

# HONG KONG BIRD REPORT

1993

## 香港鳥類報告



# 一九九三年香港鳥類報告

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## 紀錄委員會報告

一九九三年錄得的品種數目又創高峰，已經是連續第三年打破紀錄了：A類有 353 種（比 1992 年多出 5 種），D 類的紀錄則有 8 個（和 1992 年一樣）。有幾處新觀鳥地點特別吸引大家的注意：介乎羅湖和上水的松柏塢（石上河谷）；大鵬灣上的平洲（春季經常有觀鳥者到訪）；自從初秋在錦田發現了彩鵲之後，那裏亦驟然成為另一個熱門地方。帶有開拓者味道的觀鳥活動，往往幫助大家了解一些備受土地開發威脅的地帶，在目前都市發展的壓力繼續加劇的情況下，這類活動更形重要。

在一九九三年，A 類新增四個品種，D 類則多了三個。情況簡介如下：

新增 A 類品種：

1. 斑頭秋沙鴨：一九九三年十二月十六日在米埔發現，至少逗留至一九九四年四月十日。
2. 灰瓣蹼鷗：二月廿一日，在大鵬灣錄得四隻；另外，一隻首次渡夏的幼鳥在米埔消磨了一個夏季。
3. 黃咀噪啄木鳥：大埔澤錄得一隻，四月十七日、五月十日及六月三日都看到。
4. 北蝗鶯（指名亞種）：二月廿六至廿七日，在米埔錄得一隻。

新增 D 類品種：

1. 藍喉鵯：一月十六日至二月五日，在蠔涌看到一隻雄鳥。
  2. 橙胸鵯：一月廿四日，大埔澤有一隻雄鳥。
  3. 灰頭棕鳥：一月廿二日至二月五日，有兩隻在尖鼻咀出現。
- 除此之外，新錄得的棕欄鳳頭鸚鵡、麗色噪鵯和火尾火鵯都歸入 E 類。其他關於白腹藍鳥、大鷲和北蝗鶯（指名亞種）的紀錄則尚在考慮中。

紀錄委員會目前還在為著出版新的《香港鳥類名錄註釋》而覆核一些品種的舊紀錄，直到目前為止，有以下的一些結論：

### 65 白尾鵯 *Circus cyaneus*

因為資料未足夠否定鵯鵯的可能性，所有雌鳥或幼鳥（尾有圓弧紋）的舊紀錄都被否定。不過，三項雄鳥的紀錄則被接納：

- 一九八二年一月一日，洲頭
- 一九八七年一月十八日，寶馬山
- 一九八七年四月十六日，聶高信山

### 76 蒼鷹 *Accipiter gentilis*

舊紀錄大多數都不能接受，尤其是在本地發現鳳頭鷹之前的紀錄。可以肯定接受的為下面幾個：

- 一九八八年二月廿八日，米埔
- 一九八八年四月六日，大埔澤
- 一九八八年十一月十五日至十二月十六日，在埔澤（包括 11 月 18 日和 12 月 4 日的紀錄）
- 一九八九年一月七日，林村
- 一九八九年一月十四日，荔枝窩
- 一九八九年十一月廿四日，大埔澤
- 一九九二年四月二十日，米埔

### 78 小隼 *Microhierax melanoleucos*

以前接受的唯一紀錄（一九八〇年十一月五日）亦被否定，因此，這個品種由 A 類降為 F 類（912.5）。

### 81 灰背隼 *Falco columbarius*

因為不能排除為其他小型的鷹類（accipiter），所有舊紀錄都被否定，包括一隻收藏在 Tring（英國）的自然科學博物館內的樣本，已被鑑定為日本松雀鷹。這個品種現由 A 類降為 F 類（912.7）。

### 132 孤沙雉 *Gallinago solitaria*

所有以前確認的舊紀錄都被否定，因此這個品種由 A 類降為 F 類（913.6）。

### 344 楔尾伯勞 *Lanius sphenocercus*

以前確認的三個舊紀錄都被否定，因此這個品種由 A 類降為 F 類（923.5）。

此外，覆核所有軍艦鳥紀錄的工作也快將完成，結果希望在下一份年報中刊登。其他有關的決定，將儘快公報。

至於鷹類（accipiter）的辨別方法，也取得明顯進展，期望在下一份年報中介紹。不過，某些方面，如大型銀鷗亞種的辨別問題則仍懸而未決。

過去一年中，值得注視的一項活動，是在夏季進行的繁殖鳥類調查。這活動預期會維持兩至三年，當中採用的是一平方公里網格，以配合有關的植被圖，結果會加入由世界自然（香港）基金會發展的自然生態資料庫中。

冬季的水禽調查繼續進行，並且擴展至包括十一月到三月這段期間，希望這個安排將來也能持續下去。這個調查對於了解后海灣及有關其保護的措施，極為重要。

若果天氣合適，可能碰上為數可觀的海鳥。這個發現，應該是整年中最重要的一件事。在颱風影響或天氣不穩定的情況下，主要在鶴咀，不少過往只有零星紀錄的品種都有不少的發現，當中包括白額鵯、鳥燕鷗、中賊鷗和長尾賊鷗（短尾賊鷗則因資料不足，不被接納），當然還有其他未能確認的鵬科雀鳥。

觀鳥會會員安排了較多的海上旅程，也為海鳥的紀錄生色不少：二月有香港的首隻灰瓣蹼鷗；四月有久別了八年的一隻扁咀海雀。穿越大鵬灣往平洲的旅程上，也有一些賊鷗的紀錄，可惜身份還未明瞭。

在東面水域發現一個生機勃勃的小領域，更把海鳥的觀察活動引上高潮，在那裏繁殖的燕鷗有三種之多：黑枕燕鷗、粉紅燕鷗與及第一次證實在本地的繁殖的褐翅燕鷗。秋初又再見數量可觀的白腰燕鷗，看來，有可能證實牠們是這個時節的定期過客。

年內，本委員會的成員也有更替：服務多年的 Clive Viney 和 Peter Kennerley 已經卸下職務，新加入的是 Mike Leven；其他三位成員為 Mike Chalmers（觀鳥會紀錄委員）、Geoff Carey 及 Paul Leader。

# THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1993

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Officers of the Society  
(1993)

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Secretary .....	T. Woodward
Treasurer .....	J. Stott
Recorder .....	M.L. Chalmers

Front cover: Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*  
Mai Po, May 1988 (*Ray Tipper*)



## EDITORIAL NOTE

Any work such as this is very much dependant on two things: firstly, peoples' willingness to give up their own time to help in its preparation, and for this I am most grateful; secondly, the abilities of those who contribute to it. We are fortunate that in Hong Kong we have people of varying interests capable of producing interesting and original work and I think that this Report especially illustrates very well the diversity of talent that it has been possible for me to tap.

This is the longest Bird Report yet produced which is partly due to the increased length of the Systematic List. This has been made possible because the number of records submitted was substantially higher than last year. This is a very welcome increase and it is hoped that it will continue in future.

Many people have helped during the production of this Report but I would like to thank David Melville (especially), Lew Young, Mike Leven, Mike Chalmers and Paul Leader for advice and editorial help during the past months. Chan Ming Ming has kindly provided the Chinese translations and Paul Aston helped with map production.

I would also very much like to thank Jeremy Pearse for the high quality illustrations he has so willingly provided, both for this Report and the last.

It will be noticed that there is again an advertisement for membership of the Oriental Bird Club and I would urge Society members who have not yet joined to do so.

I am very grateful to Swarovski (HK) Ltd., Carl Zeiss Far East Ltd., Shriro Hong Kong Ltd. (Nikon distributor), Schmidt and Co. Ltd. (Leica distributor) and Woods Photo Supplies for their much-needed and much-appreciated sponsorship. Without their support it would not have been possible to include such a large number of colour photographs.

Once again several Society members have donated slides for which I am very grateful. For the very efficient organisation of the sponsorship and advertising I would like to thank Nigel Croft. Last, but not least, are the proof-readers who helped with that task – many thanks.

GEOFF CAREY



## REPORT ON THE BIRDS 1993

### RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT

*G.J. Carey and M.L. Chalmers*

In 1993, for the third year running, the number of species recorded reached a new high with totals of 353 in Category A (five higher than 1992) and 8 in Category D (as 1992). New sites attracting attention during the year included Long Valley (also called Shek Sheung Valley), between Lo Wu and Sheung Shui; this is not exactly the same area as the site of this name mentioned in old Reports but is sufficiently close to be given this name, especially as the 'old' Long Valley no longer exists. In addition, (Dong) Ping Chau, Mirs Bay, was visited regularly in spring and Kam Tin received a sudden increase in visits from birdwatchers after the discovery of Painted Snipe there early in the autumn. The pressure for development continues apace and, in this context, more adventurous birdwatching may have benefits in providing information on sites before they come under the threat of development.

During 1993 four species were added to Category A and three were added to Category D. The changes are summarised below while the categories used are defined in the Systematic List.

#### ADDITIONS TO CATEGORY A

1. Smew. One seen at Mai Po from 16 December 1993 to at least 16 April 1994.
2. Grey Phalarope. Four seen in Mirs Bay on 21 February followed by a first-summer bird that over-summered at Mai Po.
3. Bay Woodpecker. One seen at Tai Po Kau on 17 April, 10 May and 3 June.
4. Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler. One seen at Mai Po during 26-27 February.

#### ADDITIONS TO CATEGORY D

1. Blue-throated Flycatcher. A male seen at Ho Chung from 16 January to 5 February.
2. Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher. A male at Tai Po Kau on 24 January.
3. Chestnut-tailed Starling. Two birds at Tsim Bei Tsui from 22 January to 5 February.

First records of Palm Cockatoo, Red-winged Laughing Thrush and Red-tailed Minla were added to Category E.

Records of Christmas Island Frigatebird, Upland Buzzard and Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler are still under consideration.



The Committee is continuing the process of reviewing old records of a number of species in preparation for the next edition of the Checklist. So far the following conclusions have been reached:

**65 Hen Harrier**

*Circus cyaneus*

All female/immatures ('ringtails') are considered unacceptable due to lack of detail sufficient to rule out Pied Harrier. Only the following three records of males are acceptable:

1 January 1982 Grenade Range  
18 January 1987 Braemar Hill  
16 April 1987 Mount Nicholson

**67 Northern Goshawk**

*Accipiter gentilis*

Whilst many old records are not now acceptable, especially those which pre-date the finding of Crested Goshawk in the Territory, there remains a solid core of sightings considered acceptable. These are:

28 February 1988 Mai Po  
6 April 1988 Tai Po Kau  
15 November to 16 December 1988 Tai Po Kau  
(including sightings on 18 November and 4 December)  
7 January 1989 Lam Tsuen  
14 January 1989 Lai Chi Wo  
24 November 1989 Tai Po Kau  
20 April 1992 Mai Po

**78 White-legged Falconet**

*Microhierax melanoleucos*

The only previously accepted record of 5 November 1980 is now considered unacceptable. Accordingly, it is relegated from Category A to Category F (912.5).

**81 Merlin**

*Falco columbarius*

On review all old records are not considered acceptable and cannot safely be separable from small accipiters. This includes a specimen now in the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, which, upon examination, proved to be Japanese Sparrowhawk. Accordingly, it is now relegated from Category A to Category F (912.7).

**132 Solitary Snipe**

*Gallinago solitaria*

All previously accepted records are considered unacceptable. Accordingly, the species is now relegated from Category A to Category F (913.6).

**344 Chinese Great Grey Shrike**

*Lanius sphenocercus*

The three previously accepted records are now considered unacceptable. Accordingly, the species is relegated from Category A to Category F (923.5)

A review of all frigatebirds is nearing completion and it is hoped to publish a summary of the results in the next Report. Other decisions will be published as soon as the opportunity arises.

Significant progress has been made with accipiter identification and it is hoped to present this in the next Report; problems persist, however, with the (sub-)specific identity of large 'Herring' Gulls.

One of the notable events of the year was the undertaking of a Breeding Bird Survey in the summer. This survey is expected to continue for 2-3 years and the results will be included in the database for the Hong Kong Ecological Map being developed by WWF HK. To give the degree of detail compatible with the habitat zones in the map, a grid of 1km squares is being used.

Winter Waterfowl counts continued and were expanded to include the months November to March; it is intended that these continue in future. The contribution that these counts make to our knowledge of the importance of Deep Bay and also its conservation is very significant.

Perhaps the most noteworthy event of the year was the discovery that in the right weather conditions it is possible to see good numbers of seabirds. Observations during typhoons and other unsettled weather conditions, primarily from Cape D'Aguiar, brought a whole host of observations of species which have been recorded only a few times before in the Territory. These included Streaked Shearwater, Sooty Tern, Pomarine and Long-tailed Skuas (with records of Arctic Skua not quite providing sufficient details for acceptance as a first) as well as a number of other unidentified petrels and shearwaters.

Increasing numbers of boat trips taken by Society members also had an effect on seabird records with Hong Kong's first Grey Phalarope recorded in February and the first Ancient Auk for eight years in April. The ferry journey through Mirs Bay to Ping Chau also produced a number of records of skuas, though many of them had to remain unidentified.

Still on the subject of seabirds, a further major highlight was the discovery of a thriving colony of three species of terns breeding in eastern waters: Black-naped and Roseate Terns and the first Hong Kong breeding record of Bridled Tern. Aleutian Terns again appeared in numbers in early autumn and will probably prove to be a fairly regular passage migrant at this time of year.

Membership of the Records Committee changed during the year with the stepping down after many years of service of Clive Viney and Peter Kennerley. Mike Leven agreed to join as a replacement to help the three unchanged members, Mike Chalmers (Recorder), Geoff Carey and Paul Leader.



The systematic list was compiled by M.R. Leven (raptors and species 280 to end), G.J. Carey (waterbirds) and V.B. Picken (species 179–279). Thanks are due to the following observers who submitted records for inclusion in this report:

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## MONTHLY SUMMARIES

*G.J. Carey and C.Y. Lam*

### January

Three short-lived replenishments of the winter monsoon reached Hong Kong from the east on 4th, 8th and 11th. A cold front crossed the coast on 14th and brought a long, cold spell which noticeably affected the number of birds, especially rarities. The daily minimum temperature was below 12°C during 15–30 January, making it the longest cold spell since 1887. The month ended with another burst of northerlies on 27th which also brought low humidity.

The year began with an Eagle Owl at Chau Tau on 2nd and, on the same date, a Ruddy Shelduck at Mai Po, with two there from 16th. On 3rd a Two-barred Greenish Warbler was present in Lam Tsuen Valley, and was seen again on 9th.

On 10th a Black Stork was seen at Tin Shu Wai and a Sulphur-breasted Warbler was at Ho Chung. Also at Ho Chung, on 11th a Fulvous-faced Flycatcher Warbler was found which remained until 26th; this is the third Hong Kong record and the first for 30 years. A Black Vulture was found at Nim Wan on 10th (and was seen intermittently until 20 February) as were the first of at least six Reed Buntings trapped at Mai Po. Single Mugimaki Flycatchers were seen at Ho Chung from 12th and at She Shan, Lantau, on 24th. The first of the winter's nine records of Slaty-backed Gull was seen at Mai Po on 15th.

The January Waterfowl Count recorded 49,153 birds of 72 species in Deep Bay, a new high. Cormorant numbers continued their pattern of increase with 5098 seen; also setting new highs were Shoveler, Avocet, Redshank and Greenshank. An over-wintering Spoon-billed Sandpiper was also recorded.

While rather quiet in terms of regular winter visitors, the first winter period was notable for the number of rarities. These included three 'firsts' of southwest China origin found in the second half of the month. A male Blue-throated Flycatcher of the race *glaucomans* was found at Ho Chung on 16th and remained until 5 February, two Chestnut-tailed Starlings were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 22nd, remaining to 5 February, and a male Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher was seen at Tai Po Kau on 24th.

A White-throated Rock Thrush in Aberdeen Country Park on 25th was the fifth Hong Kong record; the day after, two European Starlings were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui, remaining until mid-February. On 26th a single Black-shouldered Kite was seen over Lok Ma Chau and presumably the same bird was seen over Mai Po four days later. Two long-staying rarities were Carrion Crow and Bull-headed Shrike which both remained from 1992 into February.

At the end of the month, the Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler originally trapped at Mai Po the previous November, was trapped again on 30th. Also on 30th, two Japanese Grosbeaks were found at Lam Tsuen, one of which



remained until 6 February. The final day of January brought a Black Stork soaring over Aberdeen Country Park and the very welcome return of a double-figure count of Dalmatian Pelicans with 12 present.

## February

In the absence of significant northerly surges, the month was unseasonably mild and almost rainless. Easterly surges were recorded on 1st, 8th, 12th and 17th. A weak cold front brought cooler conditions on 23rd and minimum temperatures were around 15°C from then up to 26th.

A *tristis* Chiffchaff was trapped at Mai Po on 6th and Sulphur-breasted Warbler continued to be seen in Tai Po Kau with singles there on 6th and 24th. A Dusky Thrush was there on 12th.

Four threatened wetland species reached their winter highs in Deep Bay during the month: 16 Oriental White Storks on 5th, this number remaining until 13th; 15 Dalmatian Pelicans and 107 Saunders' Gulls on 12th; and 73 Black-faced Spoonbills at Mai Po on 14th, a new record for Hong Kong and about 21% of the world population.

On 21 February a boat trip into Mirs Bay found four Grey Phalaropes, the first for Hong Kong. They accompanied about 35 Red-necked Phalaropes which was the first winter record for this species.

On 26th a *lugens* White Wagtail was noted at Shuen Wan. Also found on this date was Hong Kong's first Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler and a somewhat unseasonal singing male Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, both at Mai Po. On 27th 21 Imperial Eagles flew east over Mai Po. Gull passage built up to a very exciting climax at the end of the month with all species on the Hong Kong list except two recorded during 27–28th. These included one of the Relict Gulls from 1992, an adult Slender-billed Gull, a first-winter Common Gull, two Slaty-backed Gulls and one Glaucous-winged Gull.

## March

The month was warmer and more humid than normal. Two easterly surges on 8th and 12–13th were followed during 14–16th by the first spell of persistent southwesterlies of the spring. A cold front arrived on 16th and brought the first thunderstorm of the year. Temperatures then fell progressively, reaching a minimum of 11.3°C on 19th. Southerlies prevailed again during 25–28th until the arrival of another cold front which brought strong easterlies on 29th.

A Two-barred Greenish Warbler was in Lam Tsuen Valley on 6th. Reed Buntings continued to be trapped at Mai Po with birds caught on 6th and 21st. Sixteen Water Pipits were at Luk Keng on 13th and a *lugens* White Wagtail was seen at Shuen Wan during 18–19th.

An adult Common Gull was noted in Deep Bay on 23rd, only the second record of an adult. An unidentified dark-rumped swift or swiftlet was seen at Mai Po during 20–22nd and a Bull-headed Shrike was at Shing Mun on 20th.

Two Large Grass Warblers at Buffalo Hill, Sai Kung, on 21st was one of the very few records of this species away from Tai Mo Shan. Grey-faced Buzzard passage was very obvious this year with 98 on the 21st and 229 on 22nd.

A rather early Asiatic Dowitcher was noted at Mai Po on 23rd. Six Bitterns were seen at Shuen Wan on 27th, the highest count away from Deep Bay, and on the same date, an adult male Siberian Thrush was trapped at Kadoorie ARC. Finally, a Brambling was seen on Cheung Chau on 29th and two Japanese Grosbeaks were seen near Yuen Long on 30th.

## April

It was relatively cool with the northeast monsoon rather active late in the season. An easterly surge on 4th was exceptionally followed by winds turning into northeasterlies, causing the temperature to fall to a minimum of 14.6°C on 7th. A weak replenishment of the northeast monsoon maintained fresh winds and cool conditions up to 13th. Another major surge arrived on 25th, accompanied by thunderstorms and an abrupt temperature fall.

Single Mugimaki Flycatchers were noted at Mount Davis on 1st and at Kowloon Park during 6–9th. On 3rd Hong Kong's third Kittiwake was noted at Mai Po, hard on the heels of the second in 1992. There were three records of Black-shouldered Kite in the Deep Bay area during the month beginning on 3rd. One of the highlights was a Slaty-legged Crake at Kowloon Park during 10–14th, a repeat performance of 1992. Also on 3rd was the spring's first Japanese Yellow Bunting after which record numbers occurred during the middle of April with peak counts of 6 at Mai Po and 15 at Tsim Bei Tsui.

Wader passage at Mai Po got off to a sticky start with the waders initially refusing to come on the scrape. Rather unusually, peak numbers of birds were noted toward the end of the month but this was probably due to the difficulty of observation early on; by mid-month they had settled down however. The highlights were as follows: one or two Little Stints were noted from 7th through to the end of the month; Black-tailed Godwits peaked at 2055 on 7th, a new high; Spoon-billed Sandpipers were noted from 8th to the month end with a maximum of five; 58 Nordmann's Greenshanks were recorded on 13th, also a new high; Curlew Sandpipers peaked at 4552 on 25th, when Redshanks also reached a new high of 2302; and single Little Whimbrels were present at Mai Po on 28th and 30th, remaining into early May.

At Mai Po 41 Black-faced Spoonbills were still present on 6th, a rather high count for so late. On 9th two Two-barred Greenish Warblers were seen in Lam Tsuen Valley. Fifty Ashy Minivets were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 8th and thirty were seen two days later at Lok Ma Chau. Also on 10th a Japanese Nightjar was seen over urban Kowloon and a Russet Bush Warbler was singing in Ho Chung wood. On 11th a Rustic Bunting was at Mount Davies with one at Mai Po the next day and three at Pok Fu Lam on 25th.

On 12th a male Siberian Blue Robin was in Kowloon Park and a Pied Harrier was seen at Mai Po. Also there on 16th was a Styan's Grasshopper



Warbler. Hong Kong's first Bay Woodpecker was seen at Tai Po Kau on 17th. Two days later a Chinese Pitta flew into a window in Shek Kong and was later released unharmed.

Single male Narcissus Flycatchers were seen at Ping Chau during 17–18th and in Tai Po Kau on 19th. Swinhoe's Egrets were first noted at Mai Po on 18th when three were seen. The following day two Ruddy Crakes were at Nam Sang Wai and a Greater Crested Tern was seen in front of the boardwalk hide, the first record since 1984. Two Ancient Auks were seen in Mirs Bay on 24th, only the sixth Hong Kong record and the first since 1986. A maximum of three Chestnut Bitterns were seen at Luk Keng on 25th. The only Japanese Sparrowhawk of the spring was seen on 28th. The month finished with two Crested Kingfishers at Tai Lam Reservoir on 29th and again at the end of May.

## May

This was very much a normal month. Three weak surges of the winter monsoon down the Taiwan Strait were recorded on 4th, 11th and 15th. A trough of low pressure near the South China coast brought unsettled weather with heavy rain during 23–26th. Unseasonably dry conditions then set in during 28–30th.

Waders provided the interest early in the month with two Pectoral Sandpipers on 1st and one during 12–13th, record counts of Sanderling (67 on 4th) and Turnstone (256 on 8th), Little Stints on 1st and 8th and, most interestingly, a first-summer Grey Phalarope on the Scrape at Mai Po from 4th through to 7 August. Swinhoe's Egrets appeared at Po Toi on 2 May and at Mai Po on 2nd and 16th.

Single Styan's Grasshopper Warblers were at Mai Po on 2nd and 8th, the first May records. A Lesser Treeduck was seen at Tin Shui Wai during 5–15th, soon after that of autumn 1992, the first since 1971. Two Pechora Pipits were seen at Shuen Wan on 11th and one was at Tin Shui Wai the following day; also on 12th, the Bay Woodpecker was seen again in Tai Po Kau. A Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler was singing at Mai Po on 15th and a Schrenck's Bittern was at Luk Keng on 16th.

## June

There was only one rain-free day and the total monthly rainfall of 485.2mm was 29% above normal. The month started with a day of strong southwesterly monsoon winds on 1st. Daily rainfall exceeded 100mm on 11th and 16th. Typhoon Koryn passed close to Hong Kong on 27th requiring the hoisting of the No. 8 signal and gales from the northeast on 27th turned into fresh to strong southeasterlies on 28th.

The Bay Woodpecker was seen again on 3rd. A Lesser Frigatebird was at Starling Inlet on 5th and an unidentified frigatebird was seen from the Eastern Island Corridor on 22nd. Three Bridled Terns were seen near Waglan Island on 7th and, later in the month, up to eight adults were present among breeding terns in eastern waters. Also on 7th an Aleutian Tern was seen near Cape D'Aguilar. A Black-shouldered Kite was seen at Tin Shui Wai on 19th.

A pair of Brown Fish Owls were noted breeding in Sai Kung during the month.

## July

This was the hottest July since 1967 with southwesterlies prevailing most of the time. Severe Tropical Storm Lewis crossed the northern part of the South China Sea during 9–12th and brought fresh southeasterlies and over 100mm of rain to Hong Kong.

An exceptionally early Brown Shrike was trapped at Mai Po on 31 July.

## August

The month was in general on the warm side and the most notable event was the approach of Typhoon Tasha. The no. 8 signal was hoisted overnight on 20–21st and southeasterly gales were recorded.

A juvenile Grey-cheeked Fulvetta was seen in Tai Po Kau indicating, for the first time, breeding in the territory. A female Crested Kingfisher was still present at Tai Lam Reservoir on 14th and, discovered the next day, was a Slaty-backed Forktail near Tsuen Wan.

The approach of Tasha was responsible for the first of three periods of autumn seabird observations off Cape D'Aguilar. Three Streaked Shearwaters were seen there on 21st as well as three Long-tailed Skuas, and 130 Aleutian Terns were seen on 22nd. Other counts of the latter species were 130 south of HK Island on 29th and 40 at Cape D'Aguilar on 28th.

Finally, a Tiger Shrike was at Mai Po on 29th.

## September

This was a month of tropical cyclones. Typhoon Yancy, east of Taiwan, maintained an unseasonable northerly flow over southern China during 1–3rd and fine weather persisted in light northeasterlies over China until 12th. Typhoon Abe brought more than 50mm of rain on 13th and landed in eastern Guangdong on 14th. Typhoon Becky passed by the south of Hong Kong on 17th on its way to western Guangdong and no. 8 signals were hoisted and gales recorded, first from the northeast and then the southeast.

Finally, Typhoon Dot developed east of Hainan Island on 22nd and drifted slowly northward eventually making landfall on 26th. The approach of Dot also coincided with the first significant surge of the northeast monsoon and more than 200mm of rain were recorded on 26th when the no. 8 southeast signal was hoisted.

Two Siberian Blue Robins were seen at Shing Mun on 4th and the same day a Crested Honey Buzzard was seen at Mai Po; on the following day the autumn maximum of 14 Painted Snipe was seen at Kam Tin. On 15th a Tiger Shrike was seen at Mount Austin.



Another Siberian Blue Robin was seen at Shing Mun on 11th and a Black-shouldered Kite was seen at Ping Chau on 11th and 18th. A very early Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was found in Tai Po Kau on 11th and on the same day a Sooty Flycatcher was seen at Sha Lo Tung; three others were seen elsewhere on 18th.

Unprecedented seabird observations were made during the course of the month, the first on 17th when one Streaked Shearwater, four unidentified all-dark petrels and one adult Sooty Tern were seen. On 24th 179 Bridled Terns were seen late in the afternoon and the following day 749 were recorded; also on 25th and the next day an Aleutian Tern was at Shuen Wan, the first away from open, coastal waters. On 26th Pomarine and Long-tailed Skuas were noted at Cape D'Aguilar and, somewhat in contrast to all the seabirds, two adult male Chestnut-cheeked Starlings were recorded at Shuen Wan, the first ever autumn record.

### October

The monthly mean pressure of 1016.2 hectopascals (hps) was the third highest on record for October, reflecting the dominance of the continental anticyclone throughout most of the month. Winds turned into fresh northerlies during 6–7th under the influence of Tropical Storm Flo near the Philippines. Another weak tropical depression close to Hong Kong brought some 80mm of rain during 13–14th, the only rainy spell in October. After a weak easterly surge on 25th a major northerly surge arrived on 29th bringing cooler and very dry conditions.

The month began well on 1st with two Dalmatian Pelicans, the earliest ever record for this species, a Crested Honey Buzzard at Mong Tseng, a Purple-backed Starling at Tsim Bei Tsui and a Besra at Mai Po. On 2nd a Besra was caught at Kadoorie ARC; on the same date two Sooty Flycatchers were in Tai Po Kau, and an obliging Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush was found at Mount Austin, remaining until 16th. On 3rd a Schrenck's Bittern was seen at Long Valley and the first of five Lanceolated Warblers seen during the month was recorded at Mai Po.

The first of the month's three Two-barred Greenish Warblers was also reported on 8th as was a Siberian Blue Robin found dead at Discovery Bay. Thirteen Painted Snipe were recorded at Long Valley on 9th and, the following day, the third Crested Honey Buzzard of the autumn was seen at Mount Austin and seven Purple-backed Starlings were at Mai Po. Single Thick-billed Warblers were trapped at Mai Po on 10th and at Kadoorie ARC on 1st, 20th and 25th. The second Slaty-legged Crane of the year, in even more atypical habitat than the first, was found wandering the streets of Mong Kok on 14th.

The sole Oriental Cuckoo of the autumn was seen at Sha Lo Tung on 16th and the following day an immature *fulvescens* Spotted Eagle was at Mai Po, possibly the same individual as the previous winter. The first of the month's three Siberian Thrushes was seen on 23rd.

A rather unusual autumn record was of a Spoon-billed Sandpiper at Mai Po on 27th. The month's second Besra was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 25th. The month finished with a Yellow-legged Buttonquail at Tan Shan Valley.

### November

The month was cloudier and more humid than normal. Tropical cyclone signal no. 3 was hoisted on 4th during the close approach of Typhoon Ira, the first time this had been done in November since 1974. There was a weak northerly push on 12th and then a strong easterly surge on 19th. An intense northerly surge arrived on 21st and brought temperatures down to 11.9°C on 22nd.

A Black Stork was in the Deep Bay area from 2nd into December. Typhoon Ira brought a Streaked Shearwater off Cheung Chau on 4th and a Long-tailed Skua off Cape D'Aguilar on 5th. Six Greylag Geese were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui, the first for 21 years; also on 6th, a *lugens* Black-backed Wagtail was at Shuen Wan and a Pheasant-tailed Jacana was found at Long Valley, remaining until 12th. Hong Kong's second Carrion Crow was seen at Nim Wan on 7th and a male Yellow-legged Buttonquail was seen at Nam Sang Wai on 8th.

Six Chestnut-flanked White-eyes were trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 10th and an immature Besra was trapped there the next day. Japanese Sparrowhawks were trapped at the same locality on 11th and 13th. A Ringed Plover was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk during 12–13th and the first of the month's four Radde's Warblers was seen at Mount Austin on 13th. The autumn's fourth Siberian Thrush was seen on 14th.

Three Northern Skylarks flew west over Mai Po on 20th. A male Fukien Niltava was in Aberdeen Country Park on 27th and a female was at Mount Austin the next day. The first Oriental White Stork returned to Mai Po on 27th and the winter's first Sulphur-breasted Warbler was noted at Tai Po Kau on 29th.

### December

The month was slightly cooler than normal. Northerly surges of the winter monsoon were recorded on 4th, 14th and 21st. The second surge, together with a replenishment arriving on 16th, took the temperature down to 9.2°C on 17th, the lowest of the month.

A Nordmann's Greenshank at Mai Po on 4th was the latest ever record; on the same date an immature Japanese Sparrowhawk was also seen there with a male at the same locality on 12th. A second Oriental White Stork appeared on 7th and four were present at the end of the month; the Ringed Plover seen again on 8th. A surprise sighting during the December waterfowl count was an Ancient Auklet at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12th; also seen there was a Ruddy Shelduck which remained into 1994.



A female Smew was discovered at Mai Po on 16th, the first record for Hong Kong, and it remained until April 1994. Two Buff-bellied Pipits were seen at Long Valley on 19th and an immature Pied Harrier was there on 23rd. A Ruddy Crake at Tin Shui Wai on 26th remained into January and a *lugens* Black-backed Wagtail was seen at Ping Chau on 27th as was a Dusky Thrush on Lantau. The year finished with an unseasonal Pale-legged Leaf Warbler in Aberdeen Country Park on 29th.



## SYSTEMATIC LIST

Michael R. Leven, G.J. Carey and Verity B. Picken

In the interests of brevity, records for species which are generally common and widespread throughout the year are not listed unless significant reports were received. The dates of the waterfowl counts referred to are 10 January, 14 February, 14 March, 14 November and 12 December. The codes 'BBR' and 'CC' at the end of the species entry indicate that it was recorded during the Big Bird Race on 9-10 April and/or the Christmas Count on 27 December. † indicates that more detailed data concerning spring passage are provided in Table 1.

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

### 1 Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

At Mai Po successful breeding was noted for at least ten pairs with a total of 20 fledged young being seen. Elsewhere in the Deep Bay area breeding pairs were noted at Mong Tseng (1 brood), Nam Sang Wai (31 broods), Wing Kei Tsuen, near Fairview Park, and Tin Shui Wai (4 broods); a pair with two eggs was the first breeding record at Shuen Wan.

Peak monthly counts at Mai Po were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
46	48	43	—	51	—	36	10	46	50	26	39

The highest winter count was 87 at Nam Sang Wai on 22 November. In addition to the above-mentioned localities, wintering birds were also noted at Plover Cove Reservoir where a maximum of 17 was noted on 28 January.

BBR,CC

### 2 Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

During the January waterfowl count 27 were noted in Deep Bay, somewhat lower than the previous two years. The highest count during the first half of the year came during the March waterfowl count when 53 were recorded in Deep Bay, presumably involving passage birds. A summer-plumaged bird seen from the boardwalk on 4 May (GJC,VBP) equalled the latest date ever. Numbers in the second winter period were higher and the peak count for the year was 150 in Deep Bay during the December waterfowl count.

CC

### 4 Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*

At Cape D'Aguilar two were seen on 21 August during Typhoon Tasha (MRL,PJL), one was recorded on 17 September during Typhoon Becky (MRL,GJC,MT *et al.*) and three passed during Typhoon Dot on 26 September (PJL,MRL). These are the third to fifth records in Hong Kong; previous reports were of singles on 3 May 1985 and 1 June 1986.

An unidentified shearwater *Calonectris/Puffinus* sp. was seen off Cheung Chau on 4 November during Typhoon Ira (MDW).

[ **Shearwater/Petrel sp.** *Procellariid sp.*  
Four dark Procellariids seen together and another, apparently larger, bird off Cape D'Aguilar on 21 August during Typhoon Tasha (MRL,PJL) were considered to be large petrels *Bulweria/Oceanodroma* sp. or Shearwaters *Puffinus* sp. A similar bird was observed during Typhoon Becky on 17 September (RWL,GJC,PJL).]

In view of its very limited knowledge of Procellariids in the South China Sea and the inherent difficulties in judging seabird records, the Records Committee is taking a very conservative view in assessing these records. Nevertheless, the observations suggest that passage of shearwaters and petrels may be a regular occurrence during tropical storms.

[ **Petrel sp.** *Hydrobatidae sp.*  
Eleven all dark petrels were seen at Cape D'Aguilar on 26 September (PJL,MRL).]

**6 Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
A total of 5098 were counted during the January waterfowl count, all except 200 recorded in Deep Bay. Similar numbers were present during the February count but only about 50% of these were recorded in mid-March. A sharp drop in numbers was noted in the fourth week of March and only 300 were noted on 30th. The final spring record occurred on 16 April. A single at Cheung Chau on 18 March was unusual.

First recorded in the second winter period on 1 October at Mai Po, a fairly early date. Numbers had built up to 1508 by the November waterfowl count and reached 5983 in the December count, a new high for the Territory. The latter total included over 1000 roosting on Plover Cove reservoir which was rather a high count for that locality. BBR,CC



**1 Dalmatian Pelican** *Pelecanus crispus* immature  
Mai Po, Hong Kong October 1993

Ray Tipper

**7 Dalmatian Pelican** *Pelecanus crispus*  
Seven birds were present during the January waterfowl count after which numbers built up to 12 by the end of the month, to 14 by 5 February and to 15 by the 12th. These remained to 22 March and the final record was of a single bird thermalling high over Mai Po on 28 March. In the second half of the year two immature birds appeared on 1 October (RWL), the earliest date recorded for this species, although there is a record of an unidentified pelican seen on 19 September 1986. These two were joined by six others on the last day of the year.

**9 Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel*  
A female or immature was seen at Starling Inlet on 5 June (PJL,MRL).  
A Frigatebird sp., probably also this species, was seen over Victoria Harbour on 22 June (VBP).

**10 Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*  
In the first half of the year noted on 3 January, 21 February and 18 April at Mai Po and during 27-28 March at Shuen Wan when up to six birds were present; this is only the third record away from the Deep Bay area. In the second winter period a single was recorded at Mai Po on 20 November followed by two birds during 1-4 December and a single again during 11-12th. Elsewhere, one was seen at Nam Sang Wai on 4 December. CC



**2 Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*  
Mai Po, Hong Kong October 1993

Lam Mei Sheung

**11 Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*  
Records at Mai Po on 2 and 7 January and 21 February presumably involved the same wintering individual. The spring influx possibly commenced on 30 March, when one was noted at Mai Po, but had certainly done so by 12th April. The highest spring count was ten at Mai Po on 22 May; ten were also



present there on 22 June. Also noted in June at Shuen Wan, Tin Shui Wai, Nam Sang Wai and on Lantau. Most records during the autumn came from Mai Po with others at Shuen Wan and Nam Sang Wai; the highest count was five on 19 September at Mai Po and at Nam Sang Wai on 23 September. Three were noted as late as 17 October but subsequently there were only four records during the rest of the year, singles at Mai Po on 31 October, 7 November and 4 December and at Nam Sang Wai on 20 December. BBR

**12 Schrenck's Bittern** *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*  
Three records during the year, a female at Luk Keng on 16 May (PIL), a female or immature at Long Valley on 3 October (MRL,PJL) and a male at Nam Sang Wai on 7 October (GAW). This was an unimpressive spring showing for this species. There are now six autumn records, all between 23 September and 7 October.

**13 Chestnut Bittern** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*  
In spring recorded on eight dates between 10 April and 16 May, usually involving singles, but three were at Luk Keng on 25 April and two were at Mai Po on the last date. A juvenile was present at Mai Po on 23 July. In autumn singles were recorded at Mai Po on 31 August, at Ho Sheung Heung on 16 September and at Long Valley on 2 October.

**16 Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*  
Breeding was confirmed at five sites in the Territory and probably occurred at least at one other. A minimum of 148 pairs nested. At A Chau, Starling Inlet, 82 nests and 281 birds were noted on 21 March; at Yim Tso Ha 400 birds were noted during the March waterfowl count and 46 nests and 250 adults were recorded on 20 June; at Tai Po Market KCR station 4 nests and 78 adults were noted on 26 March; at Mai Po 78 adults were recorded on 28 March, two-week old young were seen at the nest on 13 March and many near full-grown young were seen on 21st; at Shuen Wan 15-20 pairs bred. At Stonecutters Island breeding was not proven but probably occurred, just as it has since at least 1990. During the January waterfowl count 228 were counted and in the December count, 371. BBR,CC

**17 Little Green Heron** *Butorides striatus*  
Presumed wintering birds were at Wah Fu and Telegraph Bay on 26 February, in Lam Tsuen Valley on 5 March and at Shing Mun on 20 March. No more were seen until one was noted at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 April. The highest spring count was 12 at Mai Po on 15 May; ten were present there on 22 June and 11, including two juveniles, were seen on 24 July. Away from Deep Bay, one was in Tai Po Kau on 9 April, one was at Telegraph Bay on 27 April, three were at Tai Long Wan on 2 May, a single was at Tai Lam Chung on 29 May and about ten were seen near Mui Wo, Lantau, in mid-June. Autumn numbers peaked at eight at Mai Po on 15 August and the final record of the year there was on 9 October. A juvenile was found dead on the road to Cape D'Aguilar on 17 September and singles were present at Lei Muk Shui, Tai Po Kau, Shing Mun and Plover Cove during the second winter period. BBR,CC

**18 Chinese Pond Heron** *Ardeola bacchus*  
During the January waterfowl count 426 birds were counted; in November, 362 were recorded. At the Mai Po egretty 75 nests and 55 individuals were noted on 6 June; at Shuen Wan about 20 pairs bred. BBR,CC

**19 Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*  
The highest count of the first winter period was 113 during the January waterfowl count while in the second winter period it was 52 in the December count. A minimum of 158 pairs nested. At Yim Tso Ha 77 nests and 32 adults were noted on 20 June; at Tai Po Market KCR station 6 nests and 7 adults were noted on 19 May (although 21 birds were counted on 19 March); at Shuen Wan over 75 pairs bred and the highest count was 272 birds on 6 August. Other interesting records were seven flying north on 22 April at Cheung Chau, three flying north over Mirs Bay on 24 April and 23 in the Repulse Bay area during 25-27 April. BBR,CC

**20 Swinhoe's Egret** *Egretta eulophotes*  
At least four individuals were recorded at Mai Po during 13-25 April (JSRE *et al.*), including three together on 18th; one bird was also present there on 1st (CAV) and 16 May (RWL). In addition, one was seen on rocks at Po Toi Island on 2 May (VBP *et al.*).

1992: a single was also seen at Mai Po on 12 April (PIL).

**21 Reef Egret** *Egretta sacra*  
One to ten birds were reported from the following localities: Cape D'Aguilar, Repulse Bay, Pok Fu Lam, Discovery Bay, Chi Ma Wan, Lamma Channel, Pak Sha Wan, Ping Chau, Mirs Bay, Soko Islands, Round Island, Po Toi and the Ninepins. BBR,CC

**22 Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*  
The January waterfowl count recorded 2010 birds which had declined to about half that figure in February. In the second winter period the highest number was 1190 during the November waterfowl count. A minimum of 244 pairs nested and breeding was confirmed at six locations: at A Chau, Starling Inlet, 10 nests and 23 birds were noted on 21 February; at Yim Tso Ha 11 nests and 9 birds were recorded on 20 June; at Tai Po Market KCR station 36 nests were seen on 26 March; at Mai Po 36 nests were noted on 28 March; at Tsim Bei Tsui about 150 nests were recorded on 26 March; and at Shuen Wan about 20 pairs were estimated to have bred. In addition, two juveniles were noted at Discovery Bay on 14 July. BBR,CC

**23 Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia*  
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	2	3	10	3	2	-	5	-	4	2	7

In addition, one to two birds were recorded on four occasions at Shuen Wan up to 23 March, six flew east at Cape D'Aguilar on 25 September during Typhoon Dot (the first record for HK Island), one was at Long Valley on 3 October, singles were present at Shuen Wan on 6 and 29 October and one was seen at Tai Long Wan on 30 October.



**24 Great Egret** *Egretta alba*

The peak winter count of 576 during the January waterfowl count was about average for recent years. In February 250 were noted and in March, 357. In the second winter period during the December waterfowl count 1073 were recorded in Deep Bay and 142 elsewhere; this is 75% more than the previous highest figure. A minimum of 29 pairs bred at three locations: at A Chau, Starling Inlet, 17 nests and 39 birds were counted on 21 February; at Yim Tso Ha 2 nests and 4 birds were seen on 20 June; and at Shuen Wan 10-20 pairs bred. Other interesting records were two flying north over the sea, west of Sai Kung, on 7 March and 1-2 birds seen at Cape D'Aguilar during typhoons on 17-18 and 27 September. BBR,CC

**25 Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The January waterfowl count total of 1203 was about average for recent years; this figure had dropped to 935 in February and 543 in March. The latest two records at Shuen Wan were of singles on 21 April and 12 June; eleven were still present at Mai Po on 6 May; in addition, one was at Tai Lam Reservoir on 30 May. Breeding was noted at A Chau, Starling Inlet, where five nests and 35 birds were counted on 21 February. In the second half of the year the earliest records at Mai Po were a single on 23 July and two adults on 15 and 22 August; 25 were present on 4 September. At Shuen Wan birds were noted from 4 October. The November waterfowl count figure of 1373 was the highest of the second half of the year and this declined to 1054 in December. BBR,CC

**26 Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*  
Peak monthly counts at Mai Po were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	1	3	3	1	—	—	1	—	15	6	2

Up to four were recorded elsewhere in the Deep Bay area throughout the year and one was at Shuen Wan on 4 October. BBR,CC

**27 Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*

In the first winter period singles were seen at Tin Shui Wai on 10 January (RWL) and circling over Aberdeen Country Park on 31 January (JEB). This latter bird is the first record from HK Island. In the second winter period three were seen soaring over Deep Bay on 31 October (JSRE) and an immature ranged between Tsim Bei Tsui and Mai Po from 2 November to 4 December (JGH *et al.*).

**28 Oriental White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia boyciana*

The fourteen that arrived on 13 November 1992 remained into 1993. Numbers increased in late January with 15 recorded on 27th and 16 on 5 February. This number was last seen on 13 February and most seem to have departed during the subsequent week as from 21st no more than three were recorded. Two were last reported on 7 March and a single, possibly injured, bird remained and was last seen on 13 April (GJC), the latest date recorded in Hong Kong.

In the second winter period the first record was a single on 27 November (PJJ,MRL). Subsequently, a second bird was noted on 7 December and on 30th four were recorded which remained into 1994. All records came from the Deep Bay area, mainly Mai Po. This is the eighth record for Hong Kong and the fourth consecutive winter of occurrence. BBR,CC

**30 White Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Recorded in Deep Bay, mainly at Mai Po, in all months of the year though with a bias toward the first five months. From January to April one or two birds were recorded on most dates with three recorded on 14 February (including 2 immatures) and 25 April (including two adults). Records from 30 April to 14 November involved single birds only, all of the birds aged being immature, and thus possibly the same individual. In the latter period of the year two birds were seen on 21 and 27 November but during December only one was seen. BBR,CC

**31 European Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*  
Peak monthly counts at Mai Po were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	5	5	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3

The highest count of six occurred on 2 April and the latest spring report was on 22 April. In the second half of the year first recorded on 13 November. BBR

**32 Black-faced Spoonbill** *Platalea minor*

The total of 73 counted at Mai Po on 14 February (PJJ,MRL) is a new high for Hong Kong and constitutes about 21% of the known world population (Dahmer and Felley 1994); this is also the same date as the high count of 1992, possibly indicating that passage occurs at this time. Sixty-seven were still present in Deep Bay at the time of the March waterfowl count; subsequently, numbers dropped to 41 on 6 April, 32 on 13 April (mainly immatures), 12 on 23 April, nine on 3 May, five (all immatures) on 8 May, two on 11 May and the last sighting of one on 31 May. In the second winter period the first record was of 17 at Mai Po on 27 October; 56 were recorded during the November waterfowl count and 70 were seen at Mai Po on 11 December. BBR,CC

**33 Lesser Treeduck** *Dendrocygna javanica*

Singles were present at Tin Shui Wai from 5 to 15 May (GAW,MH,GJC) and Mai Po during 4-5 September (MRL,VBP,RWL). These are the seventh and eighth records for Hong Kong. However, it is conceivable that one or both of these birds is the same as that seen in September 1993.

**35 Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

Six birds were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 November (RWL). This is the fifth record for Hong Kong, the first four being two on 23 November 1958, two on 22 March 1964, two on 8 November 1969 and four on 5 March 1972.

[ **Goose sp.** *Anser sp.*

A single goose at Starling Inlet on 7 December (SES) was probably a Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* or a White-fronted Goose *A. albifrons*.]



**36 Ruddy Shelduck**

*Tadorna ferruginea*

In the first part of the year one was present in Deep Bay from 2 January (MRL,EPL) and two from 16 January until 28 February (WLY *et al.*). In the second winter period one found at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 December (GJC,PJL) remained into 1994. CC

**37 Shelduck**

*Tadorna tadorna*

A count of 729 recorded on the January waterfowl count reversed slightly the decline in numbers wintering in the Bay noted over recent years. Subsequently, 308 were counted in Deep Bay on 27 February, 170 on 6 March and three on 27 March; two remained until 7 April and the final record was of one on 19 April. In the second winter period recorded from 27 November with numbers rising to 892 during the December waterfowl count indicating that the increase in numbers noted the previous winter was to continue. This latter total also included two birds seen at Shuen Wan which may be the first record away from Deep Bay. BBR,CC

**39 Mandarin**

*Aix galericulata*

Full-winged birds were seen at Mai Po as follows: a male on 6 February, three males and two females on 13 February, three males and a female on 20 February, a male on 6 March and a male on 4 May.

