

Getting To Know Our Students

Adeline Yong, PhD student



Adeline
is a PhD student of
Natural Sciences &
Science Education
(NSSE) Academic
Group.

What attracted you to a higher degree programme at NIE?

I had previously pursued my Master of Science (Life Sciences) at NIE to enhance my content-knowledge. For my MSc dissertation, I studied the potential of using the local species of ghost crabs as a bioindicator of the level of human disturbance at the sandy beaches in Singapore. I learnt a lot from my project supervisor and I was impressed with the vast learning opportunities that NIE offers. The experience during my MSc motivated me to pursue a PhD at NIE.

What is your PhD research on?

My research is on the feeding ecology of the painted ghost crabs in Panama. I am interested in the feeding strategies of the juvenile and adult crabs and how the crabs partition their resources.

What impact do you wish to achieve with your research?

The dynamics of the sandy beach environment makes it challenging to study the ecology of its inhabitants. Ghost crabs are commonly found on sand beaches around the world, but little is known about their ecological interactions. I hope my study can provide some insights to the trophic interactions of this crab. Such information might be useful in the management of coastal environments that are under threat from increasing human activities.

How would you describe your interactions with NIE faculty members?

Faculty members are approachable and open to sharing their ideas and knowledge. They also challenge us to think critically in class and for our assignments.

What is the best part of being a student at NIE?

My supervisor gives me the support and flexibility of taking my research in the direction I wish. I was also very fortunate to be based at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) in Panama for my field studies. During the 14 months in Panama, I had the opportunity to interact and learn from other graduate students and scientists from other parts of the world at STRI. NIE also provides many opportunities and platforms for a graduate student to communicate our research both locally and internationally through conferences, seminars and teaching assistantships.

How will the programme prepare you for your career progression?

I am currently a Biology teacher in a secondary school and this learning journey has been very enriching so far. Not only have I gained a wide range of skills as a graduate student, I have also become a more critical and independent thinker. The challenges of conducting field work in Panama taught me to problem-solve and be innovative. These skills are essential in the 21st century classroom and having applied them as a graduate student, I feel more confident and better equipped to instil the same skills in my students.