT

Coral reefs in Singapore, though small in size, boast a relatively high biodiversity. These reefs are, however, threatened by various human activities. In order to enhance and restore the current coral cover in Singapore, a coral nursery was established off Pulau Semakau in 2007. Unlike other commercial methods of harvesting corals, which breaks up healthy coral colonies for planting, the Pulau Semakau nursery is the first coral nursery in the region that uses "coral of opportunity" (i.e. coral fragments that lie free on the reef having been fragmented by some impact) as seed corals for growth and transplantation. This is akin to a horticultural nursery providing seedlings to be planted in forest sites that need to be reforested. Coral fragments that have been successfully grown in the coral nursery are being transplanted onto the degraded reef sites off the southern coast of Singapore.

NParks and National University of Singapore jointly champion this marine conservation project with sponsorship from Keppel Corporation and support from the National Environment Agency.



TERRESTRIAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME: KETAM MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

The Ketam Mountain Bike Park in Pulau Ubin is a good example of how land can be optimally used for different needs. The project demonstrated the sustainable co-existence of nature conservation and outdoor recreation.

When NParks took over management of the site in 1999, it had been highly impacted by past granite quarrying activities. The severely degraded was devoid of greenery and biodiversity, and the ground was highly compacted with granite chips and dust.

To rehabilitate the site, about 350,000 cubic metres of soil were brought in for landscaping and over 1,500 trees and shrubs were planted. The Bike Park is now a lush habitat for a large number of open country wildlife, attracting even birds previously not found in Pulau Ubin e.g. the Red-wattled Lapwing, Baya Weaver and Lanceolated Warbler.



ACTIVE, BEAUTIFUL AND CLEAN (ABC) WATERS PROGRAMME

Soft-scaping of our waterways has an important role to play in benefiting our biodiversity. Most streams, rivers and ponds in the built-up parts of Singapore had been given hard edges, created by masonry, walls or concrete, to prevent flooding and protect infrastructure. Now, the trend has been reversed: changes in water flow and water levels are managed rather than prevented, and the ABC Waters Programme engages the People, Public and Private (3P) sectors to take ownership of water resources. It includes initiatives to manage catchments and waterways for recreation and enjoyment. Our drains, canals and reservoirs are being transformed into beautiful streams, flowing rivers and vibrant lakes.

Soft edges, with a variety of native plants, help to merge the built and the natural environment. They encourage direct interaction between people and waterways. Projects such as the revitalisation of the Kolam Ayer riverside encourage dragonflies, kingfishers and local water plants to thrive. Planted edges create more habitat types, and more places for animals to seek shelter, rest and feed. The plants can also help in making the water cleaner.

More information about the ABC Waters Programme can be found at <http://www.pub.gov/abcwaters/>.





Strategies & Actions 2

STRATEGY : CONSIDER BIODIVERSITY ISSUES IN POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING

The government will take into account biodiversity issues when making decisions and adopt holistic approaches towards conserving our natural environment.

ACTIONS:

- 2.1. Incorporate biodiversity conservation considerations, including integrated coastal management principles, into existing administrative processes
- 2.2. Enhance biodiversity assessment capabilities
- 2.3. Strengthen the current processes on access and benefit sharing, to ensure that biodiversity conservation is considered when granting access to Singapore's natural genetic resources.



INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT

As Singapore progresses economically, the multi-sectoral use of Singapore's coastal and sea-space resources becomes increasingly more complex, requiring the balancing of development, navigation, public health and conservation goals. The Technical Committee on Coastal and Marine Environment, comprising members from different agencies with a stake in the marine environment, was set up to address these issues, and will adopt integrated coastal management principles as a holistic approach in managing our coastal and marine resources.

SAVING CHEK JAWA

Do Singaporeans care about our biodiversity? In 2001, the public learnt about the rich biodiversity of Chek Jawa. Many visited the unique juxtaposition of at least 5 inter-tidal ecosystems in Chek Jawa. Visitors of all ages were fascinated by the various organisms seen only during low tides that occur during the early or late hours of the day. Even more flocked to experience Chek Jawa when they learnt that it was slated for reclamation. They were at first resigned to accept the planned reclamation. However, many felt so strongly about the natural heritage of Chek Jawa that they appealed to the Government to seek alternate solutions.

