

THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1963



Published by

THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

Price: Three Dollars

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Records Compiled by
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Edited by

F.O.P. Hechtel

Published in 1964

by the

HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

c/o The Chartered Bank, Hong Kong.

(A registered Society under the Hong Kong Societies Ordinance)

INTRODUCTION

The most notable feature of the year was the persistent drought. As well as being tiresome for humans, it certainly cut down the number of wintering birds.

We were unfortunate during the year in losing most of our observers in the New Territories, especially Brigadier Kent and Richard Hale, but we have also gained some active new members. A sad blow was the death of Mr. A.O. Barretto, who joined the Society in the very early days and sent in many interesting reports from his garden at Tai Po Kau and the neighbourhood.

During the summer, Miss M.E.M. Benham's "An Introduction to the Birds of Hong Kong" was published. It has been very well received and fills a large gap as it is the only book on local birds that is available to the general public.

In February, we had another welcome visit from General Sir Gerald Lathbury, now Quartermaster General. As before the birds flocked in from every side and we saw more than sixty species in one day, including two Grey-faced Buzzard Eagles. Later in the year, in December, another visiting ornithologist Mrs. M.L. Colthurst from Somerset had a day in the Ho Chung valley and saw the first two Treepies of this winter's irruption.

Formal outings were very well attended and were as follows:—

1st January	Pak Tam valley, beyond Tai Mong Tsai
26th January	Lam Tsuen valley
17th February	Tung Chung valley, Lantau Island
17th March	Three Fathom Cove
15th April	Mai Po marsh
28th April	Mai Po marsh
(summer vacation for birds and watchers)	
15th September	Mai Po marsh
2nd October	Mai Po marsh
21st October	Three Fathom Cove
11th November	Ping Shan/Luen Tak
8th December	Ho Chung valley
26th December	Ping Shan/Mong Tseng/Luen Tak

Unfortunately there is still no let-up in the stringent frontier regulations and we cannot reach the mouth of the Shum Chun river, the most likely spot for Ibis, Black Stork, Spoonbills, Pelicans and Duck.

In August, the Committee reviewed the financial position. In view of the increasing cost of printing the Bird Report and the fact that a number of members were known to be leaving the Colony during 1964, it was reluctantly decided that the Annual Subscription must be kept at \$20 for the present (\$30 for a husband and wife membership). We have however, introduced an Overseas Membership of HK\$6 (or 7/6d or US\$1).

The following books have been added to the Library:—

"The Book of Indian Birds" and "Indian Hill Birds" both by Salim Ali;

"A Field Guide to the Birds of East and Central Africa" by J.G. Williams;

12th & 13th Annual Reports of the Wildfowl Trust (1959-60 & 1960-61) and

A Set of Reprints of Papers by Member J. Cairns in the Malayan

Nature Journal & Bombay Natural History Society Journal.
Extra copies of:—

Kobayashi's "Birds of Japan";

Herklots' "Birds of Hong Kong" (two more copies) and

Smythies' "Birds of Borneo".

Where we have more than one copy of any book, one is now kept as a "reference copy".

E. D. W.

COLONY RECORDS 1963

The Weather

1963 has been unique in the history of the Colony. It was on average the hottest, sunniest and driest year since records began. From the human standpoint — and probably from that of the birds also — it will be remembered for its heat and above all for its drought. The annual rainfall was 35.48 inches, less than 42% of the annual average of 85.39 inches. For comparison the next two driest years since records began 80 years ago have been 1895 with 45.84 inches and 1954 with 53.82 inches. Rainfall was negligible in February and March and slight in April and May — indeed the latter month produced less than a quarter of an inch of rain, only about 2% of the normal amount. May and June produced the highest temperatures ever recorded in these months and while both June and July were nearer the average in both temperature and rainfall both August and September were considerably hotter and drier than average, and the latter produced both the hottest recorded September day and the highest September mean temperature. The last quarter of the year continued the pattern with temperatures consistently higher and rainfall consistently lower than average.

In contrast the Colony was little affected by Typhoons. The No. 3 Storm Signal was raised only four times and only Typhoon Faye in early September produced really strong, but unexceptional, winds.

Summary

The Cattle Egret colonized Sha Tau Kok Egretty and at least six pairs bred there — the only recorded breeding in the Colony other than at Yuen Long. Swinhoe's Egret also bred at Sha Tau Kok, where it has not been recorded previously. A Drake Shoveller was shot at Lok Ma Chau on 8th December — this is the fourth Colony record.

A pair of Golden Eagles were seen at Ping Shan on 29th December. An Imperial Eagle frequented the Mai Po — Mong Tseng area from 3rd — 14th March and again (the same bird?) from 24th November — 26th December. There were two Spotted Eagles at Mai Po on 13th March and Bonelli's Eagles were recorded in March, July, October and December.

A probable White-tailed Eagle was seen at Repulse Bay on 20th September; there have been a number of "probables" of this Eagle in recent years and it is felt that one more "probable" — from a reputable source — will turn itself and all its predecessors into accepted records. White-bellied Sea Eagles were, as usual, in evidence throughout the year and occupied a new nesting site near Cape Collinson

on or before 5th December. There were at least two eggs on 20th December. Finally there were a pair of Grey-faced Buzzard Eagles in the Ping Shan area from 3rd February to 19th March. Thus we have recorded (or probably recorded) seven out of the nine eagles on our list in 1963.

Before 1962 there was only one record of the Crimson-legged Crake from the Colony. In 1963 records have been redoubled. There was one or perhaps two in the Ho Chung valley on 1st and 12th January; the pair by the road from Sek Kong to Fanling reappeared from 3rd April to 7th May and one was seen on Route Twisk on 3rd June.

There is nothing of particular interest to mention in the Wader section except that H.M.S. "Albion" steamed through a flock of about 40 Red-necked Phalaropes four miles East of Waglan lighthouse on 23rd September. We have also recorded the ninth occurrence of the Black-winged Stilt in the Colony on 9th September at San Tin.

A development of great interest is the colonization of Mong Tseng Peninsula in the North West of the New Territories by the Rose-ringed Paroquet. Previously this species, which was first noticed as an introduction by escape in 1903, had confined itself to Hong Kong Island with occasional forays to Kowloon and the New Territories. It now appears to be firmly established in small numbers in the Mong Tseng Peninsula.

The Great Barbet regrettably appears to have withdrawn itself from Hong Kong Island in the face of advancing civilization, and to be somewhat less common than before throughout the Colony. However breeding was proved in the Lam Tsun Valley in July.

Taking a conservative view, we have acknowledged the fourth and fifth records of the Bull-headed Shrike. Of these five records three are from the University Area, all in different years. The incidence of rare birds varies directly with the incidence of competent ornithologists to record them, but this seems more than a coincidence. Some species of winter visitors, are by individuals, remarkably faithful to their winter quarters. Perhaps these three records of different years of birds in the same place refer to the same bird. It is an interesting speculation.

A Phillipine Brown Shrike which had been seen at Kowloon Tong from late 1962 to 27th April 1963 reappeared in the same place (if it was the same bird) on 30th November and was seen again on 7th December.

A Japanese Brown Shrike which had been seen at Government House from late 1962 was seen regularly up to 21st April 1963. A similar bird reappeared in the same place on 2nd November and remained until the end of the year (and beyond).

There were a fair number of Black-Naped Orioles in evidence including a pair which bred in Victoria Barracks. Let us hope that the comment in last year's report that they were withdrawing in the face of advancing civilization was over pessimistic.

It was a good year for Drongos, with many reports of both Black Drongos and Hair-Crested Drongos. Two or three Ashy Drongos were seen at The Peak just before Christmas.

The winter of 1963/64 has been memorable for an invasion by Treepies. The status in the Check List is "occasional visitor --- the latest report is --- March 1950". Based on the last four years, which may, of course, be exceptional as this year certainly is, the status would read "uncommon winter visitor with occasional records during the spring migration". The scanty available literature does not mention the migration of this species, but it would be interesting to know if it is an irruption species as is, further North, its fellow corvid, the Nutcracker.

It was an exceptionally good year for Scarlet Minivets and there have been nearly as many records this year as in all previous years put together. The winter of 1962/63 was an irruption year for both Chestnut Bulbuls and White-headed Black Bulbuls. There are several reports of 20 — 25 of the first and similar reports of up to about 60 of the latter. The year saw a fourth record of the Chinese Babax, a species only recently added to our list.

It was a good year for Flycatchers. The Ho Chung bird, a Grey-headed Flycatcher, which was first seen in 1962 was seen regularly up to 10th March. Another bird was seen on the Mong Tseng Peninsula and yet another bird in the She Shan wood in the LTV, where four of the first five Colony records were made. The status of this bird must now be changed from "vagrant" to "occasional visitor". Indeed, if the experience of the past two years is continued it will be "a regular winter and spring visitor in small numbers".

There were six records of the Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher, more than doubling all previous records put together; but perhaps the most interesting information is of the breeding of the Hainan Blue Flycatcher in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, where there were two birds in residence during the summer. One pair bred and produced at least three fledged young. The second pair may or may not have bred. Before 1963 there was only one record.

There were two records of the Chestnut-breasted Rock-Thrush — third and fourth Colony records. There were reports of at least 12 different Pale Thrushes and two Brown Thrushes — the latter a very uncommon bird in Hong Kong. We are indebted to our Chairman for the only records of the Blackbird for the year — all from the slightly unlikely venue of Government House garden. There is one report of a White's Thrush. Only small numbers of Thrushes appeared in the second half of the year and those that did were late.

Pipits do not appear to have been as common this year, especially in the latter half, as previously. There are only seven records of the Chinese Pipit and the first Autumn record of the Indian Tree-Pipit was 24th October. It certainly appears to have been less common and later this year than usual. There are only two reports of the Red-throated Pipit for the entire year. The 1962 report says "widespread reports to 6th May --- no Autumn reports received". The extreme drought of 1963 cannot have had any effect on the latter months of 1962 or indeed the early months of 1963. There are only two reports of Water-Pipits, but the Upland Pipit has been recorded from suitable habitats in most months of the year.

It was an exceptional year for the Tristram's Bunting and the winter of 1962/63 provided a minimum of 15 birds compared with a minimum of six birds recorded from the Colony previously. There were no reports in the latter half of the year when numbers of any species of Bunting were below average. There were, however, reports of male and female Chestnut Buntings at Ping Shan and together with 1961/62 records the status of this species must be changed from "vagrant" to "occasional winter visitor and passage migrant". There are only a few records of the Yellow-breasted Bunting. Its status in the Check List is shown as "... abundant in the Autumn ..." and there is only one record of the Grey-headed Bunting in the second half of the year. This is normally a common bird.

A flock of 15 to 20 Red Avadavats were seen at the Mai Po Marshes in February. This is the largest number that has ever been recorded in the Colony and is also the seventh Colony record. There are two records of the White-backed Munia, a bird that was formerly common, but has seldom been seen since the war. Two Three-coloured Munias were seen on Lantao on 30th March. These are the second and third Colony records for this sub-species.

Discussion

From the above and the Systematic List it will be seen that Thrushes, Pipits (and possibly Wagtails) and Buntings were very scarce in the latter half of 1963. There are two possible reasons for this — perhaps both bearing their share of responsibility. The first is purely local and is the drought in the Colony from the Autumn of 1962 which lasted throughout 1963. The second and more alarming possibility is that the drought, which was fairly general in South East Asia, extended far enough North to affect the breeding areas of our winter visitors. Few details of the weather further North are available nor do we know with any certainty where are the breeding areas of our winter populations. It is to be hoped that the winter of 1964/5 will produce more normal numbers of these species, since a low population again next winter will probably mean that the breeding stocks have been seriously affected by conditions in the breeding area.

It is however, probably unnecessary to take too gloomy a view since it is known that a species not otherwise threatened can recover from a natural disaster in two to five years.

**SYSTEMATIC LIST
OF BIRDS REPORTED IN HONG KONG
DURING 1963**

2. Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

2 on 14 Dec. (JLCB) and at least 6 on 29 Dec. (JRLC), both in Deep Bay, are the only records.

4. Little Grebe *Podiceps ruficollis*

Tai Lam Chung reservoir remains the stronghold with 27 Apr. and 11 Nov. the latest Spring and earliest Autumn dates (JRLC). A bird on 1 Jan. — probably immature — at Pak Tam is of interest (EDW), as are 2 at Aberdeen Reservoir on 19 Feb. (JLCB). This last is thought to be the first report from the Island.

5. Spotted-billed Pelican *Pelecanus roseus*

There are only three records:— 19 in Deep Bay on 24 Mar. (EDW), 1 at Mai Po on 15 Apr. (EDW, JLCB) and 2 at Ping Shan on 26 Dec. (Society Outing).

6. Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

A total of eight reports from Tai Lam Chung Reservoir, Deep Bay, Stonecutters Island and outer islands. 3 Mar. (FOPH) and 11 Nov. (JRLC) are the last Spring and earliest Autumn dates for the year, both from Tai Lam Chung Reservoir.

10. Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*

Seen regularly at Mai Po from 21 Apr. (JMR) to 19 Sep. (EDW). A probable immature by a pond at Brick Hill on the South side of the Island 19 and 20 Oct. (C & ED) is probably the second record for the Island and is a new late date for the colony.

11. Chestnut Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*

1 in a pinewood at Ho Chung on 4 Apr. (EDW) is the only report for the year. It is a new early date for the colony.

14. Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

One at Luen Tak on 11 Aug. and one at Mai Po on 18 Aug. (EDW) are the only records for the year.

15. Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*

Bred in large numbers at Sha Tau Kok where there were about a hundred young on 5 August (EDW). Seen at Mai Po almost throughout the year although, as is usual, commoner in Summer. A bird over the Hong Kong car ferry terminal on 15 September (EDW) is of interest as it is rarely reported from the Island.

16. Cattle Egret *Ardeola ibis*

Colonised the Sha Tau Kok egretty for the first time this year, with at least 6 nests on 25 May (JRLC) and 6 or 7 juveniles on 5 August (EDW). Seen in Mai Po area from 7 April to 30 August.

17. Little Green Heron *Butorides striatus*

One at Lok Ma Chau on 12 September (JLCB), one at Mong Tseng on 29 September (JMR), one at Tai Lam Chung Reservoir, where the catchment stream enters, on 22 September (JRLC) and another in the same place on 31 December (JLCB). The last is only the third winter record.

18. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Nesting in the Sha Tau Kok egretty on 25 May (JRLC) and about 30 young seen there on 5 August (EDW). Remains very common in the Deep Bay area.

20. Swinhoe's Egret *Egretta eulophotes*

Apparently bred at Sha Tau Kok egretty where there were a few young birds on 5 August (EDW). There is only one other report — a bird at Mai Po on 2 June (FOPH).

21. Reef Egret *Egretta sacra*

All reports are dark phase birds. A bird on one of the feeder streams to Jubilee Reservoir on 20 April (EDW) is of interest.

22. Great Egret *Egretta alba*

Reported in February, March, April, October, November and December all from Deep Bay area. 22 on 13 October at Mai Po (FOPH) is the largest number for the year.

23. Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

All reports are from the Deep Bay area. There were over 50 at the mouth of the Shum Chun River on 2 January (SPMK). 3 at Mai Po on 23 June (FOPH, JLCB) is an unusual date.

24. Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Reported on 28 April (Society Outing) and 5 May (JLCB) in the Spring. The last is a new late date. An out of season bird on 3 June (EDW) is the first to be recorded in the Summer. Autumn reports are 1 on 30 August (EDW), 2 on 13 October (EDW, FOPH) and 3 on 20 October (FOPH). All reports are from the Mai Po Marshes.

25. Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

One at Mai Po on 16 December (JLCB).

26. White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephala*

Two at Ping Shan on 26 December (Society Outing).

