

THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1984/1985



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THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

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(A registered society under the Hong Kong Societies Ordinance)

Records compiled by M.L. Chalmers
Report edited by V.B. Picken

**Officers of the Society
(1985)**

Chairman G.C.H. Cooper
Secretary S. Smith
Treasurer J.S.R. Edge
Recorder M.L. Chalmers

EDITORIAL NOTE

The contents of the 1984/85 Hong Kong Bird Report differ from those of previous years. With the publication of the fourth edition of the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong it was felt that inclusion of an annual systematic list was no longer essential as the Checklist provides an accurate summary of the status of species recorded in Hong Kong up to mid-1985.

The traditional Report on the Birds comprising a review of the year's events with monthly summaries based on abridged and updated versions of the Society's quarterly bulletins, is now followed by the Records Committee Report which replaces the systematic list. This Report gives details of all accepted records of rarities and other species of local interest. By popular request a list of the submitted records which were rejected is also included for the first time. Next is a brief report on significant breeding records and finally there is an addendum to the fourth edition of the Annotated Checklist including both updated information and corrections to the text.

Apparently not content with the remarkable and ever-increasing wealth of our own avifauna, Hong Kong birdwatchers have made several exploratory visits to the People's Republic of China during the last two years. Four trips to Nan Kun Shan Nature Reserve, Guangdong Province, have resulted in a paper, included in this Report, which describes the reserve, compares the habitat with that in Hong Kong and provides a systematic list of birds recorded there. A visit to Poyang Lake, Jiangxi Province, was made at the request of the Beijing Forestry Bureau, the purpose being to survey and census the wintering bird populations of the reserve. The resulting paper is also published in this Report. Ben King, who needs no introduction, has provided an account of his visit to Pangquanguo Reserve in Shanxi Province and another of the birds of the Yi Shan area in Jianxi Province.

The apparent extension of the range of certain species from South China into Hong Kong in recent years makes these excursions into China particularly exciting but it should not be thought that our own territory is being neglected. Indeed, the increase in numbers and expertise of Hong Kong observers has resulted in more frequent coverage of our recognised birding sites. Home-based reports published here include those on the Waterfowl Counts for 1984 and 1985 and one on the first Christmas Count, held in December 1985.

VERITY PICKEN

REPORT ON THE BIRDS 1984

M.L. Chalmers

Two entirely new species were added to Category A and two more, which were about to be relegated to Category F because of doubts over previous records, were re-established by new sightings. The first two were a Black-shouldered Kite at several locations in the North-west New Territories in February and a Rosy Starling at Ha Tsuen at the end of December. The second two were a Pechora Pipit at Mai Po in April and a Von Schrenck's Little Bittern at Deep Water Bay in May.

Two additional species were added to Category D. This Category, established in the new 4th edition of the Annotated Checklist, is for birds which are probably wild but for which the possibility of escape cannot be satisfactorily excluded. The two species involved were a Grey-cheeked Fulvetta in Tai Po Kau in October and a Hawfinch at Mong Tseng in December, both species which are traded regularly.

Notable breeding records included the attempt by a pair of Crested Kingfishers at Plover Cove and the colony of Black-naped Terns in Miro Bay.

The mid-winter waterfowl count was held as usual in January and requests for information for the breeding birds survey continued. However, 1984 will be remembered most as the first year in which the Hong Kong Big Bird Race was held. This popular event has grown to be a major focal point in the birding calendar and a most successful means of raising funds for the World Wildlife Fund project at Mai Po.

A monthly summary is given below:

January

Thrushes were relatively common with Pale and Dusky Thrushes being apparently more numerous and widespread than usual. Red-flanked Bluetails and Red-breasted Flycatchers were also widely reported in small numbers and Rufous Turtle Doves were fairly common. The pair of Crested Kingfishers first seen at Plover Cove in December last year was found to be defending a nest hole against the neighbouring Pied Kingfishers. On 7th a female Mandarin was found at a pool along Tai Tam Catchwater and stayed there until late March. On the same day a Sulphur-breasted Warbler was reported from Tai Po Kau. The next day a dazzling drake Baikal Teal was located at Mai Po. A female was subsequently found there on 28th and the male was seen intermittently up to March. These records were the first in Hong Kong for 23 years. The co-ordinated waterfowl count held in the Deep Bay area on 14/15th produced over 23,000 birds of 55 species (see separate report) including 38 Dalmatian Pelicans, 33 Black-faced Spoonbills and 413 Falcated Teal. Other rare duck included up to five Common Pochard and two Scaup at Mai Po on 22nd. There were also several out of season reports of Chestnut Bitterns during the month. A

male Great Spotted Woodpecker was sighted in the Zoological and Botanical Gardens on 22nd and seen again in Victoria Barracks in February.

February

On 2nd a Black Vulture was seen in flight at Lantau. There were several wintering records of Great Reed Warblers at Mai Po while Water Pipits and European Starlings were reported in the Lok Ma Chau/ San Tin area at the beginning of the month. On 11th a pair of Crested Goshawks displaying in Tai Po Kau indicated probable breeding. On 14th there was an exciting addition to the Hong Kong List with the finding of a Black-shouldered Kite near Lau Fau Shan. The bird was located again at Ha Tsuen and Mai Po on 18th, when it was watched stooping at a flock of over 100 Dusky Thrushes. A male Hen Harrier was reported over Mai Po on 18th. An unidentified dowitcher, probably Long-billed, was recorded at Mai Po on 24th and 22 Saunders' Gulls were seen there the next day. Black Bulbuls remained common at Tai Po Kau and six were seen at Hong Kong University on 26th.

March

Rare gull records continued with a second-winter Great Black-headed Gull at Pak Nai on 10/11th and a first-winter Common Gull there on 13th. The Crested Kingfishers were seen for the last time on 11th and on 17th evidence of human interference was found at the abandoned nest hole. Five Penduline Tits, the second record for the Territory, were sighted at Mai Po on 17th. The spring wader passage began as usual towards the end of the month with all the regular species represented including Great Knot and Asiatic Dowitcher. Passerine migrants at this time included a few Narcissus Flycatchers, Ashy Minivets and White-throated Needletails.

April

Two teams competed in the first Hong Kong Big Bird Race on 7th. The winners, the World Wildlife Fund team, recorded 124 species, a new daily maximum, and over HK\$30,000 was raised for the WWF Mai Po project. Details are given in a separate book published by WWF HK (*Hong Kong's Own Big Bird Race*, Cooper, Chalmers & Viney, 1984). Included in the combined total of 141 species were two Australian Curlews, two Saunders' Gulls and two small groups of Grey-faced Buzzard Eagles. Three Japanese Yellow Buntings were located at Mai Po on 10th during a period of marked bunting passage. This was only the second record, the first being 124 years earlier in 1860. Passage waders were prominent in the Deep Bay area and a new high of 37 Great Knot was reported on 16th at Mai Po. A single Spoon-billed Sandpiper was also seen there on 14th and 16th with another at Tsim Bei Tsui on 29th. On this last day five Swinhoe's Egrets were also recorded at the Fence and an amazing total of 325 Asiatic Dowitchers was counted in one flock at Mai Po with another 14 at Tsim Bei Tsui. At the time this was the second highest total ever recorded in the world and compared with the 400 seen earlier the same month in Thailand. Other rarities on this remarkable day included a Pechora Pipit and Chestnut-cheeked Starling at Mai Po. In contrast the spring flycatcher passage was considered to be poor,

the only widespread species being Grey-streaked Flycatcher.

May

On 5th a flock of 11 Blue-tailed Bee-eaters provided a magnificent spectacle at Mai Po. Between the 9th and 11th a female Von Schrenck's Little Bittern turned up in the unlikely locality of the Deep Water Bay Golf Course. During the month an Orange-headed Ground Thrush was regularly heard in song in Tai Po Kau and appeared to be holding territory, thus raising hopes of adding this attractive species to our breeding birds. Other scarce residents or summer visitors reported at this time included 14 Black Bazas in the Lam Tsuen Valley and two Chinese Babax at Tai Mo Shan. After unsettled weather and heavy rain a sparkling selection of waders turned up at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on 20th including five Spoon-billed Sandpipers (a new high), three Nordmann's Greenshank and over 300 Grey-rumped Sandpipers.

June

After the excitement of the spring passage this month was relatively uneventful. The Blackbird of dubious origin was still singing in the Zoological and Botanical Gardens on 4th, Large Grass Warblers were reported at Tai Mo Shan, Grey-throated Minivets and Hainan Blue Flycatchers bred at Tai Po Kau and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos bred at Battery Path in Central.

July

An expedition on 7th to the island in Mirs Bay where Black-naped Terns bred last year found 60 adults and about 20 juveniles. Fears that earlier disturbance may have seriously affected this precarious colony appeared unfounded. A single White-winged Black Tern in the same area was an unusual summer record. A further unexpected bonus occurred on 22nd with the sighting at close quarters of two Greater Crested Terns on rocks at the entrance to Tolo Channel.

August

The first of three Hoopoes within four weeks was reported on 11th at Tsim Bei Tsui while a Black Bittern, one of Hong Kong's most elusive marsh birds, was sighted near Yuen Long Creek on 19th. Several Asian Paradise Flycatchers at the end of the month marked the beginning of the autumn flycatcher passage.

September

Wader numbers were generally low but increased on 22nd with several Terek and Grey-rumped Sandpipers and Whimbrel at the Fence and Marsh Sandpipers and Black-winged Stilts at Mai Po. Evidence of a fall of passerine migrants about this time was given by a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler at Tsim Bei Tsui and two Purple-backed Starlings at Mai Po together with increased numbers of Arctic and Yellow-browed Warblers in other areas. The month

ended with an immature Tiger Shrike at Tai Po Kau on 26th.

October

On 2nd an Orange-bellied Leafbird was first reported at Tai Po Kau and was subsequently seen intermittently until January 1985. Another Purple-backed Starling turned up at Mai Po on 14th and a Lanceolated Warbler was flushed from the paddy at Tai Long Wan on 20th. What was probably the same bird was seen there again in early November. On 25th a Grey-cheeked Fulveta was found in Tai Po Kau and accepted to Category D because of the possibility of escape or release.

November

The first of several scattered reports of Yellow-bellied Tits was noted on 4th at She Shan. Wintering duck returned to Mai Po. The scarcer species included a drake Common Pochard and up to three Baer's Pochard on 10th and 45 Tufted Duck from 20th.

December

On 9th a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was seen in a mixed flock of warblers and tits at Sek Kong. Two Siskins were found in Tai Po Kau on 16th and numbers then increased to seven with birds present up to February 1985. On 26th a Hawfinch was recorded at Mong Tseng. Although the sighting fitted well with a cold-weather movement of a wild bird, this species remains for the time being in Category D. The month and year ended on a high note on 30th with at least one Great Black-headed Gull at Tsim Bei Tsui and a Rosy Starling at Ha Tsuen. The latter was the first to be accepted for Hong Kong and remained throughout the winter.

The following observers submitted record cards for this report:—

C.P. Barnes, E.A. Barnes, R.J. Barnes, C. Briffett, A. Cheung, M.L. Chalmers, N. Champion, C.R. Clark, G.C.H. Cooper, R. Ferguson, D.J. Galloway, C. Hilton, P.R. Kennerley, A.R. Lamont, D.S. Melville, A. Murray, W. Parfitt, E. Parker, C.J. Pike, E.G.B. Powell, C. Rampton, R. Sinclair, S.P. Smith, R.P. Tipper, C.A. Viney, D. Walker, M.A. Webster, C.D. Weidemann.

I should like to thank Margaret Chan who kindly typed this draft.

RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT 1984

M.L. Chalmers

CATEGORY A. SPECIES WHICH HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN AN APPARENTLY WILD STATE IN HONG KONG WITHIN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.

- 7. Dalmatian Pelican** *Pelecanus crispus*
Recorded regularly in Deep Bay up to 9 April and from 16 December with a maximum of 38 on 14 January.

- 12. Von Schrenck's Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*
An adult female seen at close quarters along the stream on the west side of Deep Water Bay Golf Course on 9, 10 and 11 May. (TRC, CAV, PRK *et al*)
This is the first satisfactory record of this species as previous published records in 1956 and 1957 cannot be confirmed and may have been confused with Yellow or Chestnut Bitterns *sinensis* or *cinnamomeus*.

- 14. Black Bittern** *Ixobrychus flavicollis*
An immature at Yuen Long Creek on 19 August.

- 20. Swinhoe's Egret** *Egretta eulophotes*
Five seen on bunds at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on 29 April with a single bird there on 5 and 6 May.

- 31. European Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*
Up to 14 at Mai Po between 28 January and 16 April, and one there from 8 December.



European Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia*
Mai Po, February.

(A.J. Brandt)

- 32. Black-faced Spoonbill** *Platalea minor*
Recorded up to 2 May, with a maximum of 33 on 14 January, and from 25 November.

- 39. Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*
A female present at Tai Tam Catchwater between 7 January and 25 March.

- 41. Falcated Teal** *Anas falcata*
Several hundred wintered as usual at Mai Po. Maximum count was 413 on 14 January.

- 43. Baikal Teal** *Anas formosa*
A drake at Mai Po from 8 January intermittently up to 12 March. What was presumably the same bird seen at San Tin on 18 March. Also a female at Mai Po on 28 January.
These are the third and fourth records for Hong Kong and the first since 1961.

- 50. Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*
Up to four drakes and one duck at Mai Po up to 19 February. One drake present at Mai Po from 10 November, a new early date, until January 1985.

- 51. Baer's Pochard** *Aythya baeri*
Up to four at Mai Po until 18 March and up to three present from 10 November, a new early date.

- 53. Scaup** *Aythya marila*
At least two ducks remained at Mai Po from the four seen at the end of 1983 until 22 January.

- 59. Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*
An immature first seen near Lau Fau Shan on 14 February and then at Ha Tsuen and Mai Po on 18 February (EP, MLC, CAV *et al*). As there was a three hour interval between the sightings at Ha Tsuen and Mai Po, it was assumed that the same bird was involved.

At Ha Tsuen it was watched at close quarters perched on the overhead wires and then stooping unsuccessfully on a large flock of over 100 Dusky Thrushes *Turdus naumanni*. There were also large numbers of buntings present, mostly Yellow-breasted *Emberiza aureola*.

The bird was considered to be immature because of the brownish cast to the flight feathers on the closed wing. In flight the underwing showed black extending across the secondaries as well as the primaries suggesting that the bird may have belonged to the Philippine race *hypoleucos* as opposed to the southern China race *vociferous*, which has whitish secondaries.

This is the first record for Hong Kong.

- 62. Black Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*
One in flight near Tai O, Lantau on 2 February.

- 65. Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*
A male soaring over Pak Hok Chau, Mai Po on 18 February.

- 66. Pied Harrier** *Circus melanoleucos*
A male and two females circling above Tsim Bei Tsui on 17 October. Single unidentified birds which were probably females of this species were reported at Mai Po on 15 and 28 January, 17 March and 21 October.
- 70. Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus*
One or two birds (a pair) regularly seen at Tai Po Kau between 4 February and 25 October, Sek Kong Catchwater (Tsing Tam) on 20 April and between 6 September and 15 October, and Island School in April. Also one at Victoria Barracks on 19 June and Mount Nicholson on 12 and 27 November. Display behaviour often noted at Tai Po Kau. On 11 February the female was observed to break off several dead branches, bow four to five times with each stick in its bill and then, with high-pitched cries, take the sticks in her talons to a tree-top, all in sight of the male.
- 71. Horsfield's Goshawk** *Accipiter soloensis*
Single birds at Shek O on 29 April and Mai Po on 21 October.
- 72. Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle** *Butastur indicus*
One at Mai Po on 17 March, three at San Tin on 23 March, seven at Mai Po on 24 March, two at Mai Po and three at Tai Po Kau on 7 April, five at Pat Sin on 8 April and one at Wu Kai Sha on 19 April.
- 74. Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*
One or two juveniles regularly seen at Mai Po or San Tin up to 1 April and one or two there from 1 November until the end of the year.
- 75. Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*
Up to three in the Deep Bay area up to 9 April and from 25 November.
- 85. Japanese Quail** *Coturnix japonica*
One flushed at San Tin on 4 April and one at Mong Tseng on 26 December.
- 94. Crimson-legged Crake** *Amaurornis akool*
Two at Wu Kau Tang on 24 March.
- 100. Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*
Two at San Tin on 29 April and one at Double Haven on 7 October.
- 116. Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris*
Regularly recorded at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui between 24 March and 20 May with numbers rising to 21 on 15 April and 37, a new maximum, at Mai Po the next day.
- 125. Spoon-billed Sandpiper** *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*
Single birds at Mai Po on 14 and 16 April, Tsim Bei Tsui on 29 April and 31 May, and five at Tsim Bei Tsui on 20 May, a new maximum count for Hong Kong. All but one (on 20 May) were in non-breeding plumage.
- 127. Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*
One at San Tin on 16 March and one at Mai Po on 4 April and 2 May.

- 128. Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*
Single birds flushed at Sha Ma (near Sai Kung) on 15 January and Tsung Pak Long on 20 March.
- 131. Swinhoe's Snipe** *Gallinago megala*
One at Tung Chung on 23 April. At least one flushed at Tai Long Wan on 28 April, at least three there on 20 October and at least one there on 3 November, a new late date.
- [**133. Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus/griseus*
A single bird at Mai Po on 24 February in non-breeding plumage was either Long-billed or Short-billed Dowitcher *L. scolopaceus/griseus*.]
- 134. Asiatic Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus*
Up to 11 at Mai Po or Tsim Bei Tsui Fence between 1 April and 27 May (a new late date), except for exceptionally large numbers on 29 April with a flock of at least 325 at Mai Po and 14 at Tsim Bei Tsui. At the time this was the second highest total recorded in the world and followed a sighting of a flock of 400 in Thailand earlier the same month (Legakul, Round & Komolphalin, *British Birds* (1985) Vol. 78, 2-39).
- 141. Australian Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis*
One at Mai Po on 10 March, a new early date, and up to four reported from Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui between 4 April and 12 May, a new late date. One on 21 October at Mai Po.
- 146. Nordmann's Greenshank** *Tringa guttifer*
Three at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on 20 May. This is the fourth record for Hong Kong.
- 156. Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus*
A second-winter at Pak Nai on 10 and 11 March. Two birds seen together in flight at Tsim Bei Tsui on 30 December. One was in second-winter plumage while the other bird, probably also this species, was in first-winter plumage. These are the fourth and fifth records for Hong Kong.
- 157. Saunders' Gull** *Larus saundersi*
Recorded regularly at Mai Po between 25 February and 11 April, with a maximum of 24 on 10 March. Also about ten in Deep Bay on 8 December.
- 159. Brown-headed Gull** *Larus brunnicephalus*
An adult at Mai Po on 18 March.
- 161. Common Gull** *Larus canus*
A first-winter at the gull roost at Pak Nai on 13 March was only the fifth record for Hong Kong.
- 169. Greater Crested Tern** *Sterna bergii*
Two adults watched at close quarters and photographed on rocks next to the light beacon at the mouth of Tolo Harbour on 22 July. This is the fifth record for Hong Kong.

170. Black-naped Tern

Sterna sumatrana

Recorded in the Tap Mun area between 28 April and 22 July. Indications are that at least 60 adults bred or attempted to breed in the area and that at least 20 juveniles were fledged. Up to five unfledged young were still present on ledges on 7 July.



Black-naped Terns *Sterna sumatrana*
Mirs Bay, July.

(Ray Tipper)

172. Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

Over 40 in Tolo Harbour on 28 April, two at Kadoorie Beach on 29 April and one immature at Mai Po on 23 September.

192. Oriental Cuckoo

Cuculus saturatus

At least one at Chek Keng on 28 April, and single birds at Sek Kong and She Shan on 29 April. Birds which were either this species or Common Cuckoo *saturatus/canorus* were also seen in a loose flock of ten at She Shan on 6 May and one at Mai Po on 22 September.

200. Barred Owllet

Glaucidium cuculoides

One at Ma Tseuk Leung on 16 April and Sek Kong Catchwater on 5 December.

[206/207. Needle-tail

Hirundapus caudacutus/cochinchinensis

Two at Mai Po on 29 April and at least three at Tai Po Kau on 30 April with Large White-rumped and House Swifts *Apus pacificus & affinis*. In view of the subsequent discovery of White-vented Needle-tail, *H. cochinchinensis* in Hong Kong in 1985 and the fact that the white throat was not seen on these

birds, they are treated here as unidentified needle-tails.]

214. Crested Kingfisher

Ceryle lugubris

A pair seen on a daily basis at Tai Mei Tuk, Plover Cove up to 11 March. The birds were first seen on 21 December 1983. On 24 December a recently excavated nest hole was found. The birds aggressively defended the area around the hole frequently chasing off Pied Kingfishers *Ceryle rudis*. During February the birds became considerably quieter and remained exceptionally wary during early March. It was assumed that they were incubating. The last sighting was on 11 March when a single bird was seen perching openly. On 17 March debris from two eggs was found near the nest site and a wooden plank had been set near the hole. This was the first record of this species since 1968 and the first observed breeding attempt in Hong Kong.

215. Blue-tailed Bee-eater

Merops philippinus

A flock of 11 seen and photographed on overhead wires and on the ground at Mai Po on 5 May.

222. Great Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos major

An adult male at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens on 22 January and 22 February and Victoria Barracks on 12 February.

233. Pechora Pipit

Anthus gustavi

One seen in a reed-bed at Mai Po on 29 April. (RF, TJF)

This is the first satisfactory record for Hong Kong as a previously published record of one on 20 February 1971 cannot on review be satisfactorily separated from Red-throated Pipit *A. cervinus*.

235. Water Pipit

Anthus spinoletta

One at San Tin on 4 February and three there on 4 March. Up to 12 at Ha Tsuen and San Tin from 26 December.

269. Orange-headed Ground Thrush

Zoothera citrina

A male in song at Tai Po Kau on 11 May and 4 June, with other reports between April and August, and an immature there between 23 August and 6 October.

274. Brown Thrush

Turdus chrysolaus

One at Ho Sheung Heung on 7 April.

286. Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler

Locustella certhiola

One at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on 22 September.

288. Lanceolated Warbler

Locustella lanceolata

One flushed from abandoned coastal paddy at Tai Long Wan on 20 October and 3 November.

This is the third record for Hong Kong.

292. Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler

Seicercus burkii

One seen with a mixed foraging flock of warblers and tits at Sek Kong Catchwater on 9 December.

- 295. Large Grass Warbler** *Graminicola bengalensis*
One carrying food to presumed nest site on Tai Mo Shan on 7 June.
- 297. Sulphur-breasted Warbler** *Phylloscopus ricketti*
One in Tai Po Kau on 7 January and two there on 22 November. Also one bird there on 11 March with a white belly below the yellow breast. This is a character of the Yellow-faced Leaf Warbler *Ph. cantator* whose published range is far to the west (Williamson, 1962, *Identification for Ringers* 2 British Trust for Ornithology).
This is not the first time that such a bird has been reported in Hong Kong, there being two previous records in 1966. It is suggested that these records refer either to vagrant *cantator* or an undescribed plumage of *ricketti*. The description of the bird seen on 11 March 1984 was as follows:—
“The upperparts were bright green with a narrow single bright yellow wing bar and edges to tertials. Tail bright green. The head showed a bright yellow supercilium extending from the base of the bill to the rear of the ear coverts. This was bordered by a black eye-stripe and dark coronal bands. The central stripe of the crown was bright yellow. Chin, throat, upper breast and undertail coverts were bright yellow. However, the belly was white and sharply demarcated from the yellow of the breast and undertail coverts. Legs were pale straw in colour.” (PRK)
- [298. Blyth's/White-tailed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides/davisoni*
Reported at Tai Po Kau with one on 7 January, up to five on 5 February, at least three on 29 February, one on 23 November, one on 24 December and three on 29 December. Nuthatch-like behaviour was noted in several of these birds.]
- 299. Eastern Crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus coronatus*
One at Ho Sheung Heung on 23 September.
- 300. Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes*
One at Ho Sheung Heung on 29 September, a new early date by one day.
- 322. Chinese Babax** *Babax lanceolatus*
Two near the summit of Tai Mo Shan on 6 May and 6 June and a flock of 14 there on 25 August.
- 334. Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*
At least five at Mai Po on 17 March, and two there on 21 April.
This is the second record for Hong Kong.
- 341. Tiger Shrike** *Lanius tigrinus*
An immature seen at the terraced picnic area on the Red Walk at Tai Po Kau on 26 September.
This is the second record for Hong Kong.
- 355. Purple-backed Starling** *Sturnus sturninus*
Two at Mai Po on 23 September, a new early date, and one there on 14 October, a new late date.

- 356. Chestnut-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus philippensis*
One with flock of Chinese Starlings *S. sinensis* at Mai Po on 29 April.
This is the second record for Hong Kong.
- 358. European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
Five at Mai Po on 28 January, six at San Tin on 4 February, four at Lok Ma Chau on 14 February, four at Ha Tsuen on 26 December and eight there on 30 December.
- 359. Rosy Starling** *Sturnus roseus*
One first seen at Ha Tsuen on 30 December remained in the area throughout the winter until 16 March 1985.
This was the first definite record for Hong Kong although there had been a previous report at Mai Po in 1982 which was not accepted on the evidence presented.
The following description was submitted for the 1984/85 bird:—
“In size slightly smaller than Grey Starling *S. cineraceus* but distinctly larger than Chinese Starling *S. sinensis* and not as dumpy. The tail was similar in proportion to that of a European Starling *S. vulgaris*. The bird usually remained isolated from all other starlings. The head was dark but conspicuously fringed with pale edges. No crest was visible. The dark area extended onto the chin, throat and upper breast but again was conspicuously marked with pale edges to feathers. The mantle and body including the lower breast and belly were pink but broadly edged with brown fringes. This gave the bird a very dull fawn appearance with a pinkish cast. However, in one or two places on the mantle the brownish fringes had worn off and the light pink colouration could clearly be seen. The undertail coverts were black but broadly edged with white fringes. The tail was dark and the wings were black with glossy or oily purplish-green. There were no white patches on either wing. The rump was slightly paler than the mantle. Legs pale brown. Bill orange with a darker culmen ridge. The bill was slightly decurved unlike all other starlings present. The eye was dark unlike that of Chinese Starling *S. sinensis*.” (PRK).
Rosy Starlings breed from Eastern Europe to Central Asia and regularly winter in India. La Touche referred to a single record in East China; a bird shot at Shanghai in 1888.
- 368. Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*
Two males at Tai Po Kau on 16 December. Numbers subsequently increased up to seven and a small flock remained until February 1985.
This is only the second satisfactory record for Hong Kong. On review the possibility of other previous records being confused with Yellow-fronted Canary *Serinus mozambicus* cannot be excluded.
- 372. Japanese Yellow Bunting** *Emberiza sulphurata*
Three feeding in the casuarina trees at Mai Po on 10 April during a period of marked bunting passage.
This is the second record for Hong Kong, the first and only previous record being a bird seen by Swinhoe 124 years earlier in 1860!