The caveat first made in the 1992 Report continues to apply: all Mai Po records are of suspect origin as not all birds in the Waterfowl Collection have been pinioned and others are known to have escaped locally (S. Chan pers. comm.). The number of birds recorded this year, which goes markedly against the previous known status of the species, and the late record of a male emphasise the caution that must now be adopted.

**40 Wigeon**

*Anas penelope*

The January waterfowl count recorded a total of 1120, very similar to the totals of 1991 and 1992. In the February count 291 were recorded and in March, 453. Subsequently, numbers declined to 40 on 28 March and 20 on 5 April; two immature males remained until 12 May (GJC,RWL), the latest date recorded in Hong Kong.

In the second part of the year, first noted on 2 October (JB), a new early date for Hong Kong. Subsequently, numbers built up to 150 by 23 October, 647 by the time of the November waterfowl count and 1000 by 23 December. All records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

For the second successive winter, hybrid male Eurasian x American Wigeon *A. americana* were noted. Two were first recorded on 22 October (HFC *et al.*) and three were seen on 13 November (GJC). Two were still present on at least 18 December (MLC).

**41 Falcated Teal**

*Anas falcata*

During the January waterfowl count 126 were recorded, a similar total to 1992; 107 were still present during the February count but numbers had declined to 26 by 13 March. Subsequently, 12 were seen on 10 April and the latest record was of one on 30 April. In the second part of the year, nine on 2 October was the earliest record and the third earliest arrival date recorded in

Hong Kong. Forty-one were present during the November waterfowl count and this remained the highest count for the rest of the year. All records from the Deep Bay area, mainly Mai Po. BBR,CC



3 Hybrid Wigeon *Anas penelope* x *A. americana* male  
Mai Po, Hong Kong October 1993

Ray Tipper

**42 Gadwall**

*Anas strepera*

The highest count in January was eight birds on 16th which was also the first record of the year; the highest February count was nine during the waterfowl count and in March it was eleven on 13th. Subsequently, numbers declined to four on 27 March, a pair on 10 April and a male on 15 April (SC) which proved to be the latest record and a new late date for Hong Kong. Records in the second part of the year were few: one on 8 November, four on 27th, three on 5 December and two on 13th. All records came from the Deep Bay area with most at Mai Po. BBR

**43 Baikal Teal**

*Anas formosa*

The only records came from Kowloon Park where there was a male on 13 February and two males and a female on 5 and 8 March (YYT). As with the male seen here on 20 December 1992, it is difficult to know whether these birds arrived unaided or were released. Although it is not unusual for this species to occur in urban locations, Baikal Teal regularly occurs in the bird markets and it was more numerous than the full-winged Teal and Garganey present in the Park at the same time. The balance of probability seems to be that they were not naturally occurring birds.

**44 Teal**

*Anas crecca*

The January waterfowl count recorded a total of 2384 which is a fairly average count for recent years; in the February count 2279 were noted and in March, 1349. Subsequently, numbers declined to 50 by 28 March, 40 by 5



April and the final record of one male on 4 May. In the second half of the year, the earliest record was of two on 12 September. In the November waterfowl count 2383 were recorded and in the December count, 2620. Most records came from the Deep Bay area but birds were also seen at Shuen Wan (max of 21 up to 28 March and singles on 23 and 27 December), Luk Keng (12 on 9 January), Kowloon Park (one on 8 and two on 31 March) and Long Valley (108 on 10 November and 170 on 29 December). BBR,CC

**45 Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*  
The January waterfowl count recorded 20 in the Deep Bay area and there were 32 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 10 February. Four were recorded in Deep Bay during the March waterfowl count. Subsequently, a male summered at Mai Po, the first such record in Hong Kong. In the second half of the year the first record definitely not attributable to the over-summering male was of three at Mai Po on 30 October. Subsequently, numbers built up to 29 by the November waterfowl count and 39 by the December count. All records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**46 Yellow-nib Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha*  
Peak monthly counts at Mai Po were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
229	35	44	—	70	40	44	45	43	16	123	328

Three broods were noted at Mai Po. A single at Shuen Wan on 19 March was a rare record outside Deep Bay. BBR,CC

**47 Pintail** *Anas acuta*  
The January waterfowl count recorded 5419 in the Deep Bay area which compares favourably with the two very high counts of the previous two years. During the February count 4071 were still present but by the March count numbers had declined to 29. Subsequently, 12 were present on 1 April and the final record was of two females on 7 April. In the second half of the year the earliest record was of two females on 7 April. In the second half of the year the earliest record was of two females on 7 April. In the second half of the year the earliest record was of two females on 7 April. The November waterfowl count recorded 2049 and the December count 5810, a new high for Hong Kong. BBR,CC

**48 Garganey** *Anas querquedula*  
The first record of the year was of three birds at Mai Po on 1 January; 15 noted on 15th and 20 on 31st indicated that over-wintering occurred again. The highest February count was 20 during 12-13th and in March it was 42 on 27th. Also in this month, two were noted at Shuen Wan on 19th. The April high was 40 on 9th after which date recorded numbers declined to eight on 28th. The final record of the spring was of a male on 9 May.

In the second part of the year the earliest record was of one on 31 August. Numbers built up to 20 on 19 September, 120 on 28th and 150 on 1st and 16 October with 80 still remaining on 23rd. On 25 September 72 flew east off Cape D'Aguilar during Typhoon Dot and eight did likewise on 27th. There was one November record at Mai Po (ten on 27th) and in December up to four birds were noted there on five dates up to 19th. The only other records away from the Deep Bay area were of singles at Long Valley on 29 December and at Plover Cove Reservoir on 21 November. BBR

A male present at Kowloon Park on 5 and 8 March has the same question mark over its origin as the Baikal Teal noted above, especially as an unpinioned pair were also seen there on 1 June.

**49. Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*  
During the January waterfowl count 5171 were recorded, a new high for Hong Kong; in the February count 3040 were noted and in the March count, 991. Subsequently, numbers decreased to 242 on 27th and 30 on 10 April, after which the only record was of a female in the waterfowl collection at Mai Po on 31 May (RWL) which is the latest date noted for this species. In the second part of the year the first record was of a male on 3 September (RWL), ten days earlier than the previous early date set in 1992. Two were present on 17 September and 30 on 1 October. Numbers reached 3250 by 13 November; the December waterfowl count recorded 2268. All records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**50 Pochard** *Aythya ferina*  
On 10 January three males were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui and on 13th a pair was present at Mai Po. In February four were seen at Mai Po during 12-14 February and a female was there on 20th. In March two females present at Mai Po during 6-13th were joined by a male on 14th; a single female was present there on 19th. In the second part of the year the only records were of a female at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 December and Nam Sang Wai on 20 December.

**[51 Baer's Pochard** *Aythya baeri*  
Observers are reminded to note the caveat contained in last year's Report regarding the presence of almost full-winged captive birds in the collection. No records during 1993 definitely related to wild individuals.]

**52. Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*  
During the January waterfowl count 29 birds were recorded; 92 were recorded at Nam Sang Wai on 16 February with 30 present at Mai Po on 7 March. Nine were noted there on 14 March with three still present on 27th; the final record was of one on 3 April. In the second part of the year noted from 8 November with a maximum of 27 at Nam Sang Wai on 20th of that month. All records were from the Deep Bay area except for an eclipse male on a roadside pool at Starling Inlet on 8 December.

**53 Scaup** *Aythya marila*  
An immature male was seen at Mai Po on 15 January; two males were present at Tsim Bei Tsui on 23 January and one was there on 31st. A female was at Mai Po on 6th and 9 February and an adult male was seen there on 14 February.

**55.5 Smew** *Mergus albellus*  
A female was present at Mai Po from 16 December to at least 16 April 1994 (GJC,RWL). This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report). BBR,CC



**56 Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*  
The January waterfowl count recorded 15 but this was the only record from the Deep Bay area for the whole of the year. At Shing Mun reservoir a female was seen on 21 February, 21 March and 4 April, the first inland record of this species (DAD,GAW).

**57 Black Baza** *Aviceda leuphotes*  
The earliest report was of three at Ho Chung on 24 April. A pair was at Luk Keng from 25 April until 3 July, one was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 April and two were at Plover Cove on 29 April. Up to three were seen at Nam Chung, Chek Keng, Ko Tong, Wong Nai Tun, Tai Long Wan, Sha Lo Tung, Lam Tsuen Valley and Discovery Bay between May and 11 September; the only larger group was a party of eight at Hoi Ha Wan, Sai Kung, on 29 August. Five late birds were at Fanling Golf Course on 3 October. A typical spread of (apparently) breeding birds but rather fewer migrants than in most recent years.

**58 Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*  
Single birds were seen over Mai Po on 4 September (GJC,PJL *et al.*), Mong Tseng on 1 October (DAD) and Mount Austin on 10 October (DAD). These are the sixth to eighth Hong Kong records.

**59 Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*  
In first half of the year in the Deep Bay area singles were seen over Lok Ma Chau on 26 January, at Mai Po on 30 January, Tsim Bei Tsui on 3 April and Mai Po on 9 and 23 April. Elsewhere, one was on Ping Chau on 17-18 April. There were two midsummer records: one at Nam She Wan, Sai Kung, on 1 June and one at Tin Shui Wai on 19 June. One to two (both adults) were seen irregularly in the Deep Bay area from 5 August to 28 November and one was on Ping Chau on 11th and 18 September. Probably rather few birds, perhaps only four individuals, were involved and, in contrast to 1992, no juveniles were seen.

**60 Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*  
Counts included 37 at Shuen Wan on 6 January, 88 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 27 February and 50 at Shuen Wan on 4 October. One at Mount Nicholson on 16 May was seen to attempt to catch a newly fledged Crested Mynah.  
BBR,CC

**61 White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*  
With the exception of one over Causeway Bay on 23 May, all records came from eastern and southern waters. Breeding season reports were concentrated in Mirs Bay where there appeared to be three to four pairs, one of which was seen with a fledged juvenile on 7 June. Whilst confirmed breeding records of this species are rather few, the high proportion of non-adult birds seen suggests a healthy population.  
BBR,CC

**62 Black Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*  
One was seen in the Pak Nai/Nim Wan area on 10th, 21st and 26 January and on 14th and 20 February (MH,VBP,MDW *et al.*).



**4 Black Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*  
Pak Nai, Hong Kong 26 January 1993

Martin Williams

**63 Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela*  
Up to three were reported from 14 localities in the central and eastern New Territories throughout the year. Displaying pairs were observed at Tai Po Kau and Shek Kong. Although displaying pairs are seen every year the nest of this species has yet to be found in Hong Kong.  
BBR,CC

**64 Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*  
Up to five were recorded in Deep Bay until 14 April and up to three were present there from 18 September. The number of individuals was much greater with passage especially obvious in late March/early April.  
BBR,CC

**66 Pied Harrier** *Circus melanoleucos*  
An adult male flew over Mai Po on 12 April (MT) and an immature flew over Long Valley on 23 December (GAW).

**68 Japanese Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter gularis*  
The only individual in spring was a male at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 April (GJC). In autumn, males were trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 20th, 23rd and 27 October and 11 November and a female was trapped on 13 November (DPC). At Mai Po, an adult female was seen on 1 December (GJC), a first year male was trapped on 4 December (GJC) and a male was seen on 12 December (DAD).

**1990:** The individual trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 11 November is now considered to be a Besra (see below).

**68.1 Besra** *Accipiter virgatus*  
First year females were trapped at Mai Po on 12 September (GJC) and 2 October (MRL), a male was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 25 October (DPC) and a first year male was trapped there on 11 November (PJL).



**1990:** An accipiter trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 11 November, and identified as an immature female Japanese Sparrowhawk, has been shown to be an immature male Besra (Leader and Carey in prep.). Criteria for identifying this difficult pair of species in the hand have now been established but field identification frequently still causes problems.

- 69 Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*  
An adult male was on Ping Chau on 18 April (PJL,PRK). Small accipiters *A. gularis*, *A. virgatus* or *A. nisus*, were reported as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
7	3	14	13	—	2	—	3	5	8	10	3

The spring peak is unusual as the largest numbers of small accipiters are normally noted in late autumn. The June and August records were probably Besras but the other reports could involve all three species.

- 70 Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus*  
Reported from 29 localities with apparent concentrations on Hong Kong Island and the central New Territories but also on Lantau Island and at Mai Po where, unusually, one was displaying on 27 March. BBR,CC

- 71 Chinese Goshawk** *Accipiter soloensis*  
One flew north over Ping Chau on 12 April (MDW) and one was seen there on 18 April (MLC,PRK,PJL). Three were at Shuen Wan on 18 April (RWL), two at Tai Long Wan on 23 April (GJC) and 19 flew north during 0830-1015h at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 April (GJC,VBP). In autumn, one was seen at Mong Tseng on 1 October (DAD) and two were at Shuen Yiu, Sai Kung, on 2 October (CAV).

- 72 Grey-faced Buzzard** *Butastur indicus*  
The first in spring were at least 42 north over Cheung Chau and 56 northeast over Aberdeen Country Park on 21 March. On 22 March 24 flew northeast over Aberdeen Country Park, 57 (including some leaving a roost) flew north at Tsim Bei Tsui, 147 flew north at Mai Po and one was seen near Tai Po. One was at Mai Po on 28 March and one to six birds were seen at Aberdeen Country Park, Ho Chung, Mai Po, Tsim Bei Tsui and Ping Chau between 7th and 18 April. The latest in spring were two at Ping Chau on 18 April and one at Mai Po on 20 April. In contrast to this strong spring showing the only autumn record was a single at Tai Po Kau on 23 October. BBR

- 73 Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*  
Regularly recorded in the Deep Bay area up to 7 April with maxima of five birds at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5th and 8 March. Other reports during the first winter period included up to two from various localities on Hong Kong Island and singles at Shuen Wan, Kadoorie ARC, Ho Chung and Lam Tsuen Valley. The first two in autumn were at Mai Po on 16 October; subsequently, up to two were recorded in the Deep Bay area until the year end. Elsewhere, two were seen at Tai Tam Reservoir and singles were reported from Long Valley, Shuen Wan, Three Fathoms Cove, Shing Mun Reservoir, Tai Po Kau and Hong Kong Island. BBR,CC

**1992:** A report of two birds of the race *B.b. japonicus* at Tsim Bei Tsui on 22 February implied that this was unusual. In fact, all Hong Kong records are likely to be of this race.

- 74 Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*  
Up to three were recorded in the Deep Bay area until 1 April, including a juvenile of the '*fulvescens*' colour form from 1992 until 2 March. Two at Tsui Keng, Fanling, on 9 January was the only report from elsewhere. In the second winter period up to three were present in the Deep Bay area from 16 October, including an immature of the '*fulvescens*' form - perhaps the individual from the previous winter returning. CC

- 75 Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*  
At least six individuals were seen in the Deep Bay area until 14 April and one was over Lam Tsuen Valley on 20 March. A total of 21 flying east during a ninety minute period at Mai Po on 27 February (DAD) was unprecedented, the previous high count being ten in 1991. In the second winter period up to six were seen from 27 October. BBR,CC

- 76 Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraetus fasciatus*  
Pairs were noted at five sites in the northern and central New Territories and nests were found at two of these (success unknown). Elsewhere, two adults were seen over Causeway Bay on 16 March, one was seen on Lantau on 11 June and one was at Tai Tam Reservoir on 4 December. BBR,CC

- 77 Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*  
Up to five were seen in Deep Bay until 6 May, a summering bird was noted at Tin Shui Wai on 19 June and 15 July and up to six were there from 8 August. Reports from the central and eastern New Territories included two on Hole Island, Mirs Bay, on 21 February. One over Kowloon Park on 9 April was unusual. BBR,CC

- 79 Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*  
One or two were widely recorded early in the year with late records at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 May, Lam Tsuen Valley on 8 May, Repulse Bay on 15 May and at Shing Mun on 22 May (DAD) - a new late date for Hong Kong. There is only one previous record for May. In autumn the first three were at Mong Tseng on 1 October and one to two were widely recorded thereafter. BBR,CC

- 82 Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*  
One was seen at Mai Po on 28 February. There were nine spring reports of singles between 10 April and 25 May, six of which came from Deep Bay. Reports of singles at Mong Tseng on 16 June, Nam Sang Wai on 26 June and Ping Yeung on 27 June echo the late summer records of 1991 and provide further evidence that breeding may occur in Hong Kong. In autumn 22 bird-days were logged in widespread localities from 7 August until 22 October with peak passage (eight bird-days) between 1st and 3 October. BBR



- 83 Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*  
Reported throughout the year, especially from Deep Bay and eastern waters, but with a clear peak of passage birds in April. A territorial pair was present on an island site in April. BBR,CC
- 84 Chinese Francolin** *Francolinus pintadeanus*  
Widely reported from the mainland New Territories and Lantau Island. BBR,CC
- 85 Japanese Quail** *Coturnix japonica*  
Very scarce in the first winter period: one at Ho Chung on 6 January, three at Ping Yeung on 9 January, one at Long Valley on 12 March and one on Ping Chau on 25 April were the only reports. The first in the second winter period was at the unusual location of Mount Davis on 1 October; one near the Education Centre at Mai Po on 9 October was also unusual. Up to five were seen at Long Valley from 9 October, one was at Shuen Wan on 27 October, one was at Tin Shui Wai on 27 October, two were there on 26 November, one was at Yung Shue O on 7 December and one was at Ho Chung during 11-29 December. CC
- 86 Yellow-legged Buttonquail** *Turnix tanki*  
One was seen near Hok Tau on 30 October (DAD) and a male was seen at Nam Sang Wai on 8 November (GAW).  
  
Buttonquails *Turnix* sp. were seen at Tin Shui Wai on 12 May, Long Valley on 23 October, Fung Yuen on 21 November and again at Long Valley on 18 December.
- 88 Slaty-legged Crane** *Rallina eurizonoides*  
One was present at Kowloon Park for the second year in succession, the dates this year being 10-14 April (PJL,RWL *et al.*). A bird in immaculate condition was found on the streets of Mong Kok on 14 October; it was ringed and released at Shuen Wan on 16th (MRL). These are the eighth and ninth Hong Kong records. BBR
- 90. Banded Rail** *Rallus striatus*  
Reported throughout the year from Deep Bay; also recorded at Luk Keng and Nam Chung and in June at Pui O, Lantau. BBR,CC
- 92 Ruddy Crane** *Porzana fusca*  
Two were present at Nam Sang Wai on 19 April (NW) and one was at Tin Shui Wai from 26 December into 1994 (HFC *et al.*).
- 95 White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*  
Breeding noted at Mai Po and Shuen Wan. Present at Ping Chau during April. BBR,CC
- 96 Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*  
The January waterfowl count recorded 92 birds in the Deep Bay area

and this figure had declined to ten and eleven in the February and March counts respectively. Breeding was noted at Mai Po, Lok Ma Chau and Shuen Wan. Forty-one and 53 were noted in Deep Bay during the November and December waterfowl counts respectively. The only other record of note was of 32 in one flock at Lok Ma Chau on 27 March. BBR,CC

- 96.1 Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio porphyrio*  
One was seen at Mai Po on 2 January and 16 and 20 April (MRL,GJC). However, the loss of two birds from a collection at Fairview Park (S. Chan *in litt.*) means that the escape likelihood is high and thus these records will not be added to the total for this species.

- 97 Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea*  
Five records for the year: a male at Mai Po on 1 May (JSRE,CAV); a male at Tin Shui Wai on 12 May (GJC,MLC); a female or immature at Shuen Wan on 29 July (RWL); another at Long Valley on 18 September (PJL,RWL); and a male at Sheung Shui on 4 and 8 October (GAW).

- 98 Coot** *Fulica atra*  
The January waterfowl count recorded 1334 birds in the Deep Bay area which is a fairly average total; 1290 were still present at the time of the February count but this figure had dropped to 55 by the time of the March count. Forty were still present at Mai Po on 27 March but this had dropped to 7 by 6 April and two by 6 May; one was still present there on 22 May and this, or possibly two birds, may have over-summered as two were present on 24 July and one on 7-8 August. At Shuen Wan up to 12 were present during the first three months of the year; subsequently, up to two birds remained until at least 16 June. Two were at Nam Sang Wai on 23 September but no more counts were received until the November waterfowl count when 68 were noted; during the December waterfowl count 1061 were recorded in the Deep Bay area. A record of note was that of one on the sea west of the Ninepins on 21 February.

BBR,CC

- 100 Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*  
A female or immature was present at Long Valley during 6-12 November (PJL,GJC *et al.*). One seen there on 23 November (GAW) was probably the same individual.

The now rather rare occurrence of this species should be contrasted with its former status. Chalmers (1986) described it as a "summer visitor with occasional winter records" that had been proven to breed; it was "usually seen singly or in small groups (of) up to 15 birds. Recorded in every month with most reports between late April and early November". Contrast this with its status in the seven years since 1987: one May and one June record, three in November, one of which remained into December, and three years with no records whatsoever. Unquestionably, widespread habitat loss here in Hong Kong, and probably elsewhere in southern China, has contributed to a substantive change in this species' status to that of a rare passage migrant.



**101 Painted Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*

There was one early spring record, a male at Hok Tau on 20 March (DAD). A pair were seen at Long Valley on 8 May and a male was seen there on 22 May; breeding was confirmed at this site when a male was seen with four juveniles on 8 July (GAW); this is only the second breeding record for Hong Kong. Subsequently, regularly recorded there until 9 October when the peak count of 13 was made; there was one more record of two on 13 November. At Kam Tin there were records from 30 August to 10 October, the maximum count being 14 on 5 September, with ten being seen there on both 7th and 9th of that month. The only other autumn record was of one at Lok Ma Chau on 14 November. Like the previous species, Painted Snipe is generally considered to be declining in Hong Kong and the discovery in 1993 of significant numbers at two previously underwatched sites is, therefore, most encouraging.

**103 Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
156	—	230	228	1	1	—	50	73	220	275	271

The flock of up to 230 birds was recorded from 8 March to 2 April and numbers declined afterward with 121 present on 21 April and 47 on 5 May; after this date no more than six were recorded until 22 August when 47 were seen. All records came from the Deep Bay area except for a series of reports from Long Valley where up to three were seen between 30 August and 23 December with an exceptional 41 counted during flood conditions on 24 September. BBR,CC

**104 Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

A total of 550 counted on 10 January was a new high for Hong Kong; 491 were still present on 13 March and 320 on 23 March. In the next four days numbers dropped to about 200; 192 were still present on 2 April and numbers then declined thus: 107 on 7 April, 90 on 12th, 47 on 20th, 28 on 23rd and only three from 25th to 4 May, the last spring date. Recorded in the second half of the year from 27 October, when 50 were present, reaching 80 by 13 November, 480 by 6 December and 731 by 8th (RWL), a new high count for Hong Kong. All records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**105 Oriental Pratincole** *Glareola maldivarum*

In the first part of the year recorded from 14 February to 1 May. Double-figure totals were as follows: 30 on 14 and 21 February, 20 on 28 February, 16 on 5 March, 20 on 23 March and 14 on 17 April. Otherwise, up to nine were recorded on two dates in February, five dates in March, nine in April and one in May. There was only one record in autumn, a single on 27 August. Apart from one at Luk Keng on 19 March, all records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR

**106 Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

During the January waterfowl count 120 were recorded in the Deep Bay area and this remained the highest count of the year; 54 were recorded in

the February waterfowl count and 45 in March. The highest count of the spring was 54 at Tin Shui Wai on 2 April. Breeding occurred at Tin Shui Wai, where juveniles were noted in mid-May, at Cheung Shu Tan and at Tsang Tsui, near Tuen Mun; juveniles were also seen at Mai Po toward the end of May and at Shuen Wan in early July. The highest counts in the second half of the year were 50 at Long Valley on 9 October and 26 November and 60 at Mai Po on 12 December. BBR,CC

**107 Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*  
One was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk during 12-13 November and on 8 December (RWL,GJC).

**108 Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

The highest count of the first winter period was 1300 on 6 March. On both 13th and 14 March 178 were counted but, after 21 March, subsequent spring records concerned up to seven birds, apart from ten on 13th and twelve on 14 April. Autumn passage first noted on 28 August and subsequently up to four birds were present until 4 September; there were no records during the rest of that month. On 1 October 450 were recorded after which numbers built up to 1325 by the end of the month and reached 1500 by 13 November, the highest count of the second half of the year. Most records were from the Deep Bay area but, in addition, one was present at Shuen Wan from 28 March to 21 April, three were at Ping Chau on 6 November and six were seen at Three Fathoms Cove, Sai Kung, on 12 November. BBR,CC

**109 Lesser Sand Plover †** *Charadrius mongolus*

A total of 43 seen during the January waterfowl count was slightly lower than the previous two years and there were no more records until 13 March when four were seen. Numbers remained no higher than this until 6 April when 20 were recorded. The highest count was 150 on 25 April. On 8 May 91 were recorded and numbers declined thereafter, the final record of the spring being ten on 31 May. Noted in autumn from 1 August when 40 were recorded; numbers increased to 115 on 7th with 50 still present on 22nd. There were only two records in September but at the beginning of October numbers increased again to 120 on 2nd. Thereafter, recorded twice more in October, three times in November and three times in December, the last record of 115 on 13 December marking a return to the higher winter numbers of 1991 and 1992. Three birds showing characters of the race *altrifrons* were noted on 8 and 15 May. Except for four at Shuen Wan on 24 March and three at Ping Chau on 17 April, all records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR

**110 Greater Sand Plover †** *Charadrius leschenaultii*

A single was seen in Deep Bay twice in January and twice in March up to 21st; double figure counts were made from 23rd and numbers reached 345 on 10 April and 350, the highest count of the year, on 25 April and 1 May. There was a decline after this date, although 81 were still present on 21 May, and the final record of the spring was of one on 4 June. Noted in autumn from 1 August when ten were seen at Mai Po; subsequently numbers reached 74 on 15th but declined to 15 by 4 September. After this date there were four records of up to four birds on four dates between 1 October and 28 November. Except for three at Tai Long Wan on 23 April, all records came from Mai Po and Deep Bay. BBR



**112 Asiatic Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
200	210	203	465	40	3	–	99	110	85	113	237

The wintering flock peaked at 210 on the last day of February and remained until at least 21 March. The highest spring counts were 465 on 14 April and 360 on 22 April; 151 were still present on 28 April but during May numbers declined fairly rapidly and the final records were of a single on 21st and three on 4 June. Noted in autumn from 15 August with an apparent decline in October and early November, perhaps marking a transition from birds on passage to those arriving for the winter. The wintering flock was established by at least 6 December. Apart from three at Shuen Wan on 28 March, all records came from Mai Po and Deep Bay. BBR

**113 Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
400	240	206	65	42	3	–	5	1	10	14	432

On 13 March 206 were still present but there seems to have been a marked departure in the week after this. The latest record in spring was of three on 4 June. Autumn passage began with one on 1 August and was apparently rather weak though winter numbers had reached a respectable total as early as 6 December. All records came from Mai Po and the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**114 Grey-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus cinereus*  
The only records in the first part of the year were of four at Tsim Bei Tsui on 10 February, a single there on 1 April and one at Tin Shui Wai on 30 April. In the second part of the year one was at Long Valley on 1 October, two were there on 8 October, one was at Mai Po on 23 October, up to five were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui from 27 October to 21 December and up to eleven were recorded at Kam Tin from 7 November to 4 December. The numbers at Kam Tin are good for this species although it may be that this is a regular site that has been overlooked in the past. CC

**115 Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*  
In the first winter period two were seen at Mai Po on 31 January and in spring singles were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 April and at Mai Po during 15–20 April, with three there on 23rd. In the second part of the year five were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 25 November, with three there the next day, one was at Long Valley on 23rd and 27th, eight were at Mai Po and three were at Long Valley on 18 December and two were at Long Valley on 26th.

**116 Great Knot** † *Calidris tenuirostris*  
Up to 12 were noted in Deep Bay during the first winter period with ten still present in mid-February; 14 noted on 14 March possibly indicated the presence of early passage migrants. Thereafter, numbers built up to 55 by 1 April and 156 on 8 April, the highest count of the year; after 16th numbers declined significantly. After 25 April until the final spring date of 24 May, no

Table 1 Numbers of selected wader species on selected dates at Mai Po 6 April to 6 May 1993.

Date Species		April																	May		
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	25	28	4	6
Lesser Sand Plover		20	9					3	20	25		20				50	14	150	16	8	
Greater Sand Plover		50	250			345			45	200		100					50	350	32	70	12
Great Knot		20	8	156		3		6	109	85		83			4		7	15	2	3	4
Red-necked Stint		100	70		110	20	850	150	300	830		200				300	100	400	162	850	220
Curlew Sandpiper		150	250						1500	2000		500					1200	4552	4077	4170	1853
Asiatic Dowitcher		3			73	41			114	115						48		64	56	19	6
Black-tailed Godwit		700	2055		1162	1300		1000	1135	1135						1000	1010	1500	580	217	21
Spotted Redshank		100			1251	236			100	300							468	1043	140	950	484
Redshank		26	845		898		1600		200	200							413	2302	1221	1244	748
Marsh Sandpiper		150	265		1514	855			1300	500							50	80	5	80	15
Greenshank		50	100		233	150			230	200							137	230	345	354	348
Nordmann's Greenshank		3	9		30				58	34					4		6	1	1		
							80	10	60	50		177					143	121	56	65	55



more than nine were present on any one day. First recorded in autumn on 21 August, numbers building up to 34 by the end of the month, to 47 by 4 September and to 80 on 18th, the highest count of the second half of the year. After 2 October, until the last record of the year on 18 December, no more than 12 were recorded on any one date. All records came from Mai Po and Deep Bay. BBR

**117 Knot** *Calidris canutus*

Up to five birds were noted in Deep Bay during the first winter period until 14 February and then up to three were recorded until 14 March when eleven were logged. Singles were then noted until 9 April, when two were seen, and numbers reached ten on 16th, eleven on 20th, twelve on 28th, 15 on 6 May and 18 on 11th, the highest count of the spring. The final spring record was two on 25 May. First noted in autumn on 7 August, when two were present, and up to five were seen until 19 September. Thirty-one on 1 October marked a second influx, with numbers reaching 35 the following day. Subsequently, up to ten were seen on six dates until 18 December. All records in the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**118 Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

Recorded from 8 April to 19 May with up to seven on any one date until 25 April after which numbers built up to new high of 67 on 4 May (GJC). Thirteen were recorded on 8 May but after then no more than three were noted. Except for one at Tai Long Wan on 23 April, all spring records were at Mai Po or in Deep Bay. Three on 7 November at Nim Wan was the only autumn record. BBR

**119 Red-necked Stint** † *Calidris ruficollis*

Seven seen on 10 January and six on 15th were the only records of the first winter period. In spring recorded from 13 March to 31 May with numbers reaching a peak of 850 on 11 April and 4 May. After the latter date, numbers fell to 267 on 8th, 151 on 12th, 86 on 22nd and 13 on 31st. In autumn recorded from 1 August, reaching a peak of 72 on 15th; up to 50 were seen during 1-2 October but thereafter no more than three were noted until the final record of a single on 18 December. BBR,CC

**119.1 Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

Recorded in the spring on eleven dates: one on 7 April (PJJ), two during 8-9th (JB,PRK,RWL), one of these remaining to 11-12th (JB,PRK,PJJ), three on 22nd (GJC), one on 25th (RWL), two on 28th and 30th (GJC,RWL,GAW), two on 1 May (PJJ) and one on 8 May (JB,PRK). All records came from Mai Po or drained ponds at Tsim Bei Tsui. BBR

**120 Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

In the first winter period the maximum count was of 38 at Tin Shui Wai on 27 February. The main period of spring passage occurred during the first twelve days of April with the peak count being 80 on 12th at Tsim Bei Tsui. Subsequently, there was only one more spring record, two at Mai Po on 14 April. Present in the second half of the year from 3 October with no more

than ten noted, except for 26 on 27 October and 20 on 14 November, both at Tsim Bei Tsui. While most records came from the latter site, four were at Long Valley on 16 October. BBR,CC

**121 Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta*

Up to 39 were recorded during January at Mong Tseng, near Tsim Bei Tsui; smaller numbers were present until the beginning of spring passage in late March which lasted until 22 May. The main passage occurred during 6-16 April and the maximum count was 175 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 April (GAW), a new high for Hong Kong. Other notable counts were 70 on 9th at the same location and 41 on 16th at Mai Po. After 9 May the only records in that month were one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 19th and four at Mai Po on 22nd. Recorded in the second half of the year during 7-30 August and then again from 1 October to 28 November with the maximum count being 54 at Mong Tseng on 26 November. The latter period presumably involved mainly wintering birds and the former, those on passage. BBR,CC

**121.1 Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

Two were seen at Mai Po on 1 May (PJJ) and a single was there during 12-13 May (GJC,DAD). These are the fifth and sixth records for Hong Kong and that of 1 May is the first record of more than one individual.

**122 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata*

Recorded in spring from 2 April to 8 June. Three or less were present up to 8th when 12 were recorded; thereafter, numbers increased to 25 on 10th and 56 on 13th with somewhat lower numbers present in the second half of April. An influx at the beginning of May brought the spring maxima of 80 on 1st, 8th and 9th. Numbers declined subsequently to 53 on 12th, 15 on 22nd, 5 on 31st and one on 5 and 8 June. There were five records in autumn: two on 7 August and 1 September and singles on 4 and 19 September and 1 October. All records came from Mai Po and Deep Bay. BBR

**123 Curlew Sandpiper** † *Calidris ferruginea*

Two in Deep Bay during 10-15 January was only the fourth winter record for this species. Spring passage was noted from 13 March to 5 June with numbers reaching a peak of 4552 on 25 April; 4170 were present on 4 May but numbers had fallen to 1863 the next day, to 600 by 9th, 327 by 12th and 50 on 23rd. The earliest autumn record was 73 on 23 July; numbers reached their autumn peak of 379 (including two juveniles) on 1 August and 352 were still present on 7 August. Numbers then dropped to 66 on 15th, 26 by 1 September and ten on 4th. Thereafter, apart from 13 on 1 October, no more than six were noted until the end of autumn passage on 14 November. A single on 4 December was a late record. All records were from the Deep Bay area. BBR

**124 Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

The highest count in the first winter period was 844 during the January waterfowl count. Forty were noted on 14 March and four on 23 March but subsequently one to two birds noted on only three dates until the end of spring passage on 14 April. Recorded in the second half of the year during 15-30 August (a single on four dates) and from 1 October when winter visitors



presumably began arriving. Numbers had built up to 947 by the end of the month, to 1400 by the November waterfowl count and 3247 by the December count. All records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**125 Spoon-billed Sandpiper** *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*  
What was presumably the same bird as that noted in December 1992 remained into 1993 and was recorded on 15 January (RWL). Noted in spring between 8 and 30 April; records were thus (all dates in April):

8th	3	Mai Po	13th	3	Mai Po
9th	1	Mai Po		1	Tsim Bei Tsui
	2	Tsim Bei Tsui	14th	2	Mai Po
10th	5	Mai Po	16th	1	Mai Po
11th	3	Mai Po	22nd	1	Mai Po
	3	Tsim Bei Tsui	23rd	1	Mai Po
12th	4	Mai Po	25th	2	Mai Po
	1	Tsim Bei Tsui	30th	1	Mai Po

As the possibility of duplication exists between records at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui, the maximum day count is five and this equals the highest one day total previously recorded. In the latter half of the year singles were recorded on 27 October and 16 December (RWL), the latter possibly foreshadowing the third year in succession in which this species has overwintered. BBR

**126 Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus*  
Five were recorded during the January waterfowl count but there were no more records until the March waterfowl count when four were seen; these were followed by two on 21st and then an influx in early April bringing 20 on 5th. Numbers increased to 125 on 11th and then declined during the rest of the month. On 1 May however, 150 were noted but this figure declined quickly such that after 9 May numbers during the rest of spring did not exceed five; the final spring record was two on 4 June. Recorded in autumn from 7 August to 4 September, though no more than three were present on any one day, and again from 1 October to 13 December with numbers not exceeding nine after 2 October and the highest count being 80 on 1 October. All records came from Deep Bay and Mai Po. BBR

**127 Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*  
In spring a single was present on 21 March and a male was recorded during 5-10 April. In autumn, two (including one juvenile) were seen on 1 September followed by singles on 4 and 18 September; one on 1 October was followed by three the next day and on 16th; two were seen during 13-14 November and in December singles were seen on 4th and 18th. All records came from Mai Po. Slightly better than the average showing of recent years. BBR

**129 Fantail Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
57	120	130	40	3	—	—	3	25	25	80	106

Counts of over 100 were recorded on five occasions during the first part of the year up to 30 March, the highest being 130 at Lok Ma Chau on 23 March. Thirty-five were present there on 22 April but subsequently no more than three were recorded on any one date until the final record of the spring on 9 May. Noted in autumn from 22 August with the highest counts being 80 at Lok Ma Chau on 28 November and 106 during the December waterfowl count. Records came from Lok Ma Chau, the Deep Bay area, Long Valley and Kam Tin. BBR,CC

**130 Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	2	10	8	1	—	—	2	10	10	2	3

Main passage occurred from mid-March to the end of the third week in April and the latest spring record was 6 May. The earliest autumn record was 7 August and main passage occurred from mid-September to mid-October. Lok Ma Chau and the Deep Bay area provided the bulk of records but other birds were seen at Luk Keng, Kam Tin and Victoria Peak. BBR

**131 Swinhoe's Snipe** *Gallinago megala*  
In the first part of the year there were no records in January, two in February, six in March (including the highest of the spring, five on 19th at Lok Ma Chau), and seven in April up to the final record on 25th. In the second half of the year noted from 21 August with records on six dates in August, four in September, seven in October and one each in November and December. The highest autumn count was three on seven dates between 30 August and 4 December. Lok Ma Chau and Long Valley provided the bulk of records with other birds seen at Shuen Wan, Luk Keng, Kam Tin and in the Deep Bay area. BBR

**134 Asiatic Dowitcher †** *Limnodromus semipalmatus*  
First noted in spring on 23 March, one day later than the earliest ever in 1987. The highest count of the spring was 115 on 14 April. Numbers gradually declined to 19 on 4 May; during 6-11 May up to eight birds were noted and after this period only one or two were seen until the final spring record on 8 June, a rather late date. Autumn passage noted between 23 July and 16 October with the highest counts being 20 on 21 August, ten on 22nd and eleven on 27th; otherwise, totals did not exceed five. Juveniles were noted up to 1 September, though primarily before 22 August. All records came from Mai Po and Deep Bay. BBR

**135 Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*  
There were twelve records of singles during the year: Ho Chung on 6 and 16 January, Shing Mun on 20 January, Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 March, Tai Po Kau on 30 October, Shing Mun on 18 November, Long Valley on 23 November, High West on 30 November, Sheung Mui Tin, near Wu Kau Tang, on 8 December, Long Valley on 23 and 26 December and Ho Chung on 27 December. CC



**136 Black-tailed Godwit †** *Limosa limosa*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
150	228	814	2055	300	2	10	45	35	184	159	223

The Deep Bay wintering flock numbered up to 150 until the end of January but the February waterfowl count recorded 228 which possibly indicated the arrival of birds from elsewhere. Numbers then gradually increased to 240 by early March, to 271 by the middle of that month and 586 by 19th. The highest count of the spring was 2055 on 7 April (PJL), a new high for the territory; 1500 were still present on 25 April but numbers subsequently declined to 217 on 4 May and 30 on 8th. Thereafter, only one or two birds were seen until 8 June. Seven seen on 4 July were possibly over-summering birds. Noted in autumn from 23 July with numbers reaching 45 on 22 August (including 19 juveniles). One hundred seen on 1 October possibly indicated the arrival of wintering birds and numbers reached 184 by the end of the month and 223 by 8 December. All records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**137 Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*  
Up to five birds were present in the first winter period to 14 February. Spring passage noted from 14 March with six birds present during 20-23rd; numbers then remained at one or two until 6 April which marked the beginning of an increase to 78 during 13-14 April. After 25 April numbers did not exceed eight until the latest spring record on 8 June. Recorded in the second half of the year from 22 August to 12 December with the highest count being 30 during 17-18 September. After 2 October single birds only were noted on five dates. Apart from singles seen at Shuen Wan on 24 March and from Cape D'Aguilar on 22 August in the aftermath of Typhoon Tasha, all records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR

**138 Little Whimbrel** *Numenius minutus*  
Singles were present at Mai Po on 28 and 30 April (PJL,RWL) and 1 May (PJL); two birds were present there on 4 May (GJC,MH,VBP). Not of annual occurrence but late April and early May is a favoured time.

**139 Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*  
Noted in spring from 23 March to 8 June. Ten on 5 April and 15 on 8th were followed by a slight decline in numbers before another influx beginning on 15th. Numbers then climbed to reach 72 on 22nd before dropping again and there was possibly another small influx at the end of the month as numbers reached 52 on 28th. Numbers gradually declined during the first three weeks of May to reach 13 on 21st and after this date seven or eight were recorded until 8 June. Records of a single on 27 June, five on 4 July and presumably the same five on 1 August possibly referred to over-summering individuals.

Autumn passage was evident from the latter half of August to 30 October with main passage occurring from 22 August to 4 September when the highest count was 41 on 1st. In addition, 20 on 18 September and 52 on 2 October marked other influxes. Most records were from the Deep Bay area

with the following exceptions: one near the Ninepins on 14 August, two from Cape D'Aguilar on 21 August, with seven seen there the next day (during Typhoon Tasha), 16 in Tolo Harbour on 3 September, nine from Cape D'Aguilar on 17 September and two there the following day (both during Typhoon Becky). BBR

**140 Curlew** *Numenius arquata*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
660	700	500	40	90	11	10	44	49	92	50	426

The January waterfowl count recorded 528 birds; numbers built up to 700 during 8-27 February and declined to 120 by mid-March; 63 were present on 27 March. May began with 90 on 1st and 20 on 2nd but, from then until the final spring record on 8 June, numbers did not exceed 15. Ten present on 4 July were possibly over-summering birds. Autumn passage was first noted on 1 August and numbers gradually increased to the end of the year. Apart from one over the sea west of Hong Kong on 14 August, all records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**141 Australian Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis*  
In the early part of the year singles were recorded on 12th and 14 February and 21 March. The latter bird was probably on passage but migration was certainly under way by 3 April when five were seen; five were also seen on 8 April and this was the highest count of the year. Spring passage continued to be noted throughout April and on four dates in May to 11th. Recorded in autumn from 31 August to 12 November, the highest counts being three on 1 September and 1-2 October. All records came from Mai Po and Deep Bay. A fairly typical year for this species. BBR,CC

**142 Spotted Redshank †** *Tringa erythropus*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
292	710	537	1251	950	-	-	50	5	29	373	746

Spring numbers peaked at 1251 on 9 April but there were still 950 present on 4 May, a fairly high count for so late in the spring. Numbers declined after this date however, with 484 present on 6th, 178 on 12th and five on the latest date of the spring, 21 May. As usual, autumn passage was much less marked. All records came from Mai Po and the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**143 Redshank †** *Tringa totanus*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
736	301	460	2302	1244	34	990	1254	385	293	230	220

The January waterfowl count total of 736 was a new winter high in Hong Kong. Spring numbers were also high with 2302 being seen on 25 April (PJL,MRL), a record for the Territory; in addition, 1600 were noted on 11



April and 1244 as late as 4 May. The presence of 21 on 4 July indicates that at least some birds over-summered but the 990 seen on 23 July, followed by 1214 on 1 August and 1254 on 7th, are considered to be birds returning south. Numbers remained fairly high until 22 August, when 875 were counted, but dropped noticeably after this date to 385 on 1 September. Numbers in the second winter period were more normal, though still slightly higher than previous years. All records came from the Deep Bay area. BBR,CC

**144 Marsh Sandpiper †** *Tringa stagnatilis*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
500	500	160	1514	80	1	3	49	111	894	300	550

Main spring passage occurred from 5 April (when 1200 were present) to 13th (when 1300 were recorded) with a peak of 1514 on 8th. Numbers declined noticeably afterward. Autumn passage became obvious around mid-August and numbers had reached 111 by 3 September and 894 on 1 October, over double the previous highest autumn count. The December waterfowl count total of 550 was up to the high levels of the previous winter. Apart from three at Shuen Wan on 26 September, eleven at Long Valley on 1 October and one there on 3 October, all records came from Mai Po and Deep Bay. BBR,CC

**145 Greenshank †** *Tringa nebularia*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
453	495	522	465	538	29	29	364	315	161	396	281

Counts in the first winter period were significantly higher than those of previous years. Spring numbers were reasonable too, though not reaching the very high levels of 1992, and substantial counts continued to be made well into May, including the spring high on 9th. After this date however, totals fell to 255 on 11th, 174 on 12th and, subsequently, no more than seven were recorded during the rest of the month. Counts of 20-30 during most of June and July indicate that a small number of birds over-summered. Autumn passage was noted from 1 August and main passage occurred during August and the first half of September. BBR,CC

**146 Nordmann's Greenshank †** *Tringa guttifer*  
Recorded in spring from 30 March to 8 June with a further record on 27 June (GJC), a new late date. Numbers peaked at 58 on 13th (GJC), a new high for the territory. There was a noticeable decline beginning the middle of April and, after a record of six on 22nd, numbers remained at between one and three until 8 May. The 9th saw the beginning of a small influx of first-summer birds with between four and nine recorded up to 22nd; in addition, six were also seen on 5 June. The only record in the second half of the year was of a single on 4 December (RWL,GJC,PJL) which is the latest ever in Hong Kong. BBR

**147 Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*  
The January waterfowl count total of 22 was equal to the lowest ever recorded at that time; the only other double figure counts of the year came in the March (17), November (11) and December (14) waterfowl counts. The latest date in spring was 30 April and the earliest in autumn, 28 July. Apparently, a rather poor year for this species. BBR,CC

**148 Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*  
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
64	—	32	186	50	—	13	85	150	75	80	76

The spring peak was reached on 13 April at Tsim Bei Tsui. The autumn high was recorded on 18 September at Long Valley. Also seen at the following localities: Tin Shui Wai, Mong Tseng, Lok Ma Chau, Shuen Wan and Tsim Bei Tsui. BBR,CC

**149 Terek Sandpiper †** *Xenus cinereus*  
Recorded in spring from 30 March to 5 June. No more than six were noted until 7 April when 20 were seen; 80 on 11th indicated an influx as did 177 on 16th. Numbers reached 200, the highest count of the spring, on 1 May and then generally varied between 100 and 200 for the rest of that month. The final two records were of 118 on 4th and 80 on 5 June. Recorded in autumn from 1 August to 16 October with the highest count being 91 on the earliest of these dates. Numbers then fell to 50 on 7 and 21 August and 15 on 1 September. Thereafter, seven were seen on 4 September, four on 1 October and one on 16th. All records came from Mai Po and Deep Bay. BBR

**150 Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*  
The January, February and March waterfowl counts recorded totals of 54, 19 and 58 respectively. Passage was noted during 7-23 April with up to 22 birds seen at Mai Po during this period. The latest date in spring was 4 June and the earliest in autumn, 28 July. At Mai Po on 22 August 22 birds were seen and 54 and 52 were recorded during the November and December waterfowl counts respectively. BBR,CC

**151 Grey-rumped Sandpiper** *Heteroscelus brevipes*  
Spring passage was noted from 14 April to 5 June. Single birds were noted up to 19 April but numbers then increased to 30 on 25th, 40 on 1 May, 136 on 9th and 320 on 21st, the highest count of the spring. On 24th 265 were still present but numbers declined sharply thereafter to 42 on 31st and 20 on 5 June. Records of nine on 27 June and two on 4 July indicated the presence of over-summering birds. In autumn recorded in the Deep Bay area on twelve dates from 1 August to 29 October; apart from 13 seen on 22 August, all autumn records concerned five birds or less.

