



Hong Kong is famous for its commerce and 21st century modernity, but also for its beautiful natural scenery and mountain trails. However, as the recent enthusiasm for hiking has shown, even the countryside can get a little overcrowded. The population of amphibians and reptiles, some of which are unique to Hong Kong, has fallen dramatically in recent decades, and some species are now facing extinction.

Let's see how our scientists at the **Science Unit (SU)** led by **Prof Mark McGinley** foster a biodiversity-friendly city in their work of Conserving, Documenting and Discovering the natural life around us.

Citizen Scientists

Apart from conducting research, our scientists enjoy teaching non-science students at Lingnan University, Hong Kong's liberal arts university, and hope that, as graduates, they will be able to apply this scientific knowledge to a broad scope of industries and professions.

“ **Take the example of an administrative officer in the government. If they have the right mindset about the environment, they can contribute more than an ecologist like me in terms of promoting the right policies.** ”

Prof Yik-Hei Sung, Assistant Professor of SU

In a project funded by the University's Knowledge Transfer Project Fund, **Assistant Professor Jonathan Fong** collaborated with the Outdoor Wildlife Learning Hong Kong to reach out to the young and old in the community, engage them in **intergenerational partnerships**, and innovatively train them to be “Citizen Scientists” in experiential learning for the conservation of reptiles and amphibians in distinct locations of Hong Kong which hold populations of different exotic species.

Citizen Scientists - Fostering a biodiversity-friendly city



Unique specimen collection

The SU has recently established a publicly accessible **Natural History Collection** of specimens of local amphibians and reptiles to document Hong Kong's biodiversity for research, conservation and education purposes.

<https://lingnancollection.wixsite.com/naturalhistory>

More than 500 individual specimens, representing 92% of the amphibian species and 36% of the reptile species in Hong Kong are documented in this database currently. It covers species of high conservation or scientific research values, such as the white-headed blind snake and Romer's tree frog which is found only in Hong Kong - so precious! (see inside front cover)

The Collection contributes to the goals of Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and is funded nearly **HK\$1.1 million** by the **Environment and Conservation Fund** of the HKSAR Government.

"Specimens represent a valuable resource for future generations, often for uses that we currently cannot predict. For example, the impact of climate change was revealed by comparing specimens from modern times to those collected in 1911, when there was no concept of climate change," said research team leader **Prof Jonathan Fong**.

White-headed blind snake
- unique to Hong Kong