CATEGORY D. SPECIES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN AN APPARENTLY WILD STATE BUT FOR WHICH THE POSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE OR RELEASE FROM CAPTIVITY CANNOT BE SATISFACTORILY EXCLUDED.

703. Silver Pheasant *Lophura nycthemera*
A male at Pokfulam between 5 and 13 October.

706. Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii*
An adult at Tai Po Kau from 2 October until January 1985 showed no signs of having been in captivity.
This is the second record for Hong Kong. A separate unidentified leafbird seen at Tai Mei Tuk on 15 January was probably an escape.

712. Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia*
One at Tai Po Kau on 25 October.
The bird was located in a bird wave. The observer's attention was first attracted by its familiar harsh chatter. The description noted the following features:—

"Grey head, white eye-ring, contrasting with dull buffy underparts and rich brown upperparts." (CAV). As with birds regularly seen at Nan Kun Shan, Guangdong Province, the description fits the race *hueti* as the chin and throat are grey.

Although the bird appeared to be wild and was in suitable habitat, the species was being traded in significant numbers at the time, and the presence of a single bird is not considered sufficient to justify acceptance to Category A.

715. Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
A female/immature at Mong Tseng on 26 December. This is the fourth record for Hong Kong. Although the bird appeared to be wild and the date was consistent with the arrival of a winter visitor from northern China, Hawfinches are regularly traded and at least one of the previous records referred to a tame bird in May. It is considered that further records are needed to justify the transfer of this species to Category A.

CATEGORY E. SPECIES FOR WHICH ALL PUBLISHED RECORDS ARE SUSPECTED OF BEING BIRDS WHICH HAVE ESCAPED OR HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY.

825. Golden Bishop *Euplectes afer*
A male seen regularly at Mai Po in the latter part of the year.

831. Yellow-fronted Canary *Serinus mozambicus*
Up to two at Barbecue Gardens, 17 Miles Castle Peak Road (Siu Lam) between 26 August and 11 November with two recently fledged juveniles indicating successful breeding.

832. Yellow Canary *Serinus flaviventris*
One at Lam Tsuen Valley on 18 March.

THE FOLLOWING RECORDS WERE SUBMITTED BUT NOT ACCEPTED:—

12. Von Schrenck's Little Bittern Two at Sha Ha, Sai Kung on 25 May.
Ixobrychus eurhythmus

34. Bean Goose Two in flight over Mai Po on 17 March.
Anser fabalis

51. Baer's Pochard One at Mai Po on 9 November.
Aythya baeri

— **Merganser** Four ducks seen in flight near Tap Mun on 29 October and subsequently diving were probably Smew *Mergus albellus*. However, the views obtained were insufficient to justify acceptance to the Hong Kong List.
Mergus sp

58. Crested Honey Buzzard One very high over Mai Po on 16 October.
Pernis ptilorhynchus

66. Pied Harrier A male at Mai Po on 15 January.
Circus melanoleucos

67. Northern Goshawk Single birds at Tolo Harbour on 8 January, She Shan on 6 May, Sek Kong Catchwater on 26 May, and Hong Kong University on 31 May.
Accipiter gentilis

68. Japanese Sparrowhawk Single birds at Mai Po on 4 November, Mong Tseng on 26 December.
Accipiter gularis

— **Besra/Shikra** One at Hong Kong University on 4 September.
Accipiter virgatus/badius

91. Baillon's Crane One at Mai Po on 3 March.
Porzana pusilla

111. Oriental Plover One at Tai Long Wan on 10 March.
Charadrius veredus

131. Swinhoe's Snipe One at Mong Tseng on 16 April.
Gallinago megala

157. Saunders' Gull Two flocks in Mirs Bay on 24 March.
Larus saundersi

161. Common Gull One near Peng Chau on 21 January.
Larus canus

204. Japanese Nightjar A male found dead near Wu Kau Tang on 20 April.
Caprimulgus indicus

243. **Rosy Minivet** One at Hong Kong University on 30
Pericrocotus roseus March.
274. **Brown Thrush** One at Pak Tam Chung on 2 February.
Turdus chrysolaus
282. **Mountain Bush Warbler** One at Tai Po Kau on 21 November.
Cettia fortipes
287. **Styan's Grasshopper Warbler** One at Tai Long Wan on 20 October.
Locustella pleskei
288. **Lanceolated Warbler** One at Mui Wo on 19 May.
Locustella lanceolata
291. **Thick-billed Warbler** One at Mai Po on 5 May.
Acrocephalus aedon
299. **Eastern Crowned Warbler** One at Tai Po Kau on 21 December.
Phylloscopus coronatus
300. **Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** One at Shui Hui, Lantau on 21 January.
Phylloscopus tenellipes
304. **Radde's Warbler** A single bird seen at Wu Kai Sha on 19
Phylloscopus schwarzi April was probably this species but the
description was insufficient to justify
acceptance to the Hong Kong List.
341. **Tiger Shrike** One at Hong Kong University on 21 and
Lanius tigrinus 31 May.
- **Daurian Jackdaw** One at Hong Kong University on 17
Corvus dauuricus May.
355. **Purple-backed Starling** Three at San Tin on 18 February.
Sturnus sturninus
- **Small Niltava** One at Tai Po Kau on 11 March.
Niltava macgrigoriae
379. **Reed Bunting** A female at Mai Po on 20 April.
Emberiza schoeniclus
702. **Grass Owl** One in flight over sea near Lamma on 20
Tyto capensis April.
- **Layard's Parakeet** One at Shui Hau, Lantau on 21 January.
Psittacula calthorpae
905. **Spotted-billed Pelican** One at Mai Po on 17 March.
Pelecanus philippensis

908. **White-tailed Eagle** One at Kau Yi Chau on 16 April.
Haliaeetus albicilla
911. **Steppe Eagle** One at Mai Po on 7 February.
Aquila rapax

SIGNIFICANT BREEDING RECORDS 1984

M.L. Chalmers

This report summarises confirmed or probable breeding records in 1984 of some of Hong Kong's rarer breeding species or those suspected of breeding.

17. **Little Green Heron** *Butorides striatus*
At least three pairs bred in dead mangroves at Mai Po.
26. **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*
Two very young birds seen at Mai Po on 30 June and two others carrying sticks indicated probable breeding.
70. **Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus*
See Records Committee Report.
83. **Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*
Two adults with one young (*pullus*) were located at a breeding site in the Eastern New Territories on 23 April.
106. **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*
A nest with four eggs was found on an undeveloped part of the Yuen Long Industrial Estate on 27 May. On 18 June at Tai Po Industrial Estate two birds and six other recently fledged young were noted. On 19 June one adult and four chicks were seen at Marina Cove, Ho Chung.
170. **Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana*
See Records Committee Report.
214. **Crested Kingfisher** *Ceryle lugubris*
See Records Committee Report.
245. **Grey-throated Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris*
A family of two adults and five recently fledged juveniles was seen in Tai Po Kau on 18 June proving breeding for the first time.
269. **Orange-headed Ground Thrush** *Zoothera citrina*
See Records Committee Report.
307. **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis hainana*
Up to two singing males at Tai Po Kau in May and June.
350. **Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae*
Breeding suspected at Hong Kong University.
603. **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** *Cacatua sulphurea*
Breeding confirmed in hole in tree at Battery Path, Central, but young taken on 26 June.
831. **Yellow-fronted Canary** *Serinus mozambicus*
See Records Committee Report.

REPORT ON THE BIRDS 1985

M.L. Chalmers and P.R. Kennerley

1985 was a notable year for several reasons. Firstly it produced at least five new species for Category A of the Hong Kong List, the part for apparently wild birds recorded within the last 50 years, and four new species for Category D, which contains apparently wild birds for which the possibility of escape or release cannot be satisfactorily excluded. It also provided a wide range of other vagrants due partly to the increased activity generated by the Big Bird Race in April and partly to a greater number of active observers and overseas visitors.

The first new bird to be recorded was a single immature Glaucous-winged Gull in Deep Bay on 27 February. Unidentified immature large gulls, which are not obvious Herring Gulls, have been seen regularly over the last few years. Slaty-backed, Glaucous-winged or hybrids have been suspected. Part of this puzzle was resolved by Dr. Mark Brazil, who has been resident in Japan for several years and is familiar with these species, when he identified the Deep Bay bird as Glaucous-winged.

The second new bird of the year was a White-vented Needletail seen at close quarters in flight on Tai Mo Shan on 24 April. Since 1977 the closely related White-throated Needletail has been seen regularly each spring, but this was the first time the White-vented was separated here; the main difference is its darker throat.

The next new species was a Streaked Shearwater seen off the Ninepins on 3 May. There have been previous records of birds just outside Hong Kong waters: one which was probably released from Aberdeen and found with wire round its bill, and several on sale at hawkers' stalls. The Ninepins bird was the first indisputable record of a wild bird in Hong Kong waters.

The fourth and fifth new birds were both terns, Roseate and Bridled, found at a breeding colony of Black-naped Terns in Mirs Bay in June and July. They are both known to breed on the China Coast and offshore islands but it was still a surprise to find them in Hong Kong. The Roseates were proved to be breeding but the Bridleds were probably only prospecting. There have been sight records in previous years of birds claimed as Roseate Terns but up to 1985 none was considered adequate for inclusion in the Hong Kong List.

The Rosy Starling, first recorded at Ha Tsuen in December 1984, remained in the area and at Tsim Bei Tsui up to 17 April, and was joined by a second bird on 19 January.

The additions to Category D were a Shore Lark at Mount Davis on 16 May, at least two Rufous-capped Babblers in a flock of about ten babblers at Tai Po Kau on 29 June and a single Japanese Grosbeak at She Shan on 30 November.

The ever-increasing list of escapes was augmented by a flock of free-flying Swan Geese which caused considerable excitement when first found at Kowloon Reservoirs. Subsequent investigations revealed that the partially pinioned birds had been offloaded from lorries and released by Buddhists.

Examples of second and third records for Hong Kong included Siskins in January and February, a Ruddy Shelduck in January, April, May and December, a Black-shouldered Kite in February, Japanese Yellow Buntings, a Chestnut-cheeked Starling and Rosy Minivets all in April, Pechora Pipits in May, Radde's Warblers in November and December and a Velvet Scoter in December. There were also records of Category D Orange-bellied Leaf-birds in January, November and December.

Another reason for remembering 1985 will be certain exceptional features of the spring migration. These included the heavy bunting passage in April, which produced all the regular species in greater numbers than usual and in addition gave us records of Rustic and Japanese Yellow Buntings. There had only been two previous records of the latter, one of which was by Swinhoe in 1860! Later in the month the wader passage was to include up to 12 Nordmann's Greenshanks, which formerly had only occurred in ones and twos, and exceptional numbers of Little Whimbrel with flocks of 45 at Tsim Bei Tsui and 80 at Mai Po. An example of the concentrated passage of birds of prey which followed was flocks of 110 and 600+ Horsfield's Goshawks at Tsim Bei Tsui.

As far as breeding birds are concerned, the most exciting find was the new tern colony in Mirs Bay. Because of its isolation and the difficulty in landing, the rock where the terns bred has apparently enjoyed relatively little disturbance in the past. However, with increased pleasure-boating in the area both this island and the one where the Black-naped Terns bred in 1984 have on occasions suffered large numbers of thoughtless visitors who are considered to present a serious risk for the future. Yellow-nib Duck again bred at Mai Po while at Tai Po Kau Scarlet Minivets, Hainan Blue Flycatchers and White-bellied Yuhinas were proved to breed. Orange-headed Ground Thrushes were also found singing there in spring. Grey-headed Parrotbills bred at Mount Nicholson adding further confusion to the true status of this species in Hong Kong.

Three major organised events took place in 1985. The annual waterfowl count was held on the middle weekend of January and recorded over 27,000 birds of 64 species. For the first time counting was carried out simultaneously in the Fu Tien Reserve on the other side of Deep Bay from Mai Po. Counting waders for the Interwader project continued but with very few contributors. On 13 April the second Big Bird Race took place to raise funds for the World Wildlife Fund Nature Reserve at Mai Po. Society members were in all seven of the competing teams. Remarkably \$500,000 was raised and a total of 186 species was seen. For those who have not yet read of the events of that legendary day, copies of the race booklet may be obtained from WWF HK. The last event was a new one — a co-ordinated Christmas count to assess the variety and order of numbers of winter visitors. A total of 184 species was recorded, which was surprisingly close to the Bird Race total. Because of its success this count will no doubt establish itself as

a regular feature of the ornithological calendar as well as being an enjoyable way to work off the excesses of Christmas.

A monthly summary is given below:

January

Tai Po Kau held several Robin Flycatchers throughout the month while other interesting species recorded there included Orange-bellied Leafbird, Serpent Eagle, up to three Siskins plus the more usual Grey, Grey-backed, Pale and White's Thrushes. A Barred Owlet was found at Sek Kong on 1st while Yellow-bellied Tits, Plumbeous Water Redstarts, Common Rosefinches and Black-tailed Hawfinches were recorded at scattered localities in the Lam Tsuen Valley. Sek Kong also held Grey-headed, Black-naped Monarch and Red-breasted Flycatchers on 6th. The Rosy Starling found at Ha Tsuen in December 1984 remained there throughout the month and was joined by a second bird on 19th. Ha Tsuen proved interesting during the month with its varied and rather sticky habitats providing excellent feeding for a wide variety of species including Dusky Thrush, Silky, Chinese and up to 167 Grey Starlings, several Red-throated and a couple of Water Pipits. The co-ordinated waterfowl count held on 13th produced a total of 27,633 birds of 64 species. Of particular interest were a Black Stork and a drake Baikal Teal at Tsim Bei Tsui. During the middle of the month a Spotted Eagle of the pale *fulvescens* form joined the other three Spotted Eagles at Mai Po. This is the first time this colour phase has been seen in Hong Kong. Mai Po held many of the regularly noted species throughout the month with sightings of European and Black-faced Spoonbills, four White Ibis, up to 15 Dalmatian Pelicans plus up to 155 Falcated Teal, 26 Gadwall, 350 Wigeon and 71 Tufted Duck. Duck numbers in Deep Bay were also high with 1,400 Shelduck, 45 Red-breasted Mergansers, 2,000 Pintail, 2,100 Shoveler and 2,500 Teal. A Ruddy Shelduck was found at San Tin between 26th and 30th where it joined 14 Grey-headed Lapwings, 102 Black-winged Stilts and the Water Rail which had been in the area all month. However, by then the flock of Lapwings had dropped to nine from a peak of 30 on 13th. Smaller numbers had also been recorded at other localities in the New Territories including nine at Mai Po. The Baikal Teal was relocated at Tsim Bei Tsui on 19th when a first-winter Black-tailed Gull was also seen there. A small black and white auk, almost certainly Ancient Auk, was seen in Rocky Harbour on 20th while Tai Po Kau produced a Sulphur-breasted Warbler on 26th. Miscellaneous sightings during the month included a Chestnut Bulbul at Pokfulam, a Crimson-legged Crake at Ho Chung and a Grass Owl at Mai Po on 20th.

February

The Water Pipits remained at Ha Tsuen during the month allowing many observers to get to grips with this elusive and tricky species. A visit to Mai Po on 2nd produced 24 Dalmatian Pelicans, a single Black Stork, three White Ibis, four European and 12 Black-faced Spoonbills, three Spotted, two Imperial and one Bonelli's Eagle. Also seen that day at Mai Po were ten Red-rumped Swallows and two Red Avadavats while at nearby San Tin 15 Grey-headed Lapwings and 150 Black-winged Stilts were noted. Tai Po

Kau continued to produce sightings of Siskins with seven on 2nd along with a single Blyth's/White-tailed Leaf Warbler and several small groups of Pekin Robins. A Japanese Quail at Tsim Bei Tsui was flushed on 2nd while a Black-tailed Gull was seen at the same place. Black-tailed Gulls were also noted in Starling Inlet with 43 on 9th, subsequently increasing to over 200 on 20th. Saunders' Gulls were present at Mai Po from 10th with numbers increasing to 36 on 23rd. The Crimson-legged Crake at Ho Chung was seen regularly during the month with an additional bird near Wu Kau Tang on 20th. Also on this date, a Grey-headed Bunting was found at Luk Keng. The *lugens* race of White Wagtail was seen at Hebe Haven on 16th, this being the first record of this distinctive subspecies in Hong Kong. San Tin and Lok Ma Chau held several interesting species during the month including 20 Long-toed Stints, Pintail Snipe, up to ten Grey-headed Lapwing plus the usual range of freshwater duck. Interesting birds proved elusive initially in Tai Po Kau but improved by the end of the month with Crested Goshawk starting their distinctive display flight and small numbers of Eye-browed Thrushes, Chestnut Buntings and Robin Flycatchers being seen. The flock of Siskins was last observed there on 23rd. Small numbers of Great Crested Grebes were seen at Mong Tseng during the month and up to 30 Avocets were present there on 22nd. The first Red-necked Stint of the spring was also reported on this date. By the end of the month the numbers of duck in Deep Bay had started to drop. Mai Po produced two interesting birds at this time, namely a Glaucous-winged Gull on 27th and a Black-shouldered Kite on 28th; these were the first and second records for Hong Kong respectively.

March

March saw the majority of the wintering species departing for their northerly breeding grounds and by the end of the month only the stragglers remained although the spring passage migration was getting under way. The month commenced with a third-winter Great Black-headed Gull at San Tin and 38 Saunders' Gulls at Mai Po, this being the maximum count during the spring. Yellow-breasted Buntings arrived in large numbers at the beginning of the month and joined the wintering Bluethroats and Common Rosefinches at Ha Tsuen. Further bunting records included at least five Crested Buntings at She Shan on 16th while a Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher and 16 Asian House Martins were seen at other localities within the Lam Tsuen Valley. The Rosy Starling was refound at Ha Tsuen on 16th following an absence of a few weeks and a Grey-headed Bunting was also seen there on the same day. Starling Inlet held up to 30 Black-tailed Gulls plus a Brown-headed Gull on 23rd. 15 Red-necked Phalaropes were found near Bluff Island and a Barred Owlet was seen at She Shan on 24th. The end of the month was marked by unsettled weather which produced heavy rain and the first fall of spring migrants on 30th. A Swinhoe's Egret was found below the Tsim Bei Tsui car park while at the end of the Fence many migrant waders were forced down by the bad weather. These included both Greater and Mongolian Sand Plovers, 60 Red-necked Stints, six Broad-billed and five Spoon-billed Sandpipers. A White-throated Needletail was present along with 450 Large White-rumped Swifts, 40 Red-rumped Swallows, two Sand Martins and a male Rustic Bunting. The occurrence of this last species in a marked passage of buntings during the end of March and early April

was considered as indicating a wild bird rather than an escape and the species was accordingly uprated to Category A of the Checklist. At Mai Po on the same day there were over 1,000 Swallows, 800 House and 400 Large White-rumped Swifts pointing to the disruption of a large passage of these insectivorous ariel feeders. The following day was equally productive with Australian Curlew, Asiatic Dowitcher, Great Knot, Gull-billed Tern, 16 Intermediate Egrets and several Asian House Martins, Great Reed Warblers and Little Buntings being present at Mai Po. On this same day, Tsim Bei Tsui produced 15 White-throated Needletails and the Rustic Bunting was seen again.

April

This proved to be a memorable month both for the number of rare migrants encountered, and the lateness of departure of many passage migrants. In particular the numbers and variety of buntings, and the persistence with which their passage continued through April, was considered unusual. On 2nd two Japanese Yellow Buntings, the third Hong Kong record, were discovered at Wah Fu and seen again there on 4th. On 5th another Japanese Yellow Bunting was seen at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence with one Black Stork, four Great Knot and one Chestnut-cheeked Starling, the latter being only the third for Hong Kong. The Rosy Starling was relocated nearby and groups of needletails continued to be widespread. The concentrated fieldwork prior to the Big Bird Race continued to yield results. At Tai Po Kau Robin Flycatchers were still present when the first of many Blue and White Flycatchers was reported. Crested Goshawks, Tristram's and Chestnut Buntings, Pekin Robins, Grey, Eye-browed and Grey-backed Thrushes could also still be found there. On 6th two Ashy Minivets were reported at Sek Kong Woods while the Japanese Yellow Bunting was still present at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence; also there were two Australian Curlews and a White Wagtail of race *personata*, apparently the first record of this distinctive subspecies for Hong Kong. At Mai Po the Ruddy Shelduck was again recorded and yet another Japanese Yellow Bunting was seen. The first Hobby was reported at Sek Kong the next day. On 8th two Asiatic Dowitchers were seen at the Fence and six Rosy Minivets, only the second record for Hong Kong, were observed at Tsim Bei Tsui. Several other groups of Rosy/Ashy Minivets were recorded heading north over Tsim Bei Tsui on the same day. A White-bellied Green Pigeon was reported on 10th from Shuen Wan but this is currently under review. A male Japanese Paradise Flycatcher with full tail was found at Tai Po Kau on 12th and several other Japanese and Asian Paradise Flycatchers were seen during the period 10th-13th at Sek Kong and Tai Po Kau.

The sightings on 13th, the day of the Big Bird Race, are now legendary. The winning total was 145 species (seen by the HKBWS team) and amazingly the combined total for all seven teams was 186 despite heavy rain in the afternoon. Best birds included two Nordmann's Greenshank, one Spoon-billed Sandpiper and one or two Saunders' Gulls at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence, one Rosy Starling at Tsim Bei Tsui, one Ferruginous Flycatcher and several Orange-headed Ground Thrushes at Tai Po Kau and White-throated Needletails everywhere! There was also one late Tufted Duck at Mai Po.

The next day further intensive field work resulted in five Nordmann's Greenshank at Tsim Bei Tsui and another seven at Mai Po, 50 Asiatic Dowitchers, two Spoon-billed Sandpipers, one or two Swinhoe's Egrets, one Oriental Plover and one immature frigatebird in Deep Bay and Ferruginous Flycatchers at Tai Po Kau and Sandy Bay. The first Horsfield's Goshawk was reported at Kowloon Hills on 14th and this was followed by widespread records including exceptional passages of 65 at Tai Po Kau on 15th, 110 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 17th and several flocks totalling an incredible 600 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28th. Several Narcissus Flycatchers were reported in widespread areas and an Ashy Drongo (White-cheeked) was seen at Mount Nicholson. The first Black-naped Terns of the year were reported in Tolo Harbour on 20th and numbers subsequently increased at the breeding site. On 21st two Grey-faced Buzzard Eagles, one Black Bittern and two Chestnut Bitterns were seen at Tai Long Wan while another Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle was noted at Mount Nicholson the same day.

On 24th the Little Whimbrel saga began. A flock of up to 11 remained at Jubilee Sports Centre, Shatin until the end of the month, with up to eight at Kai Tak during the same period and exceptional flocks of 45 at Tsim Bei Tsui and 80 at Mai Po on 28th. Other rarities included a White-vented Needletail at Tai Mo Shan on 24th, the first for Hong Kong (providing a timely reminder to check every White-throated Needletail just in case it isn't!) and a Baillon's Crake, the fifth Hong Kong record, at San Tin on 27th and 28th. Over 300 Yellow Wagtails were reported in the Deep Bay area on 28th with many flying north into China. Great Knot and Asiatic Dowitchers remained regular in the Deep Bay area where there were occasional reports of one or two Spoon-billed Sandpipers. A Broad-billed Roller was seen at Aberdeen Country Park on 28th, the first Black Baza appeared at Sek Kong on 29th and several Brown Shrikes and two Pekin Robins were found near the Youth Hostel at Tai Mo Shan on 30th.

May

The richness of April overflowed into May with a Streaked Shearwater near the Ninepins on 3rd, this being the first satisfactory Category A record of this species within Hong Kong waters, followed the next day by a Pechora Pipit at Tsim Bei Tsui and a probable Ancient Auk in Mirs Bay. The last report of the Ruddy Shelduck at Mai Po was on 4th following intermittent sightings during April. A Watercock was also seen there the same day. Nordmann's Greenshanks were again seen with two at Mai Po on 7th and three at Tsim Bei Tsui on 19th. Hainan Blue Flycatchers were regularly noted in song at Tai Po Kau from early May and several pairs subsequently fledged young. Red-winged Crested Cuckoos were widespread including several on Hong Kong Island as well as in the New Territories. A late Little Bunting, three Rollers and two Chestnut Bitterns were seen at Tai Long Wan on 11th. More Rollers and a Black Baza were recorded at Tai Po Kau on 12th. A most unexpected Shore Lark, the first for Hong Kong, turned up at Mount Davis on 16th to be followed by up to eight Pechora Pipits the next day. On 19th a late Masked Bunting was present at the Fence where 78 Knot and 260 Grey-rumped Sandpipers were also seen. The same day two Orange-headed Ground Thrushes were noted again at Tai Po Kau. A very late Chestnut Bunting was also observed at Mount

Nicholson on 29th.

June

The month began with Black Baza sightings near Tai Mei Tuk, a new locality. Between 1st and 11th up to seven Grey-headed Parrotbills were seen at Mount Nicholson, two of the birds on 2nd being juveniles, indicating breeding. On 11th a visit to an isolated rock in Mirs Bay found 11 pairs of Black-naped Terns, apparently breeding. The next day two unidentified gulls were seen in Tolo Channel. On 15th a minimum of two Large Grass Warblers was seen at Tai Mo Shan. At Tai Po Kau on 17th a family of at least four White-bellied Yuhinas and one juvenile Scarlet Minivet were recorded, indicating that both species had bred.

Late dates were established on 22nd with two Shelduck and a White Wagtail at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence and a Silky Starling at Ha Tsuen. On 29th at least two Rufous-capped Babblers were found in a flock of about ten small babblers on the Brown Walk at Tai Po Kau. High numbers of Pekin Robins (about 50) at Tai Po Kau and Shing Mun probably indicated breeding and represented a marked increase over former years. A female Tufted Duck, thought to have an injured wing, was seen at Mai Po on 29th and was still present on 11th July. Wader records in the last week of the month included 70 Oriental Pratincoles at Ha Tsuen and 14 Whimbrel, 12 Grey-rumped Sandpipers, three Grey Plover, two Redshank, two Greenshank and one Mongolian Sand Plover at Mai Po. Five Gull-billed Terns and two Caspian Terns were also seen there on 30th.

