

Learning Tours

Learning tours form a key part of ***The Nature Education Program for the Intellectually-disabled Children***. In total, 500 Hong Chi Association school children will participate in 8 learning tours to visit the Mai Po Nature Reserve, starting from March 28, 2007 to May 3, 2007. **For the first time**, children with intellectual disability will have a chance to learn about nature conservation and the wildlife and the wetland ecosystem at the Mai Po Nature Reserve.

The learning tour is based on the educational materials specially developed for this project, and is designed to be interactive and fun. Each learning tour will accommodate a maximum of 90 students and will be split into groups of 30 students each. Two volunteers each from WWF and the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society will act as tour guides for each group. In addition, up to 6 Rotarians and their family members, Rotaractors and Interactors could participate as volunteers for each group.

Over 50 students of the Hong Chi Winifred Mary Cheung Morninghope School participated in the first learning tour of this program on March 28, 2007. **President Allen Au** and his **Rtne. Karen Au**, **President Bertha Chan** of the Rotaract Club of Hong Kong Island West and **Volley Wong** of the Rotaract Club of United College volunteered as helpers of the first Learning Tour.

NOW TV provided coverage of the Learning Tour in its entirety and the reporter of the **Hong Kong Economic Times** interviewed the students and the volunteers throughout the tour.

The first Learning Tour was a success in that the students not only learned about nature conservation and the wildlife and the wetland ecosystem at the Mai Po Nature Reserve, but also honed their listening, reading, writing, problem-solving and communication skills. The students thoroughly enjoyed the program as witnessed by their smiling faces and incessant laughter.

Those who acted as tour guides and helpers of the first Learning Tour found children with mild grade intellectual disability to be intelligent, inquisitive, friendly, thoughtful and cooperative, and the stigma our society has accorded these children is unfounded.



The students of the Hong Chi Winifred Mary Cheung Morninghope School waited anxiously before the inception of the first Learning Tour of the project.



Most of the students brought cameras and binoculars with them so they could take photos of and get in touch with the wildlife of the Mai Po Nature Reserve.



President Allen Au and a volunteer from the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society helped a student to use the telescope to observe an *Imperial Eagle*.



A volunteer from the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society helped a student to use a telescope to observe a *Black-winged Stilt*.



A WWF volunteer helped a student to spot a *Great Egret*.



This marker on the tree prompted the WWF volunteers to ask the students to follow the instructions on the Wetland Detective worksheet to count the various types of birds.



A WWF volunteer explained to the students about the Mangrove communities in the Mai Po Nature Reserve. He showed the students a *Cerbera manghas* tree, which bears poisonous fruits.



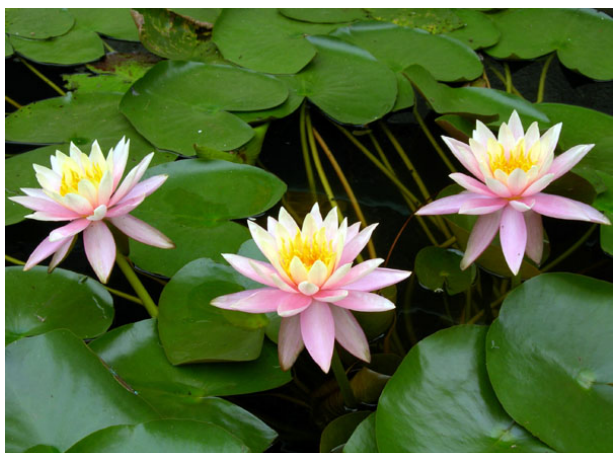
This marker prompted the WWF volunteer to ask the students to watch out for butterflies and *Little Grebe* that frequented the Mai Po Nature Reserve marshes.



A number of *Great Cormorants* and a few *Little Egrets* rested on a small island in the middle of a lake.



Rttnne. Karen Au helped a student to descend the stairs to access the ground floor of a bird watching hide.



Students had a chance to see a number of floral species, including these lovely lotus flowers.



President Allen Au and his Rttnne. Karen Au, Rotaractors, volunteers of WWF and the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society together with students of one of the learning tour groups.