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About Life

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EARTH HOUR
地球一小時

Ten Years of Darkness, Ten Years of Light



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ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE



In 2007, WWF's first Earth Hour was held in Sydney, Australia. This year, WWF-Hong Kong took part in this spectacular, unifying global event for the eighth consecutive year – joining millions of people in 178 countries and territories around the planet as they turned off their lights for an hour, taking action together to create a brighter future.

As remarkable as this event is, there are some who doubt the effectiveness of Earth Hour, asking things like “how can switching off the lights for an hour make a real difference?” Naturally, it is naive to think that one person will save the world by just flicking a switch, but think of it this way: when added together, small, collective actions – like turning off the lights, turning down the air conditioning, turning off the tap and using less water – become much larger. The impacts are much greater – these small actions are the first steps along the path to real change.

To ensure that Earth Hour is both collective and impactful, WWF must spread the message far and wide. Here in Hong Kong, our team worked to get the message out to as many Hongkongers as possible. We linked Earth Hour with local issues like the over-consumption of resources, food waste, the footprint created by clothing and more. These issues were backed up by hard, sometimes frightening figures: like the fact that the natural resources consumed by Hong Kong people exceed the resources available in the territory by an astounding 540 times.

Our actions, and yours, are having real results. More and more people are aware of Earth Hour every year – more people are having conversations about resources, consuming less and making their lifestyles more sustainable. We are moving from symbolic actions to real change – this is both exciting and encouraging.

In this issue, we look at the history and evolution of Earth Hour and what's next for this global movement. We'll also chat with the team behind Earth Hour as we learn how they spread the Earth Hour message. And we'll also take a look at the recent “Wall of Destruction” exhibition, which drew public attention to how unauthorized development is destroying Hong Kong's biodiversity.

Climate change is real, and it's happening now. We hope that in another ten years, when we celebrate the 20th Earth Hour, everyone will know that in order to stop climate change and make Hong Kong a truly sustainable city, we have to live responsible, sustainable lives.

Nicole Wong
Acting Chief Executive Officer
WWF-Hong Kong

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FOOTPRINT CONSERVATION EDUCATION

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GLOBAL CONSERVATION NEWS



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ARCTIC SEA ICE AT RECORD LOW: TROUBLE AHEAD

2016's record-breaking warm temperatures are giving rise to other ominous milestones: this year the winter sea ice cover in the Arctic Ocean hit another record low level. The ice cover peaked at 14.52 million km² on 28 March, lower than the previous minimum of 14.54 million km² recorded last year. This is creating worrying impacts across the region: on polar bears for example – new mothers emerging from their winter birthing dens are starving and need quick access to sea ice to feed; less ice means these bears cannot find food. Low ice conditions also impact polar bears' main prey, ringed seals, which birth their pups on the sea ice.

“This year marks another grim statistic in the continuing disappearance of Arctic sea ice, with major consequences for wildlife and weather” says Samantha Smith, Leader of WWF’s Global Climate and Energy Initiative. “We must stop the destruction of our planet’s ecosystems and start building a new and renewable energy future”.



© Brent Sifton / Getty Images / WWF-UK



NEW GLOBAL STRATEGY TO SAVE SHARKS AND RAYS

A group of international conservation organizations recently launched a new strategy to combat the worldwide decline of sharks and rays. The 10-year strategy emphasizes that rays – including skates, stingrays, sawfishes, guitarfishes and devil rays – should receive as much attention and investment as their better known relatives, the sharks. Part of the “*Global Priorities for Conserving Sharks and Rays: A 2015-2025 Strategy*” document, released at a recent Convention on Migratory Species meeting on shark conservation in Costa Rica, the strategy calls on countries around the globe to conserve and rebuild vulnerable populations of sharks and rays.

It also highlights the fact that science-based limits on shark and ray fishing and trade are urgently needed to end overfishing and ensure sustainability. Andy Cornish, Shark and Ray Initiative Leader for WWF International, noted that an integral part of the strategy involves “driving major reductions in the global demand for shark and ray fins and meat, the vast majority of which are currently from unsustainable and untraceable sources.”



© Edward Parker / WWF



TRANSPORT SECTOR IN DRIVE AGAINST WILDLIFE CRIME

In March, the global fight against wildlife crime received another major boost with the leaders of 40 airlines, shipping firms, port operators, customs agencies, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs from around the world signing a declaration on the Transportation of Illegal Wildlife Products at London’s famous Buckingham Palace.

The declaration is the result of a year's worth of meetings, research and coalition-building by the United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce. It commits signatories to raising standards across the industry and preventing traffickers from exploiting loopholes and systemic weaknesses. Their commitments include developing information-sharing systems to gather data on high-risk routes and methods of transportation; supporting a secure system for passing wildlife crime information from the transport sector to the relevant customs and law enforcement authorities; and notifying the relevant authorities about cargo suspected of containing illegal wildlife and where possible, refusing to accept or ship such cargo.



