

5 October 2014

**Release of Butterfly Survey Results
First Local Records of Two Rare Butterfly Species in Mui Wo Survey**

There are now 166 qualified surveyors who carry out regular surveys at specified butterfly hotspots. Initially, we covered only three survey sites, but since increased the number of sites by one each year, and in 2014 expanded to nine sites: Mui Wo and San Tau on Lantau; Luk Keng in Fanling; Wu Kau Tang, Lam Tsuen (She Shan & Ng Tung Chai) and Yuen Tun Ha in Tai Po; Shum Chung & Yung Shue O, Pak Sha O & Lai Chi Kok in Sai Kung; and Sha Tau Kok. Mui Wo on Lantau was the latest site to be added, in 2014.

Common Banded Demon (*Notocrypta paralyos*), Plain Banded Awl (*Hasora vitta*) and Shiny-Spotted Bob (*Isoteinon lamprospilus*), first found at Mui Wo

2014's Butterfly Survey began in June and, as of September 2014, a total of 158 species - accounting for more than 60% the Hong Kong total - have been recorded at the nine survey sites. The survey have been underway for four months up to October 2014, and the results so far indicated not much change from previous records. The only exception was that the number of species at San Tau had decreased. The cause was still not known, Green Power would closely monitor the changes in the local environment and butterfly population.

The highest total of butterfly species was recorded at Mui Wo, Lantau. Here, surveyors found 108 species with 11 rare, 4 very rare and 1 unrated new species. Mui Wo was newly added to the survey sites in view of the ongoing development on Lantau in recent years. Though the survey have been carried out for only four months, more species than that have been recorded in the literature. We found the first records of the very rare Plain Banded Awl (*Hasora vitta*) and Shiny-Spotted Bob (*Isoteinon lamprospilus*), and in late September we recorded Common Banded Demon (*Notocrypta paralyos*), the adult of which was only first discovered in Hong Kong in April 2014.

Luk Keng ranked second, with 96 butterfly species. The third ranked survey site is Lam Tsuen (She Shan & Ng Tung Chai), with 92 species. Vagrant (*Vagrans egista*), a very rare species, was recorded at Lam Tsuen, the first record in six years of surveys there. In fact, there are only very few records of Vagrant in Hong Kong.

Lantau development raises concerns regarding butterflies

The diversity of butterflies indicates diversity of local habitats as well as their ecological value. The baseline data of the rich butterfly populations in Mui Wo provides an important reference for the current discussions on Lantau's development.

The 2014 Policy Address of the HKSAR Chief Executive mentioned that there would be "fundamental changes to Lantau's functions and development potential", against the background of rapid economic development of the Pearl River Delta and completion of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) and Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link (TM-CLKL) in the near future. The government is actively planning to develop Lantau, as the outlying island will become a converging point of traffic between Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Macao. In 2014, the government established a Lantau Development Advisory Committee.

The Chief Executive, C. Y. Leung pointed out in 2014 Policy Address that the government is carrying out a study of the East Lantau Metropolis plan, which aims to build a 1,000-hectare artificial island on the Kau Yi Chau waters between Lantau and Western District of Hong Kong Island. In August 2014, the Development Bureau announced a plan to include Mui Wo in this "metropolis". Apart from the development plan, the Lantau Development Advisory Committee is also reviewing proposals to enhance transportation networks connecting Mui Wo, Tai Ho and Tung Chung. The vehicle permit system may be cancelled, which would mean opening up virtually all Lantau roads to traffic.

Green Power is concerned that once the proposal is realised, there will be immense pressure on Mui Wo's ecology. We also oppose the opening of Lantau roads. Tung Chung Road is the main road connecting Lantau South and North. The restriction on vehicles is the last guard gate for the conservation of Lantau South. It must not be lifted. The opening to all traffic will lead to more development and there will be no return. In the beginning of 2014, the Lantau Development Advisory Committee raised the proposal and said that enhancing nature conservation would be the basis for the development of Lantau South, which would focus on tourism, leisure and entertainment. However, as more details are disclosed, the actual planning is obviously contrary to the basis of "enhancing nature conservation".

At present, about 70% of land on Lantau is natural. Lantau South, in particular, is still little disturbed by human activities and it is very precious. Therefore, Hong Kong people must fight to preserve and protect nature on Lantau from development. Although the government promised that development of Lantau South will be based mainly on tourism and leisure activities, the devil may be in the detail. Great caution must be taken in planning. Apart from



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considering the carrying capacity, proper conservation measures must be in place before the development.