

Wildlife Times

CONSERVATION & EDUCATION

Wildlife Reserves Singapore Group



WRS quarterly magazine

Wildlife Wonders

Click here to subscribe

Service Learning & Volunteer Programme

Click here to find out

Find us on **Facebook**

Wildlife Reserves Singapore Conservation Fund

Click here to find out

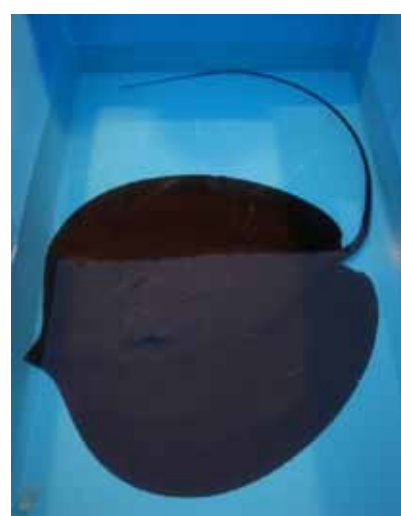
WRS welcomes freshwater giants on board



A well-known species of the Mekong River has made its way to Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS). The giant freshwater stingrays, which arrived last month, are amongst the extensive wildlife collection to be featured at the upcoming River Safari. Apart from the stingrays, the other freshwater 'giants' that have arrived at WRS include the South American arapaimas and the Mekong giant catfish.

These gigantic creatures are one of the highlights of River Safari, which will display freshwater habitats of some of the greatest rivers around the world. The collection of five giant freshwater stingrays, ten arapaimas, and six Mekong giant catfish are presently undergoing quarantine at WRS' Fish Holding and Quarantine Quarters.

The giant freshwater stingrays that have arrived at WRS are between one and two years of age. Already, the body length of the specimens measures an impressive one metre across. The species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by the IUCN. They will be displayed together with the giant catfish at the Mekong exhibit at River Safari. The Mekong giant catfish can grow to over three metres in length and weigh up to 300kg. It is regarded as the most endangered species in the Mekong habitat by many conservationists, due to threats posed by overfishing and pollution. The arapaima, found at the Amazon River Basin in South America, can grow up to three metres long, and weigh as much as 200kg.



The giant freshwater stingray is threatened by overfishing and pollution of its river habitat.

Bird Park aids raptor in distress



The vets embarked on a two hour surgery to insert a metal pin to hold the broken sections of the bone together.

The two ends of the pin were tied with an elastic band to increase pressure on the bone, so it could heal faster.



Yet another raptor has made a successful and speedy recovery at the hands of the Bird Park's dedicated vets and their expert avian intervention! This time around, help was for one of the largest raptors in South-east Asia – the white-bellied sea eagle.

The young bird was found with a broken leg by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) near the tarmac of Changi Airport in late August. Birds are at risk of such injuries when they crash into objects like planes, buildings and windows. The injured bird was promptly brought to Jurong Bird Park's Avian Hospital for treatment. The vets discovered that its femur (thigh bone) was completely broken. If left untreated, the two sections of the bone would heal at an awkward angle leading to a shorter left leg.

In early September, the vet team operated on the eagle for two hours, employing the Doyle technique. The Doyle technique is an orthopedic procedure that involves inserting two pins to hold the broken sections of the bone together, allowing them to align while they heal. The pins are reinforced by an elastic band to provide additional pressure on the bone and hasten the healing process.

The vets removed the pin in early October, after leaving the bone to heal for a month. X-ray examinations have revealed that the fracture is healing well and the prognosis looked promising. The eagle however, is not yet ready to be released. The Bird Park is rehabilitating it to hunt and eat live prey again to ensure its survival back in the wild.

Bird Park embarks on educational trip to Indonesia to study Bali starling



In its bid to save the Bali starling from extinction, the Bird Park partnered with conservation group, Begawan Foundation, early this year. As part of the partnership, the Bird Park will send three Bali starlings to the Foundation to breed and after which, have the young released into the wild.

To discuss the collaboration further, a four-member team from the Bird Park, comprising Mr Raja Segran, General Curator, Mr Elden Gabayoyo, Avian Management Officer, Mr Ivan Choo, Avicultural Officer, Dr Melodiya Magno, Veterinarian, embarked on a trip to the Nusa Pineda Island in Bali, Indonesia. The trip also doubled up as an educational platform for the team to participate in an audit to ascertain the number of Bali starlings surviving in the wild, and observe their behaviour.

The auditing exercise, which lasted three days, was initiated by the Begawan Foundation, in co-operation with Bali Bird Park, Udayana University, Green School Bali and Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS). At the end of the exercise, the team spotted a total of 42 Bali starlings. Other useful details gathered during the trip included the foraging and nesting habits of the birds, their co-existence with people, husbandry of the Bali starlings and other species of birds



Illegal poaching for the cagebird trade has heavily threatened the existence of the Bali starling.

with representatives from Begawan Foundation and the Bali Bird Park.

With just about 50 birds left in the wild, the Bali starling is classified as "Critically Endangered" by the IUCN. Visitors can view the Bird Park's collection of these beautiful birds at the South-east Asian Aviary.

WRSCF augments fund raising efforts with second charity bazaar



Hundreds of earnest wildlife enthusiasts and visitors thronged the second annual charity bazaar held by Wildlife Reserves Conservation Fund (WRSCF) on 6 November at the Singapore Zoo, and 7 November at Jurong Bird Park. The event is part of WRSCF's gamut of initiatives to raise funds to conserve Singapore's native endangered animals.



Visitors had an array of treats to pick from, including photography opportunities with some of our feathered and furry friends, face painting sessions and mouth-watering cakes and confections. The funds raised from the event will be channelled towards funding projects to protect local wildlife while increasing public awareness on Singapore's biodiversity of flora and fauna.



Primate art! Orangutan Anita parades her masterpieces, which could be taken home for a small fee and a good cause.

Docent programme celebrates wildlife and conservation



Docents interact with visitors and add value to their learning experience at WRS parks.

Incepted in 1997, the Docent programme is among the myriad of volunteer opportunities offered by Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS). It is targeted at members of the public who wish to spread the conservation message and inspire others to make a positive difference in wildlife conservation.

New docent recruits are required to complete an eight-week training programme. After which, they will be based at various Ranger Stations within the three parks to engage, enthuse and educate visitors using interpretives, games, props and animal artifacts. Docents play an important role in enhancing visitors' learning experience at the three WRS parks.

For more information on Docent programme, please visit, <http://education.zoo.com.sg/docent.html>

Native Critter Chatter - Slow Loris



The slow loris is a native creature of Singapore, and a member of the primate family. The huge-eyed, soft, furry creature is also found in other parts of Southeast Asia. Slow lorises are extremely good climbers and have very strong grip.

They have large eyes and an excellent vision. These nocturnal creatures are omnivores, and feed primarily on insects, fruit and vegetables. Slow lorises use a long, curved claw on their second toe to groom themselves.

Slow lorises are the only venomous primates in the world. When threatened, the slow loris raises its arms above its head to quickly lick the brachial glands located on its arm, where a special chemical is produced. This chemical is then mixed with saliva and turns venomous. The slow loris then delivers a powerful and painful bite to fend off predators, which include palm civets and sun bears.

Visit Night Safari to view the slow lorises along the Leopard Trail.



Despite their venomous bite, slow lorises are known to be in demand for the illegal pet trade.