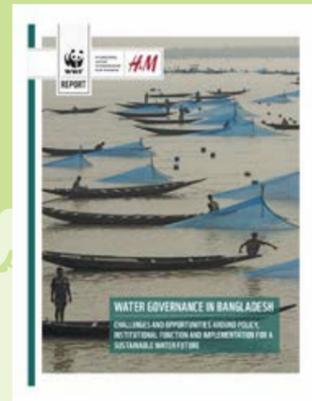
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WETLANDS CONSERVATION MILESTONE FOR WWF

Ahead of World Wetlands Day on 2 February, the world achieved a positive landmark when the designation of wetlands supported by WWF reached over 100 million hectares worldwide, thanks to the declaration of seven Ramsar sites in Zimbabwe.

WWF had been working closely with Ramsar and the government of Zimbabwe for the protection of these sites – the first to be protected in Zimbabwe – including the world’s largest waterfall, Victoria Falls, and urban wetland of Monavale Vlei. The wetlands face a number of threats including pollution, illegal logging and encroachment from construction projects. The global extent of wetlands is estimated to have declined by as much as 71 per cent since 1900. On the other side of the equation, WWF has supported the designation of over 100 million hectares of wetlands since 2000, representing 45 per cent of the total wetlands designated under the Ramsar convention since it was signed in 1971.



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WHY WATER GOVERNANCE IS KEY TO GROWTH IN BANGLADESH

WWF is working in partnership with fashion retailer H&M on an ambitious water stewardship programme, aiming to address water issues in China and Bangladesh and tackle H&M’s own water use. WWF and H&M have collaborated on two investigative reports in Bangladesh as part of a water stewardship engagement programme. The reports find that the gap between water policy and implementation in Bangladesh is likely to affect the country’s economic growth.

Bangladesh is a major producer of clothing for the EU and US markets, and the apparel sector is vital to the country’s economy. But currently, textile and leather processing have significant negative impacts on water sources, leading to environmental degradation and potential human health problems. The reports say that these impacts are likely to affect the country’s GDP, living standards, food security and textile export growth by 2030. They suggest that taking decisive action on water governance could reduce health care costs and lost productivity due to lack of water and sanitation and protect textile production sites from running out of usable water.



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GREAT BARRIER REEF IN WORST-EVER BLEACHING

Climate change-induced oceanic warming is combining with a major El Niño weather pattern to produce the worst coral bleaching event in the Great Barrier Reef’s history. News emerged in early March that reefs around Australia’s Lizard Island, at the north end of the Reef, were experiencing serious coral bleaching. Later in the month, a survey by the National Coral Bleaching Taskforce reported further grim news: the Taskforce found that huge portions of the northern part of the Reef were severely bleached, with scientists struggling to find a southern boundary to the bleaching. The worst may not be over either: warmer ocean temperatures brought about by the effects of climate change will continue to worsen conditions for the Great Barrier Reef and other reef systems, with scientists predicting more frequent and intense bleaching events in the future. WWF’s initiatives to mitigate the worst effects of climate change are now more important than ever.

LIGHTS DOWN,



SPIRITS UP



Sydney Australia, 31 March 2007 – At 8:30p.m. Sydney time, the sparkling lights of the city’s skyline and landmarks started to go out – one by one at first, then quicker and quicker. This was the start of what began as “The Big Flick”. One hour, around 2.2 million people and over 2,100 businesses had changed the world – they were the first participants in what is today the planet’s largest collective environmental action: Earth Hour.

ONE HOUR TO UNITE PEOPLE ACROSS THE EARTH

The Earth Hour “light bulb moment” came when the then-Director of Communications for WWF-Australia Andy Ridley and a group of his colleagues came to the realization that “for all the news about climate change, all the research and studies that were going on, we weren’t really reaching out to the broader public.” They decided to devise a “mainstream campaign, a communal engagement that would involve fewer fear tactics and more fun”. After a PR agency advised a name change, the event became Earth Hour.

Earth Hour was, and still is, about two simple concepts: uniting people in a common cause and raising awareness of how small, individual actions can add up to something much larger. While the event itself is naturally symbolic,

the spirit of Earth Hour is about much more than just switching off the lights – it is about people working together to make meaningful changes to make our lifestyles more sustainable and ensure the continued health of our planet.

The success of Sydney made the world sit up and take notice. Earth Hour drew immediate global attention and acclaim, not only because of its originality, but because it produced a measurable drop in electricity consumption, albeit a modest one, of 2.1 per cent. This was something new: a collective gesture that was highly symbolic but which also created tangible, immediate environmental effects.

In October 2007, San Francisco held its own successful city-wide lights-out event, and other cities around the

world expressed interest in doing the same. Quickly realizing the enormous future potential of the event, WWF-International decided to coordinate an annual global Earth Hour, setting it for a Saturday in late March. And we have never looked back. Earth Hour 2008 experienced exponential growth, becoming a truly global phenomenon with an estimated 50-100 million people taking part in 35 countries, and landmarks from the Sydney Opera House to Rome’s Colosseum to Toronto’s CN Tower going dark.

HONG KONG JOINS THE PARTY

Alongside 88 other countries and territories, WWF-Hong Kong launched our first Earth Hour in 2009. Over 160 schools and youth organizations, 2,400 companies and



Beijing, China

buildings including landmarks like the Tsing Ma Bridge and the Legislative Council complex, and 2.9 million Hong Kong people took part. Electricity consumption dropping by a significant 5 per cent during the hour – a success for WWF and a big win for the environment.

