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Hong Kong's mangrove biodiversity and its conservation within the context of a southern Chinese megalopolis. A review and a proposal for Lai Chi Wo to be designated as a World Heritage Site

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Running heads: Brian Morton : Chinese mangrove conservation

HIGHLIGHTS

- The structures of Hong Kong's various mangrove communities are described
- Identified are the various threats to Hong Kong's mangroves
- Conservation measures are described and discussed
- Lai Chi Wo is proposed as a World Heritage Site for historical, cultural and ecological reasons

Abstract

The ecologies of Hong Kong's mangroves are described in relation to transects undertaken through stands at Mai Po and Lai Chi Wo in the northwestern and northeastern quadrants of this Special Administrative Region, respectively. Also described is the less well-formed mangrove at Hoi Ha Wan also in the northeast. These three stands are important because they are: (i), all situated in protected coastal areas; (ii), representative of, as is described, ecologically dissimilar communities and (iii), all endangered to some extent by various anthropogenic pollutants and land developments, which are also examined. The most recent threat to the mangroves within Hong Kong's country and marine parks, however, is not, as one might expect, from over-enthusiastic tourism but from small house developments in the village enclaves (tithings) where the mangroves are situated. It is concluded that if Hong Kong's Small House Policy is not abandoned, mangrove remnants may survive for a while but, one by one, they will disappear as development takes advantage of our collective amnesia and conservation is concerned not with protecting what was but with a degraded what is. It is shown that of all the estimated 107 mangrove stands in Hong Kong (of varying proportions), Lai Chi Wo in the Plover Cove Country Park,

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