**152 Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*  
Recorded in spring from 23 March to 5 June. Singles only were recorded until 7 April; subsequently, apart from eleven on 14th, no more than eight were noted on any one day up to 18th. Numbers then started to rise



significantly: up to 60 during 20-27th, up to 113 during 28 April to 1 May and over 200 during 4-8 May, including the maximum count of 256 on 8th (GJC), a new high for the territory (the previous highest was 120 on 27 April 1991). Numbers then declined to 144 the next day, 89 on 11th, 71 on 13th, ten on 24th, 9 on 31st and, finally, singles on 4 and 5 June. Autumn passage however, was characteristically weak with singles recorded on 7, 8 and 15 August and 1 October. BBR

**153 Red-necked Phalarope**

*Phalaropus lobatus*

Up to 35 birds seen on the sea east of Hong Kong during 21-22 February is the first midwinter record. Spring passage was noted from 7 March to 31 May with the largest numbers noted at the end of March and beginning of April (153 in Victoria Harbour on 22 March and 67 in Mirs Bay on 3 April) and during the period 10-24 April (120 in Mirs Bay on 10th and 18th and 60 there on 24th). Recorded in autumn from 14 August to 2 October with the largest numbers occurring in conjunction with the approaches of Typhoons Tasha on 21-22 August (80 off Cape D'Aguilar on 21st), Becky on 17-18 September (50 on 18th) and Dot on 26-27 September (594 off Cape D'Aguilar [PJL,MRL] and 100 in Mirs Bay on 26th and 200 at Mai Po on 27th). The highest Cape D'Aguilar count is a new high for autumn. BBR

**153.1 Grey Phalarope**

*Phalaropus fulicarius*

The first record for Hong Kong was of four birds seen in Mirs Bay on 21 February (PA,MLC,VBP et al.). This was followed by a first-summer bird caught and ringed at Mai Po on 4 May; this individual remained on the Scrape until 4 July (PJL,GJC,PRK) (see separate paper in this Report).

**154 Pomarine Skua**

*Stercorarius pomarinus*

Three were seen off Cape D'Aguilar on 26 September, along with six that were considered to be probably this species (PJL,MRL). This is the second Hong Kong record. The first was in February 1957.

**155 Long-tailed Skua**

*Stercorarius longicaudus*

In spring one was seen at Ping Chau on 12 April (RJJ,MDW). In autumn at Cape D'Aguilar three adults were seen on 21 August (PJL,MRL), another adult was recorded on 26 September (MRL,PJL) and a single bird was seen on 5 November (RWL). These are the third to sixth Hong Kong records, previous observations were of singles on 9 May 1976 and 19 May 1991.

Unidentified skuas *Stercorarius* sp. were recorded as follows: four in Mirs Bay on 12 April (MDW,RJJ), one from Ping Chau on 17 April (MT,MDW) and one in Mirs Bay on 18 April (MLC,PRK).

**156.1 Relict Gull**

*Larus relictus*

What is presumed to have been one of the individuals first seen at the end of 1992 was seen into 1993 on six occasions from 10 January to 8 March (RWL,GJC,MLC et al.).

**157 Saunders' Gull**

*Larus saundersi*

During the January waterfowl count 67 were recorded; passage birds swelled numbers to 107 on 12 February which was the highest total for the first

part of the year, though somewhat down on the counts of the previous three years. Subsequently, numbers fell to 74 on 26 February, 40 on 13 March and eight on 30 March. Seven first-winter birds remained until at least 14 April, two were still present on 25th and one first-summer individual stayed until 30 May (JB,PJL), a month later than the previous latest record. In the second winter period first noted from 30 October when three adults and three first-winters were seen at Mai Po. Numbers had reached 69 by 16 December, the highest count in this part of the year. BBR,CC

**158 Black-headed Gull**

*Larus ridibundus*

The Deep Bay total of 17,225 recorded during the January waterfowl count was ten short of the 1991 total, making it the third highest ever. During the February count the rather low total of 4735 was noted but in March the figure was 8878. Subsequently, 2500 were still present at the end of the month and an estimated 2000 remained on 11 April, a rather late date for such a number. A sharp drop in numbers then seems to have occurred as, by 14th, only 100 birds were seen. On 4 May two first-summer birds were seen and one of these remained another month, last being seen on 4 June.

The earliest record in the second half of the year was of one on 25 July at Mai Po (PA), a new early date for Hong Kong. Given the relatively late-staying individual in June and the fact that there were no other records until 28 August, it is possible that this was an over-summering bird. At the end of October, 2270 were present which increased to 4843 by the time of the November waterfowl count and 12,436 during the December count. All the above records refer to Deep Bay. Elsewhere, about 100 birds were in Tolo Harbour on 1 January and 750 were in Victoria Harbour on 29 January; the peak Shuen Wan count of the first winter period was 1200 on 5 January, and of the second, 800 on 8 December. BBR,CC

**159 Brown-headed Gull**

*Larus brunnicephalus*

An adult winter, presumed to be the same bird, was recorded at Mai Po on a number of dates until 27 February. There was no small surge of records in early March as has been noted in the past two years. In the second winter period, also at Mai Po, an adult was recorded intermittently from 30 October until at least 17 December.

**159.1 Slender-billed Gull**

*Larus genei*

An adult was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk during 27-28 February (PRK et al.). This is the third record for Hong Kong, the first two being in February 1990 and April 1992.

**160 Black-tailed Gull**

*Larus crassirostris*

At Mai Po the maximum monthly counts in the first part of the year were: January, three (two adults, one first-winter); February, seven (three adults, one second winter, three first-winter); March, eleven (four adults, seven first-winter); April, up to 13th, five (two adults, three first-winter). An adult was also recorded near the Ninepins on the unusually late date of 7 June, one day earlier than the latest ever. Away from Deep Bay, in eastern waters about 30-40 first-winter birds were recorded on 21 February, about 25 were there on 7 March and an adult was at Starling Inlet on 13 February. There were no records in the second part of the year. BBR



**161 Common Gull***Larus canus*

A first-winter was recorded from the Mai Po boardwalk on 28 February (PJL *et al.*) and an adult was there on 23 March (GJC,VBP). The latter is only the second adult to be recorded, the first being in 1968, the first ever record of this species.

**162 Herring Gull***Larus argentatus*

During the January waterfowl count 135 were recorded, which is somewhat down on recent years; at the end of the month, however, 365 were noted which is more normal. The highest February count was 350 on 26th, and 300 were still present on 13 March. Thereafter, numbers declined to 88 by 20th and eight by the end of the month. Five were present to 5 April and the final record was of one on 14th.

In the second part of the year the earliest record was of two off Cape D'Aguilar on 5 November and the first in Deep Bay were three adults on 13 November. Subsequently, numbers built up to 75 by the time of the December waterfowl count. Almost all records of adults referred to birds with yellow legs, very tentatively ascribed to *L.(a.) mongolicus*. Pink-legged, pale-mantled birds, possibly *L.(a.) vegae*, were noted thus: five on 30 January, two on 31 January, three on 11 February, five on 26 February, six on 27 February, twelve on 28 February and 13 March and two on 7 March.

BBR,CC

**163 Slaty-backed Gull***Larus schistisagus*

Birds were seen from the Mai Po boardwalk as follows: a first-winter on 15 January, a first-winter on 26 January, a second-winter on 30 January, a different second-winter on 31 January, a first-winter on 13 February, a second-winter on 27 February, a first-winter on 28 February (different from 13th) and one first- and one second-winter on 14 March (PRK,PJL,RWL *et al.*). Increasing familiarity with and confidence in the identification of this species means that its true status is now coming to light.

**164 Glaucous-winged Gull***Larus glaucescens*

First-winter birds were seen from Mai Po boardwalk on 27 February (RWL,PRK,PJL) and 13 March (MLC). However, the presence of darker secondary bar and tail may indicate hybrid origin.

**166 Kittiwake***Rissa tridactyla*

A first-winter was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 3 April (RJJ). This is the third record for Hong Kong and comes little more than a year after the second, in February 1992.

**167 Gull-billed Tern***Gelochelidon nilotica*

Recorded in spring from 2 April to 5 June. No more than ten were recorded up to 9 April but an influx seems to have commenced around then as 40 birds were noted on 11th and numbers built up rapidly to reach 172 on 14th, the peak count of the spring. Subsequently, numbers declined to 116 by 23rd, 90 by 28th, 25 by 10 May, 15 by 12th and five by the end of the month. A count of 16 on 4 June ruffled the smooth decline somewhat but after a count of four the following day, there were no more records. Up to two first-summer birds were noted intermittently from 8 May. All spring reports, except for a flock of 35 flying north off Ping Chau on 24 April, were from Mai Po.



5 Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*  
Mai Po, Hong Kong 27 February 1993

Peter R. Kennerley

In autumn noted as follows: one at Mai Po on 28 August, one at Shuen Wan and two north off Cape D'Aguilar on 25 September during Typhoon Dot, nine in Tolo Harbour the following day, two off Cape D'Aguilar on the 27th and up to five at Mai Po during 1-2 October.

BBR

1992: the entry should read that the record count of 279 was present on 12 April, not 12 May as stated.

**168 Caspian Tern***Sterna caspia*

In the first part of the year recorded from 27 February to 5 June. Numbers in March did not exceed five until 30th when seven were noted. An influx then occurred with 110 present on 4 April and 125 on 11th, the highest count of the spring; numbers then declined fairly sharply with 51 recorded on 14th followed by five on 20th. Nine were noted on 30 April and in May no more than two were noted on any one day, although the sole June record was of three birds. One on 4 July at Mai Po was unusual.

In autumn recorded on four dates thus: one in Tolo Harbour on 10 October, two off Cape D'Aguilar on 5 and 6 November during Typhoon Ira and four at Starling Inlet on 26 November. The great majority of records were from Deep Bay.

BBR

**169 Greater Crested Tern***Sterna bergii*

An adult in summer plumage was seen from Mai Po boardwalk on 19 April (VBP,WLY). This is the sixth record for Hong Kong and the first since 1984.

An unidentified tern *Sterna bergiubengalensis* was seen at the Ninepins on 20 July (GJC,PJL).



### 170 Black-naped Tern

*Sterna sumatrana*

The earliest record of the spring was of 31 in Tolo Harbour on 23 April. The discovery of a thriving colony in eastern waters was the first confirmed breeding since 1987. It was estimated that 30-40 pairs were nesting; nine fledglings were noted on 23 June and a further ten were seen on 10 July. At least four nests still contained eggs on 20 July and 20 birds were still present on 15 August. Away from the breeding site, four were seen at the Soko Islands on 7 May, four were in Tolo Harbour on 8 May, with seven there on 15th and three on 11 June, 15 were at Tap Mun on 30 June, one flew past Cape D'Aguilar on 28 August and an adult was near Lamma on 29 August.



6 Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* adult  
Eastern Waters, Hong Kong July 1993

Geoff Carey

### 171 Roseate Tern

*Sterna dougallii*

As with the previous species, alongside which it was nesting, the colony located in waters east of Hong Kong was the first confirmed breeding since 1987. About 15 pairs were estimated and the maximum count of birds was 50 on 20 July (PRK *et al.*). On 14 August about 30 adults were still present, some of which were carrying food, as well as four juveniles. Away from the breeding site two adults were seen off Cape D'Aguilar on 7 June (PJJ,PRK) and on 28 August (RWL) and a first-summer was south of Hong Kong Island on 29 September (PJJ).

### 172 Common Tern

*Sterna hirundo*

Noted in spring from 2 April to 7 June. The first record of a single at Mai Po was followed on 17th by 20 near Ping Chau plus one found dead of the race *tibetana/minussensis*. The following day about 50 were seen in Mirs Bay; all birds close enough were identified as *longipennis*. Seven *longipennis* were at Mai Po on 20th and this was followed by about 60 in Mirs Bay on 24th, though on this occasion all birds identified proved to be *tibetana/minussensis*.

The following day three were seen at Ping Chau. On 2 May, of the approximately fifty seen in the waters to the southeast of Hong Kong, those close enough to be identified were *tibetana/minussensis*. On 13 May six were seen south of Hong Kong Island and the final record of the spring concerned two *tibetana/minussensis* near Waglan Island.

Recorded in autumn from 14 August to 27 September. In August, one juvenile was in southern waters on 14th; four flew southwest off Cape D'Aguilar and six adults flew south over Mai Po on 21st and 40 were off Cape D'Aguilar on 22nd, during Typhoon Tasha. Two were at Mai Po on 28th and four (one *tibetana/minussensis* and three *longipennis*) were south of Hong Kong on 29th. In September, one adult *longipennis* was at Shuen Wan on 17th during Typhoon Becky. In September, 20 were at Shuen Wan during 25-26th, 360 flew north off Cape D'Aguilar on 25th, 16 (including four juveniles) were in Tolo Harbour on 26th and 285 flew south at Cape D'Aguilar between 0830-1030 on 27th (about 50% of these were juveniles). Observations during this period relate to the passage of Typhoon Dot.

### 172.1 Aleutian Tern

*Sterna aleutica*

One adult was seen in the West Lamma Channel on 2 May (MH,PRK,RWL) and on 7 June a summer-plumaged adult was seen near Cape D'Aguilar (PJJ,PRK). These are the first spring records for Hong Kong and China. In autumn an adult and a first-summer bird were in the East Lamma Channel on 14 August (GJC,PJJ,MRL *et al.*). During Typhoon Tasha off Cape D'Aguilar four adults were seen on 21 August and about 130 adults headed south-southwest between 0730h and 0930h on 22 August. About 120 adults were seen south of HK Island on 29 August. In September about 20 adults headed southeast at Cape D'Aguilar on 17th and four adults were seen there on 18th during Typhoon Becky and about 20 were there on 25th during Typhoon Dot (all PJJ,MRL). One was at Shuen Wan on 25th (RWL).

Already, in only its second year of occurrence, a pattern is emerging of fairly strong passage from about mid-August to mid-September; spring records, however, are rare and observers are urged to exercise caution at this time.

### 173 Bridled Tern

*Sterna anaethetus*

Two adults and a first-summer bird were seen between Waglan and Po Toi on 7 June (PJJ,PRK). At the eastern waters tern colony up to eight birds were seen during 10-20 July and breeding was confirmed on 20th when one nest with a single egg was found (GJC,PJJ). This is the first breeding record for Hong Kong.

In autumn there were a series of largely typhoon-related records as follows (all from Cape D'Aguilar unless stated): six on 22 August during Typhoon Tasha (PJJ,MRL), two on 18 September during Typhoon Becky (PJJ,MRL), 178 moving east on 25 September (MT), an unprecedented 749 (about 20% of which were juveniles) between 0700h and 1630h on 26 September (PJJ,MRL) and four on 27 September during and after Typhoon Dot. While the majority of inshore birds were positively identified as Bridled Terns, the closely related Grey-backed Tern *Sterna lunata* was not eliminated in all cases.



**174 Sooty Tern** *Sterna fuscata*

An adult was seen at Cape D'Aguilar on 17 September (PJJ,GJC). This is the fourth record for Hong Kong and, like the previous three, was associated with the close approach of a typhoon (in this case Becky).

**175 Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*

Recorded in spring from 1 April to 13 May. The highest counts were 14 on 13th, 27 on 16 April and 20 on 19th. There were two autumn records, one on 21 August and one at Shuen Wan on 26 September during Typhoon Dot. All records except the latter were in the Deep Bay area. BBR

**176 Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus*

Recorded in spring from 22 March to 4 June. The first record of a single was followed by two during 11-13 April; there were then singles on 19, 20, 22 and 28 April. Passage picked up in May with six on 1st, one on 4th, 15 on 11th three on 12th, one on 13th, 15 on 15th and 16 on 16th. Following this there was a single on 24th followed by the final record of a single on 4 June. All these records were at Mai Po or Tsim Bei Tsui.

Autumn passage began with two at Mai Po on 8 August. This was followed by three (including two adults) flying southeast off Cape D'Aguilar on 17 September, a juvenile at Mai Po on 18th and three there on 19th, all presumably associated with the approach of Typhoon Becky. The passage of Typhoon Dot brought one flying north at Cape D'Aguilar on 25th, eleven at Repulse Bay during 26-27 September, one at Shuen Wan on 26th and five at Cape D'Aguilar on 27th. The final record of the year was two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 November. BBR

**177 White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Spring passage first noted on 28 April when one was at Mai Po. Main passage occurred during the first half of May when counts included 263 at Mai Po on 5th, 150 there on 11th, 500 on 12th and 900 on 13th; 500 were in Tolo Harbour on 15th and the same number was noted at Mai Po on 16th. Although counts of 1000 have been attained before, spring passage was stronger than it has been for some years. After a slight lull during the next two weeks, passage at Mai Po picked up again on 30th when 200 were seen followed by one on 4 June, 60 on 5th and 9 on 7th; most birds in this second pulse however were in first-summer plumage. First-summer birds were also seen at Mai Po on 3-4 July and near Waglan on 6 July. Most spring records came from Mai Po.

Return passage commenced 1 September when two juveniles were at Mai Po. Typhoon Dot brought an influx that involved 16 flying north of Cape D'Aguilar and 70 at Shuen Wan on 25th, 100 there, three in Tolo Harbour and 120 at Ma Wan on 26th and 30 off Cape D'Aguilar on 27th. Subsequently, four were at Mai Po on 1 October and a first-winter was there on 30 October.

**178 Ancient Auk** *Synthliboramphus antiquus*

Two birds, one in breeding plumage and one moulting into breeding plumage, were seen in Mirs Bay on 24 April (MH *et al.*). One in winter plumage was seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 December (MRL,GJC,PJJ). These are the sixth and seventh records for Hong Kong, the last being in December 1986.



7 Ancient Auk *Synthliboramphus antiquus*  
Mirs Bay, Hong Kong 24 April 1993

Peter R. Kennerley

**179 Red Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

Present in the Tsim Bei Tsui area until 30 April, but the highest count, of 20 on 24 January, was lower than the maxima in the last three years. Elsewhere, two were at Mai Po on 27 and 28 February, one was there on 4 April and one was in Kowloon Park on 9 April. The first autumn record was of two at Mai Po on 4 September, and later reports included eight in Lam Tsuen Valley on 11 September, 21 at Mai Po the next day, 11 there and at least 13 on Cheung Chau on 2 October and 20 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 21 December. BBR,CC

**180 Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

One was in Victoria Park on 16 January; the maximum, and only notably high, count of the year was of 300 at Mai Po on 20 March. Two in Aberdeen Country Park on 28 March were unusual for that location. The latest spring record was of three in Tai Po Kau on 13 May. The first in autumn were five at Shing Mun on 22 October and the highest counts were of 40 at Mai Po and 20 at Mount Austin on 4 December, 171 leaving a roost at Mai Po on 10 December and 30 at Long Valley on 19 December. BBR,CC

**181 Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*

No significant reports. BBR,CC

**183 Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica*

Reported intermittently throughout the year from Shek Kong, Tai Lam Country Park, Shing Mun, Tai Po Kau, Tai Po, Fo Tan, Tan Shan Valley, Tai Mei Tuk, Shuen Wan and the islands of Ping Chau, Cheung Chau and Lantau. Breeding was suspected at Tai Mei Tuk and Yung Shue Au. BBR



- 185 Red-winged Crested Cuckoo** *Clamator coromandus*  
First heard at Luk Keng on 4 April and noted thereafter at 20 locations throughout the New Territories; there were also reports from Aberdeen Country Park and Lantau. The last record was on 26 June. BBR
- 187 Large Hawk Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx sparveroides*  
Slightly less widespread than the previous species. The earliest was heard at Shing Mun on 20 March and the last was heard calling at Tai Mei Tuk on 21 June. A juvenile was seen in Tai Po Kau on 26 August. BBR
- 189 Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus*  
The earliest was heard at Island House, Tai Po, on 16 March and the latest was an adult at Mai Po on 23 November. BBR,CC
- 190 Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*  
The first was heard at Shuen Wan on 7 April. Thereafter, fairly widespread until mid-June with the latest heard calling at Tai Mei Tuk on 21 June. A juvenile was seen at Sheung Shui on 11 July. BBR
- 192 Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*  
Singles were reported between 5 and 22 April from Aberdeen Country Park, Lam Tsuen Valley, Ping Chau and Mai Po where one on 10 April was a hepatic bird. Two were noted at Mount Davis on 15 April. Autumn records were of singles at Nam Sang Wai on 14 September and at Sha Lo Tung on 16 October. BBR
- 193 Koel** *Eudynamis scolopacea*  
At Shuen Wan the density was estimated at eight to ten pairs, one pair per 'fung shui' grove. Two juveniles there on 15 June were accompanied by two adult Magpies behaving in a parental manner. BBR,CC
- 194 Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis*  
One in flight at Tai Lam Chung on 30 May was carrying a foot-long green snake in its bill (HFC). BBR,CC
- 195 Lesser Coucal** *Centropus benghalensis*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC
- 196 Collared Scops Owl** *Otus bakkamoena*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC
- 198 Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo*  
One was seen at Chau Tau on 2 January (MRL,EPL).
- 199 Brown Fish Owl** *Ketupa zeylonensis*  
A pair bred successfully in Sai Kung. Following a sighting of an adult on 2 June, an adult and newly-fledged juvenile were seen together on 13th, 19th and 28 June (MH,VBP *et al.*). This is the first report of this species since a pair and a juvenile were seen at Discovery Bay during 1988-89 and appears to be only the second confirmed breeding record.

- 200 Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides*  
Heard and seen in Tai Po Kau between 2 February and 29 April. Also heard at Shek Kong on 20 April, Shing Mun on 7 August and Ting Kok on 17 August. One was seen in Aberdeen Country Park on 28 August and a freshly-dead bird was found on the road at Tai Mei Tuk on 13 November. BBR
- 204 Japanese Nightjar** *Caprimulgus indicus*  
A male was seen over Kowloon on 10 April (MRL,PJL) and a female or immature was at Tai She Wan, High Island, on 2 October (JSRE,CAV). These are the first records of this rather elusive species since 1989. BBR
- 205 Savannah Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis*  
Two were seen at Chau Tau on 31 January and were also noted there from 27 March to 11 April. One was heard at Kau To Shan, Shatin, on 11 March, whilst singles were seen at Chek Nai Ping, near the Chinese University, on 4 April and 1 May and on Ping Chau on 24 April. Heard at Sha Lo Tung on 14 June and 2 July and at Shuen Wan on 20 June. Whilst most recent reports of this species have been in spring and summer, Chalmers (1986) lists records in all months with only a slight bias towards spring. BBR,CC
- [ **Swift sp.**  
A small dark-rumped swift or swiftlet was at Mai Po from 20-22 March (PRK *et al.*) This is the third such record in Hong Kong; the previous reports were both in 1990.]
- 206 White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus*  
Two were noted in a large flock of Little *Apus affinis* and Pacific Swifts *A. pacificus* at Mai Po on 8 April (MAP,PJL), the following day two were seen flying north over Tsim Bei Tsui (MDW) and one was at Mai Po (MLC). About six were reported over Tai Mo Shan on 12 April (DAD) and one was at Mai Po on 17 April (DM,PVS).
- 207 White-vented Needletail** *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*  
Two at Mount Davis on 28 March (PRK), five at Mai Po in the same large flock as the previous species (MAP,PJL) and eight flying north over Tsim Bei Tsui on 8 April (MDW), three over Tai Mo Shan on 12 April (DAD) and one at Tai Po Kau on 19 April (DT). On 18 June, a new late date, at least one was seen at Ho Chung (with two more unidentified needletails) (MH). BBR
- 208 Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus*  
One hundred were seen at Mai Po on 13 February when passage was first noted, and later reports from there included a peak count of 500 on 26 February, 50 on 13th and 18 March, 200 on 20 March, 75 the following day and 40 on 6 April. Elsewhere there were seven over the sea west of Sai Kung on 7 March, ten over Tai Po Kau on 19 April, 20 at Tai Long Wan on 23 April, ten over Tai Mo Shan on 16 May, three at Three Fathom's Cove on 19 June and two at Cape D'Aguilar on 21 August. A breeding colony of 150-200 birds was discovered on The Ninepins on 2 May when copulation in flight and the carrying of nesting material into rock crevices was observed (MLC,RWL *et al.*). This is the first time breeding has been proven in Hong Kong though it has



long been suspected. There were two autumn reports of singles on Ping Chau on 11 September and Cape D'Aguilar on 27 September. BBR

- 209 House Swift** *Apus affinis*  
A large colony of 200-300 nests was noted at the Chinese University on 12 February. High passage counts, all at Mai Po, included 500 on 13 February, 3,000 on 26th, at least 100 on 28th, 500 on 13 March, over 300 on 18th increasing to 500 the next day, 1,000 on 20th falling to 300 on 21st, 100 on 6th and 7 April, 250 on 8 April, 100 on 12 April, over 300 on 18 April and over 100 on 19 and 20 April. Elsewhere, 150 were noted at Tai Mo Shan on 16 May. BBR,CC

- 210 White-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*  
Breeding may have occurred in Victoria Park where this species was recorded throughout the year. One unusual winter report came from woodland at Silverstrand on 8 December. BBR,CC

- 211 Black-capped Kingfisher** *Halcyon pileata*  
The first back at Mai Po after the summer absence was on 22 August. As with the preceding species, one at Silverstrand on 9 December was unusual. BBR,CC

- 212 Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

- 213 Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*  
All records were of birds from Mai Po or Starling Inlet except for four young at a nest hole at Nam Sang Wai on 19 April, a pair at Tai Lam reservoir on 29 April and 14 August (a nest was found on the latter date), two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 9 May, one at Plover Cove on 22 May, one at Discovery Bay on both 17 and 18 July, two at Long Valley from July to December and up to three birds throughout the year at Shuen Wan. BBR,CC

- 214 Crested Kingfisher** *Ceryle lugubris*  
A pair was seen at Tai Lam reservoir on 29 April, 27 and 29 May and a female only on 14 August (PA,VBP,RWL *et al.*). Singles were reported at Tung Chung, Lantau, on 14 June (MLC) and at Bride's Pool on 30 October (CAV,JSRE).

- [215/215.1 Bee-eater sp.]** *Merops sp.*  
Four bee-eaters flew west at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 October (GAW) and six flew west over the Scrape at Mai Po on 9 October (DAD) but in both cases views were insufficient to permit specific identification. These are the fifth and sixth records of bee-eaters in autumn.]

- 216 Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus orientalis*  
Spring passage began on 10 April when one was seen at Shing Mun. Thereafter, up to four (though mostly singles) were noted at several locations in the New Territories; in addition, eight were at Tai Long Wan on 23 April and 5-6 were there on 25 April. Nineteen birds (including two immatures at

Mount Davis on 19 September) were noted during autumn passage which took place between 30 August and 2 October; on this last date seven individuals were seen at Pak Tam/High Island. BBR

- 217 Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*  
In the early months singles were seen at Tsui Keng on 9 January and at both Pak Nai and Chau Tau on 10 January, two at Beas River and one at Chau Tau were noted on 17 January, with singles again at Nim Wan on 14 February, Mai Po on 6 March and Chau Tau on 1 and 9 April. Breeding occurred at King's Park, Kowloon, between 28 April and 6 June when a pair usurped a Tree Sparrow's nest, ousting the chick, and successfully raised a chick of their own; the Tree Sparrows returned to the nest and appeared to share it even after the Hoopoe chick had hatched (NHP). A pair also bred on Stonecutters' Island and a pullus was ringed on 15 April (per DSM). These are the first records of Hoopoes breeding in Hong Kong (see elsewhere in this Report). Singles were seen at Mai Po on 3 July and 12 November, and two were there on 12 December. BBR

- 218 Great Barbet** *Megalaima virens*  
Heard at Ho Chung, Sha Lo Tung, Fung Yuen, Pak Tam Chung and Chek Keng as well as Tai Po Kau. One was seen devouring a lizard at Shuen Wan (RWL) (see note in this Report). BBR,CC

- 219 Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*  
Eleven were reported in the early months of the year from Tsui Keng, Ho Chung, Mai Po, Tsim Bei Tsui, Nam Sang Wai, Tin Shui Wai, Sheung Shui and Ping Chau, the last sighting being 13 April. Rather scarce in the second winter period: first seen on 9 October at Long Valley; at Ho Chung, what was probably the same bird was regularly seen between 17 October and the end of December; two were at Nam Sang Wai on 8 November and singles were noted at Tin Shui Wai, Tsim Bei Tsui, Mai Po and Tai Po Kau.

- 220.5 Bay Woodpecker** *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*  
A male was seen in Tai Po Kau on 17 April, 12 May and 3 June (JSRE,NW *et al.*). Laughing calls, suspected to have been made by this species, have been heard in Hong Kong before, but this is the first fully acceptable record (see separate paper in this Report).

- 223 Chinese Pitta** *Pitta nympha*  
An adult found stunned, having flown into a window at Shek Kong, was ringed and released unharmed on 19 April (JA,PJL,PRK) (see plates 8-9) and one was seen at High West on 20 September (GAW). These are the fifth and sixth Hong Kong records; there have now been two reports in April, one in July and three in September.

- 225 Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*  
One was at Luk Keng on 9 January (PRK), two were seen on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 21 January (MH) and three were there on 13 February (PRK,MRL,PJL). Two were at Tin Shui Wai on 27 February (GAW) and there were at least three pairs there on 5 April when a nest





8 Chinese Pitta *Pitta nympha*  
Shek Kong, Hong Kong 19 April 1993

Peter R. Kennerley



9 Chinese Pitta *Pitta nympha*  
Shek Kong, Hong Kong 19 April 1993

Peter R. Kennerley

containing three eggs was found; the pulli were ringed on 19 April when at least two birds were still singing; five were present on 15 May (PJL,MRL). This is the first confirmed breeding record away from Kai Tak. The maximum count at Tin Shui Wai in the second winter period was ten, including three singing males, on 26 November. One flew over Tsim Bei Tsui on the same day (PJL).  
BBR

#### 225.1 Northern Skylark

*Alauda arvensis*

Three flew west over Mai Po on 20 November (PJL,PRK). This is the third Hong Kong record. The previous observations were in February-March and November 1991.

#### 226 Sand Martin

*Riparia riparia*

There were no high counts during the spring passage. At Mai Po in April there was one on 7th, two on 9th, ten on 13th, one on 14th, three on 18th and one on 20th; there was also one on 1 May. Elsewhere there were singles at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 April and at Luk Keng on 9 April, two at Nam Chung on 1 May and one over Pat Sin Leng on 29 May. In autumn one was at Mai Po on 19 September, three were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 October, ten were at Mai Po on 23 October with two near there on 2 November, 40 were at Mai Po on 6 November, three were at Nam Sang Wai on 8th and two were at Mai Po on 4 December.  
BBR

#### 227 Swallow

*Hirundo rustica*

Passage was noted as follows: 80 at Tin Shui Wai on 10 February, 35 moving north near The Ninepins on 7 March, 500 at Mai Po on 20 March, 300 there the following day, several hundred in the Deep Bay area on 7th and 8 April, 600 at Tsim Bei Tsui and 150 at Mai Po on 13 April, 250 on 18 April and 1,000 on 20 April. These numbers are lower than those of the previous three years, when counts of up to 3,000 were noted.  
BBR,CC

#### 228 Red-rumped Swallow

*Hirundo daurica*

Four were present at Mai Po on 17 January. In spring 13 were at Mai Po on 8 April and the following day ten were seen there and at least 60 were at Tsim Bei Tsui. Groups of up to five birds were at Mai Po, Luk Keng, Ping Chau and Mirs Bay until 16 May. In autumn, small numbers were intermittently reported at Ho Chung, Pat Sin Leng, Junk Bay, Long Valley, Lok Ma Chau, Mai Po and Mong Tseng from 18 September, with 25 in small parties at Mai Po on 9 October, ten at Long Valley on 4th and 23 December and 12-13 at Ho Chung on 27 December.  
BBR

#### 229 Asian House Martin

*Delichon dasypus*

Peak passage occurred between 19 and 22 March when small flocks of up to nine were seen at Ho Chung, Mai Po and Lam Tsuen Valley, with 20 at Luk Keng on 19th and ten at Tan Shan Valley on 20th. A secondary passage occurred between 8th and 12 April with up to four being noted at Tsim Bei Tsui, Mai Po, Luk Keng, Tai Po Kau and Tai Mo Shan. In the second half of the year five were seen at Kam Tin on 10 October, one was at Mount Austin on 28 November and two were at Ho Chung on 18 December. These figures represent a return to regular numbers after last year's unusually high counts.  
BBR



**230 Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Migrant counts were lower this year with 25 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 April and at Tin Shui Wai on 9 and 12 April being the highest. A small bright bird seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 March was neither the regular wintering race *A. n. richardi* nor the breeding *A. n. sinensis* (MRL). Breeding birds of the race *sinensis* were seen during the summer at Tung Lung Chau, Tap Mun, Chek Keng, Shuen Wan and Tai Mo Shan, where four pulli were ringed on 16 May (PJL). There were 25 *richardi* at Long Valley on both 6 November and 20 December, and 20 there on 28 December. BBR,CC

**231 Upland Pipit** *Anthus sylvanus*

On Tai Mo Shan there was one on 11 February, at least two pairs on 16 April and a single on 30 May. One was singing near Pinehill Village, Tai Po, on 18 June (RWL) (this site is c80m above sea level - all previous reports have come from high peaks). Two were singing on Tai Mo Shan on 24 June.

**232 Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

Reports of note in the early part of the year were 15 at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau on 3rd and 26 January respectively, 15 at Mai Po on 6th and 27 March, 25 at Shing Mun the following day and 15 at Lok Ma Chau on 30 March. In the second winter period 70 (a new high count) were seen flying north over Kadoorie ARC on 6 November (PJL). Twenty were noted at Long Valley on 21 November and 35 on 26 December. BBR,CC

**233 Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi*

Singles were seen at Shuen Wan on 11 May (RWL) and at Tin Shui Wai on 12 May (MLC,GJC).

**234 Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*

Midwinter and spring counts were lower than last year, the highest in the early months being 25 at Lok Ma Chau on 26 January while the spring peak was 80 at Tin Shui Wai on 9 April. Forty were still there on 12 April and the latest record was five there on 19 April. The first autumn report was of four at Long Valley on 19 September (WLY), more than two weeks earlier than previous autumn records. About 50 were noted at the same site on 30 October, 25 on 13 November, 17 on 20 December and 30 on 26 December. Thirty were at Shek Kong on 24 December. BBR,CC

**235 Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*

A flock of at least 16 was at Luk Keng on 13 March (CAV) and two were at Long Valley on 19 December (PJL). Small flocks of this species were formerly not uncommon but it has become much scarcer in recent years. The scientific and English names of this species have been brought into line with current usage and to distinguish it from Water Pipit *A. spinoletta*, which also occurs in China but has not been recorded in Hong Kong (BOURC 1986).

**236 Forest Wagtail** *Dendroanthus indicus*

There was one spring record, a single at Nam Sang Wai on 19 April. The first autumn record was one on Lantau on 7 August, a new early date by over two weeks (JB). Except for one in Aberdeen Country Park on 30 August,

all other records were in September, with singles in Tai Po Kau and on Ping Chau on 5th, at Long Valley on 11th and in Tai Po Kau on 11th and 12th (probably the same bird).

**237 Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*

There were 15 *taivana* and 15 *macronyx* at Lok Ma Chau on 26 January and 20 *taivana* at Mai Po on 26 February. The highest passage count was 200 in Lam Tsuen Valley on 5 April, with up to 100 noted both in the eastern New Territories on 12 April and at Mai Po on 16 and 18 April. Of birds identified to subspecies during spring, *simillima* was noted from 7 April to 17 May with the highest counts being 50 at Shuen Wan on the last date and 80 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15 May; *macronyx* was noted from 19 March to 15 May with the highest count being ten at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 April; *taivana* was recorded thus: 30 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 March, 25 at Tin Shui Wai on 5 April and 35 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 April. The first in autumn was at sea, south of Hong Kong, on 29 August and 120 (the autumn peak) were seen going to roost at Mai Po on 4 September. Ten *simillima* were at Long Valley on 17 September. Other passage flocks included 50 at Shuen Wan on 26 September and a peak of 100 at Long Valley on 3 October. Wintering flocks (of the race *taivana*) included 50 at Long Valley and 25 on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 20 December. BBR,CC

**239 Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Twelve were noted in Lam Tsuen Valley on 3 January. Departure in spring passed unrecorded. The earliest autumn report was of one at Shek Pik on 21 July though this may not have been a passage bird; one seen at Shouson Hill on 31 July almost certainly was, however. Approximately 300 gathered on the road at Mai Po on 6 November, presumably about to roost in the mangroves. BBR,CC

**240 White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

There were no high counts this year, the highest in midwinter being 192 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 27 February, whilst no spring flocks exceeded 20 birds. The maximum in the second part of the year was 28 at Long Valley on 20 December. Single juveniles were noted at Tin Shui Wai on 15 May (PJL,PRK), Tsim Bei Tsui on 19 May (GAW), Shuen Wan from 20 to 28 May (RWL) and at Fanling on 11 July (MRL); at least two juveniles were at Yim Tso Ha on 4 July (MRL). Although no nests were found, these widespread reports are believed to reflect breeding which had, indeed, been suspected as long ago as 1959.

An adult male of the race *lugens*, known as Black-backed Wagtail, was recorded at Shuen Wan on 26 February (RWL) and seen again on 18, 19 and 20 March (MH,WLY). Another male was seen on Ping Chau on 6 November and 27 December (DAD,PJL). BBR,CC

**242 Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike** *Coracina melaschistos*

Singles were seen at Tsui Keng on 9 January, Ho Chung on 26 January, Mount Parker on 12 March and Ping Chau on 17 and 18 April. Long-staying birds were noted at Shing Mun from 20 January to 7 March, Lam Tsuen Valley from 13 February to 17 April and in Tai Po Kau from 19 March



to 12 April. The first four autumn sightings (from 12 September) were all from Hong Kong Island; a further seven birds were reported up to 27 November, mainly from the New Territories. BBR

**244 Ashy Minivet** *Pericrocotus divaricatus*  
Spring records involved a flock of 15 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 April, 50 there on 8 and 9 April, 30 at Lok Ma Chau on 10 April and 18 flying north over Mai Po on 13 April. In autumn singles were noted at Shing Mun on 2 October, Mai Po on 10 October and Tsim Bei Tsui on 14 November. BBR

**245 Grey-throated Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris*  
At least 20 were in Tai Po Kau on 1 January, at least 50 on 6 February and 25 on 22 December; small numbers were seen throughout the year at Shing Mun. Elsewhere, singles were noted at Kap Lung on 30 January and on Ping Chau on 25 April. BBR,CC

**246 Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*  
Present at Shing Mun throughout the year with 16 there on 28 December. Between one and eight birds were seen up to 30 May at the Chinese University, Tai Po Kau, Lam Tsuen Valley, Ho Chung, Shatin, Kap Lung, Tai Mo Shan and Chuen Lung. One was at Sha Lo Tung on 5 December. BBR,CC

**247 Crested Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

**248 Chinese Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis*  
Movement was noted on Ping Chau on 6 November: flocks of 120 and 50 were seen flying southeast and a further 60 birds were on the island. BBR,CC

**249 Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus aurigaster*  
One was at Mai Po, an unusual location for this species, on 4 April. BBR,CC

**250 Chestnut Bulbul** *Hypsipetes castanonotus*  
Present throughout the year at Shing Mun, with 30 being noted on 28 March, and throughout the summer at Leadmine Pass. Also recorded up to 26 June at Ho Chung, Ng Tung Chai, Kap Lung, Sha Lo Tung, Plover Cove, Bride's Pool, Pat Sin Leng and Tai Po Kau. The species was common at Pat Sin Leng on 30 October, there were 10+ at Leadmine Pass and five at Lo Lau Uk on 28 November, 10+ at Ho Chung on 11 December and 15 in Tai Po Kau on 31 December. The absence of summer reports from many of these sites (for example Tai Po Kau) is doubtless a function of limited observer coverage. BBR,CC

**251 Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*  
Three were at Hong Kong University on 5 January, with one there on 12 February (GAW), and one was at Ho Chung on 26 January (PJL).

## 251.1 Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii*

One or two seen intermittently in Tai Po Kau between January and April and again in August and November. Other locations where this species was occasionally seen were Ho Chung, Shing Mun and Lam Tsuen Valley, while one was at Hong Kong University on 12 February. BBR,CC

**255 Red-tailed Robin** *Luscinia sibilans*  
At least ten individuals were seen or heard at Ho Chung, Kadoorie ARC, Shing Mun, Tai Po Kau, Ping Chau and Kowloon Park in the first winter period, the last being noted on 17 April, a new late date by just one day (DAD). The first in autumn was one in Tai Po Kau on 12 November; November produced a further 19 records from Tai Mo Shan, Shing Mun, Ping Chau, Long Valley, Ho Chung and Aberdeen Country Park with singles trapped at Mai Po on 20th and nine trapped at Kadoorie ARC during the month. The peak count was six in Tai Po Kau on 28th. There were apparently fewer in December when one was caught at Kadoorie ARC on 8th, and singles were reported in Tai Po Kau on 19th, 23rd and 26th and seven were on Ping Chau on 27th.

**256 Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*  
Up to three were seen or heard, mostly in the New Territories, until 9 May, with five at Mai Po on 21 March and 4 April. The first report in the second winter period was of one trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 23 October. Peak counts were nine on Ping Chau on 6 November and ten at Kadoorie ARC on 14 November and Mai Po on 4 December. BBR,CC

**257 Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*  
Up to three were noted at Tin Shui Wai, Tsim Bei Tsui, Mai Po, Long Valley, Ping Yeung and Ho Chung until 16 April. In the second half of the year the first was seen at Long Valley on 23 October and the highest count was nine there on 23 December. BBR,CC

**258 Siberian Blue Robin** *Luscinia cyane*  
The only spring record was an adult male at Kowloon Park on 12 April (DAD). In autumn an adult male and a female/immature were seen at Shing Mun on 4 September (DAD), an adult female was there on 11 September (MT,WLY), a first-winter male was in Tai Po Kau on 26 September (JAH) and an immature male was found dead at Discovery Bay, Lantau, on 8 October (JB).

**259 Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*  
The highest count in the early part of the year was at least 11 at Kadoorie Farm on 1 February and the latest record was of three at Shing Mun on 21 February. First noted in autumn at Mount Austin where at least five were seen on 13 November. More than 20 were in Tai Po Kau on 27 November. CC

**260 Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus auroreus*  
Most sightings were of singles but three were seen in Lam Tsuen Valley on 3 January. The latest spring bird was one at Tan Shan Valley on 20 March. The first report in the second winter period was of up to three on Ping Chau on 6 November, while the highest count was five on Lantau on 27 December. CC



- 261 Plumbeous Water Redstart** *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*  
Singles were seen near the Chinese University on 1 January and at Shuen Wan on 5 January while a pair was reported at Shing Mun on 17 January and 20 February. A male on the waterfront at Shau Kei Wan on 11 April was the latest seen in the first winter period. The only record in the second part of the year was a female in Lam Tsuen Valley on 27 December.
- 262 Magpie Robin** *Copsychus saularis*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC
- 263 Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*  
Recorded in the early part of the year until 20 April, with maximum counts of ten. The first in autumn was one at Mount Austin on 12 September. Sixty, an unusually high number, were noted at Long Valley on 6 November (PJL). BBR,CC
- 264 Grey Bushchat** *Saxicola ferrea*  
Both the adult and immature males first seen at Ho Chung in October 1992 remained until at least 22 January (MH *et al.*); an adult male (probably the same bird) was reported there on 13 February (RWL) and a male and a female were seen there on 4 March (GAW). Two males were at Mai Po on 24 February (PL). An immature male was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 8 October (DPC), a male was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 10 October (JAH), a female was at Long Valley on 23 November (GAW) and a female was at Sai Kung Market on 20 December (YYT,LKS).
- 265.1 White-throated Rock Thrush** *Monticola gularis*  
The only report was of a female in Aberdeen Country Park on 25 January (VBP). This is the fifth record for Hong Kong.
- 266 Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush** *Monticola rufiventris*  
A first-winter female found at Mount Austin on 2 October remained in the area until 16 October (MT *et al.*). This is the fourth record for Hong Kong (see below). In view of the fact that this was the first record for some time, despite a higher level of observer activity than formerly, and that the date was outside the pattern of previous records, the Records Committee carried out a review of previously accepted records. As a result of this review, only the following are now considered acceptable:  
**1976:** male, the Peak, 14 January; male, Luen Yik, 31 January  
**1977:** male, Sha Lan, 31 December  
Thus there have now been four records of this species in Hong Kong which means that it must be considered far rarer than was previously thought.
- 267 Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*  
In the early part of the year all reports except for records of one at Shing Mun on 21 January and three on Tai Mo Shan on 16 April were of coastal birds. The latest was seen at Discovery Bay on 20 June. Noted in the second winter period, again mostly on the coast, from 17 September, when one was seen at Cape D'Aguilar. Singles were on Mount Davis on 18 September

and Mount Austin the following day, two were on Mount Austin on 2 October and one on Ma On Shan on 27 December. Nine of at least 27 individuals were of the red-bellied race *philippensis* and three were the all-blue *pandoo*.

BBR,CC

- 268 Violet Whistling Thrush** *Myiophonus caeruleus*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC
- 269 Orange-headed Ground Thrush** *Zoothera citrina*  
All records except one came from Tai Po Kau where one was first reported on 5 February (FW). A singing male was noted on 13 May (DAD) and again on 22 May when two birds were seen together (VBP); on 29 May the same two birds were still present and a single was seen on 31 May (RWL). One, possibly a juvenile, was seen at a higher elevation on 8 August (RWL) and singles were noted on 19 and 26 December (DAD,PJL). Elsewhere, one was seen at Shek Kong catchment on 9 October (JAH) and one was at Hong Kong University on 26 November (GAW).
- 270 White's Thrush** *Zoothera dauma*  
A total of about nine birds was reported until 17 April, with all records being of singles in the New Territories except for one in Kowloon Park on 10 and 12 April. In the second winter period the first was seen at Shing Mun on 31 October and a further eight or nine birds were noted from the New Territories and Hong Kong Island. BBR
- 271 Siberian Thrush** *Zoothera sibirica*  
An adult male was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 27 March (DPC). A female was seen in Tai Po Kau on 23 October (CAV,JSRE), a first winter male was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 27 October (DPC), a female was at Shing Mun on 31 October (DAD) and a first-winter female was on Tai Mo Shan on 14 November (RWL,PJL).
- 272 Grey Thrush** *Turdus cardis*  
Up to three were seen in widespread locations until 13 February and presumed passage was noted at Mount Austin, High West, Ping Chau and Tai Po Kau from 1 to 10 April. The first record in the second part of the year was of one trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 13 November. Three were trapped there the next day and a further 13 flew over. Between 15 and 25 birds were seen at Hong Kong University on 23 November. In addition to these high counts, up to four were noted from widespread areas until 30 December. CC
- 273 Blackbird** *Turdus merula*  
Highest counts in the early part of the year were 55 leaving a roost in Bonham Road on 3 January, 30 in Lam Tsuen Valley on 9 January and 26 at Hong Kong University on 11 January; other, widespread flocks numbered up to 12 birds. A male was singing in Kowloon Park in early April up to 14th, the last spring record. First seen in the second winter period on 25 October at Tai Wai. A single flock of 35 flew over Kadoorie ARC on 14 November, there were 35 at Long Valley on 23 November, 50 at Starling Inlet on 26 November, and 40 at Tan Shan Valley and 30 at Long Valley on 27 November. BBR,CC



**274 Brown Thrush** *Turdus chrysolaus*  
Two were seen at Pok Fu Lam on 20 January (GAW) and one was at Hong Kong University on 9 February (GAW).

**275 Grey-backed Thrush** *Turdus hortulorum*  
Although sightings were particularly numerous in January, the largest flock, in Tai Po Kau on 30th, contained only ten birds. Up to six birds were seen in widespread locations until 9 April when the last three were reported in Tai Po Kau. First noted in the second winter period on 14 November when two were trapped at Kadoorie ARC. Regularly recorded thereafter with high counts of 20 in Aberdeen Country Park on 22 December (in a flock of 80 *Turdus* thrushes not all specifically identified), 20 in Tai Po Kau on 23 December and 49 on Ping Chau on 27 December. BBR,CC

**276 Pale Thrush** *Turdus pallidus*  
There was one at Kap Lung on 2 January and three there the next day, one in Aberdeen Country Park on 25 January, five at Kadoorie Farm on 1 February and two at Ho Chung on 12 April. The second winter period brought only two records – singles at Hok Tau on 5 December and at Mount Austin on 19 December. CC

**277 Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus*  
The only two records in the first part of the year were both from outlying islands – singles on Ping Chau on 3 April and on Cheung Chau on 29 April. One was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 13 October, 37 flew over there on 14 November, three were in Tai Po Kau and at Tsim Bei Tsui on 26 November, two at Bride's Pool on 28 November, six at Mount Austin on 7 December and singles in Tai Po Kau on 19 and 30 December. CC

**278 Dusky Thrush** *Turdus naumanni*  
Singles were in Tai Po Kau on 12 February (RWL), at Mount Nicholson on 24 November (CAV) and at Long Valley on 11 December (PJL). One or two first-winter birds were at Lau Fa Tung, Lantau, on 27 December (JB). All records were of the dark race *eunomus*.