29. **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*
Up to 40 at Tai Lam Chung Reservoir on 10 February (EDW).
30. **Yellow-nib Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha*
Single birds at San Tin on 10 February, 21 October and 29 December (JAO per EDW).
31. **Falcated Teal** *Anas falcata*
6 on 19 September (EDW, JNH) 3 on 13 October (EDW) at Mai Po and a female at San Tin on 20 October (JAO per EDW) are the only reports.
32. **Teal** *Anas crecca*
A few reports in each month up to 7 April (SPMK, JLCB, JAO per EDW). Commoner during the late Autumn from 16 September and particularly from 10 October to 3 November (JAO per EDW).
34. **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*
Two males, one at Sheung Shui on 6 October and the other at San Tin on 13 October are the only confirmed reports (JAO per EDW).
35. **Wigeon** *Anas penelope*
Mai Po, 9 on 3 November (EDW). Mong Tseng c.10 on 26 December (Society Outing).
37. **Shoveller** *Spatula clypeata*
A male shot at Lok Ma Chau on 8 December (JAO per EDW) is the only report. This is the fourth colony record.
48. **Black-eared Kite** *Milvus migrans*
Common and widespread. At least 3 nests on Stonecutters Island and 1 at Shouson Hill. c. 500 over Stonecutters on 7 March.
50. **Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*
Widespread in Winter. Extreme dates 30 March (JMR) and 13 October (EDW, FOPH).
52. **Sparrow-hawk** *Accipiter nisus*
Widespread in Winter. Extreme dates 14 April (EDW) and 22 September (FOPH).
56. **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*
A pair near Ping Shan on 29 December (JRLC).
57. **Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*
One in area Mai Po — Mong Tseng 3-14 March (JLCB, JNH, SPMK, EDW). One in same area 24 November — 26 December (JLCB, EDW).
59. **Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*
Two at Mai Po on 13 March (SPMK, JNH, EDW).
60. **Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraetus fasciatus*
Two at Kowloon Peak on 23 March and one at High West on 16 July (JLCB). Two at Cape Collinson on 17 July (C & ED). Two over Ho Chung Valley on 9 October (JRLC) and two at the same place on 8 December (Society Outing).
62. **White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Widespread throughout the year. The old nest site near Cape Collinson was deserted on 25 January (JLCB), but one or two birds were perched by it on 16 March (JNH). A pair were regularly in the area in October, November and December. A nest was discovered on 5 December and contained at least 2 eggs on 20 December (C & ED). This nest is closer to the point of Cape Collinson than the previous nest. A pair of immatures have taken up a territory at Tai Tam Intermediate Reservoir, and have been seen intermittently from 5 October — 25 December (FOPH, JRLC). A third immature has tried to join up with the pair but is repeatedly driven off (FOPH).
63. **Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle** *Butastur indicus*
Two birds frequented the Ping Shan area from 3 February to 19 March (SPMK, JLCB, EDW, JNH).
65. (a). **Marsh Harrier** *Circus a. aeruginosus*
A female frequented the Mai Po area from 2 January to 15 April (SPMK, EDW, JLCB) and on 26 January there was a second bird (SPMK). The first Autumn report was on 1 October and there was a female on 2 October and 3 November, all at Mai Po (EDW, FOPH).
67. **Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*
All records are from Mai Po/Ping Shan. Single females on 1 March and 7 April and a pair on 13 March (SPMK, EDW, JLCB) and single females on 13 October and 3 November (EDW, FOPH); a male on 26 December (Society Outing).
70. **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*
There are a few reports for the early months of the year. There were one or two at Mai Po from 15 April to 28 April (JLCB, EDW) and one at Tai Po on 4 May (SPMK), a late date. The first autumn bird was reported from Mai Po on 1 October (EDW) and they were recorded regularly in the Deep Bay area from then on to the end of the year. The largest number of the year (at least three) were seen here on 29 December (JRLC).

72. **Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*
There is only one record, 14 April in the Ho Chung Valley (EDW).
73. **Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*
Over thirty reports covering every month except February. A Peregrine roosted on the China Bank building in April, August and September. A pair appear to have been based on the island for most of the summer.
77. **Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*
Widespread winter records with the last Spring report on 25 April (SPMK), a new late date, and the first Autumn report on 29 September (JRLC).
78. **Chinese Francolin** *Francolinus pintadeanus*
Calling heard from many parts of the Colony from April to August. Shooting circles report a good year (JAO per EDW).
79. **Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*
A fair number of reports up to 12 April in the Spring (EDW, JAO per EDW). A bird on 11 November (EDW, JLCB) is the only Autumn record.
81. **Barred Button-quail** *Turnix suscitator*
One on 7 January at High West (JLCB), one on 14 March and another on 17 November at Sheung Shui (JAO per EDW).
85. **Banded Rail** *Rallus striatus*
Recorded from the Deep Bay marshes on 26 January and 14 March (SPMK), 23 June (JLCB) and 8 September (EDW).
88. **Crimson-legged Crake** *Amaurornis akool*
One in the Ho Chung Valley on 1 January (JLCB) and 12 January (EDW). One or both of a pair in the same place as last year (near the road between Fanling and Sek Kong) between 3 April and 7 May (SPMK). One near the waterfall on route TWISK on 3 June (EDW).
89. **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*
Various reports from most parts of the Colony, but NOT common this year. No reports between 9 June and 6 October, which may or may not be significant.
90. **Moorhen** *Gallinola chloropus*
Only two reports, both from LTV, — 3 February (SPMK) and 10 March (JLCB).
92. **Coot** *Fulica atra*
One at Lok Ma Chau on 1 December (JAO per EDW) and one in the Ho Chung valley on 12 December (EDW) are the only reports.

94. **Painted Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*
Reported from 5 January to 17 March and from 16 October to 3 November (JAO per EDW, JLCB).
96. **Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*
Four at Ping Shan on 3 February is the only record (EDW, SPMK, JLCB).
97. **Grey-headed Lapwing** *Microsarcops cinereus*
Three at San Tin on 13 October (JAO per EDW).
99. **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*
Recorded in the Spring at Ho Chung on 13 March (6) and 5 April (20+) (JMR), from the Deep Bay marshes from 14 March to 15 April and from Lan Tao on 1 April (JMR). Also at Three Fathom Cove on 17 March (Society Outing). In the autumn in Deep Bay marshes from 11 August — 11 November, with 23 at Lok Ma Chau on 13 October and 10 at Mai Po on the same day, the largest number (FOPH).
100. **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*
Regular reports from the Deep Bay marshes up till 24 April. Ten at Tung Chung on Lantao on 17 February are of interest (JLCB). In the Autumn reported from 19 September onwards. c. 154 on 13 October at Mai Po (FOPH) is a large number for so early in the season.
101. **Greater Sand-plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii*
All reports are from the Mai Po marshes. Spring reports are from 7 April to 5 May and Autumn reports from 5 August to 20 October. The lack of winter records is interesting but may result from the lack of observers rather than lack of birds. c. 240 on 20 October (FOPH) appears to be the largest number yet recorded in the Colony.
102. **Mongolian Sand-plover** *Charadrius mongolus*
All reports are from the Mai Po marshes. Spring dates are from 11 April to 5 May with c. 20 on 15 April (JLCB) a comparatively large number. Autumn dates are from 5 August (EDW) to 13 October. The former is the earliest autumn record for the Colony.
104. **Grey Plover** *Charadrius squatarola*
All reports are from the Mai Po marshes. Up to three birds were seen in the Spring from 15 to 28 April and single birds from 1 — 12 October in the Autumn. Twelve on 20 October (FOPH) is the largest number and latest date for the year, but is not exceptional.
105. **Asiatic Golden Plover** *Charadrius dominicus*
The few reports all from Mai Po, can be itemised: 24 March — 5 (EDW): 16 April — 2 (SPMK): 18 August — 1 (EDW): 11 September and 2 October — 1 (JLCB). 18 August is the earliest date so far recorded for the Autumn passage.

106. **Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*
 Reports of up to four birds at Mai Po from 24 April to 5 May (EDW, JLCB, SPMK).
- 107/109. **Snipe** *Capella sp*
 Recorded up to 22 April in Spring and from 2 October in Autumn.
112. **Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*
 Recorded up to 7 April (REH) in Spring and from 9 September (JLCB) in Autumn.
113. **Curlew** *Numenius arquata*
 Only three reports, all from Mai Po: two on 28 April (Society Outing): five on 3 June (EDW): nine on 30 August (JLCB).
115. **Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*
 All reports are from the Mai Po marshes. Spring reports are from 15 April (c. 20 birds) (EDW) to 5 May (JLCB, EDW) and Autumn reports from 30 August to 13 October (EDW). On 30 August some 50 plus birds were seen (EDW, JRLC) and this appears to be as many as have ever been recorded in the Colony.
118. **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*
 One at Mai Po on 30 March (SPMK).
119. **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*
 Recorded in the Ho Chung valley (3) on 17 March (REH, JMR) and on 23 March (1) (JM & CR) also at Ham Tin (South Lantau) on 1 April (JMR). The only autumn records are one at Mai Po on 1 October (EDW) and six at Mong Tseng on the same day (JMR).
120. **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*
 All records are from the Deep Bay marshes. During the Spring passage up to ten birds were seen on various dates from 1 March to 15 April. The Autumn passage was observed from 5 August to 20 October, again with a maximum of about ten birds.
121. **Common Sandpiper** *Tringa hypoleucos*
 Recorded throughout the year from suitable habitats from all parts of the Colony.
122. **Redshank** *Tringa totanus*
 All records are from the Deep Bay marshes. The Spring passage was recorded from 1 March to 19 May with maximum numbers of c. 60 on 24 April (JLCB). The Autumn passage was recorded from 5 August to 13 October with maximum numbers of c. 30 on 18 August (EDW). There is one winter record, 7 — 10 birds seen at Mai Po on 17 February (JAO per EDW).

123. **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*
 All records are from the Deep Bay marshes. The only records are during the Spring from 1 March to 5 May, with a maximum of 11 at Lok Ma Chau on 7 April (EDW) and 2 others in the same area on the same day (SPMK).
124. **Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
 All records are from the Deep Bay marshes. Spring records are 3 on 15 April and 1 on 19 May (EDW). Autumn records are for small numbers from 30 August to 13 October (EDW, JLCB, FOPH).
125. **Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
 All records are from the Deep Bay marshes. In the Spring recorded (one bird) only on 7 April (EDW, JLCB, SPMK). Autumn records are on 1, 13 and 20 October with a maximum of c. 10 (EDW, FOPH).
126. **Grey-rumped Sandpiper** *Tringa brevipes*
 Apart from an interesting report of one near Sai Kung on 22 April (EJB) all reports are from the Mai Po marshes. The Spring passage was recorded from 28 April to 19 May, with a maximum of at least 20 on the latter date (SPMK, EDW). In the Autumn it was only recorded on 30 August (2) and 8 September (about 10) (EDW).
127. **Terek Sandpiper** *Tringa terek*
 All reports are from the Mai Po marshes. The Spring passage was recorded in smallish numbers from 26 April to 2 June and the Autumn passage from 5 August to 8 September, also in small numbers.
128. **Knot** *Calidris canutus*
 There is only one record — one at Mai Po on 28 April in nearly full summer plumage (Society Outing). This is a new early date for the Colony.
130. **Eastern Little Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*
 All records are from the Deep Bay marshes. The Spring passage was observed from 30 March to 19 May with a maximum of c. 20 on 26 April (EDW). The Autumn passage was observed from 10 August to 13 October with never more than 2 birds at once (EDW).
132. **Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*
 There are only two records. Three at Mai Po on 9 January (SPMK) and two at Lok Ma Chau on 9 September (JLCB).
133. **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata*
 There is only one record — a single bird at Mai Po on 11 September (JLCB).

134. **Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*
All reports are from the Deep Bay marshes. In the first half of the year seen in smallish numbers up to 6 May, and first noted in the Autumn on 19 August.
135. **Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*
All records are from Mai Po. In the Spring there were c. 10 on 26 April (EDW) and 4 or 5 on 28 April (SPMK). In the Autumn there is only one record, a single bird on 10 August (EDW).
136. **Sanderling** *Crocethia alba*
All records are from Mai Po or Lok Ma Chau. Seen in the Spring in small numbers from 24 March to 24 April and in the Autumn from 10 August to 13 October. The record for 24 March (4 birds) (EDW) is a new early date for the Colony.
140. **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*
The only record is a flock of c. 40 four miles East of Waglan lighthouse on 23 September (HMS Albion per JNH).
141. **Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*
There is only one record — three at San Tin on 9 September (JLCB).
143. **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*
There are three records, all during the Spring passage. One in full plumage at Sheung Shui on 14 March (JAO per EDW). This is a new early date, by nearly four weeks, for the Spring passage. Two were seen at Mai Po on 7 April (EDW) and seven near Sai Kung on 22 April (EJB).
144. **Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*
Reported in the early part of the year in February and March from Deep Bay and at sea. In the latter part of the year reported throughout December from the Western end of the harbour and at sea. Both the Vega Herring Gull (144a — *L.a. vegae*) and the Mongolian Herring Gull (144b — *L.a. mongolicus*) have been recorded but most reports are, inevitably, not sub-specific.
148. **Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*
Only reported from Deep Bay from 14 December to the end of the year, with various estimates as to numbers of up to a hundred (EDW, JLCB, JRLC).
150. **White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucoptera*
Only two records (both from JLCB). One at Mai Po on 24 April and three at San Tin/Lok Ma Chau on 9 September. The first is a new early date for the Colony.

151. **Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*
Again only two records (both from JLCB). c. 20 at San Tin/Lok Ma Chau on 9 September and one at Lok Ma Chau on 12 Sept.
152. **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica*
All reports are from the Mai Po marshes. In the Spring it was seen from 15 April to 5 May. A single bird was seen on 16 June (EDW) and another on 5 July (JRLC). These are the first ever Summer records and may refer to a straggler. In the Autumn it was recorded only on 8 September (4 birds) (EDW) and 19 September (1 bird) (EDW, JNH).
154. **Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana*
Two on 9 September at San Tin/Lok Ma Chau (JLCB) is the only record.
155. **Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*
All records are from the Mai Po marshes. In the Spring seen from 24 April to 4 May only in small numbers, with the exception of c. 40 seen on 28 April (Society Outing); this is the largest number yet seen during the Spring passage. In the Autumn seen in ones and twos from 18 August (EDW) to 2 October. The former date is the earliest yet for the Autumn passage.
158. **Rufous Turtle-dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*
There are only three records, all from the Island in the Spring. One at Shouson Hill on 12 March, one in the University area on 29 March and one at Pokfulam on 14 April (JLCB).
159. **Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*
Common and widespread resident.
161. **Rose-ringed Paroquet** *Psittacula krameri*
Remains established on Hong Kong Island. It has now established itself on Mong Tseng peninsula in the New Territories where small numbers have been seen on a number of occasions (JRLC, JMR).
162. **Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*
One in Mai Po wood on 30 October (C & ED) is the only record. This is a late date for the Colony.
164. **Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*
One was heard calling fairly regularly in the Beas Stables area from 1 April to 29 June (SPMK).
166. **Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus*
One on 15 January and again on 2 March at Kam Tsin (SPMK) are additions to the few Winter records for the Colony. During the Spring was seen or heard during April, May and June in the North and West of the New Territories. Autumn reports (all of hepatic birds) are two in Mai Po wood on 30 August (EDW, FOPH) and one in the same place on 29 September (FOPH).

169. **Koel** *Eudynamis scolopacea*
Widespread reports in Spring, Summer and Autumn, including a fair number of reports from the Island. Calling was recorded regularly from 1 March to early July, and thence occasionally to August (MEMB, JLCB, JRLC). The normal period for calling has been described as "February to April".
170. **Crow-pheasant** *Centropus sinensis*
Widespread reports during every month of the year. A fledgling picked up dead at Cape Collinson on 7 July (FOPH) adds to our scanty knowledge of the breeding season of this species.
171. **Lesser Crow-pheasant** *Centropus bengalensis*
Widespread reports, but not so common as the previous species.
172. **Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides*
One in the Gough Hill Road/Severn Road area from 10 January to 17 February (MEMB) appears to be the first record from the Island. Otherwise all reports except one are from the LTV on 3 February, 21 February and 19 May. The other New Territories report is of a bird at Kam Tsin on 22 March (SPMK).
174. **Collared Scops Owl** *Otus bakkamoena*
Reported regularly from Pokfulam and The Peak area of the Island from March to July, and is presumed to have bred. Also reported from the LTV (where it bred) and Tai Po Kau.
179. **Japanese Nightjar** *Caprimulgus indicus*
A pair at Cheung Sha, on Lantau, on 31 March is the only record (JMR).
180. **Savanna Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis*
Recorded from the New Territories from February to March (SPMK) and on the Island in November and December (JLCB, MEMB).
181. **Large White-rumped Swift** *Apus pacificus*
Two birds reported on 3 January (The Peak) and again on 1 February (Tin Fu Tsui) (JLCB), are the only winter records. Thereafter widespread reports from 22 March to 6 July of up to c. 70 birds. The later reports are mostly from the summit of Tai Mo Shan.
182. **House Swift** *Apus affinis*
Widespread. Up to c. 30 birds could be seen from May to July in Nathan Road, Kowloon (JRLC), but then largely disappeared, reappearing briefly on 30 October (JRLC) and 3 November (JLCB). Otherwise reports are of small numbers of birds. It seems that observers have either missed this bird or considered it too common to report, as its status is not properly reflected by the small number of reports received.
183. **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*
Reported from the Ping Shan area on 13 March (JLCB), and 14 March (SPMK) and 27 October and 10 November (2) (JMR).
185. **Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*
Common and widespread.
186. **White-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*
Common and widespread.
187. **Black-capped Kingfisher** *Halcyon pileata*
Seen regularly in January, February, March and April and from 13 September (JLCB) in Autumn. The only summer reports are of two birds at Jubilee Reservoir on 26 June (REH) and a single bird at the same place on 17 July (JLCB).
189. **Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomas orientalis*
No records for the Spring passage. In the Autumn seen regularly from 15 September (EDW), which is a new early date, to 13 October (JLCB) in ones and twos.
191. **Great Barbet** *Megalaima virens*
Reported from the LTV, the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, the Ho Chung Valley and Three Fathom Cove. There are no reports from the Island. A pair bred in the LTV and were seen feeding young during July (RWA).
194. **Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*
One at Tung Chung on Lantau Island on 17 February (JLCB). A possible at Ping Shan on 11 November (JLCB).
195. **Oriental Skylark** *Alauda galgula*
A single bird in the Ho Chung Valley on 6 January (JMR) is the only record for the year.
196. **Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
Widespread in Summer, particularly in the area of the Deep Bay Marshes. Bred on Hay Ling Chau Island and Mount Davis.
198. **House Martin** *Delichon urbica*
In Spring recorded from Deep Bay Marshes from 24 February to 12 April in small numbers and from Mount Gough on 14 March (MEMB). There is only one Autumn record — 6 or 7 including one albino at Ping Shan on 8 September (JLCB).
201. **Rufous-backed Shrike** *Lanius schach*
Common and widespread. A pair nested in the University Area in May and the young had flown, probably recently, on 19 July (JLCB). A male and female with a recently fledged young bird were seen on Tai Mo Shan on 3 June (EDW). The Dusky variety remains common, but it is difficult to assess the proportion of Dusky to normal birds.

