



## International Year of Biodiversity 2010 – Celebrations in Singapore

In 2006, the United Nations declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB2010) to raise global awareness on the vital role of biodiversity in sustaining life on Earth.

As the national focal point for the Convention on Biological Diversity, National Parks Board organised a series of year-long activities to celebrate the occasion. More than 200 activities were held across different parks and gardens to create awareness among the public of the rich biodiversity which can be found in Singapore. These also included targeted roadshows at educational institutions and local schools, including Singapore's Ministry of Education to help educators better understand the variety of opportunities for curriculum teaching in the parks and gardens.

Key events include:

- **BiodiverCity' Photo Competition** (January 2010) – Launched officially on 8 January in conjunction with the official launch of International Year of Biodiversity in Curitiba, Brazil, this photo competition aimed at celebrating the rich diversity of flora and fauna in the Garden City. The competition attracted over 2,200 entries from 725 participants. Of this, 341 people participated in the open category and 384 in the student category.
- **Screening of “The Return of the King”** (January 2010) - A documentary about the return of the Oriental Pied Hornbills to our urban landscape was screened at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Once thought to be extinct from Singapore, these large birds are re-establishing healthy colonies here, with about 50 hornbills now found on Pulau Ubin, a small island off Singapore, and spreading out to other areas in mainland Singapore.
- **Dragonfly project** (March 2010) – A study by NParks reveals that one third of all our dragonflies (40 species) can still be found in our parks, despite Singapore's highly urbanised environment. This is significant as it shows that a considerable number of species of dragonflies are able to thrive in an urban setting, when previously they are more commonly found in the reserves and rural areas. Currently, there are 117 species of dragonflies in Singapore. This is as large as the number in the whole of Europe.
- **Sembcorp Forest of Giants** (April 2010) – One of Singapore's largest listed companies, Sembcorp Industries had donated S\$1 million to the Garden City Fund, a registered charity supported by National Parks Board, to set up an arboretum - a living gallery of giant tree species - for education and research, and to fund green educational programmes to benefit the community. This is part of efforts to enhance biodiversity within urban areas.
- **Singing Forest** (May 2010) - A new collection of bird-attracting native trees is being established at Southern Ridges to provide a wide variety of suitable food sources as well as shelter and nesting areas for native birds. When established, the additional planting of

suitable tree species will eventually provide an opportunity for visitors to learn and appreciate the diverse collection of birds and trees. This project is sponsored by STMicroelectronics.

- **BiodiverCity' Photo Exhibition** (May 2010) – One of the largest nature photo exhibitions organised along Orchard Road, Singapore's busiest shopping street, this month-long exhibition featured a collection of 150 photos of Singapore's rich flora and fauna. Some of the photos were presented in a slide show featured in a specially constructed dark room, where the public could view mammals, insects, marine life and bird amidst nature sounds. They were selected from 2,200 entries from public and students who submitted them for the BiodiverCity Photo Competition (*see bullet point above*) organised in January 2010. The exhibition attracted an estimated 40,000 visitors.
- **BiodiverCity Photo Exhibition at World Cities Summit 2010** (June 2010) – The World Cities Summit brought together over 230 local and overseas participants from the government, academia, research and landscape practitioners from various cities around the world. The collection of winning photographs from the BiodiverCity Photo Competition was showcased at the summit as well as public places like HortPark and City Square Mall.
- **Green Wave** (May 2010) – Targeted at children and youths around the world, the 'Green Wave' campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity. Celebrated worldwide, students in the participating schools plant and/or water a tree at 10:00am local time, creating a 'green wave' that goes around the world. Over 90 schools in Singapore planted about 200 trees as part of this campaign on 21 and 22 May 2010.
- **Launch of Nature Keeper Programme** (May 2010) - The Nature Keeper Programme is the first programme in Singapore for primary school students, which focuses on our local forests and its floral and faunal inhabitants. Designed to stimulate the interest of the young and inculcate in them an appreciation of our forests, the programme brought students through a series of theoretical and field workshops on eight topics carried out over two years. The workshops were carried out at the Bukit Timah and Central Catchment Nature Reserves. The programme also aims to nurture young volunteers in protecting our natural heritage in the longer term.
- **Launch of Orchid Conservation Fund** (May 2010) - The Orchid Conservation Fund was launched by the Garden City Fund (National Parks Board's registered charity) to help conserve native orchids. Donations to this fund are used to propagate and reintroduce our rare and endangered orchid species back into the roads, parks and nature areas.
- **Community in Bloom (CIB) Schools Arts Competition** (May 2010) – The CIB Schools Arts Competition provided an opportunity for local students to unleash their artistic and innovative ideas on promoting gardening and nature appreciation. Forty-four Primary and Secondary schools submitted their ideas via paintings, sculptures or animation pieces, which focus on the varied plants and animals that live in the natural habitats in Singapore.
- **"Love Green: Just Bin It!" outreach programme** (July 2010) - The "Love Green: Just Bin It!" outreach programme was organised to encourage park users to keep parks and nature reserves free from litter, and conserve our natural heritage. As part of the programme, an online video competition was held for the first time to reach out to the young and "wired"