July

On 1st a Black-faced Spoonbill was seen at Mai Po and on 3rd a Great Reed Warbler was trapped there, both unusual summer records. Two broods of Yellow-nib Duck were seen at Mai Po on 3rd and on 6th an immature White Ibis was first observed there; it remained throughout the summer. Waders included four Black-tailed Godwits, 14 Whimbrel, 24 Little Ringed Plover, one Green Sandpiper, two Redshank and one Asiatic Golden Plover. On 7th the now famous voyage of the good ship 'Ondine' took place to an isolated rock in Mirs Bay. The results were 65 Black-naped Terns including two juveniles, 9+ Roseate Terns, six Bridled Terns, 14 egg sites and seven chicks. Both the Bridled and Roseate Terns were new to Hong Kong; Roseate had been claimed on several occasions in the past but none had been accepted. On 13th six Bridled were still present and on 21st over 14 were seen with up to 12 Roseates and about 60 Black-naped including nine juveniles. The same day four Black Bazas were found at Ho Chung. Red Avadavats were regularly seen at Mai Po from 23rd and waders included one Australian Curlew, Grey-rumped Sandpipers and Oriental Pratincoles on 20th.

August

A juvenile Shelduck was seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 3rd and two Large Grass Warblers were found at Tai Mo Shan. On 10th no Bridled Terns were located at the Mirs Bay site, although a few Roseate and Black-naped were still present. A juvenile Black-winged Stilt was noted at Mai Po on 17th and

the next day 40 Whimbrel and four Asiatic Golden Plover were seen there while four Asiatic Dowitchers were found at Tsim Bei Tsui. On 26th and 31st several Swinhoe's Snipe were flushed at Ha Tsuen whilst Garganey and Curlew were noted at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on the last day.

September

Wader numbers built up during the month. On 1st 35 Whimbrel were reported at Mai Po and ten Red-necked Phalaropes in Mires Bay. White Ibis and Red Avadavats were regularly seen at Mai Po and Ha Tsuen produced small numbers of its usual Wood and Green Sandpipers. Following the passage of Typhoon Tess on 6th, 40 Red-necked Phalaropes and two Sooty/Bridled Terns were seen at Ting Kau. A search of the woodlands on the 7th produced a Tricolour Flycatcher at Pak Nai, followed the next day by two Tricolour, one Brown and one probable Sooty Flycatcher, a single Pale-legged Leaf Warbler and best of all, a superb male Siberian Blue Robin plus the more usual Arctic Warblers. Ferry trips the same day produced up to 150 Common Terns in inshore waters. Garganey numbered nine at Mai Po on 8th while at Tai Po Kau Asian Paradise and Blue and White Flycatchers were recorded. A visit to Tai Po Kau on 14th produced an Eastern Crowned Warbler, a couple of Asian Paradise Flycatchers and yet another Siberian Blue Robin, this time a young male. Elsewhere up to five Tricolour Flycatchers were noted and on 15th a Japanese Paradise Flycatcher and a probable Horsfield's Goshawk were seen in Tai Po Kau.

Arctic Warblers became numerous in the latter half of the month and with them was a single Pale-legged Leaf Warbler on 22nd in Tai Po Kau and at least four Eastern Crowned Warblers there on 24th. Two Purple-backed Starlings were found in the casuarinas at Mai Po on 22nd when a Hobby and Marsh Harrier were also noted there. On 24th Tai Po Kau hosted three Asian and a single Japanese Paradise Flycatcher while at Mai Po on 28th 11 Black-naped Orioles were found. Black Bazas became evident towards the end of the month with four at She Shan on 28th and at least four at Mong Tseng on 30th. Ha Tsuen, not to be outdone, produced a minimum of five Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers on 29th on a day when large numbers of Great Reed Warblers were in the Territory. Unusual records from that locality were a Forest Wagtail and a Common/Oriental Cuckoo on 30th.

October

Asian and Japanese Paradise Flycatchers were seen in small numbers in Tai Po Kau up to the end of the month — a rather late date. This latter species was also present at Mai Po on 20th. Forest Wagtails were found in Tai Po Kau on 12th and by this same date the wintering Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers had also returned there. A Society outing to Mong Tseng on 13th produced a Red-winged Crested Cuckoo and a female Grey Bushchat. On the 20th two Mallard were recorded at Mai Po, the first of several of this normally scarce wintering species to be recorded during the winter. A Woodcock was noted in Tai Po Kau on 22nd while on 26th Ha Tsuen held three Painted Snipe and seven Asiatic Golden Plover plus the more usual Pintail Snipe, Wood and Green Sandpipers, Long-toed Stints, several Red-throated Pipits, Von Schrenck's Reed Warblers and over 150 Yellow Wagtails. Two immature Black Storks put in a brief appearance at Mai Po

on 27th. Also at Mai Po, several Yellow Bitterns were seen and an injured Watercock was picked up. On the same day a juvenile Pheasant-tailed Jacana and up to 40 Long-toed Stints were recorded at San Tin. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen at Government House on 28th. On the last day of the month Tai Po Kau produced Woodcock, White's Thrush and a Grey-headed Flycatcher.

November

Single Black-naped Monarch and Grey-headed Flycatchers as well as a Woodcock were reported at Tai Po Kau on 1st. The next day new sightings there included an Ashy Drongo (there were subsequently two during the rest of the month, often with the minivets), Grey-streaked and Hainan Blue Flycatchers, the first of many Blackbirds and several Pekin Robins. Also on 2nd a Grey-headed Bunting, Water Pipit and European Starling were seen at Ha Tsuen. On 3rd a group of ten Tufted Duck, two unidentified bishops/weavers and one Red-breasted Flycatcher were reported at Mai Po. The 9th proved an excellent day: three European Starlings were present at Ha Tsuen with large numbers of Silky and Grey Starlings; an Imperial Eagle and Oriental Skylark were watched nearby in the Castle Peak foothills; over 1,000 Showeler were present in Yuen Long Creek area; a Scaup and a Baer's Pochard were found amongst the Tufted Duck at Mai Po, and a female Baikal Teal was located there with the Teal and Garganey on the pond northwest of the rocky outcrop. Numbers of Black-winged Stilts and Avocets increased at San Tin, several Spotted and Imperial Eagles took up residence in the marshes and adjacent areas, and Chestnut Buntings, Black-winged Cuckoo Shrikes and Robin Flycatchers were seen at Tai Po Kau and in other woodlands. Red-tailed Robins were also widely reported from this time on including at least one at the ZBG. There were also scattered records of flocks of Black Bulbuls including one on Cheung Chau. On 16th two female Baikal Teal and a female Pochard were found at Mai Po and remained until the end of the month. A late Forest Wagtail was observed in Tai Po Kau on 16th and the next day two Radde's Warblers were watched at close quarters at Lantau Tea Gardens, two Scaup were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui, a Ruff and a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Lok Ma Chau, a Woodcock at Middle Island and an Ashy Drongo at Victoria Peak. Another Radde's Warbler was reported in Tai Po Kau on 18th; this bird remained in the picnic area/nursery on the Red Walk for over a week and was seen by many observers. These two records are only the second and third for Hong Kong, although there is one other recent record which was accepted as probable and several in the past which were rated as possibles. Also on 18th there was an unusual urban record of a Jay at King's Park, Kowloon and up to 50 Yellow-bellied Tits were reported from 20th at Tai Mei Tuk. On 23rd 26 Black-faced Spoonbills were seen at Mai Po where the rarer duck were all still present and numbers of Tufted Duck had risen to 31. At Tai Po Kau the first Short-tailed Bush Warblers were reported. The next day the first Saunders' Gulls were watched from the boardwalk at Mai Po and a male Verditer Flycatcher and a pair of Plumbeous Water Redstarts were found in the Lam Tsuen Valley. The month ended with a flourish of further rarities: a Chestnut-flanked White-eye and several Blyth's/White-tailed Leaf Warblers in Tai Po Kau and a Japanese Grosbeak at She Shan. This last bird is new to Hong Kong and, being similar superficially to

Black-tailed Hawfinch, resulted in the close scrutiny of the latter during the winter. On 30th Tai Po Kau also held at least five species of thrush including flocks of Eye-browed, Grey and Grey-backed as well as Tristram's Buntings.

December

On the first day of the month an Ancient Auk was seen from a boat near Bluff Island in Rocky Harbour. A flock of Yellow-bellied Tits took up residence at the ZBG where a Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike was also seen. Yellow-bellied Tits were also found near Lai Chi Wo on 7th and were subsequently regular at Tai Mei Tuk, Ho Sheung Heung, Lam Tsuen Valley and Kadoorie Beach. There were several reports of Ashy Drongos including one at Coombe Road on the Peak. The Ancient Auk put in a second appearance at Port Shelter on 8th in the same area as a large leaping game-fish which did not bode well for the auk's future. The same day duck at Mai Po included Scaup, Pochard and Baer's Pochard and both Spotted and Imperial Eagles were present. On 14th five Orange-bellied Leafbirds, one Radde's Warbler and one Blyth's/White-tailed Leaf Warbler were found at Tai Po Kau and two Water Pipits and two European Starlings at Ha Tsuen. The next day at Mai Po one female Baikal Teal, 30 Black-faced and four European Spoonbills were present. On 19th two Asian House Martins and a Jay were seen at Sek Kong Catchwater. On 21st Tai Po Kau was "heaving" with over 100 Thrushes (mostly Eye-browed); two flocks of Pekin Robins, one Chestnut-flanked White-eye, three Orange-bellied Leafbirds, five Robin and two Grey-headed Flycatchers, two Blyth's/White-tailed Leaf Warblers and one Pale-legged Leaf Warbler were also seen there. Also on 21st the first of several Hoopoes and a male Verditer Flycatcher were seen at Lam Tsuen Valley while Tufted Duck numbers rose to over 110 at Mai Po. On 22nd a Ruddy Shelduck was found at San Tin, another duck record was set with over 400 Wigeon at Mai Po while the first Pelican of the winter and an out-of-season Australian Curlew were reported in Deep Bay. A Barred Owllet was located at Sek Kong and two Imperial Eagles and three Plumbeous Water Redstarts were seen at Tai Lam Reservoir. A second Hoopoe turned up at Shatin Race Course and was seen again on 24th. Christmas Day at Tai Po Kau produced one Sulphur-breasted Warbler and four White-bellied Yuhinas.

Boxing Day presented a pair of Velvet Scoter, only the second Hong Kong record, at Tsim Bei Tsui with several Red-breasted Mergansers and two Great Crested Grebes. These last two species were seen regularly thereafter. There were five European Starlings and two Lapwings at Ha Tsuen and another out-of-season wader, a Great Knot, was found at Siu Lam and remained there for two weeks. The 29th was the day set for the Christmas count and a total of 183 species was recorded including an Orange-headed Ground Thrush at Tai Po Kau. On the last day of the year another Chestnut-flanked White-eye was also seen there.

The following observers contributed records to the report which follows:—

E.A. Barnes, R.J. Barnes, M. Brazil, M.L. Chalmers, A. Cheung, C.R. Clark, G.C.H. Cooper, T.R. Costin, J.S.R. Edge, R. Ferguson, D.J.

Galloway, A. Galsworthy, M.D. Green, R.G. Harding, P.R. Kennerley, A.R. Lamont, J. Latham, N. Latham, S. Mannix, D.S. Melville, P. Ng, D.E. Sargent, K.C. Searle, S.P. Smith, S. Smith, G.E. Stevens, R.P. Tipper, C.A. Viney, Y.F. Wan, M.A. Webster, C.D. Weideman, A. Woods.

I should like to thank Margaret Chan who kindly typed the draft.

RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT 1985

M.L. Chalmers

CATEGORY A. SPECIES WHICH HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN AN APPARENTLY WILD STATE IN HONG KONG WITHIN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.

4. Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*
One seen in flight from a boat near the Ninepins on 3 May (ARL).

This is the first satisfactory Category A sighting of this species in Hong Kong as all other previous reports have referred either to captive birds or sightings outside territorial waters.

Streaked Shearwaters breed on coastal islands around Japan, Korea and North China and are reported regularly in the South China Sea. They are thus the most likely of the large shearwater species to occur in this area.

7. Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*
Recorded regularly in Deep Bay up to 13 April with a maximum of 26 on 9 March and from 22 December with a maximum of 15 from 26 December.

[8/9. Frigatebird *Fregata sp.*
A single immature seen in flight over Tsim Bei Tsui on 14 April. The same day a single immature frigatebird (possibly the same bird) was seen perched in a tree close to the egretty at Starling Inlet. On 18 September a single frigatebird was harried in flight by a Black Kite at Ap Lei Chau.]



Frigatebird *Fregata sp.*
Tsim Bei Tsui, April.

(Urban Olsson)

14. Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*
One flushed twice from the flooded paddy behind the beach at Tai Long Wan on 21 April.

20. Swinhoe's Egret *Egretta eulophotes*
One watched feeding below Tsim Bei Tsui car park on 30 March, one seen from the adjacent Fence on 12 and 13 April and up to two there on 14 April.

27. Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*
Single birds seen in Deep Bay from Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 January and 5 April. The latter is a new late spring date. On 27 October two immatures landed at Mai Po for about one hour, then soared upwards and drifted off to the south.

31. European Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
Two at Mai Po on 23 February and up to four there from 15 December except for at least 15 on 21 December.

32. Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*
Up to 16 wintering birds reported in Deep Bay area until 19 May, one at Mai Po on 1 July, 20 July and 28 July and at least 30 present from 24 November.

36. Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*
An immature at San Tin from 26 to 30 January, one at Mai Po from 6 April until 4 May and one at San Tin on 22 December.
These are the second, third and fourth records for the territory.

41. Falcated Teal *Anas falcata*
Present at Mai Po throughout the winter with a maximum of 155 on 12 January.

43. Baikal Teal *Anas formosa*
Adult male at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 and 19 January and 13 February. At least one female at Mai Po between 9 November and 15 December with two seen together between 16 and 24 November. At least one at Wah Fu, Pokfulam on 27 December. One or two other unidentified ducks, possibly of the same species, were also flushed along the same stream.

50. Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*
One drake at Mai Po on 6 January. Two drakes and one duck at Mai Po on 17 January. Up to three drakes and one duck at Mai Po between 16 November and 26 December.

51. Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri*
Recorded at Mai Po from 9 November with a maximum of eight (five drakes and three ducks) on 15 December. Also an unusually late record of one at Mai Po on 17 and 25 May.

53. Scaup *Aythya marila*
A pair on the sea near Tsim Bei Tsui on 17 November and

26, 28 and 29 December. An immature drake at Mai Po on 9 and 16 November.

54. Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*
An immature drake and a duck seen on the water off Tsim Bei Tsui jetty and in flight on 26 December.

This is only the second record of this species in Hong Kong, the first being a single bird seen in flight near Pak Nai on 5 February 1982.

59. Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*
A single bird seen in flight over Mai Po on 28 February.
This is the second record for Hong Kong.

62. Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*
According to the local press one was caught and photographed at Chai Wan on 4 January and released on 6 January. Also one at San Tin on 30 January.

[68. Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis*
Single birds, probably this species, were noted at Mai Po on 12 April, Tai Mei Tuk on 9 September and 6 October, Fanling on 17 October (seen to take Chinese Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis* with difficulty) and Victoria Barracks on 30 December. The last record was a female or immature and is one of the few winter records for small accipiters. Also reported in the Northern New Territories on the Christmas count on 26 December.]

70. Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*
One or two noted regularly at Tai Po Kau up to 13 April and Mount Nicholson on 9 March and 21 April. Display flight noted at Tai Po Kau on 21 February. Other records accepted as goshawk sp. were single birds at Tai Mei Tuk on 16 April, Crooked Island on 5 May, Tai Po Kau on 16 October and 3 November and Tai Tam Reservoir on 22 December.

71. Horsfield's Goshawk *Accipiter soloensis*
One at Kowloon Hill on 14 April and 65 at Tai Po Kau on 15 April.

Exceptionally large movements at Tsim Bei Tsui with four flocks totalling 110 birds flying west over Deep Bay on 17 April, and even larger numbers on 28 April with separate individuals and flocks (one of 250 birds) totalling over 600 birds, both adults and immatures, again flying westwards across Deep Bay. Other reports were of single adults at Ho Sheung Heung on 27 April, Tai Po Kau on 5 May and Mount Davis on 17 May. An immature accipiter at Tai Po Kau on 15 September was probably this species.

72. Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle *Butastur indicus*
Single birds in flight at Tai Mei Tuk on 16 April, Mount Nicholson on 21 April, Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 April (with Horsfield's Goshawks *Accipiter soloensis*), and at least two flew in from the sea at Tai Long Wan on 21 April.

74. Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*
Between one and four at Mai Po and San Tin up to 3 April, including

one juvenile showing characters of *fulvescens* phase between 15 January and 11 February. Up to three in same area from 3 November.

75. Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*
Up to three birds in the Deep Bay area until 8 April and from 9 November. Also two at Tai Lam Reservoir on 22 December and one on the Peak on 26 December.

85. Japanese Quail *Coturnix japonica*
One flushed at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 January and 2 February and two flushed at Ha Tsuen on 16 and 23 March. Also one at Mai Po on 12 April, 4 and 15 November.

91. Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*
One watched perched, swimming and in flight at San Tin on 27 and 28 April.
This is the fifth record for Hong Kong.

94. Crimson-legged Crake *Amaurornis akool*
Single birds at Ho Chung Valley on 13 January, 16 and 20 February, Wu Kau Tang on 20 February, and an immature at Luk Keng on 21 August.

100. Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*
Single birds at San Tin on 27 April and 27 October.

101. Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*
Two at Ha Tsuen on 11 February, one flushed at Shuen Wan on 10 April, up to three at Ha Tsuen on 26 and 27 October and one there on 2 and 24 November.

111. Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus*
A female at Tsim Bei Tsui on 14 April.

116. Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*
Up to five at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui between 31 March and 19 May. One on the beach at Siu Lam from 26 December until early 1986 was an unusual wintering record.

125. Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*
Recorded at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence with five on 30 March, one on 13 April, two on 14 April and one on 20 April. Also at Mai Po with single birds on 14, 27 and 28 April. All records were of birds in non-breeding plumage except for those on 13, 14 and 20 April.

127. Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
One at Tsim Bei Tsui on 2 September and a male in non-breeding plumage at Lok Ma Chau from 16 to 24 November.

131. Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala*
One at Kowloon Tong and one at Ha Tsuen on 13 April. At least six at Ha Tsuen on 26 and 31 August and 30 September. The call, not heard in all cases, is considered separable from Latham's Snipe, the main confusion

species, for which there are no Hong Kong reports to date. Several snipe at Mai Po on 14 September were either Pintail or Swinhoe's (*stenuralmegala*).

134. Asiatic Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*
Reported from Tsim Bei Tsui Fence with two on 8 April, five on 20 April and three on 4 May. Also at Mai Po with one on 31 March and 13 April, at least 50 on 14 April and one on 8 May. Four at Tsim Bei Tsui on 18 August.

The flock of 50 on 14 April is the second highest count for Hong Kong to date and follows the record number of 339 seen in 1984.

138. Little Whimbrel *Numenius minutus*
Up to 11 at Jubilee Sports Centre, Shatin between 24 and 30 April, ten at Mai Po on 27 April, about 50 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 April including a flock of about 45 flying west towards China and a flock of about 80 at Mai Po the same day. Also eight at Kai Tak on 29 April.

Together these records indicate a concentrated passage of this species exceeding the highest number previously recorded in Hong Kong by a factor of at least five.



Little Whimbrel *Numenius minutus*
Tsim Bei Tsui, May.

(Ray Tipper)

141. Australian Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*
Up to two at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui between 31 March and 7 April and one there on 20 July and 26 August. Also an unusual winter record of one at Mai Po on 22 December.

146. Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*
Two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 April, five there on 14 April and three there on 19 May. Also seven at Mai Po on 14 April which together with the separate five at Tsim Bei Tsui the same day gave a total of 12 in the Deep Bay area. Two at Mai Po on 7 May and an unsubstantiated report of two in the Deep Bay area on 21 May.

156. Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*
One third-winter bird at Lok Ma Chau/San Tin on 1 March.

157. Saunders' Gull *Larus saundersi*
Recorded at Mai Po between 10 February and 14 April with a maximum of 38 on 1 March and up to four from 24 November.

159. Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*
Single adults at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 January, Mai Po on 30 January, San Tin on 23 February, Mai Po on 3 March, Starling Inlet on 23 March and Tsim Bei Tsui on 26 December.

164. Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*
An immature at rest on the tideline in Deep Bay on 27 February. This is the first record for Hong Kong. The description noted the following:—

“Essentially it was a large, heavy-headed and heavy-billed gull, pale coffee coloured including wing tips, with an all-black bill and pink legs, and struck me as being a typical Glaucous-winged Gull” (MB).

The observer had been resident in Japan for several years and until the week before had been working on the Shiretoko Peninsula in north-east Hokkaido where this species is common in winter. The key feature noted was the pale brown flight feathers, similar in colour to the mantle. Glaucous Gulls *L. hyperboreus* of this age would show pink at the base of the bill and whitish flight feathers, whereas Slaty-backed and Herring Gulls *L. schistisagus/argentatus* (even leucistic individuals) would show darker flight feathers.

Glaucous-winged Gulls breed in N.E. Asia and Alaska and are regular winter visitors to Japan.

170. Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*
Reported in the Tap Mun area between 20 April and 7 July and at Gau Tau (Mirs Bay) between 5 May and 10 August. Breeding occurred at both locations with up to 35 adults and three fledged juveniles at Kong Chau and 65 adults and nine fledged juveniles at Gau Tau. Landings at Gau Tau on 7 and 13 July indicated 16 nest sites with 24 eggs and eight additional nests with ten young.

171. Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*
Recorded at Gau Tau between 8 June and 2 September with a maximum of at least nine on 7 July, and at Kong Chau with two on 7 July (ARL, DSM, MLC). Several nest sites were located on 7 and 13 July and at least one fledged juvenile was noted on 21 July and 2 September.

These sightings represent the first satisfactory records of this species for Hong Kong. Many of the previously claimed sight records cannot safely

be separated from other *Sterna* terns.



Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*
Mirs Bay, July.

(Angus Lamont)

172. Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

About 30 off Ting Kau after a typhoon on 6 September. About 60 seen from a ferry between Tuen Mun and Tai O on 8 September and about 120 seen in West Lamma Channel on the same day.

173. Bridled Tern

Sterna anaethetus

Recorded at Gau Tau, Mirs Bay with six on 7 and 13 July and at least 17 on 21 July (MLC, DSM, ARL). The birds were located in the Black-naped *S. sumatrana* and Roseate Tern *S. dougallii* colony and appeared to be prospecting for nest sites although no proof of breeding was found. All sightings were of adults.

These are the first definite records of this species for Hong Kong. Bridled Terns have a worldwide breeding distribution over tropical and sub-tropical seas. They tend to be more inshore than the similar Sooty Terns *S. fuscatus* and are known to breed on the islands around Taiwan.

In the autumn two unidentified terns (Sooty/Bridled) were seen off Ting Kau after a typhoon on 6 September.



Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*
Mirs Bay, July.

(Angus Lamont)

178. Ancient Auk

Synthliboramphus antiquus

One seen from a boat near Bluff Island on 1 and 8 December is the fourth record for Hong Kong. Other sightings of single small black and white auks or auklets in Rocky Harbour on 20 January, near Shelter Island on 17 March and around Gau Tau on 4 May cannot be safely attributed to any one species, but provide an intriguing insight into the frequency of occurrence of these birds in eastern waters.

[184. White-bellied Green Pigeon

Treron sieboldii

A female at Shuen Wan on 10 April was previously accepted as only the second record for Hong Kong. This record has subsequently been withdrawn by the observer and resubmitted as Thick-billed Pigeon *T. curvirostra* and is now under review.]

192. Oriental Cuckoo

Cuculus saturatus

One at Sek Kong on 13 April. Two at Hong Kong University on 29 April and other single birds at Pak Nai on 10 and 12 September, Ha Tsuen on 29 and 30 September and Mong Tseng on 30 September were either Common or Oriental Cuckoos *canorus/saturatus*.

- 200. Barred Owl** *Glaucidium cuculoides*
One at Sek Kong Woods on 1 January, 14 February and 22 December.
One at She Shan on 24 March and 13 April and a pair at Tai Tam on 13 April.
- 206. White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus*
One at Mong Tseng on 30 March, at least 15 there the next day, at least 20 at Sek Kong Catchwater, ten at Tsim Bei Tsui and several at Mai Po on 13 April and two at Tsim Bei Tsui the next day. Four needletails seen at Nim Wan on 31 March and six at Tai Po Kau on 10 April were not seen well enough to be positively identified.
- 207. White-vented Needletail** *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*
One watched at close quarters near the summit of Tai Mo Shan on 24 April.
This is the first record for Hong Kong. The following description was submitted:—
“Bird first located by sound. As the bird passed close overhead a large “swoosh” characteristic of the *Hirundapus* genus was heard. The bird was then observed through binoculars (10 x 40) as it flew about feeding with a few Large White-rumped Swifts *Apus pacificus*. Totally different outline and white undertail coverts immediately identified it as a species of the *Hirundapus* genus.
Underparts: blackish with contrasting brownish-grey throat and white undertail coverts. Upperparts: black with a brownish “saddle” most prominent on upper mantle, rapidly fading into black of lower mantle and rump. No white on tertiaries. Other: lores dark.” (DES).
The observer was familiar with this species having studied both Brown *H. giganteus* and White-vented Needletails less than one week earlier at Khao Yai, Thailand. White-vented Needletails were thought to breed no nearer than Hainan, but King (pers. comm.) has advised that this species is now known to breed in Taiwan.
- 222. Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*
One in the Zoological and Botanical Gardens on 5 May and in Government House garden on 28 October. This was presumed to be the same bird as the 1984 sightings.
- 225. Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*
One flushed from paddy in Castle Peak foothills near Ha Tsuen on 9 November. This species is seldom seen away from its favoured habitat at Kai Tak.
- 233. Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi*
One at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on 4 May and at least two at Mount Davis on 17 May.
These are the second and third records for Hong Kong.
Six other birds seen in flight at Mount Davis on 17 May, three of which called, and one there the next day were probably this species.
- 235. Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*
Reported from San Tin and Ha Tsuen up to 23 March and from 15 December. Maximum number was about 20 at San Tin on 12 January.