202. Bull-headed Shrike*Lanius bucephalus*

One at Kam Tsin on 13 January and another (or the same bird) on 2 March (SPMK). One in University Area on 9 April (JLCB). Taking a conservative view and regarding the Kam Tsin reports as referring to the same bird these are the fourth and fifth Colony records. Of these five records three are from the University Area (JLCB) in 1960, 1962 and 1963.

203. (b). Japanese Brown Shrike*Lanius cristatus superciliosus*

The Government House bird (see 1962 report) was seen regularly from the beginning of the year to 21 April (EDW). The only other record in the first half of the year was a single bird at Mong Tseng on 3 February (JLCB, EDW). The first Autumn bird was seen at Lok Ma Chau on 8 September (FOPH). It was still there the next day and there was a second bird in Mai Po wood (JLCB). The Government House bird did not return until 2 November but was seen regularly from then till the end of the year.

203 (c). Phillipine Brown Shrike*Lanius cristatus lucionensis*

The Kowloon Tong bird (see 1962 report) was seen regularly from the beginning of the year to 27 April (EJB). Reports during the Spring passage are 2 May (Aberdeen Reservoir), 19 May (Big Wave Bay) and 24 May (Pokfulam) (JLCB). During the Autumn passage one was reported from Mai Po on 8 September (FOPH). The Kowloon Tong bird returned (to winter?) on 30 November and was seen again on 7 December (EJB).

204. Black-naped Oriole*Oriolus chinensis*

First reported on 12 April from Beas Stables, seen regularly in the area, and probably nested in the area of Fanling Golf Course (SPMK). A pair nested near Tai Po Police Station (per MEMB), and there were scattered reports of single birds from various parts of the New Territories. On the Island a pair bred in Victoria Barracks area and the adults with three immatures were seen in July and August (C & ED). There are encouraging reports of birds in other parts of the Island, notably the University Area and May Road. Possibly reports in the 1962 Report were over-pessimistic. The last report for the year was on 2 October.

205. Black Drongo*Dicrurus macrocercus*

Many reports from all over the Colony including many of the islands and in every month of the year except March and November although Summer reports are more frequent. Stonecutters Island remains the stronghold with at least 30 birds in May (JRLC). As mentioned in last year's report this species appears to be on the increase.

206 (a). Ashy Drongo*Dicrurus leucophaeus salangensis*

Two or three at Severn Road, The Peak, on 22 December (MEMB).

207. Hair-crested Drongo*Dicrurus hottentottus*

Many reports from all over the Colony from 24 February (JMR) to 5 October (JLCB). A pair were building a nest in the LTV on 26 April (FOPH). A pair, and possibly three pairs, bred at Shouson Hill, with young being fed out of the nest on 30 June (JLCB). Immature birds were seen with adults on 28 July at Severn Road, the Peak (MEMB) and 29 September in the Mong Tseng peninsula (JRLC).

208. Chinese Starling*Sturnus sinensis*

Winter records in the early part of the year come from Kowloon Tong where there were four on 3 January, six or seven on 19 January and one male on 27 January (EJB). The main body of reports cover the Summer months from 1 April (JLCB) to 2 October (JLCB) from widely separated parts of the Colony, with maximum numbers of c. 15 at Mai Po Wood on 19 September (EDW, JNH) and 100+ at Mong Tseng on 29 September (JMR). There were three nests with young at Castle Peak on 6 July (JLCB). Finally there were three more Winter reports: 25+ at Mong Tseng on 28 October (JMR), four at Kowloon Tong on 7 December and four or five on Cheung Chau Island on 31 December (EJB). The status in the Check List of "Summer Visitor with occasional Winter records" would therefore seem to be confirmed by experience in 1963. The 1961 and 1962 reports discuss this question.

209. Silky Starling*Sturnus sericeus*

There are only two records: 15+ at Ho Chung on 17 March (JMR) and eight birds on the Mong Tseng peninsula on 24 November (JLCB).

210. Grey Starling*Sturnus cineraceus*

There are three reports from the early part of the year: 30+ birds at Mong Tseng on 20 January (JMR), several small flocks at the same place on 3 February and several small flocks at Lok Ma Chau on 1 March (SPMK), who reports that he has seen them there for three years running at about the same time of year. There are numerous reports in the latter half of the year following the first sighting on 11 November of three or four birds at Ping Shan (Society Outing). Maximum numbers of 50+ were recorded from the Mong Tseng Peninsula on 26 December (Society Outing) and 29 December (JRLC).

211. Black-necked Starling*Sturnus nigricollis*

Recorded from widely scattered parts of the New Territories in most months of the year. Maximum numbers of 32 were seen at Ping Shan on 11 November (Society Outing). Breeding was established at Ping Shan on 3 June and Pat Heung Plain on 14 July (JLCB).

212. Common Mynah*Acridotheres tristis*

Resident in the Mong Tseng/Ping Shan area. Maximum numbers of 15+ seen at Mong Tseng on 29 September (JMR).

213. **Crested Mynah** *Acridotheres cristatellus*
Common and widespread resident.
214. **Jay** *Garulus glandarius*
Three records: one in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 6 January; two at Tai Mong Tsai on 24 February; three (possibly four) near Starling Inlet on 3 November (JLCB).
215. **Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*
The Island, generally, and Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve are the main centres for this species.
216. **Magpie** *Pica pica*
Common and widespread resident.
217. **Treepie** *Crypsirina formosae*
The Winter of 1963/64 has been an invasion year, but the record of the last four years is in sharp distinction to the status given in the Check List of "occasional visitor ... the latest report is ... March 50". Based on these four years — which may of course be exceptional, as this year certainly is — the status would read "Uncommon winter visitor with occasional records during the Spring migration". This year's records are:— Ho Chung Valley, two on 12 December (EDW); LTV, three on 15 December (EDW); Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, six to eight on 15 December (CMC, JRLC); Starling Inlet, ten + on 22 December (JLCB, FOPH).
219. **Jungle Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*
Recorded in all months of the year from most parts of the Colony. "At least thirty" above Tai Tam Harbour on 11 December (JRLC) appears to be the largest gathering yet observed in the Colony.
220. **Collared Crow** *Corvus torquatus*
Recorded in ones and twos (once three) in most months of the year, with the majority of records from the area of the Deep Bay Marshes and the Mong Tseng peninsula.
221. **Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina melaschistos*
One at Sek Kong on 23 January (SPMK). One in the LTV on 10 March and one in the University Area on 4 April and 9 April (JLCB). One at The Peak on 30 December (JLCB).
223. **Ashy Minivet** *Pericrocotus divaricatus*
Eight reports from 31 March to 12 April, with a maximum of five birds at South Bay on 7 April.

225. **Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*
There are nearly as many records this year as there have been in all previous years together. A female was in the LTV on 26 January and a male and a female at Pak Tam Chung on 10 February (REH, JMR). On 21 February there were 3 or 4 females in the LTV, in a different wood to the previous record (SPMK). On 17 March an immature male was at Three Fathom Cove (Society Outing). Finally there was a single bird at Little Sai Wan on 5 December (C & ED).
226. **Chestnut Bulbul** *Microscelis flavalus*
Following the reports of small numbers in the early winter recorded in the 1962 Report, large numbers of this irruption species were reported in the early months of 1963. Reports come from all over the Colony from the beginning of the year to 12 March. The largest numbers were c. 35 on 3 February in the LTV (JLCB, EDW), but there are three other reports of c. 20.
227. **White-headed Black Bulbul** *Microscelis madagascariensis*
The single bird recorded on the last day of 1962 (see 1962 Report) was the precursor of an irruption similar to, but apparently even larger than, that of the previous species. Reports come from most areas of the New Territories and from the Island from 10 February to 10 April with c. 60 at The Peak on 3 April (MEMB), the largest number recorded.
228. **Crested Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*
Common and widespread resident.
229. **Chinese Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis*
Abundant and widespread resident.
230. **Red-Vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus aurigaster*
Common and widespread resident.
234. **Black-faced Laughing-thrush** *Garrulax perspicillatus*
Common and widespread resident.
235. **Black-throated Laughing-thrush** *Garrulax chinensis*
All reports are from the Island where it was recorded in small numbers from a wide number of areas. Most reports are for the Spring and early Summer, but breeding has still not yet been proved.
236. **Hwamei** *Garrulax canorus*
Most of the reports come from Hong Kong Island, with scattered records from the New Territories.
- 4x. **Chinese Babax** *Babax lanceolatus*
Six were seen near the summit of Tai Mo Shan on 4 August (REH, JLCB). This is the fourth Colony record.

238. **Pekin Robin** *Leiothrix lutea*
One in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 6 January and another near Three Fathom Cove on 13 January (JLCB).
240. **Ince's Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi*
One female or immature male at Pokfulam on 1 January (JLCB). One female at Mai Po on 8 September (FOPH). One female at Three Fathom Cove on 21 October (Society Outing).
242. **Grey-headed Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*
The Ho Chung bird (see 1962 Report) was seen regularly up to 10 March (REH) and there were two birds on 13 January (JMR). Another bird was seen on the Mong Tseng Peninsula on 3 February (JLCB), and yet another bird in the She Shan wood in the LTV on 10 March (JLCB) where four of the first five Colony records were made. The status of this bird must now be changed from "Vagrant" to "Occasional Visitor". Indeed if the experience of the past two years is continued it will be "Regular Winter and Spring visitor in small numbers".
243. **Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher** *Hypothymis azurea*
There are six records for the year, more than doubling all previous records put together. One male was in residence in the Ho Chung Wood from 5 January to 17 March (REH, JMR). Another bird was seen at Pak Tam Chung on 10 February and yet another in Tai Wan wood on 17 March (REH). A pair, one male and one female, were seen at Ho Chung on 8 December (Society Outing) and one bird was still present on 17 December (C & ED). Finally there was a female at the Lookout, Tai Po Kau on 28 December (JLCB).
244. **Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa latirostris*
Many winter reports from all over the Colony. The last Spring report was on 26 May (JLCB), nearly a month later than any previous record, and the first Autumn date was 11 September (MEMB).
245. **Grey-spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa griseisticta*
A bird in the LTV on 26 April (FOPH) and another near The Peak on 22 September (MEMB) are the only records. The latter is a new early date for Autumn migrants.
247. **Verditer Flycatcher** *Muscicapa thalassina*
There are a total of nine records for this winter visitor. Pride of place must again go to the Ho Chung Wood, which had a resident male from 6 January to 9 March and a female on 20 January and 17 March. The following December a male was seen again on 8 and 12 December. The other records are from the Island (near The Peak, 4 January: Shouson Hill, 24 March: University Area, 22 December) and scattered in the New Territories (Fanling 3 February: Tai Lam, 3 March: Tai Po Kau, 18 December).

248. **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa parva*
Widespread reports from most parts of the Colony. The latest Spring date was 8 April (SPMK) and the earliest in the Autumn was 20 September (MEMB).
249. **Robin Flycatcher** *Muscicapa mugimaki*
There are a total of four records: Two females or immature males at Mong Tseng on 24 November (JLCB, FOPH): two females in Ho Chung Wood on 8 December (Society Outing) (one still there on 12 December EDW).
251. **Tricolour Flycatcher** *Muscicapa zanthopygia*
All reports are from the Autumn passage. There were females in Mai Po Wood on 30 August, 12 September and 2 October (JLCB), presumably all different birds and a male in the same place on 15 September (JNH, EDW, MEMB). The only other report is of a female near The Peak on 13 September (MEMB).
252. **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** *Niltava hainana*
Before 1963 this bird was a "Vagrant" included in the Check-List by virtue of its only recorded appearance at Sek Kong on 24 September 58. 1963 has produced seven more records and established it firmly among those birds that have bred here. In brief on 16 June (JLCB) found a pair in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve just beyond the seed beds and a single male about four hundred yards short of them. On 23 June (JLCB and FOPH) saw a female in the same place as the single male seen previously exchanging song with a bird not seen, and, in addition, the male beyond the seed beds. On the same day (REH) saw a male and a female in both localities. On 30 June REH and FOPH saw the male beyond the seed beds, but no female. On 14 July JLCB and REH saw the pair beyond the seed beds feeding at least three young who had just left the nest, one of these young being a male. On 21 July REH saw an adult, and the final sighting was an adult male by JLCB on 1 September. In summary there were two pairs of Hainan Blue Flycatchers in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve in late June. One pair bred and produced at least three fledged young. The second pair may or may not have bred. Those who know the Forestry Reserve at this point and its very heavy vegetation — the only place in Hong Kong approaching jungle — will realise that the question must remain open. The record stands of proven breeding by one pair and a total of seven birds of this species seen in 1963.
253. **Blue and White Flycatcher** *Cyanoptila cyanomelana*
There is only one record — a female seen in the Ho Chung Valley on 8 December (Society Outing).

254. **Chinese Bush Warbler** *Cettia diphone*
 There are five records. One at Pokfulam on 2 January (JLCB). One in the LTV in Tai Om Wood on 16 January (SPMK). One in Gough Hill Road, The Peak on 19 January, and another in exactly the same place on 14 December (MEMB). Another on 14 December at Mong Tseng (JLCB).
256. **Short-tailed Bush Warbler** *Cettia squameiceps*
 There are four records. One in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 6 January. One at Ho Chung on 20 January. One in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 28 December. One at Peel Rise (The Peak) on 30 December (JLCB).
259. **Von Schrenk's Reed-warbler** *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*
 Full and satisfactory details of one at Shung Shui on 23 Nov. (JLCB).
260. **Great Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*
 All records are from the Autumn passage, and all except one from the Mai Po marshes. In detail these are: 11 September, one (JLCB); 19 September, two (EDW); 2 October, four (JLCB, FOPH); 1 October, one (JLCB). The only other record is of two birds at Telegraph Bay on 16 October (JLCB). This appears to be the first record from the Island.
262. **Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*
 Widespread Winter reports. The latest Spring record is 15 May (EJB), a new late Spring record. Earliest Autumn record is 2 October (Society Outing) from Mai Po where the bird was described as numerous.
263. **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*
 Widespread winter reports. The latest Spring record is 24 May (JLCB), which equals the previous late Spring record. The earliest Autumn record is 8 September (MEMB).
264. **Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*
 There are far fewer reports than in previous years. Whether this is because observers consider this species so common as to be unworthy of mention, or because it has failed to appear, is uncertain. JLCB records a bird from Three Fathom Cove (a remote area) on 31 March and EDW comments that he saw a bird in the Autumn. There are no other reports.
265. **Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*
 There are only three reports of this normally common species. SPMK saw one at Kam Tsin on 29 March and JLCB saw c. 20 at Three Fathom Cove on 31 March and one in the Mai Po Wood on 9 September. The remarks on the previous species apply with equal force to this bird.
266. **Pale-legged Willow-warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes*
 There is only one record — a single bird in the Plover Cove area on 19 September (JNH, JRLC).
267. **Crowned Willow-warbler** *Phylloscopus occipitalis*
 One at Tai Lam Chung Reservoir on 10 February (EDW). This is apparently only the tenth Colony record.
270. **Long-tailed Tailor-bird** *Orthotomus sutorius*
 Common and widespread resident. Adults were seen with freshly fledged young in three localities during July (FOPH, MEMB).
272. **Brown Wren-warbler** *Prinia subflava*
 One at Ping Shan on 8 September (JLCB) is the only record.
273. **Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler** *Prinia flaviventris*
 Common in the area of the Deep Bay marshes. Reports of two birds at Tin Fu Tsein on 1 February and 2 or more at Cape D'Aigular on 2 March (JLCB) are of interest.
274. **Fantail Warbler** *Cisticola juncidis*
 The Check-List describes this species as "Resident and Winter visitor (breeding recorded)." This year reports are descriptive of a winter visitor only. In the first half of the year it was recorded from 1 January to 13 March (JLCB, FOPH), and in the second half from 7 August to 24 November (JLCB, FOPH, EDW).
275. **Red-tailed Robin** *Luscinia sibilans*
 One at Ha Yeung on 4 January (JLCB) and a male in the Ho Chung Valley on 12 December (EDW) are the only reports.
276. **Blue Throat** *Luscinia svecica*
 All reports are from the Deep Bay marshes: One female on 3 February (JLCB) and another female on 31 March (SPMK): two females on 11 November (JLCB).
277. **Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*
 Widespread winter reports up to 22 April in Spring and from 31 October in Autumn.
278. **Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*
 Widespread winter reports up to 17 March in Spring and many fewer reports (seven birds only) from 30 November in Autumn. Unlike last year's experience there was no great imbalance in the proportion of adult males to juvenile males or females. This may indicate a poor breeding season.
279. **Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis*
 Fairly common throughout the year. Adults were seen with recently fledged young in July and early August.