**279 Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus schistaceus*  
One at Lo Wai, near Tsuen Wan, during 15-19 August (TW,VBP,HFC) was thought to be an escaped bird because of missing tail feathers and the proximity to three monasteries (caged birds are often released at monasteries).

**280 Short-tailed Bush Warbler** *Cettia squameiceps*  
Scarce early in the year with maxima of two in Aberdeen Country Park on 2 January, four in Tai Po Kau on 30 January and two at Ho Chung on 7 February. The latest in spring were two in Kowloon Park on 9 April with one still present on 15 April. In the second winter period the first was at Mount Austin on 12-13 November, one was in Tai Po Kau on 15 November and two were in Long Valley on 19 November. An influx occurred by 27 November when there were at least 20 in Tai Po Kau. Up to four were reported around

this date and thereafter from widespread localities on Hong Kong Island and the New Territories with ten at Lead Mine Pass on 5 December, six at Shing Mun on 6 December and eight on Ping Chau on 27 December. BBR,CC

**281 Chinese Bush Warbler** *Cettia diphone*  
Up to 15 were noted at Mai Po during January to March. The latest in spring was trapped at Mai Po on 1 May. There was one very early bird reported at Shing Mun on 9 September; generally however, the autumn arrival was late, the next report coming from Sha Lo Tung on 10 November. Numbers were also rather low with a peak of eight trapped at Mai Po on 27 November. Fourteen were on Ping Chau on 27 December. BBR,CC

**282 Mountain Bush Warbler** *Cettia fortipes*  
In the first winter period there were singles at High West on 4 January (GAW), Ho Chung on 7 January (MH), on Cheung Chau on 4 February (MDW), at Shing Mun on 23 February (GAW) and at Kadoorie ARC (trapped) on 6 February and 3 April (DPC). In the second winter period singles were at Pat Sin Leng on 30 October (CAV) and Kadoorie ARC (trapped) on 10th and 24 November (DPC). Two were trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 8 December (DPC), one was at Plover Cove on 15 December (GAW), one was at Ping Shan Chai on 18 December (RWL), two were at Sha Lo Tung on 22 December (DAD) and one was on Ping Chau on 27 December (PJL).

**282.1 Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler** *Cettia acanthizoides*  
The individual trapped at Mai Po on 29 November 1992 was retrapped on 30 January (FW) (see separate note in this Report).

**282.5 Russet Bush Warbler** *Bradypterus seebohmi*  
In the first winter period three were singing at Ho Chung on 6 January (RWL), one was singing at Wu Kau Tang on 25 January (MLC), one was trapped at Mai Po on 20 February (PJL *et al.*) and one was singing at Ho Chung on 10 April (PJL,MRL); this last is the latest spring date for Hong Kong. In the second winter period singles were singing at Sha Lo Tung on 21 November and 10 December (DAD,RWL), Yung Shue O on 4 December (CAV), Ho Chung on 10 December (MH) and Ping Shan Chai on 18 December (RWL). One was also seen on Ping Chau on 27 December (PJL). BBR,CC

**1992:** In addition to the records published, the following have now been accepted from Sha Lo Tung: one singing on 7 November; three singing on 8 November; one singing on 12 November; and three singing on 4 December (RWL)

**283 Fantail Warbler** *Cisticola juncidis*  
Twenty on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 27 March and 75 in Long Valley on 23 December were the largest counts in the first and second halves of the year respectively. Preliminary breeding survey results suggest that this species is very scarce as a breeding bird. BBR,CC





10 Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler *Cettia acanthizoides*  
Mai Po, Hong Kong 29 November 1992

M.R. Leven



11 Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler *Cettia acanthizoides*  
Mai Po, Hong Kong 29 November 1992

M.R. Leven

#### 283.1 Bright-capped Cisticola

*Cisticola exilis*

In the first winter period there were eight at Ping Yeung on 3 January (JAH); on 9 January two were there (MH), one was at Tsui Keng, Fanling, (CAV) and one was in Lam Tsuen Valley (DAD). One was at Tan Shan Valley on 16 January and three were there on 20 February (DAD). In the second winter period two were at Yung Shue O on 4 December (CAV), one was at Nam Sang Wai on 4 December (GAW), three were at Wu Kau Tang on 8 December (DAD), up to two (including one trapped) were at Ho Chung during 11-27 December (MH,PJL,EMSK *et al.*), one was at Long Valley on 19th and 26 December (PJL) and one was at Sha Lo Tung on 22 December (DAD). It is now apparent that this species is a scarce, but regular, winter visitor. CC

#### 284 Plain Prinia

*Prinia inornata*

A partial albino (all white except for wings and tail) was seen at Sheung Shui on 24 September (GAW). BBR,CC

#### 285 Yellow-bellied Prinia

*Prinia flaviventris*

No significant reports.

BBR,CC

#### 286 Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler

*Locustella certhiola*

In spring a singing male was seen at Mai Po on 26-27 February, one was trapped on 2 May and another singing male was seen on 15 May. The first singing male was a small, dark bird, whilst the latter was larger and paler and resembled individuals which have been trapped and ascribed to the race *P.c. minor*. The songs of the two birds were distinctly different (Kennerley and Leader *in litt.*).

In autumn one was trapped at Mai Po on 4 September, nine were at Long Valley and one at Kam Tin on 11 September, two were trapped at Mai Po and one was seen at Kam Tin on 12 September, four were at Tin Shui Wai on 13 September, 11 were at Long Valley on 16 September with four there on 18 September, one was at Nam Sang Wai on 23 September, one was at Shuen Wan on 27 September, two were at Hei Tsz Wan, Pak Tam Chung, and six were at Long Valley on 2 October, one was trapped at Long Valley on 3 October, one was at Long Valley on 9 October and one was at Wang Shang, Pat Sin Leng, on 30 October. All trapped birds in autumn appeared to be of the race *L.c. minor* (MRL). It should be noted that during autumn 1993 there was very little coverage of Luk Keng (the principal site during 1990-92).

#### 286.5 Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler

*Locustella ochotensis*

One was seen at Mai Po during 26-27 February (PJL). This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

#### 287 Styan's Grasshopper Warbler

*Locustella pleskei*

One was seen at Mai Po on 16 April (GJC,RWL), one was trapped there on 2 May (per MRL) and a singing bird was seen in the Mai Po mangroves on 8 May (PJL,PRK). This last record is the latest ever spring observation.



**288 Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata*

One was trapped at Long Valley on 3 October (PJL,MRL *et al.*), one was seen at Tai Wai during 4-5 October (DAD), one was at Mai Po on 17 October (RWL), two were at Tin Shui Wai on 27 October (GAW), one was at Long Valley on 10 November (GAW), one was at Mount Austin on 12 November (MT), one was trapped at Long Valley on 20 November (PRK,PJL,MRL), one was seen at Mai Po on 27 November (PJL,MRL) and one was on the landfill area to the east of there the next day (GAW), one was at Ho Chung on 10 December (MH) and two were seen there on 12 December (PJL,MH). These records suggest a rather late passage period in 1993 – the previous latest autumn date was 14 November, though there is one midwinter record on 8 February 1987.

**289 Black-browed Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

One was trapped at Mai Po on 6 February and singles were retrapped there on 13 February and 6 March: clearly wintering individuals. There was also one at Tin Shui Wai on 27 February. The first influx of passage birds was noted on 4 April when six were recorded. Subsequent counts included peaks of 20 on 16 April, 15 on 1 May and 25 on 9 May. Six were present on 15 May and the latest two in spring were on 22 May. All records came from Mai Po. Generally scarce in autumn, the first was seen at Long Valley on 18 September and one was trapped at Mai Po on 19 September. The maximum counts were of three at Mai Po on 2nd and 10 October. Away from Deep Bay there was one at Kam Tin on 9 October and two were at Long Valley on 23 October. The latest record was of one at Mai Po on 20 November. BBR, CC

**290 Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

One was singing at Mai Po on 13th, 20th and 26-27 February. Three were singing there on 14 March and there was an early peak of ten on 27 March but numbers were low in April with maximum daily counts of only five. Forty were at Mai Po on 1 May, 30 were there on 8 May and ten were still present on 25 May. Singles at Tai Wai on 2 May and on Ping Chau on 15 May were the only reports away from Deep Bay. One singing at Mai Po on 26 June (CAV) was interesting; whilst this species has not been proven to breed in Hong Kong, there have been a number of midsummer records from Mai Po and in 1987 an incomplete nest was found there (Melville 1988).

The first in autumn were four at Mai Po on 28 August; peak counts there were of 35 on 12 September, 40 on 19 September, 20 on 2 October and 50 on 10 October. As usual, there were widespread reports of small numbers during the main passage period, including singles at Tai Wai on 4th and 10 October and Mount Austin on 9 October, but 20 at Tin Shui Wai/Tsim Bei Tsui on 1 October was by far the largest count away from Mai Po. Late reports at Mai Po were of three on 20 November and one on 4 December, but the latest record was of one at the unusual location of Pamela Youde Hospital, Chai Wan, on 6 December. BBR

**291 Thick-billed Warbler** *Acrocephalus aedon*

Singles were trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 11 September and 1st, 20th and 25 October (DPC) and at Mai Po on 10 October (PJL).

**292 Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler** *Seicercus burkii*

In the first winter period singles were at Hong Kong University on 5 January (GAW), at Ho Chung on 24th and 26 January (MLC *et al.*), Tai Po Kau on 24 January and 6th and 13 March (DAD,MRL) and Mount Davis on 28 January and on 1 April (a singing male) (VBP,PRK). In the second winter period there was an early record of one in Tai Po Kau on 11 September (CAV), followed by singles (trapped) at Kadoorie ARC on 31 October and 14 November (DPC,MRL), at Hong Kong University on 11 and 26 November (GAW), Lead Mine Pass on 28 November (PA), on Ping Chau on 27 December (PJL) and at Lan Lai Wan, Hong Kong Island, also on 27 December (JEB). Two were at Hong Kong University on 23 December (GAW). CC

**294 Fulvous-faced Flycatcher-warbler** *Abroscopus albogularis*

One at Ho Chung from 11-26 January (JAH,MH *et al.*). This is the third Hong Kong record; previous occurrences were as long ago as 1955 and 1964.

**295 Large Grass Warbler** *Graminicola bengalensis*

One was at Shing Mun (500m. asl) on 23 February (GAW), one was seen carrying food at Sleepers Hill (by Kowloon Peak) on 21 April (MH), up to three were noted on Tai Mo Shan between 8 May and 25 July, including one carrying food on 30 May, (HFC,PJL,RWL *et al.*) and one was seen near the summit of Tai To Yan (above Lam Tsuen Valley) on 18 July (MLC).

**296 Long-tailed Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

**297 Sulphur-breasted Warbler** *Phylloscopus ricketti*

In the first winter period one was at Ho Chung during 10-26 January (JAH *et al.*) and one was seen in Tai Po Kau on 6th and 24 February (VBP). In the second winter period there was one in Tai Po Kau on 29 November and 13th, 19th, 26th and 29 December (DAD,RWL,WLY), one at Plover Cove on 15 December (GAW) and one at Ho Chung on 18 December (PJL). CC

**298 Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides*

In the first winter period present in Tai Po Kau until 13 March with a peak of five during 9-10 January. One was at Ma Lui Village on 2 January, singles were in Aberdeen Country Park from 2 January to 5 February, up to three were at Ho Chung during 11-26 January, one was at Lam Tsuen Valley on 19 January, up to two were at Shing Mun from 20 January until 20 February, one was at Mong Tseng on 25 January and one was at Tan Shan Valley on 29 January. As in 1992, a wide geographic spread of records. Less widespread in the second winter period with records in Tai Po Kau from 19 November, with a peak there of seven on 23 December, and singles at Ho Chung and Plover Cove on 15 December. CC

**299 Eastern Crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus coronatus*

Singles at High West on 23 March and in Tai Po Kau on 27 March were the only spring reports. In autumn one in Tai Po Kau on 12 August (RWL) was the earliest ever in Hong Kong. One was in Aberdeen Country



Park on 30 August and an influx occurred on 4 September when there were two at Mai Po, two at Shing Mun and singles at Kadoorie ARC and Mount Austin, and there was one in Tai Po Kau the next day; singles were subsequently seen in Tai Po Kau until 19 September. There was one at the Trappist Monastery on Lantau on 11 September, four at Lam Tsuen Valley and one at Mount Davis on 18 September, one at Shuen Wan on 27 September, two at Lam Tsuen Valley on 29 September and four trapped at Kadoorie ARC between 22 September and 8 October.

**300 Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes*

One on Cheung Chau on 1 April (MDW) was the earliest ever in spring in Hong Kong – there are a number of previous reports for the period January to March but only one of these (one at Tai Po Kau on 8 January 1991) postdates the widespread recognition of the field characters of this species. The only other spring reports came from Ping Chau, where there were up to two from 10th to 24 April, and Mai Po where there was one on 12 April. In autumn, the earliest were recorded on 4 September, when there were six at Mount Austin, three at Shing Mun and one at Mai Po. The passage period extended to 17 October, with the highest counts being four in Tai Po Kau on 5 September, four at Shing Mun on 11 September, five at the Trappist Monastery, Lantau, and six at Mount Austin on 19 September and five at Mount Davis on 1 October. Generally widespread, with smaller numbers at numerous wooded sites throughout the Territory. There was one winter record: one in Aberdeen Country Park on 29 December (VBP).

**300.2 Two-barred Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*

Two birds were at Lam Tsuen Valley on 3rd and 9 January (PJL) with one there on 6 March (DAD) and two on 9 April (PJL). In the second winter period one was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 22 September (DPC) and singles were seen at Tan Shan Valley on 8 October (DAD), Mai Po on 10 October (PJL), Tai Mo Shan on 17 October (DAD), Lam Tsuen Valley on 28 November and 3 December (PJL,MRL,DAD) and Shek Kong on 24 December (DAD).

**301 Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*

Spring passage was generally light with singles at Lam Tsuen Valley on 20 March, Kowloon Park on 9 April, Lok Ma Chau on 10 April, Ping Chau during 17-18 April and Mai Po on 8 May. However, there were 15 on Ping Chau on 15 May (DAD) – an exceptional count for spring. The latest record was of two at High Island on 16 May. In autumn there was one in Tai Po Kau on 26 August, with the main passage commencing on 4 September when six were seen at Mai Po, two at Sha Lo Tung and nine at Shing Mun. Thereafter, up to six were widely reported until 3 October with 17 counted on Ping Chau on 11th and 18 September and ten in Tai Po Kau on 12 September. The only later report was of two at Lam Tsuen Valley on 14 October. BBR

**302 Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Numbers were average early in January, with 30 in Tai Po Kau on 9th and 20 in Ho Chung on 13th. However, this species was apparently severely affected by the cold weather later in the month and, whilst there were 15 at Ho

Chung on 26 January and 40 at Shing Mun on 20 February, at other sites it was very scarce; for example, only singles were recorded in Tai Po Kau from 30 January. Six were at Shing Mun on 28 March, one was in Tai Po Kau on 1 April and one was on Ping Chau on 18 April (MRL), a new late date in Hong Kong. In the second winter period the first was recorded at Kadoorie ARC on 14 November and there was one in Tai Po Kau on 16 November, but the main arrival did not occur for another ten days. Generally rather scarce: peak counts were 20 in Tai Po Kau on 27-28 November, 30 there on 16th and 19 December and 46 there on 22 December. BBR,CC

**303 Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

As with the previous species, severely affected by cold weather in late January: in Tai Po Kau around 20 were reported during the first half of the month but no more than four were seen there during the remainder of the winter and no more than five were reported elsewhere except for six on Ping Chau on 13 March. The latest in spring were four in Tai Po Kau and one on Ping Chau on 18 April. In autumn there was one at Mount Austin on 12 September, three at Lam Tsuen Valley on 18 September and one at Mai Po on 19 September but the main arrival did not occur until around 10 November. There were 25 in Tai Po Kau on 28 November but by far the highest count was of 100 in Aberdeen Country Park on 12 December, only 20 remaining there by 27 December. BBR,CC

**304 Radde's Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

Two were on Mount Austin (MT) on 13 November, singles were trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 13th and 24 November (DPC) and one was in Tai Po Kau on 28 November (PJL,MRL).

1992: also two at Shing Mun on 1 November (DAD).

**305 Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Approximately 20 were estimated to be at Mai Po in early January, with around 15 there during February and March. There were still eight at Mai Po on 16 April with the last there on 6 May. In autumn the first was seen at Mai Po on 1 October, and numbers there increased rapidly to 70 on 10 October, declining to 20 by 12 December. The highest count elsewhere was of 52 at Nam Sang Wai on 28 October. At Mount Austin (where this species is a passage migrant) the first eight (the peak count) were seen on 9 October and passage continued until 13 November except for one bird on 19 December. BBR,CC

**305.1 Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

A bird showing characters of the eastern race *P.c. tristis* was trapped at Mai Po on 6 February (PJL,MRL,GJC). This is the fourth Hong Kong record; only one bird has been found in the field.

**306 Fukien Niltava** *Niltava davidi*

A male was seen in Aberdeen Country Park on 27 November (GAW) and a female was at Mount Austin on 28 November (MT,WLY). As with previous records of females, this latter record does not exclude the presumed extralimital Orange-bellied Niltava *N. sundara* which is apparently indistinguishable in the field. These are the ninth and tenth Hong Kong records.



A male niltava in Tai Po Kau on 23 January (JSRE) was either Fukien or Orange-bellied Niltava, but brief views prevented specific determination.

**307 Hainan Blue Flycatcher**

*Cyornis hainana*

Up to two pairs were present in Tai Po Kau from 28 March, up to seven singing males were noted at Shing Mun during mid-April and single singing males were seen at To Kwa Peng, near Uk Tau, Sai Kung, on 25 April, Tei Tong Tsai, between Tung Chung and Ngong Ping, Lantau, on 6 May and Wong Shan Keuk Ha Tsuen, Pat Sin Leng, on 29 May. A female was at Sha Lo Tung on 18 June. The latest autumn report was of a male at Tai Po Kau on 12 September, but an immature male was at Ho Chung on 28 December. BBR

**308 Blue and White Flycatcher**

*Muscicapa cyanomelana*

In spring there was one at Shing Mun on 21 March, one at Hong Kong University on 25th, one in Aberdeen Country Park on 26th, one in Tai Po Kau on 27th, one in Kowloon Park on 8 April, one at Bride's Pool on 9th, at least four on Ping Chau between 10th and 18th, one (trapped) at Kadoorie ARC on 11th and one in Kowloon Park on 1 May. In autumn singles were seen in Tai Po Kau on 29 August (PA) - a new early date - and 10 September and trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 20th and 27 October and 10 November. BBR

**309 Verditer Flycatcher**

*Muscicapa thalassina*

Two were at Hong Kong University on 5 February with one there on 12 February (GAW) and singles were recorded in Tai Po Kau on 2 January (WLY), Lam Tsuen Valley on 10th and 31 January and 1 February (MH,VBP), Shing Mun on 23 February (GAW), Uk Tau, Sai Kung, on 10 September (GAW), Barker Road, Hong Kong Island, on 23 October (MT) and Tai Po Kau on 29 November (RWL).

**310 Ferruginous Flycatcher**

*Muscicapa rufilata*

One was seen in Tai Po Kau on 10 April (MRL,PJL). A poor showing for this species. BBR

**311 Sooty Flycatcher**

*Muscicapa sibirica*

One was at Sha Lo Tung on 11 September (RWL) and one was at Mount Nicholson on 16 September (CAV). On 18 September there were two in Kowloon Park (YYT) and one at Mount Davis (MT) and on 2 October there was one at Mai Po (MLC) and two first-winter birds in Tai Po Kau (PJL,MRL). One was in Tai Po Kau on 15th and 19 November (RWL,PRK) and one was at Lam Tsuen Valley on 17 November (DAD). An excellent autumn for this species though greater observer experience may be a contributory factor to the number of records.

**312 Grey-streaked Flycatcher**

*Muscicapa griseisticta*

In spring the first was at Mai Po on 18 April, thereafter there were eight sightings until 15 May, all singles except for three at Mai Po on 1 May. In autumn, twelve were recorded at eight sites between 5 September and 4 October. This species is generally recorded more frequently in spring than in autumn.



**12** Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta*  
Lamma Island September 1993

Wong Tin Wa



**13** Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris*  
Mai Po, Hong Kong September 1993

Ray Tipper



**313 Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa latirostris*

Widely reported in the first winter period with a peak count of four flycatching on a rocky stream in Lam Tsuen Valley during cold weather on 19 January. The latest in spring was at Nam Sang Wai on 19 April. In autumn the first record was of five at Mai Po on 5 September; subsequent counts there included seven on 12 September, nine on 19 September and six on 10 October. At Mount Austin passage birds were noted from 19 September until 23 October. The highest winter count was of four in Tai Po Kau on 28 November.

BBR,CC

**314 Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*

In the first winter period one was seen at Lam Tsuen Valley on 17th and 19 January and 20 March with two there on 21 January, and there were singles at Shek Kong on 30 January and Sha Lo Tung on 1 February. In autumn/winter singles were recorded from: Mai Po on 1 October, 10 October (trapped), 16 October, 4 December (trapped) and 17 December; Mount Austin on 9th, 10th, 6th and 23 October; Nam Sang Wai on 4th and 18 December, Ho Pui on 19 December and Shing Mun on 27 December.

CC

**315 Mugimaki Flycatcher** *Ficedula mugimaki*

Wintering birds were at Ho Chung between 12 January and 13 February and at She Shan, Lantau, on 24 January. In spring there were singles at Mount Davis on 1 April and Kowloon Park during 6-9 April. Rather widespread in autumn from 7 November when one was caught at Kadoorie ARC; 26 were caught there up to 24 November with peaks of eight on 10th and six on 14 November. There was one on Tai Mo Shan on 9 November, three singles at Mount Austin between 13 November and 4 December, at least four in Tai Po Kau between 15 November and 17 December, one at Lam Tsuen Valley on 17 November and one in Aberdeen Country Park on 29 December.

**316 Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** *Ficedula zanthopygia*

Autumn passage commenced on 4 September when there were seven at Mai Po and singles at Mong Tseng, Wong Nai Tuin and Mount Austin. Thereafter, up to three were recorded from nine sites until 2 October with nine (including seven trapped) at Mai Po on 12 September being the only higher total. All of the 21 trapped were first-winter birds.

**317 Narcissus Flycatcher** *Ficedula narcissina*

Single males were seen on Ping Chau during 17-18 April (JB *et al.*) and in Tai Po Kau on 19 April (DT).

**318 Grey-headed Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

In the first winter period there were up to four in Tai Po Kau until 13 March and singles were seen at Ho Chung and Shek Kong. Unusually, the latest was on Cheung Chau on 20 March. In the second winter period there was one on Ping Chau on 6th and 13 November, at least six in Tai Po Kau from 13 November and up to two were recorded from Hok Tau, Lam Tsuen Valley, Ho Chung, Wanchai Gap Road and Hong Kong University in late November and during December.

BBR,CC

**319 Asian Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi*

The wintering male at Lam Tsuen Valley remained until 10 January (MH,PRK,PJL). One in Kowloon Park on 9 April was the only spring record. In autumn the first two were in Tai Po Kau on 12 August (equalling the previous early date) and up to four were seen there until 16 October. Elsewhere, singles were recorded from Mai Po, Lam Tsuen Valley, Shing Mun, Mount Austin and Victoria Park, Hong Kong Island, between 31 August and 31 October with three at Mai Po on 19 September. There were two late or wintering birds: at Tai Mo Shan summit on 9 November (HFC) and in Tai Po Kau on 19 December (RCN).

**320 Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone atrocaudata*

A male in Tai Po Kau on 28 March (VBP) was, by two days, the earliest ever in Hong Kong. Thereafter, singles were seen in Kowloon Park on 3 April and in Tai Po Kau on 7th and 8 April, and three were on Ping Chau on 10 April with two there on 12th and two (at least one of which was different) on 17 April. In autumn there were two in Tai Po Kau on 18 September, one (trapped) at Kadoorie ARC on 22nd, two on Mount Davis on 1 October and singles on Mount Austin on 2nd, in Tai Po Kau on 3rd and at Sha Lo Tung on 16 October.

**321 Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher** *Hypothymis azurea*

In the first winter period up to two were recorded from Ho Chung until 26 January and Tai Po Kau until 5 February and singles were seen at Lam Tsuen Valley, Aberdeen Country Park and Hong Kong University. Four apparent passage birds were seen: one in Kowloon Park on 31 March, one at Ho Chung on 10 April and two at Mount Davis on 12th and 15 April (MH,VBP), these last being the latest recorded in spring in Hong Kong. In the second winter period there was one at Shing Mun on 1 October, two at Bride's Pool on 30 October, one at Lam Tsuen Valley from 3 November until 27 December, two trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 10 November; up to two in Tai Po Kau from 13 November until 31 December, one in Long Valley from 21 November until 28 December, one in Aberdeen Country Park on 25 November, one at Hong Kong University on 14 December, one at Ho Chung during 15-28 December, one at Mai Po from 4 December into 1994 and two on Ping Chau on 27 December.

BBR,CC

**321.2 Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*

On Hong Kong Island up to two were recorded in Aberdeen Country Park throughout the year, up to three were at High West on 27 and 28 January, five were seen at Mount Nicholson on 28 September and five were at Yung Shue O on 4 December. Also noted at Mount Austin on 15 September and 21 November. In the New Territories up to four were at Shing Mun throughout the year, one was at Lead Mine Pass on 7 August and at least three were there on 14 August, and one was heard at Pat Sin Leng on 30 October.

BBR

**321.5 Vinous-throated Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis webbianus*

Seen on Tai Mo Shan throughout the year with peak counts of seven on 11 February and 9 October. Two were at Shing Mun on 20 January and 15 April and three were in the Kowloon Hills on 27 November. The latter area is infamous for sightings of released or escaped birds.



**322 Chinese Babax** *Babax lanceolatus*  
The highest count on Tai Mo Shan was nine on 25 July.

**323 Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush** *Garrulax pectoralis*  
Peak counts from the main range in the New Territories included four at the Shek Kong Catchment on 31 May, five at Smuggler's Ridge on 19 June, 15 at Tai Lam Chung on 18 July, 15 at Shing Mun on 4 September, 15 at Sha Lo Tung on 21 November, 16 at Ho Chung on 27 November, six at Lion Rock on 26 December and 35 in Tai Po Kau on 27 December. On Hong Kong Island up to 15 at Tai Tam Reservoir from 3 October to 4 December (PA) were of one of the western races (possibly *G. p. subfuscus*) not the south China race *G. p. picticollis* which is present in the New Territories. Six in Aberdeen Country Park on 22 December were not ascribed to a particular race. Viney (1988) states that there is a feral population of one of the western races on Hong Kong Island which is descended from birds released in the ZBG. BBR,CC

**324 Black-throated Laughing Thrush** *Garrulax chinensis*  
On Hong Kong Island regularly recorded in Aberdeen Country Park, on Mount Austin, at High West and in the ZBG. One was seen in Kowloon Park on 10 April and 1 June and up to four were seen at Shing Mun throughout the year with two juveniles noted on 2 October. BBR,CC

**325 Hwamei** *Garrulax canorus*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

**326 White-cheeked Laughing Thrush** *Garrulax sannio*  
On Hong Kong Island there were records from Aberdeen Country Park, Mount Austin and the ZBG whilst in the New Territories this species was recorded from Chau Tau, Tan Shan Valley, Tai Mo Shan, Sha Lo Tung, Lam Tsuen Valley, west of Fo Tan, above Man Hang and at Tate's Cairn. The highest count was of five at Sha Lo Tung in December. One in Kowloon Park on 13 April was probably an escape or a released bird. BBR

**327 Black-faced Laughing Thrush** *Garrulax perspicillatus*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

**328 Pekin Robin** *Leiothrix lutea*  
As usual, most were seen in the central New Territories with up to 20 in Tai Po Kau and at Leadmine Pass and up to 16 at Shing Mun throughout the year with smaller numbers noted at Wu Kau Tang, Pat Sin Leng, Tai Lam, Kap Lung, Kadoorie ARC, Ng Tun Chai and Ho Chung. The pattern of records strongly suggests that all occurrences in 1993 relate to an established resident population and not to migrants. One at Mai Po on 28 March, up to ten in Kowloon Park from 6-15 April (including two nest building on the first date), a pair at Mount Parker on 29 May and eight at Po Lin Monastery, Lantau, on 27 December are presumed to be escapes or released birds. BBR,CC

**329 Striated Yuhina** *Yuhina castaniceps*  
A flock of about 40 birds was seen in Aberdeen Country Park on 25 November (MT). Subject to irregular irruptions, this species has become scarce

in recent years with all records during 1990-92 considered to relate to escaped or released birds.

**330 White-bellied Yuhina** *Yuhina zantholeuca*  
In Tai Po Kau there were up to two until 28 April and up to three from 13 August; at Shing Mun there were up to three until 14 April and singles from 29 September, whilst at Ho Chung there was one on 17 January, two on 7 February and one on 7 December. It is presumed that the absence of midsummer reports is primarily a consequence of limited observer activity. BBR,CC

**331 Red-headed Tit** *Aegithalos concinnus*  
Recorded from Tai Po Kau throughout the year with peak counts of five on 24 January and 15 on 28 November. One of two seen there on 12 August was a juvenile (RWL). Up to six were at Shing Mun until 20 March with up to three there from 4 September. Two were at Lead Mine Pass on 5 April, one was at Mount Austin on 7 April, three were at Tai Lam Chung Reservoir on 29 April and seven there on 29 May included two juveniles (RWL). There were four adults feeding a juvenile in Aberdeen Country Park on 1 May (VBP) whilst at the Shek Kong Catchment there were two on 31 May and three on 24 December. These observations include the second to fourth breeding records for Hong Kong and suggest that this species is rapidly consolidating its status as a resident member of the avifauna. BBR,CC

**332 Yellow-bellied Tit** *Parus venustulus*  
One was in Tai Po Kau on 6 February (MLC). Three were at Mount Nicholson on 12 September (CAV); the previous earliest date for this irregular irruptive migrant was 20 October 1979 and it is possible that these were escaped or released birds.

**333 Great Tit** *Parus major*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

**333.1 Yellow-cheeked Tit** *Parus spilonotus*  
Up to four were seen in Tai Po Kau in the early part of the year. Two were carrying nesting material on 21 March and a juvenile was seen there on 22 April (VBP). Up to three were in Tai Po Kau from 12 August. Up to three (including two singing males) were at Shing Mun until 8 May and again from 12 September. One was at the Kap Lung Trail (Shek Kong Catchment) on 30 January, two were at Lead Mine Pass on 5 April and one was on Mount Austin on 15 November. Presumably, as with a number of woodland species, the absence of summer reports merely reflects limited observer activity. BBR,CC

**334 Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*  
All records came from Mai Po where there were 11 on 2 January and up to ten through February. Numbers increased in March with peaks of 50 on 6th and 40 on 27th. Up to ten were noted until 16 April and there were ten on 1 May and one on 6 May (GJC) - this last equalling the previous late date for Hong Kong. In the second winter period there was one on 31 October but no more until 36 were seen on 20 November and 25 on 27 November. Up to 12 were present during December. BBR



**335 Fork-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga christinae*  
It was noted that this species is common at Shuen Wan in winter but is absent during the summer months suggesting that local movements, or at least dispersal from breeding habitat, occur. BBR,CC

**336 Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus*  
One in Tai Po Kau on 12 September was the only significant report. Wintering birds typically arrive from mid-October. BBR,CC

**337 Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

**338 Chestnut-flanked White-eye** *Zosterops erythropleura*  
Two were in Tai Po Kau on 9 January (JAH), one was at Mount Austin on 28 January (VBP) and six, believed to be a new high count for Hong Kong, were trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 10 November (DPC).

**1992:** The individual recorded on 1 November was seen at Mount Austin, not as stated.

**339 White-eye** *Zosterops japonica*  
Migrant flocks totalling 244 birds passed over Kadoorie ARC on the morning of 14 November and 150 flew over there on 21 November. BBR,CC

**340 Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis*  
In spring there were singles at Island House, Tai Po, on 28 February, 16 March and 13 April and at Tai Long Wan on 23 April; two were on Cheung Chau on 27 April and one was on Tai Mo Shan on 7 May. In autumn up to four were recorded at Mai Po on seven dates between 12 September and 9 October, four were on Mount Austin and one was at Shing Mun on 2 October, one was in Long Valley on 3 October, one was at Mount Austin on 9 October and two were at The Trappist Monastery, Lantau, on 10 October. BBR

As recently as the mid-1980s this species was considered to be a summer visitor, albeit a declining one, with occasional winter records (Chalmers 1986), but since 1990 all records have been during passage periods, especially in late September and early October.

**341 Tiger Shrike** *Lanius tigrinus*  
Single first winter birds were seen at Mai Po on 29 August (RDES) and on Mount Austin on 15 September (WLY). These are the sixth and seventh Hong Kong records: 29 August is a new early date, all previous records fell between 5th and 26 September.

**341.1 Bull-headed Shrike** *Lanius bucephalus*  
An adult male remained at Fung Yuen, Tai Po, from 4 December 1992 to 14 February 1993 (RWL *et al.*) A female was at Shing Mun on 20 March (DAD), a male was at Sha Lo Tung on 16 October (RWL) and a female or immature was at Shing Mun on 18 November (GAW). These are the eighth to eleventh records for Hong Kong.



**14 Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* immature  
Lamma Island September 1993

Wong Tin Wa

**342 Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*  
One remained at Sha Tin Central Park from 1992 until 16 April and one was at Sheung Shui on 12 March. Spring passage was weak with a total of 24 birds recorded from nine sites between 21 April and 16 May. The highest counts were of five on Ping Chau on 15 May and eight at High Island on 16 May. A juvenile trapped at Mai Po on 31 July (PRK) was unusual but perhaps not surprising since the species breeds in northern Guangdong (Cheng 1987). The main autumn passage commenced on 30 August, and subsequently 27 birds were recorded from eleven sites, with the latest being two long-staying individuals in Victoria Park, Hong Kong Island, which were present from 13 October to 2 November and 2-23 November. BBR

**343 Rufous-backed Shrike** *Lanius schach*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

**345 Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocerus*  
Sixteen at Ho Chung on 16 January and eight at Tsim Bei Tsui on 25 January were exceptional concentrations for midwinter, whilst one in Victoria Park, Hong Kong Island, on 13 October was unusual for the locality. BBR,CC

**346 Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus*  
In the first winter period up to three of the race *leucogenis* were in Tai Po Kau until 21 April, up to four (two of the race *salagensis* and two *leucogenis*) were at Shing Mun until 15 April, one was at Kap Lung on 30 January and one *salagensis* was at Coombe Road, Hong Kong Island, from 12 March to 1 April. In the second winter period an exceptional 15 *salagensis* were seen moving south at Pak Tam/High Island on 2 October (CAV), up to three (at least one *leucogenis*) were at Shing Mun from 2 October and up to two *leucogenis* were in Tai Po Kau from 23 October. BBR,CC



**347 Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus*  
Fifty, a new high count for Hong Kong, were near the Duke of Edinburgh Camp, Lam Tsuen Valley, on 5 March (RWL). The breeding population at Shuen Wan was estimated at five to ten pairs. BBR,CC

**348 Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*  
Up to four were reported from twelve localities in the central and northern New Territories throughout the year. In addition, at least ten were at Yung Shue O on 4 December (CAV). This is a new high count for Hong Kong. CC

**349 Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythrorhynchus*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

**350 Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae*  
Up to five were recorded from Kap Lung, Lam Tsuen Valley, Tai Po Kau, Ho Chung and High West during January to April. There were two at Fo Tan on 8 May, two at Lam Tsuen Valley on 5 June and six, including two juveniles, in Tai Po Kau on 12 August. In the second winter period up to three were recorded from Chau Tau, Starling Inlet, Hok Tau, Tan Shan Valley, Pak Tam Chung, Sha Lo Tung, Kap Lung, Tai Mo Shan and Ho Chung in the New Territories and High West and Mount Davis on Hong Kong Island. Most records fell in late November suggesting passage at this time. Large scale irruptions, as described by Chalmers (1986), now seem to be very rare but, in contrast, summer records have become more frequent. BBR,CC

**351 Magpie** *Pica pica*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC

**351.5 Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*  
A first winter bird was at Nim Wan on 7 November (PJL,GJC). This is the second record for Hong Kong; the first was almost exactly a year earlier, at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui between 22 November and 12 December 1992 - this individual was stated by Stott and Chalmers (1993) to have been present until February 1993 but no acceptable descriptions were received outside the dates noted above.

**352 Jungle Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchus*  
Fifty on a landfill site at Shuen Wan on 12 June was the largest flock reported. A count of 30 on Ping Chau on 6 November, when compared with about four there in summer, suggests at least a local movement. BBR,CC

**353 Collared Crow** *Corvus torquatus*  
A flock of 62 at Shuen Wan on 2 July was the highest count whilst two in Aberdeen Country Park was an unusual record for Hong Kong Island. BBR,CC

**354 Silky Starling** *Sturnus sericeus*  
The largest flock in the first winter period roosted near the Fence to the west of Mai Po: there were up to 130 there in January, 400 on 20 February and

a peak of 600 on 14 March. Elsewhere the largest flocks were at Shuen Wan, which peaked at 216 on 14 March, and at Pak Nai where there were 50 on 10 January. The latest record was of 30 at Shuen Wan on 24 March. In the second winter period there were 12 at Sheung Shui on 16 October. Again, a large roost developed on the Fence to the west of Mai Po; 1300 were counted there on 13 November and 2000 (probably the same flock) were seen coming in to roost at Mai Po on 15 November (SC). This is a new high count for Hong Kong. There were still 1000 on 21 November, falling to 500 on 23 December. There were few records elsewhere: 300 at Tan Shan Valley on 12 November and 40 at Shuen Wan on 27 December were the highest counts. BBR,CC

**355 Purple-backed Starling** *Sturnus sturninus*  
One was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 1 October (DAD), singles were at Mai Po on 2 October (PJL,MRL) and 4 October (GAW) and seven were there on 10 October (PJL,MRL).

**356 Chestnut-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus philippensis*  
Two were observed at Shuen Wan on 26 September (RWL) during the passage of Typhoon Dot. This is the eighth Hong Kong record - one was on 28 September 1986 whilst the remainder were in spring.

**357 Chinese Starling** *Sturnus sinensis*  
Two were at San Tin on 7 February but the main passage period commenced on 20 March when there was one at Mai Po. Numbers were generally low with peak counts of ten at Mai Po on 5 April, 12 at Luk Keng on 12 April, 27 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April and 16 at Mai Po on 6 May. All records came from the northern New Territories except for five in Kowloon Park on 10 April and up to six on Ping Chau during 17-18 April.

There were breeding records from Nam Sang Wai (at least two pairs and juveniles seen), Mui Wo, Lantau, (up to eight adults entering nest sites on 11 June), Cheung Chau, where six adults and two juveniles were seen on 24 June, and Victoria Park, Hong Kong Island, where two newly-fledged juveniles were seen on 26 August. A pair was also present throughout the summer at Mai Po. Autumn passage peaks included 15 at Mai Po on 1 August, 12 at Tin Shui Wai on 8 August and 43 at Mai Po on 28 August. Flocks of up to ten were reported in the northern New Territories until mid-October with late singles at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 November and Mai Po on 20 December. BBR

**358 European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*  
Two were at Tsim Bei Tsui from 26 January to 13 February (MDW,MLC,DAD) and two (one of which was a first-winter bird) were there from 13-30 November (GJC,RWL *et al*). One at Mai Po on 27 December (MLC) was probably also one of these. CC

**360 Grey Starling** *Sturnus cineraceus*  
All records in the first winter period came from the Deep Bay area with the highest count being 60 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 February. The latest was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 30 March. In the second winter period there was one at Luk Keng on 30 October; all other records came from the Deep Bay area where there were four at Mai Po on 31 October, up to 25 in the starling roost in November and a peak of 200 there on 21 December. CC



- 361 Black-necked Starling** *Sturnus nigricollis*  
Eighty in the starling roost to the west of Mai Po on 13 November was the only significant report. BBR,CC
- 362 Crested Mynah** *Acridotheres cristatellus*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC
- 363 Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC
- 364 White-backed Munia** *Lonchura striata*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC
- 365 Spotted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata*  
Flocks of 110 in Long Valley on 12 March, 200 at Mai Po on 7 August, 20 in Long Valley on 6 November and 40 at Mai Po on 14 November were the largest reported. BBR,CC
- 366 Chestnut Munia** *Lonchura malacca*  
Four were seen at Mai Po on 3 July (YYT) and 7 August (HFC), three were there on 21 August (DAD), with four again on 1 September (GJC). One was at Long Valley on 23 December (GAW). Probably only five birds in total.
- 366.1 Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*  
One was seen on Cheung Chau on 29 March (MDW).
- 367 Chinese Greenfinch** *Carduelis sinica*  
Very scarce: one was at Sha Tin Central Park on 23 March, with a pair there on 3 May, one was at Shuen Wan on 21 April, one was at Siu Lek Yuen, Sha Tin, on 29 May, two were at Mai Po on 30 October and one was at Mount Davis on 23 December.
- 369 Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*  
One at Shing Mun on 21 January, one at Lam Tsuen Valley on 3 March, two at Luk Keng on 5 April and five at Ma On Shan on 27 December were the only records. This species also appears to be becoming very scarce. CC
- 370 Black-tailed Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes migratorius*  
In the first winter period there were flocks of up to 22 at Lok Ma Chau between 15 January and 10 April, 20 at Hang Tau between 17 January and 8 February, 13 at Tsim Bei Tsui between 21 January and 3 February and 15 at Lam Tsuen Valley between 25 January and 7 April. There were 13 at Shing Uk Tsuen, near Yuen Long, on 30 March and the latest three were at Shuen Wan on 18 April. Exceptionally scarce in the second winter period: 12 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 26 November was the only report. BBR
- 370.1 Japanese Grosbeak** *Coccothraustes personatus*  
Two were at Lam Tsuen Valley on 30 January (DAD) and one was seen again on 1 and 6 February (MH,VBP,MLC). Two were at Shing Uk



15 Black-tailed Hawfinch *Coccothraustes migratorius* male  
Sheung Shui, January 1993

John Holmes



16 Black-tailed Hawfinch *Coccothraustes migratorius* female  
Sheung Shui, January 1993

John Holmes



Tsuen, near Yuen Long, on 30 March (GAW). These, the fifth and sixth Hong Kong records, include the first away from Lam Tsuen Valley.

**371 Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala*  
Spring passage was weak with a peak of only 30 at Mai Po during 6 to 27 March and 27 April. The latest was at Mai Po on 16 May. One at Mai Po on 19 September (GJC) was a new early date for Hong Kong but numbers in the second winter period were generally low. Passage on Mount Austin occurred from 30 October to 19 December with a peak of ten on 13 November. BBR,CC

**372 Japanese Yellow Bunting** *Emberiza sulphurata*  
Record numbers were recorded in April as follows:

	3rd	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	17th
Mai Po	1		2	1	6		4		1	1	1
Tsim Bei Tsui		1	1	2		15	2	2		2	

There were also singles at Tin Shui Wai on 7 and 13 April, one at Lok Ma Chau on 10 April, three at Kai Tak Airport on 11 April and one at Shuen Wan on 11 April. The count of 15 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 11th April (PRK) was a new high for Hong Kong. BBR

**373 Grey-headed Bunting** *Emberiza fucata*  
In the first winter period there were singles at Luk Keng on 9 January and at Tsim Bei Tsui on 10 April. In the second winter period there were singles at Long Valley from 29 October to 29 December, at Tan Shan Valley on 30 October, at Sha Lo Tung on 3 November, at the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 28 November and at Nam Sang Wai on 4 December. BBR,CC

**374 Tristram's Bunting** *Emberiza tristrami*  
In the first winter period up to ten were recorded in Tai Po Kau until 2 April with smaller numbers at Kap Lung, Shing Mun, Ho Chung, Aberdeen Country Park and High West. The latest was at Shing Mun on 4 April. In the second winter period the first was seen at Tai Tam Reservoir on 31 October; subsequently, there were up to six at Tai Po Kau, up to five at Kap Lung, up to seven at Shing Mun and up to six in Aberdeen Country Park until the year end. Also recorded from Kadoorie ARC, Lam Tsuen Valley, Tai Lam, Ho Chung, and Chai Wan. BBR,CC

**375 Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*  
A male was at Mount Davis on 11 April (MT), another male was at Mai Po on 12 April (PJL), a male and a female were at Pok Fu Lam from 24th to 25 April with a second male present on the later date (PRK, VBP).

**376 Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*  
The peak count in the first winter period came from Nam Sang Wai where there were 50 on 4 March. The latest record was of 12 at Pok Fu Lam on 25 April. In the second winter period the earliest record was of one on Mount Austin on 10 October. There were 20 in Long Valley on 23 November, 15 at Ping Shan Chai on 18 December and 70 at Sha Lo Tung on 22 December. BBR,CC

**377 Chestnut Bunting** *Emberiza rutila*  
Fifteen were at Tai Lam Country Park on 3 January, a high count for midwinter. Spring passage was weak with up to four recorded at Mai Po, Shing Mun and Pok Fu Lam between 4th and 25th April and one male on Mount Parker on 29 May. In view of the urban location and late date, this last seems likely to have been an escaped or released bird. Good numbers in autumn, commencing with six at Mount Austin on 9 October. There were over 100 flying east in small flocks at Tsim Bei Tsui on 31 October, 50 at Kadoorie ARC on 7 November, 20 at Sha Lo Tung on 12 November, 80 there on 21 November, 20 at Tan Shan Valley on 27 November, 120 at Sha Lo Tung on 6 December and 50 at Hok Tau on 6 December with up to ten also recorded from several other sites in the New Territories during this period. BBR

**378 Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola*  
Spring passage occurred from 13 March to 30 April with a maximum of 13 at Tin Shui Wai on 23 April. In autumn, there was an early single at Long Valley on 19 September but the main passage period was from 2 October to 4 December. Small numbers were widely reported, primarily around Deep Bay, and the highest counts were of 22 in Long Valley on 6 November and 15 at Mai Po on 15 November. BBR

**379 Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*  
At flock of at least six was recorded at pond 14, Mai Po, from 10 January to 21 March as follows: a female trapped on 10 January, three females trapped on 30 January, a female seen on 6 February, a male trapped and a female retrapped on 6 March, and a female trapped and a male retrapped on 21 March (PJL,FW,PRK *et al.*). This is the seventh Hong Kong record; one of the previous records is also of a small flock at Mai Po - up to five from 7 February to 14 March 1982.

**380 Crested Bunting** *Melophus lathami*  
Three were at Ho Chung during 16-22 January (MH). A male was singing on Sleeper's Hill (by Kowloon Peak) on 19 April (MH) and a pair were displaying at Chuen Lung, Tai Mo Shan, on 22 May (HFC). One was at Tan Shan Valley on 12 November (DAD), one was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 20 November (DPC) and two were at Ho Chung on 9th and 10 December (MH).

CATEGORY B. SPECIES WHICH HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN AN APPARENTLY WILD STATE IN HONG KONG, BUT NOT IN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

**501 Ring-necked Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*  
A male on Old Peak Road, Hong Kong Island, on 29 June was clearly an escaped or released bird.



