Pokedex of S'pore wildlife records over 10,000 species

Museum’s online database also shows how flora, fauna interact

Audrey Tan

It may look like a concrete jungle but Singapore still supports more species than one might expect.

Now it is possible to get acquainted with them from the comfort of your home.

An online database hosted by the National University of Singapore’s Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum has catalogued over 12,000 entries of plants, animals and fungi – all of them found in Singapore.

One of the researchers behind the project is museum officer Ang Yuchen who describes it as “a virtual Pokedex of virtual reality game Pokemon Go. All of them found in Singapore.

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Museum officer Ang Yuchen (left) and Dr Meier showing some of the virtual reality game's fauna.

Scientists are managing the biodiversity online platform to help preserve Singapore’s biodiversity.

Here's how flora and fauna interact

MUSEUM OFFICER ANGYUCHEN, one of the researchers behind the project, is a virtual Pokedex of virtual reality game Pokemon Go.

Central to the project is a museum officer Ang Yuchen who describes it as “a virtual Pokedex of virtual reality game Pokemon Go.”

The database also features links to external sources, such as places created by natural history groups, students from the National University of Singapore’s life sciences classes or the museum’s Singapore Biodiversity Records – an online collection of flora and fauna in Singapore, including sightings of uncommon or rare species.

“Due to the nature of the process, we now have different species interact with the Singapore online platform,” Yuchen said.

Our greatest aim is to help keep Singapore cool. They not only function in the air, on the land and in the water, but also as air and water purifiers,” said Prof Meier.

“By keeping these areas healthy, we need to know about the plants in them. Only by understanding these instructions can we keep our environment healthy.”

Prof Meier estimates that there could be between 10,000 and 100,000 of these flies around a small area managed by Prof Meier and Dr Ang.

The database also features links to external websites, such as the Virtual Realities platform, which could help generate greater awareness and appreciation of Singapore’s biodiversity.

Environmental studies under-graduates Shovan Ban, 24, and Loi Tung, 23, said: “I dare say that a large number of Sin- gaporeans still do not know about the incredible biodiversity contained in this small island. This online platform could help many learn more about the wildlife we share our home with at the click of a mouse.”

Prof Meier added that the links to external websites, such as biodiversity records and blogs by naturalists, were also useful in helping users make connections between wildlife and everyday happenings within our nation. "The links could show them that we are not as estranged from nature as some might think," he said.