280. **Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus auroreus*
Widespread reports of this winter visitor up to 11 April (JLCB), a new late Colony record. The earliest Autumn report is 10 November. Only ten separable birds were recorded in the second half of the year and the date of the first report is late. The proportion of males to females was about even.
281. **Plumbeous Water-redstart** *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*
It was a good year for this species. From a large number of individual reports it is clear that at least eight different birds (1 adult male and seven females or immature males) were seen up to 2 March. In the latter part of the year at least three females or immature males were seen from 1 December. Ho Chung with at least three birds in the first half of the year and two in the second half, and the catchment streams of Tai Lam Reservoir with three birds in the first half of the year and one in the second, are the strongholds. As in other winter visitors the faithfulness of this species to its winter quarters is remarkable.
282. **Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*
Widespread winter reports up to 15 April in Spring and from 1 October in Autumn. The Autumn date is somewhat later than most years.
283. **Grey Bushchat** *Saxicola ferrea*
All records are from the early months of the year. On 26 January there were two females in the LTV (REH), and, also in the LTV, there were two females and a male on 3 February (EDW, JLCB) while on the same day there was a male at Mong Tseng (JLCB). There was a female at Chung Am Kok on 16 February (JLCB) and a male at Pak Tam on 23 February (REH) and 24 February (EDW). Finally there were females in the LTV on 10 March (JLCB) and near Shatin on 6 April (EDW).
- 284a. **Blue Rock-thrush** *Monticola solitaria pandoo*
There are a number of reports from widespread areas of this winter visitor, with 24 March and 1 October the latest Spring and earliest Autumn dates.
- 284b. **Red-bellied Rock-thrush** *Monticola solitaria philippensis*
Appears to be as widespread, but not, this year, as common as the previous sub-species. 1 April is the latest Spring date and 26 September the earliest Autumn date.
285. **Chestnut-breasted Rock-thrush** *Monticola rufiventris*
The bird seen from 17 Dec. 62 (see 1962 Report) at Severn Road, The Peak, was seen regularly up to 22 Mar. (MEMB). It was also seen by REH and EDW, and, nearby by JLCB. A second bird, with a slightly less rich colouring was seen on 12 Apr. in Severn Road (MEMB). These are the third and fourth Colony records.

286. **Violet Whistling Thrush** *Myiophonus caeruleus*
Widespread resident and not uncommon locally, particularly in the area of the Peak on the Island.
287. **Pale Thrush** *Turdus pallidus*
It was an exceptional year for this species. There were reports of at least twelve individual birds from 2 January to 14 April. Nearly half of these birds were seen on the Island, but there were a number of reports from widespread areas of the New Territories (JLCB, EDW, MEMB, FOPH) and one on Cheung Chau Island on 9 March (EJB). There was another bird (or the same?) on the same island on 31 December (EJB).
289. **Brown Thrush** *Turdus chrysolaus*
One (probably female) was seen in the LTV on 3 Feb. (JLCB). A male was seen at Tai Mong Tsai on 10 February (REH, JMR). These are the fourth and fifth Colony records. All three previous records were during the period 11 January—8 February 1960. The Check-List gives four previous records, but a female at Severn Road, The Peak, on 30 January and 8 February, 1960 was presumably the same bird, and the status remains "Vagrant" with a total of five recorded occurrences.
290. **Grey-backed Thrush** *Turdus hortulorum*
There are numerous reports of this winter visitor in the first half of the year up to 9 April (SPMK), including a bird on Cheung Chau Island on 9 March (EJB). There are few reports from the second half of the year and the first, 2 December (C & ED), is late for this species.
292. **Blackbird** *Turdus merula*
The only records of this normally fairly common bird are from the slightly unlikely venue of Government House garden! Three were seen on 30 November, five on 2 December and thence up to five regularly to the end of the year (EDW).
293. **Grey Thrush** *Turdus carolis*
There are a fair number of reports from widespread areas of this Winter visitor up to 29 April (JLCB), a new late date for the Colony. However JLCB considers it less common than in previous years. In the second half of the year there are only two records — a male at Tai Po Kau on 15 December (JRLC) and another male at Ho Chung on 17 December (C & ED). It is clear that its Autumn arrival was exceptionally late and in exceptionally small numbers this year.
296. **White's Thrush** *Turdus dauma*
One bird was seen at Pak Tam on 1 January (JMR) and again 23 February (REH) and again on 24 February (JLCB).

299. **Great Tit** *Parus major*
Common and widespread resident. Young birds were seen out of the nest from 23 June.
301. (a). **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae richardi*
Common and widespread winter visitor. The latest Spring report was 28 April (JMR) and the earliest Autumn report was 7 September (JLCB).
301. (b). **Chinese Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae sinensis*
There are only reports of a total of seven birds from 3 June (JLCB) to 11 August (EDW). The last was a bird of the year.
302. **Indian Tree-pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*
Numerous reports of this winter visitor in the first half of the year. The latest Spring record was of several on Fanling Golf Course on 29 April (SPMK) — a new late date. The first Autumn report is 24 October (JLCB) and this species seems to have been later and not so common as in other years.
303. **Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*
This species is described as "Winter Visitor. Quite common and widespread" in the Check-List. The 1962 report says "Widespread reports to 6 May no Autumn reports received." There are only three reports for 1963 — one at Ham Tin on Lantau on 1 April (JMR), one at Mai Po on 6 April (REH) and one at Ping Shan on 26 December (Society Outing). The reason for this dearth of records is unknown. The extreme drought of 1963 cannot have had any effect on the latter months of 1962, or indeed the early months of 1963.
304. **Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*
There are only records of two birds — one at Ho Chung on 2 February (JLCB) and a second in the LTV on 3 February (Society Outing) and again in the same place on 10 February (SPMK).
305. **Upland Pipit** *Anthus sylvanus*
Has been recorded from the upper slopes of Tai Mo Shan, Kowloon Peak, Sunset Peak (Lantau) and the Pat Sin range in most months of the year.
307. (a). **Streak-eyed Wagtail** *Motacilla alba ocularis*
Common winter visitor. Extreme dates are 28 April in the Spring and 20 October in the Autumn. This, and the following sub-species continue to use the roost on the Supreme Court.
307. (b). **White-faced Wagtail** *Motacilla alba leucopsis*
Common winter visitor. Extreme dates are 23 March in the Spring and 13 October in the Autumn. (The first "Pied" Wagtail of the Autumn was seen on 8 September).

308. **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*
Common winter visitor in suitable habitats. The latest Spring records are a pair by the catchwater on the Southern slopes of Tai Mo Shan on 24 May (JRLC) and a bird at Pokfulam on the same day (JLCB). These are new late Spring records. The earliest Autumn record is 25 August (JLCB).
309. (a). **Blue-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla flava simillima*
c. 25 at Ho Chung on 26 April (JMR) is the only record for the year.
309. (c). **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava taiwana*
Common winter visitor to the Deep Bay Marshes. The latest Spring record is 5 May (JLCB) and the earliest Autumn record is 6 September (JLCB). Also recorded from Ho Chung, Brick Hill and Lantau.
310. **Fork-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga christinae*
Seen almost throughout the year in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve (REH, JLCB, EDW, FOPH). Analysis of the different reports shows that at least two males and two females — and probably more of both sexes — were present here for most of the year. Also reported from Middle Bay (male) on 6 April (JLCB), Ho Chung (male) on 21 April (JLCB) and The Peak (female) on 11 October (MEMB).
311. **White-eye** *Zosterops japonica*
Common and widespread. Nest record card completed from information supplied by FOPH. Incubation was about ten days from 28 or 29 June. Of a clutch of four all hatched but were taken by a predator before they left the nest.
312. **Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum cruentatum*
A male was seen in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 23 June (JLCB, FOPH) and 18 December (JLCB) and a female was seen on 1 July (FOPH); a bird was heard in the same place on 1 September (JLCB). A bird was heard at Three Fathom Cove on 21 October (Society Outing) and a female seen at Government House on 29 November (EDW).
313. **Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus*
A female or juvenile male seen in the Ho Chung valley on 8 December (Society Outing).
314. **Lesser Black-tailed Hawfinch** *Euphonia migratoria*
Widespread reports of this winter visitor up to 8 April. There are only two reports from the latter half of the year, a pair at Mong Tseng on 14 December (JLCB) and c.20 at Ping Shan on 26 December (Society Outing).

315. **Chinese Greenfinch** *Chloris sinica*

Reported in small numbers from widespread areas of the Colony throughout the year.

317. **Hodgson's Rose-finch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

A pair near She Shan wood in the LTV on 16 February (SPMK) is the only report during the year.

318. **Masked Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala*

Common winter visitor in the first half of the year up to 20 April. The first autumn record is 17 October (JLCB), but the bird was less common than usual from then to the end of the year.

321. **Tristram's Bunting** *Emberiza tristrami*

It was a good year for this bird, but all reports are from the early months of the year. At Tai Mong Tsai there were one male and two females on 3 January (JLCB) and a male and a female on 24 February (JLCB, EDW). There were a pair in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 6 January (JLCB), 5 birds at Shouson Hill on 3 March (JLCB) and two (possibly three) birds at Luen Tak on 14 March (SPMK). Finally there was a female at Lok Ma Chau on 7 April (EDW). Taken with the two birds seen in the LTV in December 1962 (see 1962 Report) it will be seen that the Winter 1962/63 was quite exceptional, and provided a minimum of fifteen birds compared with a minimum of six birds recorded from the Colony previously.

322. **Chestnut Bunting** *Emberiza rutila*

A male and a female were seen at Ping Shan on 24 November (EDW, JLCB, FOPH). With the 1961 and 1962 records the status of this species must be changed to "occasional winter visitor and passage migrant".

323. **Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola*

A female at Ping Shan on 13 Mar (JLCB) is the only spring record. In the Autumn it was recorded at Pokfulam — 1 female (and possibly four other birds) — on 17 October (JLCB), at Mong Tseng (one female) on 27 October (JMR), and at Ping Shan on 11 November — five birds (JLCB) — and 24 November — three birds (JLCB, FOPH). These are exceptionally small numbers since it is described in the Check-list as "..... abundant in the Autumn but very uncommon in the Spring".

324. **Grey-headed Bunting** *Emberiza fucata*

There are a number of reports of this Winter visitor up to 15 April. There is only one report from the second half of the year — a single bird at Ping Shan on 11 November.

325. **Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*

Recorded frequently from all parts of the Colony until 31 March. There are details of seven birds in the second half of the year following the first on 11 October (MEMB) at Severn Road, The Peak. This is the earliest ever date in the Autumn, but there were no other reports until the middle of December.

326. **Crested Bunting** *Melophus lathami*

Recorded in every month of the year but more common up to March and from October onwards. From May to August inclusive all reports except one, are from high up on the hills.

327. **Tree Sparrow** *Passer montianus*

Abundant and widespread resident.

328. **Red Avadavat** *Estrilda amandava*

A flock of fifteen to twenty on the Mai Po Marshes on the evening of 15 February (SPMK) is the only record. This is the largest number that has ever been seen in the Colony.

329. **Java Sparrow** *Padda oryzivora*

There are records of two birds, one at Telegraph Bay on 16 October and the other near the Peak on 30 December (JLCB). The possibility of these being escaped cage birds must be borne in mind.

330. (a). **Three-coloured Munia** *Lonchura malacca malacca*

Two birds were seen on 30 March at Ham Tin on Lantao Island (JMR). The Check-List gives three previous records of this species — a bird at Mai Po on 6, 13 and 14 September 1959. Since this presumably was the same bird it would be wiser to accept it as one record only. With this year's two birds the record stands at two records for the Colony.

330. (b). **Chestnut Munia** *Lonchura malacca atricapilla*

Two birds were seen at Mai Po near the Police Post on 5 August and two in the same place on 19 September.

331. **Spotted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata*

Widespread in the Winter months in flocks of up to fifty birds. Uncommon in Summer — there are only two reports between 22 April and 1 October.

332. **White-backed Munia** *Lonchura striata*

One bird was seen at Severn Road, The Peak, on 16 February (MEMB). There was a flock of c. ten at Shouson Hill on 3 March (JLCB).

DOUBTFUL RECORDS

The following reports cannot be accepted as confirmed records. However, following the example of previous years, they are included for the sake of completeness and because further information in subsequent years may provide additional evidence for their acceptance.

61. **White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*

A large dark eagle with a wedge-shaped tail seen over Repulse Bay on 20 September (JRLC) is considered to have been a 'probable' immature of this species.

69. **Black Vulture** *Aegyptius monarchus*

Three birds of this species have been listed by JAO (per EDW) as having been seen at Dill's Corner on 28 December, without further details. Since birds of this species were seen in the same area early in 1964 the report is included in this section. Normally such a bare report, without further description of any kind, of such a rare bird would be rejected out of hand.

ESCAPES

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*

A bird of this species was well seen by SPMK on 23 June in the Kowloon Reservoir area. According to La Touche this bird ". . . . occurs in South and West China and also in Formosa and Hainan"; there is therefore no reason why it should not turn up in the Colony although it has not been recorded so far. Unfortunately it is also a common cage bird. In June the local Buddhists released a very large number of captive birds as an intercessionary measure in the hope that it would rain. Regrettably therefore this record must, in the circumstances, be attributed to an escaped or released bird. It is felt however that the record is worth publishing.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*

Four birds of this species were seen together in Victoria Barracks in July (JRLC). This is the largest number that have yet been seen together so far. Unfortunately circumstances did not permit a detailed scrutiny to determine if any of them were birds of the year. Apart from this 'White' Cockatoos have been seen on the Island from The Peak to Happy Valley in ones, twos and threes, and also on Stonecutters (C & ED, MEMB, FOPH, JRLC). The 1961 and 1962 reports discuss this species. It will be interesting to see whether this bird succeeds in establishing itself.

LIST OF OBSERVERS

Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Adams	Mr. R. E. Hale
Miss E. J. Bollback	Mr. and Mrs. F. O. P. Hechtel
Miss M. E. M. Benham	Commander J. N. Humphreys
Major J. R. L. Caunter	Brigadier S. P. M. Kent
Mrs. C. M. Caunter	Mr. J. A. Ozorio
Mr. J. L. Cranmer-Byng	Mr. J. M. Rowlands
Mr. C. Dale	Commander E. D. Webb.
Mrs. E. Dale	

Throughout the above list the abbreviation LTV stands for Lam Tsun Valley.

NOTES ON SOME BIRD WATCHING AREAS IN THE COLONY

May I refer the reader to my article in the Bird Report for 1962. It is unnecessary to repeat this information, but instead I will here set out a few amendments and additions to the previous article.

MONG TSENG PENINSULA

Look out for the Bluethroat in the tomato patches around Mong Tseng Wai village. These birds are difficult to observe, but if you flush them from vegetable plots they fly only a little way before dropping down and you may get a second chance to see one or at least catch a glimpse of the russet in the tail. The only other place where Bluethroats have been reported is the area round the Police Post at Mai Po. However, there have been no definite reports of Bluethroats there since 1962.

TAI PO KAU

Also worth visiting is the wooded area in the vicinity of "The Lookout" on the right hand side of the road just before reaching the Forestry Reserve when coming from Shatin. This is a likely place for Flycatchers, Flowerpeckers and other woodland birds.