CATEGORY C. SPECIES WHICH, ALTHOUGH ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED BY MAN, HAVE NOW ESTABLISHED A REGULAR FERAL BREEDING STOCK WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT BE SELF-SUPPORTING

- 601 Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC
- 602 Rainbow Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus*  
Regularly recorded at Shouson Hill all year with a maximum of ten on 23 October; one was at Island House, Tai Po, from 25 March to 8 April and three were in Victoria Park, Hong Kong Island, on 4 October.
- 603 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** *Cacatua sulphurea*  
No significant reports. BBR,CC
- 604 Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*  
Flocks of ten at Tsui Keng, Fanling, on 9 January and three at Kam Tin on 11 September were the only reports away from the urban area. BBR,CC
- 605 Common Mynah** *Acridotheres tristis*  
Single breeding pairs were noted at the landfill area near Mai Po, Chek Nai Ping, Sheung Uk Tsuen and Sheung Shui. Up to three at Kam Tin and up to ten at Nam Sang Wai were the only reports away from these areas. BBR
- 606 Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyana*  
Still present in the ZBG where a pair was noted between 3 and 10 April. BBR

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

- 706.5 Blue-throated Flycatcher** *Cyornis rubeculoides*  
A male of the distinctive race *glaucomans* (sometimes treated as a separate species, Chinese Flycatcher) was present in Ho Chung wood from 16 January to 4 February (MH, JAH *et al.*) This is the first record for Hong Kong of this west China flycatcher (see elsewhere in this Report).
- 706.7 Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophilata*  
One was seen in Tai Po Kau on 24 January (FW). This is the first Hong Kong record (see elsewhere in this Report).
- 709 Rufous-capped Babbler** *Stachyris ruficeps*  
One was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 6 March (DPC) and one was seen at Shing Mun on 1 October (PJL). The only previous records are of two in Tai Po Kau on 29 June 1985 and one at Shing Mun on 31 December 1991.
- 711 Grey-headed Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis gularis*  
A party of approximately eight were seen north of the Lion Rock on 7 January (JGH) and seven were seen near Tai Po Mei Village on 18 July (GJC). Records of small parties are typical for this species.

- 712 Grey-cheeked Fulvetta** *Alcippe morrisonia*  
An adult and juvenile seen together in Tai Po Kau on 8 August (RWL) is the first breeding record for Hong Kong. At least seven were in Tai Po Kau on 18 September (CAV) and at least five were seen there on 23 October (JSRE, CAV). Eight were seen on the Catchwater Path between Lan Lai Wan and Tai Tam, Hong Kong Island, on 27 December (JEB). Whilst the first record was of a single bird in 1984, the only other previous sighting concerned a flock of ten in Tai Po Kau on 31 October 1992. CC

- 712.1 Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** *Sitta frontalis*  
Up to six were regularly seen in Tai Po Kau in the first half of the year. One or two pairs were proven to breed there with family parties, including at least two begging juveniles, noted on 30 May and 5 June (SES, MRL). This is the first instance of proven breeding in Hong Kong. Slightly higher numbers were present in Tai Po Kau in the second winter period with at least ten (a new high count) present on 24 November (WLY). Away from Tai Po Kau there were two at Shing Mun on 2 October, one at Ho Chung on 17 October, three at Shing Mun on 27 December and one at King's Park, Kowloon, on 30 December. BBR,CC

- 712.5 Chestnut-tailed Starling** *Sturnus malabaricus*  
Two were at Tsim Bei Tsui from 22 January to 5 February (IT *et al.*). This is the first record for Hong Kong (see elsewhere in this Report).

- 712.7 Ruddy Sparrow** *Passer rutilans*  
A female was at Ho Chung from 10-12 December (MH, JEB, WLY). (Formerly 712.2).

[ **Red-headed/Black-headed Bunting**

- Emberiza bruniceps/melanocephala*  
A female or immature of one of these species was at Ho Chung on 17 November (MH). The three previous records (four birds) of this difficult species pair were all in October 1992.]

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

- 800.5 Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa*  
**802.05 Chattering Lory** *Lorius garrulus*  
**802.1 Goffin's Cockatoo** *Cacatua goffini*  
**802.5 Palm Cockatoo \*** *Probosciger aterrimus*  
**805 Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria*  
**808 Budgerigar** *Melopsittacus undulatus*  
**810.05 Collared Finchbill** *Spizixos semitorques*  
**812.2 White-tailed Robin** *Cinclidium leucurum*  
**813 Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata*  
**814.7 Red-winged Laughing Thrush \*** *Garrulax formosus*  
**815 Rufous Laughing Thrush** *Garrulax poecilorhynchus*  
**816 Silver-eared Mesia** *Leiothrix argentauris*



816.01	Blue-winged Minla	<i>Minla cyanuroptera</i>
816.02	Red-tailed Minla *	<i>Minla ignotincta</i>
816.07	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>
816.2	Green Jay	<i>Cyanocorax yncas</i>
821	White-vented Mynah	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
822	Indian Grackle	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
824	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
828.1	Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>
830	Java Sparrow	<i>Padda oryzivora</i>

\* First recorded in 1993

# THE FOLLOWING RECORDS WERE SUBMITTED BUT NOT ACCEPTED BY THE RECORDS COMMITTEE

**Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii* Cape D'Aguilar, 17 September (accepted as *Procellariid* sp.)

**Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula* Cheung Chau, 23 August

**Bean Goose** *Anser fabilis* Starling Inlet, 7 December (accepted as Goose sp. *Anser* sp.)

**Swinhoe's Egret** *Egretta eulophotes* Ping Chau, 11 June

**Reef Egret** *Egretta sacra* Tsim Bei Tsui, 9 June

**Lesser Treeduck** *Dendrocygna javanica* Sheung Shui, 8 July

**Wigeon x American Wigeon** *Anas penelope* x *americana* Mai Po, 13 October

**Baer's Pochard** *Aythya baeri* eleven, Mai Po, 1 April

**Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Tsim Bei Tsui, 13 September; Tai Po Kau, 23 October

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus* Tin Shui Wai, 26 December

**White-tailed Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla* Deep Water Bay, 19 December

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* Long Valley, 23 December (accepted as Pied Harrier)

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* Tai Mo Shan, 25 July

**Japanese Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter gularis* Tsim Bei Tsui, 8 April; Ping Chau 12 April; Tai Long Wan, 23 April; Sai Kung, 24 April; Tsim Bei Tsui, 28 April (all accepted as small *Accipiter* sp.)

**Besra** *Accipiter virgatus* Port Shelter, 29 July; Mount Austin, 28 August; Shing Mun 9 September and 10 October; Tsim Bei Tsui 3 December (all accepted as small *Accipiter* sp. except for that on 29 July)

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* Tsim Bei Tsui, 22 March; Chek Nai Ping, 26 March (both accepted as small *Accipiter* sp.); Pok Fu Lam, 2 December

**Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca* Shuen Wan, 22 May; Sha Po 15 August

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* Mai Po 16 January

**Barred Buttonquail** *Turnix suscitator* two, Tai Po, 2 November

**White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis* Mai Po, 29 August

**Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* Tin Shui Wai, 28 April

**'Cox's Sandpiper'** *Calidris 'paramelanotos'* Tsim Bei Tsui, 30 April

**Solitary Snipe** *Gallinago solitaria* Chuen Lung, 29 September

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* Mirs Bay, 12 and 17 April (both accepted as Skua sp. *Stercorarius* sp.)

**Skua** sp. *Stercorarius* sp. eight, near Ping Chau, 18 April; Cape D'Aguilar 17 September; seven, Cheung Chau 4 November

**Common Gull** *Larus canus* Tsim Bei Tsui 16 March

**Aleutian Tern** *Sterna aleutica* Mirs Bay, 17 April

**Blue and Yellow Macaw** *Ara ararauna* Sai Kung 3 July

**Thick-billed Pigeon** *Treron curvirostra* Yung Shue O, 4 December (accepted as Green Pigeon sp. *Treron curvirostris/pompadora*)

**Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus* Mount Austin, 21 September

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* Ho Sheung Heung, 24 September

**Brown Hawk Owl** *Ninox scutulata* Tai Tam Reservoir, 10 April

**Japanese Nightjar** *Caprimulgus indicus* Tai Mo Shan, 18 April

**Blue-throated Bee-eater** *Merops viridis* four, Tsim Bei Tsui, 6 October (accepted as Bee-eater sp.)

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Picoides major* Pat Sin Leng, 29 May

**Bay Woodpecker** *Blythipicus pyrrhotis* heard, Plover Cove, 30 October

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta* Tsim Bei Tsui, 13 September; Sheung Shui 10 November; Long Valley, 23 December

**Brown-breasted Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous* Kowloon Park, 10 April

**Brown Dipper** *Cinclus pallasii* Amah Rock, 25 December

**White-browed Shortwing** *Brachypteryx montana* Sha Lo Tung 13 February

**Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus schistaceus* Shing Mun, 29 September

**Pale-footed Bush Warbler** *Cettia pallidipes* Ho Chung, 20 March

**Aberrant Bush Warbler** *Cettia flavolivacea* Shing Mun, 7 December

**Styan's Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella pleskei* Nam Sang Wai, 8 November

**Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola* Nam Sang Wai, 4 March

**Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides* Tai Po Kau, 2 April; Shing Mun, 10 April; two, Lam Tsuen Valley, 6 September

**Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes* Aberdeen Country Park, 2 January

**Two-barred Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* Lam Tsuen Valley, 7 February (two), 29 November, 2 December; Long Valley, 6 and 23 December

**Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis* High West, 27 December

**Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica* Tai Po Kau, 1 May, 18 September; Mount Nicholson 15 September (two), 30 September

**Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni* Tai Po Kau, 12th and 15 August

**Fukien Niltava** *Niltava davidi* male, Tai Po Kau, 23 January (accepted as *Niltava* sp. *N. davidi/sundara*)

**Chestnut-capped Babbler** *Timalia pileata* five, Shing Mun, 12 December

**Grey-cheeked Fulvetta** *Alcippe morrisonia* three, Tai Po Kau, 29 November

**Striated Yuhina** *Yuhina castaniceps* Tai Po Kau 31 July, 7 August

**Yellow-bellied Tit** *Parus venustus* two heard, Shuen Wan, 23 December

**Olive-backed Sunbird** *Nectarinia jugularis* Tai Po Kau, 1 May

**Tiger Shrike** *Lanius tigrinus* Shing Mun, 9 September

**Carrión Crow** *Corvus corone* Tsim Bei Tsui, 10 and 27 February, 6 July

**Purple-backed Starling** *Sturnus sturninus* Lam Tsuen Valley, 5 September

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* Mai Po 12 September

**Japanese Grosbeak** *Coccothraustes personatus* Lam Tsuen Valley, 7 February; immature, Shing Uk Tsuen, 30 March

**1992:**

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius* Lau Fau Shan, 1 December

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* two, Mai Po, 30 March

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## WINTER WATERFOWL COUNTS 1992-93

*G.J. Carey*

In addition to the fourteenth annual coordinated count of wintering waterfowl organised by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society and held on 10 January 1993, coordinated mid-monthly counts during November to March were also undertaken for the first time. These other counts took place on 15 November, 13 December, 14 February and 14 March. It is intended that these monthly counts should continue every winter so as to get a clearer picture of the numbers of waterfowl using wetlands in Hong Kong and especially Deep Bay. In accordance with guidelines from the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau and the Asian Wetland Bureau other counts, if higher, were included for the one week period either side of the coordinated count date. All the Deep Bay sites included in recent counts were covered in January with the addition of Shuen Wan which supports a substantial population of egrets and herons. In the other months there were a number of exceptions as listed below; it is hoped that such shortfalls will not occur in future.

The results of the five counts are summarised in Table 1. The January count is given in full in Table 2 to allow comparison with previous years. Full details of all counts can be obtained from the count coordinator.

**TABLE 1. Waterfowl Count subtotals by group and location**

	LOCALITY	NOV <sup>1</sup>	DEC <sup>2</sup>	JAN	FEB <sup>3</sup>	MAR <sup>4</sup>
Cormorants	Deep Bay	2074	665	4898	5000	2635
	SI & SW	—	—	200	0	49
Herons, egrets etc.	Deep Bay	2388	1877	4327	2509	1446
	SI & SW	—	—	310	168	665
Duck, grebes	Deep Bay	10562	5600	15353	9996	2925
	SI & SW	—	—	32	4	67
Rails, Coot etc	Deep Bay	971	1012	1469	1304	74
	SI & SW	—	—	4	18	13
Waders	Deep Bay	5969	7288	5676	4540	3239
	SI & SW	—	—	46	22	18
Gulls, terns	Deep Bay	2262	8235	17430	4739	9151
	SI & SW	—	—	1275	140	54
Sub-total	Deep Bay	24226	24677	49153	28088	19470
	SI & SW	—	—	1867	352	866
Total		24226	24677	51020	28440	20336

SI: Starling Inlet

SW: Shuen Wan

—: no count

1: Tin Shui Wai, Fu Tian National Nature Reserve, Nim Wan/Lau Fau Shan, San Tin/Lok Ma Chau, Starling Inlet and Shuen Wan not counted.

2: Tin Shui Wai, Fu Tian National Nature Reserve, Nim Wan/Lau Fau Shan, San Tin/Lok Ma Chau, Starling Inlet and Shuen Wan not counted.

3: Tin Shui Wai and Starling Inlet not counted.

4: Tin Shui Wai not counted.

During the January count, in the Deep Bay area a total of 49,153 birds of 72 species was recorded. This is the highest count so far and represents a 0.75% increase over the previous highest total of 48,784 in 1991. In addition, 278 birds of four species were recorded at Starling Inlet and 1589 birds of 17 species at Shuen Wan. The total count for all sites is 51,020.

The most obvious feature of the winter as far as waterfowl was concerned was the high number of Cormorants in the Deep Bay area, far surpassing previous counts and proving largely responsible for taking the total to such a height. The establishment of the captive waterfowl collection at Mai Po has provided an attractive roost site not only for duck, but also, perhaps slightly surprisingly, for Cormorants. The total of 5098 in January exceeds the previous highest by 1691; what is more, although it is probable that the high total to some extent reflects the greater efforts that were made to accurately record the numbers in the bay, it is nevertheless likely that this under-records the true number in the area.

Good news occurred in the form of a return to Deep Bay of Dalmatian Pelicans – 15 was the highest winter count, including four juveniles, made in February. This is almost certainly due to much decreased disturbance as a result of people no longer visiting the mudflats adjacent to Mai Po Reserve in large numbers in order to collect mudskippers. Black-faced Spoonbill recorded a count of 73 in February, the highest ever in Hong Kong, which represents 21.5% of the known world population (Dahmer and Felley 1994). Whether this increase is due to pressure elsewhere or to an increase in numbers is open to debate.

Other records of interest in Deep Bay in January were new high winter counts for Shoveler (5171), Avocet (550), Redshank (736) and Greenshank (453); the Deep Bay total of Black-headed Gulls (17,225) was also the highest ever. Three species never recorded before on a Waterfowl Count were Relict Gull, Slaty-backed Gull and Black Vulture. Another over-wintering Spoon-billed Sandpiper was also present. There were also record winter counts of Pintail (5616) in November, of Kentish Plover (4000) in December, and of Asiatic Golden Plover (194), Black-tailed Godwit (228) and Marsh Sandpiper (500) in February. The January count of Little Egrets was only eleven short of the previous highest.

If the highest Deep Bay counts in the winter period proper, defined as December to January, for each species are added together, the total is 54,350 birds of 81 species, which is about 10.5% higher than the Deep Bay count of January. This is, perhaps, a more accurate reflection the numbers of birds dependent on the Bay for at least part of the winter.



Raptor species in the Deep Bay area were again counted and the following totals were obtained: Black Kite – 201; Black Vulture – 1; Marsh Harrier – 4; Common Buzzard – 5; Spotted Eagle – 4; Imperial Eagle – 5; Osprey – 13; Peregrine – 1.

The cooperation of the staff at Fu Tian Nature Reserve is gratefully acknowledged. The following observers participated in the counts: G.J. Carey (coordinator), M.L. Chalmers, P.R. Kennerley, P.J. Leader, D.A. Diskin, M. Turnbull, R.W. Lewthwaite, M. and E. Leven, S. McChesney, I. Tyzzer, V.B. Picken, M.D. Williams, J. Holmes, J.S.R. Edge, F.K.O. Wong, C.A. Viney, A. and W. Young, L. Young, J. Hackett, M. Hale, P. Garland, J. Burton, N.J. Croft and S. Chan. I am very grateful to all who took part.

除了每年一度的冬季水禽調查之外，也第一次安排了月中的調查，時間為十一月至翌年三月。五次調查所得綜合在表一中；一月那一次的調查結果則詳列在表示，以方便和過往的結果作比較。一月，在後海灣錄得 72 個品種，合共 49,153 隻，是有史以來最高的紀錄，比前一個高紀錄（1991 年）多出 0.75%。鸕鶿 *Phalacrocorax carbo* 的數量很多，卷羽鵜鶘 *Pelecanus crispus* 的數目也有增加。

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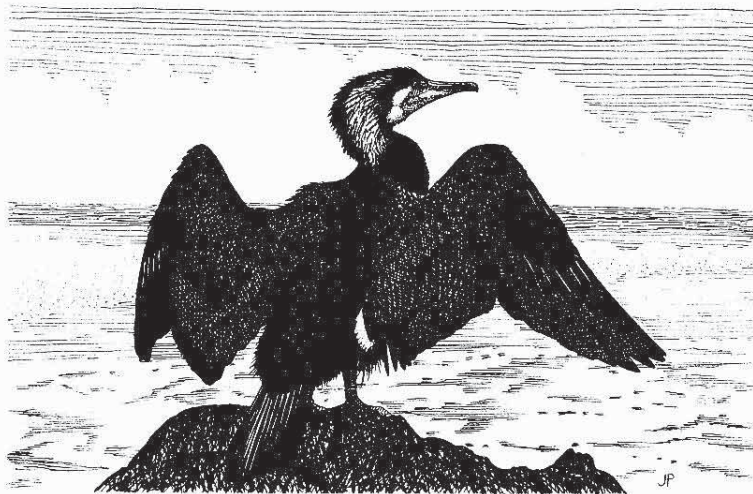


TABLE 2. Summary of Waterfowl Count January 1993

Species	Shuen Wan	Yim Tso Ha Starling Inlet	Deep Bay Area						Total	
			Fu Tian	Ma Tso Lung Lo Wu Lok Ma Chau	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan Lau Fau Shan		
Little Grebe	11		5	8	46	4		10	5	89
Great Crested Grebe			3			5			19	27
Cormorant	200		411	185	*	1612			2690	5098
Dalmatian Pelican						7				7
Night Heron	3		24		200			1		228
Chinese Pond Heron	25		94	64	73	39		15	116	426
Cattle Egret				47	47	17		1	1	113
Little Egret	40	20	173	292	718	382		152	233	2010
Intermediate Egret	1				1	3				5
Great Egret	24	116	130	8	124	150		7	17	576
Grey Heron	14	67	48	97	429	524		22	2	1203
Purple Heron				1	1					2
Black Stork								1		1
Oriental White Stork					9	*				9
White Ibis					1	*			1	1
European Spoonbill					3					3
Black-faced Spoonbill					51	1			1	53
Ruddy Shelduck			2							2
Shelduck			141			573			15	729
Mandarin					1					1
										Continued ...

Continued ...



TABLE 2. Continued

Species	Shuen Wan	Yim Tso Ha Starling Inlet	Deep Bay Area						Total
			Fu Tian	Ma Tso Lung Lo Wu Lok Ma Chau	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan Lau Fau Shan	
Wigeon			7		193	600		320	1120
Falcated Teal					124			2	126
Gadwall			1			1			2
Teal	21			374	977	998	14		2384
Mallard					11	6	3		20
Yellow-nib Duck					119	86	4	20	229
Pintail			4332		88	907		92	5419
Garganey				1	15				16
Shoveler			3364		19	1748		40	5171
Common Pochard						3			3
Baer's Pochard					2				2
Tufted Duck					10	8		11	29
Scaup					1				1
Red-breasted Merganser								15	15
Banded Rail					1	2	1		4
White-breasted Waterhen			3	10	10	1	8	2	34
Moorhen	2			74	17	1	1		95
Coot	2			173	299	2		860	1336
Black-winged Stilt					149			7	156
Avocet								550	550

Continued ...

TABLE 2. Continued

Species	Shuen Wan	Yim Tso Ha Starling Inlet	Deep Bay Area						Total
			Fu Tian	Ma Tso Lung Lo Wu Lok Ma Chau	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan Lau Fau Shan	
Little Ringed Plover	35			3	16	2	3	96	155
Kentish Plover						800	1		801
Lesser Sand Plover						43			43
Greater Sand Plover						1			1
Asiatic Golden Plover						160			160
Grey Plover						245			245
Grey-headed Lapwing						5			5
Great Knot						12			12
Knot						5			5
Red-necked Stint						6		1	7
Long-toed Stint								6	6
Curlew Sandpiper						2			2
Dunlin						825		19	844
Spoon-billed Sandpiper						1			1
Broad-billed Sandpiper						5			5
Fantail Snipe				52		5			57
Pintail Snipe				4					4
Black-tailed Godwit						140			140
Curlew			24			504			528

Continued ...



TABLE 2. Continued

Species	Shuen Wan	Yim Tso Ha Starling Inlet	Deep Bay Area						Total
			Fu Tian	Ma Tso Lung Lo Wu Lok Ma Chau	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan Lau Fau Shan	
Spotted Redshank			204		16		72		292
Redshank			5				731		736
Marsh Sandpiper			1				124	2	129
Greenshank			68		5		343	37	453
Green Sandpiper	1			13	4		1	4	23
Wood Sandpiper				39	6		6	8	64
Common Sandpiper	10		2	9	9		11	3	53
Wader sp.							250		250
Saunders' Gull							67		67
Relict Gull							1		1
Black-headed Gull	1200	75	9188	665	580		6397	395	18500
Black-tailed Gull							1		1
Herring Gull			3				121	11	135
Slaty-backed Gull							1		1

\* indicates total deleted to avoid possible double count

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## REPORT ON BIRD RINGING IN HONG KONG IN 1993

David S. Melville

Totals for both numbers of individual birds (4,065) and species (153) ringed in 1993 were lower than in 1992. This largely resulted from poor weather reducing shorebird catches, a poor spring passage of buntings, and the departure of three active members of the ringing group during the year - Tony Galsworthy, Fox Wong and Peter Kennerley.

Species totals are given in Table 1, together with those from previous years. The most recent report on bird ringing in the Territory is given by Melville and Galsworthy (1993). Ringing activities continued to be concentrated at the WWF Hong Kong Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve and the University of Hong Kong Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre (KARC), near Shek Kong. A limited amount of ringing at Luk Keng, Long Valley and other sites in the New Territories resulted in several interesting captures.

No species were added to the Hong Kong list during the year as a result of trapping, however captured birds included an as yet unidentified Locustella warbler (see Leader 1994) and the third ringed (but fourth record of) Chiffchaff.

The trapping of further Japanese Sparrowhawks and Besras has permitted a more detailed analysis of biometrics which shows a clear split between the two species on wing/tail ratio. This has led to the re-identification of a bird, originally ringed as a Japanese Sparrowhawk in 1990, as a Besra (Leader and Carey in prep.).

A Slaty-legged Crane, the eighth record for Hong Kong, was found in the streets of Mongkok in September, but from its physical condition it was clearly a wild bird. It was subsequently released in the marsh at Shuen Wan. Another bird in atypical habitat, which was found after flying into a building, was Hong Kong's fifth record of Chinese Pitta, at Shek Kong.

The Grey Phalarope was a first summer bird which remained at Mai Po for most of the summer and follows the first sightings of this species in the Territory three months earlier (Aston 1994). The Black-naped and Roseate Tern chicks were the first to be ringed in the Territory. Both species nested on a small island in eastern waters and managed to avoid human predation and typhoon damage. The Hoopoe chick was the first breeding record of this species in Hong Kong (Melville 1994).

Particularly cold weather in January/February (absolute minimum temperature 5.4°C) appeared to result in mortality of some species, several moribund Yellow-browed Warblers being found in the bottom panel of nets for example. It is noteworthy that, whereas resident Yellow-bellied and Plain Prinias regularly show substantial fat deposits in the tracheal pit in midwinter, migrant Phylloscopus warblers do not and thus may be less able to withstand severe cold spells.



Autumn numbers of bulbuls and White-eyes at Mai Po were low compared with previous years, but bulbul catches at Kadoorie ARC were larger than usual. The explanation for this is unknown. The bird trade continues to supply a variety of 'new' species to Hong Kong and birds of likely captive origin caught during the year included Rufous-capped Babbler, Pied Bushchat, Collared Finchbill and Red-winged Laughing Thrush. Such birds are, nevertheless, ringed since it is possible that some may establish feral breeding populations, as have Silver-eared Mesias (and possibly Pekin Robins) at KARC.

The reduction in shorebird trapping accounts for the small number of overseas movements recorded during the year (Table 2). The Curlew Sandpiper was our first record from Malaysia, but was not unexpected in view of the spread of Australian recoveries of this species through southeast Asia, including Thailand and Vietnam (Pook 1992). The Redshank in Shandong is our second from that province; ring details of what was almost certainly another Redshank in Shandong, recovered in May/June 1992, were not properly recorded and it has been impossible to determine its identity.

Despite the fact that only one Australian-ringed wader was caught, there was a large number of sightings of leg-flagged birds (Table 5). The value of flagging can clearly be seen, especially since the Greater Sandplover was one of only three birds marked in Victoria, Australia!

The Great Reed Warbler is our fourth to be found in Japan (three Japanese birds have been controlled in Hong Kong). The late date makes it impossible to know whether this bird was on passage or at a breeding site. Our databank of recaptures continues to expand and a number of the more interesting records are detailed in Table 3.

Longevity records for a selection of 'resident' species are given in Table 4. It should be noted that for a number of these species our studies appear to be the first to determine longevity (c.f. McClure 1984). It should be appreciated that these are probably approaching extreme records, and that the 'average' lifespan of these species is likely to be considerably shorter.

The results of a study into infestation of apparent Knemidocoptes mites in passerines at Mai Po have now been published (Mainka *et al.* 1994). A study of mitochondrial DNA obtained from blood samples of Dunlin collected at Mai Po has confirmed that wintering birds derive from populations in eastern Siberia and Alaska (Wenink and Baker 1994), as previously indicated by biometrics. Biometric data for Styan's Grasshopper Warblers, obtained from ringing studies in Hong Kong, have been published by Kennerley and Leader (1993). Studies into leg 'cramp' (capture myopathy) in shorebirds (S. Mainka) are continuing, and information on the diets of *Prinia* spp. is in preparation (G. Reels). The results of an earlier study into avian influenza are in preparation.

I wish to thank the Ringing Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology for permission to use their rings in Hong Kong. Trapping of birds

is carried out under permits issued by the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries and ringing at KARC is conducted with the kind permission of the University of Hong Kong. I am grateful to fellow ringers Geoff Carey, David Carthy, Tony Galsworthy, Peter Kennerley, Paul Leader, Mike Leven and Fox Wong. Many others have assisted with ringing during the course of the year and I thank them all, especially Jan Galsworthy, Liz Leven, Steve McChesney, Vicky Melville and Lew Young. A great debt of gratitude is owed to Tony Galsworthy and Mike and Liz Leven for computerising the ringing records, and to John Bryant for assistance in programming. Steve McChesney very kindly collated the leg-flag records.

Bird ringing in Hong Kong is a WWF Hong Kong project made possible through the generous sponsorship of Exxon Energy Limited. We are most grateful for their continuing support.



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1993 年內環志的雀鳥，無論是總數量（4,065），或是品種數目（153），都比 1992 年少。表一列舉了各品種的總數，也列出了過往幾年有關的數字。網捕的雀鳥中包括灰瓣蹼鵒 *Phalaropus fulicarius*（該品種的第二個紀錄）、香港錄得的第五隻藍翅八色鶇 *Pitta nympha*、戴勝 *Upupa epops* 的雌鳥（本地首次繁殖紀錄）與及第三次環志的棕柳鶯 *Phylloscopus collybita*（本港的第四個紀錄）。表示至表五紀錄了部份被再度捕獲的環志雀鳥，與及帶有環志旗號的涉禽。



TABLE 1. Birds Ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1993

Species	MAPS*	1975-1992	1993	Total
Little Grebe		1		1
Cormorant		1		1
Bittern		1		1
Yellow Bitten	15	70	6	91
Schrenck's Bittern		2		2
Chestnut Bittern	1	3		4
Night Heron		6		6
Little Green Heron		6	3	9
Chinese Pond Heron		89	2	91
Cattle Egret		2		2
Little Egret		4	2	6
Falcated Teal		1		1
Teal		34	2	36
Yellow-nib Duck		3		3
Pintail		1		1
Garganey		7	1	8
Shoveler			1	1
Black Kite		39	1	40
Japanese Sparrowhawk	1	16	5	22
Besra		8	3	11
Sparrowhawk		1		1
Chinese Goshawk		1		1
Imperial Eagle	1**			1
Bonelli's Eagle		1		1
Kestrel	4**	2		6
Peregrine Falcon		1**		1
Chinese Francolin	7**			7
Japanese Quail	1**			1
Yellow-legged Button Quail	1**	1		2
Barred Button Quail	1	1		2
Slaty-legged Crane			1	1
Banded Rail			1	1
Baillon's Crane	1			1
White-breasted Waterhen	1	21	1	23
Moorhen		2	1	3
Coot		4	1	5
Painted Snipe		5		5
Black-winged Stilt		1		1
Avocet		3	7	10
Oriental Pratincole		3		3
Little Ringed Plover		5	1	6
Kentish Plover		44	1	45
Lesser Sand Plover		64	1	65
Greater Sand Plover		241	17	258

Continued ...

TABLE 1. continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1992	1993	Total
Asiatic Golden Plover		104	5	109
Grey Plover		70	12	82
Great Knot		91	2	93
Knot		92	13	105
Sanderling		1		1
Red-necked Stint	6	200	1	207
Temminck's Stint		1		1
Long-toed Stint		31		31
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		44		44
Pectoral Sandpiper		1		1
Curlew Sandpiper	1	815	135	951
Dunlin		370	3	373
Spoon-billed Sandpiper		3		3
Broad-billed Sandpiper		104	2	106
Ruff		3		3
Fantail Snipe	1	116		117
Pintail Snipe		18		18
Swinhoe's Snipe		13		13
Asiatic Dowitcher		21	2	23
Black-tailed Godwit		39	10	49
Bar-tailed Godwit		77	1	78
Whimbrel		421	21	442
Curlew		29		29
Australian Curlew		2		2
Spotted Redshank		13	5	18
Redshank		1283	155	1438
Marsh Sandpiper		94	6	100
Greenshank		45	15	60
Nordmann's Greenshank			1	1
Green Sandpiper		1		1
Wood Sandpiper		196	2	198
Terek Sandpiper		506	41	547
Common Sandpiper	4	126	19	145
Grey-rumped Sandpiper		67	2	69
Turnstone		22	10	32
Grey Phalarope			1	1
Red-necked Phalarope		9	2	11
Black-naped Tern			11	11
Roseate Tern			6	6
Rufous Turtle Dove		33	8	41
Spotted Dove	2	159	44	205
Emerald Dove		12	1	13
Rose-ringed Parakeet	1			1
Budgerigar		4		4
Red-winged Crested Cuckoo			3	3

Continued ...



TABLE 1. continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1992	1993	Total
Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>	5	1	6
Oriental Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus saturatus</i>	2		2
Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>	3	3	6
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	12		12
Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>	2	1	5
Collared Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>		1	1
Oriental Scops Owl	<i>Otus (scops) sunia</i>	2	1	3
Barred Owlet	<i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>		2**	2
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	2**	1	3
Pacific Swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>		12	6
House Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>		12	35
White-breasted Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	24	43	19
Black-capped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon pileata</i>	5	33	4
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	104	838	104
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>		5	5
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>			1
Great Barbet	<i>Megalaima virens</i>		1	1
Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	21	29	
Chinese Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>			1
Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>			3
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	1		1
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	11	203	15
Asian House Martin	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>		26	26
Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	13	4	4
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	86	56	7
Pechora Pipit	<i>Anthus gustavi</i>		3	3
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>		1	1
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		74	74
Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>		2	2
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	6	5	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	18	494	
Ashy Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus divaricatus</i>		2	2
Collared Finchbill	<i>Spizixos semitorques</i>			2
Crested Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	80	862	496
Chinese Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>	895	2011	506
Brown-breasted Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus xanthorrhous</i>		1	1
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus aurigaster</i>	95	17	3
Chestnut Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes castanonotus</i>	2		2
Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>	1		1
White-tailed Robin	<i>Cinclidium leucurum</i>		1	1
Red-tailed Robin	<i>Luscinia sibilans</i>	6	41	13
Rubythroat	<i>Luscinia calliope</i>	95	176	38
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	9	26	6
Siberian Blue Robin	<i>Luscinia cyane</i>		6	6
Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	30	214	38
Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>	16	14	2
Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	2	63	7

Continued ...

TABLE 1. continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1992	1993	Total
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	48	86	3
Grey Bushchat	<i>Saxicola ferrea</i>	1		1
Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>			1
White-throated Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola gularis</i>		1	1
Violet Whistling Thrush	<i>Myiophonus caeruleus</i>	11	11	5
Siberian Thrush	<i>Zoothera sibirica</i>			2
White's Thrush	<i>Zoothera dauma</i>	2	3	5
Grey Thrush	<i>Turdus cardis</i>	53	21	18
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	1	10	11
Brown Thrush	<i>Turdus chrysolaus</i>	1	1	2
Grey-backed Thrush	<i>Turdus hortulorum</i>	209	168	34
Pale Thrush	<i>Turdus pallidus</i>	15	3	18
Eye-browed Thrush	<i>Turdus obscurus</i>		16	1
Dusky Thrush	<i>Turdus naumanni</i>	3		3
Short-tailed Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia squameiceps</i>	1	15	2
Chinese Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia diphone</i>	19	310	30
Mountain Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia fortipes</i>		16	6
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia pallidipes</i>		2	2
Pale-footed Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia acanthizoides</i>		4	4
Russet Bush Warbler	<i>Bradypterus seebohmii</i>		3	1
Brown Bush Warbler	<i>Bradypterus luteiventris</i>		1	1
Fantail Warbler	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		24	1
Bright-capped Cisticola	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>		4	1
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>	12	581	99
Yellow-bellied Prinia	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>	39	1038	171
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella certhiola</i>	5	19	5
Middendorff's Warbler	<i>Locustella ochotensis</i>			1
Styan's Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella pleskei</i>	8	18	1
Lanceolated Warbler	<i>Locustella lanceolata</i>		4	2
Black-browed Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus bistrigiceps</i>	21	345	54
Blunt-winged Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus concinens</i>		1	1
Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	251	1783	195
Paddyfield Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>		1	1
Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>		4	4
Thick-billed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus aedon</i>		10	5
Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler	<i>Seicercus burkii</i>		2	2
Large Grass Warbler	<i>Graminicola bengalensis</i>		3	3
Long-tailed Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	11	188	37
Blyth's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus reguloides</i>		1	1
Eastern Crowned Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus coronatus</i>		5	7

Continued ...



TABLE 1. continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1992	1993	Total
Pale-legged Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus tenellipes</i>		34	15	49
Arctic Warbler <i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	12	141	25	178
Pallas's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	5	60	12	77
Yellow-browed Warbler <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	19	162	42	223
Radde's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>		7	2	9
Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	104	1222	147	1473
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		2	1	3
Two-barred Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus</i>		5	1	6
Hainan Blue Flycatcher <i>Cyornis hainana</i>		2		2
Blue and White Flycatcher <i>Cyanoptila cyanomelana</i>		3	4	7
Grey-streaked Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa griseisticta</i>		1	1	2
Brown Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa latirostris</i>	6	32	3	41
Red-breasted Flycatcher <i>Ficedula parva</i>	1	14	2	17
Mugimaki Flycatcher <i>Ficedula mugimaki</i>		25	26	51
Yellow-rumped Flycatcher <i>Ficedula zanthopygia</i>	2	45	21	68
Narcissus Flycatcher <i>Ficedula narcissina</i>		1		1
Grey-headed Flycatcher <i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	1			1
Asian Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>		3		3
Japanese Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone atrocaudata</i>		3	1	4
Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher <i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	1	4	2	7
Rufous-capped Babbler <i>Stachyris ruficeps</i>			1	1
Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush <i>Garrulax pectoralis</i>		21	5	26
Black-throated Laughing Thrush <i>Garrulax chinensis</i>	2			2
Hwamei <i>Garrulax canorus</i>	7**	69	28	104
Black-faced Laughing Thrush <i>Garrulax perspicillatus</i>	18	18	1	37
Pekin Robin <i>Leiothrix lutea</i>	9**	68	46	123
Silver-eared Mesia <i>Leiothrix argentea</i>		27	23	50
Vinous-throated Parrotbill <i>Paradoxornis webbiana</i>		1		1
Black-headed Sibia <i>Heterophasia melanoleuca</i>		1		1
Red-headed Tit <i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>		1		1
Yellow-cheeked Tit <i>Parus spilonotus</i>		1		1
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	34	70	12	116
Penduline Tit <i>Remiz pendulinus</i>		132	40	172
Fork-tailed Sunbird <i>Aethopyga christinae</i>	1	25	15	41
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker <i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>		5	5	10
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker <i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>			1	1
Chestnut-flanked White-eye <i>Zosterops erythroleuca</i>		9	6	15
White-eye <i>Zosterops japonica</i>	217	4019	727	4963

Continued ...

TABLE 1. continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1992	1993	Total
Black-naped Oriole <i>Oriolus chinensis</i>		2		2
Tiger Shrike <i>Lanius tigrinus</i>		1		1
(Bull-headed Shrike)*** <i>(Lanius bucephalus)***</i>	1			1
Brown Shrike <i>Lanius cristatus</i>	6	19	4	29
Rufous-backed Shrike <i>Lanius schach</i>	39	44	5	88
Black Drongo <i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>		7		7
Hair-crested Drongo <i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>	1	3	2	6
Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		1		1
Blue Magpie <i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>	4	4	2	10
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	2**	2		4
Silky Starling <i>Sturnus sericeus</i>		16	4	20
Purple-backed Starling <i>Sturnus sturninus</i>		1		1
Chinese Starling <i>Sturnus sinensis</i>	2	6	7	15
Grey Starling <i>Sturnus cineraceus</i>		1		1
Black-necked Starling <i>Sturnus nigricollis</i>		14	8	22
Crested Mynah <i>Acridotheres cristatellus</i>	2	13	1	16
White-vented Mynah <i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>		2		2
Ruddy Sparrow <i>Passer rutilans</i>		1	1	2
Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	92**	516	36	645
Baya Weaver <i>Ploceus philippinus</i>		4	3	7
White-backed Munia <i>Lonchura striata</i>		32	6	38
Spotted Munia <i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	34	679	18	731
Chestnut Munia <i>Lonchura malacca</i>	1	5		6
White-headed Munia <i>Lonchura maja</i>		1		1
Red Avadavat <i>Amandava amandava</i>	5	9		14
Yellow-fronted Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i>		9		9
Chinese Greenfinch <i>Carduelis sinica</i>	1			1
Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i>		1		1
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		1		1
Common Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	12	9		21
Black-tailed Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes migratorius</i>	9			9
Black-faced Bunting <i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>	219	949	101	1269
Japanese Yellow Bunting <i>Emberiza sulphurata</i>		1	5	6
Grey-headed Bunting <i>Emberiza fucata</i>	1	4		5
Yellow-browed Bunting <i>Emberiza chrysophrys</i>		2		2
Tristram's Bunting <i>Emberiza tristrami</i>	4	27	6	37
Little Bunting <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	2	204	15	221
Chestnut Bunting <i>Emberiza rutila</i>		106	16	122
Yellow-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza aureola</i>	28	24	2	54
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		1	1	2
Pallas's Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza pallasi</i>		1		1
Japanese Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza yessoensis</i>		1		1
Crested Bunting <i>Melophus lathami</i>		1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,190</b>	<b>24,887</b>	<b>4,065</b>	<b>32,142</b>



TABLE 1. continued

- \* The Migratory Animals Pathological Survey (MAPS) programme ran from 1964-1971. Ringing was done in Hong Kong between 1965 and 1968. Details of MAPS birds are from McClure and Leelavit (1972) and from F.O.P. Hechtel's personal records. In the few cases where there is a discrepancy the higher figure has been taken.
- \*\* Some or all of these birds released from captivity by the ringer.
- \*\*\* The identification of all pre-1986 records of Bull-headed Shrike *Lanius bucephalus* has been questioned by Chalmers (1986).

TABLE 2. Overseas movements of ringed birds during 1993

<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b> <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	
041-64416	ringed: 2 October 1992, Roebuck Bay, Broome, Western Australia
	controlled: 4 May 1993, Mai Po, Hong Kong
	distance: 4,591km N
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b> <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	
NV58657	ringed: 5 April 1991, Mai Po, Hong Kong
	controlled: 13 March 1993, Kapar Power Station, Selangor, Malaysia
	distance: 2,556km SSW
<b>Redshank</b> <i>Tringa totanus</i>	
DK09109	ringed: 20 August 1988, Mai Po, Hong Kong
	hunted: 21 May 1993, Chouguang County, Shandong, China
	distance: 1,699km NNE
<b>Great Reed Warbler</b> <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	
VB46961	ringed: 6 September 1989, Mai Po, Hong Kong
	controlled: 29 August 1993, Kurobe-shi, Toyama Prefecture, Japan
	distance: 2,724km NE

TABLE 3. Selected recaptures of known migrants in 1993\*

<b>Japanese Sparrowhawk</b> <i>Accipiter gularis</i>	
RA05350	ringed 3 March 1990/recaptured 17 January 1993.
<b>Wryneck</b> <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	
VJ34015	ringed 23 March 1991/recaptured 14 March 1993
VK09423	ringed 5 December 1992/recaptured 6 February 1993, 19 September 1993.

**Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*

There were 3 recaptures. Two birds ringed/recaptured in March/April at Mai Po may have been on migration, but one wintering bird (VH60964) originally ringed on 11 November 1990 at KARC, has now been recaptured 10 times, the last being 3 November 1993.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

F145309	ringed 31 March 1990/recaptured 2 January 1993
H367430	ringed 24 November 1991/recaptured 4 April 1992, 19 April 1992, 14 March 1993.

**Grey-backed Thrush** *Turdus hortulorum*

There were four recaptures, the oldest being RS13172 ringed 7 December 1991/recaptured 11 January 1992, 1 February 1992, 13 February 1993, 6 March 1993.

**Chinese Bush Warbler** *Cettia diphone*

There were 15 recaptures, the oldest being F145072 ringed 24 December 1988/recaptured 11 March 1990, 19 January 1991, 27 March 1993.

**Black-browed Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

There were three recaptures, the oldest being H501640 ringed 9 May 1992/recaptured 30 April 1993.

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

There were 10 recaptures, the oldest being VA23318 ringed 3 May 1986/recaptured 8 May 1990, 2 May 1992, 2 May 1993.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

OS8120	ringed 5 December 1992/recaptured 20 November 1993
4V4369	ringed 24 December 1989/recaptured 12 January 1991, April 1993.

The latter bird must be near a longevity record for this species (no published data appear to exist, c.f. McClure 1984, Cramp 1992).

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

There were 29 recaptures, the oldest being 9R0125 ringed 3 December 1988/recaptured 4 November 1989, 24 December 1989, 3 March 1990, 11 January 1992, 12 December 1992, 6 February 1993.

Continued ...



TABLE 3. continued

**Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*

H698010: ringed 21 March 1992/recaptured 21 March 1993

This is our first between-season recapture of this species. The fact that it was caught on the same day in both years strongly suggests that it was migrating through Mai Po.

**Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala*

There were 23 recaptures, the oldest being C995008 ringed 17 April 1987/recaptured 25 April 1987, 27 March 1989, 13 February 1993.

\* All records refer to Mai Po unless otherwise stated.

TABLE 4. Longevity records for some 'resident' Hong Kong birds\*

<b>Crested Bulbul</b>	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>
RV5814: ringed	2 December 1989/recaptured 13 November 1993 (48 months, c.f. 59 months)
<b>Chinese Bulbul</b>	<i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>
RX9265: ringed	23 April 1986/recaptured 12 September 1993 (89 months, c.f. 26 months)
<b>Yellow-bellied Prinia</b>	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>
1K2722: ringed	28 January 1985/recaptured 27 November 1993 (106 months, c.f. 66 months)
<b>Hwamei</b>	<i>Garrulax canorus</i>
RA055332: ringed	11 November 1989/recaptured 21 March 1993 (40 months)
<b>Black-faced Laughingthrush</b>	<i>Garrulax perspicillatus</i>
ER12128: ringed	30 March 1991/recaptured 20 March 1993 (24 months)
<b>Fork-tailed Sunbird</b>	<i>Aethopyga christinae</i>
7F0568: ringed	6 October 1991/recaptured 30 September 1993 (24 months)
<b>White-eye</b>	<i>Zosterops japonica</i>
1K2769: ringed	23 February 1985/recaptured 31 January 1993 (95 months, c.f. 25 months)

\* This table only includes species not noted in previous reports or those where previous longevity records have been exceeded. Hong Kong data are compared with the longest surviving bird recorded in East/South Asia during the MAPS programme (McClure 1984).

TABLE 5. Sightings during 1993 of waders marked in Australia with leg flags \*

**Greater Sandplover** *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Ringed 7 March 1993, Corner Inlet, Victoria; sighted 15 March 1993, Mai Po, Hong Kong

**Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*

Ringed Victoria, Australia; sighted 13 April (1), 14 April (1-2), 15 April (1), 24 April (1), 25 April (1), 26 April (1), 27 April (1), 28 April (2-3), 30 April (3-4), 1 May (2-3), 4 May (2), 8 May (1-3), 9 May (1-2), 12 May (1), 15 May (1), 22 May (1-3), Mai Po, Hong Kong

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

Ringed Victoria, Australia; sighted 4 April (1), 11 April (1), 12 April (1), 13 April (1), 14 April (3), 22 April (2), 24 April (1), 25 April (1), 26 April (1), 28 April (1), 1 May (1-2), 4 May (3), 6 May (2), 8 May (2-3), 15 May (1), Mai Po, Hong Kong

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

Ringed 2 March 1991, Port Fairy, Victoria, Australia; sighted 16 May, Mai Po, Hong Kong

\* after Minton (1993), from records collated by S. McChesney.



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## HONG KONG CHRISTMAS COUNT 1993

I. Tyzzer

### INTRODUCTION

The ninth Christmas count to survey the occurrence of bird species in Hong Kong took place on 27 December 1993. It was organised along established lines (see Lam 1990). Returns from members were analysed to give total numbers in seven regions, the boundaries of which are as defined in Viney (1987).

### COVERAGE

Some 52 people contributed to the 1993 count. Unfortunately, it was not possible to arrange coverage of Lantau Island, a pity in view of the continuing development for the new airport. In contrast, both Hong Kong Island and Tai Po Kau received excellent coverage. The specific locations visited are described below.

Hong Kong Island – west side from Mount Davis to Aberdeen Country Park, coastal locations from Deep Water Bay to Big Wave Bay, the Peak, Mid Levels, Magazine Gap, Black's Link, Happy Valley, Mount Parker, Tai Tam Country Park, Stanley Mound, Violet Hill, Stanley Fort and Kellet Island.

Kowloon – Kowloon Park, King's Park, Stonecutters Island

Offshore Islands – Cheung Chau, Lamma Island

Central NT – Lam Tsuen Valley, Tai Po Kau, Shing Mun, Shing Mun River at Sha Tin

Eastern NT – Razor Hill, Ho Chung including woods, Sai Kung and Hebe Haven, Wong Chuk Yeung, Ma On Shan, Pak Tam Chung, Tolo Harbour, Tai Long Wan

Western NT – Chuen Lung, Tai Mo Shan to Shek Kong, Tsim Bei Tsui, Mong Tseng, Lau Fau Shan, Tin Shui Wai, Nim Wan, Lung Kwu Tan, Tuen Mun town

Northern NT – Mai Po, Long Valley, Kam Tin, Starling Inlet and coastal villages to Yung Shue Au, Nam Chung, Luk Keng, Wu Kau Tang, Bride's Pool, Plover Cove, Shuen Wan, Tai Mei Tuk and catchment

### WEATHER

In contrast to the 1992 count, when the weather was very variable throughout the Territory, all locations reported fine, sunny and warm weather. The maximum temperature recorded was 18.5°C and the mean relative humidity was 62%



## RESULTS

Counting only Category A-D species (see Chalmers 1986), a total of 185 species was recorded in the 1993 count. Breakdown figures for the individual regions are given in Table 1. For the sake of uniformity the published figures for 1985 and 1986 have been adjusted to exclude Category E species (escapes).

