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Green Hong Kong Green showcases Local Biodiversity as revealed by Coral Survey of Lamma Island

Hong Kong has a rich biodiversity despite its compact size and dense population. To raise public awareness of Hong Kong's natural beauty, Green Hong Kong Green (“GHKG”), a green education programme jointly organised by HK Electric and the Conservancy Association (“CA”), will feature a series of activities showcasing local biodiversity this year, including guided eco-heritage tours in both urban and rural areas, as well as an Eco-tour Day in October.

Thousands of participants are expected to join monthly tours during the year – either online or physical ones (see Table 1), while schools may opt for customised online tours for their students. The debut event was an online tour held last Saturday (23 March), where the speakers explained the importance of preserving habitats for maintaining biodiversity, and shared the findings of a survey on underwater coral near Lamma Power Station.

Ms. Mimi Yeung, General Manager (Public Affairs) of HK Electric, said, “HK Electric has been protecting the ecological environment of Lamma Island and its surrounding waters, where our power station is located. Measures include planting native plant species and regularly monitoring noise, air and water quality to ensure the terrestrial and marine ecology is not affected, thereby safeguarding biodiversity and helping to combat climate change.”

She added, “With GHKG focusing on local biodiversity this year, we aim at deepening public understanding and participation in biodiversity conservation. And by sharing the findings of the coral survey conducted near our power station, we wish to highlight the importance of taking appropriate measures for industrial activities in order that we can co-exist with nature and the marine environment peacefully and protect biodiversity.”

Commissioned by HK Electric, the coral survey was conducted by a professional consultancy in the waters near Lamma Power Station in August 2023. A number of coral species were recorded, including Hard Coral and Octocoral (see Table 2). The coral colonies were found to be healthy and showed no signs of bleaching.

Among all, the *Tubastraea*, one of the Hard Coral species recorded, was seen to have colourful tentacles of yellow, orange and other colours. *Menella*, one of the Octocoral species recorded, looked soft and supple with skeletons made of keratin with small calcium spicules scattered on the external tissue of the organisms. They often grow on the edges of reef rocks or on the walls of channels.

While most of the coral species recorded were commonly found in Hong Kong waters, the findings of the survey reflected the marine environment near Lamma Power Station was a desirable habitat for coral species, and that no adverse impacts have been caused by the operation of the power station on the marine environment.

The Conservancy Association's Chief Executive Mr. Ken So said, "The biodiversity of Hong Kong can never be under-estimated. Many mainland and international experts who have visited Hong Kong were fascinated by our biodiverse treasures. However, conserving and sustaining biodiversity relies heavily on the support and co-operation of all. That is why "mainstreaming" is one of the primary objectives of the Government's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. In 2024, our GHKG project aims to enhance public understanding of Hong Kong's ecosystems, hopefully to foster a conservation mindset and encourage behavioural changes."

Promoting biodiversity aside, GHKG will introduce a new summer-exclusive night tour on reservoirs, following the successful night safari tours on Lamma Island. The String of Pearls route will explore the nocturnal ecology of Tai Tam Country Park. And in celebration of the 140th anniversary of Lo Pan Temple in Western District, the West Town Story route will be re-told with more hidden gems to be unveiled to create a more diversified experience.

Since its inception in 2005, GHKG has developed 11 eco-heritage routes on Hong Kong and Lamma islands. Combining local sustainable tourism and a low carbon lifestyle, the programme aims at helping the public appreciate local eco-heritage resources and history. In 2023, more than 4,000 people took part in its various online and offline activities.

For details of upcoming initiatives and routes, simply download the Green HK Green app, or visit GHKG's Facebook page, HK Electric's YouTube channel and website, or CA's website, or call 2728 6781.

Table 1:
GHKG Eco-heritage Tours 2024

Date	Theme
21 April (Sun) - AM	Lamma Route - Hong Kong Greenhouse (physical tour)
25 May (Sat) - AM	Relationship between Habitats and Species (online tour)
22 June (Sat) - Evening	Tai Tam Country Park Route – Our String of Pearls Night Tour (physical tour)
27 July (Sat) - AM	How Changes in the Environment affect Biodiversity (online tour)
24 August (Sat) - Evening	1) Night Safari on Lamma Island (physical tour) 2) Our String of Pearls Night Tour (physical tour)
21 September (Sat) - AM	Biodiversity in the Urban City (online tour)
6 October (Sun)	GHKG Eco-tour Day (physical tours)
16 November (Sat) - AM	When City meets Nature (online tour)
15 December (Sun) - AM	Western District Route - West Town Story Re-told (physical tour)

Online tour enrolment :

<https://ghkg.onlineform.ai/registration>



Table 2:
Coral Survey at Lamma Power Station (excerpt)




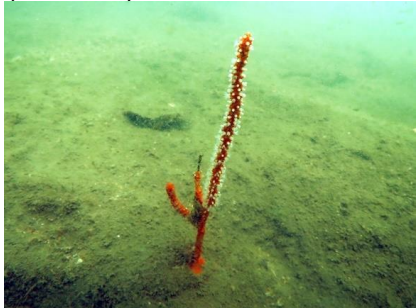
	Characteristics / Descriptions	
<i>Tubastraea</i> (Hard Coral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded at a number of locations Its tentacles are yellow and the corallites have a thick wall 	(Photo 1) 
<i>Duncanopsammia peltata</i> (Hard Coral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widespread distribution, mostly recorded from the north-eastern and eastern waters of Hong Kong Corals are in laminar form, composed of several stacked plates Plate-like colonies sometimes with columnar upgrowth 	(Photo 2) 
<i>Dendronephthya</i> (Octocoral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly grow in deep water of Hong Kong waters These corals can grow into glomerate, divaricate or umbrellate form 	(Photo 3) 
<i>Menella</i> (Octocoral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are soft and supple, with skeletons made of keratin with small calcium spicules scattering on the external tissue of the organisms Often grow on the edges of reef rocks or on the walls of channels 	(Photo 4) 

Photo Captions:

(Photo 5)



Yeung Ting (right), an environmental educator, shares her views about how plastic waste affects marine habitats. She encourages the public to adjust their lifestyle and habits and participate in eco-friendly activities.

(Photo 6, 7 & 8)



GHKG eco-leader, Lucilla Chan, introduces “the three treasures” of the mudflat habitat, namely the Fiddler Crab, Mudskipper and Little Egret.

(Photo 9 & 10)



(Credit: Pang Lau)



(Credit: Pang Lau)

By joining GHKG eco-tours, citizens will have a chance to see critically endangered species, such as the Yellow-crested Cockatoo (left) and Hong Kong Newt (right).