



Writer-in-the-Gardens Residency 2016

Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve *Residency Period: 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2016*

Before 1986, Sungei Buloh was just a humble prawn farm. However, that all changed when birdwatchers from the Malayan Nature Society-Singapore Branch (MNS) stumbled upon Sungei Buloh, discovering thousands of migratory shorebirds, feeding and roosting in the mudflats and ponds found in the farm. After making this exciting discovery, the MNS decided to push for the conservation and preservation of Sungei Buloh's mudflats and mangrove forest, recognising its importance both ecologically and as a piece of Singapore's natural heritage. Through many talks and visits, culminating in a successful submission of a proposal to the government calling for its conservation, Sungei Buloh Nature Park was officially opened on 6 December 1993.

The recognition of its importance continued to grow and in January 2002, Sungei Buloh Nature Park was gazetted as a Nature Reserve, and renamed Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve to reflect its new status. Sungei Buloh was globally recognised as a site of international importance for migratory birds and was presented with a certificate from the renowned non-profit organisation, Wetland International, marking its formal entry into the East Asian-Australian Shorebird Site Network. Being a vital link in the Flyway, Sungei Buloh was one the founding members of the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). The EAAFP links the Arctic Circle in Russia and Alaska, southwards through East Asia to Australia and New Zealand in the South. Although Sungei Buloh may be considered a small migratory site along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, it is an important stopover and wintering site during the birds' migratory months of September to March annually. With the increasing loss of habitats in many countries along the Flyway due to urbanisation and pollution, sites like Sungei Buloh have become even more crucial for the migratory birds.

Why Sungei Buloh?

- Home to a wide diversity of native flora and fauna
- A key stopover site for migratory birds
- An ASEAN Heritage Park

Besides being a site of international importance for migratory birds, Sungei Buloh is also home to a wide diversity of native fauna and flora. The mangroves are an ecological jewel, providing a vital, unique habitat for a diverse species of crustacea, resident birds, mammals and fish. With less than 5% of the original mangrove forest remaining in the whole of Singapore, Sungei Buloh



is crucial for the conservation of the mangrove tree species, and the organisms that are dependent on the habitat, such as mudskippers, fishes and crocodiles. Its rich biodiversity and ecological importance earned Sungei Buloh's additional recognition and in December 2003, it was declared an ASEAN Heritage Park, and was the very first nature reserve in Singapore to be awarded this status.

Sungei Buloh has also since earned a special place in many Singaporeans' hearts, providing a rare up-and-close experience with nature amidst our expanding urban city. With healthy visitorship and a thriving volunteer network comprised of both locals and non-locals, Sungei Buloh has benefitted from the attention, recently expanding its grounds to 202 hectares. This new extension has allowed even more visitors to enjoy Sungei Buloh's quiet charm and will continue to be a haven for both people and our local wildlife to come back to.



Facilities available:

- Access to research and resources about Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve
- Workspace with wireless internet connection
- Function rooms available for public sessions
- Possibility of overnight stay in researcher/staff quarters located on-site
- Free guided walks for members of public every Saturday morning

For more information about the NAC Writer-in-the-Gardens Residency and how to submit an application for the 2016 Residency, visit this webpage: <https://nac.gov.sg/art-forms/literary-arts/initiatives/gardens-residency>