**Table 1. Numbers of species recorded in the various regions in the nine Christmas counts.**

Results	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
1. Hong Kong Island	61	36	69	60	53	56	71	73	84
2. Kowloon	35	23	59	64	42	47	54	56	51
3. Offshore Islands	34	43	58	48	44	52	54	41	34
4. Lantau	75	63	66	51	53	62	33	60	–
5. Central NT	74	74	64	67	74	62	79	76	78
6. Eastern NT	68	55	55	43	54	55	61	81	82
7. Western NT	109	117	122	90	94	109	101	106	105
8. Northern NT	125	104	98	123	104	116	109	128	116
All	183	175	173	163	170	166	169	184	185

Continued habitat destruction continues, particularly in the northern and western NT and this, combined with a warm and sunny day in a mild winter, resulted in most observers reporting a quiet day in terms of the actual numbers of birds seen. Considering this, and also the fact that Lantau was not covered, it is perhaps surprising that the final total of species seen was so high. Once again the dedication of observers has contributed to this, together with the exceptional coverage given to some areas. The most noteworthy increase in the number of species recorded was on Hong Kong Island where a record 84 species were seen, 11 more than last year. In recent years Hong Kong Island has not suffered from hill fires and widespread recreational use to the same extent as the New Territories, and the vegetation has matured considerably with several areas of substantial woodland. It is probable that this accounts for at least some of the increase in species recorded.

Five species were recorded for the first time in a Christmas count. These were Smew, Russet Bush Warbler, Eastern Crowned Warbler, Pale-legged Leaf Warbler and Grey-cheeked Fulvetta. The cumulative total of species for all nine Christmas counts to date stands at 253.

Only Hong Kong Island and Eastern NT recorded a gain over 1992, both achieving a new high count of species, whereas all other regions recorded a decrease. The situation in respect of habitat preservation is disturbing: not only has there been continued degradation in northern and western NT, but new threats have emerged in the form of planned cross-border road and rail links, the training of the Shen Zhen River and further housing development at Tin Shui Wai. Even the long-awaited designation of inner Deep Bay as a Ramsar site may not be enough to save the area. A bleak picture indeed!

All species recorded during the survey are indicated by the code 'CC' in the individual species counts in the Systematic List elsewhere in this Report, except where records have not yet been accepted by the Records Committee. Observations of particular interest are also detailed there. The table detailing the estimated number of birds recorded by species and by region, which was published in Christmas count reports prior to 1991, is not reproduced here for the sake of economy. All those taking part in the survey have received a copy whereas any other interested persons may write to the author.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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第九次香港聖誕鳥類普查在 1993 年 12 月 27 日舉行，共錄得 185 種包括在 A 類至 D 類的雀鳥。表一列出了在各區錄得的數目，最顯著的增加在港島：總數 84，比前一年多了 11 種；今年的調查工作並沒有在大嶼山進行。

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## BIRDS NEW TO HONG KONG

### SMEW AT MAI PO: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

G.J. Carey

On 16 December 1993 at approximately 1230h I was entering the gate through the fence leading to the boardwalk at Mai Po with Richard Lewthwaite when we met a birdwatcher from overseas who informed us that he had just seen a 'redhead' Smew *Mergus albellus* on a pond known to be favoured by Teal *Anas crecca* and Wigeon *A. penelope*. We hastened to the spot and very quickly located the bird among a flock of about 50 Teal. As both of us are familiar with the species, its identification presented no problems and the following description was taken.

**Size and structure** A small diving duck, slightly smaller and more compact than the accompanying Teal and sitting noticeably lower in the water than that species. The tail was proportionately longer than both Teal and Wigeon. The head appeared rather square in shape with a steep forehead and a fairly flat, though slightly backsloping, crown, the peak of which was just above or in front of the eye.

**Head** The front half of the crown and the lores were dark grey-brown merging into a reddish-brown rear crown, rear half of the face behind the eye and upper portion of the nape; the lower nape was darker and duller with little of a red tinge. The throat and lower cheeks were contrastingly pure white producing a very distinctive head pattern immediately identifying it among the other duck on the pond.

**Body** The upperparts were uniform darkish grey as were both upper- and under-surfaces of the tail feathers; the latter contrasted noticeably with the white undertail coverts. The flanks and chest were a rather blotchy, dull greyish-brown and appeared slightly paler than the upperparts. The centre of the vent and belly were white.

**Wings** During preening and wing-flapping the wings were seen to be dark grey-brown with white median coverts and broad, pure white tips to the secondaries and greater coverts. These latter two were of approximately equal breadth and visibility. In flight, the undersides to the flight feathers were dark and the underwing coverts and axillaries were off-white, a pattern recalling Teal but not quite so contrasting.

**Bare parts** The bill was blackish and the feet were dark grey.

The bird was very active on 16th, continually diving during the early period of observation and regularly preening later on. The diving action was rather effortless with a slight arching of the neck before descending. On some occasions it seemed to bring prey items up to the surface which it then made attempts to consume, in the process adopting the head-down posture of a feeding dabbling duck. It was rather wary and was one of the first ducks on the pond to move away from human disturbance and take flight.

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17 Smew *Mergus albellus* female  
Mai Po, Hong Kong March 1994

Ray Tipper

The bird was subsequently seen irregularly, latterly favouring the Waterfowl Collection where it was last seen on 16 April. Despite this long stay, it did not show any signs of moult into male plumage, indicating that it was female. However, it does not seem possible to age this bird with certainty. The broad white tips to both secondaries and greater coverts and the lack of a ruffled rear crown and nape would indicate it was in first-winter plumage; however, the clean white belly points to an adult (Madge and Burn 1988).

The appearance of Smew in Hong Kong is not unexpected. According to Cheng (1987), Smew is a migrant and winter visitor from the northeast provinces south to the Changjiang (Yangtze River) and "further south to South China generally".

This, the first record of the species in the Territory, was accepted by the Records Committee of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society into Category A of the Hong Kong list.

1993年12月16日在米埔發現了一隻雌性的斑頭秋沙鴨 *Mergus albellus*，這個紀錄並不令人驚訝，因為這個品種在華南是相當普遍的。令人奇怪的是牠竟然逗留了頗長時間，至少到4月16日為止。這個品種已歸入A類。

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## GREY PHALAROPE: THE FIRST RECORDS FOR HONG KONG

Paul Aston

During a birdwatching boat trip on 21 February 1993 in Mirs Bay, to the east of Hong Kong, four Grey Phalaropes *Phalaropus fulicarius* were identified. This is the first record of this, the most pelagic of phalaropes in Hong Kong, as well as being one of only a few records for mainland China and Taiwan.

The weather was initially overcast, clearing after the first two birds were seen around midday, and the sea was calm all day.

Initially a flock of several Red-necked Phalaropes *P. lobatus* was seen in the distance amongst floating debris. As the boat approached, one bird stood out very conspicuously in being much larger and stouter in build and this, and a second bird in the flock, were identified as Grey Phalaropes. Later, another Grey Phalarope was discovered in a flock of six Red-necked, this bird being seen down to only 30 meters. A fourth, and even more obliging bird was later seen. The description below mainly relates to this latter bird, unless otherwise stated. The birds were seen by many observers including D.A. Diskin, J.G. Holmes, P.R. Kennerley, P.J. Leader and M.R. Leven. Photographs were taken (see plate 18).

**Size and structure** Structurally slightly larger and bulkier than Red-necked Phalarope, the bulkiness particularly noticeable in flight, with a distinctly thicker neck and slightly larger and wider head; the neck appeared particularly thick from behind. The bill was stouter, though of the same length, and appeared slightly downcurved at the tip. The tail was held slightly higher above the water than the Red-necked Phalaropes. One bird was noticeably larger than both the second bird and the Red-necked Phalaropes, both on the water and in flight, and this was assumed to be a female. The three presumed males only looked noticeably larger than the Red-necked Phalaropes in flight when they appeared generally bulkier and heavier-bellied birds.

**Head** Most of the crown, chin, lores, throat and breast were white. A black 'phalarope' mark through the eye extended back to the rear of the ear coverts. The nape was black, with a blurred demarcation with the white crown, widest and rather blob-like at the top but narrowing towards the lower nape, thus appearing T-shaped when viewed from the rear; this was wider than the dark nape mark of Red-necked Phalarope. The sides of the head, below the 'phalarope' mark, were white with the nape blob and phalarope mark not quite meeting. On the first two Grey Phalaropes, the nape stripe was wider than on the fourth, so the blob-like spot at the top of the nape was not obvious.

**Upperparts** The mantle was pale grey on the fourth bird while the earlier three birds had a browner tinge and were thus slightly darker, making the join of the nape stripe and mantle less obvious. The coverts, scapulars and tertials were pale grey and generally unmarked except where the nape met the mantle,

where there was a slight blackish edge; on a close view, the tertials appeared to have pale fringes. The primaries were similar, but slightly browner than the mantle and fell level with the tail tip at rest.

**Underparts** The breast, belly and undertail coverts were white; the black of the hindneck curled down and forward into a blackish smudgy mark on the sides of the breast (this mark was more extensive and blacker than on the earlier birds); some grey mottling was visible on the sides of the breast and lower flanks to the water line.

**Bare parts** Bill distinctly thicker than Red-necked with a yellow base to both mandibles; this was very difficult to see, even at fairly close range, but at 10m it was obvious if looked for. Eye black. Legs not seen but yellow soles to the feet were visible when preening. On the first two Phalaropes no yellow was seen at the base of the bill, perhaps indicating immaturity.

**Flight** In flight, the grey of the mantle was paler than the wings. The white wing bar across the secondaries was wider than that of Red-necked. The centre of the rump and tail was pale grey with the sides of the rump white, though the contrast was not as obvious as in Red-necked. The heavier build was obvious in flight as were the slightly slower wing beats, causing them to lag behind the others in flight and separating them a little from the flock.

**Call** The call was a rather high pitched 'wit'.

### Separation from Red-necked Phalarope

All the Grey Phalaropes showed a white crown which was dark on the Red-necked. The Red-necked Phalaropes were generally darker on the mantle although this was quite variable. The stripe down the nape was always much narrower on Red-necked than Grey. When isolated on the water from the Red-necked Phalaropes the Grey Phalaropes were less flighty, allowing very close approach. The lower pitched 'chit' call of the Red-necked Phalaropes was slightly deeper than that of the Grey Phalaropes.

Subsequently, during an evening ringing session on 4 May 1993 at Mai Po, D.S. Melville and P.J. Leader caught a Grey Phalarope and a Red-necked Phalarope allowing a direct comparison to be made. The following description and measurements were taken of the Grey Phalarope.

The forehead was white with a blackish crown and nape; both birds had an obvious nape mark in the manner of Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*, but this was duller and more diffuse on the Red-necked Phalarope. The feathers at the base of the bill had a grey wash. The mantle was silver-grey admixed black and rufous, but still rather uniform, and the underparts were white with blackish streaking on the flanks.

The bill had a very narrow yellow base to both mandibles and was remarkably deep and broad compared to Red-necked Phalarope. When viewed from the side it tapered to a relatively blunt tip and when viewed from above the bill tapered gently then bulged very strongly near the tip. The feet were





18 Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*  
Mirs Bay, Hong Kong 21 February 1993

Paul J. Leader

pinkish-grey, paler than in Red-necked Phalarope, the lobes and webs washed yellowish.

TABLE 1. Measurements (in mm) of Grey and Red-necked Phalaropes caught in Hong Kong on 4 May 1993.

	<i>P. fulicarius</i>	<i>P. lobatus</i>
Wing	130	114
Bill length	23	22
Bill width*	4.8	4.2
Bill depth	4.7	3.7
Tarsus	21.8	20.5
Weight	53.5	35.0

\* Measured at proximal edge of nostrils hence small difference between width and depth.

Cheng (1987) states that Grey Phalarope is a migrant to Xinjiang Province and that stragglers have occurred at Tianjin, Hebei Province, and Shanghai; de Schauensee (1984) states that some winter on the south coast. In Taiwan it is found on migration at or near the coast though apparently less commonly than Red-necked Phalarope (Wang *et al.* 1991).

On the basis of the above records Grey Phalarope has been accepted to Category A of the Hong Kong List.

在 1993 年 2 月 21 日的一次海上旅程中，在本港東面水域的大鵬灣確認了四隻灰瓣蹼鶯 *Phalaropus fulicarius*，這屬海洋性的蹼鶯，是香港的首個紀錄，而中國大陸和台灣也僅有少數紀錄而已。其後，1993 年 5 月 4 日，在米埔的一次晚間環志活動中，又網獲一隻初次渡夏的，該鳥在保護區逗留至 7 月 4 日。

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## BAY WOODPECKER IN TAI PO KAU: A NEW SPECIES FOR HONG KONG

John S.R. Edge

At about 1800h on 17 April 1993 I was with two English visitors, Nigel Wheatley (NRW) and Gary Grant, in Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve on the path known as 'flycatcher alley', about 50m south west of the main picnic area. We were trying to 'pish' a Hainan Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis hainana* when our attention was drawn to a loud, intermittent, high-pitched, chattering call to our left that apparently came in response to our pishing. We all quickly managed to get our binoculars on to the source of the call which at first sight appeared as a large, all-rufous bird with a striking, long, yellow bill. After a second or two we simultaneously recognised it as a woodpecker, and its large size (c. 30cm), rufous plumage and diagnostic yellow bill enabled it to be conclusively identified as a Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*, a species with which I am familiar from visits to Ba Bao Shan and Feng Kai in northern and western Guangdong respectively.

The bird was first seen at a distance of about 35m and at a height of about 10m in a horizontal pose on the branch of a eucalyptus *Eucalyptus* sp. The bird appeared to be both attracted and agitated by the pishing for, after a very short time, it flew past us and landed in the typical, vertical fashion of a woodpecker, about 15m up the trunk of another tree but 70m away and in silhouette; in that position it was not possible to get any more plumage detail. Fortunately however, the bird moved again, flying in front of us to land on another horizontal branch slightly to our right, at a distance of about 20m and a height of about 7m. In this position it was possible to see well the crimson patch on the nape and sides of the neck (indicating that it was a male), the quite broad, dark brown or black barring on the upperparts and the two plain rufous central tail feathers contrasting with the barred outer tail feathers. The neck appeared relatively thin and the plain rufous head, large; the yellow bill appeared slightly longer than the head and tapered evenly from a broad base; feathers on the wings and back were puffed out on occasions. What could be seen of its underparts were plain rufous and its plumage was in excellent condition. Its irides were dark and did not contrast noticeably with the face.

After a total viewing time of approximately two minutes the bird flew further up flycatcher alley and was not seen again by us. What was presumably the same individual was, however, seen subsequently by R.W. Lewthwaite on 10 May and by M. Hale on 3 June.

The only confusion species that needed to be ruled out were Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus* and the extralimital Maroon Woodpecker *Blythipicus rubiginosus*. The former also has barred underparts but is smaller (c. 25cm) with a short, black bill, the male having a crimson cheek patch; the latter is also smaller (c. 23cm) and has unbarred maroon upperparts.

According to La Touche (1931-34) the race *B.p. sinensis* is resident in the provinces of Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi; it is described as 'quite HK Bird Report 1993: 121-122, Dec. 1994

common' at Kuatun in northwest Fujian. Cheng (1987) states that the range of this species also includes the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou and Hunan.

After consideration by the Records Committee of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society the species was placed in Category A of the Hong Kong List. This is the first definitive sight record of this species for Hong Kong although its distinctive braying call was reported several times in the Plover Cove area both before and after this sighting, particularly on the eastern slopes of Hsien Ku Fung, the easternmost peak of Pat Sin Leng (pers. obs., N.J.G. Croft pers. comm.). Its chattering call and crimson nape patch, together with its dark, not red, iris indicate that this bird was probably an immature male. Given its range across south China together with the gradual maturing of the woodland in Hong Kong, its presence here is not unexpected.

1993年4月17日，在大埔滘發現了一隻黃咀噪啄木鳥 *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*。在5月10日和6月3日看到的，很可能是同一隻。雖然過去已多次聽到這個品種獨特的叫聲，這次才是第一次目擊的紀錄。從這鳥在華南的分佈情況，與及本地樹林已逐漸成形看來，牠的出現是絕對有可能的。

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## MIDDENDORFF'S GRASSHOPPER WARBLER: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader

At about 1130h on 26 February 1993 I was returning from the boardwalk hide at Mai Po and, at a point about 150m short of the fence, I heard a bird singing in the mangrove immediately next to the floating walkway. Initially, the bird gave frustratingly brief views. However, on the basis of the song it was clearly a *Locustella* warbler; on the basis of these rather poor observations I was only able to say that it was either Styan's *L. pleskei* or Middendorff's *L. ochotensis*, probably the latter.

For the next hour I continued to get inconclusive views as it intermittently responded to my pishing. Eventually it went quiet and after about five minutes I noticed the bird preening. I then watched it for about three minutes at a distance of about 3-4m using Zeiss 10x40 binoculars in good light. During this period it remained about 30cm above the ground and about 1m into the mangrove. Initially I had almost unobscured views and by moving only slightly I could see the entire bird. When it finished preening it hopped off into the mangroves and was not seen again that day. On 27th it was still present and its song was recorded by Richard Lewthwaite. The following description was taken immediately after watching the bird.

**Head** The supercilium was quite distinct, reaching from the base of the bill to a short distance behind the eye, and was off-white in colour. Just below the eye there was a distinct whitish crescent, the lower part of an eye-ring. The ear coverts were uniform.

**Upperparts and wings** Crown and mantle uniform warm brown, lacking any streaking, and very different to the greyish-brown upperparts of a typical Styan's. The mantle colour was, in fact, more reminiscent of Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*, though not as dark. The unstreaked rump and the uppertail coverts were slightly paler, brighter and more reddish (almost gingery) and contrasted with the mantle. The tail was a similar colour to the uppertail coverts but not quite so warm and was reddish-brown, most obviously so when the tail was spread during preening. Again, this was very different in colour from a Styan's. Paler tips were noted on at least the outer three pairs of rectrices which also showed very indistinct, darker subterminal markings. On 27th I had naked eye views of the bird about 6m away as it flew across the boardwalk and the upperparts appeared rich brown with a very obviously brighter rump, similar in appearance to that of Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *L. certhiola*. The flight feathers and coverts were the same colour as the mantle or possibly slightly duller. The tertials had a neat, thin, pale edge extending along the entire feather. The coverts also had paler fringes but these were less distinct. The outermost long primary, presumably the second, had a conspicuous, pale outer web, visible along the entire length.



19 Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella ochotensis*  
Candaba, the Philippines, 6 February 1992

Peter R. Kennerley



20 Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella ochotensis*  
Candaba, the Philippines, 6 February 1992

Peter R. Kennerley



**Underparts** The palest area was the throat which was whitish; the belly was slightly darker and the flanks were much darker, the same colour as the mantle. The darker area on the flanks, while not deep, extended along the whole length of the flanks and was very distinctive; however, it is possible that this was more apparent than normal due to the bird preening. The undertail coverts were warm brown, much paler than the flanks.

**Bare Parts** Upper mandible dark; the lower mandible appeared entirely pale. Legs long and stout, dull grey-pink.

**Structure** Size and shape similar to Styan's. Bill long and stout with a long, sloping forehead; tail long and well-rounded with the shortest rectrice shorter than the undertail coverts. Wings proportionately short, as was the primary projection which consisted of 4-5 visible primary tips.

**Song** This was quiet and scratchy though still quite melodic and was presumed to be sub-song. The brief scratchier sections sounded similar to the sound that might be made by rubbing together two pieces of expanded polystyrene. Phrases often commenced with a *tic-tic-tic* introduction but the most distinctive phrase in the song was *chewy-chewy-chewy*.

**Behaviour** Rather tame but very skulking. It responded to pishing but did not come out into the open; it also responded to playback of its song by flying twice across the boardwalk.

This has been accepted by the Records Committee of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society as the first record for Hong Kong and placed in Category A of the Hong Kong List.

Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler breeds in the maritime regions of eastern Russia which surround the Sea of Okhotsk including Sakhalin, Kamchatka, the Komandor Islands and the Kurils (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1968, Stepanyan 1990) as well as northern and eastern Hokkaido in Japan (Stepanyan 1990, Brazil 1991). It winters throughout the Philippines (Dickinson *et al.* 1991) and has been recorded south to Sulawesi and Luang, Indonesia (White and Bruce 1988). In spring, La Touche (1912, 1931-34) recorded it at Shaweihsan Island, 30km from the mouth of the Yangtze River, China, in late spring, particularly early June when up to 70 were present in a day. The Mai Po bird is therefore the first winter record from China.

A further record of a *Locustella* warbler, trapped at Long Valley on 1 October 1993, has been pending by the Records Committee. The plumage of this individual is considered to be within the range of that shown by Middendorff's but many of the measurements, in particular bill length and wing-tail ratio, fit Styan's.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF *LOCUSTELLA* WARBLERS IN EASTERN CHINA

Five species of *Locustella* occur in eastern China: Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, Styan's Grasshopper Warbler, Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler, Gray's Grasshopper Warbler *L. fasciolata* and Lanceolated Warbler *L. lanceolata*.



21 Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*  
Hebei Province, China 24 May 1991

Paul J. Leader



22 Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*  
Hebei Province, China 24 May 1991

Paul J. Leader

[The costs of production of Plates 21-27 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]





23 Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata*  
Hebei Province, China 20 May 1991

Paul J. Leader



25 Gray's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella fasciolata* first-winter  
Nigata Prefecture, Japan 1 October 1985

Yoshimitsu Shigeta



24 Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata*  
Hebei Province, China 20 May 1991

Paul J. Leader



26 Gray's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella fasciolata* first-winter  
Nigata Prefecture, Japan 1 October 1985

Yoshimitsu Shigeta





27 Styan's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella pleskei*  
Mai Po, Hong Kong 4 February 1990

Paul J. Leader

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler is the most variable of the five species with at least three races occurring in eastern China. With its warm brown upperparts and rufous rump, it is a potential confusion species with Middendorff's.

The ground colour of the upperparts is warm rufous with the rump usually contrasting with the rest of the upperparts. The upperparts, however, are always streaked and, although these are variable in intensity (and can be very subdued in some individuals), sharply defined blackish centres to the crown, mantle, wing coverts and tertials are shared only with Lanceolated Warbler. The tail feathers usually have white or off-white tips (most obvious on the outer four pairs) and blackish subterminal markings. The white tips are often abraded and thus difficult to see or, exceptionally, almost lacking even in fresh plumage (Galsworthy 1991, pers. obs.).

Lanceolated Warbler is the smallest and most heavily-streaked of the five species under consideration. The upperpart streaking is very consistent and the rump lacks contrast with the mantle. The ground colour of the upperparts is a cold olive-brown and, as such, separation from Pallas's is straightforward (*contra* Galsworthy 1991).



28 Styan's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella pleskei*  
Mai Po, Hong Kong 10 November 1990

Paul J. Leader

Gray's Grasshopper Warbler is the largest of the five species under discussion, larger than Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*. The upperparts are uniform, dark rufous-brown, often slightly more rufous on the rump and tail which are concolorous. The underparts are unstreaked and mainly pale with the flanks often dark, almost as dark as the mantle. The upper breast and throat are very often conspicuously washed grey except on first-year birds which are washed yellow below. The supercilium is fairly narrow though distinct. The bill is large and stout. The undertail coverts are rufous-brown. The large size of this species in conjunction with uniform, unstreaked, dark brown upperparts and tail are unique among the five species under discussion.

The separation of Styan's and Middendorff's Grasshopper Warblers has been covered in detail elsewhere (Kennerley and Leader 1994) and thus only a summary will be presented here.

These two species share a number of plumage characters. Both are fairly uniform above with very indistinct mottling on the mantle that is rarely visible in the field; the tail shows narrow white or off-white tips to the outer tail feathers with darker subterminal markings; both exhibit narrow supercilia [The cost of reproduction of Plate 28 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



and have a rather plain-faced appearance due to the poorly-marked eye-stripe and uniform ear coverts; both also have fairly pale, unstreaked underparts.

Separation of the two in the field relies almost entirely on the colour of the upperparts. Middendorff's invariably has a browner mantle than Styan's with contrastingly tawny-brown to reddish-brown rump and uppertail coverts that are very obvious in the field. On Styan's these are grey-brown and concolourous with, or very slightly paler than, the mantle, thus generally appearing uniform in the field. Furthermore, Styan's never shows very dark flanks as some Middendorff's can show.

Many authorities treat Styan's and Middendorff's as conspecific (e.g. Vaurie 1959, Voous 1977). However, the only study undertaken on the breeding grounds (Nazarov and Shibaev 1983) concluded that the two were separate species, a view shared by Kennerley and Leader (1993).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Peter Kennerley for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper and for his enthusiasm and lively discussion regarding *Locustella warblers*. Geoff Carey typed the original draft.

1993年2月26日，在米埔的紅樹林有一隻北蝗鶯（指名亞種）*Locustella ochotensis*，並逗留至翌日。本文介紹了有關的紀錄，並簡介了在華東出現的蝗鶯的辨別方法。

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## BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER IN HO CHUNG WOODS: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Martin Hale and Jim Hackett

In the early morning of 16 January 1993 we were birding in the woods above Ho Chung valley, Sai Kung, on a narrow track running through secondary forest. MH remarked on an unfamiliar, loud, harsh, low-pitched *tschak* call coming from near the ground to the right of the track. He obtained a brief, frontal view of the bird in question, perched on a low bush at about 8m distance. The bird then flew and landed, about 10m from JH, on a bush about 60cm from the ground, on the left-hand side of the track. JH had a brief, profile view of the bird before it flew deeper into the forest. It was not seen again until 26 January when it was relocated at the same site and was seen subsequently by a number of observers; it remained present for several days. The following description is based on our observations on 16 January and dates thereafter.

The bird was a medium-sized, male, 'blue-and-orange' flycatcher of size and proportions similar to Hainan Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis hainana*. The head was dark blue, apart from black lores. In profile view it was very clear that the sides of the throat were blue, as were the back, rump, uppertail and all the wing feathers except for the primaries, which appeared blackish and duller than the mantle. Three areas of lighter, iridescent blue were seen on this background of uniform blue; these were the forehead and supercilium, the rump and a small part of the lower back and a small area at the bend of the wing.

The lower breast, belly and undertail coverts were white and the upper breast was orange; a narrow wedge of orange extended from the breast up, onto the throat, to a point just short of the base of the bill. The demarcation between these two colours was sharp. The flanks were dull orange.

Bare part coloration was not noted by us but other observers described the eye and bill as dark and the leg colour as pale pink or pale grey-pink.

The blue throat with a prominent, upwardly-extending, orange wedge is sufficient to identify the bird as a Blue-throated Flycatcher *C. rubeculoides* of the race *glaucicomans*. This race is sometimes treated as a separate species (Lekagul and Round 1991). Male Vivid Niltava *Niltava vivida*, the only other flycatcher possessing an orange wedge of this nature, can be excluded as it does not have a clean white belly and has a larger blackish area on the head which always encompasses the ear coverts. In a two-week period after the initial sighting reported here, the bird was seen by many observers and the above identification was supported by their observations.

The race *glaucicomans* is a known migrant that breeds from Hubei to Shaanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou and winters in southern China (de Schauensee 1984). On 15 January 1993 a surge of the winter monsoon passed through Hong Kong; this passage was associated with strong northerly winds. Also at this time there was an influx of other birds with a distribution including

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southwest China such as Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophilata* (Wong 1994) and Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus* (Tyzzer and Cooper 1994).

After consideration by the Records Committee of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, the species was admitted to Category D of the Hong Kong List which consists of species for which the possibility of escape or release from captivity cannot be satisfactorily excluded. The Records Committee felt that the active bird trade through Hong Kong means that on the basis of one record alone, it was not possible to place this species in Category A. There are two earlier Category F records (misidentifications) of Blue-throated Flycatcher (subspecies not specified) from Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986). Accordingly, this report is the first for the Territory.

1993年1月17日，一頭屬於 *Glaucicomans* 亞種的藍喉鵯（亦有論者名之為中華仙鵯）*Cyornis rubeculoides* 在蠔涌樹林中被發現，並在該處停留至2月14日。牠的特點包括藍色的上體和喉的兩側，喉中央為橙色。這是香港的第一個紀錄，由於很有可能是逸鳥，已歸入D類。

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#### RUFIOUS-GORGETTED FLYCATCHER IN TAI PO KAU: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Fox K.O. Wong

On 24 January 1993 I was mist-netting in Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve at the picnic site along the Red Walk. It was a quiet morning and very few birds were caught. Throughout the morning however, I had heard an unfamiliar *pink pink* call from the trees.

At about 11am I was taking down the nets when I noticed a brown-looking bird perched on top of a tree covered with creepers. On raising my binoculars I saw it was a rather brown flycatcher with a black face and a prominent orange-red patch on the breast; its size was similar to that of Yellow-rumped Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia*. There was a shining white supercilium that was thick, but short, and started just above the eye and extended forward to meet on the forehead. The ear coverts and throat were sooty black, the latter well demarcated from the orange-red of the chest. Below this orange-red coloration there was a rather diffuse area of grey and, below this, the rest of the underparts were dirty white. The upperparts were brown, a little darker than those of Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*. Reference to King *et al.* (1975) confirmed that this was a male Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher *F. strophilata*. It was not certain whether the *pink* call was that of this bird but Lekagul and Round (1991) note a metallic *pink* for this species.

The bird was quite active and moved around branches in the tree. It was also rather tame and at times came too close to focus my binoculars. The plumage, however, was in good condition and there were no visible signs of captivity.

According to Cheng (1987) and de Schauensee (1984) the nearest wintering area is Guangxi Province in China and thus Hong Kong is out of its normal range. However, at this time there was an influx of other birds with a distribution including southwest China such as Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides glaucicomans* (Hale and Hackett 1994) and Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus* (Tyzzer and Cooper 1994). Its natural occurrence, while certainly possible, must be considered in relation to the thriving bird trade in Hong Kong. Accordingly, the Records Committee of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society placed the species in Category D, for species which have occurred in an apparently wild state but for which the possibility of escape or release from captivity cannot be satisfactorily excluded.

1993年1月24日，在大埔潭錄得一隻雄性橙胸鵯，不過其後再沒有出現。這個紀錄有詳細的資料，當時也有其他品種從中國到達，但仍有很高機會是逸鳥，所以歸入D類。



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## CHESTNUT-TAILED STARLING: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Ian Tyzzer and Gavin Cooper

On 22 January 1993 the weather was cold and cloudy with an early morning temperature of approximately 10°C in the urban areas and a few degrees cooler in the New Territories. At about 1030h I met up with Gavin Cooper along the Tsim Bei Tsui Road and we decided to visit the abandoned paddy area about a quarter of a mile before the police post in order to see whether any unusual birds had arrived with the current surge of the winter monsoon.

As we entered the paddy area we could see a large flock of starlings in and around the trees which bordered the shore. They appeared to be feeding actively on insects at a large area of pig waste at the far end of the paddy. Slowly, we made our way towards the birds, stopping frequently to scan the flock.

There were approximately 120 birds in the flock, the majority of which were Silky Starlings *Sturnus sericeus* with a few Grey Starlings *S. cineraceus* in addition. As we approached the concentration of pig waste most of the birds flew up and away; however, our attention was drawn to two birds sitting and preening on a horizontal log. These birds appeared to be members of the starling family but were very different in coloration to any of the other birds. Although they also appeared more lethargic and had less inclination to fly off than the accompanying starlings, subsequent observers commented that they showed equal willingness to fly off when disturbed.

The two birds were observed for about 40 minutes from a distance of about 10-12 metres using 10x40 binoculars under good light conditions. The following description is based on that taken at the time and is supplemented by notes submitted by P.R. Kennerley and M.L. Chalmers.

The two birds were obviously starlings, generally the same size and shape as Chinese Starling *S. sinensis*. The head was greyish-pink which extended onto the mantle where it was darker and browner; the lower back was more silvery. Dark streaking was visible on the nape, throat and sides of the neck. The scapulars and wing coverts were more buffy while there was also a prominent white spot on the primary coverts. The primaries and some of the secondaries were blackish. The chin and throat were similar to the head and the breast was a delicate fulvous-pink, stronger on the flanks. The breast, flanks and belly were buffy-cream while the rear flanks were pale reddish which became strongly orange-red on the vent, though the undertail coverts were white. Opinion as to the colour of the tail varied from distinctly chestnut, conspicuous from below to grey-brown above with chestnut outer tail feathers and bright chestnut below. The bill was fairly strong and dark, turquoise at the base with a prominent yellow tip. The legs were reddish and irides were pale yellow.





29 Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus*  
Tsim Bei Tsui February 1993

John Holmes

The only difference between the two birds was one of shade, the less strongly coloured one being generally paler all over. On neither bird was there any sign of damage to the bare parts, nor was there any obviously excessive abrasion to the plumage.

Neither of us was able to identify the birds in the field and thus returned to the road; on reference to King (1975) the only species that bore a resemblance to the two birds seen was Chestnut-tailed Starling *S. malabaricus*. Initially, there appeared to be minor differences from details in the book but, on returning to examine the two birds more closely, we concluded that they were indeed Chestnut-tailed Starlings.

The two birds remained in the area until 5 February; they were seen by many observers and were also photographed by John Holmes (plate 29).

Chestnut-tailed Starling has a range from India to South China. It is resident in Burma, northwest Thailand, parts of Indo-China, and in Sichuan and Yunnan in China; it is also a migrant to northeast, central and southwest Thailand (King *et al.* 1975, de Schauensee 1984).

The appearance of these two birds coincided with a prolonged spell of cold weather and with the occurrence of other species from southwest China. These were Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides* (Hale and Hackett 1994) and Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophilata* (Wong 1994). However, in view of the very large bird trade through Hong Kong and the consequent possibility that these were not wild birds, the Records Committee of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society adopted a cautious approach and placed the species in Category D for species which have occurred in an

apparently wild state but for which the possibility of escape or release from captivity cannot be satisfactorily excluded.

1993年1月22日，一隻灰頭椋鳥 *Sturnus malabaricus* 在尖鼻咀被發現，並停留至2月25日，其間不少觀鳥者都曾看到。本文介紹了有關的詳情，雖然同時有其他鳥類品種由中國到達，而該鳥也沒有被飼養過的跡象，仍很有可能是逸鳥，所以被納入D類。

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## WEATHER AND BIRD MIGRATION IN HONG KONG

C.Y. Lam and Martin Williams

### INTRODUCTION

Weather has long been known to influence occurrences of birds in Hong Kong: e.g. Vaughan and Jones (1913) note that typhoons 'often have a marked effect on the migration of birds, and especially on that which occurs along the sea-coast.' But, whilst later authors, including Melville (1980) and various authors in Hong Kong Bird Watching Society reports, have discussed specific bird events arising from prevailing weather, this is the first survey of the relationship between weather and bird migration in Hong Kong.

In preparing this paper we have selected notable bird events from Chalmers (1986) and Hong Kong Bird Watching Society quarterly bulletins and annual reports. These events are discussed below together with the associated weather patterns. We then attempt to generalise and speculate on how weather affects the migration of birds through Hong Kong and how locally rare birds are displaced from their normal range and end up in Hong Kong. Certain rules of thumb are then indicated to help bird watchers identify 'good days' for bird watching in Hong Kong.

The bird events fall into three broad categories: influxes (or falls), visible migration, and lulls. Note that these are events by Hong Kong standards; numbers of, say, flycatchers may seem low by comparison with influxes typical of many migration watchpoints. By subdividing further, and splitting the year into spring, autumn and winter, along with the typhoon season (lasting predominantly from May to September), we have arrived at a total of 12 categories of events.

Yet even these 12 categories represent a simplification of the true picture: for instance, on days notable for influxes, there may be visible migration in evidence, and vice versa. The relationship between weather and bird movements is extremely complex, and the following should be seen as a summary of current knowledge, together with ideas that are often speculative. We hope it will encourage further work on the subject as there is still much to be learnt. It should be noted that, unless stated, all the weather charts in this paper are valid for 0200h.

### HONG KONG BIRD MOVEMENTS

Approximately 450 species of birds have been recorded in a wild state in Hong Kong and Chalmers (1986) lists 82 species as resident, or about 18%. Thus, the great majority of species are migratory or are of occasional or vagrant status. Passage migrants occurring in Hong Kong include long-distance travellers en route between breeding grounds in northeast Asia and winter quarters that include Indo-China, the Philippines and Australasia. Though there are relatively few summer visitors, the Territory hosts many wintering birds, including short-distance migrants from China.

Radar studies (Myres and Apps 1973, Melville 1980) have shown that while bird movements occur throughout the year, they are concentrated in April and May, and during September, October and November. These studies have also shown that the dominant direction of movement in spring is southwest to northeast, and in autumn northeast to southwest. Melville (1980) notes that this route cuts across the northwestern sector of the South China Sea past the island of Hainan. He suggests that, as the prevailing directions of upper air winds at 850 mb (approximately 1.5km or 5000 ft at Hong Kong) are broadly similar to the main directions of migration, birds may utilise tail winds to reduce energy expenditure on these long-distance, migratory 'shortcuts'.

On at least four afternoons during the period 24-28 April 1972 Myres and Apps (1973) recorded echoes of birds apparently arriving at the south coast of China from over the South China Sea. The predominant heading was between north-northwest and north and the birds arrived at altitudes of up to about 3700m. On three evenings in the same period they also observed onward departure inland in the same northward direction both from Hong Kong and from the Lema Islands to the south. Melville (1980) also reported birds departing from the Lema Islands, with two notable departures occurring after the passage of cold fronts. Myres and Apps (1973) note the character of the echoes was of the 'passerine type' during their mass evening departure after sunset. They suggest that the birds had crossed the sea from an origin in the southern Philippines (perhaps Palawan) or from the north coast of the island of Borneo. Webster (1976) has suggested they could be Yellow Wagtails *Motacilla flava*.

Myres and Apps also reported that 'a most prominent ascent of bird echoes was detected after sunset on at least seven evenings in April offshore over the Lema Channel and the Pearl River estuary, the identity of which is uncertain, but perhaps due to terns.'

### HONG KONG WEATHER PATTERNS

Spring is the transition season in Hong Kong. Cool air from China is not as persistent as in winter and is occasionally displaced by warmer air coming in from the South China Sea or the Pacific Ocean. Figure 1(a) illustrates a situation in which maritime air invades the whole of China. In reading these maps, bear in mind that over the sea, winds tend to blow parallel to the isobars, with low pressure to the left-hand side. On land, winds blow at an angle to the isobars, from the high pressure side to the low pressure side. The angle could be as much as 90 degrees in places where the continental anticyclone spreads southward rapidly over China.

As the northeast monsoon pulsates, pressure over northern China rises and spreads to the south, sending cold air southward at the same time. On weather charts, the push of cold air appears as a zone of tightly packed isobars, sometimes with a cold front marking its southern flank (Figure 1(b)-(c)). If the push is strong enough to cause cold air to climb over the Nanling mountain range in northern Guangdong, then cold air will arrive in Hong Kong from the north, bringing about a 'northerly surge' (Figure 1(d)). Because the first batch of air reaching Hong Kong in a northerly surge has often been warmed up for



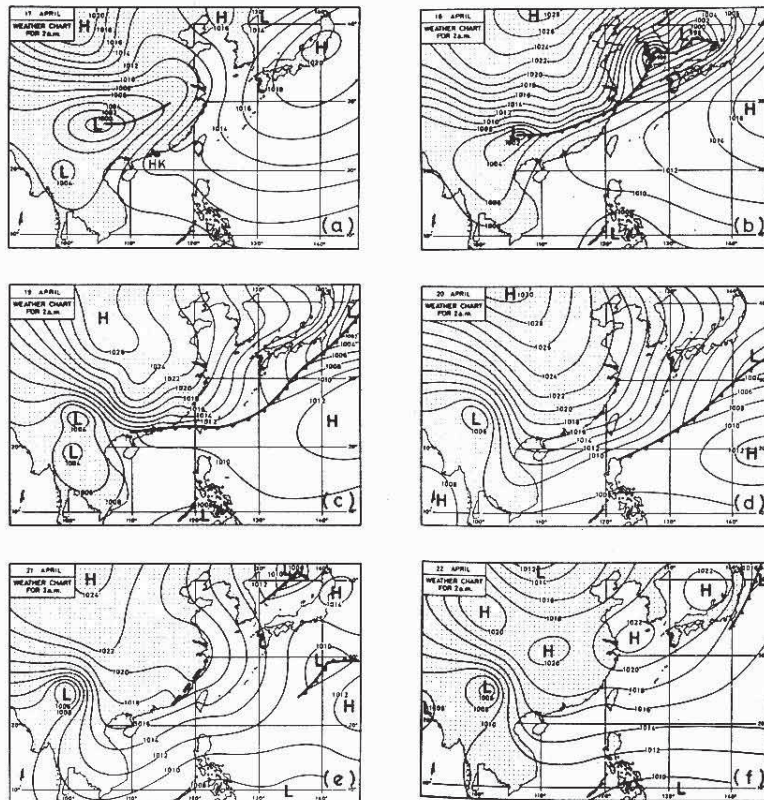
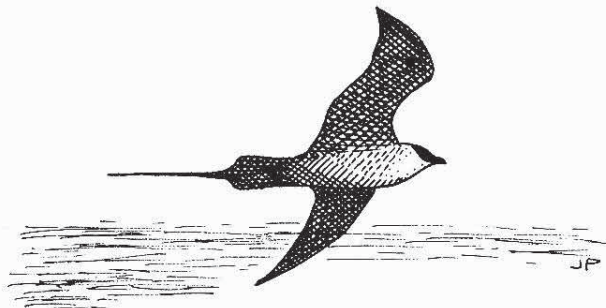


Figure 1. Weather charts, 17-22 April 1991: typical surge sequence, influx on 20th, Chinese Goshawk and unidentified accipiters movement on 21st. Dashed line marks the narrow ridge of high pressure on the southeast China coast.



several days in China before being caught by the pressure pulse, significant temperature falls often occur with a delay of a day or so.

Clouds typically form along the belt where cool, dry, continental air meets warm, moist, maritime air. Thus, it often turns cloudy and rainy on the arrival of cold air. It might even be thundery if warm and moist air has been in place for a long time. However, the weather can also clear up fairly quickly depending on upper-air circulation patterns.

The next stage in the evolution of the pressure pattern is the eastward extension of the high pressure area into the Pacific (Figure 1(e)) and the gradual veering of local winds into easterlies. Note a special feature in the chart - the narrow ridge of high pressure along the Fujian coast opposite Taiwan. This represents cold air finding its way round the Wuyi Mountains at the eastern end of Nanling and surging down the Taiwan Strait. While superficially an innocuous feature, it is often associated with gales in the Taiwan Strait and a belt of strong easterlies off the coast of eastern Guangdong. This is a phenomenon which we shall refer to again later. Such strong easterlies could extend sufficiently westward to reach Hong Kong to give rise to 'easterly surges'.

As the push subsides, easterlies in Hong Kong begin to moderate. However, air pressure remains relatively high over the East China Sea and this maintains an enhanced easterly flow over the Luzon Strait (compare the number of isobars between northern Taiwan and southern Luzon in Figure 1(b) and 1(f) - more lines mean higher wind speed).

Towards the end of the cycle, easterlies veer further into southeasterlies and southern China comes under the influence of warm, moist, maritime air again. Towards the end of spring, the easterlies are sometimes displaced by southwesterlies spreading in from Indochina.

Occasionally, the pressure pulse is not strong and cold air is blocked by the Nanling mountain range. In that case, an easterly surge would arrive in Hong Kong without being preceded by a northerly surge. An example is given in Figure 2. The cool air to the north of Nanling manifests itself as a zone of packed isobars, sometimes with a trough of low pressure (or quasi-stationary front) marking its southern boundary.

Throughout spring, the process of pressure pulses and cold air surges repeats itself once every few days. As the year marches on, the strength of the pulses becomes weaker and weaker and cool air from China stops reaching Hong Kong. Summer arrives and Hong Kong comes alternately under the influence of southeasterlies from the Pacific and southwesterlies from the South China Sea depending on the synoptic pattern, except when punctuated by the occasional visit of typhoons.

Typhoons are cyclonic vortices in which winds blow anticlockwise round the centre. They come in all shapes and sizes, some as big as 2000 kilometres across while some barely exceed 400 kilometres in diameter. Some



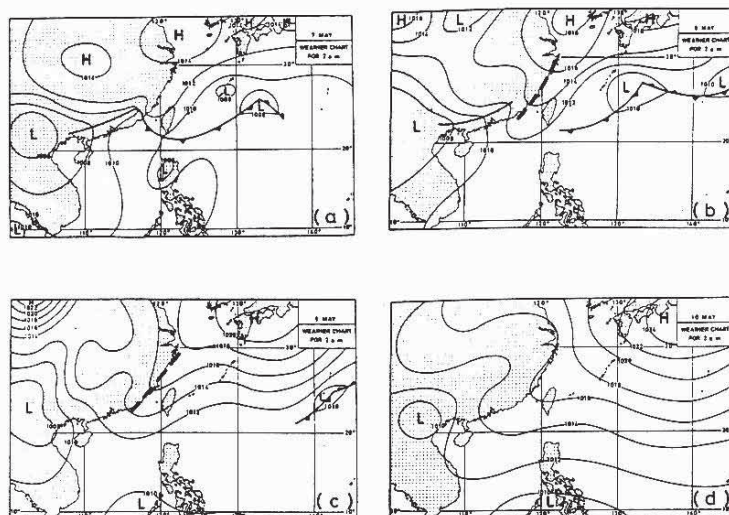


Figure 2. Weather charts, 7-10 May 1987: easterly surge on 8th, terns on 10th. Dashed line marks the narrow ridge of high pressure on the southeast China coast.

are more harmful than others because of the very high wind speeds near the centre. Strictly speaking, meteorologists reserve the name 'typhoon' only for those tropical cyclones which have maximum sustained winds of 64 knots (118 km/h) or more near the centre. A direct hit by a typhoon would necessitate the hoisting of signal no. 10 in Hong Kong. Weaker tropical cyclones are labelled 'severe tropical storm', 'tropical storm' and 'tropical depression' corresponding to threshold wind speeds of 48 knots (89 km/h), 34 knots (63 km/h) and 22 knots (41 km/h) respectively, the last figure being somewhat flexible. It may be useful to note that the tropical cyclone signal no. 8 is used in Hong Kong to warn of gales of 34 knots or more associated with approaching tropical cyclones. In this paper, 'typhoon' is generally used loosely to refer to tropical cyclones of different intensities.

Typhoons mostly form over the western, north Pacific, east of the Philippines, and then move generally westward, some eventually entering the South China Sea, although some also occasionally form within the South China Sea itself. The peak of typhoon occurrence is August and September. On average, five to six typhoons threaten Hong Kong each year and necessitate the hoisting of the signal no. 1. At least one of these usually comes close enough to cause gales.

By September, pressure pulses in the northeast monsoon are again strong enough to give Hong Kong its first surge of the winter. From this time until about early December, surges are mostly northerly ones, bringing with them fine and dry conditions as a result of large-scale atmospheric circulation. The East China Sea is still too warm for the cold continental anticyclone to spread across and easterly surges are rare compared with spring. From late December onwards, as the East China Sea cools down, easterly surges become more frequent and the arrival of surges is more and more associated with cloudy and rainy conditions. Thus, we return to spring.

As we shall see later, there is good evidence that the pulsation of the northeast monsoon has a modulating effect on the migration of birds through Hong Kong. Typhoons, by virtue of their high wind speed, also seem to cause deviations in flight paths providing Hong Kong with visits from otherwise rarely seen species.

## SPRING

### 1. Influxes

Typically, spring is marked by a succession of influxes of migrants. Examples include:

**30 March 1985** The arrival of a significant easterly surge the previous day gave rise to more than 50mm of rain in Hong Kong as humid air sitting over the region was displaced by significantly cooler air brought by the surge. On 30th it remained overcast but the rain gradually eased off. Temperatures were some nine degrees lower than before the surge. Tsim Bei Tsui held a Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes* 'many migrant waders' including five Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*, as well as a White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*, 450 Pacific Swifts *Apus pacificus*, 40 Red-rumped Swallows *Hirundo daurica* and a Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*, while at Mai Po there were over 1000 Swallows *Hirundo rustica*, 800 House *Apus affinis* and 400 Pacific Swifts. The following day was also notable for the numbers of migrants (Chalmers and Kennerley 1987).

**2 April 1983** The previous day was fine with northeasterlies. A weak northerly surge arrived, bringing drier air, but cloudier weather, with a trace of rain. At least 15, but 'probably as many as 50' Blue and White Flycatchers *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* in Tai Po Kau (Chalmers and Viney 1985) is the highest day total yet recorded in Hong Kong for this species.