The ensuing seven years have seen an almost exponential growth in public engagement and participation in what is now a truly global event. From Albania and Algeria to Vietnam and Venezuela, Earth Hour 2016 spanned the planet, giving rise to a huge range of spinoff activities like climate marches, photography and drawing competitions, personal pledges and public conversations that shone a spotlight on thousands of local environmental issues. Social media has fuelled the excitement: the build-up to Earth Hour begins earlier and the post-event buzz lasts

longer every year, spreading awareness and engaging more and more people in small-scale sustainable actions.

But for all the fanfare, publicity and action over the past 10 years – the question must be asked – has Earth Hour really made much of a long-term impact on people’s attitudes to sustainability?

Here in Hong Kong, the answer is an unqualified “yes”. WWF-Hong Kong has always stressed the importance of going “beyond the hour” and encouraging everyone to engage in individual, everyday actions that collectively make a difference. The recent years have seen us further expand the scope of Earth Hour to include the “One Earth Mission” – a series of workshops and actions based



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on four main themes – “Living”, “Clothing”, “Food” and “Transportation” – that continue the spirit of Earth Hour by showing people how to, for example, re-purpose old furniture, learn to reduce food waste, or change their clothing shopping habits with a view to consuming less and consuming wisely.

BUILDING A BRIGHT FUTURE TOGETHER

Earth Hour has also created positive influence in literally millions of different ways around the world – from acting as a springboard for climate change conversations across Africa, to being a platform to promote a plastic ban in Cyprus, to spreading sustainability awareness throughout Russia. These millions of small droplets of enlightenment are creating a waterfall of knowledge which will change the future.

So where does Earth Hour go from here? Just as the effects of climate change are limitless, so are the options for Earth Hour. Globally, the Earth Hour team is focusing on helping create a single, unified voice against climate change, uniting both the public and the business community in the knowledge that “together anything is possible”. Future Earth Hours will see WWF and our affiliates continue to empower individuals, communities, businesses and governments to take critical action against climate change in areas like sustainable food and agriculture, climate education, conservation projects, renewable energy and climate-friendly legislation.

Ten years on, the spirit of Earth Hour is burning brightly around the world. You, me, all of us can keep this spirit alive all year round almost effortlessly – by turning off another light, by not buying clothes that we don’t need, by reducing our time in the shower, by ensuring that we don’t waste food...and on and on. This is the enduring message of Earth Hour and this is how we will save our planet, through small, humble, everyday actions.



Giza, Egypt



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SPREADING THE WORD



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Bringing Earth Hour to Hong Kong and helping a global environmental movement flourish in this city is no piece of cake. Nor is it a mission that one individual can achieve on their own. *About Life* recently caught up with our Fundraising Ambassadors, Earth Hour student ambassadors and conservation leaders to learn how they spread the Earth Hour message and share the objectives and goals of this unique event with different audiences.

WWF's Fundraising Ambassadors – Sam, Andy and Kling – have participated in promoting Earth Hour for over

a year now. Our Fundraising Ambassadors operate in all sorts of locations around Hong Kong; and by engaging with passers-by, they help raise funds for our conservation and education projects by introducing WWF's work and helping spread our conservation messages.

They all share a common belief that individuals can make a difference. When promoting Earth Hour, they usually start their conversation with the same question:

“What are you willing to do to save the planet?”

During the lead up to Earth Hour, Sam, Andy and Kling took on a huge responsibility – not only helping people learn more about conservation, but actively motivating them to take part in the spirit of Earth Hour and take the 60+ message to heart.

Each of them have been involved in Earth Hour campaigns for multiple years, and the thread that they have carried through all these campaigns is one of hope and positivity: that individuals can and do make a difference.



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Andy: “Just imagine, if future generations were only able to see Chinese white dolphins in textbooks – that would be a miserable situation. To prevent this from happening, we need to make every effort to conserve our ocean environment.”



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Kling: “I often talk to people about the impacts of the shark fin trade and the ivory trade. If we say “no” to these products, species like sharks and elephants won't be driven to extinction due to overfishing and poaching.”



© WWF-Hong Kong

Sam: “When I was younger, I remember seeing fireflies often. Now I barely spot them anymore. Every little change is a warning from mother nature. To build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, we must first pay

attention to the various warning signals that nature gives us.” Inspired by his own experience, Sam asks passers-by whether they have led an eco-friendly life throughout the year. “Earth Hour is like an alarm clock that rings every year. Encouraging the simple act of switching off the lights reminds us to adopt a sustainable lifestyle and play our part in building a brighter future.”



© HKFYG Lee Shau Kee College / WWF-Hong Kong

“Environmental protection starts at home”

Earth Hour has come and gone once more, passing seemingly in the blink of an eye. We asked Roseanna, Ashley and Christy, our Earth Hour student ambassadors from HKFYG Lee Shau Kee College, an important question: “How do we go beyond the hour and keep the Earth Hour spirit alive all year long after shutting off this ‘alarm’?”

Along with another 70 students, Roseanna, Ashley and Christy made their debut as a student ambassadors this year. They began by participating in talks and workshops with WWF to learn more about Earth Hour and discuss various ways to promote the event. These keen and motivated students not only organized different events at their school, they also took part in the Earth Hour tram parade in the morning of Earth Hour day and the signature countdown event that night.