TAI MONG TSAI and PAK TAM VALLEYS

A good walk is to make for Three Fathom Cove and turn North East along the coast to the village of Yung Shue Au. This is a good place for a number of different birds such as Flycatchers, Buntings and Redstarts and Robins. Although it is quite a small area it has quite a lot of arable land and some useful strips of wood. It has not been watched very often in the past. From here you can walk over a pass into the Tai Mong Tsai valley or do a more ambitious walk (involving more climbing) and eventually come out into the Pak Tam valley.

SEK KONG PLAIN

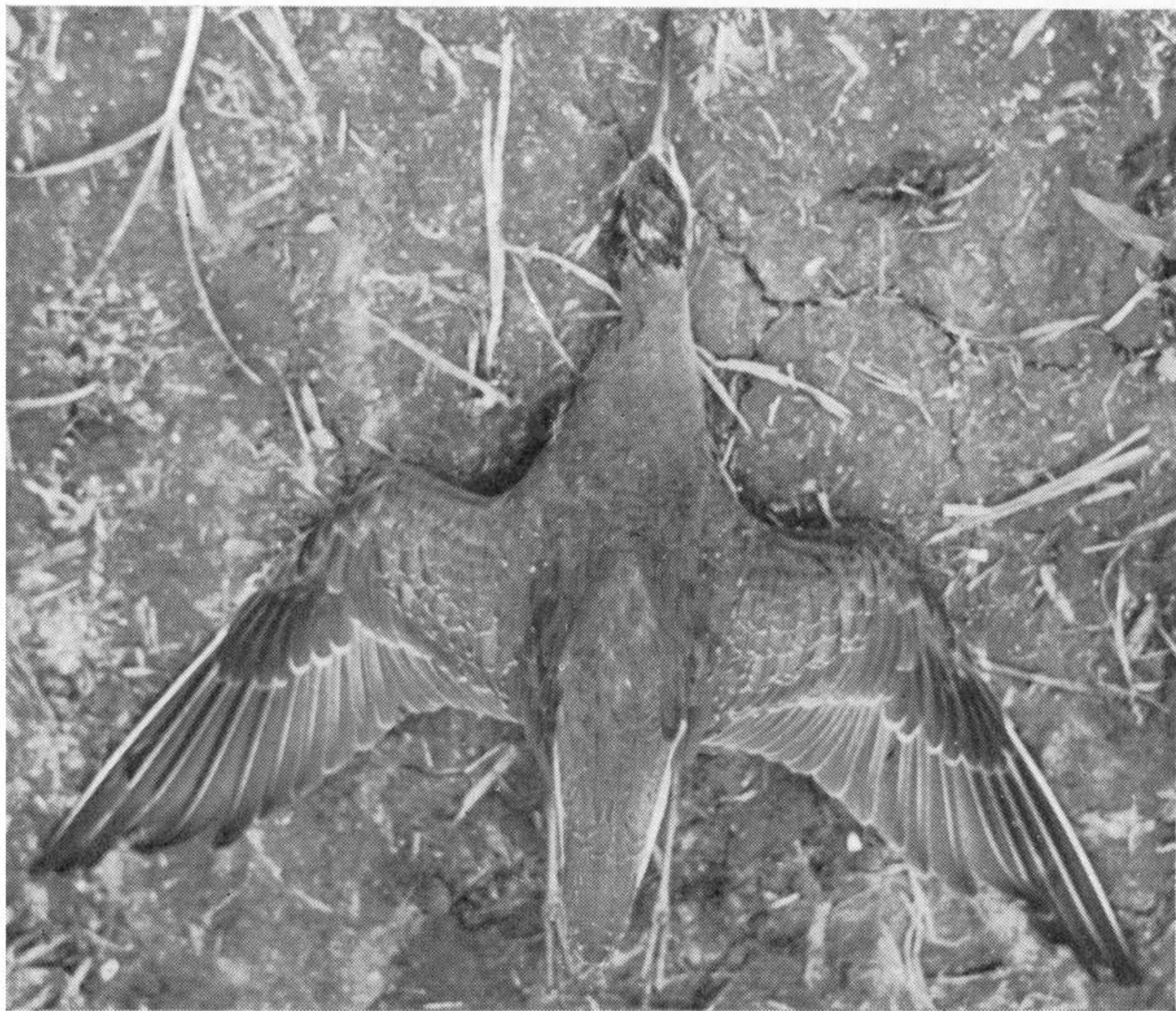
Now heavily built over, but there is still a relatively unspoilt area to the South-West corner near to the beginning of the Tai Lam Chung catchment area and centring round the village of Ho Poi. This part can be approached by car from Sek Kong camp (turn off opposite the Shell petrol station) and park beyond the large water pipes which cross the road. Good for a day's ramble in the winter. Quail, Buntings, Pipits, Fantail Warblers, Silky Starlings, Rubythroats, Blackbirds, Thrushes, Flycatchers etc., have all been seen here.



A female Collared Scops Owl



photographed by A. J. Brandt at Kowloon Reservoir in April 1963. The bird was subsequently released.



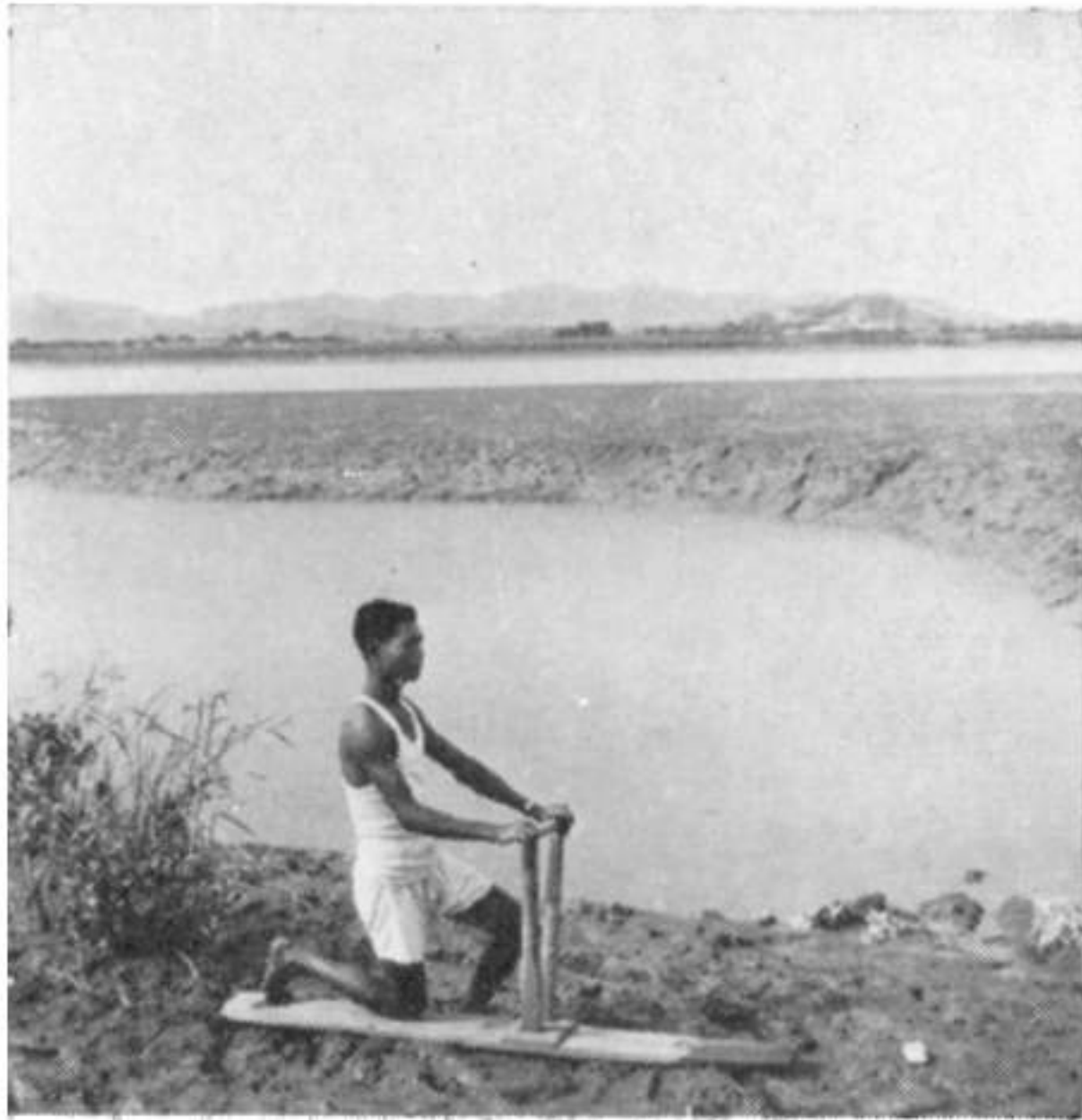
Grey-rumped Sandpiper. Note the white-shafted primaries and delicate wing pattern.

(J. Cairns)

Little Egret at nest.

(J. Cairns)





Ah Lam and his mud-scooter.

Mai Po (EDW)

LANTAO ISLAND

Recent information about birds on Lantao has shown that it is worthwhile for a visit provided that you can spend plenty of time looking for birds. The distances here are great and on a casual day's walk one is likely to be too hurried to see much. The best idea would be to stay a few days somewhere and look systematically at leisure. During a three day visit to Sunset Peak in July 1963 I was able to watch Upland Pipits regularly and with a bit more luck might have found a Crested Bunting's nest. The lower slopes of Sunset Peak, accessible from the coast road between Silvermine Bay and Cheung Sha, have been shown to harbour a small range of quite interesting birds. The steeply wooded valley from Tung Chung towards Sunset Peak which includes "Perfect Pool" might yield a few surprises if one could spend a whole day leisurely exploring and watching. But this would only be possible if one was staying on Lantao.

TAI LAM CHUNG

An earth road has now been made (for the use of the Forestry Department) from the catchment area at the head of the reservoir to the village of Tin Fu Tsai which lies in an upland plateau watered by several small streams. From Tin Fu Tsai one can walk on an earth road to the top of Route TWISK on the side of Tai Mo Shan. This area round Tin Fu Tsai is rather too high for most birds, but is good for Buntings, especially Little Buntings. It needs further exploring for its bird watching capabilities. The main stream which flows from the direction of Tin Fu Tsai into the reservoir is worth a visit if only to see Plumbeous Water-Redstarts and the Little Green Heron. But it may conceal other birds sometimes.

STARLING INLET

Now that the road goes as far as Lei Uk this area is easily accessible. The cultivated land round the villages of Lei Uk, Nam Chung and Kuk Po holds a number of birds in the winter and the area round Kuk Po looks promising. But further along the coast there are few birds to see except perhaps at Yung Shue Au (not to be confused with a village of the same name near Three Fathom Cove) which has two useful woods. This whole peninsula is a stronghold of the Black-capped Kingfisher and in summer they retreat to the hill streams where they presumably breed. Otherwise in summer you may see Hair-crested Drongos and Orioles. The wood by the road near Shataukok Police Station has a large and flourishing Pond Heronry. In spring and autumn if the tide is right, you might see a few waders on the mud of Starling Inlet. Dove and Goodhart did some of their watching here and so did S.P.M. Kent.



Water buffalo and owner-drivers

Ping Shan (EDW)

"BY PRODUCTS OF BIRD WATCHING".

CONCLUSION

Unless steps are taken urgently to set aside two or three suitable areas in the New Territories as Nature Reserves there won't be any bird watching worth the name in the Colony in seven or eight years from now. This is a task in which the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society ought to play an active part.

J. L. C-B.

BIRD-WATCHING IN HONG KONG

When I first arrived in Hong Kong in the autumn of 1956 I had very little idea of the range of birds here and at first could only identify the ones which are similar to those in Europe. However, I was soon lucky to acquire a copy of Herklots' *Birds of Hong Kong*, and so I began slowly to recognize some of the more common species. However, trying to identify new birds entirely alone is not very satisfactory and I had only made limited progress by the end of 1957 when the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society was formed. From February 1958 I started to go out regularly on the Society's outings and under the expert eye of Arthur Walton, Maxwell Macfarlane and one or two others, I soon began to recognize a much larger number of the winter visitors. By the following year I was able to add a new bird to the Hong Kong Checklist. My wife and I were lucky enough to be able to stay at "Wildridge" in the Forestry Reserve at Taipo Kau during July 1959. Almost immediately on arrival we noticed a small Flowerpecker-type bird gathering nectar from flowers outside the verandah. A day or two later, while I was out walking, my wife saw an extremely bright-coloured bird also hovering in front of the same flowers, and she noted down its outrageously gaudy colours. There was nothing like it listed in Herklots so I failed to identify it, but I sent a detailed description to the President of the Society, Arthur Walton, and he identified it as a Fork-tailed Sunbird. On subsequent week-ends all the keener members of the Society came out to Taipo and were able to see the Sunbirds at work. It was a great thing to be able to turn to knowledgeable members in the Society for help in identification, and I enjoyed expeditions in their company since they were always keen to help beginners and always watchful to stop any hasty jumping to conclusions on insufficient data.

Now, after nearly seven-and-a-half years in Hong Kong, I can look back with lively pleasure on the many hours of bird watching which I have enjoyed here. Apart from the pleasure of being in the open air and exploring the countryside, the continual expectation of seeing rare or even new species has always made the longest walk on the warmest day well worth while. When the "Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong" was published in 1960 I was able to work out how many different birds I had actually seen myself. At the time of writing this (end of 1963) my total stands at 252 out of a possible total of nearly 350. This is quite a large number, and I sincerely hope that other members of the Society will see as many different birds in Hong Kong as I have. To help them to do so I have set down a few notes which may be of use. Here they are.

1. When you start bird-watching in Hong Kong it is best to go out with a few others who are knowledgeable and you will soon learn to identify most species accurately from them. The only drawback is that several people make a noise and are conspicuous. Often

only the first two at the front see the interesting birds. Even two people walking together will want to talk and may miss the shy birds. The best thing is sometimes to go with others but sometimes to go out alone when you can walk slowly and quietly.

2. Quietness is essential for getting the best results. For this reason I always wear a pair of locally made gym shoes, summer and winter, so that I can move about silently. They only cost about \$5 H.K. and can be thrown away regularly. If you come round a bend in a path or are going through a wood you may be lucky enough to see an interesting bird if you approach silently while you may just miss it if you make any noise. If you are moving into a wood some noise may be unavoidable. In that case quickly get a few yards into the wood and then stand or sit perfectly still for a few minutes and look and listen. The birds you frightened at first may show themselves if you keep still.

3. Naturally you need to be sharp of eye to see birds stationary or moving. But seeing is not all. Very often, especially among trees and bushes, it is important to listen as well. You may come to some trees and see nothing moving, but suddenly a little call will alert you, and if you look in the direction of the sound you may be rewarded by seeing a Flower-pecker before it disappears. If you can recognize the commoner calls of birds such as the Great Tit, Tailor-bird, Tree-Pipit etc., it will save you wasting a lot of precious time looking for them. Whenever you come to trees listen and look. Eventually a call or a movement may put you onto a bird.

4. However, spotting a bird with the eye is only a preliminary. The next thing is to get your binoculars focussed on it as quickly as possible. A few seconds delay may mean that it has flown by the time you get them focussed. This is where experience helps. With practice one can get one's binoculars quickly up to the eyes and begin looking in the right place. For quick focussing I always prefer to use a pair of 8 x 30 which have a reasonable depth of focus and can be quickly adjusted when you get them up to your eyes. Being comparatively light and small they are not tiring to carry on a whole day's walk, and can be quickly put up to the eyes. Thus for all normal bird-watching, particularly among trees and bushes where speed is often essential, I recommend using an 8 x 30 pair. But there are times when a stronger magnification is preferable, especially when a bird is quite stationary and one can sit down and rest one's elbows on one's knees. For looking at waders on the marshes when every detail of plumage and colour may be necessary to establish identification a pair of 10 x 50 is essential. But I would not normally walk with them round my neck because they are slow to focus and you cannot hold them steady unless you sit down.

Having got your glasses correctly adjusted and on the bird have a long, careful, preliminary look, methodically noticing the distinctive features about it. The best way to do this is to take a mental photograph of the bird — its shape and colours — and then begin to describe it to yourself starting with the crown and working through the upper parts and then the underparts. The temptation is to start writing a description immediately you are focussed onto it, but if you do so the bird may suddenly fly away leaving you with only a hazy idea of what it was like. If there is someone with you it is a good idea for one of you to start giving a methodical description while the other one writes it down. The main point is to look thoroughly at the bird, decide what type of bird it is e.g. Bunting, Pipit, Plover etc. and then note the main points of identification. If the bird is still in sight you can then begin to write notes.