**5-6 April 1991** Since the end of March Hong Kong had been recovering from an unseasonably cold surge. Then a replenishment of the winter monsoon arrived on the night of 5th, which also brought some light rain, marking the end of the fine spell. (A 'replenishment' is a weaker version of a 'surge' and is often difficult to discern on simplified weather charts.) Winds backed from easterlies on 4th into north-



northeasterlies on 6th and light rain continued. Birds recorded on 5th included 17 Ashy Minivets *Pericrocotus divaricatus*, 50 Red-throated Pipits *Anthus cervinus* (the highest count of the spring) and two Japanese Yellow Buntings *Emberiza sulphurata* at Tsim Bei Tsui, another four Japanese Yellow Buntings at Lok Ma Chau, seven Japanese Waxwings *Bombicilla japonica* (the first record for Hong Kong) and 100 Black-tailed Hawfinches *Eophona migratoria* at Lam Tsuen; among the new sightings on 6th were 150 Asiatic Dowitchers *Limnodromus semipalmatus* and 1200 Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* at Mai Po, and a Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* (the fifth record for Hong Kong) at Tsim Bei Tsui (Leader and Turnbull 1992, Leven and Carey 1992). Eight species of flycatcher recorded during the Big Bird Race held at the time included a Sooty *Muscicapa sibirica* and a Pale Blue *Cyornis unicolor*, the latter being the first for Hong Kong (Round 1992).

**9 April 1989** The northeast monsoon had been blowing for three days and the weather had been very unsettled in the previous two, bringing nearly 100mm of rain. Winds turned easterly on the 9th and rain effectively stopped. At Mai Po 10,389 waders, the highest count of the year, included 11 Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*, 3500 Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea* and 2700 Greater Sand Plovers *Charadrius leschenaultii*; an estimated 1000 Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus* were seen off the Cheung Chau ferry (Chalmers and Turnbull 1990).

**12 April 1990** A northerly surge arrived on 11th accompanied by more than 70mm of rain. There was no appreciable temperature fall but the weather cleared on 12th. Birds in Tai Po Kau included single Ferruginous *Muscicapa ferruginea*, Blue and White, Japanese Paradise *Terpsiphone atrocaudata*, Asian Paradise *T. paradisi* and Narcissus *Ficedula narcissina* Flycatchers, as well as a Red-winged Crested Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*, and Eye-browed *Turdus obscurus*, Grey *T. cardis* and Grey-backed *T. hortulorum* Thrushes (Chalmers *et al.* 1991).

**20 April 1991** A surge of the winter monsoon reached Hong Kong on 19th and northerlies were well established on the 20th. Winds veered into easterlies the following day as a narrow ridge of high pressure formed along the southeast China coast (Figure 1(c)). While relative humidity fell arising from a change of airmass, traces of rain were recorded on all three days. Birds at Mai Po included Hong Kong's fourth Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*, the first White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea* for Hong Kong and China (Kennerley 1992), Hong Kong's first Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens* (Leader 1992), a Thick-billed Warbler *Phragmaticola aedon* and five Blue-tailed Bee-eaters *Merops philippinus* (Leader and Turnbull 1992).

**29 April 1984** Hong Kong came under the influence of an easterly surge on 29th, marking the end of a four-day spell of overcast and rainy conditions. Some 20 millimetres of rain were recorded (temperature and rainfall readings in this paper refer to those recorded at the Royal Observatory, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, unless otherwise stated). Birds at Mai Po included one Spoon-billed Sandpiper, 325 Asiatic Dowitchers (the largest flock recorded in Hong Kong), one Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi* and one Chestnut-cheeked Starling *Sturnus philippensis*, while Tsim Bei Tsui held five Chinese Egrets and 14 more Asiatic Dowitchers (Chalmers 1987a).

**5-7 May 1989** An easterly surge established itself on 3rd. By 5th, the easterlies had moderated and the weather turned mainly fine apart from a few isolated showers. It was sunny and warm on 6th and 7th. There was a fall of Arctic Warblers *Phylloscopus borealis*, Brown Shrikes *Lanius cristatus* and Grey-streaked Flycatchers *Muscicapa griseisticta*, with birds recorded at several localities and numbers perhaps highest on 5th (MDW pers. obs.); Hong Kong's first Blue-winged Pitta *Pitta brachyura* was seen on Cheung Chau on 4th (Chalmers and Turnbull 1990).

**20 May 1984** The weather had been unsettled for several days and an easterly surge had arrived the day before. On 20th, it was some six degrees cooler than before the arrival of the surge. More than 30mm of rain was recorded. At Tsim Bei Tsui, there was a 'sparkling selection' of waders including five Spoon-billed Sandpipers (a new high for the Territory), three Nordmann's Greenshank and over 300 Grey-rumped Sandpipers *Heteroscelus brevipes* (Chalmers 1987a).

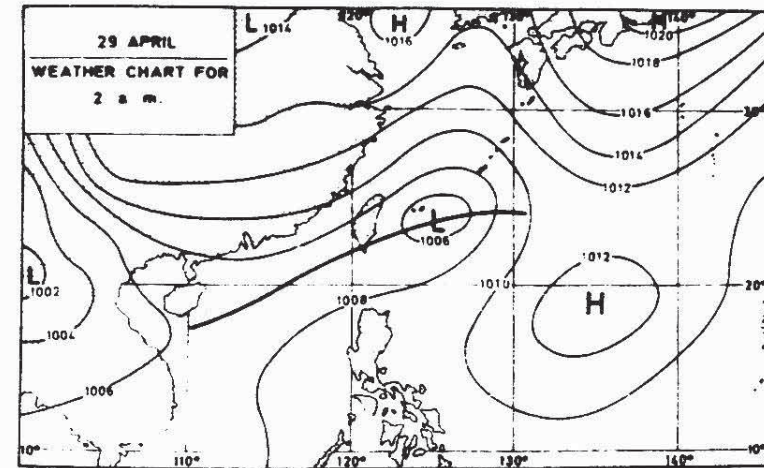


Figure 3 Weather chart, 29 April 1984: influx in easterlies, with species from the Philippines.

## DISCUSSION

All these influxes were associated with easterly or northerly surges arriving in Hong Kong, although the case of 5-6 April 1991 was a rather weak event. Melville (1980) similarly reports an influx occurring with the arrival of a surge ('cold front') on 2 April 1979.

These influxes can presumably be explained by the surges bringing adverse weather for northbound migrants: i.e. the onset of winds that may be northerly or northeasterly and, often, rain. These conditions have been shown to interrupt migration elsewhere: e.g. in a study of spring migration on the Louisiana coast of the Gulf of Mexico, Gauthreaux (1971) found that 'when the trans-Gulf migrants encountered bad weather over the Gulf or along the Louisiana coast, the proportion of migrants that alighted in the isolated woodlands south of the treeline [i.e. nearer to the coast] increased. The measure of increase was usually dependent on the severity and strength of the meteorological grounding factors.'

The influx on 29 April 1984 was notable for the occurrence of birds wintering primarily in the Philippines, such as Chinese Egret, Pechora Pipit and Chestnut-cheeked Starling. The weather synopsis for this date (Figure 3) shows a trough lying between south China and the Philippines; possibly, northbound migrants from the Philippines encountered bad weather associated with this trough over the sea, and some became disoriented, and were drifted by the easterly winds prevailing to the north of the trough's central axis.



Also notable on this date were the 339 Asiatic Dowitchers; though we have not examined the records for this species in any detail, it seems possible numbers are related to wind direction, with easterlies sometimes bringing large numbers: e.g. in April 1991 there were 150 on 6th (see above), and 241 on 22nd (Leven and Carey 1992), after winds had veered into easterlies (Figure 1(f)); other newly-arrived migrants on that date included four Chinese Egrets.

## 2. Accumulation of migrants

Two periods during recent springs have contrasted with the typical pattern of spring; one was the protracted lull during a warm, dry spell in April 1991 (see next section), the other was the accumulation of migrants during persistent wet weather in April the following year.

**3-11 April 1992** The spring of 1992 was a truly exceptional spring in Hong Kong with record-breaking rainfall (Lam 1993). This may be seen as a part of the El Nino phenomenon which is an ensemble of global weather anomalies occurring in association with an extensive body of warm water over the equatorial East Pacific. April 1992 was the wettest April since records began in 1884. Most fell between 3-11 April and there were 160.7mm on 10th alone. The rain resulted from the encounter between a cooler air mass from inland China and a warmer air mass of maritime origin. Outstanding among the migrants were flycatchers and maximum day counts during this period were five Blue and White, five Ferruginous, three Narcissus, three Asian Paradise and six Japanese Paradise. At Mai Po there were record numbers of Asiatic Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (900), Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* (1845) and Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* (279); there was also a high count of 150 White-vented Needletails *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*, and two Siberian Blue Robins *Luscinia cyane* were trapped (Leader and Lam 1993).

## Discussion

The accumulation of migrants evidently resulted from the rain grounding birds as they reached the South China coast. Weather synopses during the period (e.g. Figure 4; 7 April) indicate that the weather over eastern Indo-China and across much of the South China Sea was fine with southerly winds, conditions that are favourable to migrants heading for the coast. A satellite image for 10 April 1992 (Figure 5) shows dense clouds near Hong Kong, but clear skies over the sea away from the coast; Indo-China received below average rainfall during this period.

## 3. Lull

Usually, even between influxes and/or movements, April days produce a good spread of migrants. But one recent spell was remarkable for its exception to this trend.

**10-18 April 1991** A relatively dry, warm, southerly airstream set in on 10th and a long fine spell commenced, lasting up to 18th. There was an easterly replenishment on 14th but temperatures soon recovered. This period was notable only for the paucity of migrants, e.g. numbers of Nordmann's Greenshank after 10th did not exceed three, there was only one Spoon-billed Sandpiper (on 11th), and only one Narcissus Flycatcher (on 10th), and there were no records of such 'regular' spring migrants as Asian Paradise, Japanese Paradise and Blue and White Flycatchers, Eye-browed Thrush and Chestnut Bunting *Emberiza rutila* (Leven and Carey 1992). Numbers of swifts and hirundines were also very low; Leven and Carey (1992) do not report any counts of Pacific or House Swifts during this period.

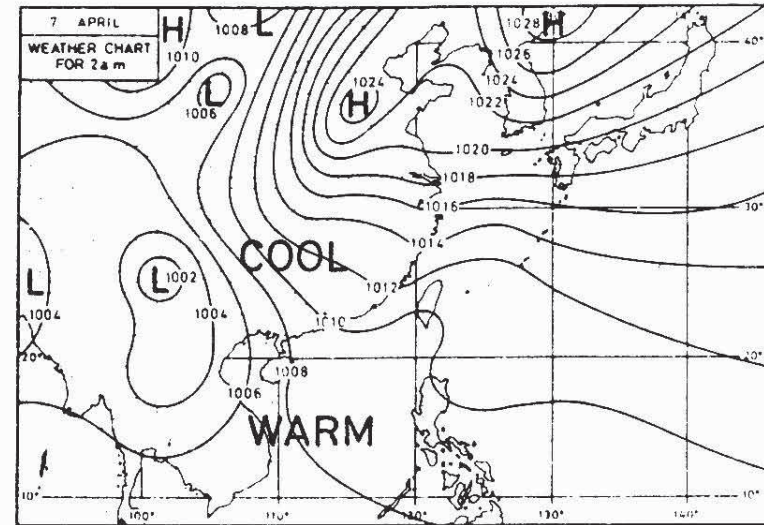


Figure 4. Weather chart, 7 April 1992: cool air meeting warm air along south China coast, migrants accumulating in Hong Kong.

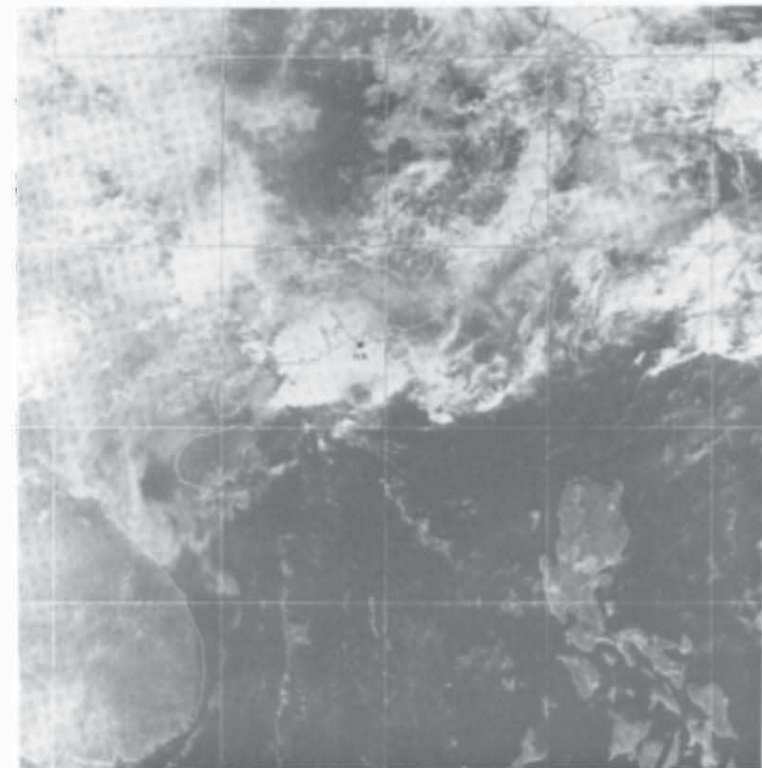


Figure 5. Satellite picture, 1100h 7 April 1992: unsettled weather near Hong Kong, fine over the South China Sea.



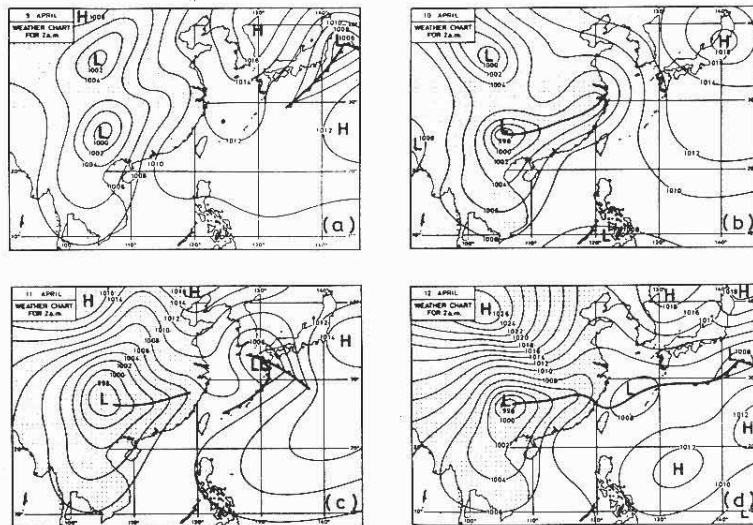


Figure 6. Weather charts, 9-12 April 1991: persistent southwesterly flow over South China.

## Discussion

Though conditions during this period hardly pleased bird watchers, they were surely a boon to migrants. Especially around 8-12 April, when a warm southerly airstream had set in (Figure 6) which prompted a departure of migrants present in Hong Kong (e.g. Nordmann's Greenshank numbers plummeted from a record 46 on 8th), conditions were surely ideal for migrants heading north over the western part of the South China Sea. With fine weather along the coast, migrants evidently headed on past Hong Kong. Even the easterlies that arrived with the surge on 14 April brought no relief from the lull, which only ended with a surge that arrived on the morning of 19th, and yielded some fine bird watching over 20th to 22nd (see above).

### 4. Raptor movements

Only occasionally are raptor movements noted in Hong Kong; they mainly involve just two species, Chinese Goshawk *Accipiter soloensis* and

Grey-faced Buzzard *Butastur indicus*, which both winter in the Philippines and southeast Asia.

**21st and 22 March 1993** A northerly surge had arrived earlier on 18th, bringing a temperature drop of around four degrees. Easterlies were replacing northerlies on 21st and 22nd. It was cloudy but free of rain on 21st while there was a trace of rain on 22nd. Two flocks of Grey-faced Buzzards, totalling 98 birds, were seen passing north on 21st: 42 over Cheung Chau and 56 over Aberdeen Country Park. The following day, some 228 were recorded heading north: 57 over Mong Tseng (Tsim Bei Tsui), 147 over Mai Po and 24 over Aberdeen Country Park (see elsewhere in this report).

**27 March 1989** This was the first fine day after some ten days of gloomy weather. A northerly surge had arrived earlier on 25th bringing drier air to Hong Kong. The northerlies were subsiding on 27th and winds veered to easterlies the following day. About 70 Grey-faced Buzzards were recorded moving in from the south at Mount Davis and Stonecutters Island (Chalmers 1990).

**29 March 1991** A surge of the northeast monsoon displaced southeasterlies on 26th and the temperature fell gradually till the end of the month. On 29th, Hong Kong came under the influence of strong easterlies and there was a trace of rain. At least 58 Grey-faced Buzzards passed over Mai Po in three flocks, including one of 36; there were also nine over Tap Mun and one near Tin Shui Wai; the next day, a further 25 were seen at Mai Po and five at Shek Kong (Leven and Carey 1992).

**15th, 17th and 28 April 1985** Light northeasterlies were blowing in Hong Kong on 15th and 17th and there was very little rain. A surge had arrived earlier with a significant temperature fall on 12th. On 28th easterlies were replacing northerlies which had arrived two days earlier with a surge. There was only a trace of rain. On 15th, 65 Chinese Goshawks were seen at Tai Po Kau. On 17th, four flocks of Chinese Goshawks totalling 110 flew west over Tsim Bei Tsui. At the same locality on 28th, several flocks of Chinese Goshawks (one of 250 birds), totalling 600, were recorded flying west; a Grey-faced Buzzard was seen with them (Chalmers and Kennerley 1987).

**21 April 1991** We have discussed this case earlier (Figure 1). A surge arrived on 19th and easterlies were replacing northerlies on 21st. It was a day with little rain (less than 1mm). It seems a large movement of Chinese Goshawks occurred, though only 17 were certainly identified (eight passing through and one trapped at Mai Po, eight at Tai Tam Bay); sightings of accipiters which were probably this species totalled 25 at Mai Po, and a distant group of 400 at Tai Tam Bay (Leven and Carey 1992).

**24 April 1988** A northerly surge had arrived on 22nd and northeasterlies were replacing northerlies on 24th. It was a fine day with no rain. 134 Chinese Goshawks flew north at Tsim Bei Tsui between 0902h and 1105h (Chalmers 1990).

## Discussion

As the raptor movements typically coincide with easterly winds, and both Chinese Goshawk and Grey-faced Buzzard winter in substantial numbers in the Philippines, it seems likely that the birds seen in these movements originated from there.

Typically, the movements have been recorded from two to four days after the arrival of surges, mostly northerly ones, of the winter monsoon. An exception was 17 April 1985 which was some five days after the initial surge. In all cases, they were within a day of the peak in air pressure in Hong Kong



associated with each surge. In terms of synoptic patterns, they share the characteristics associated with the 'mature' stage of a surge, that is, the eastward extension of the continental anticyclone into the East China Sea and the Pacific (e.g. Figure 1(e)). Sometimes in spring, one actually finds a break-off cell of high pressure on the East China coast centred near Shanghai, the case of 24 April 1988 being a good example (Figure 7).

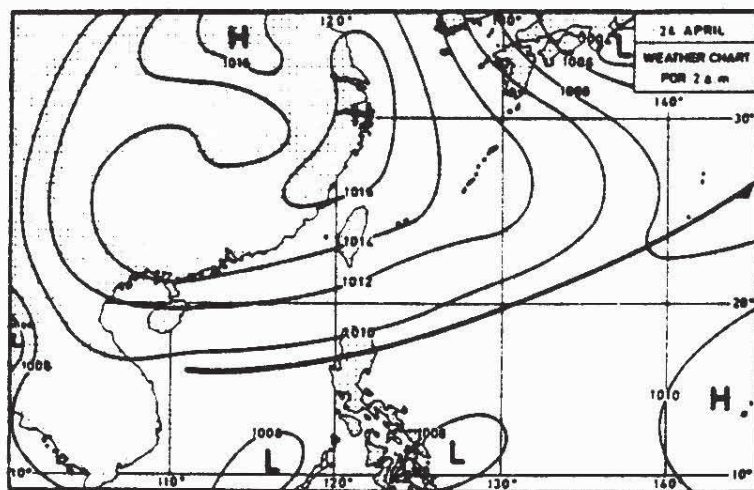


Figure 7. Weather chart, 24 April 1988: high cell over east China coast, Chinese Goshawk movement.

In each case the synopses suggest conditions in the northern Philippines were similar: air pressure was rising and the surface winds had an enhanced easterly component. These conditions may well be selected by raptors for departing north from the Philippines, as they are often associated with generally stable weather conditions between the Philippines and the South China coast (or Taiwan), as we have seen in the above examples. Similar observations regarding the prediction of weather en route have been made by Nisbet and Drury (1968), who found that spring migration at Cape Cod, Massachusetts, was highest on the western flanks of high pressure cells, and suggested this was because the prevailing conditions were best for avoiding inclement weather at the migrants' destinations.

From late March onwards, though easterlies are typically blowing at sea level when these surges reach the South China Sea, winds at higher elevations, say around 1-2km, tend to be from the southeast, making Hong Kong downwind of the Philippines. A further factor that may persuade some raptors to make landfall near Hong Kong, rather than simply pass north via Taiwan, is the occurrence of winds up to gale force in the Taiwan Strait. These winds, which extend into a belt of strong winds off the south China coast, are associated with a narrow ridge of high pressure along the Fujian coast and are often found in the mature stage of surges, especially in spring.

Both species are scarce in Hong Kong in autumn, when they pass through Taiwan in substantial numbers: during the 1980s, annual totals recorded passing through Kenting National Park in southern Taiwan were around 70,000 Chinese Goshawks and 6,000 Grey-faced Buzzards (Mei-Hua Tsou *in litt.* to MDW). Possibly, then, autumn weather is more suitable for southbound birds to take the more direct route to the Philippines.

As they usually occur with surges, raptor movements may closely coincide with influxes. For example, the influx of 20 April 1991 was followed by a Chinese Goshawk (and unidentified accipiter) movement on 21st (Figure 1(e)); the synopsis for 22nd (a Monday when fewer birdwatchers were in the field) suggests this day could have also produced Chinese Goshawks in some numbers - Figure 1(f). On 28 April 1985, the record day for Chinese Goshawks, there were also record numbers of Little Whimbrels *Numenius minutus* (45 at Tsim Bei Tsui and 80 at Mai Po) and over 300 Yellow Wagtails were also recorded in the Deep Bay area, many of them flying north into China (Chalmers and Kennerley 1987).

## 5. Tern and skua movements

Much as with raptors, spring tern movements are only occasionally noted in Hong Kong. Skuas, by contrast, have never occurred in substantial numbers, though spring 1993 records suggested there was some movement through the Territory, and should stimulate more spring sea watching.

**12th, 17th and 18 April 1993** The 12th was a day with strong easterlies and it was cloudy but there was no rain. A minor easterly surge prevailed on 17th and 18th. There was a trace of rain on 17th and some 15mm on 18th. On 12th, a Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* flew over Ping Chau and four unidentified skuas were seen from the Ping Chau ferry in northern Mirs Bay in the afternoon. On 17th, an Arctic *S. parasiticus* or Pomarine *S. pomarinus* Skua was seen from Ping Chau and a party of 13 terns, possibly Aleutian, was recorded from the same ferry. On 18th, also from Ping Chau, one unidentified skua was seen. Prior to these sightings there were only four skua records, all of single birds, in Hong Kong.

**10 May 1987** (not 9th, as in Chalmers 1988) An easterly surge became established on 8th, bringing to an end two days of unsettled weather. Winds moderated on 10th, with just a trace of rain recorded. Fifteen hundred White-winged Black *Chlidonias leucopterus* and 196 Common Terns *Sterna hirundo* recorded in the Lamma Channel arrived from over the sea to the south and mainly headed northeast; many more probably passed, as watching was intermittent: e.g. there were 420 from around 0940h to 0950h, when the movement was first noticed, and numbers tailed off by early afternoon (MDW pers. obs.). There were also at least five Black-naped Terns *Sterna sumatrana* at Cheung Chau, and 450 White-winged Black Terns at Mai Po (Chalmers 1988).

**12 May 1986** This is another case of light easterlies in the morning replaced by prevailing southwesterlies. The weather was very unsettled and more than 100mm of rain fell the previous day with 45mm on 12th. Winds between Luzon and Hong Kong were again broadly southeasterlies. About 3000 White-winged Black Terns (a new high) were recorded passing west over Starling Inlet and about 400 were seen in Deep Bay (Chalmers 1987b).



**18 May 1978** Light easterlies in the early morning were displaced by southwesterlies spreading in from the west in association with a trough of low pressure over south China. Heavy rain fell in Hong Kong, the daily total being 78mm. Southeasterlies prevailed between Luzon and Hong Kong. Over 1000 White-winged Black Terns were present in Hong Kong waters (Chalmers 1986).

## Discussion

There are broad similarities between the weather synopses for 10 May 1987 (Figure 2), and 12th, 17th and 18 April 1993. They all represented the easterly phase (and often the mature stage) of surges of the northeast monsoon, with a narrow, but not necessarily well-defined, ridge of high pressure along the coast of southeastern China. In each case, easterly winds associated with the southern flank of the ridge were blowing along the South China coast.

Possibly, these conditions are typical for spring tern and skua movements along the South China coast. They are similar to conditions prevailing on 6 May 1989 when Hopkin (1990) recorded one Arctic, 21 Long-tailed and 35 Pomarine Skuas, as well as three unidentified skuas, passing northeast through the Taiwan Strait.

These conditions may also produce other migrants in Hong Kong; if the easterlies reach the northern Philippines, conditions may be similar to those prevailing during raptor movements, as they were on 10 May 1987, when four Chinese Goshawks were seen on Cheung Chau. On days with these conditions, perhaps observations from a vantage point such as Cape D'Aguilar could produce both seabirds and raptors.

The cases of 18 May 1978 and 12 May 1986 went one step further and represented the end of the surge cycle, with easterlies retreating towards the east and being displaced by southwesterlies. In both cases, weather was very unsettled. The high numbers of terns might be better classified as influxes rather than movement, with birds that had been migrating over the sea seeking shelter in inshore waters in the inclement weather which occurs in such synoptic situations.

Though made just outside Hong Kong waters, observations by Huizinga and Ouweneel (1991) apparently involved seabirds that had similarly sought shelter in inshore waters during inclement weather. On 17 and 18 April 1990 an easterly surge brought strong easterly winds, overcast skies and some light rain. On 18th, from the 1330h High Speed Ferry from Hong Kong to Macau, Huizinga and Ouweneel recorded seabirds just to the west of the Soko Islands but before the Pearl River Estuary. The birds were 'flying south to southeast in the direction of the open sea after presumably sheltering from the storm', and included two Bulwer's Petrels *Bulweria bulwerii*, three Streaked Shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas*, a Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus* and a large, dark-backed gull identified as Slaty-backed *Larus schistisagus*, as well as small parties of Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo* and commoner gulls and terns.

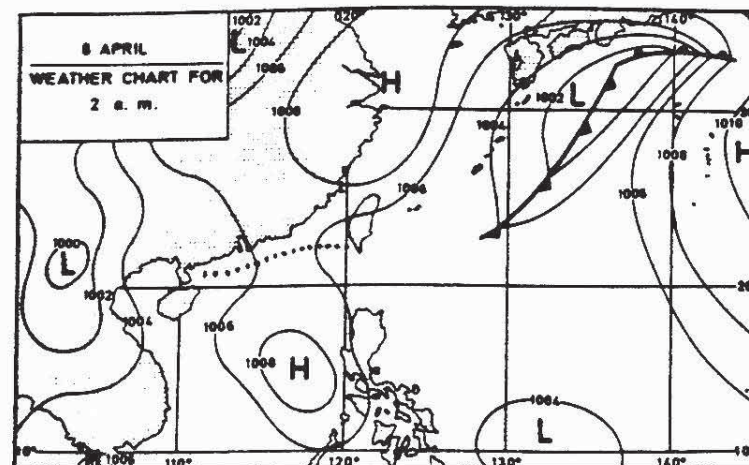


Figure 8. Weather chart, 8 April 1985: indistinct trough marked by dotted line, songbird passage.

## 6. Songbird passage

Visible songbird migration is rarely considered noteworthy in spring; we noticed only one example in the literature, though Yellow Wagtail passage on 28 April 1985 is referred to above.

**8 April 1985** A trough of low pressure (which might also be treated as a weak cold front at this time of the year) approached the South China coast on 7th but weakened into an indistinct feature on the weather chart by 8th (Figure 8). It nevertheless brought light north-northeasterlies as well as cloudy and foggy conditions with drizzle on 7th and 8th. There was also a minor anticyclone in the northern part of the South China Sea. Fifteen Rosy *Pericocotus roseus* or Ashy Minivets were recorded heading north over Tsim Bei Tsui and a flock of six Rosy Minivets, the second Hong Kong record, was in trees at the same locality (Chalmers 1987).

## Discussion

Though minor, the anticyclone over the South China Sea would probably have offered ideal conditions for migration on its western flank which would suit birds arriving from Indo-China, a possible source of the minivets. Perhaps on reaching the coast the birds flew lower (at least one flock touching down) as they encountered the light north-northeasterly wind, low cloud and fog occurring on the indistinct trough of low pressure.

## TYPHOON SEASON

### 1. Typhoons and tropical storms impacting Hong Kong

Though several of the seabird records in Chalmers (1986) are linked to typhoons, they are invariably sparse. Typhoon Brenda in May 1989 swept in many terns, but it was only with the advent of seawatching from Cape D'Aguilar during autumn 1993 that seabirds were recorded in impressive numbers and variety as typhoons and tropical storms affected Hong Kong.



**20th and 21 May 1989** (Note that there are some errors in the dates given for observations in Chalmers 1990; dates given here have been amended.) Typhoon Brenda, which had crossed southern Luzon, the Philippines, three days previously, passed about 130km to the southwest of Hong Kong on the afternoon of 20 May, and made landfall to the west early on 21st. The maximum gust at Waglan Island was 69 knots from the east at 1224h on 20th. The prevailing wind over offshore waters was about 40 knots from the east-northeast on 20th and about 20 knots from the southeast on 21st. Torrential rain was recorded in Hong Kong, 322.8mm on 20th and 102.9mm on 21st. Large numbers of terns were seen in Hong Kong waters. On 20th, three Bridled, 14 Whiskered *Chlidonias hybrida*, 624 White-winged Black and 12 'Common' Terns were recorded at Cheung Chau. The next day terns were in lower numbers off Cheung Chau, though included two Sooty Terns *Sterna fuscata* (the third record for Hong Kong); 35 Whiskered, 200 White-winged Black, six Little and two Common Terns were seen at Ma Wan and Pearl Island. With the weather improving on 21st, observers found there had been a considerable influx of egrets and bitterns: there was a Chinese Egret at Pearl Island, So Kwun Wat; a Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis* and a Schrenck's Bittern *I. eurhythmus* were seen at Clearwater Bay, and a tiny marsh on Cheung Chau that was usually devoid of waterbirds held a Green Heron *Butorides striatus* and one Schrenck's and eight Yellow *Ixobrychus sinensis* Bitterns. Black and Schrenck's Bitterns were also later reported from other localities with sightings continuing to early June (Chalmers 1990). Other migrants on 21st included a Chinese Goshawk at Cheung Chau and two Pechora Pipits at Sandy Bay (Chalmers and Turnbull 1990).

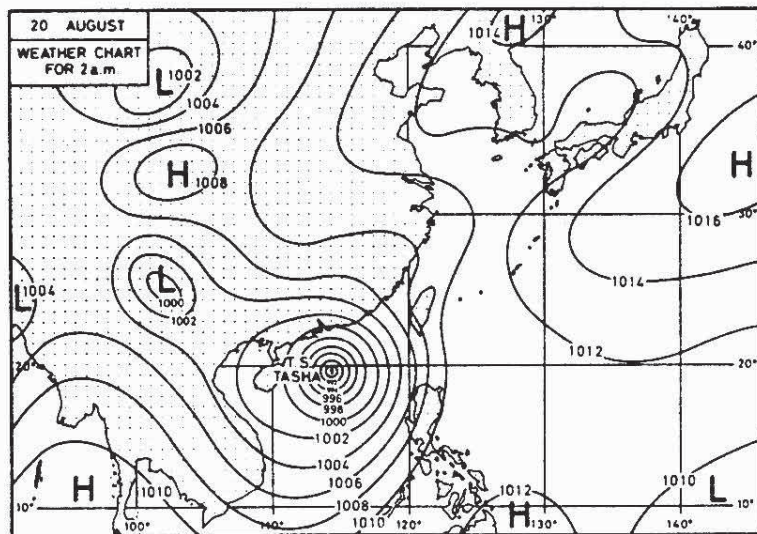


Figure 9. Weather chart, 20 August 1993: Tasha with extensive circulation, terns and seabirds the next two days.

**21st and 22 August 1993** Tasha skirted northern Luzon on 18th, becoming a typhoon and attaining peak intensity together with an extensive circulation (Figure 9) on the evening of 20th, about 220km southwest of Hong Kong. It weakened into a severe tropical storm about 260km west-southwest of Hong Kong just before making landfall in the morning of 21st, when all signals were lowered at 0940h. Maximum gust at Waglan Island was 68 knots from the south-southeast at 0215h on 21st. The prevailing wind over

offshore waters was 39 knots from the east-southeast on 20th, 32 knots from the south-southeast on 21st and 21 knots from the southeast on 22nd. On 20th and 21st, 24.6mm and 13.9mm of rain were recorded respectively, but only 1.5mm on 22nd. On 21st, two Streaked Shearwaters, five dark Procellariids *Bulweria/Oceanodroma* sp. or Shearwaters *Puffinus* sp. and three Long-tailed Skuas were recorded from Cape D'Aguiar; most headed towards the south. On 22nd, 130 Aleutian *Sterna aleutica*, 40 Common and six Bridled terns were recorded from Cape D'Aguiar, again heading towards the south.

**17 September 1993** Becky formed over the offshore waters of northern Luzon on late 15th and then moved rapidly towards Hong Kong. It intensified into a severe tropical storm on the early morning of 17th and was closest to Hong Kong around 0700h when it was 110km to the south-southwest. It made landfall later that morning, about 140 km west-southwest of Hong Kong, and all signals were lowered at 1700h on 17th. The maximum gust at Waglan was 95 knots from east at 0514h on 17th. The mean prevailing wind over offshore waters was 38 knots from the east-southeast on 17th. On 17th, 70.8mm of rain were recorded. One Streaked Shearwater, an unidentified all-dark petrel *Bulweria/Oceanodroma* sp. and one Sooty and 20 Aleutian Terns were recorded from Cape D'Aguiar during the passage of Becky; other than the shearwater, which headed north, and the Sooty Tern, which was sitting on flotsam, most flew towards the south. The next day, an early morning watch from the Cape produced just two Bridled and four Aleutian terns.

**19 September 1976** Typhoon Iris was closest to Hong Kong on the morning of 19 September when it was about 150 kilometres to the south-southwest. Peak gusts of 67 knots were recorded at 0138h. Iris had been tracking northwestward across the South China Sea for several days. On 19th, northeasterly gales in the early morning veered into east-southeasterlies later and started abating. But strong winds persisted over offshore waters and 29.5mm of rain was recorded on the same day. Fifteen Greater Crested *S. bergii* and at least seven Sooty Terns (the latter were the first for Hong Kong) were seen off Ting Kau and another two Greater Crested Terns near Tai Lam (Brothers Point) (Chalmers 1986). Also on 19th, there were at least 300, perhaps over 1000, 'Common' Terns, and at least 50 Little *S. albifrons*, 20 marsh terns and one Black-naped Tern. Birds mostly arrived from the west, with groups sheltering in the lee of Tsing Yi Island. The tern movement appeared to slacken about mid-morning, as the wind and squally showers slowly moderated, but then continued fairly steadily until dark. There were no signs of any continuation of the movement at Ting Kau the next day, though about ten marsh and 15 'Common' terns and 12 Red-necked Phalaropes were seen in the harbour. Marsh terns and Red-necked Phalaropes continued to be seen in good numbers from widespread localities over the following two weeks (Chalmers 1976).

**25th and 26 September 1993** Dot originated as a tropical depression over the waters east of Hainan Island. It intensified into a tropical storm while drifting slowly north-northeastwards. It deepened into a severe tropical storm as it began to track northwards on 25th, attaining typhoon status when it was 300km southwest of Hong Kong that afternoon. The circulation of Dot remained fairly compact during the period (Figure 10). It reached peak intensity in the early morning of 26th, finally making landfall about 180km west-southwest of Hong Kong in the afternoon; all signals were lowered at 1800h. Maximum gust at Waglan was 60 knots from the east at 0520h on 26th. The prevailing wind over offshore waters was 39 knots from the east on 25th and 34 knots also from the east on 26th. Dot was a very wet storm, dumping 121.8mm and 223.9mm of rain on the Royal Observatory on 25th and 26th respectively. On 24th, two Roseate *S. dougallii* and 178 Bridled Terns were recorded from Cape D'Aguiar, and two Roseate Terns were seen off Discovery Bay. The next day, Cape D'Aguiar produced three Streaked Shearwaters, eleven all dark petrels *Hydrobatidae* sp., an unidentified Frigatebird *Fregata* sp. (possibly Christmas Island *F. andrewsi*), 594 Red-necked Phalaropes, three certain and six probable Pomarine Skuas, one Long-tailed Skua, 370



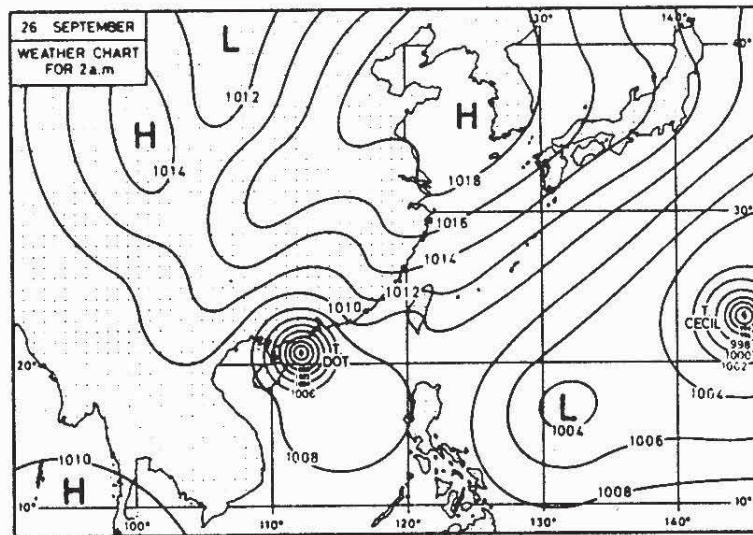


Figure 10. Weather chart, 26 September 1993: Dot with compact circulation, terns and seabirds on 25th and 26th.

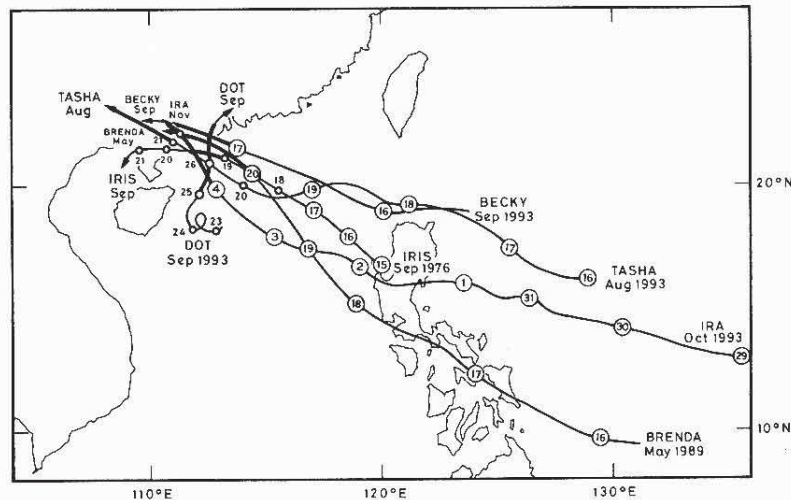


Figure 11. Tracks of six typhoons: Iris (1976), Brenda (1989), Tasha (1993), Becky (1993), Dot (1993) and Iris (1993). Those parts associated with reports of terns, seabirds and unusual species are marked more thickly. Circles show positions at 0800h.

Common, 20 Aleutian and 749 Bridled Terns. Most were heading towards the north. Terns, including an Aleutian, were also recorded at Shuen Wan, well away from the open sea; also at Shuen Wan were two Chestnut-cheeked Starlings and 50 Yellow Wagtails.

**4 and 5 November 1993** Typhoon Ira crossed Luzon on 1st and started weakening as it encountered cool air in the northeast monsoon then prevailing in the South China Sea. It nevertheless continued moving northwestward and was closest to Hong Kong around 1700h on 4th, about 250km to the southwest. It later made landfall around midnight about 280km to the west. The mean prevailing wind over offshore waters was 41 knots from the east on 4th. The maximum gust at Waglan was 56 knots from the east at 1906h. Rain was heavy during Ira's passage, 86mm on 4th and 36mm on 5th. On 4th, an unidentified shearwater *Calonectris/Puffinus* sp. was seen from Cheung Chau; on 5th, one Long-tailed Skua was seen from Cape D'Aguilar.

### Discussion

The tracks of the typhoons mentioned above are shown in Figure 11. On all the dates with interesting observations, the storms lay between south and west-southwest of Hong Kong around 100-300km away, and were heading roughly northwest (Dot was exceptional for initially approaching from the southwest owing to its different origin). Since winds blow in an anticlockwise direction round the centre of a typhoon, the resulting winds were usually between easterly and southeasterly in Hong Kong and nearby waters.

As may be expected, there is some indication that numbers of seabirds and, during their migrations, marsh terns are greatest around the time when the impact of the storm in Hong Kong is at its peak. Thus, as Brenda approached on 20 May 1989, at Cheung Chau no terns were recorded from 0830-1030h; White-winged Black Terns then appeared, with 21 from 1000h-1230h, 92 from 1230-1500, 66 from 1500-1600 (by which time seawatching received more attention), 395 from 1600-1845 and 70 from 1845 to dusk. Birds were initially heading in from the south, later, they were sweeping in from the west. As conditions improved after Brenda had made landfall on 21st, tern numbers quickly dropped as birds headed towards the sea: numbers of White-winged Terns recorded from Cheung Chau were 40 from 0600-0700h (when observation was difficult as heavy rain showers reduced visibility), 135 from 0700-0800h, 22 from 0800-0900h and nine from 0950-1005h (MDW pers. obs.).

On 21 August 1993, it appeared that the seabirds recorded from Cape D'Aguilar were heading out to sea from the direction of Mirs Bay, perhaps after sheltering there at the height of Tasha. By contrast, seabirds recorded from Cape D'Aguilar during the approach of Dot on 25th and 26 September 1993 were mostly heading northeast, presumably avoiding the worst of an oncoming storm.

The time of year when a storm arrives clearly has a great impact on the numbers and species of birds recorded; and the numbers in turn reflect passage periods of the species involved. For some species, passage periods are already fairly well known. But for others, typhoon seawatching looks set to add to knowledge of their occurrence in the vicinity of Hong Kong.



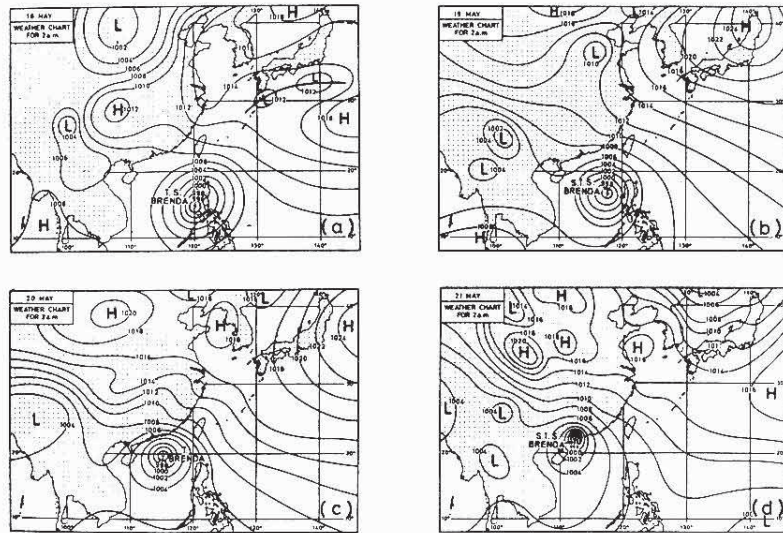


Figure 12. Weather charts, 18-21 May 1989: typhoon crossing the Philippines, many terns, influx of landbirds.

Judging by Brenda 1989, it seems that spring typhoons and tropical storms can bring large influxes of landbirds. The bitterns, egrets, herons and Pechora Pipits that arrived with Brenda are all late spring migrants; they presumably encountered the typhoon over the South China Sea, and were tired or even exhausted by the time they made landfall (many surely perished) (see Figure 12).

In the United States hurricanes may similarly bring substantial, sometimes 'immense', influxes of landbirds (Smith 1992 and 1993, Wingate 1993, Arvin 1993, Levine 1993). Based on experience on Bermuda, Wingate (1993) argues that large windfalls of hurricane-carried birds occur only when the eye of the hurricane passes directly over the island. There is some support for this hypothesis from Smith (1993) (who, however, doubts it would apply to major storms) and Levine (1993). But Arvin (1993) observed 'the most incredible 'fallout' I have ever witnessed' on the Texas coast when the area was only affected by the fringes of a hurricane.

The influx with Typhoon Brenda occurred without the eye passing over Hong Kong. Even with the storm some distance away, on the morning of 20 May, small numbers of passerines were seen heading in from the south at Cheung Chau (MDW pers. obs.).

Although the eyes of some past typhoons have moved over Hong Kong, there have been no autumn reports of landbird influxes resulting from typhoons. The occurrence of the two Chestnut-cheeked Starlings on 26

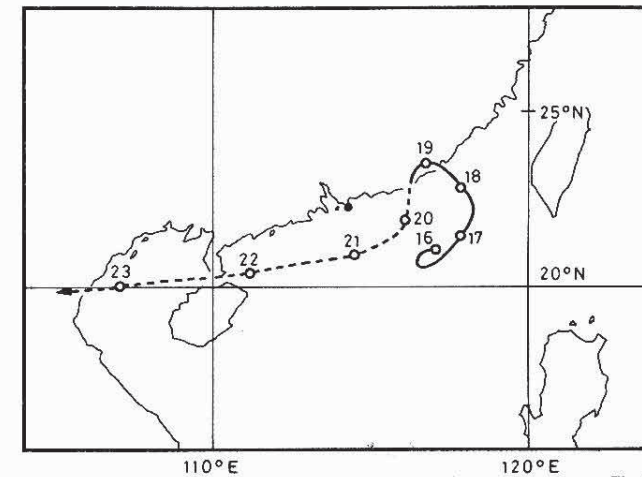


Figure 13. Track of Mark, August 1992 and its remnant low pressure area. Circles show positions at 0800h.

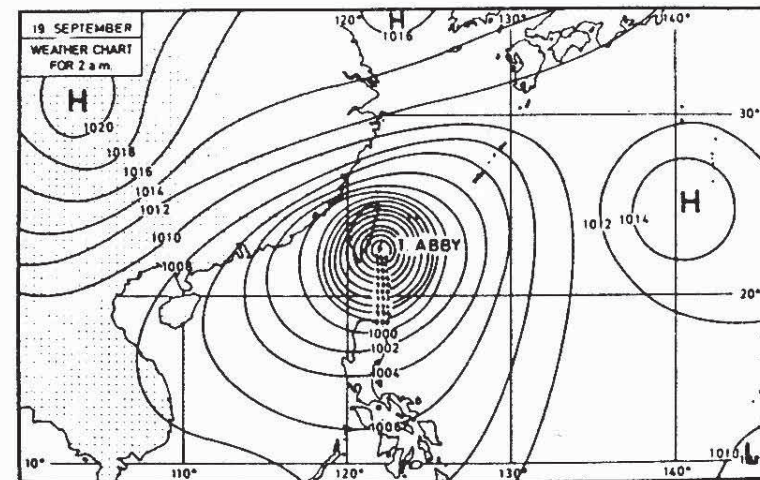


Figure 14. Weather chart, 19 September 1986: typhoon east of Taiwan, autumn influx.