Does the Singapore Government take biodiversity considerations into decision-making and listen to citizens' feedback? After studying the numerous appeals, supported by documentation of the unique biodiversity found in Chek Jawa and views of the scientific experts, and ensuring that critical land use needs would not be unduly compromised, the Government decided that as long as it was not needed for development, Chek Jawa would be kept in its natural state.

Today, Chek Jawa, a jewel of our natural heritage, continues to be as popular as ever and enjoyed by all who visit it.





Strategies & Actions 3

STRATEGY : IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR BIODIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

A keen knowledge of how the key ecosystems respond to our activities will enable us to conserve and use them in a sustainable manner. It is essential that we support taxonomic studies, document our biodiversity and conduct ecological research.

ACTIONS:

- 3.1. Encourage and facilitate research, in particular on ecosystem and species-specific biodiversity conservation, the interactions between the biological components and their physical environment, biodiversity valuation studies and the impact of climate change on biodiversity
- 3.2. Monitor the health of ecosystems and species as part of the management process
- 3.3. Develop and maintain a central information portal on biodiversity to facilitate more informed decision-making
- 3.4. Maintain a list of species with their conservation status (red data list)
- 3.5. Compile case studies on and assess best practices that have been implemented





SINGAPORE RED DATA BOOK

The Red Data Book is a list, with photographs and descriptions, of the plant and animal species in Singapore which need improvement on their conservation status. It indicates the main reasons for rarity of these species, and gives positive guidance on actions that can be taken for improvement. Many countries have their own Red Data Book, complementing the global list of threatened species that is maintained by IUCN World Conservation Union. Singapore's first edition of the Red Data Book was produced in 1994 and a second updated edition was published in 2008.

The book is a resource for planners, researchers, students and agencies, to help plan conservation actions. It is also the basis for monitoring, so that the status of species can be tracked. Its contents highlight a number of cases where the status of a species in Singapore differs from the global picture. A species that is common overseas can be very rare in Singapore. Conversely, some species threatened elsewhere, such as the Great-billed Heron and the Straw-headed Bulbul, are doing well here. Local context is very important in planning local actions. This is where Singapore's own data sources and publications are essential.

In line with making information more readily accessible, the Red Data Book is being placed on-line.



DOCUMENTING OUR MARINE BIODIVERSITY

To better understand and assess the state of our marine biodiversity, NParks has embarked on a series of research projects in collaboration with different research institutions and interest groups to study, document and monitor our marine natural heritage.

The study on the biodiversity and distribution of the marine sponges (an animal that comes in various colours, shapes and sizes and is rooted to one spot, very much like a plant) of Singapore with NUS is one such example. These sponges play many important roles in the coral reef ecosystem such as serving as food and providing habitats for other marine organisms. They also possess potential chemical compounds that are of interest to pharmaceutical companies. The study has so far recorded over 100 species of inter-tidal sponges, of which more than 40 are new records for Singapore, and at least one is new to science. The project is now in its second phase, targeting sub-tidal species.

Another research programme that Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, NUS and NParks are currently working on is the Singapore Mangrove Insect Project. Eleven mangrove sites in Singapore were surveyed during a one-month sampling campaign in May 2009 to document the species richness and assess the quality of each site. The insect fauna of Singapore was found to be surprisingly rich and one of the best known in the world. During the one-month sampling, at least 10 new fly species for science were found, demonstrating that even in a densely populated country like Singapore, treasures can still be found.





Strategies & Actions 4

STRATEGY : ENHANCE EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Knowledge and awareness are pre-requisites for action hence communication on biodiversity issues is critical in driving public involvement. Effective communication will create greater awareness and interest in our natural heritage and instill a sense of national pride.

ACTIONS:

- 4.1. Increase appreciation, awareness and understanding of Singaporeans for nature through public seminars, road shows and events
- 4.2. Promote volunteerism through biodiversity interest groups
- 4.3. Incorporate elements of biodiversity conservation into the curricula of all levels of education



VOLUNTEER AND OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

A variety of programmes are available for anyone wanting to be involved in nature conservation. This includes volunteering as guides at our nature areas, participating in habitat monitoring and giving a hand in reforestation projects.

Guided walks are available in places such as Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Central Nature Reserve, Pulau Ubin Recreational Area, Kusu Island, and Pulau Semakau. These tours are run by NParks and various interest groups including The Blue Water Volunteers, Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research and Nature Society of Singapore.