5. One or two further tips. If you hear a bird calling or singing a little way off don't wait too long hoping that it will come into sight. It may simply disappear or stop calling. The best policy is to advance steadily towards the sound even at the risk of making a little noise. This is particularly true in the forest area at Taipo Kau. If you wait about you may never see it; if you disturb it you may see it fly and be able to find it again. You have to act quickly while the bird is still calling.

Sometimes you may be walking in an area where you have previously seen birds but on this particular day you can't see or hear a single one. Don't be downhearted, however, because all of a sudden you may get among the birds. At first you may see only Bulbuls, White-eyes, Great Tits, Tailor-birds etc., but if there are common ones about there may also be one or two less common ones with them. Quite recently I was bird-watching on the Peak and spent a full hour looking in Plantation Road and Severn Road without seeing or hearing anything. The whole area seemed deserted by birds. Then I started to walk down Peel Rise and quite suddenly I was among birds which were calling all round me. I stopped to look and listen. Apart from the very common ones I have just mentioned there were Grey Thrushes and Hwameis. Then suddenly a different bird flew among the trees. Eventually it stopped on a branch and turned out to be a Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike. A few minutes later walking up a path among the trees I heard the sharp tic-tic of a Short-tailed Bush Warbler in the undergrowth very close to me. (In this case knowing the call was a great help). After waiting a bit the bird suddenly emerged in a patch of open ground, creeping about just like a Wren, and I got a good view of it. As soon as it moved away a male Verditer Flycatcher appeared on a branch, and then the Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike came back, chased by a second one. Finally a Java Sparrow hopped into view foraging under the trees. All this happened in a small area within twenty minutes while I had previously spent over an hour combing a large area without any result at all. So don't easily get downhearted.

6. Choosing where to go is partly luck — you simply have a hunch — and partly a question of knowing the most likely bird-watching areas. I hope that my "Notes on some bird-watching areas in the Colony" printed in the Bird Report for 1962 and also in Miss Benham's book will be of use to newcomers to the Colony. Experience will show you that in April and May and again in August and September you ought to be watching the Mai Po marshes and the Lok Ma Chau area, while from December until March you ought to keep an eye on the Ho Chung valley, the Forestry Reserve at Taipo Kau, the Pak Tam valley and places such as these. But this is only a guide. These areas are changing continually and it is important that members of the Society should experiment from time to time and continually be looking for new areas as the old ones are overrun by vegetable plots and chicken farms, roads and 'rural development.'

7. Identifying birds from your notes is an exacting job. When you get home sort out your notes and try to decide what the species were which you did not recognize in the field. Here coloured plates may be helpful, but they may also lead to wishful thinking. If you are uncertain what species you have seen, send in your field notes to the Hon. Recorder and let him try to decide. If you can give him a reasonable description together with a note on its habits he may be able to give you an answer. To become good at identification it is necessary to browse through different bird books quite often, looking at the illustrations and reading the descriptions so that they remain in your mind. You never know when you may see a particular bird about which you have read or which you can recognize from a good coloured illustration. Now that the Society's library has a number of different books on this area you can generally find one or more illustrations of most of the birds you are likely to see. One help is the list of illustrations compiled by A.D. Macdonald from the various books in the library. This is kept by the Hon. Secretary.

Now that I am leaving Hong Kong I can look back on many happy hours spent bird-watching and recall many memorable moments — for instance when I first focussed my glasses on a male Fork-tailed Sunbird or first recognized a Black Stork in flight. Some of the Flycatchers have given me intense pleasure: the Ince's Paradise, the males of the Black-naped Monarch, Blue and White, Verditer, Robin, Narcissus and Hainan Blue Flycatchers. There are a few birds which I wanted to see very much but which I must sadly admit have eluded me — the Frigate Bird, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Male Tricolour Flycatcher, male Scarlet Minivet and male Hodgson's Rose-finch among others. But I have enjoyed seeing so many different species that it would be ungrateful to complain. I only hope that you will get as much enjoyment from bird-watching in Hong Kong as I have during the past seven-and-a-half years.

J. L. C-B.

THE SHORT-TAILED BUSH WARBLER

This bird was not seen by Herklots nor by Dove and Goodhart, but was reported by F. J. Walker from widespread localities in the Colony between December and March of 1955-57. Subsequently it was seen near Castle Peak by A. M. Macfarlane in November 1958. It is an extremely difficult bird to see for more than a fleeting glimpse and it took me several years before I was able to identify it and recognise its distinctive call. My own records are from January until April 1962 and for December 1963. It is obviously not common but it should be possible to see one or two each winter from early December until the end of March in the Forestry Reserve at Taipo Kau, and in the area round the District Officer's house (The Lookout) at Taipo Kau; also it may be seen in the woods on the Tai Mo Shan side of the Lam Tsun Valley, particularly in the so-called "woodpecker wood", and on the Peak and its lower slopes. I suspect it can be found in other suitable areas as well. It needs thick undergrowth, not the kind on hillsides, but rather bushes under trees. There is a good illustration of it in *Birds of Japan* (no. 99) and in *Birds in Japan* (p. 100). The long pale eyebrow and dark eyestripe, the very short tail on a stumpy body, are diagnostic. But before you can begin to look for it you must first be made aware of its presence by its harsh jarring call, a fast tic-tic-tic. Even when you are close to its sound this bird is difficult to spot and you must look for a mouse-like bird creeping about on the ground and undergrowth. If you try to frighten it out of a thicket it will just disappear. In habits and call it is somewhat like a European Wren, but with a minute tail.

J. L. C-B.

A RUBYTHROAT THEORY

Herklots states that the Rubythroat is a 'rare winter visitor' and he has records for January and February only. Dove and Goodhart have records from mid-November until early April. The "Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong" (which includes records up to 30th April 1960) is more realistic when it states 'winter visitor. Fairly common. Widespread', and gives the dates as 13th October until 6th May.

I would like to take the question of its status a stage further, based on my own observations and those of S. P. M. Kent who was stationed in the Sek Kong — Fanling area from 1960 until 1963. In my experience the Rubythroat is at least as common as the Red-flanked Bluetail but far more difficult to see. None of the observers in Hong Kong seems to have mentioned its call as apart from its song, though several times in the autumn of 1959 I heard a 'loud melancholy whistle' coming from thick scrub, especially in the Shouson Hill and the Tai Tam Reservoir areas from 31 October onwards. Being unable to see the bird making this call I was unable to make any report on it. Eventually S. P. M. Kent watched a Rubythroat in the act of calling in the autumn of 1961. He reported the call as 'a penetrating and plaintive whistle, rather long drawn out'. This report put me onto its call and subsequently in the Bird Report for 1962 I wrote a brief note on the subject (p. 39). During the autumn of 1963 I have heard this long drawn out, penetrating and plaintive whistle on many occasions in very widespread localities and have seen Rubythroats in several of these places, though I have never managed to catch the bird in the act of calling. My records for the Rubythroat (No. 277) in the Bird Report for 1963 will give some idea of the numbers of times on which I heard its call during the autumn of that year, though in fact I heard the call too often to record it each time. From this evidence I am now in a position to put forward my Rubythroat theory which is as follows:—

That Rubythroats in the Colony of Hong Kong are *quite* common and widespread and can be heard regularly (though not seen easily) in many places both on the Island and in the New Territories from the second half of October until early April. This call is invariably made low down from a thick mass of undergrowth. It is useless to attempt to frighten the bird out: you will not succeed. On the other hand if you wait about you are also likely to be disappointed. However, when it sings it usually does so from a higher position — a branch of a small tree or the top of a bush — though even then it is very quick to climb down into the bush at the first sign of anyone approaching. The song starts as a rapid warbling rather like an English Hedge Sparrow. This is really the sub-song and sometimes the bird does not progress beyond this. The full song is rather like that of a Canary, very sweet and musical.

It is easy enough to identify the male if you see his breast but often the only view you get is of the olive grey upper parts as he quickly disappears into cover. The female is even more difficult to identify, but her white eyestripe is diagnostic, and she also has a white throat patch heavily vermiculated with black. There is one consolation. Although these birds are extremely shy when they first arrive in October and remain invisible in the thickets, from late December onwards they tend to come out into the open more readily, and by March you stand a good chance of seeing some. One hint: if you see a bird of the right size and colour climbing down from the top of a bush into the thicker part it is likely to be a Rubythroat.

Habitat: anywhere that thick undergrowth is found, but especially very dry areas such as scrub on hillsides. On the island on the lower slopes of the Peak, especially the Dairy Farm land above Pokfulam, in the Tai Tam Reservoir area and as far as Cape d'Aguilar. In the New Territories almost anywhere except on the marshes.

J. L. C-B.

SEVERN ROAD, THE PEAK

Birds seen in the final quarter of 1962 in this area of Severn Road below Pollocks Corner were described in the last Bird Report. The following is an account of those seen in the same area in the first 4 months of 1963.

The Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush which took up residence in mid-December stayed till about March 20th. No calls were heard in the first few weeks, but on January 21st the bird was scolding and on January 22nd started to call at dusk, continuing this regularly in the same group of trees until departure. The sound made bore some resemblance to the "rusty gate" squeak of the Violet Whistling Thrush, but was less intense and more frequent. Now and again it was punctuated by a typical thrush "churr". Despite the bird's conspicuously bright plumage it often perched on a bare branch close to the road and did not fly off if people walked below. Another bird, thinner and less brilliant in colour, appeared on a roof top on April 12th, but it flew away and was not seen again.

Red-flanked Bluetails, both male and female, were seen frequently between January 10th and February 17th, and a Rubythroat was watched on two occasions in late January and early February.

Of the migrant bulbuls the White-headed Black Bulbul came in large numbers, but only one Chestnut Bulbul was seen. This latter bird was with Crested and Chinese Bulbuls, and made its presence known by its clear "bicycle bell" call. The White-headed Black Bulbuls were also heard before they were seen, the first on February 16th. On the next day two of these birds were in a tree, the larger with completely white head calling loudly, while the other which appeared slimmer and dark all over moved restlessly among the branches. In the same tree several Crested Bulbuls were mobbing a Barred Owlet, so the noise was considerable and seemed to perplex a police constable who was looking down on the tree from the road above. The White-headed Black Bulbuls seemed to be forming into flocks prior to moving off towards the end of March, about twenty being seen in a flock on March 22nd, fifty on March 28th, sixty on April 3rd, twenty on April 4th, and fifty on April 10th. It was unfortunately impossible to trace whether they flew right away or dispersed and formed up again some days later. They flew in neat, close formation.

Daurian Redstarts, both male and female, were seen occasionally from early January to early March, and Little Buntings fed on the lawns throughout the first two months of the year.

Thrushes were numerous in the wooded stretch near the top of Gough Hill Road, the Grey-backed being seen most frequently. The Grey Thrush came nearer to the house, and a male would hop about on the lawn outside the dining-room window at breakfast time in February. None were seen or heard after the end of that month. A Blue Rock Thrush perched on nearby masonry and was seen several times during January, February and March.

A small bird with a loud single-note call made long exposed flights on two successive days in February, and was finally clearly seen to have the shape and colouring of the White-backed Munia.

On January 20th a Peregrine Falcon was flying with the Kites when it suddenly closed its wings and dived steeply. Later it was seen lying against a chimney-pot, presumably for warmth the day being cold. A Kestrel was occasionally seen about this time.

White-rumped Swifts were noticed on several occasions, about twenty circling round Mount Gough on March 23rd. Six House Martins were in the same area a week earlier.

A male Koel was calling persistently from March 1st to the end of this period, and was seen several times. A female bird was flying in the same area on March 23rd.

Crow-Pheasants were frequently seen and heard and did not seem shy. On April 25th one was watched sitting conspicuously on the top of a bush, "poomping", while another hidden some distance away replied. As the bird called it leaned forward, bill closed, and moved its tail backwards and slightly upwards on each "poomp". It appeared to be looking straight at me but it showed no fear.

M.E.M.B.

BIRDS OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE GARDEN

The garden is a nice quiet sanctuary in a very busy area, with plenty of trees and shrubs all round, to suit all tastes. With the rash of new building everywhere, it is thus very popular with birds of all sorts.

Of the permanent inhabitants, the Crested Mynahs are the noisiest and commonest, with Magpies, Sparrows and Spotted Doves in close attendance. The Blue Magpies come and go with the seasons and are sometimes absent for months. Two fledglings that fell out of the nest during Typhoon "Alice" in 1961 were reared by the pantry boy and when their tails grew too long for the cage, it was almost impossible to push them off the dole into the hard world they had never known.

Chinese and Crested Bulbuls are very common and restless. The Magpie Robins sing cheerfully in the Spring but make depressing "pssst" noises in the shrubbery in the evening when the cat is about. The Tailor Birds are more often heard than seen, though two youngsters got lost in the greenhouse one day and were most uncooperative over the rescue operations. White-eyes and Great Tits are both seen and heard but are not always present.

Other spasmodic visitors are the Paroquets which used to dash past in a noisy flock at exactly the same time every morning and evening. The last year or two they seem to have pawned their watches. In their wake is often the escaped Ornamental Lory which looks handsome but has an atrocious voice. Other "escapes" seen occasionally are the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, singly or a pair, and one morning two Chinese Grackles, who made a loud clear whistle.

Winter visitors are led by the Pied Wagtails who arrive regularly in November and strut about the lawn in pairs. I have only once seen a Grey Wagtail. Yellow-browed and Pallas' Warblers are fairly common, Tree Pipits less so. A Daurian Redstart showed up for a few days one winter and a Brown Flycatcher once or twice. A single Japanese Grey Thrush generally comes to spend the coldest part of the winter and in good Thrush-years a Grey backed Thrush also. Until recently I had never seen a Blackbird on the Island but on 29th November there were three among the shrubs on the east terrace. At long range I first took the bird for a mynah, but when it gave a little run with head down, instead of a lumbering waddle, I guessed what it was. This was confirmed when I saw the three birds flying. Three days later there were five in the same place, very wild and uneasy.

A Japanese Brown Shrike arrived early in November for the third winter running. It gets paler as the season advances and never seems to lose its extreme shyness.

Of birds of prey, a Kite has taken to spending the morning on the roof of the tower. Peregrines, Kestrels and Buzzards are fairly regular visitors overhead each winter; the Kestrel seems to claim squatters' rights and sometimes drives off the larger birds.

I have only seen one kingfisher and that was a White-breasted, perched on an azalea bush on the back lawn.

Summer visitors are rare. Apart from an occasional Drongo or two, I have heard Orioles several times in the very early morning but by the time I am active they have moved on.

Stop Press. A loud clicking noise that I have often heard lately turned out to come from a female Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, which dallied obliging in an openwork shrub. Being without binoculars, I was lucky to get a good view of the diagnostic scarlet crown.

E.D.W.

NEW BIRD WATCHING SAINT ?

The joint editor of the last Bird Report, Richard Hale, is now in Hamburg. Last winter, apart from pioneering the exotic flycatchers in the fung shui wood behind Ho Chung village, he made friends with many "juveniles" higher up the valley. He presented them with at least one football and the valley is green with his memory. Now that the new (football and birdwatching) season is starting at Ho Chung, any visitor is bombarded with cries of "Where is HALO? When will HALO come back?"

If you value sainthood, there is a chance to become a second HALO, for the football has burst and they are now in the market for a new one.

E.D.W.

(The saintly vacancy has now been most suitably filled by none other than our own esteemed Chairman! Ed.)

BY-PRODUCTS OF BIRD WATCHING

It sometimes happens that you hurry over to the New Territories to find that the birds are inconsiderately taking a day off. However, there is always a lot going on and the human inhabitants, who are not interested in bird watching, put on a continuous performance.

Of the life cycle in the rice fields, the ploughing and harrowing are rather messy, but the planting out of the seedlings is a masterpiece of symmetry though it must be backbreaking work. The reaping, with small sickles deftly flicked by wrists protected with plaited straw guards, is followed on the spot by threshing across a board on the edge of a large tub. A straw screen draped round the tub keeps the grain in and the wind out. The final winnowing is done in the village, with an ancient and communal contraption known as a "wind chest". A handle rotates an internal paddle wheel which conjures up the wind. The mixed grain and chaff is fed in through a funnel at the top and drops to an offset partition. The cross-wind blows the lighter chaff over the partition while the heavier grain falls down on the near side. All very simple but the man on the handle has to have a nice sense of r.p.m.

Curiously enough nearly all this work seems to be done by women, in photogenic lampshade hats, and very few men join in. Yet in the villages the boys preponderate in the throng of children. Perhaps the men know how to hide from work and the little girls from foreign devils. Weeding and watering in the vegetable and flower plots evokes a sense of proprietorship and is mostly done by the men.

