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## NATIONAL DAY 2003

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### 7 Nature Crusader

N. Sivasothi, 36, biologist

THE hermit crabs, starfish and carpet anemones on Chek Jawa must thank him and other nature lovers for their continued survival.



Two years ago, time was running out for the little-known beach on Pulau Ubin, which was up for land reclamation.

But after several field trips there, Mr N. Sivasothi, a research officer at the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, felt that Chek Jawa was a secret to be shared.

He and other volunteers organised public tours which exposed more than 2,000 Singaporeans so far to the wonders of marine life in their own backyard.

After many appeals against the reclamation, the Ministry of National Development announced at the end of 2001 that the beach would be spared.

Mr Sivasothi says that on Chek Jawa, all the skills and experience he has acquired handling public education for the museum 'came together like a big explosion of light'.

He helped produce a recently-launched Chek Jawa guide book and is now busy training other volunteer guides.

This is on top of organising educational workshops and talks for the museum, and producing a regular Habitat News newsletter and webpage that keep nature lovers informed.

The museum, located at the National University of Singapore, is home to a large collection of South-east Asian fauna.

The affable biologist graduated with honours in zoology from NUS in 1990, and is still with the university doing his PhD research on the tree-climbing crab.

The standing joke among his old classmates, he says, is that 'I'm still trying to pass my exams'.

In 1999, he left a full-time academic career to join the museum.

Why the switch of careers?

He says: 'The more urgent task is not just to study something in incredible depth and detail, but also to pass this information on to others.'

**Off the cuff:**

'Nature and the Singaporean way of life do not have to be mutually exclusive.'

- 1 Leong Tzi Ming
- 2 Dawn Kua
- 3 Tony Chow
- 4 Nur'Anini Mohamed Yasli
- 5 Yeo Ching Kee
- 6 Loh Lik Peng
- 7 **N. Sivasothi**
- 8 Shie Yong Lee
- 9 Trevor Xie
- 10 Andrew Giam
- 11 Jacinta Phoon
- 12 Vinothini Apok
- 13 Phua Mei Pin
- 14 Eric Ng
- 15 Grace Lim
- 16 Yue Lip Sin
- 17 Abdul Hadi Kamarolzaman
- 18 Dr Loh Lik Eng
- 19 Leslie Kee
- 20 Keith Sim
- 21 Pamela Chia
- 22 Tang Chi Sim
- 23 Flying Sotong Can
- 24 Chan Hock Keng
- 25 Pang Siu Yuin
- 26 Patrick Chia
- 27 Ken Hong
- 28 Amrin Amin
- 29 Collin Yeo
- 30 Chong Li-Chuan
- 31 Serene Chew
- 32 Melvinder Kanth & Ismail Ishak
- 33 Colin Goh
- 34 Sim Kok Wah
- 35 Sarah Martin
- 36 Daren Shiau
- 37 Ezzy Wang
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