

## **“Marine Biodiversity: Singapore's Hidden Treasure Chest”**

Tai Chong TOH

*Tropical Marine Science Institute*

Do you know that Singapore is located in close proximity to the Coral Triangle, an internationally recognised region that supports the highest number of marine species? Therefore, its not surprising that in our limited seascape, our waters support over one - third of the world’s coral species and half of the world’s seagrass species.

In this talk, I will highlight the incredible biodiversity found in our waters. From the re-discovery of sponges that were once thought to be extinct since the 1900s, to the coral reefs that have survived the decadal impacts of coastal development in Singapore, I will share some of our local researchers’ recent discoveries that have surprised the local and international scientific communities.

In the second part of my presentation, I will feature some of the ground - up initiatives started by our local community groups and how our knowledge in marine science is used to nurture eco - literacy in Singapore. I will also share my experience on community engagement and how scientists now play an important role helping the government communicate their scientific policies to the public and businesses.