Building a stretch of bund in the marshes is a fine sight, in the best spirit of watching other people work. A small party of men cut out slabs of shining mud with tapered wooden slices, while a mixed team skid them along a plank railway, to be slapped down on the fast-growing bund. Small boys keep the planks constantly lubricated with water. Hard work but a nice sloppy muddy game that all seem to enjoy. I have always wanted to photograph this but have been put off by the thought of the perfect ammunition to hand of the workers if they took offence.

On the marshes, other messy jobs are continually going on. In a waste of sedge and reed, solitary workers are engaged in mysterious ways of getting something out of nothing. The sedge is cut for thatching or fuel, huge loads of duckweed are carried on poles to civilisation to feed the pigs, and there are countless crab pots and fishing lines to be set and tended.

A friend of mine at Mai Po owns some oyster beds at the mouth of the Shum Chun river and I once watched him opening a pailful. Wearing an old woollen glove, for the local oysters are exceedingly sharp and jagged, he tapped away at one end with a pick the size of a hammer, like a curate opening an egg. Very quickly he had made a hole the width of a penny, inserted the end of the pick and hooked out the oyster into his pail. This article is too short to relate what happened when I tried.

He also owns a mud-scooter like a short, wide water ski with a handlebar, for skidding over the mudflats at low water while collecting cockles and other delicacies. First seen at a distance when the wet mud shines like the surface of the sea, he looks like a Chinese St. Peter gliding over the face of the waters. In Hong Kong, mud-scooters seem to be confined to the shores of Deep Bay but I believe they are used elsewhere in South China.

When not tending cattle, carrying water or going to school, the children have many diversions, for pleasure or profit. At the right season they collect grasshoppers, to be thrust into a jar through a crosscut in a stiff parchment cover, for sale to the birdshops at a very small sum a hundred. For pleasure they collect jumping spiders called "Kam sz maau" which are stowed in little reed pouches and kept for fighting. Less likeable pursuits, from the bird watchers' view, involve catapults and ingenious bird traps.

I have only once encountered a party of snake-catchers, in a waste of shrubs and bushes near Ping Shan. They were a wild looking lot armed with very long forked poles and carrying what might have been canvas shoe bags. The poles were for forking down into the holes and burrows and driving out the snake, not as you might suppose for pinning it down while its fangs were drawn. They made no objection to displaying their wares and thrust a bare arm into a bag to produce a writhing cobra. "Have the poison fangs been pulled out?" "Oh no!" "Well then what if it bites you?" "Oh it wouldn't do that, they are always friendly once you have caught them." "Well, but if they did bite you?" "Oh they never have much poison in the winter, especially after lunch," etc., etc. I was so stunned by this conversation that I quite forgot to take any photographs and have never had the chance again.

Altogether there should be plenty to watch if the birds are scarce.

E. D. W.

NOTES ON BIRDS WINTERING IN PENANG

by J. Cairns

Not so long ago I lived in a house built on concrete pillars driven into the sea bed and connected to the shore by a concrete bridge. High tide put ten feet of water under it and low tide left great expanses of mud in three directions. There was one large living room the whole width of the house, with six windows — two facing north, two facing east and two facing south. Between each pair of windows I had two pairs of binoculars on tables always available for immediate action — a pair of 10x for picking up and following birds in flight and a pair of 15x for specific identification when settled. At each window was a stool made sufficiently low to bring, when sitting, one's eyes level with the sill which provided perfect stability for the binoculars. Approximately 150 and 250 yards respectively, east of my east windows were several huge isolated boulders and a long curving sandspit which no tide ever submerged. On these boulders, on this bar and over the mud reaches when exposed the migrating legions — waders, terns, plovers — in their due seasons rested and fed. Sitting at meals or writing at my central table, I have merely to look up and see them. High tide was the best time for observation. The birds were then forced to crowd the boulder tops and the long ridge of the sandbar, and with no food available they remained immobilised for hours; dozing, jostling and wing-stretching: always breast to wind. By night and day gangs of sea otters whistled and played and fished under and round the house; and quite frequently pink and grey-dappled porpoises surged past the windows. Lying on the floor I used to watch the otters and their cubs through the seams of the boards: all unaware of my presence less than a yard above them.

In this bird watcher's paradise, daily for five consecutive years, I recorded and tabulated the presence, numbers and movements of every species on southward and northward passage. Throughout this welter of facts and figures a fairly constant pattern of behaviour for each is perceivable, with of course inevitable exceptions. In any region where an appreciable period — say two, three or more months — separates departures and returns there is no problem, but in Penang a number of species never go away. Departures being progressively normal up to the end of May and arrivals from the beginning of July, what was one to conclude about the presence of twenty-one Godwits on the 10th and over a hundred Curlews on the 13th of June? Were they coming or going or doing neither? Every June therefore became the month of confusing elements; but from the continuity of my annual tabulations emerged eventually what I felt was the correct solution:— A daily diminution in numbers must indicate species departing and a daily increase species arriving. This was so simple it had to be true since it resolved all overlapping

movements which occurred only in June. These brief notations are extracts from a typical period of seven months — June to December inclusive — and are offered here because they bear a certain analogy to Hong Kong birds and dates given may prove useful for comparative reference.

JUNE:

First highlight of the month was the occurrence on the 2nd of a magnificent Shahin Falcon — *F.p. peregrinator* — a fine russet-breasted adult. Most of last autumn's visitors have dwindled to a minimum or departed altogether by the end of May but during five consecutive years the following species in full summer plumage and more or less static numbers have lingered throughout their entire breeding seasons:— White-winged Black Tern — *C. leucoptera*, Little Tern — *S. albifrons*, Large Crested Tern — *T.b. cristatus*, Lesser Crested Tern — *T.b. bengalensis*, Large Sand-plover — *C. leschenaultii*, Small Sand-plover — *C.m. atrifrons*, Greenshank — *T. nebularia*. Into this medley of non-breeding "residents" the fresh tide of arrivals begins to flow. Second highlight was the advent of two Red-tailed Tropic Birds — *P. rubricaudus* — on 12th passing low over the town going northwest under rain-loaded skies. Third highlight was the occurrence of two Pomarine Skuas — *S. pomarinus* — both light phase birds, on the 8th. They were systematically harrying the fishing Terns, including the Large & Lesser Crested. These two birds ranged the waters of the inner roads until 14th July, then vanished. On the 11th eight Little Ringed Plover — *C.d. curonicus* and a solitary Kentish Plover — *C. alexandrinus* — were tripping about on the sandbar. A very early single Whimbrel — *N.p. variegatus* — the first of the new season was seen and heard as it passed southward on the 19th. Also on this date twenty-one Yellow-breasted Buntings — *E.a. aureola* — were noted on reclaimed land behind the house and remained till the 21st. Early on the 28th four Noddy Terns — *A. stolidus* — were seen at rest on a floating timber.

JULY:

The Tern invasion is now in full swing. From the 3rd onwards the following were observed in daily increasing numbers — White Winged Black, Little, Large Crested, Lesser Crested, Common — *S.h. longipennis* and Gull-Billed — *G.n. affinis*. A special feature was the presence of ten Panayan or Bridled Terns. — *S.a. anaethetus* — on the 13th. This is a blue water bird breeding on islands in Malayan seas but ranges over shallow water at other times. One bird of this party chased by a Peregrine — *F.p. calidus* — crashed through an open window of my living room expiring from shock within minutes. Five more were seen on the 31st. On the 16th a dark Reef Heron — *D. sacra* — with *red* legs remained on a boulder top for more than two hours and repeatedly dived bodily into the

sea after fish. This unique method was very successful. The legs of this species in the White or Dark phase are normally yellow, and such colour mutation is not yet clearly understood. The first five migratory swallows — *H.r. gutturalis* — passed over 23rd: the first returning Greenshanks — five — the same day: the first Curlew — *N.a. orientalis* — 24th: the first Common Sandpiper — *A. hypoleucos* — two on 29th. To round off the month two Pomarine Skuas — both light phase — were again seen on 31st chasing Terns as usual.

AUGUST:

Curlew, Whimbrel and Greenshank are now pouring in with Common Sandpipers — Large & Small Sand, Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers: while the month also brought those first arrivals:— four Redshanks — *T.t. eurhinus* — on 5th, two Pintail Snipe — *C. stenura*, two Terek Sandpipers — *X. cinereus* and three Red-necked Stints — *E. ruficollis* — on 6th; one Long-toed Stint — *E. subminuta* on 22nd: three Golden Plovers — *P.d. fulva* and one Little Kingfisher — *A.a. bengalensis* — on 24th, and seven Sanderlings — *C. alba* — on 30th; the latter species has first appeared on this same date for five consecutive years. A single White-tailed Tropic Bird — *P. lepturus* — passed on 13th going northwest: and the red-legged Reef Heron was seen again on 29th. The colony of Black-naped Terns — *S.s. sumatrana* — and Roseate Terns — *S.d. bangsi* — have now vacated their breeding station on a nearby offshore islet. The Black-naped return in mid-March and start egg laying early April every year: In forty-three years I have only once seen eggs in March. The Roseates return in May and lay in June.

SEPTEMBER:

Fifteen Grey-Rumped Sandpipers — *H. brevipes* — and the first Grey Plover — *S. squatarola* — of the season were on the spit this morning — 2nd. The smaller Terns of all species are in great numbers, but the Gull-Billed is never so plentiful. A single Brown Booby — *S.l. plotus* — and another Tropic Bird — *P. lepturus* — were present on 14th: the first Turnstone — *A.i. interpres* — on 15th and the first Curlew Sandpipers — *E. testacea* — three birds on 17th. The 18th brought thirty-four Whimbrels and twenty-one Wattled Lapwings — *L.i. atronuchalis* — to the sandbar. Seven Noddy Terns over the waters on 20th: four small Swinhoe Petrels — *O.m. monorhis* — on 21st, and the same day a large flock of fifty Godwits — thirty-two Black-tailed — *L.l. melanuroides* — and eighteen Bar-tailed — *L.l. baueri* — alighted on the bar and remained till dusk. Two Swinhoe Petrels were again seen on 26th and one Pomarine Skua on 27th.

OCTOBER:

On the 1st Whimbrels in big flocks were heard and seen flying south. Once known this bird's rippling call is unforgettable. Five Gulls — *L. ridibundus* — frequented the waters of the North Channel from 5th to 12th and twelve birds were again seen on 22nd. On the 9th Pratincoles — *G. maldivarum* — were numerous. Many big irruptions of this species have occurred over the years, and there have been seasons with few or none; but in 1959 I found a colony of fifteen pairs breeding in Trengganu. The 10th brought some very unusual visitors. Scanning the sandbar just after dawn my slow sweep was arrested by a group of large white birds which proved to be no less than twenty-three White Ibises — *T. ae. melanocephalus* — and nearby but separate a company of thirteen Black-winged Stilts — *H.h. himantopus*: all of which took off south and north respectively at 10 a.m. On the 11th eight Purple Herons — *A.p. manilensis* — passed the entire afternoon ranging along the sand bar but made no attempt to catch fish. Attracted by an eerie double syllable call on 25th, I detected close to some Greenshanks and on the same small reef two Stone Plovers which I identified as *O. magnirostris* — very rare visitors indeed. I saw them daily till the 31st when they vanished. In the afternoon of the 19th a big flock of Waders swept in to alight on a large boulder top where they remained for three hours. Counting and identifying at leisure, this host consisted of fifty-one Black-tailed Godwits, fifteen Bar-tailed Godwits, twenty Redshank and seventeen Greenshanks: the Godwits taller than all the others. Only twenty yards east of this population one hundred and seven Little Terns were at rest on a small sand spit.

NOVEMBER:

One hundred and twelve Red-necked Stints and thirty Long-toed Stints were counted on the 8th. This is about the normal relative proportion for the respective species wherever they are observed; while Temmincks — *E. teminckii* — is always scarce. On the 11th a flock of fifty Sanderlings fed for some hours along the sandbar: and on the 13th two Spotted Greenshanks — *T. guttifer* — were detected in a company of thirty seven Greenshanks crowding one boulder during high tide. A party of five Yellow-breasted Buntings came down on reclaimed land at noon on the 16th and remained for three days. This day also I noted two Painted Storks — *I. leucocephalus* — on the same area: the latter is a rare occurrence for Penang. A beautiful Black Bittern — *D. flavicollis* — and two Tiger Bitterns — *G.m. melanolophus* — were captured on the night of the 21st when they flew into the house. These birds were in excellent plumage and condition and were released next morning.

DECEMBER:

Over three hundred Curlews and two hundred Whimbrels were counted on the 5th. Along the mud reaches these birds foregather in great numbers and roost at night on rocks fringing off-shore islets. Twenty five Sanderlings observed on the 6th. They are easily distinguished from all other small waders by the black bill, legs, shoulders and primaries, grey wings and pure white underparts. About 6 p.m. on 18th a group of birds swept in from the north and alighted on the bar. The party consisted of eight Greenshanks and two Dowitchers or Red-breasted Snipe — *L. griseus* — both were in full winter plumage, but in any plumage the Dowitcher can be quickly identified by the long white V running up the back combined with the white trailing edge to each wing and narrow white bar just above it. Next day 19th a remarkable influx of fifteen White-necked Storks — *E.c. episcopus* — occurred. A Lesser Adjutant — *L. javanicus* — was with them. Throughout this month Terek Sandpipers — the only Sandpiper with orange yellow legs — have been much more numerous than in recent years. Observations made at the same place for thirty-one consecutive days give an aggregate of twelve hundred and sixty-two birds. The southward flight was continuous and provided the unique experience of having a big flock mustering just before dusk and roosting every night on a huge boulder only fifty yards from my north windows and sixty yards from a main bus route! The flight call is a melodious TOOR-LI-LEE. Tattlers or Grey-rumped Sandpipers are sporadic visitors but may be expected at any time in any year from September onwards. A bevy of nine birds was present on Christmas Day.

BIRDS OF MACAO

by E. J. Martinho-Marques

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society boasts of only two members here in Macao, neither of whom has had the time to make accurate observations of the bird life in this Province. From casual observations, however, it seems that no rare species have appeared here.

The urbanization of most of the open areas within Macao has reduced the number of bird-sanctuaries, so that many fewer birds are to be found here than in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, any vigilant bird-watcher in this five-square-mile piece of land, who keeps his eyes open, can always manage to spot some of the commoner birds that tolerate the noise and disturbance of a city.

Leaving the ubiquitous sparrow aside, the WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops japonica*) is very numerous in Macao, and on sunny days may be seen in flocks whirring from tree to tree and uttering their bell-like notes. They are present throughout the year.

The YELLOW BITTERN (*Ixobrychus sinensis*) has been seen during most months of the year. The writer personally observed a pair which had evidently made their nest in a bamboo grove in the garden of an untenanted house. Almost daily during the month of May, the two birds were seen returning home from a northerly direction late in the afternoon. Unfortunately, the house and garden has been given up to building construction and the bamboo grove and the birds have since disappeared.

Three years ago the writer heard an ORIOLE — whose identity seemed to have been confirmed — heralding the sunrise from the top of a tall tree. This was on April 7, 1960, and while this songster has not been heard again, there are reports that this bird is a frequent visitor to the thickly wooded hills of Guia and Montanha Russa.

MAGPIES (*Pica pica*) are very common, especially on Guia Hill where they may be frequently seen and heard, playing "catchers" with one another.

The SPOTTED MUNIA (*Lonchura punctulata*) is fairly populous in the Province and is easily and frequently seen.

The CRESTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) has been heard frequently, though the writer personally has never sighted one.

The HWAMEI (*Garrulax canorus*) is an occasional visitor.

BIRDS OF SOUTH VIETNAM

by Joy Bollback

EGRETS are very common on the northern side of the Province, beyond which the river banks and paddy fields of Lappa Island (Chinese territory) provide feeding-grounds for them. One day, during the summer, the writer saw a large flock of about eighteen of these birds hovering above Ilha Verde. These birds are reported to have their nests on top of the hill, which is fairly wooded and has its share of rocks too, but this area has not been visited as it is within a military zone.

TEALS (*Anas crecca*) have been spotted, on several occasions, flying across Macao's water reservoir at the Porto Exterior. The writer, on an early September evening, saw a pair skimming along the surface of the water at Duck's Channel, which separates Macao from the Chinese territory on the other side.

The COMMON SANDPIPER (*Tringa hypoleucos*) is numerous on the wet lands of Lappa Island and on the stony stretches of Areia Preta in Macao.

OWLS are reported to breed on Lappa Island and, true to popular legends and beliefs, have often been seen at the local cemeteries which they seem to be fond of visiting at night.