The three girls and 10 other students also organized an “Earth Hour Week” at their school. During their assembly that week, they played a film about Earth Hour and shared the origin and objectives of this global environmental movement with teachers and students. Then came the fun part – they put on a play they created by themselves! From scriptwriting to acting to directing,

they did it all. The story revolved around several students doing common things that harm our environment. Luckily, a panda comes along at the last minute to stop them and teaches them how to live an environmentally-friendly lifestyle.

WWF: Was the play well received by your schoolmates?

Christy: “I was the one who played the panda. Apparently, everyone was excited at seeing me appear onstage. I was a little shy then, but at the same time I was very happy about the responses we got. The Q and A session following the play was successful, too. After the activities, everyone had a better idea of what Earth Hour was about.”

Ashley: “A student told me that he was aware of the need for environmental protection, yet he didn't know how to get started. I think the best way is to start at home. For example, I like to listen to music while taking a shower. An average song lasts two or three minutes. I normally finish my shower after two songs; this is an excellent way to time your shower! I also encourage my family to consume less water and energy and adopt a low-carbon lifestyle.”

Roseanna: “I hope we will be able to organize workshops or even speeches at other schools in the future. I want to



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spread the word that Planet Earth belongs to all of us. Earth Hour is not just about the simple act of switching off the lights – we need to examine our daily lives and encourage our families and friends to take action to improve our environment.

“Don’t overlook the ‘+’ sign”



As famous as Earth Hour is, there are some who argue that the event is just for show, that it’s an empty gesture that ultimately does no good for the environment. Remember how Roseanna and Sam talked about “going beyond the hour”?

Wing Yi, WWF’s conservation leader, has a different take on the event. “I often remind people about the Earth Hour icon: there is a “+” sign after the “60”. Sixty minutes go by quickly, but everything that comes after is what really counts.”

Wong worked with her friends, Leung Hiu Tung and Fung Yu, to organize an exhibition at City University of Hong Kong for this year’s Earth Hour event. She repeatedly gave the above response to visitors during the four-day exhibition. “People have to realize that Earth Hour is not about switching off the lights for one hour once a year, and then just continuing with their bad daily habits”, she said. Inspired by WWF’s One Earth Mission, which extends the spirit of Earth Hour into the month following Earth Hour, Wong and her friends shared some green tips with About Life, specifically regarding eating, clothing, living and travelling, encouraging everyone to go beyond the hour.

“For example, in terms of eating, we urge everyone to choose local produce as often as possible. When it comes



© WWF-Hong Kong

to travelling, we encourage people to spend their holidays in the natural world and enjoy the beauty of nature,” said Fung. She also mentioned that they partnered with City University’s Music Department to compose a theme song for Earth Hour, with the song receiving positive feedback.

Majoring in Sales and Marketing, Leung gained valuable experience helping with the Earth Hour promotion this year. “I like the concept of Earth Hour. It transforms an abstract idea into a simple act – switching off the lights – and through this, it encourages people to think about what they can do to contribute to a sustainable future.” All three admitted that to start, they knew very little about the concepts of the Ecological Footprint and carbon emissions. Earth Hour has helped each of them realize the importance of environmental protection. “Through this global movement, we can spread the message far and wide. Earth Hour allows people around the city to speak in a single voice for the environment. By doing so, we can encourage more and more people to adopt a sustainable lifestyle,” Fung concluded.



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BIO-DESTRUCTION OR BIODIVERSITY?

For a tiny speck on the world map, Hong Kong is bursting with life. Our urban areas are densely packed with people, but our countryside and waters also teem with wildlife. In fact we have more species in most major classifications within our boundaries than the entire United Kingdom. Protecting this biodiversity is not something that grabs a lot of attention, but that is changing – as part of Hong Kong’s commitment to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the government is currently developing a five-year Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan which should advance the protection of this natural heritage.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE GOT 'TILL IT'S GONE

But while officials, experts and green groups discuss the details of this plan, terrible things continue to occur in in Hong Kong’s countryside. Over the past 10 years, a number of ecologically valuable areas have been subjected to all manner of destruction and degradation – wiping out

habitats and biodiversity as unscrupulous individuals dump waste, clear vegetation and illegally “prepare the land for development”.

Small, unique pockets of richly biodiverse land – from the dragonfly paradise of Sha Lo Tung to migratory waterbird havens in Deep Bay – have been subjected to degradation and destruction of all kinds: from fly-tipping and tree felling to unauthorized development. Dumping in the wetlands of Pui O on Lantau has destroyed habitat for wildlife like the Paradise fish, the Three-striped grass frog and rare bird species like the Chinese thrush and the Eurasian hoopoe. To draw attention to the severity of this problem, WWF-Hong Kong and 10 other green groups recently curated the second Wall of Destruction: Eco-vandalism Across Hong Kong exhibition.

The first exhibition, held in 2010, exposed 49 cases of environmental destruction occurring between 2006 and 2010. The latest exhibition revealed that inadequate legal protection and ineffective law enforcement resulted in the



destruction of 56 additional locations, meaning natural habitats in at least 100 sites have been destroyed in the past 10 years.