Those who prefer to get their hands dirty can volunteer to remove debris from our shoreline. The International Coastal Cleanup Singapore, which is coordinated by the Toddycats (volunteers of the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research), is one of Singapore's largest environmental conservation programme with an average annual participation of 1,500 volunteers.

The public can also participate in biodiversity-related seminars and educational workshops conducted by organisations and interest groups such as NParks, Nature Society of Singapore, Cicada Tree Eco-place and The Leafmonkey Workshop. These varied organisations also reach out to the community by showcasing their work in environment-related events, such as Earth Day, International Day for Biological Diversity, World Environment Day, and Envirofest.



WIRELESS LEARNING TRAIL @ SUNGEI BULOH WETLAND RESERVE

The wireless learning trail at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve was inspired by the desire to enhance the learning experience for students at the reserve. It is a new way of reaching out and delivering educational programmes that will appeal to the young and technology-savvy Singaporeans. The first of its kind in the parks of Singapore, and possibly in the region, this is a public-private partnership initiative involving NParks, IDA, MOE and iCELL Network Pte Ltd.

Using webcams installed on Ultra Mobile PCs (UMPC), students are able to receive information by scanning the 2-D barcodes that are located strategically along the wireless learning trail. They can listen to birdcalls or observe behaviour of mudskippers. Students are also prompted with stimulating questions on what they can see along the trail and even participate in various educational activities provided on their UMPC.

There are 20 barcodes or stations along the Mangrove Boardwalk. It takes about 2 hours to finish the entire learning trail. After completion, students can include their thoughts and observations to build their own personal learning trail, and share the information with their classmates. This promotes learning in the 'outdoor classroom'.

For more information, visit www.sbwr.org.sg/events/wirelesslearningtrail/

SUN CLUB: SPECIAL PROJECTS TO UNDERSTAND NATURE

The SUN Club programme is founded on the idea of 'nature for everyone'. It aims to bring nature appreciation to students with special needs through tailor-made projects developed in consultation with special schools.

Initiated by NParks and launched on 3 October 2006, the SUN Club programme is supported by a sponsorship from Singapore Press Holdings Foundation (SPH Foundation). It is a community partnership project that also involves the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and five special schools that pioneered the programme with NParks.

SUN Club participants get to visit some of Singapore's most fascinating nature areas with trained guides: the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, Pulau Ubin, Pasir Ris Park and East Coast Park. They will bring home fond memories of Singapore's biodiversity, and gain an understanding as to how they, themselves, are a critical link in the web of life.



WILD SINGAPORE ONLINE!

The "Wild Singapore" website (<http://www.wildsingapore.com>) was created by Ria Tan, a nature enthusiast, to provide a one-stop resource portal for Singaporeans who want to learn more about our nature areas and do more for them. The website features news on biodiversity and environmental issues, and provides a listing of nature-related events in Singapore. Fact sheets for visitors on Singapore's nature areas are available, along with a listing of volunteer opportunities and other ways to make a difference for nature in Singapore. Nearly 7,000 photos of Singapore's wildlife are also available for free download. Singapore's marine biodiversity and related-issues form the focus of the affiliated "Wild Shores of Singapore" blog (<http://wildshores.blogspot.com>). Since it went online in 2007, the "Wild Singapore" website has attracted nearly 800,000 visitors, with 2,000 to 15,000 unique visitors each month.

In recent years, more Singaporeans are blogging about nature and environmental issues, a sign of growing awareness of nature conservation. This trend not only allows ordinary Singaporeans to take a deeper interest in our natural heritage, but also builds a community of people who care about and act on these issues.




Strategies & Actions 5

STRATEGY : STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS AND PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

The most effective mode of operation for biodiversity conservation is to engage all stakeholders, including private, public and people sectors (government agencies, academia, schools, conservation groups, amateur naturalists and private corporations), in a comprehensive partnership.

Such partnerships should be pursued domestically and internationally as biodiversity issues cut across sectors and transcend national boundaries.

ACTIONS:

- 5.1. Encourage active participation in the stewardship of the environment for all sectors
 - 5.2. Promote partnerships with regional and international organisations, in particular the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as an indication of our commitment to biodiversity conservation at the global level
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TEAMSEAGRASS

Seagrasses are flowering plants that live underwater and they play an essential role in the marine environment, being a nursery, food source and habitat to a variety of marine animals. Seagrasses also act as sentinels of coastal change and with regular monitoring, can provide early warnings changes in the coastal environment.

