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National Museum
of Singapore

YOUNG EXPLORER'S TRAIL

Story of the Forest
Glass Rotunda



Facilitator's Talking Point

[Outside Story of the Forest] Today, you will be exploring the Glass Rotunda in the National Museum of Singapore. Right now, what is displayed inside the Glass Rotunda is Story of the Forest, a digital display that brings to life 69 drawings from the museum's treasured William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings.

[Pointing to WF portrait] William Farquhar was the first British Resident and Commandant* of colonial Singapore* from 1819 to 1823. He was a nature lover and appointed Chinese ink painters to draw the plants and animals found in Singapore and Malaya back then – that is almost 200 years ago! There are altogether **477** paintings in the William Farquhar Collection.

Your mission today is to find as many plants and animals in the galleries. Let's set off on this mission together!

First, I'm going to show you five of the plants and animals in the Collection.



Pomfret

Facilitator's Talking Point

Chinese Pomfret

- ❶ Chinese pomfrets are usually steamed to preserve their sweet flavour.
- ❷ The fish are eaten as symbols of prosperity and completeness during festive periods.
- ❸ The fish can grow to 40 cm in length and are usually caught at night.

Let's swim like a fish!

Frangipani



Plumeria obtusa
Plumeria obtusa.

Plumeria obtusa (Nelumbi)

Facilitator's Talking Point

Frangipani

- ❶ Frangipanis are known as graveyard trees as the trees continue to bear flowers and leaves even when uprooted. They are regarded as symbol of immortality.
- ❷ Frangipani flowers are popularly used as decoration.
- ❸ Children in Singapore and Malaya used to use the Frangipani flowers to make *chapteh* when chicken feathers were not available.

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis, *Hibiscus* *Rosa* *Sinensis*
Bourgeois *Hibiscus* *Sinensis*



Hibiscus

Facilitator's Talking Point

Hibiscus

- ❶ Hibiscus flowers seldom last for more than a day.
- ❷ Hibiscus leaves can be eaten.
- ❸ In Malay medicine, hibiscus roots were used to treat fevers or poisons.



Paradise Tree Snake

Facilitator's Talking Point

Paradise Tree Snake

- ❶ The paradise tree snake can glide in the air by flattening its body to “swim” through the air.
- ❷ It can be commonly found in the parks, where it hunt for frogs and lizards.
- ❸ Snake charmers are common sights at Mount Faber and Nassim Road in Singapore during the 1960s and 1970s.

Let's slither and hiss like a snake!

**Pied Imperial
Pigeon**



Facilitator's Talking Point

Pied Imperial Pigeon

- ❶ Imperial pigeons are large doves that can fly vast distances. It is rare to see an imperial pigeon in Singapore. Large flocks can still be seen at Tioman and Redang.
- ❷ They feed on fruits from coastal trees.
- ❸ In the past, they were often shot for sport and food.

Let's flap our hands like a pigeon flapping its wings!

[Show next slide] Here are a few more of the plants and animals you might spot inside Story of the Forest. Try to remember their names, and tell me if you can spot them!

[After giving students some time to go through the slide] We are now going to enter the Story of the Forest. It can be a bit dark, so walk slowly. You will smell something when you enter – what is it? (Answer: The scent of flowers)



Mangrove Fan Palm



Torch Ginger



Mangosteen Tree



Zebra Dove



Malayan Tapir



Hibiscus



Sambar Deer



Smooth Otter



Facilitator's Talking Point

Aren't these animals cute? Would you like to bring them home? Next, we are going to make some animal puppets! You can choose to make a Malayan Porcupine, a Malayan Tapir or a Rhinoceros Hornbill.

WHO AM I?

I have a long snout. I am black and white.

I like to eat fresh grasses and leaves.

I am good at swimming and climbing steep slopes!

My species used to be found throughout Southeast Asia but you can only find us in parts of Sumatra today.

William Farquhar was the first person to describe my species, calling us the only animal besides the elephant to have a trunk.



**Malayan
Tapir**



Malayan Porcupine

WHO AM I?

My name means "spined pig", but I'm a rodent, not a pig!

I have long, stiff and sharp quills on my back. They are black and white, or dark brown and white.

I was born with soft quills, which hardened a few hours after birth so I can protect myself from my predators.

I live in dense forest and feed on fallen fruits and vegetables.

I love my family. Up to 10 of us live together in my large underground burrow home.

WHO AM I?

I am one of the largest and most magnificent birds of the Malaysian rainforest.

I have a casque. It is part of my beak.

My brothers have an orange or red ring around their eyes, but my sisters have a white ring.

I am known as "The Farmer of the Forests" because I fly long distances with my huge wings and help to spread fruit seeds across faraway fields.

I am the state bird of Sarawak and also Malaysia's national bird.



Rhinoceros Hornbill