Dr Michael Lau, WWF-Hong Kong’s Assistant Conservation Director, explains how loophole in the Town Planning Ordinance and the gaps in Country Park system facilitate this destruction: “Eco-vandalism goes unpunished on private land covered by Outline Zoning Plans made before 1991 because the Planning Department lacks enforcement powers. Landowners can destroy these ecologically important places, like the wetlands of Pui O, with impunity.”

PINNING OUR HOPES ON THE BSAP

Green groups and other stakeholders are pinning their hopes on the BSAP, hoping that it will close these loopholes and provide more robust protection for our natural environment. What IS the BSAP? Basically, when finalized it will be a comprehensive conservation action plan for Hong Kong for the next five years. According to the government, the BSAP being developed will focus on four areas – Conservation, Mainstreaming, Knowledge and Community Involvement.

After two years of development, the Environment Bureau released a BSAP public consultation document this January. WWF is pleased to see a number of positive actions in the document: the government has proposed enhancing the conservation of natural streams and rivers and creating a comprehensive, publicly accessible database of information on local wildlife and habitats among other proposals. This is all good, but we believe that a world-class city can go further and develop an effective BSAP with clear objectives and specific actions.

WE SHOULD AIM TO DEVELOP A BIODIVERSITY SAFETY NET

How? This effective plan can be developed by incorporating ecologically-important enclaves, lowland rivers, freshwater

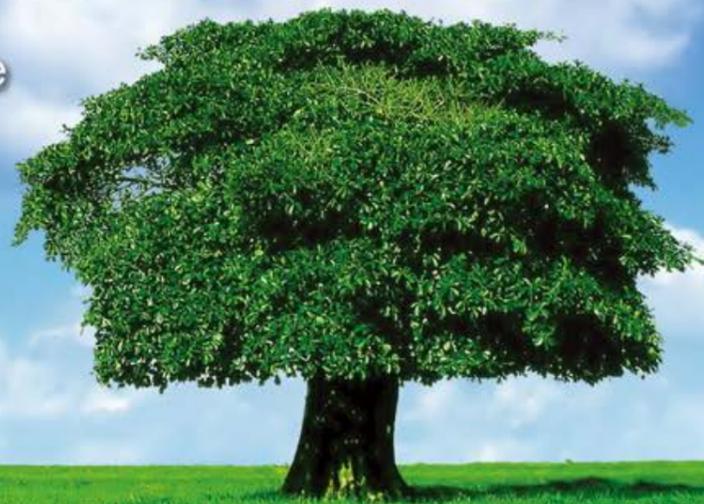


marshes and Feng Shui woods into the Country Park system; by stopping natural habitats on private land from being destroyed by plugging legal loopholes and stepping up enforcement; by establishing an effective marine protected area system covering at least 10 per cent of Hong Kong waters; and by developing conservation plans for the most threatened wildlife such as Chinese white dolphin, Chinese pangolin and the Golden coin turtle.

WWF organised an online petition and made detailed recommendations (<http://wwf.hk/wwfbsapsubmission>) to the government. By incorporating these suggestions, the finalized plan will address several serious conservation gaps and elevate our conservation work to a new level, where all ecologically-important areas and species are saved, preserved and treasured for all time. Hong Kong cannot afford another “Wall of Destruction” – ever.



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CLOSING THE DOOR ON CLIMATE CHANGE

It may seem difficult, but individual people can be part of the solution to climate change. How? Adopting a low-carbon lifestyle is a good start, but we can go even further by participating in the fascinating field of “citizen science” – where ordinary people perform measurements or experiments as part of a wider study. One recent WWF study used citizen scientist volunteers to help collect data on energy efficiency and promote discussion about our consumption of resources.

Last summer, WWF-Hong Kong conducted the city’s first-ever study of the energy efficiency of commercial display refrigerators. The results were intriguing: by installing a glass door on an open display refrigerator, retailers could reduce the power usage of that appliance by up to 50 per cent. To further investigate the “missing fridge door” problem amongst retailers and merchants in Hong Kong, WWF recently invited the public to take part in a “territory-wide fridge assessment”.

After being trained, just over 30 volunteers surveyed a total of 640 stores, including convenience stores, frozen food markets, supermarkets and department stores. Of the 8,500 refrigerators they inspected, less than half had doors



© WWF-Hong Kong

installed. By WWF's estimate, Hong Kong's doorless fridges produce 51,000 tonnes of unnecessary carbon emissions annually – equivalent to the CO2 absorbed by more than two million trees during the course of a year.

Olivia To, WWF-Hong Kong's Public Engagement Officer for Climate says that we shouldn't underestimate the important role of fridge doors in saving energy, reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change. "The misconception that doorless fridges facilitate a customer's shopping experience is contributing to serious energy waste and climate change. Fridge doors save significant amounts of energy: the amount of electricity reduced by installing doors on just two retail fridges is equivalent to the average energy consumption of an entire Hong Kong household."

After completing the survey, some of our volunteers took this issue to heart and started taking action to create change. A group of university students set up a booth at a Lunar New Year Fair, introducing the fridge issue to visitors and collecting public support for the idea of phasing out doorless fridges. They also built a website to popularize an online petition regarding the issue.