Len McKenzie and Rudi Yoshida from Seagrass-Watch HQ (Seagrass-Watch is the largest scientific, non-destructive, seagrass assessment and monitoring program in the world.) witnessed for themselves a delectable spread of seagrass species when they visited Chek Jawa on Pulau Ubin with nature enthusiasts, Ria Tan and Siti Maryam Yaakub, on 8th October 2006. Their visit started the ball rolling for Seagrass-Watch here in Singapore and sparked off a strong partnership between Ria, Siti and National Parks Board as well as the catchy name "TeamSeagrass".

Since its genesis in November 2006, TeamSeagrass, a volunteer-based seagrass monitoring programme, grew from strength to strength, both in volunteer numbers as well as the relationships fostered between various groups of people working towards a common vision and aspiration for the natural environment. NParks plays a vital role in this 3P (People-Public-Private sectors) project by working closely with the people, school students and private organisations, creating a synergistic collaboration for nature conservation.

An enthusiastic team of volunteers monitors the seagrass meadows at Chek Jawa, Pulau Semakau, Cyrene Reef and Tanjong

Rimau on Sentosa once every three months. Schering-Plough, a pharmaceutical company based at Tuas runs the monitoring programme at the site adjacent to its premises as part of its Corporate Responsibility and Environmental Stewardship. TeamSeagrass and NParks have also developed a partnership with Raffles Girls School to monitor the seagrass site at Labrador Nature Reserve and carry out scientific studies on seagrass as part of the school's science research programme.

These volunteers come from all walks of life with the common goal of caring for Singapore's intertidal habitats. The popularity and success of the Seagrass-Watch programme in Singapore highlights the importance of natural environments in an urban society where people are not directly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. It also underscores the increasing trend of public awareness and the community's desire to play an active role in the protection of their natural heritage.



ASEAN CENTRE FOR BIODIVERSITY

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) is an inter-governmental regional centre of excellence, which facilitates cooperation among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its partners for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and fair sharing of benefits arising from such use.

Singapore, a member of the Governing Board of the Centre, contributes to the Centre in terms of co-organising and hosting activities with the ACB, for example, the ASEAN Urban Biodiversity Workshop in April 2008 and the inaugural ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity 2009. Singapore benefits from the sharing of information, experiences and best practices among its members and in particular capacity building activities. These programmes include

the development of biodiversity indicators conducted by the ACB with the support of regional and international partners such as the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and World Conservation Monitoring Centre. For more information, visit www.aseanbiodiversity.org.



SINGAPORE INDEX ON CITIES' BIODIVERSITY

In 2008, more than half of the world's population lived in cities. Global demographic trends indicate that there will be more cities emerging and the number of megacities will increase. However, biodiversity, which is important for sustaining human health, is disappearing at an unprecedented rate. The key to the success of biodiversity conservation, hence, lies in the hands of city dwellers. However, we cannot act appropriately unless we know where we stand in terms of our biodiversity conservation status.

As a city-state, Singapore, with a rich legacy of biodiversity, is in an advantageous position to develop an innovative way to address this global issue. In May 2008, Singapore proposed the establishment of an index to measure biodiversity in cities at the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Seventeen technical experts, comprising representatives from the Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity, convened at a workshop in Singapore in February 2009, to design the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity. The Singapore Index comprises three components; a) Biodiversity in the City, b) Ecosystem Services provided by the Native Biodiversity in the City, and c) Governance and Management of Biodiversity in the City. In this form, it would function as a monitoring tool.

The global responses from city officials, scientists, conservation managers, academics, etc. have been positive, and various cities are now testing out the draft index to validate its usefulness. The Users' Manual for the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity is posted on the website of the Convention on Biological Diversity, (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/groups/cities/cities-draft-user-manual-singapore-index-2009-07-01-en.pdf>).





Monitoring & Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the NBSAP is essential. This ensures that our national objectives and international obligations are met. Singapore's overall conservation agenda will be reviewed every 5 years, in tandem with the Master Planning process. We shall track the achievements of specific actions and projects, as well as assess the progress of the implementation of the initiatives of "Conserving Our Biodiversity".

Feedback:

Feedback and comments on this document can be sent to Mr Jeffrey Low, jeffrey_low@nparks.gov.sg

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LET'S MAKE
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OUR GARDEN

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