adults. Winners of the video competition were decided by a three-week long public voting exercise to spread the anti-littering message and enhance nature appreciation.

- **“Wealth of the Rain Forest” Public Exhibition** (September 2010) – Held for the first time at Singapore Botanic Gardens, the exhibition featured the richness of plant life in the rain forest. It was an indoor display of the many treasures that the forest holds and little known facts, which aim to create awareness and enhance visitors’ appreciation towards biodiversity.
- **Formal adoption of Singapore Index on Cities’ Biodiversity or the City Biodiversity Index (CBI)** (October 2010) – The Singapore Index on Cities’ Biodiversity, the first self-assessment tool for cities to measure biodiversity, was formally endorsed at the 10th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)<sup>1</sup> (COP10) in Nagoya on 29 October 2010. Mooted by Singapore’s Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan, the Singapore Index is the city’s contribution to the biodiversity conservation movement and will help other cities and local authorities to measure the progress of their biodiversity conservation efforts over time. The Singapore Index was co-developed with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity.

Test-bedded by over 30 cities around the world, the Singapore Index uses a ‘report card’ scoring system where cities can carry out their own assessment, allocate points for a diversity of 23 indicators, and come up with an overall quantitative score. The information can help cities make decisions on how to prioritise their biodiversity conservation initiatives and to evaluate their progress in reducing the rate of biodiversity loss.

- **Biodiversity/Conservation Talks** – Numerous talks were organised to share with the public about nature and biodiversity in Singapore. Some of the topics included those on the long-tailed macaques, dragonflies, Oriental Pied hornbills and native orchids.
- **Guided walks** – Singapore residents learnt more about the city’s rich flora and fauna through regular guided walks in parks and nature reserves.
- **Roadshows** – Educators learnt how Singapore still has rich biodiversity despite being highly urbanised. They also discovered a myriad of outdoor learning opportunities in parks and nature reserves that cultivate a love of nature among students.
- **Plant-A-Tree Programme** – This programme was conceptualised by the Garden City Fund (National Parks Board’s registered charity), in partnership with the Singapore Environment Council, to provide an avenue for individuals and organisations to do their part for nature through planting of trees at designated parks and nature reserves. More tree planting opportunities were also made available on special dates such as Earth Day (22 April), International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May) and World Environment Day (5 June).

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<sup>1</sup> The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from the utilisation of genetic resources. The CBD currently has 193 Parties. The 10th Conference of Parties to the CBD was held in Nagoya, Japan this week, where the Parties agreed to adopt the Plan of Action on Sub-national Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity. The Singapore Index on Cities’ Biodiversity is cited in this draft Plan of Action.