- 240. White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*
The first sightings in Hong Kong for the following two distinct races were recorded:—
One Black-backed Wagtail (*M.a. lugens*) at Nam Wai, Hebe Haven on 16 February, and one Masked Wagtail (*M.a. personata*) at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on 6 and 8 April.
- 243. Rosy Minivet** *Pericrocotus roseus*
A flock of six seen in flight and perched in trees at Tsim Bei Tsui on 8 April. The pale brown or buff rumps were clearly noted.
This is only the second satisfactory record for Hong Kong. Another 15 unidentified (Ashy/Rosy) minivets *P. divaricatus/roseus* were seen flying over Tsim Bei Tsui on the same day.
- 258. Siberian Blue Robin** *Luscinia cyane*
An adult male at Pak Nai on 8 September and an immature male at Tai Po Kau on 14 September.
These are the fourth and fifth records for Hong Kong.
- 269. Orange-headed Ground Thrush** *Zoothera citrina*
Up to three (two singing males and a female) at Tai Po Kau in April and May, and one there on 29 December.
- 286. Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella certhiola*
At least five at Ha Tsuen on 29 September.
- 295. Large Grass Warbler** *Graminicola bengalensis*
Two at Tai Mo Shan above barrier on 17 April, one there on 20 April, two on 15 June and two on 3 August.
- 297. Sulphur-breasted Warbler** *Phylloscopus ricketti*
Single birds reported at Tai Po Kau on 26 January, 14 and 25 December.
- [298. Blyth's/White-tailed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides/davisoni*
Up to three in Tai Po Kau up to 26 February and from 30 November.
It is now considered that the “nuthatch-like” behaviour of these warblers creeping up and down the main branches and trunks is attributable to Blyth's/White-tailed and not Eastern Crowned Warbler *Ph. coronatus*. The latter are larger with usually only one indistinct wing bar compared with two broad yellowish wing bars on the former. It is suspected that Eastern Crowned is mainly a passage migrant around September and March, and that most winter records of “crowned” warblers probably refer to Blyth's/White-tailed.]
- 299. Eastern Crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus coronatus*
Single birds at Sek Kong Woods on 31 March and at Tai Po Kau on 14 September; at least four at Tai Po Kau on 24 September.
- 300. Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes*
Single birds recorded at Tai Po Kau on 13 April, Pak Nai on 8 September, Tai Po Kau on 22 September and Ho Sheung Heung on 23 December.
The bird seen on 8 September sets a new early autumn date for Hong Kong.

- 304. Radde's Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi*
Two at Lantau Tea Gardens, Ngong Ping on 17 November, one at Tai Po Kau between 18 and 27 November and a different bird there on 14 December.
These are only the second, third and fourth records for Hong Kong.
- 322. Chinese Babax** *Babax lanceolatus*
One at Tai Mo Shan on 17 and 20 April.
- 338. Chestnut-flanked White-Eye** *Zosterops erythropleura*
Single birds in Tai Po Kau on 5 and 9 January, in the third week of March and from 30 November.
- 355. Purple-backed Starling** *Sturnus sturninus*
Two in a flock of Chinese Starlings *S. chinensis* at Mai Po on 22 September, a new early date.
- 356. Chestnut-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus philippensis*
An adult male at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on 5 April.
This is the third record for Hong Kong.
- 358. European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
One at Ha Tsuen on 5 January, three at Lok Ma Chau and five at San Tin on 13 January, between one and five at Ha Tsuen from 2 November until the end of the year.
- 359. Rosy Starling** *Sturnus roseus*
An immature seen intermittently at Ha Tsuen up to 16 March with two there on wires on 19 January. Also one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5, 13 and 17 April. The latter was possibly the same bird as the one seen at Ha Tsuen although by April it had assumed full adult plumage.
These sightings, including the bird's discovery on 30 December 1984, are the first record of this species for Hong Kong.
- 368. Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*
Up to seven at Tai Po Kau until 23 February and seven again there on 14 November.
- 372. Japanese Yellow Bunting** *Emberiza sulphurata*
Two at Wah Fu on 2 and 4 April, a male at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on 5 and 6 April and a female at Mai Po on 6 and 7 April.
This concentration of sightings represent the third, fourth and fifth records for Hong Kong, and suggests that this species may have been overlooked in the past.
- 375. Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*
A male at Tsim Bei Tsui Fence on 30 and 31 March. This species has now been upgraded to Category A on the basis of the accumulated records.

CATEGORY D. SPECIES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN AN APPARENTLY WILD STATE BUT FOR WHICH THE POSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE OR RELEASE FROM CAPTIVITY CANNOT BE SATISFACTORILY EXCLUDED.

- 702. Grass Owl** *Tyto capensis*
One flushed at Mai Po on 20 January was probably the same bird as the one released at Fu Tien the week before.
- 704. Red-breasted Parakeet** *Psittacula alexandri*
A male at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens on 5 January and several dates during April. Also three at Wong Chuk Hang on 6 February.
- 705. Shore Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*
An adult watched at close range at Mount Davis on 16 May.
This is the first record for Hong Kong.
The following description was noted:—
"Overall colour light buffy brown, lighter (nearly white) below. Forehead white and a frontal half crown circlet black and ending in horns. White below circlet to broad black band through and below eye (with possible small white indent behind eye at top), falling away over ear coverts and down neck. Chin white. Below a thinnish black necklace stemming from the shoulder. Crown (above circlet) and nape pale buffy colour, shading into light brown mantle. At close range back appeared streaked (or flecked) with rather darker brown, and feather edges gave the slight impression of two wing bars. Tail darker brown centre with white outer and black next outer feathers — clearly visible when bird at rest and not alarmed ... Eye black, bill and legs dark grey/black." (SPS).
The white face is a character of the Siberian race *brandtii*. Although this sighting occurred during a period of spring passage, with Pechora Pipits *Anthus gustavi* at the same site the next day, the Shore Lark is far south of its known range and larks are commonly kept as cage birds.
- 706. Orange-bellied Leafbird** *Chloropsis hardwickii*
A male seen intermittently in Tai Po Kau up to 20 January. Five there on 14 December and at least three still present on 21 December. An unidentified leafbird seen on the Peak on 8 July was possibly this species.
- 709. Rufous-capped Babbler** *Stachyris ruficeps*
At least two in a flock of about ten small babblers on the Brown Walk at Tai Po Kau on 29 June. It is possible that other species were present in the flock as only two were seen well enough to identify positively.
The description noted the small size, about 100 mm, bright orange crown and nondescript greyish-brown plumage, paler below. The birds were passing through an extensive stand of dwarf bamboo and were chattering noisily. Both observers (CAV, RF) were familiar with this species from recent visits to South China.
This is the first record for Hong Kong. Although this bird does occur in the nearby wooded parts of Guangdong Province, it is usually found at higher elevations. Even though a flock was involved, it is considered that the possibility of escape or release cannot be excluded for this single record.

711. Grey-headed Parrotbill *Paradoxornis gularis*

A flock of at least seven at Mount Nicholson between 1 and 11 June included at least two fledged young demanding food on the last date. This is the first time that breeding has been confirmed for this species. Although these records may refer to wild birds, this species is traded in large numbers and all reports are near urban areas. Possibly a small feral population exists at Mount Nicholson.

713. Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava*

A pair at Mai Po on 2 February, four there on 23 July, four on 1 September and five males there on 8 September. Also one male at Tai Tam on 2 September.

715. Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

The bird first seen on 26 December 1984 was seen again at Mong Tseng on 5 January.

715.1 Japanese Grosbeak *Coccothraustes personatus*

An adult seen perched on top of the bamboo stand at She Shan on 30 November, is the first record for Hong Kong.

The following points were noted:—

“The bill was very large and ran directly into the crown with no conspicuous forehead. The bill was a striking yellow colour with no darkening towards the tip. The bill was surrounded by a narrow black band which extended back over the crown but not onto the ear coverts as in Black-tailed Hawfinch. Similarly, the extent of the black around the bill on the chin was not as extensive as in Black-tailed Hawfinch.

There was no appreciable contrast between the upper parts and the underparts and the bird showed nothing of the striking rufous flank patch typical of Black-tailed Hawfinch. The overall colour was a pale greyish brown both above and below, paler towards the undertail coverts.

However, contrasting with the body were the black wings and tail. The scapulars extended over most of the forepart of the wing leaving this part as a narrowish black line which expanded towards the flight feathers. The wings appeared wholly black apart from a striking white patch about half way down the wing corresponding to the base of the primaries. There was no sign of any white tips to the primaries or tertials which is a diagnostic feature of Black-tailed Hawfinch. Legs were pink. The call note, uttered once in flight, was a deep double “chup chup”. (PRK).

Japanese Grosbeaks are known to winter down to the Yangtze and as this sighting followed the passage of a cold front three days earlier, it is possible that the bird was wild. However, because single records of passerines are viewed with suspicion and some of the Hong Kong records of Hawfinch *C. coccothraustes* are known to have been escapes, this species has been placed in Category D for the time being.

CATEGORY E. SPECIES FOR WHICH ALL PUBLISHED RECORDS ARE SUSPECTED OF BEING BIRDS WHICH HAVE ESCAPED OR HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY.

800.1 Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides*

A flock of up to 39 partially pinioned birds was released at Kowloon

Reservoir and first noted on 24 September. The birds subsequently dispersed, one being caught by AFD wardens and transferred to Mai Po where it was seen intermittently into spring 1986.

803. Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*

One at Mid-Levels on 13 March.

803.1 Red-winged Parrot *Aprosmictus erythropterus*

One free-flying at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens on several occasions in March and April.

808. Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*

One at Mai Po on 22 July.

818. Asian Pied Starling *Sturnus contra*

Two at Stanley on 13 April and one at Pui O on 18 October, 9 November and 29 December.

824. Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*

Two juveniles trapped and ringed at Mai Po on 12 October.

825. Golden Bishop *Euplectes afer*

A male at Mai Po on 28 September.

830. Java Sparrow *Padda oryzivora*

One at Mai Po on 16, 20 and 28 September and one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 11 November.

831. Yellow-fronted Canary *Serinus mozambicus*

Single birds at Pak Nai on 2 March and Mount Nicholson on 3 July.

834. Red-crested Cardinal *Paroaria coronata*

One at Sandy Bay on 14 April.

THE FOLLOWING RECORDS WERE SUBMITTED BUT NOT ACCEPTED:—

53. Scaup Two at Mai Po on 22 December.

Aythya marila

74. Spotted Eagle One at Sek Kong on 8 February and one at Ho Chung on 12 March.

Aquila clanga

81. Merlin One at Ha Tsuen on 9 November.

Falco columbarius

92. Ruddy Crane Single birds at Mai Po on 12 January and 30 December.

Porzana fusca

130. Pintail Snipe Two at Mai Po on 13 January, two at Three Fathoms Cove on 21 February and three at Tsim Bei Tsui on 11 November.

Gallinago stenura

203. Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	One at Mai Po on 7 January.
238. Citrine Wagtail <i>Motacilla citreola</i>	One at Mai Po on 13 April.
241. Greater Cuckoo Shrike <i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	One at Tsim Bei Tsui on 29 September.
266. Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush <i>Monticola rufiventris</i>	One at Rocky Harbour on 24 February.
291. Thick-billed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus aedon</i>	One at Mai Po on 24 February.
299. Eastern Crowned Warbler <i>Phylloscopus coronatus</i>	One at Tai Po Kau on 16 January.
300. Pale-legged Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus tenellipes</i>	One at Tai Po Kau on 20 January.
311. Sooty Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>	Single birds at Pak Nai on 8 September and Tai Po Kau on 23 November.
356. Chestnut-cheeked Starling <i>Sturnus philippensis</i>	One at Mai Po on 18 May.
368. Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i>	Two at Lau Fau Shan on 6 November.
717. Yellow-browed Bunting <i>Emberiza chrysophrys</i>	One at Mai Po on 13 April.

SIGNIFICANT BREEDING RECORDS 1985

M. L. Chalmers

46. Yellow-nib Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>
Two family groups with three and four ducklings seen at Mai Po on 3 July.	
57. Black Baza	<i>Aviceda leuphotes</i>
Birds regularly seen displaying at She Shan, Tai Po Kau and Tai Mei Tuk Catchwater during spring and summer.	
70. Crested Goshawk	<i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i>
See Records Committee Report.	
106. Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
At least two pairs held territory along the Fence at Tsim Bei Tsui during the summer.	
170. Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>
See Records Committee Report.	
171. Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>
See Records Committee Report.	
173. Bridled Tern	<i>Sterna anaethetus</i>
See Records Committee Report.	
213. Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Two pairs probably bred at Tai Mei Tuk, Plover Cove. An adult with three young was seen there on 3 April.	
246. Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
One recently fledged juvenile noted in Tai Po Kau on 17 June.	
307. Hainan Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis hainana</i>
Two singing males in Tai Po Kau on 19 May and a pair there on 27 May. Fledged young were subsequently reported and several pairs were considered to have bred.	
328. Pekin Robin	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>
High numbers at Tai Po Kau and Shing Mun in summer months indicated probable breeding.	
330. White-bellied Yuhina	<i>Yuhina zantholeuca</i>
Breeding confirmed on 17 June in Tai Po Kau when a family of two adults and two recently fledged young was seen.	
606. Azure-winged Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cyana</i>
Nest building noted at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens from 26 March. Population there now at least 20.	
711. Grey-headed Parrotbill	<i>Paradoxornis gularis</i>
See Records Committee Report.	

CORRECTIONS TO 1983 REPORT

(using former checklist numbers for ease of reference)

68. Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle

One at the Peak on 1 March should be 1981.

112. Woodcock

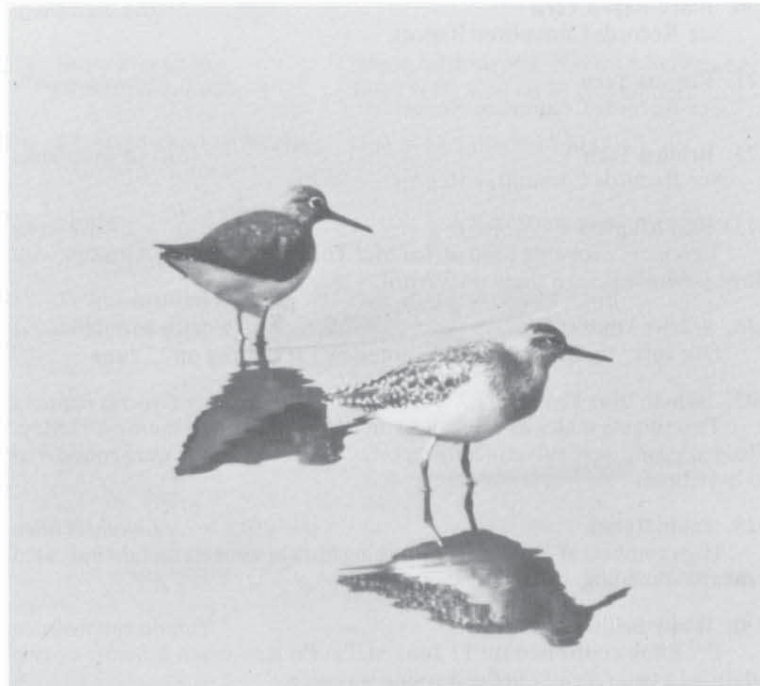
One at Deep Water Bay on 14 December should be 1981.

114. Australian Curlew

One at Mai Po on 9 May should be 1982.

308. White's Thrush

One at Deep Water Bay on 14 December should be 1981.



Green and Wood Sandpipers *Tringa ochropus*, *T. glareola*
Mai Po, January. (Ray Tipper)

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO THE ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF HONG KONG, 4TH EDITION, 1986

p.6 First sentence should read "latitude 22°18'N and longitude 114°10'E."

CATEGORY A

6. Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

2,000 also recorded in January 1985.

13. Chestnut Bittern

Ixobrychus cinnamomeus

Another December record in 1985.

23. Intermediate Egret

Egretta intermedia

Further isolated summer records of one or two birds.

25. Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Delete extreme dates (one or two have since been recorded throughout summer months).

30. White Ibis

Threskiornis melanocephalus

In last line replace "Europe and Africa" with "America".

32. Black-faced Spoonbill

Platalea minor

Also one at Mai Po on 20 and 28 July 1985.

36. Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

Four records. One at San Tin on 22 December 1985. On second line delete "on 26 and 27 January 1985" and add "from 26 to 30 January 1985."

37. Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

On second last line delete "22 June" and add "11 May", and on last line delete "29 April" and add "10 May".

40. Wigeon

Anas penelope

New maximum of 400 in December 1985.

43. Baikal Teal

Anas formosa

Seven records. Up to two females at Mai Po between 9 November and 15 December 1985 and at least one at Pokfulam on 27 December 1985.

50. Common Pochard

Aythya ferina

Five also seen at Mai Po on 19 February 1984.

52. Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

New maximum of over 110 on 21 December 1985.

- 53. Scaup** *Aythya marila*
Delete "Eight records". One or two at Mai Po or Tsim Bei Tsui between 9 November and 29 December 1985.
- 54. Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*
Second record of an immature drake and duck at Tsim Bei Tsui on 26 December 1985.
- 74. Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*
The *fulvescens* phase bird was also present in February 1985.
- 87. Barred Button Quail** *Turnix suscitator*
Last report should be on 16 October 1983, not 1984.
- 89. Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*
New late date of 28 April.
- 97. Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea*
Delete last sentence and replace with "Extreme dates are 14 April to 22 November except for isolated winter records between December and February".
- 112. Asiatic Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica*
After "apart from" in sixth line substitute "isolated records of small numbers up to 6 July".
- 113. Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*
New maximum count of 85. In sixth line after "30 June 1985" add "and one there on 25 and 27 June 1985".
- 116. Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris*
Replace last sentence by "Extreme dates are from 24 March to 1 June and between 27 August and 10 October except for one at Siu Lam between 26 December 1985 and 1 January 1986".
- 122. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata*
Extreme dates up to 24 November.
- 128. Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*
In first line replace "four" by "five" and after "15 January 1984" add "and at Tsung Pak Long on 20 March 1984".
- 136. Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*
Extreme dates are up to 7 June and from 5 July.
- 141. Australian Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis*
Records of single birds also in August and December 1985.
- 149. Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*
Maximum of 200 in spring.

- 150. Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*
Over 100 at Hebe Haven on 16 February 1985.
- 152. Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*
Extreme dates in spring to 8 June.
- 156. Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus*
Six records. Replace third line after "15 November 1978," by "one second-winter at Pak Nai on 10 and 11 March 1984, one second-winter at Tsim Bei Tsui on 30 December 1984 and one third-winter near San Tin on 1 March 1985."
- 178. Ancient Auk** *Synthliboramphus antiquus*
Four records. One near Bluff Island on 1 and 8 December 1985. One small auk near Shelter Island on 17 March 1985.
- 179. Red Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica*
Autumn flocks of up to 52.
- 180. Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*
Maximum count of over 314 on 18 December 1984. One summer record of one on 6 July 1985.
- 184. White-bellied Green Pigeon** *Treron sieboldii*
The latter record was subsequently withdrawn by the observer.
- 216. Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus orientalis*
A winter record of one at Route Twisk on 2 January 1985.
- 222. Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*
Four records. Replace "2 May 1985" with "5 May 1985". One at Government House on 28 October 1985.
- 229. Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus*
In fourth line delete "27 February" and substitute "2 January". Further sightings now give extreme dates of 5 September to 12 June.
- 233. Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi*
In second line delete "6 April 1985" and substitute "4 May 1985".
- 258. Siberian Blue Robin** *Luscinia cyane*
Five records. An adult male at Pak Nai on 8 September 1985 and an immature male at Tai Po Kau on 14 September 1985.
- 269. Orange-headed Ground Thrush** *Zoothera citrina*
Also one immature at Tai Po Kau between 23 August and 6 October 1984, and one adult there on 29 December 1985.
- 273. Blackbird** *Turdus merula*
With all records included extreme dates extend to 4 June.
- 290. Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*
Also one at Mai Po on 21 June 1985.

- 297. Sulphur-breasted Warbler** *Phylloscopus ricketti*
Eight records. One at Tai Po Kau on 14 and 29 December 1985.
- 300. Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes*
New early date of 8 September.
- 304. Radde's Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi*
Four records. Two at Lantau Tea Gardens on 17 November 1985, one at Tai Po Kau on 18 and 23 November 1985 and a separate bird there on 14 December 1985.
- 355. Purple-backed Starling** *Sturnus sturninus*
In last two lines delete "12 October" and substitute "14 October."
- 356. Chestnut-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus philippensis*
For breeding range delete "Philippines" and substitute "N. Japan".
- 370. Black-tailed Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes migratorius*
Cross-reference should be LaT 271.
- 377. Chestnut Bunting** *Emberiza rutila*
In last line after "20 May 1972" add "and 29 May 1985".
- 378. Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola*
In line eight after "February 1984" add "and 2 March 1985".

CATEGORY D

- 704. Red-breasted Parakeet** *Psittacula alexandri*
Also one in January 1985 and three at Wong Chuk Hang in February 1985.
- 706. Orange-bellied Leafbird** *Chloropsis hardwickii*
In second line delete "3 October 1984" and substitute "2 October 1984". Five at Tai Po Kau on 14 December 1985 and three there on 21 December 1985.
- 712. Grey-cheeked Fulvetta** *Alcippe morrisonia*
Delete first line and substitute "One in Tai Po Kau on 25 October 1984".
- 713. Red Avadavat** *Amandava amandava*
Also one at Tai Tam on 2 September 1985.
- 714. Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*
One at Hong Kong University in December 1970.
- 715.1 Japanese Grosbeak** *Coccothraustes personatus*
Japan & Manchuria
One at She Shan on 30 November 1985.
(LaT 272, C935, W —).

CATEGORY E

- 800. 1. Swan Goose** *Anser cygnoides* (Linnaeus)
NE Asia
A flock of 39 at Kowloon Reservoirs from 24 September 1985 were known to have been released. One was subsequently caught by AFD and transferred to Mai Po.
(LaT 706, C40, W —).
- 803.1 Red-winged Parrot** *Aprosmictus erythropterus* (Gmelin)
N & E Australia
One at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens on several occasions in March and April 1985.
(LaT —, C —, W —).
- 818. Asian Pied Starling** *Sturnus contra*
One at Pui O, Lantau in October, November and December 1985.
- 825. Golden Bishop** *Euplectes afer*
A male at Mai Po on 28 September 1985.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

p. 274 **References not included in Hong Kong Bibliography add:—**

Connors, P.G. 1983. Taxonomy, distribution and evolution of Golden Plovers *Pluvialis dominica* and *Pluvialis fulva*. *Auk* 100:607-20.

La Touche, J.D.D. 1924-35. *A Handbook of the Birds of Eastern China*, Taylor and Francis, London.

Williamson, K. 1962. *Identification for Ringers 2, The Genus Phylloscopus*. B.T.O. Identification Guide Number Two.

INDEX OF ENGLISH NAMES add:—

- p. 275 Bunting, Rustic 375
p. 277 Parakeet, Rose-ringed 604
p. 278 Robin, Siberian Blue in place of "Robin, Pallas's Blue".

WATERFOWL COUNT IN DEEP BAY 14 and 15 JANUARY 1984

M.L. Chalmers

The fifth annual co-ordinated count of wintering waterfowl was held in the Deep Bay area over the weekend 14/15 January 1984. The areas covered were similar to previous counts except that Long Valley, which was included in 1983, was not covered this year due to habitat destruction. In previous years counts have also been made from a boat in Deep Bay, but this was considered unnecessary with the completion of the fence and access road along the Deep Bay shore from Tsim Bei Tsui to Yuen Long Creek.

The main count took place during the morning of 15 January, with supplementary counts later that day (at higher high water) and in all areas except Ma Tso Lung on the previous day. The higher count for each species on either day was carried forward to the total. In cases of possible overlap or double-count, totals are quoted under one area only, and thus tend to be conservative.

The results are summarised in Table 1. A total of 23,172+ birds of 55 species was recorded. This is the highest total ever reached, and the first time over 20,000 birds have been counted. Sub-totals by major groups (for comparison with previous years in Table 2) are as follows:— Cormorants 160; herons, egrets, spoonbills and ibises 2,463+; duck 6,316+; rail, Coots, Moorhens and others 1,423; waders 1,993+; gulls and terns 10,817. Whilst some of the increases may be due to more intensive coverage and improved observation and counting techniques, the following results are noteworthy. The numbers of Cormorants were much lower than expected. However, with the onset of colder weather three days later, numbers returned to the typical level of about 1,000 birds. Wader numbers were the lowest ever counted due to not sighting the large flocks of small waders seen in previous years. However, as expected, approximately 1,000 Kentish Plovers were noted along the tide edge the following weekend. Numbers of Grey Herons and Black-headed Gulls continued to grow, but the most significant increase was for duck with the total rising from less than 4,000 to over 6,000 birds of 14 species, probably due to the decreased disturbance in Deep Bay and on the marshes, especially at Mai Po. Counts of Little Egret and Shoveler exceeded 1,000 birds for the first time and totals for Black-headed Gulls passed the 10,000 mark. Although many eyes searched hopefully, there was no sign of the drake Baikal Teal which graced Mai Po on both the previous and following Sundays.

The assistance of the following observers who took part in the count is gratefully acknowledged:—

H.M.A. Bristow, N. Chow, G.C.H. Cooper, R. Ferguson, P. Klassen, A.R. Lamont, S. Smith, R.D.E. Stott, G.A. Uphill-Brown, C.A. Viney, M.A. Webster, C.D. Weidemann.

TABLE 1

RESULTS OF WATERFOWL COUNT: 14 & 15 JANUARY 1984

Species	14.1.84		15.1.84			14/15.1.84	
	All areas except Ma Tso Lung	Ma Tso Lung	Lok Ma Chau & San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Pak Nai — Tsim Bei Tsui	Total
Great Crested Grebe	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Little Grebe	19	3	—	29	—	—	32
Dalmatian Pelican	38	—	—	—	36	—	38
Cormorant	88	—	—	—	160	—	160
Night Heron	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Chinese Pond Heron	470+	c20	6	235	77	62	470+
Cattle Egret	56	c10	42	—	8	4	64
Little Egret	890+	c25	61	426	489	13	1,014
Intermediate Egret	—	2	—	—	—	—	2
Great Egret	290+	—	—	20	234	—	290+
Grey Heron	587+	—	—	—	421	—	587+
Purple Heron	1	—	—	1	—	—	1
White Ibis	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
European Spoonbill	33	—	—	18	—	—	33
Mallard	4+	—	—	16	—	—	16
Yellow-nib Duck	32	—	4	85	—	—	89
Gadwall	10	—	—	11	—	—	11
Falcated Teal	413	—	—	180	—	—	413
Teal	2,279+	200+	2	92	1,689	—	2,279+

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	14.1.84	15.1.84					14/15.1.84
	All areas except Ma Tso Lung	Ma Tso Lung	Lok Ma Chau & San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Pak Nai — Tsim Bei Tsui	Total
Garganey	20	—	13	15	—	—	28
Wigeon	102	c50	6	103	—	—	159
Pintail	759	c40	70	39	1,239	—	1,388
Shoveler	1,412	c10	1	2	1,272	—	1,412
Scaup	2	—	—	2	—	—	2
Baer's Pochard	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
Tufted Duck	22	—	—	20	—	—	20
Pochard	2	—	—	5	—	—	5
Shelduck	—	—	—	—	492	—	492
Banded Rail	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
White-breasted Waterhen	8	2	4	2	2	8	18
Moorhen	28	c20	—	20	5	15	60
Coot	1,101	13	—	1,260	—	—	1,273
Lapwing	—	—	15	—	—	—	15
Little Ringed Plover	103	1	47	1	44	—	103
Kentish Plover	152	—	3	—	131+	258	392+
Greater Sand Plover	2	—	—	—	—	9	9
Grey Plover	75	—	—	—	c30	—	75
Fantail Snipe	139	1	13	63	93	—	170
Pintail Snipe	18	—	—	—	—	—	18
Snipe sp.	5	—	—	3	1	—	5

Continued ...

