



Press Release

**HKU Stephen Hui Geological Museum exhibition to launch on Endangered Species Day 2018 “Hong Kong’s Living Fossils” – the evolution of horseshoe crabs**

May 17, 2018



Exhibition collaborators presenting local mangrove and Chinese horseshoe crabs in comparison with a nearly identical 150 million years old fossil.

The Stephen Hui Geological Museum at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) launches a special exhibition on “Hong Kong’s Living Fossils” on the Endangered Species Day 2018 on 18 May 2018, which will run for 6 months until 4 November.

This special exhibition will showcase horseshoe crab as old as 475 million years, together with other living fossils to understand their evolution and lifestyle, including their body plan, life cycle and habitats in the

geological past and in Hong Kong today. Visitors will have the valuable opportunity to see up-close live juvenile horseshoe crabs and observe the body part functions and lifestyle in action which have helped them to successfully cope with environmental changes for hundreds of millions of years.

While horseshoe crabs were once common in Hong Kong and evenly distributed over all intertidal beaches and mudflats, their wild population has dropped significantly by 90% between 2000 and 2009, caused by human activities such as coastal development, clam digging and fishing. Horseshoe crabs will face the threat of extinction in Hong Kong and the legend of the “Living Fossil” will not be sustained if no urgent protection measures are implemented.

Apart from the horseshoe crab, fossils of two other living fossils living largely unnoticed in the coastal environments of Hong Kong, namely the primitive brachiopod *Lingula* and the small eel-like *Amphioxus* (also known as Lancelet), will also be shown in the exhibition.

Dr Petra Bach, Curator of the Stephen Hui Geological Museum at the University of Hong Kong said, “This exhibition is specially launched on Endangered Species Day to arouse awareness of the importance of protecting species that are facing a high risk of extinction and the need for conservation. Moreover, visitors are able to revisit their evolutionary history in the context of the entire Earth History as the special exhibits are integrated in the existing permanent exhibition of the Earth Evolution gallery.”

Since 2009, the collaborators and the Hong Kong Ocean Park Conservation Foundation have organized a Juvenile Horseshoe Crab Rearing and Releasing Programme and mudflat clean-ups for habitat restoration in close collaboration with Hong Kong Secondary Schools. Every summer juveniles reared in the laboratories are released to the wild into their proper habitat. The juvenile live horseshoe crabs on display in this special exhibition are part of this programme and will be reared until suitable to be released to the wild.

This special exhibition is a collaboration with local conservationist Kevin Laurie and Associate Professor, Dr. Cheung Siu Gin from the Department of Chemistry at the City University of Hong Kong and supported by the School of Biological Sciences of the University of Hong Kong.

Please download images here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/lcf0shct8vat3ad/AAAY4rIxaS1Yl-5tFofW8Y7xa?dl=0>

**Opening Ceremony:**

**Date:** Friday, May 18, 2018

**Time:** 7 pm

**Venue:** Stephen Hui Geological Museum, James Hsioung Lee Science Building, Main Campus, the University Hong Kong

**Officiating guests:**

- Dr. Petra Bach, Curator of the Stephen Hui Geological Museum, The University of Hong Kong
- Dr. Cheung Siu Gin, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, City University of Hong Kong, Steering Committee Member of the IUCN Horseshoe Crab Specialist Group
- Kevin Laurie, Programme Officer and Steering Committee Member to the IUCN Horseshoe Crab Specialist Group
- Prof. Mei Fu Zhou, Head of the Department of Earth Sciences, The University of Hong Kong

**Details of the Exhibition:**

**Dates:** May 19 to November 4, 2018

**Venue:** G/F, Stephen Hui Geological Museum, James Hsioung Lee Science Building, Main Campus, the University of Hong Kong  
**Opening hours:** Monday to Friday, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Closed on Saturdays and Sundays, University and Public Holidays

**Free Admission**

**Special Weekend Openings** from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on: May 19/20, June 9/10, July 7/8, August 11/12, September 8/9, October 6/7 and November 3/4, 2018.

**Guided Tours:** Venue: The Stephen Hui Geological Museum, Main Campus, HKU, Pokfulam, Hong Kong (Map) Free guided tours during the special weekend openings will be arranged at 2p.m. Free of charge. No registration required.

**Website:** Stephen Hui Geological Museum website: <http://www.earthsciences.hku.hk/shmuseum/>

General Enquiries: Tel: (852) 22415472 / Email: [shmuseum@hku.hk](mailto:shmuseum@hku.hk)

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