Here is an interesting bit of news for bird-lovers. Dr. Alberto Jorge, Deputy for Macao, has launched a programme encouraging the breeding in the wild of CHINESE FRANCOLINS (*Francolinus pintadeanus*) on Taipa and Colowan islands. Flocks of these birds were imported and released on these two islands. From latest reports, the population on Colowan Island seems to have increased considerably in number, but it is feared that the birds on Taipa are having a stiff fight for survival on account of depredations by hawks and wild-cats, from which the francolins have very little protection. The nature of the ground on Taipa Island does not afford them much shelter.

There is no S.P.C.A. in Macao to watch over the interests of its feathered inhabitants, domestic and wild. A local municipal bye-law, however, gives them the protection they deserve. On January 12, 1961, the Macao Municipal Council approved a resolution (Article 103) which states — "It is forbidden, at any time of the year and in all areas in the city of Macao, to hunt with firearms, air-guns or whatever other weapon, such as catapults, slings and bows and arrows, intended for the destruction of birds, under penalty of fines from \$4.00 to \$40.00." This law has, in fact, cut the ground from under the feet of local hunters and other would-be killers of birds!

Having lived in South Vietnam for several months, I was able to see a number of fascinating birds. Dalat is 5,000 feet above sea level and lies about 150 miles north east of Saigon. Pines grow abundantly in this area and in some parts the vegetation is very dense.

Bird life is also abundant but cannot be compared to Hong Kong. During my stay, from July to November, I saw about forty species of birds. There were probably many more exciting birds that I failed to note but I was confined to a rather limited area. Orioles, munias, woodpeckers, swifts, shrikes, bulbuls, drongos, spider-hunters, nuthatches, and jays were common in this mountain region.

The brilliantly colored Mountain Minivet (very similar to the Scarlet Minivet except for habitat) was a frequent visitor to the area. They often went about in small groups of six birds or less. For some reason there was usually only one mature male in such a party. Their melodious calls could often be heard as they flew from tree to tree in search of food.

The Black-naped Oriole was another very common bird in that part. Usually I saw it singly but occasionally I saw up to four together. The Oriole has an unusual three-note call which it repeats for long periods of time.

I saw three types of bulbuls while in Dalat. One was very similar to the Red-vented Bulbul except for a yellow vent in place of the red. These were seen frequently in places where there was cover. The Crested Bulbul was less common, but there was another which I have not yet identified.

On one occasion I went out to a reservoir early in the morning. I did not have the pleasure of seeing many birds but later in the morning a Common Sandpiper appeared at the lake's edge. This was a thrilling sight since this was the only wader I saw in the Dalat area.

Another time someone found a Black-capped Kingfisher that had broken its neck. However, this was the only Kingfisher I saw.

One thing that I noticed, was the lack of birds of prey. At one time I did see two circling in the distance but they were too far away to identify.

The woodpeckers interested me very much since they are so uncommon in Hong Kong. There was one small Pigmy Woodpecker that frequented pine woods. I often heard it drumming on a tree before I actually saw it. Then there was a crested, golden-backed Woodpecker that was much larger. This was much more conspicuous than the former but it was also very uncommon (I only saw it once).

Towards the end of September some Rock-Thrushes appeared. They were very often seen around the school compound and a pair were usually together. They were good songsters and especially liked to perch on something high and conspicuous to sing. These birds were probably migrants.

Drongos frequented the pine groves, where they could be seen especially in the early morning as they flew about catching insects. For the most part they were silent and solitary but occasionally two were seen together.

Some of the birds of South Vietnam, such as the parrots were much more exotic and tropical than our Hong Kong species. The Spiderhunters were interesting birds. They were extremely noisy and were common among banana palms and small trees. I enjoyed seeing them since they were so different from the birds of the Colony.

This does not cover many of the interesting birds of Dalat but there have been quite a few which I have seen that are completely new to me. With my limited experience and only general bird books I have not been able to identify all of them.

BIRD BOOKS

A short description of some books published during the past eighteen months with particulars of author, publisher, price etc.

Those books marked with an asterisk can be seen in the Library of the British Council in Hong Kong.

BIRDWATCHING. E.A.R. Ennion *Pelham Books* 16/-
138 pages Illustrations.

For the amateur ornithologist in any part of the world. Illustrated by sketches and gives sound advice about note taking in the field.

A STUDY OF BIRD SONG. Edward A. Armstrong *Oxford University Press* 45/- 352 pages Illustrations Indexes

Reviews in detail what is known about bird song as revealed by modern recording techniques and considers its various functions in relation to survival and evolution. Invaluable to students as a work of reference.

* COLLINS GUIDE TO BIRD WATCHING. R.S.R. Fitter *Collins* 21/- 244 pages Illustrations Index

By the author of the well-known pocket guides to British birds and flowers. First section deals with useful bird watching equipment: next is a general description of birds and their habitats, group by group. Finally lists of birds are given under the headings of habitat and country so that the bird watcher will know what to look for and where. A model guide for ornithologists visiting Britain.

THE HOUSE SPARROW. D. Summers-Smith *Collins* 21/-
310 pages Illustrations Index

A survey of the world's commonest bird which has spread over most parts and become an economic problem in many. Life histories of colour-ringed individual sparrows are followed and the book provides an understanding of the house-sparrow's behaviour and of its startling success wherever it becomes part of man's life. In part historical.

* BIRDS IN THE SUN Malcolm MacDonald Photographs
by Christina Loke *Witherby* 48/- 128 pages
Coloured illustrations Index

Second in the famous MacDonald/Loke series about Indian birds — of which the first was "Birds in my Indian Garden" — this collection moves farther afield and covers birds of prey, barbets, kingfishers, bee-eaters, mynahs, etc., etc. The colour reproduction is superb and the portraits of kites and eagles outstanding.

THE RETURN OF THE OSPREY. Brown and Waterston *Collins*
21/- 224 pages Illustrations

The story of the money and emotion lavished upon the re-establishment of a few species of the Osprey in Scotland. A tribute to the work of the Bird Protection societies in re-establishing species like the Osprey, Avocet and Black-tailed Godwit in Britain.

A GLOSSARY FOR BIRD WATCHERS. Michael Lister *Phoenix House* 8s 6d 104 pages Frontispiece

A small volume useful to non-zoologists pursuing any aspect of ornithology. Equivalent terms in German, Dutch and French are given.

A BIRD AND ITS BUSH. Michael Lister *Phoenix House* 16/-
142 pages Illustrations Indexes

A valuable book for natural history societies in Britain and elsewhere which are planning surveys. The bird watcher is helped to look at the environment of birds, the roles of geology, soils, and topography: also of weather, vegetation and vegetation types. The relation of birds with other animals is considered and practical and detailed recommendations given about how to survey and analyse habits.

* BIRDS FROM BRITANNIA H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh
Longmans 21/- 118 pages Illustrations Index

An account of visits paid to isolated places in tropical and Antarctic waters during two world tours with exceptional photographs of Antarctic birds in flight. Also contains a series of beautiful wash drawings by Comdr.A.M.Hughes of many of the birds encountered.

DOWN THE LONG WIND Garth Christian *Newnes* 21/-
240 pages Illustrations Index

Deals with the migration of birds mainly as observed and studied in Great Britain. Topics such as drift, navigation by sun and stars and assistance from radar screen observation are also discussed.

* BIRDS OF THE WORLD Oliver Austin *Paul Hamlyn* 84/-
317 pages Illustrations Index

A survey of the 27 orders and 155 families of birds with 300 paintings in full colour by Arthur Singer. More than 700 birds are shown and lucid explanations given about the distribution of bird families throughout the world.

* THE POPULAR HANDBOOK OF BRITISH BIRDS. P.A.D.
Hollom *Witherby* 48/- 511 pages Illustrations Index

By the co-author of "The Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe." Lays special emphasis on field recognition, distribution, habits and breeding. Over 100 drawings in the text help to resolve many problems of identification.

F.C.R.

CHOOSING BINOCULARS

The most important feature about binoculars for bird watching is their light-gathering power, which is dependent upon the field of view (measured as the diameter of the object lens in mm.) and magnification. Ideally the field should be not less than 30 mm. and not more than 50 mm.; and the magnification between 6 and 8 times. The more common combinations of magnification and field used in binoculars now are 6 x 30, 7 x 35, 7 x 50 and 8 x 30. Those with a field of more than 30 mm. tend to be rather large and cannot normally be carried in one's pocket, whereas the smaller ones may be.

Binoculars with a reasonably low magnification (about 7) and a large field (about 50 mm.) tend to have a greater depth of focus than do other types, and in practice you may find that on one setting the glasses will be in focus from about 20 yards to infinity. This is a distinct advantage when 'picking up' flying birds, for with some 8 x 30 models the bird has gone by the time the glasses are in focus.

Do not be tempted to buy larger models such as 12 x 50 for not only are they bulky and heavy but they are difficult to hold steady and tiring to use for long periods, and may result in eyestrain.

On the whole, if you prefer a smaller binocular suitable for carrying in the pocket then buy an 8 x 30 model. If you are not so concerned with weight and size then the 7 x 50 binoculars are very good and strongly recommended.

Types with central focusing are easier to use than those with separate eyepiece focusing, and there is no advantage in the latter type from the point of view of being more airtight, for none of the binoculars sold locally can be guaranteed airtight anyway.

The best makes of binoculars are undoubtedly Zeiss, Ross, Bausch and Lomb, etc., but are very expensive. However, several makes of Japanese binoculars are both good and quite cheap, these being Cannon, Nikon and Limer, for which one has to pay about H.K.\$100-200. The other Japanese makes are cheaper than this but may not be very good.

Limer also manufactures prismatic telescopes and various models are available in Hong Kong. The best ones have an objective of 60 mm. and magnifications of 2-40 times, are provided with a small tripod and cost about \$200.

D. S. H.

SIGHT-RECORDS OF RARE BIRDS

(Extracted from the editorial in "British Birds",

Vol: XLV, No. 1, January, 1952)

Accurate sight-records of rare birds are important because they add to knowledge without causing the destruction involved in the alternative method of collecting specimens. However, sight-records are of very little use if not above suspicion.

Do not record a rare bird as seen for certain unless you have taken down on the spot its characteristics before consulting a work on ornithology. It is entirely unsatisfactory to view a bird in the field, taking insufficient notes, and then, finding its supposed portrait or description in a book, even a short time afterwards, to proceed to work out an account or sketch of what was seen.

Ideally field-notes of a rarity should cover the following points:—

1. Distance of bird from you, whether you were using glasses or not, and nature and direction of light.

2. Nature of ground it was on and what other birds (if any) it was associating with.

3. Whether you saw it from different angles; whether at rest or in flight; whether from above or below. (The more varied the conditions of observation the better).

4. What were its actions and what was the character of its flight compared with other birds.

5. Its general form as compared with other birds, and how it differed from other birds at all like it which are known to you.

6. Particular points in structure as compared with other birds, such as size and shape of bill, length of legs, shape of wing, length of tail.

7. Colour of bill, legs and feet; any distinctive white or coloured patches or markings and their exact position. A rough sketch or diagram is a great help. (Some general anatomy should be learnt so that you can give the colour of wing coverts, under tail-coverts, nape, throat, chin or other parts of the plumage accurately).

8. So far as possible, an exact description of the whole plumage of the bird, not only the parts which you think may help in identifying it.

9. Any calls or notes, indicating especially the quality of the sound (harsh, rattling, shrill, hoarse, liquid, etc.), and comparison with notes of other species if this assists the description.

RECORDING

1. Records can be sent in to the Hon. Recorder at any time, but preferably quarterly or at worst half-yearly. Anyone leaving the Colony is asked to send in his records before departure if possible; notes have a nasty habit of getting mislaid "en voyage".

2. Use a separate sheet of paper (6" by 4" used horizontally) for each species.

3. Head each sheet and complete it as follows:—

YEAR	SPECIES	CHECK LIST NO.
Date	Place	Observer's Initials Numbers, age, sex, etc.
e.g. 1961	BONELLI'S EAGLE	60 X.Y.Z. One Male
1st Jan.	Tai Mo Shan	Two immatures flying South about 2 P.M.
4th Feb.	Ping Shan Marshes	

4. Please do NOT use diary form.

5. Whenever possible obtain confirmation of a rarity by getting someone else to see it. At least take full notes on the spot and send them in with your records. Do NOT guess or imagine details afterwards. Please read the extract from the British Birds editorial on the following page. It is important that our standards in Hong Kong should be as high as possible. Nevertheless, it is hoped that members will send in reports of rarities even when they are doubtful whether they have enough supporting evidence to make the observation a certainty. Subsequent events sometimes support a report of this kind, or it may tie in with those of other observers.

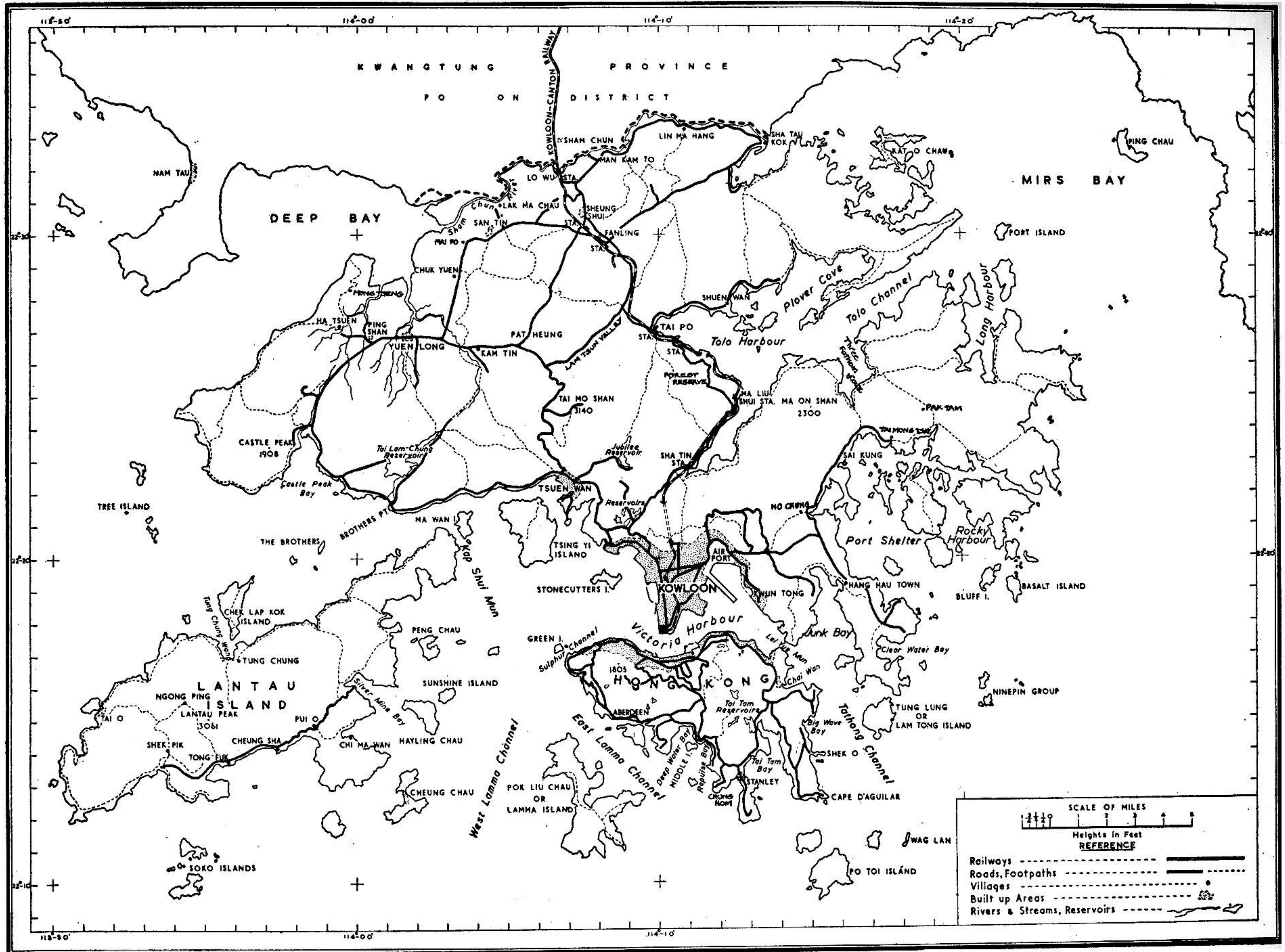
6. Remember that your records will be kept for future reference. Please type or write them neatly and legibly.

7. The following information about the Colony's birds is particularly needed:—

- Positive breeding records for all species in all areas.
- Nesting data, such as breeding period, clutch size, incubation and fledging periods.
- Arrival and departure dates of summer and winter visitors.
- Reports from the New Territories *East* of the Kowloon-Canton railway.

(a) and (b) are best recorded on nesting cards which may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. Full instructions are printed on them. When completed they should be sent to the Hon. Recorder.

HONG KONG AND THE NEW TERRITORIES



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