Species	14.1.84	15.1.84					14/15.1.84
	All areas except Ma Tso Lung	Ma Tso Lung	Lok Ma Chau & San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Pak Nai — Tsim Bei Tsui	Total
Curlew	269	—	—	208	—	—	269
Black-tailed Godwit	—	—	—	c20	—	—	20
Green Sandpiper	29	2	1	6	3	3	29
Wood Sandpiper	43	c10	26	—	7	—	43
Spotted Redshank	345	1	40	12	356	—	409
Greenshank	46	—	—	—	56	—	56
Marsh Sandpiper	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
Common Sandpiper	73+	4	—	8	3+	1	73+
Long-toed Stint	45	—	11	—	27	—	45
Temminck's Stint	62	—	21	—	4	—	62
Dunlin	30+	—	—	—	—	47	47
Black-winged Stilt	68	—	62	—	—	—	68
Avocet	82	—	—	—	83	—	83
Herring Gull	319	—	—	—	6	134	319
Black-headed Gull	9,950+	c700	180	345	8,480	790	10,495
Caspian Tern	—	—	—	—	—	3	3

TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF WILDFOWL COUNTS IN DEEP BAY (1979-1983)

Date	14.1.79	17/18.1.81	16/17.1.82	15/16.1.83
Waterfowl Species Recorded	44	52	49	52
Sub-totals by groups				
i Cormorants	not included	800	1,230	1,445
ii Herons, egrets, storks, spoonbills and ibises	1,652	1,587 +	1,936	1,680 +
iii Duck	3,441	1,842 +	3,136	3,549
iv Rails, Coots, Moorhens and others	748	229	639	1,183
v Waders	2,241	2,109 +	2,760	2,792 +
vi Gulls and terns	4,748 +	5,760	9,118	8,454
Total	12,830 +	12,327 +	18,819	19,103 +

INTERNATIONAL WATERFOWL COUNT IN DEEP BAY
12 and 13 JANUARY 1985

M.L. Chalmers

The sixth annual co-ordinated count of wintering waterfowl was organised by the HKBWS in the Deep Bay area over the weekend 12 and 13 January 1985. For the first time counts were also made from the northern shore of Deep Bay in the recently established Fu Tien Reserve in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. The results are therefore fully representative of the wintering waterfowl population in the whole of the Deep Bay area.

The main census in all areas was carried out on Sunday 13 January, but as in previous years supplementary counts were also made in several areas on the previous day and the higher total for each species on either day was carried forward to the total. Where there was any question of overlap, numbers are quoted under one area only, and are thus conservative. Counts at Ha Tsuen and Yuen Long are included under Deep Bay. As last year, Long Valley was not included due to loss of suitable habitat.

The results are summarised in Table 1. A total of 27,633 birds of 64 species was recorded. This exceeds the previous maximum of 23,172 in 1984 and continues the trend of increasing numbers in recent years. Sub-totals by major groups of species are as follows:—

Group	Number	Species
Cormorants	1,400	1
Herons, egrets etc.	2,120	14
Duck	8,885	14
Rails, Coots, Moorhens & others	1,925	9
Waders	3,556	22
Gulls and terns	9,747	4
TOTAL	27,633	64

Duck showed a further significant increase on the total of 6,316 recorded last year, due mainly to the exceptional numbers of Shelduck, nearly three times the previous highest count, and the high numbers of Teal, Pintail and Shoveler. Wader numbers were also the highest recorded due partly to the large flocks of small waders (probably Kentish Plover and to a lesser extent Dunlin) seen in Deep Bay at high tide.

New maxima were established for Little Grebe, Cormorant, Great Egret, Gadwall, Wigeon, Pintail, Shoveler, Tufted Duck (at Fu Tien), Shelduck, Curlew, Black-winged Stilt and Avocet. Totals for Little Grebe and Coot were probably higher than those quoted due to the birds seen at Fu Tien on Saturday not being added to the totals for other areas on Sunday, to avoid the risk of double-counting. In addition, the number of species was higher than any previous waterfowl count due to the wide and detailed

coverage by the relatively large number of observers. Rarities included a Black Stork, a drake Baikal Teal and such scarce species as Common Pochard and Water Rail. The single pelican did not reflect the flock of between 15 and 20 seen both the previous and following weekends. However, numbers of wintering Garganey followed the pattern set last year. A flock of over 30 Lapwing was another unusual feature.

The results once again clearly demonstrate the increasing importance of Deep Bay as a wintering area for a wide diversity of waterfowl.

The cooperation and assistance of the Guangdong Forestry Bureau and the following observers is gratefully acknowledged:—

J.F.S. Batson, H.M.A. Bristow, G.C.H. Cooper, T.R. Costin, J.S.R. Edge, Jin Jar-lin, P.R. Kennerley, Lu Bou-wei, D.S. Melville, V.J. Melville, S. Smith, P. Stevens, R.D.E. Stott, C.A. Viney, D. Walker, Wan Yip-fat, M.A. Webster, A. Woods, Yong Yu-li.

TABLE 1

RESULTS OF WATERFOWL COUNT : 12 & 13 JANUARY 1985

Species	12.1.85						13.1.85						12/13.1.85	
	Fu Tien	San Tin	Mai Po	Pak Nai - Lau Fan Shan	Sub-Total	Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung	San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Pak Nai - Tsim Bei Tsui	Sub-Total	Total	
Great Crested Grebe	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Little Grebe	240	1	19	-	260	-	10	5	70	-	-	85	260	
Pelican sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	
Cormorant	-	1	1,245	-	1,246	*	-	-	1,400	*	*	1,400	1,400	
Yellow Bittern	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	
Bittern	1	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	2	
Night Heron	-	-	-	-	-	a)	1	-	-	-	-	1	a)	
Chinese Pond Heron	7	22	87	-	116	50	42	19	80	70	99	360	360	
Cattle Egret	-	32	1	11	44	-	3	59	-	14	1	77	77	
Little Egret	152	56	400	-	608	42	102	60	262	207	66	739	739	
Intermediate Egret	-	-	6	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	
Great Egret	18	-	443	-	461	7	4	-	81	276	-	368	461	
Grey Heron	3	-	417	-	420	23	-	-	243	186	-	452	452	
Purple Heron	-	-	4	-	4	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	4	
Black Stork	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	
White Ibis	-	-	4	-	4	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	4	
European Spoonbill	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Black-faced Spoonbill	-	-	8	-	8	-	-	-	11	-	-	11	11	
Spoonbill sp.	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	12.1.85					13.1.85							12/13.1.85
	Fu Tien	San Tin	Mai Po	Pak Nai – Lau Fau Shan	Sub-Total	Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung	San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Pak Nai – Tsim Bei Tsui	Sub-Total	Total
Mallard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	9	9
Yellow-nib Duck	6	-	89	-	95	10	-	-	126	-	-	136	136
Gadwall	-	26	-	-	26	-	-	10	-	-	-	10	26
Falcated Teal	-	25	130	-	155	-	2	-	50	-	-	52	155
Teal	-	53	40	-	93	-	72	36	16	2,410	-	2,534	2,534
Baikal Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Garganey	5	35	-	-	40	-	-	10	-	-	-	10	40
Wigeon	-	12	170	-	182	-	-	-	350	350	-	350	350
Pintail	-	23	30	-	53	-	-	-	1	1,980	-	1,981	1,981
Shoveler	-	54	40	-	94	-	8	16	1	2,110	-	2,135	2,135
Tufted Duck	71	-	-	-	71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71
Common Pochard	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Red-breasted Merganser	-	-	-	45	45	-	-	-	-	-	24	24	45
Shelduck	-	-	400	-	400	-	-	-	*	1,400	-	1,400	1,400
Water Rail	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Banded Rail	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	2
Crake sp.	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
White-breasted Waterhen	-	55	20	-	75	2	4	17	4	6	2	35	75
Moorhen	4	55	18	-	73	-	43	21	6	4	8	82	82
Coot	392	310	800	-	1,502	-	115	219	885	10	-	1,229	1,502

Continued ...

Species	12.1.85					13.1.85							12/13.1.85
	Fu Tien	San Tin	Mai Po	Pak Nai – Lau Fau Shan	Sub-Total	Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung	San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Pak Nai – Tsim Bei Tsui	Sub-Total	Total
Lapwing	-	18	7	-	25	-	-	30	9	-	-	39	39
Grey-headed Lapwing	-	8	-	-	8	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	8
Little Ringed Plover	3	14	32	2	51	16	236	17	5	48	34	356	356
Kentish Plover	1	-	-	30	31	24	40	-	-	173	193	430	430
Greater Sand Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	3
Sand Plover sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	9
Grey Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53	-	53	53
Fantail Snipe	26	60	50	25	161	10	6	17	16	38	-	87	161
Pintail Snipe	-	20	-	1	21	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	21
Snipe sp.	2	8	8	-	18	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	18
Curlew	-	-	155	*	155	-	-	-	*	270	-	270	270
Black-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	5	5
Green Sandpiper	9	23	14	2	48	10	7	20	7	9	-	53	53
Wood Sandpiper	7	52	20	9	88	-	5	68	1	49	-	123	123
Redshank	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	12	12
Spotted Redshank	15	93	401	1	510	25	51	6	105	111	-	298	510
Greenshank	17	-	2	-	19	3	3	-	-	41	-	47	47
Marsh Sandpiper	-	-	14	-	14	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	14
Common Sandpiper	6	11	18	3	38	6	4	8	10	26	18	72	72
Long-toed Stint	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	12.1.85						13.1.85						12/13.1.85	
	Fu Tien	San Tin	Mai Po	Pak Nai – Lau Fau Shan	Sub-Total	Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung	San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Pak Nai – Tsim Bei Tsui	Sub-Total	Total	
Temminck's Stint	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	9	11	11	
Dunlin	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	260	*	264	264	
Black-winged Stilt	11	121	-	-	132	-	2	82	-	-	-	84	132	
Avocet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	134	-	134	134	
Herring Gull	8	1	300	16	325	-	-	-	-	185	28	213	325	
Black-tailed Gull	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Black-headed Gull	600	545	6,000	-	7,145	*	*	118	*	8,930	370	9,418	9,418	
Caspian Tern	-	-	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
Small Waders sp.	21	40	1,500	-	1,561	*	-	-	-	1,500	-	-	b) 810	
Medium Waders sp.	20	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	

a) Seen on 11-1-85

b) Total reduced by maximum numbers of Kentish Plover & Dunlin to avoid possible double-count on 13-1-85

* Total excluded to avoid possible double-count.

HONG KONG CHRISTMAS COUNT 29 DECEMBER 1985

Clive Viney

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To survey all species occurring within the geographical boundaries of Hong Kong on 29 December 1985.
- (ii) To estimate approximately the abundance of species recorded.
- (iii) To provide a yardstick for future Christmas counts.

METHOD

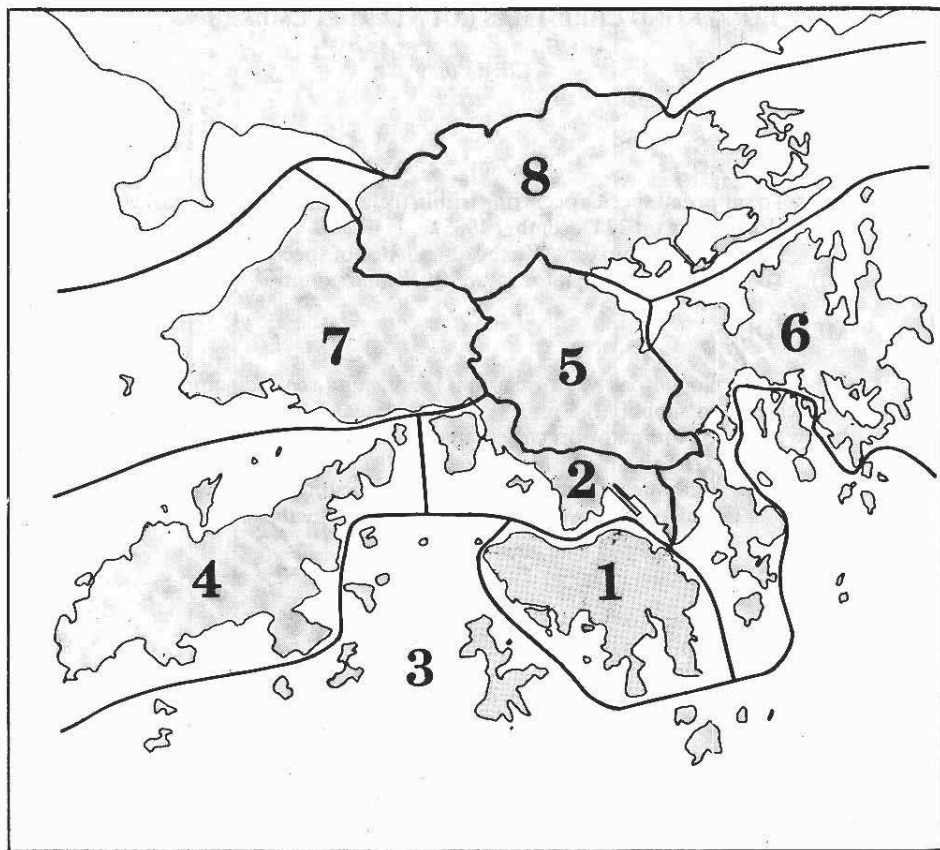
Initially Hong Kong was divided into 15 areas and a co-ordinator assigned to each, but to simplify the returns this was later reduced to 8 areas (see below). The co-ordinator organised a group survey on the appointed day and tabulated the return for his or her area. Individual returns were also encouraged. Although a reasonable degree of accuracy was expected, the survey was meant to be enjoyed by the participants rather than to be scientific.

AREAS

- 1 — Hong Kong Island
- 2 — Kowloon
- 3 — Offshore Islands
- 4 — Lantau
- 5 — Central New Territories
- 6 — Eastern New Territories
- 7 — Western New Territories
- 8 — Northern New Territories

These areas correspond to those used by Chalmers (1986) in his survey of Hong Kong's breeding birds with the following exceptions:—

- (i) The entire Lam Tsuen Valley is included in the Central New Territories (5)
- (ii) Tolo Harbour (in its entirety) is included in the Eastern New Territories (6)
- (iii) Hong Kong Harbour is included in Kowloon (2)
- (iv) The islands of Port Shelter and Rocky Harbour (excluding the Ninepin Group) are included in the Eastern New Territories (6)



Christmas Count Areas (see text page 65 for boundary adjustments).

NOMENCLATURE

Names and numbers correspond to those used by Chalmers (1986).

ABUNDANCE

Only numbers of species recorded by observers were used and estimates for entire areas (although originally requested) were not used. Estimating the numbers of common species noted was done by the factor method and these estimates have been summarized on the table below as follows:—

1 - 9	order 1
10 - 99	order 2
100 - 999	order 3
1000 - 9999	order 4

WEATHER

The weather will always be a major factor in a survey of this nature. On the day it was reasonable. Officially, it was mild (17.4 - 20° C), cloudy (1.1 hours of sunshine) and rather humid (71 - 73%, nil rainfall) with light easterly winds.

COVERAGE

All major birdwatching sites were visited, but many less frequented districts, particularly inland areas in the New Territories, were not. Most wetlands and some coastal areas were surveyed and some areas such as Hong Kong Island and Deep Bay received especially good coverage.

PARTICIPANTS

My thanks go to the following observers:

Karen & Ray Barretto, Alan Bristow, Albert Cheung (and friends), Gavin Cooper, Mike Chalmers, Roger Costin, Mrs Brigid Edge, John Edge, Dr John Edge, Nick Forward, David and Mary-Margaret Galloway, Nick Grimshaw, Dennis Kong, Angus Lamont, Matthew Linton, David and Vicky Melville, James Milne Home, David and Margaret Oak, Verity Picken, Sandy Powell, Ross Sinclair (and friend), Stewart Smith, Graeme Stevens, Peter & Peggy Stevens, Richard Stott, Ray Tipper, Christine Tracey, Robert Valentine, (Clive Viney), David Walker, Don Weidemann and Simon Wilks.

My apologies to anyone overlooked.

RESULTS

These have been tabulated below with pertinent remarks. Suffice to say the number of species noted (184) was far higher than anticipated and is remarkably similar to that recorded at the peak of the spring migration in April 1985 (Cooper *et al*, 1985).

The method of survey is at best approximate and will, for instance, result in the number of most 'common' species (especially passerines) being grossly under-recorded if looked at on an area basis, eg the number of Yellow-browed Warblers in each area must have exceeded 99 (order 2).

[For birds marked with an asterisk see *Remarks* column at end of table — Ed.]

1 - 9	order 1
10 - 99	order 2
100 - 999	order 3
1000 - 9999	order 4

	Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT
1 Little Grebe	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
2 Great Crested Grebe	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
6 Cormorant	1	-	2	1	-	-	4	4
7 Dalmatian Pelican*	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
13 Chestnut Bittern*	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
16 Night Heron	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
17 Little Green Heron	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
18 Chinese Pond Heron	-	-	1	1	2	3	3	3
19 Cattle Egret	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
21 Reef Egret	-	-	1	1	-	2	1	-
22 Little Egret	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	3
24 Great Egret	-	-	-	-	2	2	3	3
25 Grey Heron	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
26 Purple Heron	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
30 White Ibis	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
31 European Spoonbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
32 Black-faced Spoonbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
37 Shelduck	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3
40 Wigeon	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
41 Falcated Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
42 Gadwall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
44 Teal	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	3
45 Mallard*	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1

1 - 9	order 1
10 - 99	order 2
100 - 999	order 3
1000 - 9999	order 4

	Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT
46 Yellow-nib Duck*	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	3
47 Pintail	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	3
48 Garganey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
49 Shoveler	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
50 Common Pochard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
51 Baer's Pochard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
52 Tufted Duck*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
53 Scaup	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
56 Red-breasted Merganser*	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
60 Black Kite	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	2
61 White-bellied Sea Eagle	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
63 Serpent Eagle	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
64 Marsh Harrier	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
68 Japanese Sparrowhawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
69 Sparrowhawk	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
70 Crested Goshawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
73 Buzzard	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1
75 Imperial Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
76 Bonelli's Eagle	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
77 Osprey	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
79 Kestrel	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1
83 Peregrine Falcon	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
84 Chinese Francolin	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1

1 - 9	order 1
10 - 99	order 2
100 - 999	order 3
1000 - 9999	order 4

	Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT
85 Japanese Quail	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
89 Water Rail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
95 White-breasted Waterhen	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	2
96 Moorhen	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
97 Watercock*	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
98 Coot	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
103 Black-winged Stilt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
104 Avocet	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
106 Little Ringed Plover	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	2
108 Kentish Plover	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	1
110 Greater Sand Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
113 Grey Plover	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-
114 Grey-headed Lapwing	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
116 Great Knot*	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
119 Red-necked Stint	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
120 Temminck's Stint	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
121 Long-toed Stint	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
124 Dunlin	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
129 Fantail Snipe	-	-	-	2	-	1	3	2
130 Pintail Snipe	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-
135 Woodcock	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
136 Black-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
140 Curlew	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3

1 - 9	order 1
10 - 99	order 2
100 - 999	order 3
1000 - 9999	order 4

	Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT
142 Spotted Redshank	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
144 Marsh Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
145 Greenshank	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
147 Green Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	2
148 Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
150 Common Sandpiper	-	-	-	2	1	2	2	2
153 Red-necked Phalarope*	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
158 Black-headed Gull	-	3	3	3	-	4	4	4
160 Black-tailed Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
162 Herring Gull	-	1	-	2	-	-	3	2
168 Caspian Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
180 Rufous Turtle Dove	2	-	-	1	2	1	2	2
181 Spotted Dove	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
183 Emerald Dove	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
189 Plaintive Cuckoo	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
193 Koel	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
194 Greater Coucal	1	1	-	1	-	2	1	1
195 Lesser Coucal	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
196 Collared Scops Owl	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
209 House Swift	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	2
210 White-breasted Kingfisher	1	-	-	1	-	1	2	2
211 Black-capped Kingfisher	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1
212 Common Kingfisher	1	-	-	1	1	1	2	2

1 - 9	order 1
10 - 99	order 2
100 - 999	order 3
1000 - 9999	order 4

		Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT
213	Pied Kingfisher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
218	Great Barbet	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-
225	Oriental Skylark	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
227	Swallow	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
230	Richard's Pipit	-	-	-	2	-	1	2	1
231	Upland Pipit	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
232	Olive-backed Pipit	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
234	Red-throated Pipit	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
235	Water Pipit	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
237	Yellow Wagtail	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
239	Grey Wagtail	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1
240	White Wagtail	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2
242	Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
245	Grey-throated Minivet	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
246	Scarlet Minivet	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
247	Crested Bulbul	3	2	2	3	3	4	2	3
248	Chinese Bulbul	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	3
249	Red-vented Bulbul	2	-	1	-	2	2	2	2
250	Chestnut Bulbul	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
255	Red-tailed Robin	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1
256	Rubythroat	-	1	-	1	1	1	2	2
257	Bluethroat	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
259	Red-flanked Bluetail	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-

1 - 9	order 1
10 - 99	order 2
100 - 999	order 3
1000 - 9999	order 4

		Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT
260	Daurian Redstart	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	1
261	Plumbeous Water Redstart	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
262	Magpie Robin	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2
263	Stonechat	1	-	1	2	1	2	2	2
264	Grey Bushchat	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
267	Blue Rock Thrush	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
268	Violet Whistling Thrush	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1
269	Orange-headed Ground Thrush	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
270	White's Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
273	Blackbird*	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
275	Grey-backed Thrush	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
277	Eye-browed Thrush	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
278	Dusky Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
280	Short-tailed Bush Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
281	Chinese Bush Warbler	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	2
283	Fantail Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	2
284	Brown Wren-Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3
285	Yellow-bellied Wren-Warbler	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3
296	Long-tailed Tailorbird	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3
297	Sulphur-breasted Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
302	Pallas's Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
303	Yellow-browed Warbler	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	3
305	Dusky Warbler	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	3

1 - 9	order 1
10 - 99	order 2
100 - 999	order 3
1000 - 9999	order 4

	Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT
309 Verditer Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
313 Brown Flycatcher	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
314 Red-breasted Flycatcher	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-
315 Robin Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
318 Grey-headed Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
321 Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
324 Black-throated Laughing Thrush	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
325 Hwamei	2	1	-	1	2	1	1	2
326 White-cheeked Laughing Thrush	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
327 Black-faced Laughing Thrush	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	2
328 Pekin Robin	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
332 Yellow-bellied Tit*	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	2
333 Great Tit	2	1	-	2	3	2	2	2
335 Fork-tailed Sunbird	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	1
337 Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
339 White-eye	3	2	2	2	3	4	3	3
342 Brown Shrike	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
343 Rufous-backed Shrike	1	-	1	2	1	2	2	2
345 Black Drongo	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
346 Ashy Drongo	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
347 Hair-crested Drongo*	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
348 Jay	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
349 Blue Magpie	1	1	-	1	-	2	1	-

1 - 9	order 1
10 - 99	order 2
100 - 999	order 3
1000 - 9999	order 4

	Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT
350 Treepie	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
351 Magpie	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
352 Jungle Crow	1	1	-	1	2	-	1	2
353 Collared Crow	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	2
354 Silky Starling	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	1
360 Grey Starling	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
361 Black-necked Starling	-	1	-	1	2	3	2	2
362 Crested Mynah	3	2	2	4	2	3	3	3
363 Tree Sparrow	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3
364 White-backed Munia	2	-	-	-	2	1	-	1
365 Spotted Munia	-	-	2	1	2	2	2	2
367 Chinese Greenfinch	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
370 Black-tailed Hawfinch	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	2
371 Masked Bunting	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	2
374 Tristram's Bunting	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
376 Little Bunting	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	2
380 Crested Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
601 Feral Pigeon	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	2
602 Rainbow Lorikeet	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
604 Rose-ringed Parakeet	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
605 Common Mynah	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
606 Azure-winged Magpie	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
818 Asian Pied Starling	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

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Long-tailed Tailorbird
 Black-faced Laughing Thrush
 Magpie
 Masked Bunting
 Yellow-browed Warbler
 White Wagtail
 Magpie Robin
 Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler
 Dusky Warbler
 Grey Wagtail
 Blackbird

Certain records mentioned above are not contained in the Records Committee Report covering this period. This is due to the Christmas count participants not submitting corresponding written records to the Recorder. Whilst such records are considered adequate for this survey, they will not be included in the official Society records unless substantiated by the submission of a detailed record card.

REFERENCES

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Cooper, Gavin *et al* 1985. *Hong Kong's Own Big Bird Race*, World Wildlife Fund Hong Kong.



Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
 San Tin, January.

(Ray Tipper)

OBSERVATIONS ON THE BIRDS OF NAN KUN SHAN NATURE RESERVE, GUANGDONG PROVINCE, CHINA

Clive Viney

Nan Kun Shan Nature Reserve is situated c150km NNE of Hong Kong (23°38'N, 114°38'E). The reserve has an area of 12,400ha and is an upland plateau 350-500m a.s.l. with peaks rising to 1,228m.

