



Dr Jane Goodall speaking at the Human-Wildlife Co-Existence in Asia: Conflicts and Mitigations Conference 2019 at Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre yesterday. The renowned primatologist discussed the pressing issue of human-wildlife conflicts as the human population grows and encroaches deeper into wildlife habitats, calling the No Feeding campaign "desperately important".
ST PHOTOS: CHONG JUN LIANG

New campaign aims to stop people from feeding monkeys

No Feeding initiative focuses on common long-tailed macaques, and includes outreach talks and nature walks

Jean Iau

There are now fewer cases of people feeding monkeys, but a new campaign has been launched to try to end such incidents completely.

The three-year-long No Feeding campaign focuses on the common long-tailed macaques. It was

HARMFUL, NOT HELPFUL, ACT

Within Dairy Farm, we have been actively discouraging people from feeding, but some people do it out of their good hearts. So it's tough to communicate to these residents that the monkeys need to feed off a natural food source to keep them from coming into the house.



ENGINEER KEVIN KHO, 58, a resident at Dairy Farm Estate who attended talks by the Jane Goodall Institute (Singapore) in his condominium last year. He sees about 10 macaques once a week in the estate.

launched yesterday by the Jane Goodall Institute (Singapore), or JGIS, and the Long-tailed Macaque Working Group, a volunteer group.

There will be various initiatives such as nature walks, outreach talks, interviews with residents in macaque hot spots, and teaching them safe monkey-guarding procedures.

Such procedures involve understanding monkey behaviour, and guiding them away from residential areas in a non-aggressive manner using walking sticks or umbrellas.

Macaque hot spots include residential areas around MacRitchie, Bukit Timah and Upper Thomson that are close to forests.

Incidents of people feeding monkeys have fallen from more than 100 in 2016 to fewer than 30 so far this year.

Minister for Social and Family Development Desmond Lee announced the new No Feeding campaign at the Human-Wildlife Co-Existence in Asia: Conflicts and Mitigations Conference 2019 at Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre yesterday.

It was attended by conservationists, teachers, students, the public



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and media from the region.

Mr Lee said: "Supported by data and feedback, outreach and education activities will be scaled up, and monkey-guarding efforts will be carried out in more areas. More details will be shared in the coming months, as the plans continue to take shape and get implemented."

He also announced a three-year study, which looks at the behaviour, movement, diet and health of the long-tailed macaques, that the National Parks Board (NParks) and National University of Singapore will undertake.

Mr Lee outlined the initiatives Singapore has undertaken to protect wildlife as the country develops.

These include incorporating greenery into long-term planning, plans to restore secondary forests and expand species recovery efforts, and turning to nature-based solutions to deal with rising sea levels and temperatures.

Renowned primatologist Jane Goodall, who was present at the event, discussed the pressing issue of human-wildlife conflicts as the human population grows and encroaches deeper into wildlife habitats, calling the No Feeding campaign "desperately important".

She said: "It's interesting to think of why we feed wildlife. There's some part of us that still relates closely to the animals that we share

the planet with... and that gives you a good warm feeling.

"So it's only through education that we gradually understand that by doing something that makes us feel wonderful and part of the natural world, it's actually harming the animals - and we have to stop doing it."

Dr Goodall, 85, in town for JGIS' inaugural ConservAction Week, will speak about conservation and attend programmes.

NParks attributed the drop in the number of monkey-feeding incidents to various educational measures, such as having outreach programmes, distributing advisory pamphlets and putting up signs in nature reserves and parks.

Engineer Kevin Kho, 58, a resident at Dairy Farm Estate, supports the monkey-guarding effort and attended talks by JGIS in his condominium last year. He sees about 10 macaques once a week in the Upper Bukit Timah estate.

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NParks studying primates to aid in their conservation

The National Parks Board (NParks) is studying the long-tailed macaque, the Raffles' banded langur and the sunda slow loris.

In partnership with the National University of Singapore, NParks will begin studying the long-tailed macaque in January next year.

The three-year study aims to better understand how the species interacts with the Raffles' banded langur by comparing their demographics, behaviour, diet and more.

This will let NParks formulate conservation and management strategies for these primates by assessing where habitat connectivity can be improved, and where mitigation methods are needed to reduce human-wildlife interactions with the long-tailed macaques.

The study will take place island-wide for the macaques and in nature reserves and buffer parks for the Raffles' banded langur.

NParks has also been studying the sunda slow loris in nature reserves and buffer parks to gather more information about its spatial distribution, habitat preferences and behavioural patterns.

Future research will study population size, home range and activity patterns.

The Raffles' Banded Langur Working Group comprising Wildlife Reserves Singapore, NParks and universities from Singapore and Malaysia, developed a species action plan in 2016 for the conservation of the langurs.

Jean Iau