Thanks to the help of dedicated supporters like these, the situation is beginning to change. Various Hong Kong retailers have given positive feedback: 7-Eleven is now

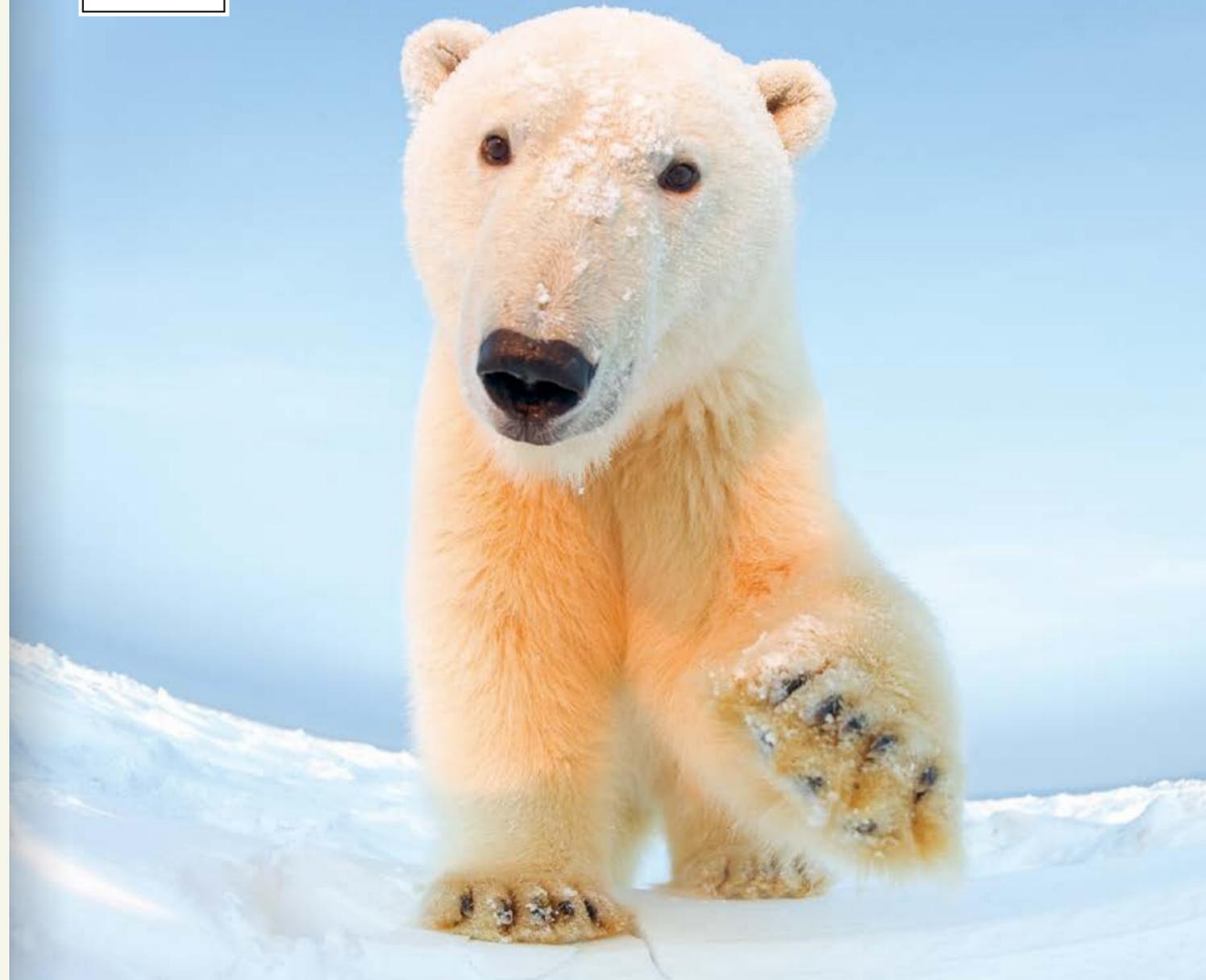
working to install fridge doors in all its branches during the first half of this year; while 759 Store has said that they will do the same within the next two years. AEON is also working with WWF to conduct energy use and temperature tests on its fridges. This is good news for Hong Kong and the Earth's atmosphere!

Learn more:



"Door God" loses his job?

In Hong Kong, half of the fridges in retail and grocery stores are doorless. Is this traditional "Door God" no longer needed? Can we help secure a job for him? Watch the video now!



Polar bears: Our climate change wake-up call

Between 2001 and 2010 a 40 per cent drop in polar bear populations was recorded in northeast Alaska and Canada's Northwest Territories. Population numbers fell **from 1,500 to 900**.

Behind this substantial fall lies a lessening of sea ice cover caused by **climate change**. Polar bears rely on sea ice to rest, breed and hunt seals.

Join us in the fight to save this beautiful and important creature before it is too late.

Donate NOW!

Enquiry: 2526 1011 wwf.org.hk

We need your support:



wwf.org.hk/savepolarbear/en



NO MORE LAP SAP WANS

Lap Sap Wan, or “Rubbish Bay” in English, is a remote beach located at Cape D’Aguilar in Shek O at the southern end of Hong Kong Island. Lap Sap Wan faces east and the prevailing wind and wave patterns mean that the bay has the unfortunate tendency to collect marine litter – tonnes and tonnes of it. For more than 20 years, Lap Sap Wan has been infamous for having vast quantities of litter strewn everywhere along its shoreline, such as abandoned fishing gear, junked household items, industrial waste, scrapped recreational equipment – almost every type of waste you can imagine.