Although declared a nature reserve in May 1984 (Xinhua News Bulletin — 14.5.84) the area is essentially a forestry station and includes 8,000ha of naturally regenerating bamboo and pine, 2,000ha used for cultivation of fruit trees, vegetables and a small amount of rice and, most importantly, 2,000ha of primary or climax forest. (Data provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau)

The habitat within the reserve can be broken down into seven types:—

- (i) Climax or primary forest. Dense woodland comprising a wide range of indigenous trees mostly on sloping ground. Commercial logging has apparently ceased although thinning is evident. Typical breeding species are Grey-throated Minivet, Chestnut Bulbul, Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, Treepie, Large Hawk Cuckoo and Black Baza. In winter, large mixed flocks of minivets, tits, warblers and babblers forage through the area.
- (ii) Commercial bamboo and pine. Usually situated below the climax forest on the more level and accessible ground but often intergrading with woodland. These areas are less attractive to birds than the climax forest but a variety of species can be found, especially in winter. Hair-crested Drongos particularly favour this habitat in summer.
- (iii) Scrubland. Found at the margins of all other habitat types. Especially favoured by babblers and warblers.
- (iv) Cultivation. Intensively husbanded level areas with occasional fish and frog ponds. Attracts a variety of winter visitors (buntings, pipits, chats and thrushes) but few resident species.
- (v) Upland. Most of the high ground is wooded but on the highest peaks above 1,000m forest gives way to open grassland.
- (vi) Reservoir. A large expanse of open water situated in the lowest part of the reserve. The water level varies considerably (drained 23-26 March) and attracts very few water-related species. However, the banks shelve gradually and at low water level present an interesting open habitat. Much of the immediate shore is well wooded and in parts adjoins cultivation. The area has proved good for raptors.
- (vii) Riverine. Fast flowing rocky streams with highly variable water levels.

Most streams pass through steep, often wooded gorges. Typical species are Slaty-backed Forktail, Crested Kingfisher and Brown Dipper.

There are no published records of recent visits to the area by non-Chinese ornithologists, but the Guangdong Forestry Bureau kindly provided a list, which, however, proved to be substantially incomplete, of specimens and sight records from the general district. Nevertheless, several interesting species on this list, such as Rickett's Hill Partridge, Silver Pheasant and White-throated Rock Thrush, were not recorded on the 1984/1986 visits.

Four recent visits have been made to the reserve by groups of Hong Kong based birdwatchers, viz:—

- (i) 23-26 March 1984 (Clive Viney, Dr. K.S. Searle, M.L. Chalmers, G.C.H. Cooper, C.D. Weidemann, R. Ferguson and J.S.R. Edge.)
- (ii) 9-12 November 1984 (G.C.H. Cooper, Steven Smith, Stewart Smith, G. Stevens, P. Stevens, R.D.E. Stott, A.C. Wood *et al.*)
- (iii) 3-6 May 1985 (G.C.H. Cooper, Clive Viney, D.S. Melville, Stewart Smith, G. Stevens, R.D.E. Stott, H.M.A. Bristow, J. Boughey *et al.*)
- (iv) 16-20 January 1986 (G.C.H. Cooper, Stewart Smith, G. Stevens, P. Stevens, J. Boughey, R. Spowage *et al.*)

These visits followed a similar format and essentially surveyed the same areas. Efforts were concentrated on the immediate environs of the reserve headquarters (400-500m), where most habitat types are readily accessible. Particularly attractive are the two level and totally unenclosed catchment walks which follow the edge of climax forest and afford excellent views of river gorges and open vistas for aerial species. On all four visits excursions were made to the climax forest and adjoining cultivation at Sheung Ping (500-600m) and the reservoir area (350m). The high ground above 600m was only visited on 18 January.

The Forestry Bureau advised that several large mammal species, including Leopard *Panthera pardus*, still occur and it is only a few years since the last Tiger *P. tigris* was killed there. During the recent visits large deer identified as Sambar *Cervus unicolor* were seen twice and smaller mammals, including Crab-eating Mongoose *Herpestes urva* and a trapped Pangolin *Manis pentadactyla*, were also reported.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

The order is after Howard & Moore (1984), although the names correspond to Viney & Philipps (1983) except those not mentioned therein (marked +) which follow King (1975). Unreferenced comments referring to status follow Cheng (1976) and published data in Hong Kong.

Von Schrenck's Little Bittern

Ixobrychus eurhythmus

One flushed twice by a stream at c600m on 4 May. Two other brief views of single small bitterns near watercourses on 3 and 5 May may have been this species. There are very few reliable records of this species from Hong Kong but these sightings bear a striking similarity to a report of a single female in similar habitat in Hong Kong 9-11 May 1984 (Chalmers 1986) and suggest spring passage.

Chestnut Bittern

Ixobrychus cinnamomeus

One on cultivation at c400m, 3-6 May.

Chinese Pond Heron

Ardeola bacchus

Two in the vicinity of cultivation at c480m on 4 May.

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

One flying over at c450m on 4 May.

Little Green Heron

Butorides striatus

Up to three recorded along watercourses 16-20 January and 9 November. Two adults and an immature by the reservoir on 5 May.

Mandarin

Aix galericulata

A male and four females at the edge of the reservoir on 11 November.

Black Baza

Aviceda leuphotes

Very much in evidence 3-6 May and clearly breeding (aerobatics, display flights and copulation noted). Up to seven seen circling.

Black Kite

Milvus migrans

Up to three 9-12 November and 3-6 May.

Serpent Eagle

Spilornis cheela

One or two noted on all four visits. Calling but no obvious signs of breeding activity.

Besra

Accipiter virgatus

A large female (identified by thick mesial stripe) near the reservoir on 5 May. Other *Accipiters* (not *trivirgatus* or *soloensis*) seen on 5 and 6 May were probably this species. Both Cheng (1976) and Brown & Amadon (1968) show this mostly sedentary hawk as occurring in South China. Not reliably recorded from Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986).

Northern Sparrowhawk

Accipiter nisus

One female/immature on 19 January.

Crested Goshawk

Accipiter trivirgatus

Regular sightings of one or two on all four visits. Quivering wing-tip display and tail flagging noted and breeding is likely. Breeding behaviour has recently been recorded in Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986) which, with these records, indicates a more easterly breeding range than that given by Brown & Amadon (1968), Cheng (1976) and Etchecopar & Hue (1978).

Horsfield's Goshawk *Accipiter soloensis*

Regular sightings of one or two adults and an immature 3-6 May. Pairs calling and performing display flights (aerobatics and talon grasping) strongly suggested breeding. Although only recorded as passage migrant in Hong Kong, Cheng (1976) indicates breeding in the approximate area of the reserve.

Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*

A pair of adults performing a display flight 3-5 May, strongly suggested breeding. Single birds were also recorded 18 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November. Breeding has been recorded in Hong Kong but there this species is normally only seen in open hilly country with rocky outcrops (Viney & Philipps 1983).

Mountain Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis*

Several sightings of single birds 3-5 May. Not recorded from Hong Kong but the reserve is within the range given by Cheng (1976) and Brown & Amadon (1968).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

At least three separate birds on 5 May were probably passage migrants, although the reserve is close to the breeding range given by Cheng (1976).

[Chinese Francolin] *Francolinus pintadeanus*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau.]

[Rickett's Hill Partridge] *Arborophila gingica*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau. Evidently still shot in winter.]

Chinese Bamboo Partridge *Bambusicola thoracica*

Several coveys were seen at various elevations 9-12 November and also recorded 17-19 January and 3-5 May. The reserve is within the breeding range given by Cheng (1976). Evidently shot in large numbers in winter.

[Silver Pheasant] *Lophura nycthemera*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau. Evidently still shot in winter.]

[+Golden Pheasant] *Chrysolophus pictus**

The news announcement declaring this area a reserve referred to the presence of this species (Xinhua News Bulletin — 14.5.84) although it was not recorded on the four visits or evidently by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau.]

*name after Cheng (1976)

[Slaty-legged Crake] *Rallina eurizonoides*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau.]

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Recorded in small numbers 19-20 January, 3-6 May and 9-12 November.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

One in climax forest at c600m on 18 January.

Rufous Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

Recorded in small numbers. Very shy. It is not clear whether this species breeds in the reserve as it is only a visitor to Hong Kong (September to May) (Chalmers 1986). Cheng (1976) indicates breeding close to the reserve.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*

Surprisingly scarce as this species is very common in Hong Kong. The dearth of dove records suggests heavy hunting pressure.

Red-winged Crested Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*

Two or three seen together in several localities 3-5 May. Behaviour strongly suggested breeding.

Large Hawk Cuckoo *Cuculus sparveroides*

Its loud and familiar call was frequently heard 23-26 March and 3-6 May. Few sight records.

[Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo] *Cuculus fugax*

A two note call heard 23-26 March and 3-6 May was attributed to this species on the basis of distribution (Cheng 1976) and the notes in King (1975), but none of the observers had previous experience of the call. There is one specimen record from Hong Kong.]

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*

One heard calling on 6 May. The scarcity of this species, when compared to Hong Kong, may be attributable to the virtual absence of its known host species, Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocerus*.

[Oriental Cuckoo] *Cuculus saturatus*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau.]

Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*

One called during the evening of 4 May. The scarcity of this species, when compared to Hong Kong, may be due to the scarcity and absence of its two known host species, Crested Mynah *Acridotheres cristatellus* and Black-necked Starling *Sturnus nigricollis*.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

Occasionally seen, usually at lower elevations.

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis*

A pair, which appeared to be breeding, was seen near the reserve headquarters 3-5 May. One on 18 January.

Collared Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena*

Heard at the reserve headquarters during the early hours of 19-20 January and 6 May.

Collared Pygmy Owllet *Glaucidium brodiei*

One seen calling in daylight (1100h) on 5 May from a low branch. This bird was the object of curiosity and mobbing by several species; these included Chestnut Bulbul *Hypsipetes castanotus*, Mountain Bulbul *H. mccllellandii*, Grey-throated Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris*, Great Tit *Parus major*, Yellow-cheeked Tit *P. sponotus* and Fork-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga christinae*.

Brown Hawk Owl *Ninox scutulata*

One seen in daylight (1130h) on 3 May at rest and in flight.

+ Red-Headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus*

One male at the edge of climax forest (c900m) on 18 January.

Crested Kingfisher *Ceryle lugubris*

Breeding was proved 23-26 March when an occupied nest hole was found in a decomposed rock bank immediately above a water catchment at c410m. The catchment is situated on the side of a river gorge. At this time one or two pairs were present, at least three pairs were in the area 9-12 November but it was surprisingly scarce 16-20 January and 3-6 May when only a single bird was seen.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

One or two recorded on all four visits, usually at the reserve headquarters but also by the reservoir.

White-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

Single birds seen in open areas 19 January, 4-6 May and 9-12 November.

Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*

Several pairs breeding in the area 3-5 May. Nest holes located.

[Blue-throated Bee-eater] *Merops viridis*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau.]

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus orientalis*

Two recorded on 3 May and many on 4 May. It is not clear whether these were passage birds (corresponding to spring passage through Hong Kong) or breeding birds, as the reserve is within the breeding range shown by Cheng (1976).

Great Barbet *Megalaima virens*

Recorded on all four visits but, surprisingly, was much less vocal than

in Hong Kong. Apparently, quite thinly distributed.

[+ Black-browed Barbet] *Megalaima oorti*

Barbets which were not *virens* were heard calling on 3 and 4 May. The call "took — took took" was repeated between 30 and 40 times per minute. On range (Cheng 1976) this seems to be the most likely species and the call is not unlike that recorded on *A Field Guide to the Bird Songs of South-East Asia* (British Library National Sound Archive; ed. White, T.) and described by King (1975) for this species, except that it is slower (King gives c70 phrases per minute).]

Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus*

Two separate birds (one a male) seen close to the reserve headquarters on 20 January. According to Cheng (1976) the reserve is within this species' known breeding range.

+ Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*

Two at c480m on 4 May and heard calling at c550m on 5 May; also noted 19 January. Earlier records of 'rufous woodpeckers' 23-26 March and 9-12 November (Viney 1984 & 1985) are likely attributable to this species. According to Cheng (1976) the reserve is within this species' known breeding range.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Occasionally seen over cultivation and around settlements 23-26 March and 3-6 May.

[Red-rumped Swallow] *Hirundo daurica*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau. This species does, however, occur close to the reserve at Wing Hani but at a much lower elevation.]

[Asian House Martin] *Delichon dasypus*

Several house martins were seen low over woodland 23-26 March and 9-12 November and identified as *urbica* (Viney 1985). However, a recent review of house martin records from Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986) and a reappraisal of the field notes taken suggest that these birds were probably *dasypus*.]

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

A few were regularly seen on all four visits, including birds in full plumage 23-26 March. However, these are considered to be wintering or migrant birds as the reserve is well south of the known breeding range (Cheng 1976).

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Several of the distinctive white-faced race *leucopsis*, which is resident in South China (Cheng 1976), were recorded on all four visits.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Three on cultivation at c480m on 4 May.

Indian Tree Pipit*Anthus hodgsoni*

Wintering birds, mostly on cultivation 17-20 January, 3-6 March and 9-12 November.

Rosy Minivet*Pericrocotus roseus*

Several of the distinctive grey race *cantonensis* in flocks of mixed minivets 23-26 March.

Ashy Minivet*Pericrocotus divaricatus*

Two on 6 May at c410m were passage migrants (corresponding to spring passage through Hong Kong).

Grey-throated Minivet*Pericrocotus solaris*

One of the most obvious species occurring on the reserve and commonest of the minivets recorded. Displaying birds noted 3-6 May. Both males and females had entirely grey throats, which is contrary to the illustration in King (1975), and are presumed typical of the race *griseogularis* found in Southeast China (de Schauensee 1984).

Scarlet Minivet*Pericrocotus flammeus*

Recorded in good numbers 17 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November, usually in mixed minivet flocks, with males and females in more or less equal numbers (this is contrary to Hong Kong where in winter full-plumaged males are clearly in a minority). Much scarcer 3-6 May but breeding activity was noted.

Crested Bulbul*Pycnonotus jocosus*

Surprisingly scarce (when compared to its abundance in similar habitat in Hong Kong) but noted on all four visits.

+ Brown-breasted Bulbul*Pycnonotus xanthorrhous*

Four of the distinctive eastern race *andersoni* were seen at the edge of climax forest (c600m) on 18 January. Although Cheng (1976) shows the reserve to be close to this species' known breeding range, King (1975), Etchecopar & Hue (1983) and de Schauensee (1984) indicate that this is a montane species occurring above 1200m. Not recorded from Hong Kong.

Chinese Bulbul*Pycnonotus sinensis*

Flocks of about ten on 18 January and 11 November are the only records. The virtual absence of this species is surprising considering its abundance in lowland South China and at all elevations in Hong Kong (0-957m).

[Red-vented Bulbul*Pycnonotus aurigaster*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau. This species does, however, occur close to the reserve at Wing Han but at a much lower elevation.]

+ Mountain Bulbul*Hypsipetes mccllellandii*

Several flocks were seen throughout the reserve and at various elevations 17-20 January and 9-12 November. Scarcer, but still widespread 3-6 May. These birds were of the race *holtii* which is quite different from that illustrated in King (1975) (more prominent crest, grey mantle, white

streaked throat, contrasting bright emerald green wings and tail and no obvious colour contrast on the ventral area). Cheng (1976) shows the reserve within the species' breeding range but King gives an altitude range of 900-2,000m. Not recorded from Hong Kong.

Chestnut Bulbul*Hypsipetes castanotus*

Present in good numbers. Displaying birds noted and the reserve is within the breeding range given by Cheng (1976) and Etchecopar & Hue (1983). Often regarded as race *canipennis* of *H. flavalus* (Ashy Bulbul) (Howard & Moore 1984).

Black Bulbul*Hypsipetes madagascariensis*

Only recorded once 23-26 March 1984, which is surprising in view of the large winter irruption evident in Hong Kong at that time (Chalmers 1984). Very common in November 1984 and January 1986 during winters when it was very scarce or even absent in Hong Kong. Not recorded 3-6 May 1985.

Orange-bellied Leafbird*Chloropsis hardwickii*

Single birds and pairs noted at the edge of climax forest 18 January and 4 and 5 May, but generally scarce. The reserve is within the breeding range given by Cheng (1976).

Brown Shrike*Lanius cristatus*

A juvenile near the reserve headquarters 9-12 November. An adult of the race *lucionensis* was seen at the edge of cultivation on 4 May.

Rufous-backed Shrike*Lanius schach*

Birds of the race *schach* were seen in open cultivated areas on all four visits.

Brown Dipper*Cinclus pallasii*

Several single birds were seen on fast flowing streams 17-19 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November. Comparatively scarce 3-6 May with only a single record (6 May). The reserve is within the breeding range given by Cheng (1976) but King (1975) gives a minimum altitude of 760m. None of the streams visited was above an elevation of 600m. Melville (verbally) suggested that the birds move to higher ground to seek more constant water-levels for breeding.

Red-tailed Robin*Erithacus sibilans*

Recorded 17 January and its distinctive song was heard 23-26 March; this species is known to sing within its wintering range (Viney & Phillipps 1983).

Red-flanked Bluetail*Tarsiger cyanurus*

Several sightings of wintering birds 17-20 January and 23-26 March.

[Magpie Robin*Copsychus saularis*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau. This species does, however, occur close to the reserve at Wing Han but at a much lower elevation.]

Plumbeous Water Redstart*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*

Several widespread sightings of single birds, both males and females 16-20 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November. During 3-6 May, a male and two females were seen in the same locality (c380m) but not elsewhere. It is not clear whether this species breeds in the area as it is only a winter visitor to Hong Kong.

White-capped Redstart*Thamnolaea leucocephalus*

One or two located on streams 17-19 January and 23-26 March. Presumably these were wintering birds as the reserve is well outside its known breeding range (Cheng 1976 and Etchecopar & Hue 1983).

Daurian Redstart*Phoenicurus aureoreus*

One or two wintering birds by cultivated areas 17-20 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November.

Slaty-backed Forktail*Enicurus schistaceus*

Regularly seen on all four visits in suitable riverine habitat. Breeding behaviour noted and clearly several pairs are resident.

White-crowned Forktail*Enicurus leschenaulti*

Two or three located 17-19 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November. Found on smaller, quieter streams than *schistaceus*. Although not recorded 3-6 May, the reserve is within the species' known breeding range (Cheng 1976) and it does not appear to have a specific altitude preference (King 1975).

Stonechat*Saxicola torquata*

Single wintering birds located by cultivated areas 17-19 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November.

Grey Bushchat*Saxicola ferrea*

Up to five wintering birds seen in the vicinity of the same cultivated area at c500m 18 January, 24-26 March and 10-12 November.

[White-throated Rock Thrush*Monticola gularis*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau.]

Violet Whistling Thrush*Myiophonus caeruleus*

Recorded near watercourses on all four visits. Breeding activity noted 3-6 May.

[Siberian Thrush*Zoothera sibiricus*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau.]

White's Thrush*Zoothera dauma*

One or two wintering birds located 17-20 January and 24-26 March.

Grey-backed Thrush*Turdus hortulorum*

A wintering male located by a cultivated area 24-26 March.

Pale Thrush*Turdus pallidus*

Several records of wintering birds 23-26 March 1984. (It should be noted that the 1983/84 winter was regarded as good for thrushes in Hong Kong when compared to the 1984/85 and 1985/86 winters, which may account for the absence of this species 9-12 November 1984 and 16-20 January 1986.)

Eye-browed Thrush*Turdus obscurus*

A flock was seen at the edge of climax forest 9-12 November. This species is known to migrate through Hong Kong in loose flocks in the late autumn.

Dusky Thrush*Turdus naumanni*

One wintering bird of the dark-tailed race *eunomus* located by a cultivated area 24 March.

+ Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler*Pomatorhinus erythrogenys**

At least two in a bamboo thicket at c1,100m on 18 January. According to Cheng (1976) the reserve is within this species' known breeding range. King (1975) lists this species as Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler *P. erythrocnemis*.

Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*

Recorded in small parties on all four visits. These birds were of the race *stridulus* (de Schauensee 1984) and are presumably resident.

+ Rufous-capped Babbler*Stachyris ruficeps*

Small flocks of the distinctive race *davidi* were commonly seen 17-20 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November. On call, was clearly present in some numbers 3-6 May but was much more difficult to see, presumably because of breeding activity. Mostly recorded at c500m, which is below the ranges of above 900m given by King (1975) and 1,000-2,400m given by Etchecopar & Hue (1983). However, recorded at Tai Po Kau, Hong Kong, July 1985, at 340m.

Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush*Garrulax pectoralis*

One or two flocks recorded on all four visits and is presumably resident. Sightings were of the distinctive race *picticollis* (de Schauensee 1984) which also occurs at Tai Po Kau, Hong Kong.

Hwamei*Garrulax canorus*

Judging by the number of singing birds on all four visits is quite common throughout the reserve.

White-cheeked Laughing Thrush*Garrulax sannio*

Small flocks located at the edge of cleared and cultivated areas on 18-19 January, 24 March and 3-6 May and is presumably resident.

Pekin Robin*Leiothrix lutea*

Several small flocks of, apparently, wintering birds located 18-20

*name after Cheng (1976)

January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November (not recorded 3-6 May). This species breeds from April to October (Etchecopar & Hue 1983) and is normally resident above 900m but is known to be subject to altitudinal movement in winter (La Touche). These records are particularly interesting in the context of Hong Kong where this species' status is confused by the strong possibility of free-flying escaped cagebirds (Chalmers 1986). It now seems likely, however, because of these records that small flocks in suitable woodland are genuine wintering birds.

+Brown-capped Fulvetta

Alcippe brunnea

Present in good numbers. Although only infrequently seen, its song is loud and was heard in most parts of the reserve, particularly 3-6 May. Presumably resident, but King (1975) gives an altitudinal range of 900-1,800m and Etchecopar & Hue (1983) of 1,000-2,500m. Absent in Hong Kong. Most sight records fit the description of race *superciliaris* (La Touche). However, detailed notes were taken on 10 November (G. Stevens) of a bird fitting the description of race *genestieri*, which Cheng (1976) treats as a separate species *Alcippe dubia* (Hume), but is lumped by King, Etchecopar & Hue and de Schauensee (1984) under *Alcippe brunnea*.

+Grey-cheeked Fulvetta

Alcippe morrisonia

Small flocks of the distinctive race *hueti* (La Touche) were frequently seen 16-20 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November, often in the company of other species. Much more difficult to locate 3-6 May but was clearly present in good numbers and was presumably less obtrusive because of breeding activity. The reserve is just within Etchecopar & Hue's (1983) breeding range of 500-3,000m but well below that of above 1,300m given by King (1975). La Touche (1925-1934) recorded this species down to sea-level. Single birds have recently been noted at Tai Po Kau but, as yet, its status in Hong Kong is uncertain as the possibility of escapes cannot be disregarded (Chalmers 1986).

Collared Siva

Yuhina castaniceps

Flocks of about 30 birds each, were recorded 17-19 January. Only occurs in Hong Kong as an irruption species (Chalmers 1986).

White-bellied Yuhina

Yuhina zantholeuca

Regularly seen in mixed flocks of tits and warblers 16-20 January and 23-26 March, but much scarcer 9-12 November and not reliably reported 3-6 May. This species should be resident as it has recently bred at Tai Po Kau (Chalmers 1986).

Short-tailed Bush Warbler

Cettia squameiceps

One wintering bird located 23-26 March.

Chinese Bush Warbler

Cettia canturians

Several wintering birds located 17-20 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November.

Dusky Warbler

Phylloscopus fuscatus

Several wintering birds located 9-12 November.

Radde's Warbler

Phylloscopus schwarzi

Several located at various elevations 9-12 November. This species is known to winter in South China (Cheng 1976) and these records are particularly significant in the context of Hong Kong where this species is regarded as a vagrant (Chalmers 1986).

Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

Wintering birds were recorded 17-20 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November but this species was much less common than in similar habitat in Hong Kong at these times.

Pallas's Warbler

Phylloscopus proregulus

During 17-20 January and 23-26 March, wintering birds, sometimes several together, were regularly seen in mixed flocks of tits and warblers. Only once recorded 9-12 November.

[Arctic Warbler

Phylloscopus borealis

Occasionally reported in mixed flocks of tits and warblers 23-26 March (Viney 1984). In Hong Kong, this species is a passage migrant (as against a winter visitor) and the dates of these records would be regarded as early. Recent observations in Hong Kong of probable Two-barred Greenish Warblers *P. plumbeitarsus* have highlighted the difficulties in separating these two similar species in the field. As no notes were taken and the fact that *plumbeitarsus* has been reported from the area (see below) some doubt must be attached to these sightings.]

[Two-barred Greenish Warbler

Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus

Not recorded on the four visits (however see Arctic Warbler), but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau. Regarded as a race of Greenish Warbler *P. trochiloides* by many authorities, including Cheng (1976).]

Blyth's Leaf Warbler

Phylloscopus reguloides

One on 11 November. Records of the Eastern Crowned Warbler *P. coronatus* for the period 23-26 March (Viney 1984) are considered doubtful as field notes were not taken and confusion with race *fokiensis* of *P. reguloides* cannot now be ruled out.

Sulphur-breasted Warbler

Phylloscopus ricketti

Occasionally seen 23-26 March in mixed flocks of tits and warblers. Only one record 9-12 November and apparently absent 3-6 May. One or two of the March birds had distinctly pale bellies thereby showing the characters of *P. cantator* (a phenomenon also noted in Hong Kong), which is apparently unknown in South China (Williamson 1967).

Fantail Warbler

Cisticola juncidis

Single birds located on cultivated areas 18-19 January.

Brown Wren-warbler

Prinia subflava

One on a cultivated area by the reservoir on 5 May.

Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler *Prinia flaviventris*

Located in suitable grassy habitat on all four visits and is likely resident.

Hill Prinia *Prinia atrogularis*

Birds of the distinctive race *superciliaris* were found in scrub at several localities (500-600m) in March, November and May. Probably resident, although King (1975) gives a range of above 900m.

Long-tailed Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Surprisingly scarce; found only in more open areas. Probably resident in small numbers.

Robin Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki*

Quite common in all plumage states 9-12 November. The main late autumn passage through Hong Kong occurs in the third week of November (Chalmers 1986).

Blue and White Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana*

Single males were occasionally seen associating with mixed flocks of tits and warblers 23-26 March. One on 10 November.

Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*

At least two were seen at the edge of woodland 9-12 November.

[Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris*

Not recorded on the four visits, but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau.]

[Asian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*

Not recorded on the four visits but is included on a list of species provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau.]

Red-headed Tit *Aegithalos concinnus*

Several small flocks were seen 18-20 January and 23-26 March, two birds 9-12 November and a flock of about ten on 3 May. Presumably non-breeding as King (1975) gives a range of 900-2,500m.

Yellow-bellied Tit *Parus venustus*

Two 9-12 November 1984 and small flocks recorded 17-20 January 1986. Only occurs irregularly in Hong Kong as an irruption species but was recorded November 1984 (Chalmers 1986) and commonly in January 1986 (Viney pers obs).

