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Mai Po Community Frequently Asked Questions

(1) What is the Mai Po Community?

Students, teachers, public visitors, families and community groups as well as dedicated researchers and birdwatchers, comprise our local Mai Po community. The community welcomes international researchers and educators, being a key training facility for both wetland managers and those involved in the protection of wetlands across the region. We are connecting our community to nature.

(2) What is the 21st Century Nature Classroom Project?

The 21st Century Nature Classroom project is funded by a HK\$347.86 million grant from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. The grant covers elements that make it possible for the Mai Po Community to have the facilities needed by students, teachers, and those interested in wetlands research and wetlands training. The project includes the Peter Scott Field Studies Centre rebuild, construction of a wooden boardwalk and two new bird hides.

(3) What is the rationale behind rebuilding the Peter Scott Field Studies Centre?

The Peter Scott Field Studies Centre rebuild is intended to meet the needs of our Mai Po Community, whilst bringing the facility up to today's environmental and building safety standards. The project is aligned to goals under the UN Convention for Biological Diversity to deliver a 21st Century Nature Classroom by 2021.

(4) What will the Peter Scott rebuild be used for?

The Peter Scott rebuild can enhance capacity for wetland training and research, providing space for community forums and workshops. This can bring groups together to tackle threats to biodiversity and the issues surrounding the protection of Deep Bay wetlands and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.



The centre rebuild can reinforce our community commitment to securing the biodiversity of Hong Kong in support of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity with the education focus on developing a voice for nature in our younger generation. The new centre has learning and activity areas to supplement outdoor learning. During Hong Kong's summer, especially during rainstorm warnings, the learning areas will be available.

(5) Will the Peter Scott rebuild method that was chosen cause disruption to birds or other wildlife?

WWF has employed a highly-respected ecological consultancy with long experience in the Deep Bay area to ensure that potential impacts on all wildlife arising from the whole project will be fully considered and adequately mitigated. Avoidance and minimisation of impacts are the guiding principles in regard to mitigation, and this will be achieved via the preparation of an ecological assessment for all elements of the project, and surveys of wildlife before and during the rebuild to identify impacts promptly. Effective use of noise barriers will ensure the demolition and rebuild methods chosen will have the minimum of detrimental impacts on wildlife and the local community.

WWF has chosen to meet BEAM Plus Platinum standards, Hong Kong's leading initiative to offer independent assessments of building sustainability performance. This will minimise noise, water and air pollution, and construction waste and incorporate sustainable materials and green features. The demolition method chosen is 'selective demolition', which involves carefully dismantling materials for their reuse/recycling and minimising waste disposal, which will also be a factor in the rebuild phase. Independent environmental inspectors will be used to monitor the work to ensure compliance to the highest levels.

(6) Will Mai Po remain open during the rebuild of the new centre?

Mai Po Nature Reserve will remain open to visitors throughout the rebuild of the new Peter Scott Field Studies Centre. A safety office will be located outside the main gate and serve as a meeting point for school tours and walk-in visitors. A new WWF-Hong Kong visitor centre for the Mai Po community will open at Long Ping MTR. This visitor centre will operate a new shuttle bus service to and from Mai Po, taking in car parks in the Lok Ma Chau area, providing families and other public visitors easy access to Mai Po. Click [here](#) for more details.

(7) What is the rationale for constructing a new wooden boardwalk?

Upgrade to the existing footpath that connects Mai Po's various facilities with the construction of a wooden boardwalk includes widening to universal accessibility standards. The new boardwalk design will be a minimum width of 1.65 metres with a safety lip for wheelchairs. There will be in total six education areas with signage at points along the 1 km route, and seven passing bays for wheelchair users. The boardwalk path will be built above the existing concrete footpath, in keeping with the natural setting of the reserve, and minimising disturbance to the reserve's inhabitants. The boardwalk will facilitate guided visits with WWF by schools, members of the public on guided visits, and other visitors with permits to visit the reserve.

(8) What will the planned construction of a wooden boardwalk involve?

The new boardwalk path will be built above the existing concrete footpath in keeping with the reserve's natural setting. The widened path will provide access to the nearby bird-watching hides, offering seating, viewing spots and student-class nooks. The new boardwalk design will be a minimum width of 1.65 metres with a safety lip for wheelchairs. There will be in total six education areas with signage at points along the 1 km route, and seven passing bays for wheelchair users.



(9) Will construction of the boardwalk cause disturbance to birds and other wildlife?

Construction will take place in the summer when bird numbers are lowest, and by constructing the boardwalk above the existing concrete path, we will negate the need to generate concrete spoils. The height between the existing concrete path and the new boardwalk will be a minimum of 6 centimeters to ensure no barrier for invertebrates and small mammals. The structure will be fabricated off-site, to avoid noise, air pollution and avoid any need for on-site concrete mixing.

(10) Why do you plan to build additional bird hides?

Bird hides are one of the most important elements of Mai Po Nature Reserve, allowing visitors to observe the globally endangered and migratory birds that pass through the reserve without causing disturbance. The two proposed tower hides will provide opportunities for our Mai Po community to observe the reserve's bird community and connect to nature.

One of the tower hides will be located in the southern part of the reserve and cater to the needs of researchers, while the other tower hide, set to be located in the northwestern part of the reserve, will mainly provide for public visitors and school groups. Consultations for the detailed internal layout design for the bird hides will be conducted in Summer 2019.

(11) What sustainable elements will the proposed hides feature?

The hides are designed to have natural ventilation, with fan cooling and LED floor safety lights powered by solar energy. Wi-Fi will be available to visitors in both hides will feature Wi-Fi to enhance the learning and sharing.

(12) Will construction of the bird hides cause disruption to birds and other wildlife?

Construction work will be carried out outside the bird migration season and will be aligned with the Mai Po Habitat Management Plan. The structures will be fabricated off-site, minimising noise and air pollution and the need for on-site concrete mixing.

(13) Does the project support education goals?

The centre rebuild method that was chosen will help to reinforce our community commitment to securing the biodiversity of Hong Kong in support of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity with the education focus on developing a voice for nature in our younger generation. Schools using subsidized places provided by the Education Bureau, can connect their students to nature. Find out more in our [One Planet Schools programme](#) overview for 2019-2020 and [book one of our tailor-made activities](#)

(14) How many people visit Mai Po annually?

WWF currently welcomes some 24,000 students and public visitors annually and facilities are used by these guided groups and other visitors. The guided visitor numbers have been at a peak of 40,000 in past years and expect to be around 32,000 in 2023. [Book an eco visit to Mai Po](#) and discover this world-class Ramsar site together with friends and family.

(15) Where can I find out more information?

Please visit our [project website](#) or contact us at: maipocommunity@wwf.org.hk to find out more about the 21st Century Nature Classroom project. To learn more about WWF-Hong Kong's activities, visit: wwf.org.hk