

Monkey-proof bins among measures to reduce human-wildlife conflict at NTU

Shermaine Ang

Nicknamed “Pulau NTU”, Nanyang Technological University’s (NTU) green campus attracts a huge variety of wildlife, and the university is undertaking a slew of measures to reduce human-wildlife conflict and make the environment more conducive for students and fauna.

The measures range from monkey-proof bins to monkey guarding workshops for university employees that teach a method to guide the animals away from an area.

“We aim to become a City in Nature, by weaving nature more deliberately and intensely into our urban fabric, so that nature thrives within our city,” said Minister for National Development Desmond Lee at a seminar with students on Monday.

Hosted by Earthlink, an environmental club at NTU, the 1½-hour Zoom webinar on human-wildlife coexistence featured a panel of speakers: Dr Shawn Lum, president of the Nature Society (Singapore); Dr Vilma D’Rozario, director of Singapore Wildcat Action Group; Professor Kwok Kian Woon, associate vice-president of well-being in NTU; and Associate Professor Valerie Du Toit-Low, deputy associate provost of residential education at NTU.

Apart from monkeys, birds, butterflies and snakes, NTU, which is



Some of the wildlife spotted at Nanyang Technological University include (clockwise from left) oriental pied hornbills, smooth-coated otters and spotted wood owls. NTU is making efforts to educate students about the school’s rich biodiversity and wildlife etiquette, during induction of new students. PHOTOS: EARTHLINK NTU

located next to forests in the western catchment area, has had visits from rare and endangered species, such as the Sunda pangolin, oriental pied hornbill and the buffy fish owl.

To guard against macaques forag-

ing through rubbish bins, it has installed more than 1,200 monkey-proof bins around camp, and teaches staff, including security officers, monkey herding to guide the animals away from an area.

NTU is also making efforts to edu-

cate students about the school’s rich biodiversity and wildlife etiquette, during induction of new students, and through a handbook being put together by Earthlink on what to do when encountering wild animals on campus.



istry of National Development (MND) is speaking to building owners about using bird strike-proof windows made from a different type of glass, as taller buildings pose a safety threat to birds, particularly migratory birds.

MND is studying this threat carefully, Mr Lee said.

Speaking about the Government’s approach towards wildlife conservation, Mr Lee highlighted the importance and pressures of having to strike a balance between maximising land use and preserving biodiversity as a small country with a high population density.

Pressure on housing is set only to grow, with demand increasing, for instance, for Housing Board flats as households get smaller.

There were about three people in each HDB household last year, compared with more than four in 1990. Singapore now has more than one million HDB flats and 400,000 private homes.

Mr Lee said that to achieve a balance, the Government uses a science-based approach to identify core biodiversity areas to conserve, connect these areas by setting up nature corridors, and develop brownfield sites such as golf courses and old schools, among other strategies.

“Collectively, these strategies will allow us to steward our scarce land resources – for today’s use, and for future generations.”

The webinar on Monday kick-started the NTU Biodiversity Week 2022, which has a line-up of webinars and activities aimed at raising awareness of the school’s rich biodiversity and wildlife.

On the national front, the Min-

shermaineang@sph.com.sg