Great Tit *Parus major*

The distinctive grey race *commixtus* is quite common (as in Hong Kong) and presumably resident.

+ Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus spilonotus*

Occasionally seen in mixed flocks of tits and warblers 17-18 January and 23-26 March. Not recorded 9-12 November. Several records of one and two 4-6 May. Its status is unclear as King (1975) gives an altitudinal range

of 900-2,300m and La Touche (1925-1934) states that it is normally a montane species but subject to altitudinal movement in winter. Not recorded from Hong Kong. Cheng (1976) treats this species as a race of *P. xanthogenys*.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus*

Flowerpeckers were recorded 16-20 January, 23-26 March and 3-6 May but most were not specifically identified. One male of this species was identified in March and at least two were seen in May.

Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum cruentatum*

One male identified on 6 May.

Fork-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga christinae*

Regularly recorded and probably resident as it occurs commonly in similar habitat in Hong Kong.

White-eye *Zosterops japonica*

Very common 17-20 January but surprisingly scarce 23-26 March and 9-12 November when compared to the large flocks which invariably occur in woodland in Hong Kong during the winter. Not recorded 3-6 May.

Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami*

Wintering birds regularly recorded 17-19 January and 23-26 March in wooded areas.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

A large loose flock of over 50 was found on an open cultivated area 24 March. Fairly common in similar areas 17-20 January and 9-12 November.

Chestnut Bunting *Emberiza rutila*

One female near the reservoir 11 November. Up to five on a cultivated area 3-6 May. This species is recognized as a late spring passage migrant in Hong Kong (breeds northeast Asia).

Masked Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

Several wintering birds located 17-20 January, 23-26 March and 9-12 November.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

A flock of about 15 in pines (c450m) on 20 January. A vagrant winter visitor to Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986).

White-backed Munia *Lonchura striata*

Small flocks located in cultivated areas 17-19 January, 24 March and 12 November.

Spotted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

A small flock located on a cultivated area 24 March and two in the same locality on 4 May.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Very local, being only found in rice growing areas. Absent around

quite sizeable settlements.

Crested Mynah *Acridotheres cristatellus*
Two recorded near the reserve headquarters 3-6 May.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*
Occasional birds were recorded 3-6 May but was much less common than *hottentottus* and apparently not breeding.

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*
Common 3-6 May and clearly a good number of pairs breed on the reserve. Display flights were regularly seen and a nest was located in the fork of a branch of a tree about 3m above the ground. Not recorded in January, March, and November which indicates that it is a summer visitor to the reserve as it is to Hong Kong.

Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*
Quite common throughout the reserve and apparently resident.

Treepie *Crypsirina formosae*
Quite common throughout the reserve and apparently resident. One seen carrying nesting material on 6 May.

Magpie *Pica pica*
Surprisingly scarce; one or two birds around settlements. A disused nest was located at the reserve headquarters.

Jungle Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*
Two or three regularly seen on all visits.

DISCUSSION IN THE CONTEXT OF HONG KONG

As well as compiling a useful systematic list, which will provide a base for future work, the visits enabled an interesting comparison to be made with similar basic habitat types in Hong Kong.

- (i) Forest. Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve provides the closest comparison, although the woodland is not as mature, contains many introduced trees and is situated in a coastal area at a lower elevation (100-350m). The most obvious difference at Nan Kun Shan is the presence in winter of large mixed foraging flocks. At a distance, the most striking component of these flocks is the minivets and the dominance of the Grey-throated Minivet rather than the Scarlet Minivet is noteworthy, particularly as the situation is usually reversed at Tai Po Kau. On closer views these flocks were seen to hold a variety of smaller birds. Of these the most noticeable were the small babblers, particularly the Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, which mostly kept to mid-storey and are, to all intents and purposes, absent in Hong Kong. The *Phylloscopus* warblers and tits in these flocks often kept to the canopy and were difficult to observe but were clearly of greater diversity than that usually found in Hong Kong. On the other hand, at many times during

the 3-6 May visit, the forest areas appeared virtually birdless. The babblers proved most elusive during breeding, warblers and flycatchers were absent and often it was only the cheery Chestnut Bulbuls and cuckoos that gave life to the woodlands. Tai Po Kau in the early summer holds as great a variety of breeding birds and the opportunities for seeing them are just as good. Of the other woodland birds, mention should be made of Nan Kun Shan's excellent raptor population, particularly its *Accipiters* and Black Bazas, but also of its disappointingly few woodpeckers despite some splendid habitat.

- (ii) Riverine. As little comparable habitat exists in Hong Kong the riverine areas are particularly exciting, especially as several of the associated species have only been recorded as vagrants to Hong Kong or, as in the case of the White-crowned Forktail, are absent. Again, these species are best seen in the winter months.
- (iii) Cultivation. The birds of the open and cultivated areas were unremarkable and much as would be expected in similar upland areas in Hong Kong.

SUMMARY

This paper briefly describes Nan Kun Shan Nature Reserve and provides a systematic list of birds based on four recent visits and notes provided by the Guangdong Forestry Bureau. A comparison with similar habitat in Hong Kong is included.

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**A SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF
THE POYANG LAKE NATURE RESERVE,
JIANGXI PROVINCE, CHINA,
29 DECEMBER 1985 — 4 JANUARY 1986**

Peter R. Kennerley

At the generous invitation of the Beijing Forestry Ministry and with the assistance of the Nanchang Forestry Bureau, a group from the World Wildlife Fund, Hong Kong (WWF HK) visited the newly created nature reserve on Poyang Lake during the period 29 December 1985 to 4 January 1986. The group was headed by Dr. K.C. Searle and Mr. R.E. Hale, executive council members of WWF HK. Also included within the group were Mrs. M.H. Ketterer, the director of WWF HK, Ms. S. Earle and Mr. P.R. Kennerley. The objectives of the visit were to undertake:

1. A complete census of all crane, stork and bustard populations occurring within the reserve. All the species within these groups can be considered in global terms to be threatened and in the case of certain species, highly endangered. This is largely due to habitat destruction in both the breeding and wintering areas and also to the use of pesticides and direct human persecution.
2. A survey of the avifauna of the reserve. This necessitated visiting all habitat types within the reserve in order to establish the variety of species present but concentrated mainly on the wetland areas. Estimates were made of the numbers of birds seen.

Details of the census and survey can be located within the systematic list.

BACKGROUND

In the winter of 1981 researchers from the Beijing Institute of Zoology searching for the wintering grounds of the Siberian Crane* in China discovered a total of 140 birds in the north-western section of Poyang Lake near the confluence of the Gan and Xiu rivers. In subsequent winters, Chinese researchers revisited the area and amassed totals of 409 and 840 Siberian Cranes. In January 1985, assisted by members of the International Crane Foundation, a staggering count of 1350 birds was made (Archibald 1985).

Prior to the discovery of the large wintering numbers of Siberian Cranes at Poyang Lake, it was believed that the world population numbered less than 400 individuals. This was divided into two distinct populations. The western population which was known to breed in western Siberia and winter in two localities in Iran and north west India numbered less than 50

* Scientific names of the species mentioned in the text can be found by reference to the systematic list.

individuals. The eastern population had been discovered to breed on the tundras of northern Yakutia but its wintering grounds were unknown although believed to be somewhere along the lower Yangtse. Surveys on the breeding grounds had estimated 300-350 birds existed in this eastern population and therefore the discovery of much larger numbers at Poyang came as a startling revelation. Poyang Lake remains the major wintering location for the species within China. However, in early 1987, a group of about 30 Siberian Cranes was found to be wintering at Dongting Lake in neighbouring Hunan Province (Archibald, pers. comm.). Birds are regularly recorded on passage at several crane refuges in northern China (Chalmers 1985).

In 1983, as a direct result of the earlier fieldwork, a reserve totalling 22,400 hectares of lake, marsh and cultivated land was established by the Forestry Ministry, primarily to protect the wintering Siberian and other crane populations. Since the reserve was established and a ban imposed on hunting, particularly by punt gunners, the total number of birds using the reserve has greatly increased. The reserve now acts as a safe refuge for all birds which at one time were widely scattered around the shores of Poyang Lake.

DISCUSSION

Poyang Lake is located in the northern part of Jiangxi province between Nanchang, the provincial capital, to the south and the Yangtse river to the north. It is the largest freshwater lake within China and extends over an area of 3,000 square kilometres.

The water levels within Poyang Lake are greatly influenced by the onset in March of the wet season which continues through to July. During this period, the water level rises to its maximum and the surface area of the lake is at its greatest. However, water levels gradually subside during the autumn and winter months by as much as 10 metres to leave a series of large shallow lakes standing within the reserve boundary.

These lakes are, in biological terms, extremely productive and hold huge concentrations of waterfowl on and around their shores. As the winter progresses, concentrations become very densely packed as the water levels reduce to produce what must be the avian spectacle of China.

The following habitat types are found within the reserve area.

- (i) Rivers. The Gan and Xiu rivers are large, fast flowing and extensively used by shipping in the form of barges and riverboats. In December and January the water levels are at their minimum and the rivers become extremely shallow in places. The rivers were preferred by Goosander, Smew and Pied Kingfisher although several species of wader used the edges for feeding.
- (ii) Lakes. Shallow seasonal lakes appear during the winter months and carry extremely high numbers of waterfowl and waders. Dahu Chi is particularly important as it held almost all the crane, stork and pelican populations within the reserve. Of the other lakes, only Bang

Hu can be compared to Dahu Chi in terms of the numbers and variety of birds present. However each lake held substantial waterfowl numbers and all are of great importance as refuges from human disturbance which still occurs in many areas.

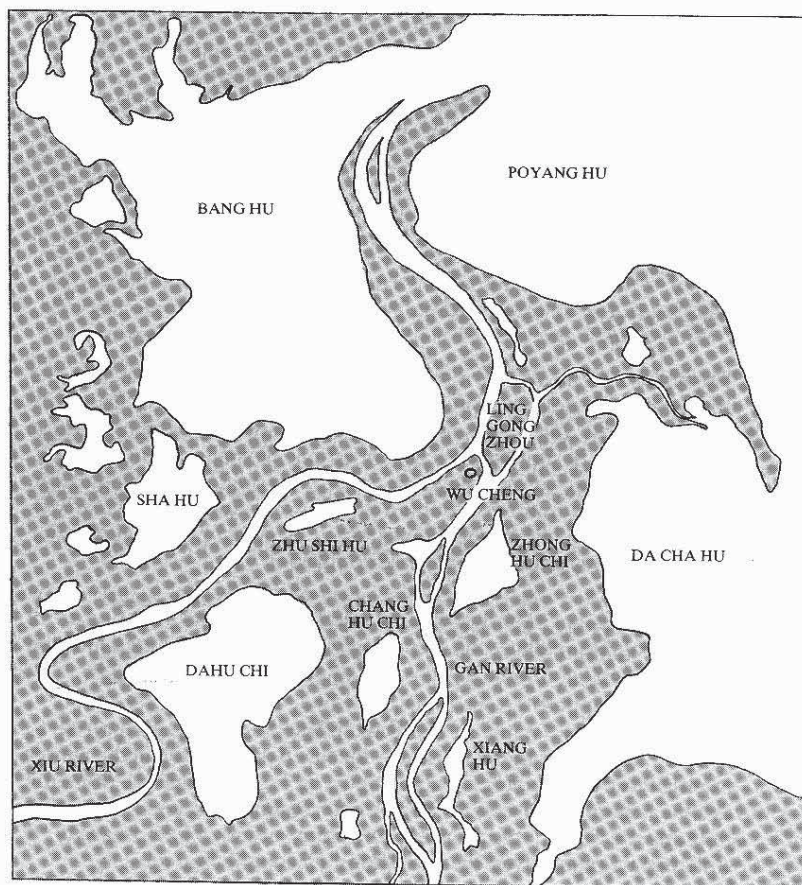
- (iii) Marsh. The marshy edges of the lakes held large numbers of waders and geese and in the case of the Swan Goose, probably a very large percentage of its world population. Further away from the shorelines the land became drier and more attractive to larks, pipits and Japanese Quail. We were unable to discover any *Phragmites* reedbeds which would have yielded several additional interesting species.
- (iv) Dry Grassland. The dry grasslands of Ling Gong Zhou were unique in the areas visited. This island held large numbers of Great Bustards while the rougher areas of long grass produced Grass Owl and Japanese Marsh Warbler. The grass was being harvested by villagers during our visit.
- (v) Cultivation. The numerous small villages with their adjacent areas of cultivation held many species not noted elsewhere in the reserve. The line of low hills between Chang Hu Chi and Dahu Chi was interspersed with scattered villages, fields and areas of paddy lying fallow prior to spring planting. Additionally, many villages had ponds and small groups of trees on their edges in the manner of the 'fung shui' woods of Hong Kong. These held many species associated with woodland such as bulbuls, thrushes and tits. Wu Cheng also had small plantations of introduced conifers and these appeared to be important as evening roosts for many species of passerine.

OBSERVATIONS

- a) The night of 29.12.85 was marked by extremely strong winds from the north-east. The following morning we made our first visit to Dahu Chi and discovered the cranes and geese quite close to the bluffs which mark the eastern shore of the lake and provided shelter in their lee. On subsequent days we were never to experience the same concentration of birds and the numbers counted were always lower, particularly in the case of the White-naped Cranes which presumably have alternative feeding grounds under less adverse conditions.
- b) The small number of observers prevented simultaneous counting on all the major lakes. Hence, the crane and stork numbers counted must be considered to be minima.
- c) The international status of the Baikal Teal should be giving rise to concern. It appears that it has a very localized distribution in the winter months and recent observations made in Japan suggest a dramatic decline in numbers there (M. Brazil, pers. comm.). We had expected to find this species in large numbers and were surprised by its scarcity. It still appears regularly in the bird shops of Hong Kong.

- d) Many species were notable by their absence in what appeared to be ideal habitat with good feeding conditions. The lack of Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Coots *Fulica atra*, Falcated Teal *Anas falcata* and diving duck of the genus *Aythya* was considered noteworthy, particularly in the context of their relative abundance in Hong Kong during the winter months (Chalmers 1982).
- e) Even more striking was the virtual absence of predatory and carrion feeding species. In view of what must be a fairly high daily mortality of birds considering the total numbers present within the reserve, the lack of Black Kites, *Milvus migrans* and *Aquila* eagles was surprising.
- f) In addition to the birds listed above, several examples of the Chinese Water Deer *Hydropotes inermis* were recorded near Bang Hu and on Ling Gong Zhou.

MAP OF THE POYANG LAKE NATURE RESERVE



SYSTEMATIC LIST OF THE BIRDS SEEN WITHIN THE RESERVE BOUNDARY

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

Widespread and noted daily in small numbers on all the lakes and even on the fast-flowing Gan and Xiu rivers around the boat mooring areas. The maximum group size recorded was 12.

Dalmatian Pelican

Pelecanus crispus

Dahu Chi was the favoured locality for this species with 18 noted on 30.12.85, six on 1.1.86 and 18 again on 3.1.86. In addition, three flew over Ling Gong Zhou on 31.12.85 and one was seen there on 3.1.86.

Bittern

Botaurus stellaris

A single bird flushed from wet grassland on the edge of Dahu Chi on 1.1.86.

Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Two immatures flushed from a group of trees by a small village near Dahu Chi on 1.1.86. One was present there again on 3.1.86.

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Widespread and common. Noted daily in all areas including Ling Gong Zhou. Dahu Chi held the largest numbers with up to 100 on 1.1.86 but it is believed the birds moved around the lakes as only six were counted there on 3.1.86.

Black Stork

Ciconia nigra

Two immatures feeding on the edge of Zhong Hu Chi on 31.12.85.

White Stork

Ciconia ciconia

Noted daily, usually in small numbers but a maximum count of 103 was made at Dahu Chi on 1.1.86. Otherwise, noted on most lakes in much smaller numbers as follows:—

Location	Date	Count
Chang Hu Chi	30.12.85	10
Dahu Chi	30.12.85	17
Xiang Hu	31.12.85	1
Zhong Hu Chi	31.12.85	16
Dahu Chi	1.1.86	103
Chang Hu Chi	1.1.86	6
Bang Hu	2.1.86	45
Sha Hu	2.1.86	2
Ling Gong Zhou	3.1.86	2
Dahu Chi	3.1.86	6
Chang Hu Chi	3.1.86	8

All the birds seen were of the black-billed race, *boycciana*. It is believed that the reserve area holds a substantial proportion of the world population of this highly endangered race during the winter months.

European Spoonbill*Platalea leucorodia*

Noted in small numbers with only Dahu Chi appearing to hold birds regularly with 16 on 30.12.85, 40 on 1.1.86 and 39 on 3.1.86. In addition 72 were counted on Bang Hu on 2.1.86 while a flock of 20 rested briefly on the adjacent Sha Hu on the same date. Finally, six landed for a short period on Chang Hu Chi on 3.1.86.

Black-faced Spoonbill*Platalea minor*

Although not seen during the survey, subsequent examination of photographs of spoonbills taken at Dahu Chi has revealed the presence of mixed flocks *P. leucorodia* and *P. minor*. No estimates can be given for its abundance but it is clearly much scarcer than its larger relative.

Bewick's Swan*Cygnus columbianus*

Bang Hu held the largest numbers with an estimated 2,000 present on 2.1.86. Additionally noted in smaller numbers on the major lakes as follows:—

Location	Date	Count
Chang Hu Chi	30.12.85	120
Xiang Hu	31.12.85	42
Zhong Hu Chi	31.12.85	60
Bang Hu	31.12.85	1,000 + (incomplete count)
Chang Hu Chi	1.1.86	12
Bang Hu	2.1.86	2,000+ (incomplete count)
Sha Hu	2.1.86	460
Dahu Chi	3.1.86	12
Chang Hu Chi	3.1.86	106

Swan Goose*Anser cygnoides*

The Swan Goose was an abundant species within the reserve but was restricted to specific locations. Dahu Chi and Bang Hu held totals of over 40,000 and 10,000 birds respectively on each visit and these are likely to be underestimates. Sha Hu held over 1,000 on 2.1.86. Otherwise only small groups and family parties were noted, usually in flight heading towards one of the major concentrations.

Bean Goose*Anser fabalis*

Present in small numbers. A group of five was noted on the banks of the Xiu river on 29.12.85, two on the shores of Bang Hu on 31.12.85 and over 100 there on 2.1.86. In addition, counts of 140 and 50 were made at Dahu Chi on 1.1.86 and 3.1.86 respectively while Sha Hu held 200 on 2.1.86. This species was described as being exceedingly abundant in south-east China by La Touche (1925-1934).

White-fronted Goose*Anser albifrons*

Common and widespread. Dahu Chi held the largest numbers with an estimated 4,000 present on 1.1.86. However birds were also noted on Xiang Hu, Zhong Hu Chi, Bang Hu, Ling Gong Zhou and Sha Hu in varying numbers of between 50 and 300. A leucistic bird was seen at Dahu Chi on 3.1.86.

Lesser White-fronted Goose*Anser erythropus*

Three adults, a pair and a single bird, were found in the large flock of White-fronted Geese at Dahu Chi on 3.1.86. La Touche (1925-1934) recorded the Lesser White-fronted Goose as being the most numerous goose along the Yangtse.

Greylag Goose*Anser anser*

Scarce and localized. Five were found at Dahu Chi on 1.1.86 and two at Chang Hu Chi on the same date. Bang Hu held ten individuals on 2.1.86 while Sha Hu had 43 on that date. Four were counted on Ling Gong Zhou on 3.1.86.

Ruddy Shelduck*Tadorna ferruginea*

Generally common and widespread in small groups on all the major lakes. Dahu Chi held the largest numbers with a maximum of 80 counted on 30.12.85.

Shelduck*Tadorna tadorna*

Only noted on Bang Hu with two seen on 31.12.85 and 2.1.86.

European Wigeon*Anas penelope*

Generally scarce apart from a count of over 500 on Chang Hu Chi on 3.1.85. Otherwise, groups of up to 70 were noted on Dahu Chi, Xiang Hu, Zhong Hu Chi, Bang Hu and Sha Hu.

Baikal Teal*Anas formosa*

Present in very small numbers and noted as follows: one male on Bang Hu on 31.12.85, a pair and a single male on Chang Hu Chi on 3.1.85 and a pair on a small pool near Zhu Shi Hu, also on 3.1.85.

Teal*Anas crecca*

Widespread and common, particularly on Dahu Chi, Chang Hu Chi, Bang Hu and Sha Hu, with each lake holding an estimated 2,000 birds.

Mallard*Anas platyrhynchos*

Present in concentrations of up to 2,000 on all the major lakes.

Yellow-nib Duck*Anas poecilorhyncha*

Very common on every lake. Dahu Chi held in excess of 6,000 while Chang Hu Chi and Bang Hu both held a minimum of 3,000.

Pintail*Anas acuta*

This species was the most abundant duck in the reserve area. Dahu Chi and Bang Hu were the major locations for this species with estimates of 7,000 and 5,000 respectively. All the other major lakes held concentrations in excess of 1,000. In addition, many duck, possibly this species, were present on Dahu Chi and Bang Hu but at ranges too distant for accurate identification. However, counts of 50,000 and 100,000 respectively would not be overestimates of the numbers present. Described by La Touche (1925-1934) as being the commonest duck in eastern China.

Shoveler*Anas clypeata*

A localized species. Bang Hu held six individuals on 31.12.85 and an

estimated 500 on 2.1.86. The only other locality found to hold Shoveler was Sha Hu where six were counted on 2.1.86.

Smew

Mergus albellus

Virtually confined to the Xiu river where three (one male) were seen on 29.12.85 and 12 (five males) on 2.1.86. In addition four (three males) were located on Sha Hu, also on 2.1.86.

Goosander

Mergus merganser

As with Smew, primarily confined to the Gan and Xiu rivers but present in larger numbers than that species. The Xiu river held eight (two males) on 29.12.85 while concentrations of up to 20 were noted daily on the Gan river.

Marsh Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

Single females were noted at Ling Gong Zhou on 31.12.85, Chang Hu Chi on 1.1.86 and 3.1.86, Bang Hu and Sha Hu on 2.1.86.

Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

The commonest raptor on the reserve. Seen daily in small numbers in all areas with up to eight at Chang Hu Chi on 1.1.86 including an adult male. Adult males were also observed at Sha Hu on 2.1.86, Ling Gong Zhou on 3.1.86 and Dahu Chi on 3.1.86.

Buzzard

Buteo buteo

Up to three seen together in widespread areas throughout the period.

Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

Single birds recorded at Bang Hu and Sha Hu on 2.1.86 and also at Ling Gong Zhou on 3.1.86.

Peregrine

Falco peregrinus

A single immature was present at Dahu Chi on 30.12.85 and 3.1.86, on which date it was seen to stoop at a Hen Harrier.

Japanese Quail

Coturnix japonica

Frequently flushed from the drier grassland areas, particularly from Ling Gong Zhou and the grassy margins of Chang Hu Chi and Bang Hu.

Ring-necked Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

Widespread in small numbers, particularly in the cultivated areas around the villages near Dahu Chi where up to eight birds were noted on each visit.

Common Crane

Grus grus

The scarcest of the crane species present within the reserve. The following counts were made:—

Location	Date	Count
Dahu Chi	30.12.85	1
Dahu Chi	1.1.86	109
Sha Hu	2.1.86	2

Hooded Crane

Grus monacha

This species preferred the drier areas surrounding the lake margins. It was usually found in well-spaced family groups consisting of a pair of adults and one or two juveniles. Dahu Chi held the only recorded large flock of this species. Noted at follows:—

Location	Date	Count
Dahu Chi	30.12.85	144
Chang Hu Chi	30.12.85	6
Zhong Hu Chi	31.12.85	3
Dahu Chi	1.1.86	148
Chang Hu Chi	1.1.86	12
Dahu Chi	3.1.86	155
Chang Hu Chi	3.1.86	7

White-naped Crane

Grus vipio

The most numerous crane within the reserve. This species preferred to feed in the marshy edges of the lakes and concentrated in very large groups, where family parties became very difficult to discern. The count made on 30.12.85 was incomplete and is certainly an underestimate of the numbers present, as it considerably outnumbered the Siberian Crane. The following numbers were noted:—

Location	Date	Count
Dahu Chi	30.12.85	2000+ (incomplete count)
Bang Hu	31.12.85	36
Dahu Chi	1.1.86	1438
Bang Hu	2.1.86	36
Dahu Chi	3.1.86	1418

Siberian Crane

Grus leucogeranus

The Siberian Crane was largely confined to Dahu Chi with the only other sighting being of 150 in flight over Bang Hu and apparently heading for Dahu Chi. Large groups were also observed leaving Dahu Chi in the late evening on 1.1.86 and fighting in the direction of Bang Hu. It seems highly likely that there is another area within the reserve holding substantial numbers of birds as the counts made on 1.1.86 and 3.1.86 were lower than those made on 30.12.85.

This species tended to feed in large mixed groups with the White-naped Cranes in water only a few centimetres deep. The family groups tended to feed on the drier areas away from the lake shore while the largest and densest concentrations consisted entirely of adults feeding on submerged vegetation. The following counts were made:—

Location	Date	Count	Adults	Juveniles	Percentage Juveniles
Dahu Chi	30.12.85	1,401	1,165	236	16.8%
Dahu Chi	30.12.85	1,444	1,235	191	13.2%
Dahu Chi	1.1.86	1,325	—	—	—
Dahu Chi	1.1.86	1,378	1,196	182	13.2%

Location	Date	Count	Adults	Juveniles	Percentage Juveniles
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Bang Hu	2.1.86	150	—	—	—
Dahu Chi	3.1.86	1,313	1,139	174	13.2%

Large numbers of this species were recorded on migration at Qinhuangdao, Hebei province by La Touche (1925-1934) in March, April, October and November, but the exact wintering grounds were unknown at that time.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Largely confined to the dry grassland areas. Ling Gong Zhou was the favoured locality with counts of 115 on 31.12.85 and 67 on 3.1.86. Four birds were also seen in flight over Dahu Chi on 1.1.86.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Scarce and localized. Two present on Xiang Hu on 31.12.85 and 20 at Bang Hu on the same date. On 2.1.86 28 were counted on Bang Hu and two on Chang Hu Chi on 3.1.86.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Common around the lake shores and river banks with counts of up to 600 at Bang Hu.

Asiatic Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

A single bird at Bang Hu on 2.1.86.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

The sole record was of a single bird at Bang Hu on 2.1.86.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Present in good numbers in the drier grassland areas. A count of 200+ made at Chang Hu Chi on 30.12.85 was exceptionally high. Counts of less than 60 were made daily in all areas visited.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

This species was present in very large numbers at Bang Hu where an estimated 3,000 were recorded on 2.1.86. Small numbers were present on the river banks but not noted on any other lakes.