In April last year, the Coastal Watch team and some of our conservation partners led an expedition to Lap Sap Wan to conduct an on-site marine litter survey. What the team found was beyond shocking – it was a damning indictment of the world’s inability to face up to and resolve our mounting plastic pollution problem.

185 TONNES: A WARNING FROM NATURE

When the team arrived, the bay had not been cleaned in years and debris was piled almost a metre high in some locations. A sample survey estimated the total weight of the litter to be 185 tonnes, made up of an estimated 12 million individual pieces of litter. Plastic made up the vast majority of the litter, with the largest component being polystyrene fragments, reflecting the reality that after entering the sea, most litter becomes fragmented into small pieces. There were also huge amounts of single-use plastic items like plastic packaging, straws and drinks bottles – in fact nine volunteers collected a staggering total of 2,064 bottles in 30 minutes.

Unusually for environmental news, the Lap Sap Wan story made headlines across Hong Kong. The government took action, removing most of the rubbish – 8,290 bags’ worth! – in a few months. But what seemed like a happy ending

has turned out to be the same old story: a follow-up visit by the Coastal Watch team in January of this year revealed a beach which was once more covered in garbage.

Clearly, we have a problem; one which will not be fully solved by beach clean-ups. The persistent presence of rubbish in the marine environment is creating multiple threats to the marine ecology. During various Coastal Watch surveys, fish bite marks have been found on all kinds of marine debris – proof that fish and other marine creatures are mistaking plastic for food. If these pollutants enter the food chain, they will affect both fishery resources and human health.

IDENTIFYING A LONG-TERM SOLUTION

A permanent solution is relatively simple: we need to stop allowing garbage to enter the ocean. The Coastal Watch project, running since 2014, is dedicated to cataloguing, investigating and reducing the amount of marine litter entering our beautiful ocean. Now in its second and final year, the project has been expanded to 34 sites across Hong Kong which are being cleaned and having their litter examined to determine its source and composition.

Above and beyond these actions, the Coastal Watch project also aims to leave a lasting legacy by educating Hong Kong people about our marine environment and inspiring people to protect our seas. Events like a recent exhibition on Lap Sap Wan at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum and the popular Ocean Seminar series are raising much awareness, but for those who are unable to attend, the Coastal Watch team has four things you can start doing right now to make sure the story of Lap Sap Wan is never repeated:



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- Report coastal areas affected by marine litter – this information is useful for research and helps pinpoint black spots where clean-up teams can take action.

Download the TrailWatch App NOW



Android



iOS

- Take part in clean-up events – this physically reduces the amount of litter on our coastlines and helps people viscerally experience the seriousness of the issue.
- Treat your waste responsibly – clean your recyclable material and put it in the right bins, and aim to minimize the pressure you put on landfills.
- Stop using single-use plastic products – this type of trash has an overwhelming presence in every marine litter survey conducted so far. If you don’t use it, it won’t end up in the water!



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NATURE'S UNSUNG HEROES

The on-going slaughter of elephants, and the near-extinction of rhinos, tigers and orangutans in the wild is headline news and has outraged people in all corners of our planet. On the front lines of this continuing slaughter is a group of quiet, unsung heroes. They are wildlife rangers – the brave men and women who put their lives on the line in wildlife crime hotspots across the world.

While most people in Hong Kong are aware of this war, they also live busy, urban lives that are often disconnected from nature. For us, wildlife rangers are “out of sight and out of mind”. It’s easy to speculate on what their jobs might be like, but how much do we really know? Let’s get under the surface of a few assumptions we might have...

ASSUMPTION #1 – WILDLIFE RANGERS HAVE “NORMAL” JOBS

Far from it. Wildlife rangers usually work great distances away from their homes and families, living in basic conditions as they carry out treacherous daily patrols. They operate in consistently dangerous environments and face daily threats from the well-armed, murderous poachers who hunt wildlife. They also face frequent threats from the wild creatures themselves.

While a ranger’s primary mission is to protect wildlife and their habitats, a ranger’s day-to-day work is complex and highly varied, generally covering six main areas: patrolling, monitoring wildlife, combating poaching, engaging with local communities, managing fires and other immediate threats, and also assisting with tourism.

ASSUMPTION #2 – ANYBODY CAN BE A WILDLIFE RANGER

Nope. Being a ranger is a highly pressurized and dangerous job. Operating in some of the harshest environments on Earth and often being being equipped with little more than courage and conviction, a wildlife ranger is closer to a soldier than a park officer. According to the Thin Green Line Foundation, 1,000 rangers have been killed in the line of duty in the last 10 years, with over 80 per cent dying at the hands of poachers or armed militia groups. The brutal



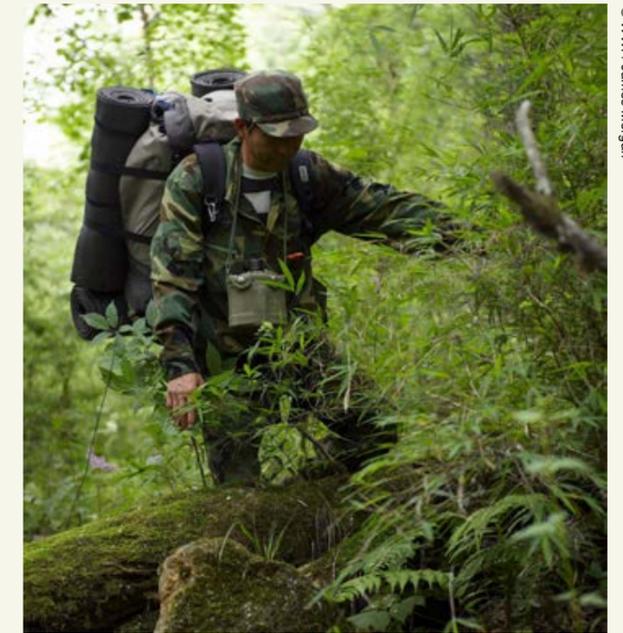
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ASSUMPTION #4 – WWF DIRECTLY EMPLOYS WILDLIFE RANGERS

Not exactly. WWF does support rangers in various ways however. We work with national, regional and local governments and other NGOs to influence change at all levels, advocating policies which protect groups of people threatened by wildlife crime. Wildlife rangers are one such group.

Various WWF offices around the world also help rangers directly by providing funding which supplements rangers’ salaries, allowing them to purchase food, and provides them with better equipment – boots, uniforms, tents and GPS devices for example.

In 2014 WWF, along with the International Ranger Federation and other groups, launched an initiative to improve ranger standards and welfare, first in Asia and then in other critical regions. The initiative focuses on raising awareness of the importance of rangers, the need for increased professionalism, development and promoting higher standards and improved welfare for rangers.

Without rangers, many of the world’s iconic species would already have been hunted to extinction. They are the vigilant eyes and ears of the natural world and the “thin green line” protecting wildlife from, and we use this word intentionally, evil. While you may not want to become a ranger, you can certainly contribute to WWF initiatives to provide rangers in Asia and Africa with desperately-needed equipment, training and resources to stop wildlife crime. Help us help wildlife rangers kill the trade that kills.

truth is that per capita, rangers are killed far more often than police officers.

In addition to danger, rangers have to be tough enough to withstand the hardship of being separated from their families and friends for weeks, perhaps months, and living in primitive conditions, often without electricity or running water.

How do you think you would fare under these conditions?

ASSUMPTION #3 – RANGERS ARE WELL-FUNDED AND WELL-EQUIPPED

Sadly not. Many countries with high levels of wildlife crime also face deep social and economic problems. A chronic lack of funding means rangers are under-equipped to deal with ruthless poachers who have been armed by criminal syndicates with powerful modern weaponry, and sometimes even light aircraft. In some places, rangers are not even given the authority to carry weapons, further stacking the odds against them.

Rangers also suffer from a lack of proper, even basic, equipment and often are paid very poorly. In spite of these conditions they work with courage and devotion to protect the world’s wildlife. Imagine how much more effective they could be with the right funding and resources!



Support Rangers
Now

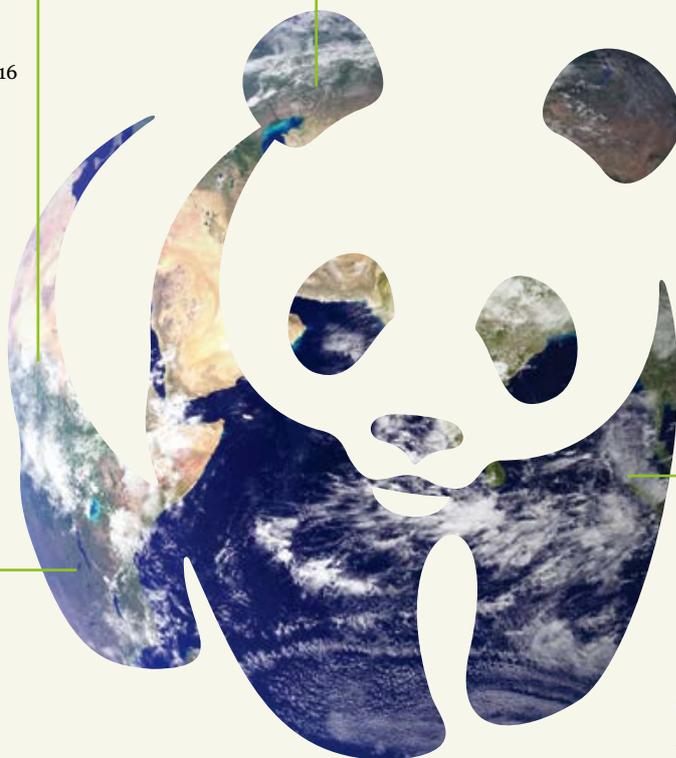
10th Earth Hour

8:30-9:30p.m.

Earth Hour – held on a Saturday in late March every year, in every time zone around the world

178

Countries and territories embraced Earth Hour 2016



4,100

Over 4,100 companies and buildings in Hong Kong committed to taking part in Earth Hour 2016

3.06%

drop in electricity consumption in Hong Kong during Earth Hour 2016

	<p>Why we are here 我們在這裡</p> <p>To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. 為了遏止自然環境惡化，建立人類與大自然和諧共存的未來。</p> <p>wwf.org.hk</p>
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