Fantail Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Widespread in small numbers. Usually single individuals were flushed from marshy wetlands but a group of 22 feeding in cut rice paddy was counted near Chang Hu Chi on 3.1.86.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

A single bird in flight over Wu Cheng in the evening of 3.1.86 was the only record.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Only noted twice. Single birds were seen in flight over the Gan river on 31.12.85 and on Bang Hu on 2.1.86.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Common on all the major lakes and seen daily. Chang Hu Chi held over 200 on 30.12.85 and Sha Hu, 120 on 2.1.86. However, Bang Hu was the major locality for this species with an estimated 1,000 present on 2.1.86.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The preferred location was a small area of fishponds near Wu Cheng, which regularly held concentrations of up to 40. Bang Hu also proved attractive with an estimated 80 individuals present but not in large concentrations as at the above site. Also found to be widely distributed in small numbers on all lakes.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Recorded daily in all areas visited. Usually seen singly but occasionally a pair was noted.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Only seen on the Gan river where single birds were noted on 31.12.85 and 1.1.86.

Saunders' Gull *Larus saundersi*

12 adults at Bang Hu on 2.1.86 and four adults at Chang Hu Chi on 3.1.86. These were widely scattered along the muddy shorelines of the lakes and mixed with the more numerous Black-headed Gulls.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Numerous and widespread on all lakes and rivers with between 30 and 200 noted daily.

Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris*

An adult and an immature noted at Chang Hu Chi on 1.1.86.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

One adult recorded at Bang Hu on 2.1.86.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Present on all lakes and rivers in good numbers. Chang Hu Chi and Bang Hu regularly held a minimum of 50 birds while other localities typically held 10-20. All the adults exhibited the characters of the race *vegae*.

Rufous Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

Three near Wu Cheng on 30.12.85 and a further three flushed from a wood near Dahu Chi on 1.1.86.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*

Common in all areas with trees, particularly around the smaller villages.

Grass Owl *Tyto capensis*

A single bird flushed twice from long grass on Ling Gong Zhou on 31.12.85.

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

Localized, with a distinct preference for the rivers. Two on the Xiu river on 29.12.85. Three birds noted on the Gan river on 30 and 31.12.85 and recorded there again on 1, 3 and 4.1.86. Additionally, two were recorded in flight over a village pool surrounded by trees near Dahu Chi on 1.1.86.

Hoopoe*Upupa epops*

A single bird recorded in the cultivated area near Dahu Chi on 1.1.86.

Wryneck*Jynx torquilla*

One near Dahu Chi on 1.1.86 in a lightly wooded area adjacent to village cultivation.

Oriental Skylark*Alauda gulgula*

Common and widespread in all areas visited. Frequently seen but exhibited a distinct preference for the drier grassland areas and cultivated areas in groups of up to 40.

Northern Skylark*Alauda arvensis*

Much scarcer than the Oriental Skylark. Four were recorded near Wu Cheng on 29.12.85 and six at Zhong Hu Chi on 31.12.85. The largest group consisted of an estimated 20 individuals at Chang Hu Chi on 3.1.86. No distinction in habitat preference was noted between this and the previous species.

Water Pipit*Anthus rubescens*

Common and widespread throughout the reserve in small groups. The maximum count was of at least 80 in scattered groups along the shores of Chang Hu Chi on 3.1.86.

White Wagtail*Motacilla alba*

Up to six counted at Chang Hu Chi which was the favoured locality. Single birds or pairs were occasionally noted in other areas but generally quite scarce and not seen daily.

Chinese Bulbul*Pycnonotus sinensis*

Common and widespread in all areas where trees and bushes existed including the centre of Wu Cheng.

Wren*Troglodytes troglodytes*

A single bird in Wu Cheng on 29.12.85 was the only record.

Daurian Redstart*Phoenicurus auroreus*

Occasional sightings of single birds. The areas near Wu Cheng and the bush covered hillsides near Chang Hu Chi were favoured localities with up to three separate birds regularly noted.

Blackbird*Turdus merula*

Frequently seen in Wu Cheng and around the villages near Dahu Chi where up to ten were found.

Dusky Thrush*Turdus naumanni*

Birds of the races *naumanni* and *eunomus* were seen daily in open scrubby areas with scattered trees. Both races were present in equal numbers but the maximum daily count was only six.

Fantail Warbler*Cisticola juncidis*

A minimum of eight individuals was counted on Ling Gong Zhou on 3.1.86.

Japanese Marsh Warbler*Megalurus pryeri*

A single bird was found on Ling Gong Zhou on 31.12.85. A concerted effort to establish the status of this species revealed a minimum of seven individuals at the same locality on 3.1.86. They frequented an extensive area of grass averaging between 30 and 90 centimetres high. The birds proved very reluctant to fly and behaved in a manner reminiscent of a *Locustella* warbler. Cheng (1976) indicates the known wintering range of this species includes the Poyang Lake area.

Vinous-throated Parrotbill*Paradoxornis webbianus*

A single group comprising at least 50 individuals was found in Wu Cheng on 29.12.85 and relocated there again on 3.1.86.

Yellow-bellied Tit*Parus venustulus*

Up to four were seen in Wu Cheng on 1 and 3.1.86. In addition, a group of six was found in a small village near Dahu Chi on 3.1.86.

Great Tit*Parus major*

Only recorded in the vicinity of Wu Cheng, where occasional sightings were made.

Rufous-backed Shrike*Lanius schach*

Common and widespread in all areas of cultivation. This species was recorded most frequently on the walk between Wu Cheng and Dahu Chi where up to ten were noted. All the birds seen were assignable to the race *schach*.

Magpie*Pica pica*

Abundant throughout the reserve.

Collared Crow*Corvus torquatus*

Four seen over the Gan river near Chang Hu Chi on 30.12.85 was the largest group recorded. Otherwise scarce; the only other records being single birds on 31.12.85 and 2 and 3.1.86.

Grey Starling*Sturnus cineraceus*

Common and widespread throughout the reserve.

Crested Mynah*Acridotheres cristatellus*

Abundant in all areas, particularly around the villages and land under cultivation. A minimum of 200 was estimated in the small villages near Dahu Chi on 3.1.86. Frequently associated with Grey Starlings.

Tree Sparrow*Passer montanus*

Large flocks of up to 100 were regularly recorded around many of the villages including Wu Cheng. This species appeared to be closely associated with human activities.

White-backed Munia*Lonchura striata*

A group comprising about 40 individuals was recorded in a village near Dahu Chi on 1.1.86 and 14 were present there on 3.1.86.

Spotted Munia*Lonchura punctulata*

The only record was a group of eight going to roost in a small conifer plantation near Wu Cheng on 29.12.85.

Chinese Greenfinch*Carduelis sinica*

Restricted to the cultivated areas where occasional sightings of small groups were made. One near Chang Hu Chi on 1.1.86 and three there on 3.1.86. A walk from Dahu Chi to Wu Cheng on 3.1.86 through extensive areas of cultivation produced flocks of 48, 16, six and six.

Black-tailed Hawfinch*Eophona migratoria*

The status of the Black-tailed Hawfinch was similar to that of the previous species. A single bird in Wu Cheng on 29.12.85 and two there on 30.12.85. A flock comprising 27 birds was seen on 3.1.86 in the village area near Dahu Chi.

Lapland Bunting*Calcarius lapponicus*

Two were recorded in flight at Bang Hu on 31.12.85 and at Sha Hu on 2.1.86.

Masked Bunting*Emberiza spodocephala*

The sole record comprised six birds going to roost in a small conifer plantation near Wu Cheng on 29.12.85.

Meadow Bunting*Emberiza cioides*

Two near Wu Cheng on 29.12.85 and a group of eight near Dahu Chi on 1.1.86 were the only records.

Grey-headed Bunting*Emberiza fucata*

A single bird recorded near Chang Hu Chi on 1.1.86 was the only sighting of this species.

Little Bunting*Emberiza pusilla*

Scarce but the most widely recorded bunting in the reserve. Three at Wu Cheng on 29.12.85, 15 near Dahu Chi on 30.12.85, five at Bang Hu on 2.1.86 and two at Dahu Chi on 3.1.86.

Pallas's Reed Bunting*Emberiza pallasi*

The only records came from the tall grass areas of Ling Gong Zhou where two pairs were located on 3.1.86.

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SUMMARY

A group of five members of the World Wildlife Fund Hong Kong visited Poyang Lake, Jiangxi Province, China between 29.12.85 and 4.1.86 at the invitation of the Beijing Forestry Ministry. The purpose of this visit was to survey and census the wintering bird populations within the newly created nature reserve centred around the village of Wu Cheng. Special attention was paid to the crane, stork and bustard populations and counts revealed minimum totals of 1,444 Siberian, 2,000+ White-naped, 155 Hooded and 109 Common Cranes while the maximum number of White Storks counted was 103. Additionally, a count of 115 Great Bustards was made and the total number of species recorded within the reserve boundary during the visit was 92.

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**SOME BIRD OBSERVATIONS
AT PANGQUANGUO RESERVE IN WEST CENTRAL
SHANXI PROVINCE IN NE CHINA**

Ben King

From 28-31 May 1985, I visited the Pangquanguo Nature Reserve in the Luliang Shan range in west central Shanxi Province. This reserve is southwest of Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi, and about 300 km by road. I believe there is a shorter way but since I was the first foreigner to visit this reserve, they wanted me on the longer route for some reason. Pangquanguo exists for the protection of the rare and endangered Brown Eared Pheasant, *Crossoptilon mantchuricum*, of which there seems to be a healthy population. It is a very attractive place, with a fine mixed broadleaf deciduous and coniferous forest. The forest is entirely secondary, about thirty years old.

Pangquanguo is a veritable oasis in the desert. The entire 300 km drive from Taiyuan was unrelieved cultivation (no grass or bushes), and a few scattered trees. The hills above the valleys were barren, treeless, with only scrub or grass cover. The part of the province I saw is near total destruction of the natural environment.

The Brown Eared Pheasant is China's most endangered pheasant, probably being entirely limited to three reserves, two already operating and a third being set up. I was told by my hosts that they believed that the Reeve's Pheasant, *Syrnaticus reevesi*, is extirpated in Shanxi Province.

The Grey-sided Thrush, *Turdus feae*, was seen and may breed there. Both the sighting and possible breeding may be new for Shanxi. Siberian Blue Robins, *Erithacus cyane*, were behaving territorially and may breed there. If so, it would be a very long southwestward extension of breeding range. Beautiful Rosefinches, *Carpodacus pulcherrimus* are common breeding birds.

They are eager to have foreign visitors. Visits can be arranged through the Forestry Ministry in Beijing. Scientists wanting to study the Brown Eared Pheasant should contact Professor Chang Jun, Shanxi Biological Institute, Taiyuan, Shanxi, China.

ANNOTATED LIST

Pangquanguo Reserve, Shanxi

[The English bird names have been maintained in accordance with the author's wishes; those which differ considerably from names commonly used in Hong Kong are marked with an asterisk — Ed.]

Eurasian Sparrowhawk One daily	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Brown Eared Pheasant Fairly common	<i>Crossoptilon mantchuricum</i>
Common Pheasant* Common	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Large Hawk-Cuckoo Heard regularly	<i>Cuculus sparveroides</i>
Lesser Cuckoo One heard	<i>Cuculus poliocephalus</i>
Grey Nightjar* Common	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>
Black-capped Kingfisher One seen	<i>Halcyon pileata</i>
Barn Swallow* Several seen	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
White Wagtail Common	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Long-tailed Minivet Two seen	<i>Pericrocotus ethologus</i>
Blue Magpie Two seen	<i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>
Eurasian Nutcracker Two seen	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>
Large-billed Crow* Several	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
Northern Wren* Common	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Siberian Blue Robin Fairly common	<i>Erithacus cyane</i>

Orange-flanked Bush-Robin* One seen	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>
Daurian Redstart Uncommon	<i>Phoenicurus aureoreus</i>
White-bellied Redstart Fairly common	<i>Hodgsonius phaenicuroides</i>
White-crowned Forktail Two seen	<i>Enicurus leschenaulti</i>
Grey-sided Thrush One heard, one seen	<i>Turdus feae</i>
Yellow-streaked Warbler One seen	<i>Phylloscopus armandii</i>
Inornate Warbler* Abundant	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>
Lemon-rumped Warbler* Abundant	<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>
Slaty-backed Flycatcher Common	<i>Ficedula hodgsoni</i>
Dark-sided Flycatcher* One seen	<i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>
Willow Tit Common	<i>Parus montanus</i>
Coal Tit Fairly common	<i>Parus ater</i>
Great Tit One seen	<i>Parus major</i>
White-browed Nuthatch Three seen	<i>Sitta villosa</i>
Common Treecreeper Three seen	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Grey-capped Greenfinch* One seen	<i>Carduelis sinica</i>
Beautiful Rosefinch Common	<i>Carpodacus pulcherrimus</i>

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SOME NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THE YI SHAN AREA OF NW JIANGXI PROVINCE, CHINA

Ben King

On 3-6 December 1986, I visited the Yi Shan area of Wuning County, Jiangxi Province, S.E. China, the first foreigner to do so since the revolution. The Yi Shan are about one hour's drive NNW of the county seat of Wuning and about 4-5 hours' drive NW of Nanchang, the capital city of Jiangxi. The Yi Shan are hills of moderate elevation, ranging perhaps from about 200-800 metres. There is a fair bit of forest left, although a major portion of the larger trees have already been removed. The forest is mixed coniferous and broad-leaved, the latter including both evergreen and deciduous. It is one of the few extensive forests left in Jiangxi Province.

The rare and endangered Elliot's Pheasant, *Syrnaticus ellioti*, exists here in moderate numbers. Professor Long Tizon of the Jiangxi University in Nanchang feels the population of Elliot's Pheasants to be about 100 here (I suspect there are more), and estimates the entire population in Jiangxi at less than 1,000 birds. Also present are Silver Pheasant, *Lophura nycthemera* Koklas Pheasant, *Pucrasia macrolopha*, Common Pheasant, *Phasianus colchicus* and the Chinese Bamboo-Partridge, *Bambusicola thoracica*.

The forests of Yi Shan would make a fine reserve for these pheasants. Unfortunately, the County and Provincial governments have shown little interest thus far. If unprotected, the forests and Elliot's Pheasants will be gone within ten years. According to Professor Long, there are no Elliot's Pheasants in any of the reserves in Jiangxi and he estimates their extirpation in Jiangxi at 10-20 years. I would be inclined to think it will be quicker, 5-10 years, unless some action is taken.

I suggested to Professor Long, and he agreed, that foreigners visiting the Yi Shan to see Elliot's Pheasant might create some interest in the government to make a reserve out of the area and in the local folks to protect the birds. The best time to see the Elliot's Pheasant is said by the Professor to be the last half of October and the first half of November. When I was there, Professor Long got the local government to hire thirty men to search for pheasants flying into trees in late afternoon to find their nocturnal roost. On the second evening there, several reports came in and we followed one up, resulting in a spectacular half hour's view of an adult male by flashlight from 11 feet at eye level! The following morning we revisited the area before dawn, in time to see 15 Elliot's Pheasants and at least one Silver Pheasant erupt noisily out of the trees to begin their daily activities.

The most serious threat to the Elliot's Pheasant is habitat destruction. There will soon be no place at all for it to live in Jiangxi Province. Secondary threats are widespread trapping and shooting.

Those interested in visiting the Yi Shan area should contact Professor Long Tizon, Biology Dept., Jiangxi University, Nanchang, Jiangxi, China.

I also made a brief two-day visit to Poyang Lake on 7-8 December 1986. The Siberian Cranes *Grus leucogeranus* were in along with many White-naped Cranes *Grus vipio* and Swan Geese *Anser cygnoides*. Interesting was a lone Bar-headed goose, *Anser indicus*, which could be the first for Jiangxi. I also saw a nice Pallas' Warbler, *Locustella certhiola*.

A brief visit was made to N.E. Jiangxi to the village of Guang Keng (300 metres elevation) upriver on the Luan Ho from Wuyuan, the county seat of Wuyuan. There is a small patch of forest there and I hoped to find the Yellow-throated Laughingthrush, *Garrulax galbanus*. No luck. However Moustached Laughingthrush *Garrulax cineraceus* and Spot-breasted and Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babblers *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis/ruficollis* were common. An Elliot's Pheasant was heard and a Silver Pheasant seen. A flock of Yellow-browed Buntings *Emberiza chrysophrys* was seen on the outskirts of Wuyuan.

I would like to express my thanks to Professor Long Tizon who obtained the necessary permits, organized the entire trip and was an enjoyable companion. The interpreter, Chen Hue and Professor Long's assistant, Yu Peng-cheng were very helpful.

ANNOTATED LIST

Birds seen at Yi Shan, Jiangxi Province

[The English bird names have been maintained in accordance with the author's wishes; those which differ considerably from names commonly used in Hong Kong are marked with an asterisk — Ed.]

Chinese Bamboo-Partridge Common	<i>Bambusicola thoracica</i>
Silver Pheasant One seen, one heard	<i>Lophura nycthemera</i>
Koklas Pheasant One seen, three heard	<i>Pucrasia macrolopha</i>
Common Pheasant* One seen	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Elliot's Pheasant 15 seen	<i>Syrnaticus ellioti</i>
Collared Scops-Owl Two heard	<i>Otus lempiji</i>
Asian Barred Owllet One seen	<i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>
Common Kingfisher Two seen	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>

Speckled Piculet One seen	<i>Picumnus innominatus</i>
White Wagtail Common	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Collared Finchbill Common	<i>Spixios semitorques</i>
Brown-breasted Bulbul Common	<i>Pycnonotus xanthorrhous</i>
Light-vented Bulbul* Common	<i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>
Chestnut Bulbul Common	<i>Pycnonotus castanotus</i>
Long-tailed Shrike* Common	<i>Lanius schach</i>
Eurasian Jay Fairly common	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Blue Magpie Common	<i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>
Large-billed Crow* Uncommon	<i>Corvus macrorhynchus</i>
Orange-flanked Bush-Robin* Common	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>
Blue-fronted Redstart One male (first for Jiangxi?)	<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i>
Daurian Redstart Common	<i>Phoenicurus aureoreus</i>
Plumbeous Redstart Four seen	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i>
White-crowned Forktail Fairly common	<i>Enicurus leschenaulti</i>
Scaly Thrush* One seen	<i>Zoothera dauma</i>
Grey-backed Thrush Three seen	<i>Turdus hortulorum</i>
Common Blackbird Fairly common	<i>Turdus merula</i>

Spot-breasted Scimitar-Babbler Fairly common	<i>Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis</i>
Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler* Common	<i>Pomatorhinus ruficollis</i>
Rufous-capped Babbler Common	<i>Stachyris ruficeps</i>
Masked Laughingthrush* Common	<i>Garrulax perspicillatus</i>
Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush Two flocks	<i>Garrulax pectoralis</i>
Moustached Laughingthrush Fairly common	<i>Garrulax cineraceus</i>
Hwamei Common	<i>Garrulax canorus</i>
White-browed Laughingthrush* One flock seen	<i>Garrulax sannio</i>
Red-billed Leiothrix* Five seen	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>
Gray-cheeked Fulvetta Abundant	<i>Alcippe morrisonia</i>
Vinous-throated Parrotbill Common	<i>Paradoxornis webbianus</i>
Rufous-faced Warbler A flock of six	<i>Abroscopus albogularis</i>
Black-throated Tit* Common	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>
Yellow-bellied Tit Up to six per day; uncommon	<i>Parus venustulus</i>
Great Tit Uncommon	<i>Parus major</i>
Eurasian Tree-Sparrow Common around human habitat	<i>Passer montanus</i>
White-rumped Munia* A few seen	<i>Lonchura striata</i>

Grey-capped Greenfinch* Common	<i>Carduelis sinica</i>
Yellow-billed Grosbeak* Several	<i>Eophona migratoria</i>
Little Bunting Uncommon	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>
Yellow-throated Bunting One large flock	<i>Emberiza elegans</i>
Black-faced Bunting* Fairly common	<i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>
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GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF RECORDS

Recording

One of the most important functions of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society is the publication of the Hong Kong Bird Report. The value of this publication depends on members submitting records and all are encouraged to submit records at the end of each year.

The Society provides 152 x 106mm record cards to facilitate analysis and storage and these are available from the Recorder. Completed cards are stored in a species-indexed filing system and members wishing to look at past records are asked to contact the Recorder. It is hoped that the ease with which records can be retrieved will result in interested people analysing migration patterns and population trends and undertaking other studies.

Nest Record Cards are also available from the Recorder for reporting breeding data.

The Society also maintains a collection of reports submitted by members of birds seen during their visits to other parts of South-East Asia and China to assist others in planning overseas trips.

Rarities

While the birds of Hong Kong are better known than those of many other areas of the Far East, new species are continually being added to the Hong Kong List and the status of many other species is uncertain.

Field identification techniques for species in the area still need refining and the Society has a Records Committee to assist the Recorder in the unenviable task of assessing records and ensuring that a high standard of observation is maintained. A list of species considered by the Committee is given below. The list may seem dauntingly long and to include some unmis-takeable species such as Oystercatcher. However, all members are requested to submit field descriptions of the birds listed.

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

- (a) Date, time and location of sighting.
- (b) Power of binoculars (telescope) used, distance of bird from observer, weather and light conditions.
- (c) Description of habitat and what other birds (if any) it was associating with.
- (d) Whether you saw it from different angles; at rest, in flight, swimming etc.; from above or below. (The more varied the conditions the better).

- (e) What were its actions and what was the character of its flight compared with other birds.
- (f) Its general shape and structure as compared with other birds e.g. size and shape of bill, length of legs, shape of wing, length of tail.
- (g) Colour of bill, legs, feet and iris.
- (h) So far as possible, an exact description of the whole plumage of the bird, not only those parts which you think may help in identifying it. A rough sketch or diagram is a great help.
- (i) Any calls, indicating especially the quality of the sound (harsh, rattling, shrill, hoarse, liquid etc.) and comparison with calls of other species.
- (j) Notes on previous experience with the species or species with which it may be confused.

If possible try and get someone else to see the bird as two descriptions are better than one. *Make sure that you take full field notes on the spot* — it is all too easy to imagine field marks after consulting a book!

Even if you do not know what the bird is please send in the description as it may be possible for the Committee to identify it for you. It should be remembered that many species of cage birds have been recorded as escapes in Hong Kong and they may not be included in any of the local books.

The increasing number of field guides on the market often make positive identification appear all too easy, but it must be remembered that there are still many difficult species and groups of birds and it is only by careful painstaking observation that such species can be identified.

Species for which written descriptions of all sightings must be submitted to the Recorder for consideration by the Records Committee.

The following list is based on the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong*, Chalmers, 1986. In many cases brief notes added to the record cards describing the salient features, ranges and viewing conditions will suffice. However, full descriptions are required for the rarer or more difficult species, or any new species not yet on the Hong Kong List. In addition the Recorder may request descriptions of other species under unusual circumstances. Records submitted without descriptions may not be considered.

CATEGORY A

Red-necked Grebe
 Streaked Shearwater
 Swinhoe's Storm Petrel
 Dalmatian Pelican
 all frigatebirds
 Von Schrenck's Little Bittern
 Black Bittern
 Japanese Night Heron
 Swinhoe's Egret
 Black Stork
 White Stork
 Glossy Ibis
 European Spoonbill
 Black-faced Spoonbill
 Lesser Treeduck
 all geese
 Ruddy Shelduck
 Cotton Teal
 Mandarin
 Falcated Teal
 Baikal Teal
 Common Pochard
 Baer's Pochard
 Scaup
 Velvet Scoter
 Goldeneye
 Crested Honey Buzzard
 Black-shouldered Kite
 Hen Harrier
 Pied Harrier
 Northern Goshawk
 Japanese Sparrowhawk
 Horsfield's Goshawk
 Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle
 Spotted Eagle
 Imperial Eagle
 White-legged Falconet
 Amur Falcon
 Merlin
 all button quails
 all cranes
 Common Crane
 Pheasant-tailed Jacana
 Painted Snipe
 Oystercatcher
 Ringed Plover
 Oriental Plover
 Great Knot
 Spoon-billed Sandpiper
 Ruff
 Jack Snipe
 Solitary Snipe
 Long-billed Dowitcher
 Asiatic Dowitcher
 Little Whimbrel
 Australian Curlew
 Nordmann's Greenshank
 all skuas

Great Black-headed Gull
 Saunders' Gull
 Brown-headed Gull
 Common Gull
 Slaty-backed Gull
 Glaucous-winged Gull
 Glaucous Gull
 Kittiwake
 Greater Crested Tern
 Black-naped Tern
 Roseate Tern
 Common Tern
 Bridled Tern
 Sooty Tern
 Ancient Auk
 Bar-tailed Cuckoo Dove
 White-bellied Green Pigeon
 Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo
 Emerald Cuckoo
 Common Cuckoo
 Oriental Cuckoo
 all owls except Collared Scops Owl
 Japanese Nightjar
 White-throated Needletail
 White-vented Needletail
 Crested Kingfisher
 Blue-tailed Bee-eater
 all woodpeckers
 Chinese Pitta
 all larks
 Pechora Pipit
 Water Pipit
 Citrine Wagtail
 White Wagtail (all races other than *leucopsis* and *ocularis*)
 Greater Cuckoo Shrike
 Rosy Minivet
 Brown Dipper
 Wren
 Japanese Robin
 Siberian Blue Robin
 White-capped Redstart
 Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush
 Orange-headed Ground Thrush
 Siberian Thrush
 Brown Thrush
 Slaty-backed Forktail
 Mountain Bush Warbler
 Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler
 Styan's Grasshopper Warbler
 Lanceolated Warbler
 Thick-billed Warbler
 Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler
 Chestnut-crowned Warbler
 Fulvous-faced Flycatcher Warbler
 Large Grass Warbler
 Sulphur-breasted Warbler
 Blyth's Leaf Warbler

Eastern Crowned Warbler
 Pale-legged Leaf Warbler
 Radde's Warbler
 Fukien Niltava
 Sooty Flycatcher
 Chinese Babax
 Chestnut-flanked White-eye
 Red-headed Tit
 Penduline Tit

Tiger Shrike
 Chinese Great Grey Shrike
 Purple-backed Starling
 Chestnut-cheeked Starling
 Rosy Starling
 Siskin
 Japanese Yellow Bunting
 Rustic Bunting
 Reed Bunting

CATEGORY B

all (one!)

CATEGORY D

all

CATEGORY F

all

CATEGORY C

none

CATEGORY E

all, other than most obvious escapes