September was perhaps partly due to Dot, though it approached from the southwest and its circulation was tight (Figure 10), so these Philippines-bound birds were probably already off-course when they encountered the storm.

## 2. Tern influx with remnants of tropical storm near Hong Kong

**22 August 1992** The remnant of Tropical Storm Mark was located to the southwest of Hong Kong on 22nd. The storm had formed south of Shantou on 16th, then drifted slowly northward near the southern exit of Taiwan Strait for two days. It weakened on hitting land near Shantou on 19th, then became an area of low pressure and drifted into the sea again. It then moved westward slowly passing about 140km to the south of Hong Kong on 21st. At least 190 Aleutian Terns, the first for Hong Kong, were discovered in waters to the south of the Territory; Aleutians 'subsequently remained in the area in good numbers until 19 September, when the last sighting was reported...' (Kennerley, Leader and Leven 1993).

## Discussion

The track of Mark and its remnant is shown in Figure 13. Around 17-19 August, migrants heading south through the Taiwan Strait would have encountered the southerlies or southeasterlies in the northeastern quadrant of Mark. Possibly, many Aleutian Terns opted to head west, downwind, rather than move into the storm, and substantial numbers were in this way diverted into Hong Kong waters.

## AUTUMN

### 1. Influxes

**20 September 1986** This was the fourth successive day with hot, dry, continental air arriving in Hong Kong from the north, under the influence of the very extensive circulation of Typhoon Abby to the east of Taiwan (Figure 14). The continental anticyclone also contributed to maintaining a broad, northeasterly airstream over eastern and southern China. A Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* and at least three Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers *Locustella certhiola* were flushed at Ha Tsuen; Arctic Warblers were 'especially numerous' and Brown Flycatchers *Muscicapa latirostris* were widespread (Chalmers 1987a, 1987b).

**15 September 1991** This is another case involving a tropical cyclone east of Taiwan and the synoptic pattern had broad similarity with that of the September 1986 event above. For three days from 12th to 14th, Severe Tropical Storm Kinna and a continental anticyclone in China together maintained a generally northerly flow over south China. By 15th, Kinna had moved well away to Japan and winds in Hong Kong turned easterly as the anticyclone spread eastward into the East China Sea. The 15th also marked the last day of a rainy episode; there were 64mm of rain on 14th and 29mm on 15th. An estimated 55 Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers were recorded at Luk Keng and a Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* was at Shek Kong; birds the next day included a Chinese Pitta *Pitta nympha* in Tai Po Kau (Leader and Turnbull 1992).

**5 October 1989** A surge of the winter monsoon had reached the South China coast on 1st but the passage of Typhoon Brian from west to east across the South China Sea held back the northerlies for several days (Figure 15). Southeasterlies in Hong Kong were strong between 2nd and 4th under the influence of Brian but moderated by 5th. It was a sunny day with very little rain. 'Heavy passage' of Arctic Warblers and Black Drongos *Dicrurus macrocercus* occurred at this time; at Mount Davis on 5th there were about 150 of the latter, with other birds noted including a Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike *Coracina melaschistos*, Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* and at least 12 Black-naped Orioles *Oriolus chinensis*.

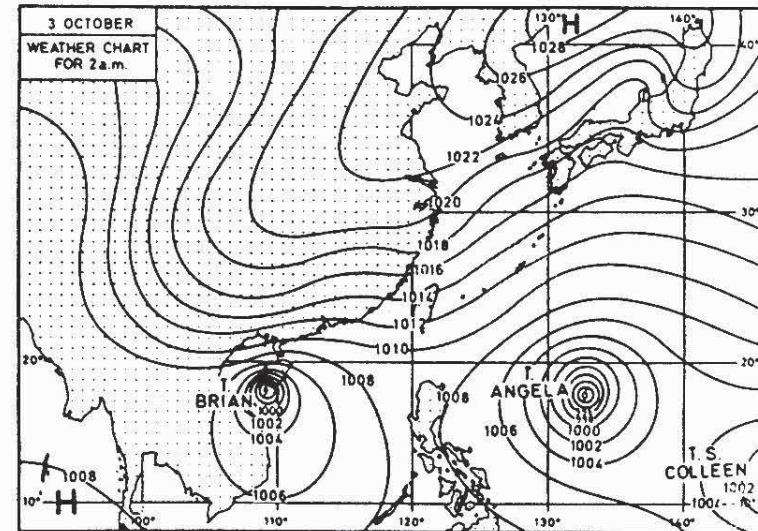


Figure 15. Weather chart, 3 October 1989: southeasterlies in Hong Kong in spite of winter monsoon, autumn influx.

**16 October 1959** Following a minor northerly surge on 15th, it turned out to be a dry, cloudless day on 16th. About 3000 Yellow-breasted Buntings *Emberiza aureola* were estimated to be present on the former marshes at Ping Shan (Chalmers 1986).

**10 and 11 November 1990** A cold front passed Hong Kong early on 9th bringing strong northerly winds and unsettled weather. With the arrival of continental air the temperature dropped significantly on 10th to some 5-7 degrees lower than the two days previous. It had turned dry, with relative humidity falling below 60%. Birds ringed at Mai Po on 10th included a Styan's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella pleskei*, an Eye-browed Thrush and a Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*. The next day, a ringing session at Kadoorie Farm yielded a Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher *Hypothymis azurea*, a Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus auroreus*, five Red-tailed Robins *Luscinia sibilans*, a Besra *Accipiter virgatus*, a Chestnut-flanked White-eye *Zosterops erythropleura*, a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler *Seicercus burki*, Hong Kong's second Pale-footed Bush Warbler *Cettia pallidipes* and Hong Kong's first White-throated Rock Thrush *Monticola gularis* (Leader 1991). Also trapped was a White-tailed Robin *Cinclidium leucurum* which has been placed in Category E. A Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki*, 11 Blackbirds *Turdus merula* and large numbers of unidentified thrushes and buntings, mainly in flight overhead, were also noted on 11th. Two days later, Hong Kong's first Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Picoides hyperythrus* was discovered in Tai Po Kau (Chalmers *et al.* 1991).

**12 November 1988** This was the fourth successive day of northerlies. The daily minimum temperature had dropped by some five degrees since the arrival of the surge on 9th. It was gloomy and dull with some light rain on 12th. This 'proved to be an exceptional day for the variety and numbers of birds seen.' At Mai Po birds included a Water Pipit *Anthus rubescens*, 50 Sand Martins *Riparia riparia*, two Red-rumped Swallows, a skylark sp. *Alauda* sp., three Common Aythya *ferina* and one Baer's A.



*baeri* Pochard, and 42 Tufted Duck *A. fuligula*, and many of the common wintering passerines had arrived. At least five Ashy Minivets were present at Beas River, while Tai Po Kau held four Orange-bellied Leafbirds *Chloropsis hardwickii*, a Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*, a Red-tailed Robin, Grey-headed *Culicicapa ceylonensis*, Sooty, Brown and Grey-streaked Flycatchers and a Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus spilonotus*. At the Peak, there was another Yellow-cheeked Tit, as well as a Chestnut-flanked White-eye, several Short-tailed Bush Warblers *Cettia squamiceps* and many Yellow-browed *Phylloscopus inornatus* and Pallas's *P. proregulus* Warblers. The next evening, Hong Kong's third Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* was trapped at Mai Po (Chalmers and Kennerley 1989).

## DISCUSSION

The key to all these influxes would appear to be a broad, persistent north to northeasterly airstream over central and southern China that brings winds between northerly and easterly to the Territory.

Most of the influxes appear to follow surges, mostly northerly, and a good example is the influx recorded on 10th and 11 November 1990; there may however be a time lag of several days between the surge arriving and an influx being recorded. To some extent, this may reflect observer activity, which is more concentrated at weekends than is the case in spring: i.e. an influx produced by a mid-week surge may not be noticed until the weekend. However, it may also reflect a tendency of migrants to wait till the northerly airstream becomes established before taking off for the long, southward flight. Since there were influxes in both wet and dry weather, rain does not seem to be a major factor in producing these autumn influxes.

As southbound airstreams generally bring fine weather, these surges surely help migrants heading south over China. The influxes are probably of migrants that have taken advantage of the surges to travel south, and halt as they approach the coast. This situation is in marked contrast to that recorded at Beidaihe, Hebei Province, China (Williams *et al.* 1992), on the northeast coast of China, where there may be influxes of songbirds and other migrants before autumn cold fronts arrive, followed by departures once the fronts, and with them the surges, have passed through. Perhaps these migrants gather at the coast as they await the surge, their 'train' southwards; as the weather is typically fine and warm before a front arrives, conditions are ideal for feeding in readiness for the migratory flight.

These surges push on down over China, but even the strongest soon lose momentum as they reach the south coast. Perhaps, then, the south coast is where the train's passengers (which, judging by the species recorded, are a new batch indicating that birds joining the surge at Beidaihe have probably halted well north of Hong Kong), must stop to await the next departure which may not be long in coming.

The two cases in September 1986 and 1991 illustrate that slow-moving tropical cyclones with extensive circulation centred to the east of Taiwan could play a role in the maintenance of favourable circulation over China even if the continental anticyclone might have been otherwise too weak or too distant to do so. The October 1989 case shows that so long as the right synoptic set-up is

in place in China, one does not require northerlies in Hong Kong for the influxes to occur.

## 2. Songbird movements

In the view of some observers visible migration of songbirds is more apparent in autumn than in spring, though numbers are usually low.

**14 November 1992** The first major surge of the 1992 winter arrived on 8th. Sunny and dry conditions had set in on 9th and persisted up to 13th during which time winds veered into easterlies and moderated. The warm up trend was checked on 14th with the arrival of another easterly surge which also brought light but continuous rain. Early morning passerine movement at Kadoorie Farm included 92 Eye-browed Thrushes and nearly 100 Chestnut Buntings which dropped into scrub on the hillside (Leader and Lam 1993).

## DISCUSSION

Much as on this date, once northerly surges have reached Hong Kong, the northerly winds affecting the coast are soon replaced by more moderate easterlies. The next surge, particularly if it is easterly, would surely be ideal for onward migration of birds bound, initially at least, for Indo-China; this would be the 'train' awaited by migrants that had arrived at the coast in the aftermath of the previous surge. Given this hypothesis, it is tempting, and surely plausible, to explain the movement on 14 November as onward passage of songbirds once the second surge, with fresh easterly winds, has arrived.

## 3. Lull

**22/23 October 1993** From mid-October 1993 onwards, there was a quiet period in terms of synoptic pattern, with Hong Kong sitting on the southern periphery of the continental anticyclone and maintaining more or less constant pressure readings. There was a weak replenishment of the winter monsoon on 18th and 19th, but winds quickly returned to easterlies and the cloud cover gradually dissolved. It was sunny and dry on 22nd and 23rd. There was a relative dearth of migrants around these dates.

## DISCUSSION

The synopsis for this period is similar to some of the synopses for autumn influxes but there was much more persistence. The synoptic pattern on 22 October (Figure 16) was typical of the period. A noteworthy feature is the ridge of high pressure extending southwards from the high cell over China to Vietnam. This is a good indicator of significant northerly components in winds over central and southern China. Possibly, the paucity of birds seen in Hong Kong may be accounted for by the fact that the anticyclone and the ridge extending to Vietnam were practically stagnant and there had not been a marked surge for several days prior to this; thus, migrants were passing unobserved in the fine weather and predominantly easterly winds.



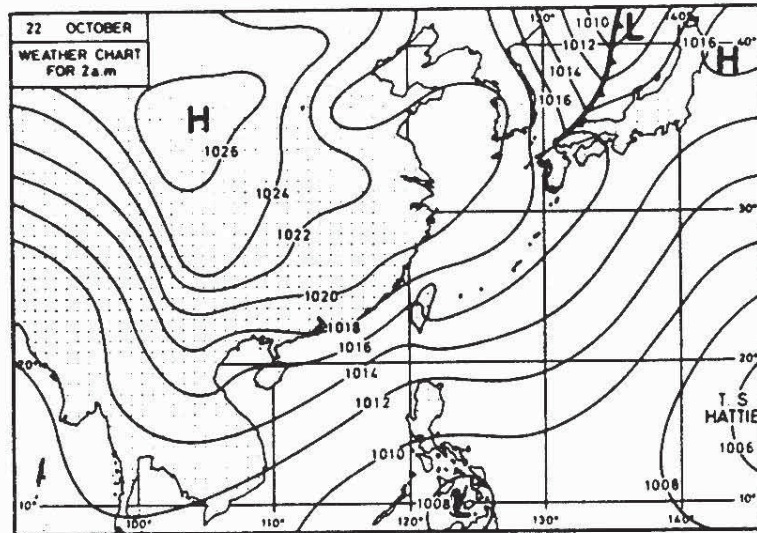


Figure 16. Weather chart, 22 October 1993: persistent anticyclonic pattern, autumn lull.

## WINTER

### Influx

Winter influxes may occur during cold spells, a good example being:

**21 January 1992** An easterly surge on 18th was followed by a minor northerly replenishment on 20th. It was generally fine and dry during the period. On 21st, the minimum temperature of 11.3°C was one degree lower than that of the previous day. White's Thrushes *Zoothera dauma* were noted in ones and twos at a number of sites, with nine at Kadoorie Farm, which also held 51 Pale *Turdus pallidus* and 42 Grey-backed Thrushes and 39 Red-flanked Bluetails *Tarsiger cyanurus* (Leader and Lam 1993).

### Discussion

The northerly replenishment associated with this influx was modest, yet the numbers of birds were impressive. By contrast, a very strong surge at the end of December 1991 which brought a minimum temperature of 4.6°C, Hong Kong's lowest for 16 years, had not even brought a murmur of an influx. The explanation may lie in the prevailing weather conditions prior to these surges. Until the December 1991 surge, the winter had been relatively warm (Christmas Day was the warmest on record); perhaps birds did not flee to Hong Kong once the surge arrived as they were well fed, and able to withstand a burst of low temperatures. But this was followed by two more surges, reaching Hong Kong on 4 and 13 January 1992, and the more persistent cold weather perhaps made feeding harder and birds weaker: e.g. many of the chats and thrushes seen after 18th 'were more approachable than normal' (Leader and Lam 1993), paving the way for the 18 January and 20 January events to prompt a movement southwards.

## SUMMARY

For the bird watcher who would like to try anticipating migrant influxes etc, it is first necessary to become familiar with the typical sequence of synoptic patterns associated with surges of the northeast monsoon.

In terms of spring influxes, it appears to be a case of identifying the day of surge arrivals, or the day immediately following, between late March and mid-May. The target synoptic patterns could be either Figure 1(c)-(d) for northerly surges or Figure 2(b)-(c) for easterly surges. Where the southern edge of cold air manifests itself as a trough of low pressure with unsettled weather in the South China Sea after crossing Hong Kong, one should also be on the alert for species wintering in the Philippines (see Figure 3).

When one starts reading about El Nino in newspapers in winter (which is likely to be accompanied by news about heavy rain in Ecuador or Peru, unusual tropical cyclones in the mid-Pacific and drought and bush fires in regions stretching from Borneo to northeast Australia), be prepared to see more persistent unsettled weather in spring with the boundary between cold continental air and moist maritime air lingering near Hong Kong. The typical synoptic pattern should look something like Figure 4. If such conditions extend into the peak migration period of April, then there is a good chance of migrants accumulating in Hong Kong.

In contrast, if the winter monsoon retreats early and a persistent southerly airstream becomes established over South China and the South China Sea during this period, with a pattern such as that in Figure 6, migrants would have little motivation to stop in Hong Kong.

For raptors in late March and April, one has to wait two to four days after the arrival of somewhat more significant surges which would continue to bring about rising pressure in the Philippines and enhanced easterlies between Hong Kong and Luzon, the latter represented by several east-west oriented isobars over the sea between China and Luzon on simplified weather charts. The continental anticyclone would have either extended into the East China Sea or the Pacific (e.g. Figure 1(e)) or spawned a break-off high cell on the East China coast (e.g. Figure 7).

Spring tern and skua movements also tend to occur in the easterly phase of surges; perhaps observations from a vantage point such as Cape D'Aguilar could produce both raptors and seabirds. There are also indications that seabirds might be forced to seek shelter in inshore waters of Hong Kong by inclement weather associated with the arrival of strong easterly surges, and the invasion of southwesterlies at the end of the surge cycle.

Visible migration of songbirds in spring is more difficult to pinpoint. Perhaps fine weather to the south of Hong Kong is required to bring birds towards the coast, and they may pass lower, within visible range, if they encounter northerly winds, low cloud and low visibility.



In the case of typhoons bringing in terns and other seabirds, the key parameters would appear to be: 1) centres within about 300km in the southwest quadrant relative to Hong Kong, 2) prevailing winds over offshore waters, as represented by Waglan Island, between east-northeast and southeast and 3) wind speeds of 30-35 knots (55-65km/h) or more, gusting to 50-60 knots (90-110km/h) or so. In situations like this, tropical signal no. 3 will certainly be hoisted and the no. 8. signal may well be warranted. Judging by Brenda 1989 (Figure 12), spring typhoons may bring substantial influxes of migrant landbirds.

Autumn influxes, as with spring influxes, are also associated with the arrivals of surges although there appears to be a slight delay in bird arrival. However, one should also be on the lookout in the absence of surges if a slow-moving typhoon east of Taiwan reinforces a weak continental anticyclone to give rise to a persistent northerly flow in South China (e.g. Figure 14). On the other hand, one should be aware that songbirds arriving with a previous surge might be encouraged to move on by the following surge.

As is the case in spring, a lull in bird occurrence could take place in autumn when conditions are persistently favourable for onward migration, such as easterly flow and fine weather, in a synoptically quiet meteorological background.

Finally, in winter, if several significant cold surges occur in succession over a few weeks, then it would be time to check for influxes after each surge arrival no matter how modest it might seem.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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本文介紹天氣和雀鳥遷徙經過香港的關係：作者首先描述了本港天氣的特點，鳥類遷徙過港的模式，並把其相互關係分成十二個類別；其後亦探討了可能牽涉其中的原因，與及提供一些預測在何種天氣下會帶來雀鳥的意見。

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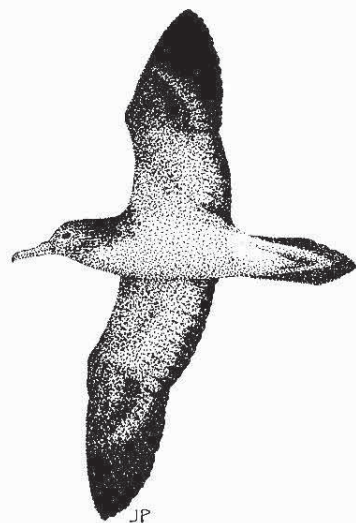
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## CURRENT STATUS OF SCALY-SIDED MERGANSER IN CHINA AND ITS DISTRIBUTION IN WINTER

Zhao Zheng Jie, Han Xiao Dong and Wu Jing Cai

### INTRODUCTION

The Scaly-sided Merganser *Mergus squamatus* is a rare species with a restricted distribution in Northeast Asia. It is a Category One Protected Species in China and is listed in Collar and Andrew (1988) as threatened and declining.

Information concerning the breeding and wintering distribution of the species is limited. Outside China, breeding has been confirmed at Sikhote-Alin in far east Russia (Roslyakov 1985, Shibnev 1985, Bocharnikov 1990) but the main breeding population is in Ussuriland where there are an estimated 950 pairs (Bocharnikov 1990). In China the total breeding population is estimated at 200-250 pairs and these are concentrated in the Changbai Mountains, Jilin Province (Zhao *et al.* 1992). At present, the total world breeding population is estimated at 1200-1500 pairs (Zhao 1992).

Even less is known of the wintering grounds which at present are thought to involve a patchy distribution through east, south and southeast China, extending also to Japan, Taiwan and South Korea.

Scaly-sided Mergansers arrive in the Changbai Mountains between early and late March and, on arrival, they frequent lakes or larger stretches of river before moving onto smaller tributaries to breed. These are mainly in primary mixed coniferous/broad-leaved woodland and nests are built in holes in bankside Oak *Quercus dentata* and Poplar *Populus ussuriensis*. The favoured rivers have clear water, slow currents, gravel or rocky substrates and many meanders and are rich in fish, shrimp, crayfish and aquatic insects which provide prey items (Zhao *et al.* 1994).

### BREEDING DISTRIBUTION IN CHINA UP TO 1980

The first specimen of Scaly-sided Merganser from the Changbai Mountains was collected in 1963. It was not until 1976 however, that a nest was found and it was realised that the Changbai Mountain range was an important breeding area. Within the Changbai Mountains, Scaly-sided Mergansers were found breeding on Toudaobai River, Sandaobai River and Gutong River on the northeast slopes and on the Mang River on the southwest slopes (Zhao *et al.* 1979, 1984, 1993).

In addition to the Changbai Mountains, Scaly-sided Merganser was found to breed in the Lesser and Greater Xingan (or Hingan) Mountains (Xiao Xingan Ling and Da Xingan Ling) which are located in Inner Mongolia and Heilongjiang Provinces (Cheng 1987, Zhao 1988). As early as 1956 researchers from the Institute of Zoology, Academia Sinica, Beijing, found young birds 150km south of Hailar on the southwest slopes of the Greater Xingan Mountains (Cheng 1979) and a female specimen was collected by the Department of Zoology, North East Forestry University in June 1979 at the



western edge of the same mountain range (North East Forestry University Skin Collection). The distance between the two sites indicates that the distribution of Scaly-sided Merganser in this area was possibly fairly extensive. In the Lesser Xingan Mountains the species was mainly found breeding on the Tan Wang River and its tributaries, the Luan Cui and Nan Cha Rivers. In May and June 1979 a male, a female and young birds were collected in this area (North East Forestry University Skin Collection). Four young birds and a pair of adult birds were also collected at Yong Cui and Bishi, Heilongjiang Province, in 1980 by the Biological Monitoring Station of Nan Cha Forestry Bureau and the Dailing Natural History Museum.

Scaly-sided Merganser was also found to breed at Jingbo Lake, between the Changbai Mountains and the Lesser Xingan Mountains, and at Shanhetun, between the Greater and Lesser Xingan Mountain ranges (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1952).

Thus, it can be seen that Scaly-sided Merganser once bred over a fairly large area and could probably have been seen in most of Northeast China, far east Russia and Korea, though not commonly.

#### RECENT WORK

According to observations made in April and May during 1976-1978, the average population density in the Toudaobai River was 0.72 birds per km. During 1989, 1990 and 1991, at the same time of year and in the same place, population density was measured at 0.66, 0.63 and 0.50 birds respectively, making an average of 0.58 (Zhao *et al.* 1979, 1985, 1993). The primary reasons for this decline are deforestation, illegal hunting and human disturbance mainly through the use of poison and explosives in fishing. However, due to the establishment of nature reserves in the Toudaibai and Man Jiang river valleys, the decline in these areas was not so severe. In some areas outside the reserves though, Scaly-sided Merganser has hardly been seen. For example, in 1965 and 1967 Scaly-sided Mergansers were frequently observed on the Gudong River but at the same place in 1988 it was not recorded. Similarly, birds were easily seen on the Shangbaodai River in 1978 but none were found in 1989 and 1990. At present, it is estimated that 40-50 pairs are present in the Toudaibai and Man Jiang river valleys.

At the Greater Xingan Mountains no Scaly-sided Mergansers were found in surveys carried out in 1987 and 1988; nor was it seen during surveys conducted by North East Forestry University and Heilongjiang Institute of Natural Resources in 1984 and 1985 (Ma and Ma 1989). However, specimens were collected in 1979 (Cheng 1979). This indicates that there has been a dramatic reduction in numbers in this area probably due to the same reasons as mentioned above. It is possible, however, that a few individuals survive there.

The population in the Lesser Xingan Mountains is greater and specimens have been collected continually in recent years; for example, Youhao Forestry Farm collected two females at Yong Cui and Bi Shi in May 1989. However, during a survey of 20km of the Luan Cui River in 1990 none were found (Zhao 1991).



30 Scaly-sided Merganser *Mergus squamatus*  
Gifu Prefecture, Japan February 1986

Yasuhiro Ito

Although there has been little forest at Jingbo Lake and Shanhetun for the past few decades, there is possibly still a small population as two adult males and a young bird were collected there by the North East Forestry University in July 1989.

In recent years Scaly-sided Merganser has also been found in the north-eastern area of Sangjiang Plain, at Hong He and Xing Long Reserves and the Qixing and Naoli Rivers (Lu 1990). The status of these birds is unclear as the Wusuli River which runs through the area has no forest on its banks and is unlikely to provide suitable breeding habitat.

#### WINTERING DISTRIBUTION

Details concerning the wintering distribution of Scaly-sided Merganser are even more scant. Early records indicate a wintering distribution covering the provinces of Fujian, Guangdong, Hunan, Hubei, Sichuan and Tibet with a few individuals even wandering to Viet Nam and Burma (La Touche 1931-34, Dement'ev 1933, Vaurie 1972, Cheng 1976). Austin (1948) lists three records involving up to four birds in Korea between 1912 and 1928.

More recently, in Guizhou Province Wu *et al.* (1986) have reported very small numbers wintering in the Ping Tang and Du Yun areas including a female collected in 1975, and Guiyang Zoo bought two females in Guiding on 29 November 1986. Scaly-sided Merganser has been found on two occasions at Dongting Lake, Hunan Province, where three and seven birds were seen between 1988-1990 (Nature Reserve staff pers. comm.). Guangdong Entomological Institute collected a female at Longmen, Guangdong Province, in December 1973 (Guangdong Entomological Institute Skin Collection). A male was also observed at Poyang Lake, Jiangxi Province, during 25-26





Figure 1. Winter areas of Scaly-sided Merganser *Mergus squamatus* and its breeding range in China.

December 1989 (Turnbull 1990). In addition, Scaly-sided Merganser was observed and three female birds were bought by Nanjing Zoo at Feidong, Anhui Province (Xiu 1988). In Shandong Province birds were also seen at Rong Cheng in 1984 and Chang Dao in 1990. (Shandong Forestry Department staff pers. comm.). On the Yalu River, Jilin Province, on 30 November 1989 two birds were seen and during December 1990 to March 1991, 16 Scaly-sided Mergansers were observed on the Yangtze River (Chang Jiang) between Cōng Qing and Wan Xian (Zhao *et al.* 1991).

In Japan it is an annual winter visitor in small numbers with, apparently, more regular sightings in recent years that perhaps indicate it was overlooked in the past. Brazil (1991) reports 7 records from December 1984 to April 1988; in addition, Hibi (*in litt.* to G.J. Carey) reports a further record for that period as well as an additional 13 records for the period January 1989 to February 1994. Most records come from Honshu with some also from Kyushu.

Scaly-sided Merganser has also appeared in Taiwan recently. Three birds were seen in Ping Dong Harbour in 1981, three were recorded from the Tatu River, near Taichung, in November 1987 and there were records at Long Luan Tan in November 1988 and November 1989 (Wang *et al.* 1991, Brazil

1991). In South Korea a male was seen on the Imjin River on 2 February 1992 (Chalmers 1992) and in North Korea a pair were seen at Mayang Chosuji in May 1986 (Sonobe and Izawa 1987). In Vietnam Vo Quy (1983) lists Scaly-sided Merganser as a winter visitor to the northeast and northwest. There is one record from North Thailand, an immature on 30 January and 1 February and again on 20 February 1991 at 400-500m on Doi Inthanon, Chiang Mai Province (P. Round *in litt.* to G.J. Carey).

## CONSERVATION

The decline in the population of Scaly-sided Merganser has been marked and major threats continue to loom over the species' future, even in its Far Eastern stronghold. In Russia these threats include poaching, tree-felling, water pollution, industrial development, dam construction and river disturbance (Hughes and Bocharnikov 1992). In China a similar situation probably exists and it is certain that hunting, disturbance and habitat loss cause serious problems. The exact proportion of breeding sites that are within Nature Reserves is not known but it is considered to be small.

In China the ecology of Scaly-sided Merganser has only been investigated by Zhao *et al.* (1979, 1984, 1993, 1994). Further research is required into both its breeding and wintering distribution and ecology in order to implement more effective protection measures. In addition, those practices listed above which affect the population should be controlled or prevented and more nature reserves need to be established to protect the breeding habitat.

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本文介紹了繁殖季節內在中國的中華秋沙鴨 *Mergus squamatus* 的情況，並和以前的紀錄作比較，分析數目急劇下降的原因。此外，也描述這品種冬季裏在亞洲的情況與及分佈；最後，並提出一些保護這個瀕危品種的一些建議。

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# CENSUS AND POPULATION STATUS OF BLACK-FACED SPOONBILLS DURING WINTER 1993-1994

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## INTRODUCTION

The small number of surviving Black-faced Spoonbills *Platalea minor* and the apparent trend of wintering birds to concentrate at only a few sites combine to place the species in danger of extinction. Rapid economic development in all of the known winter range states of Black-faced Spoonbills increases the risk that important winter habitats will be eliminated or altered beyond the tolerance limits of the species. Although Black-faced Spoonbill is categorised as 'endangered' by IUCN, which means that its 'survival is unlikely if the causal factors (for its decline) continue operating' (Groombridge 1993), little effort has been directed toward describing its biology. The species is best known in Hong Kong and Taiwan, where the two largest winter concentrations are currently recorded.

In Hong Kong systematic censusing of Black-faced Spoonbills has been conducted for many years by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society at Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve and Deep Bay as part of the annual Asian Waterfowl Census; studies are currently in progress on their feeding habits. Wintering birds in Taiwan have been systematically counted by the Taiwan Wild Bird Society and others (Y.T. Ueng pers. comm.). A detailed study of Black-faced Spoonbill winter distribution and habitat use in Taiwan began in early 1994 under the authority and funding of the Council of Agriculture. In contrast, other winter range states have not conducted systematic census or study of their winter populations and have no known plans to do so.

The breeding biology of Black-faced Spoonbill is largely unknown or unreported outside North Korea, where the only known nesting sites occur (Hancock *et al.* 1992).

The purpose of this study was to update the work of Kennerley (1990) with a comprehensive winter census of Black-faced Spoonbills and to assess the conservation status of the species at each wintering area.

## METHODS

Wintering Black-faced Spoonbills were censused by the authors at Hainan Island, China, and at Tsengwen River, Taiwan, between December 1993 and March 1994. All other counts were conducted independently at each known wintering site (see acknowledgements). Assessment of the conservation status at each winter site was conducted by the authors through personal visits, telephone or fax interview, or available literature.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Black-faced Spoonbills are currently known to winter in Vietnam, Hong Kong, China, Japan and Taiwan. Six birds were recorded during winter

1988-1990 in South Korea (Kennerley 1990); this was the only previously recorded wintering area not to report Black-faced Spoonbills during this study. Vagrants have been recorded in Thailand, Philippines and Brunei (Kennerley 1990).

Kennerley (1990) summarised the status of the Black-faced Spoonbill and estimated the world population at 288 birds at the end of the 1989-1990 winter. His estimate was based on maximum counts in each of six range states over two successive winters from 1988 to 1990. Because of this it could have overestimated the world population. However, he did not have access to reliable information from Japan (N. Moores *in litt.* to G.J. Carey) which resulted in underestimation of the Japan population. If the 1988-90 population estimate was accurate for birds outside Japan, current census figures (Table 1) suggest a modest recovery in total numbers has occurred.

Counts or estimates for Black-faced Spoonbills during winter 1993-94 are shown in Table 1. The difference between the 1993-94 estimate of 341 birds and the 1988-90 estimate of 288 birds is partly due to recent availability of better data for Japan but could also be due to improved census or reporting at other sites as well. If the 14% increase of 40 birds (283 to 323, discounting Japan) is not an artefact of census methods, but is a real increase, its primary importance is as an indicator that the species has not suffered a continued decline in numbers. If the increase reflects a real upward trend in the total population, confirmation of this could be achieved through systematic, simultaneous census at each of the known wintering areas during future years. Because little is known of Black-faced Spoonbill biology during breeding and migration periods, these gaps in knowledge must be filled before this apparent trend can be explained.

**Table 1 Maximum estimates or counts by area of Black-faced Spoonbills during winter 1993-94 with an estimate of the world population.**

Location	Count	Date Counted	Comment
Taiwan			
Tsengwen River	206	Jan 1994	new high count
Hong Kong/China			
Deep Bay <sup>1</sup>	70	Dec 1993	comparable to 73 in 1992-93
China			
Yancheng Nature Res.	13	Feb 1994	up from 5 (1992-93), <10 in 1991-92
Dongzhaigang Nature Res.	9	Feb 1994	down from 11-13 (1991-93)
Vietnam			
Xuan Thuy Reserve (Red River)	25	Nov 1993	comparable to 24 in Nov 1992
Day River Estuary	no data		27 on 9 April 1993
Japan		Winter 1993-4	
Hakata Bay	9		
Manose River	6		
Tokyo Bay	1		
(Shikoku <sup>2</sup> )	2		
South Korea	0	Aug-Oct 1993	no records after Oct 1993
Total world population	341		up from 288 (1990)

<sup>1</sup> Deep Bay includes Mai Po Marshes (Hong Kong) and Futian (China) Nature Reserves

<sup>2</sup> Birds migrating through Hakata Bay. Wintering at Shikoku suspected but not confirmed.



There are no current records of Black-faced Spoonbill in the Philippines but there are suitable habitats in the northern islands which have not been surveyed (T. Fisher pers. comm.).

New wintering populations of Black-faced Spoonbills were reported from Japan and Vietnam between 1990 and 1993. The new populations in Japan were small in number but are significant in terms of the national wintering total. Of the four sites reported by Scott (1989), only Hakata Bay was again used in 1993-94, as were two sites at Tokyo Bay and the Manose River estuary (N. Moores *in litt.* to G.J. Carey). In Vietnam the Day River estuary was first recorded as a wintering site in 1993 and census data from 1993 (Duc *et al.* 1993) suggest that it may be as important to wintering Black-faced Spoonbills as the Xuan Thuy estuary during some months (see below).

The regional trend in geographic distribution of Black-faced Spoonbill numbers confirms that the species remained at least as vulnerable as was thought in 1990 in terms of concentration of the surviving individuals on a few winter sites. Black-faced Spoonbills were likely at even greater risk in early 1994 than before due to their apparent disappearance from Korea, their increasing concentration in Taiwan and Hong Kong and the potential for habitat loss in Taiwan.

At Yancheng Nature Reserve, Jiangsu Province, China, the 1994 count of 13 birds was up from 5 counted in the 1992-93 winter and 'less than 10' during the 1991-92 winter. However, up to 17 were present there in October 1989 (Bakewell and Young 1989). Conversely, at Dongzhaigang Mangrove Reserve, Hainan Province, the 1991-92 count was 11, followed by 13 in 1992-93 (X.R. Zheng pers. comm.), and then dropping to nine in 1993-94.

Scott (1989) listed only the Xuan Thuy estuary as a Black-faced Spoonbill wintering site in Vietnam. However, Duc *et al.* (1993) listed the Day River estuary, 30km distant from the Xuan Thuy estuary, as a second wintering site. Wintering numbers in Vietnam appear to peak in midwinter at over 60 birds (Table 2). Midwinter counts at Xuan Thuy in 1987-88 and 1992-93 were similar at 62 and 68 birds respectively. These counts indicate stability in winter totals. Except for April 1987, autumn and spring counts are also similar suggesting a pre- and post-peak population of 25-30 birds. March 1993 counts for the two areas were substantially below previous March totals for Xuan Thuy but April 1993 combined counts were comparable to previous March totals. In contrast, the April 1987 count was approximately double all other March-April counts and was similar to midwinter totals. Absence of data prior to April 1987 and during midwinter 1993-94 precludes assessment of winter population trends.

**TABLE 2. Winter population census of Black-faced Spoonbills in Viet Nam from autumn 1987 through spring 1994.**

	April 1987	mid- winter 87-88	10-12 Mar 1988	17-31 Mar 1989	4 Nov 1992	10 Jan 1993	20-21 Mar 1993	9 Apr 1993	23 Apr 1993	Nov 1993
Xuan Thuy Estuary	>60	62	32	27	24	68	2		3	25
Day River Estuary							2	27		

Source: Scott 1989, Scott and Howes 1989, Kennerley 1990, Duc *et al.* 1993, Duc pers. comm.

At Hong Kong's Deep Bay, Taiwan's Tsengwen estuary, China's Yancheng Nature Reserve and in Japan, Black-faced Spoonbill numbers are apparently steady or increasing. Stability of wintering numbers in Japan over the last three years was also reported (N. Moores *in litt.* to G.J. Carey). Tsengwen estuary and Yancheng Nature Reserve recorded their highest counts on record, and Deep Bay the second highest, during the 1993-94 winter. Tsengwen and Deep Bay shared 276 of 341 or 81% of the world's known wintering Black-faced Spoonbills in 1993-94. The increase in numbers over recent years at these two sites may to some extent be due to birds shifting their wintering areas from sites such as South Korea. Increases may also be due to enhanced recruitment in the population. Regardless of the reasons for wintering population increases, the importance of the Mai Po and Tsengwen River wintering areas is increased as greater concentrations of the known world population (21% at Deep Bay and 60% at Tsengwen River) rely on these two locations.

The Deep Bay counts shown in Table 1 include data from the two reserves on the Hong Kong and Chinese sides of the bay, Mai Po Marshes in Hong Kong and Futian Nature Reserve in China. Coordination of counts at both locations by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (G.J. Carey pers. comm.) ensured that double-counting was avoided. It is assumed for the purpose of this report that the maximum count of 70 birds at Deep Bay included all birds in the Deep Bay area during the winter of 1993-94 (birds at Mai Po plus those at Futian Nature Reserve).

Apart from the Changjiang (Yangtze River) valley in China and coastal areas in northern Philippines and northern Vietnam, it is doubtful that there are remaining locations which might harbour previously unrecorded wintering Black-faced Spoonbills. There may be locations in Japan or South Korea which support a few wintering birds, but it is unlikely that new wintering populations will be found which would add significantly to the current estimate of 341 birds as the total world population.

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Wintering Black-faced Spoonbills occupy established nature reserves in Hong Kong, China and Vietnam. Of the other major wintering sites, Tsengwen River estuary in Taiwan, Day River estuary in Vietnam and all sites in Japan have not been established as nature reserves. Of the Black-faced Spoonbill wintering areas which lie within nature reserves, only Hong Kong's Mai Po Nature Reserve provides a significant degree of security from human disturbance. Even Mai Po however, is under continual, indirect threat from development in surrounding areas.

Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve is administratively protected by two levels of surrounding buffer zones in which development is strictly regulated. There is a permanent Reserve staff including managers, biologists, and educators and conservation security is enhanced by strict enforcement of cross-border security between Hong Kong and China. The immediate threat to Black-faced Spoonbills on both sides of Deep Bay is sustained urbanisation of surrounding agriculture and fish culture sites, which could result in loss of important feeding habitats.



In China nature reserves exist at the three locations where Black-faced Spoonbills are known to winter. Yancheng Nature Reserve is classed as a nature reserve of international importance, Grade I. Dongzhaigang Nature Reserve in Hainan Province is a nature reserve of national importance, Grade I; and Futian Nature Reserve in Guangdong Province is a nature reserve of national importance, Grade III (Maxey and Lutz 1994). However, unregulated shooting of birds is known to occur at all three sites.

Futian Nature Reserve lies between the north shore of Deep Bay and Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. General environmental degradation in the immediate area has resulted from rapid economic development accompanied by land-use change. Nearly half of the reserve has been affected by conversion of fishponds to industrial sites which has resulted in loss of feeding habitats, primarily riparian wetlands and fishponds. A second threat at Futian Nature Reserve is degradation of marine water quality due to pollution of the Deep Bay catchment. Developments currently contemplated within the reserve include a water amusement park, country club and vacation villas; if carried out, these developments will increase human disturbance to wintering birds and may result in conversion of Black-faced Spoonbill habitat to other uses.

When TD visited Dongzhaigang Reserve, it was found to be under pressure from encroachment of human activity. Nearly half of the mangrove estuary was converted to coconut plantation during the mid-1980s (X.R. Zheng, pers. comm.). Pressures on land use will increase in the immediate future following completion of a new highway to the Reserve as access by automobile will be shortened to roughly 30 minutes from the provincial capital of Haikou. New hotels near the Reserve were under construction in early 1994 in anticipation of the increased demand for the area as a recreation destination. The Reserve is also under continued pressure from local villagers who use the area for fishing, mariculture, oyster culture and the gathering of shellfish.

Similarly, birds at Yancheng Nature Reserve are at risk due to the threats of hunting or poisoning by local villagers. Although poison bait is used mainly to capture duck, it also poses a threat to both species of spoonbill. At least one European Spoonbill *P. leucorodia* died of poisoning at Yancheng during December 1991.

The conservation status at Xuan Thuy Reserve in Vietnam was not investigated during this study. Routine census data were not available, but birds were known to be at risk from market hunting, habitat conversion (mangrove to prawn culture), and poisoning (L.D. Duc 1989).

Taiwan's Tsengwen River estuary is not formally protected as a nature reserve. The area of available habitat is large, and is used for fish and oyster culture as well as for farming. Fish ponds provide foraging habitat for Black-faced Spoonbills, so there appears to be little conflict between fish culture and conservation. Waters in the river and estuary are not seriously polluted. However, there is a risk of significant land-use change in the areas preferred by Black-faced Spoonbills. Sustained industrial development in southern Taiwan will require additional conversion of agricultural lands, and this may place

wintering Black-faced Spoonbills at risk. At Tsengwen River, there is strong local public support for a change from agricultural to industrial land use. Should industrial development permission be denied by government, there is a risk that local residents would retaliate by destroying birds. This occurred in 1993 when two birds were killed as a gesture of protest against delays in industrial development which were perceived by locals as resulting from conservation concerns. A Black-faced Spoonbill study currently in progress under the authority of the Council of Agriculture will be completed in late 1994 and the results may be useful for guiding land-use planning in the Tsengwen River area.

## CONCLUSION

Census figures updated from previous counts in 1988-90 have enabled the surviving world population of the species to be estimated at 341 birds in March 1994 as compared to 288 in spring 1990. This corresponds closely with the population estimate of 350 in Rose and Scott (1994). The increase was due to inclusion of more complete data from Japan and possibly to population recruitment. The total estimated populations at Yancheng Nature Reserve, China, Tsengwen River estuary, Taiwan, and Deep Bay, Hong Kong/China, were larger than during previous counts. The latter two areas supported approximately 81% of the known world population during winter 1993-94. New Black-faced Spoonbill wintering areas were reported for Japan and Vietnam. Stable or declining counts at other locations suggest a trend toward concentration at only two winter areas. Of eleven known wintering areas (considering the two Deep Bay Nature Reserves separately), only Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve in Hong Kong had adequate scientific monitoring and conservation enforcement to ensure preservation of Black-faced Spoonbills and their winter habitats.

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1993-94 年間的冬季，在黑臉琵鷺 *Platalea minor* 所有已知的越冬地點進行了統計，對每一個地點的保護工作也作了評估。1994 年 3 月，全球的數目估計是 341 隻，而 1988-90 年間的估計數字是 288。黑臉琵鷺及其越冬地點，只有在香港米埔自然保護區才有適當的保護；在中國及越南的地點，雖然也由官方劃為保護區，但管理和實行方面都未合要求；台灣方面有最大批的越冬鳥群，不過完全沒有實行任何官方的保護措施。

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## JUVENILE TERNS IN HONG KONG: A SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION

G.J. Carey and Paul J. Leader

Four species of medium-sized *Sterna* tern have been recorded in Hong Kong; these are Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* of the eastern races *longipennis* and *tibetana/minussensis*, Aleutian Tern *S. aleutica*, Roseate Tern *S. dougallii* and Black-naped Tern *S. sumatrana*. Of these only juvenile Aleutian Tern has yet to occur in Hong Kong, though it has been recorded in first-summer plumage and could well turn up in juvenile plumage in the future.

This article summarises the main features for identifying these terns in juvenile plumage and is based on field observations in Hong Kong, the study of photographs (some of which are reproduced in plates xx-xx) and examination of skins.

The structural differences between adults of the four species are far less apparent in juvenile plumage and cannot reliably be used as an aid to identification. Short tail streamers and rounded wing tips are common to all and thus reliance must be placed on plumage features. In general, Black-naped appears easily the palest of the four and Aleutian Tern the darkest. Especially early on in the autumn, Roseate appears slightly darker than Common with a more contrasting upperpart pattern but this difference lessens as birds get older.

## COMMON TERN

**Head** Dark rear crown and nape with white forehead and fore half of crown, thus showing the largest area of pure white on the crown of the four species.

**Upperparts** Shows the least strongly patterned mantle and scapulars. Both are fairly pale brown with pale tips and darker subterminal marks but these are noticeably less conspicuous than on the other species and typically birds at any distance appear pale grey.

**Wings** Has both median and greater coverts pale, lacking obvious darker markings; there is also an obvious dark carpal bar. The silvery underwing is unmarked except for the underside of the primaries which have broad and fairly diffuse dark tips.

**Bare Parts** The legs and bill of *longipennis* are black whereas the legs and bill of *tibetana/minussensis* have some red coloration which usually covers most of the legs but only the base of the bill.

## ROSEATE TERN

**Head** Extensively dark crown, generally with a buff forehead, though some, probably older birds, can have a white forehead by August.





31 Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* juvenile  
Lamma Channel, Hong Kong 18 September 1992

Peter R. Kennerley



32 Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* juvenile  
Lamma Channel, Hong Kong 18 September 1992

Peter R. Kennerley

[The cost of reproduction of Plates 31-33 in colour has been subsidised by Carl Zeiss Far East Co. Ltd.]

**Upperparts** Pale brown mantle and scapulars with broad, dark brown, subterminal crescents to the mantle feathers and very striking V-shaped subterminal marks on the scapulars and tertials; these latter marks are the most striking of the species under discussion. The pale brown quickly fades, however, to become whitish.

**Wings** Pale grey with darker outer primaries; has broad white tips to the flight feathers and the secondaries also have a darker grey subterminal area. There is a darker leading edge to the inner wing, not so contrasting as that on Common Tern, and in fresh plumage the median and lesser coverts are buff. The underwing is white with greyish edges to the distal half of the outer 5-6 primaries.

**Bare Parts** The bill and legs are black.



33 Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* juvenile  
Eastern Waters, Hong Kong 14 August 1993

Paul J. Leader

#### BLACK-NAPED TERN

Overall the whitest of the four species, appearing noticeably pale in the field.

**Head** Of the four species, the head pattern most closely resembles adults with an extensively pale crown and a blackish nape. The forehead is initially pale buff, quickly fading to white; the crown is pale buff, also quickly fading to whitish, with blackish feather tips. There is a broad blackish line behind the eye that extends back and broadens to cover the whole of the nape.

**Upperparts** The mantle and scapulars are pale buff or whitish with fairly broad, dark brown crescentic marks. These dark marks however, are nowhere near as V-shaped on the scapulars as on Roseate, nor are they as strikingly broad and distinct.





34 Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* juvenile  
Eastern Waters, Hong Kong 20 July 1993

Peter R. Kennerley



35 Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* juvenile  
Eastern Waters, Hong Kong 20 July 1993

Peter R. Kennerley

[The cost of Plates 34-36 in colour has been subsidised by Carl Zeiss Far East Co. Ltd.]

**Wings** The flight feathers are rather pale grey, slightly darker on the outermost primaries and secondaries, and are fringed white, broadest on the secondaries. The greater coverts are rather pale, forming a paler inner wing panel between the darkly-marked median coverts and darker secondaries. There is an obvious dark carpal bar. The underwing has no dark trailing edge to the primaries and is white and, thus, is noticeably pale, and like the upperwing, the palest of the four species.

**Bare Parts** The bill and legs are black.

#### ALEUTIAN TERN

**Head and body** The most extensively dark head of the four species, having a dark brown crown and upper nape, slightly paler forehead and also darker lores. There is also a buff wash to the face and the sides of the chest which extends around to the rear to form a distinctive pale collar.

**Upperparts** The mantle and scapulars are dark brown with deep buff fringes, a very different pattern to that of the other three species. The rump and uppertail coverts are pale grey.

**Wings** The tertials, inner lesser and median wing coverts are dark brown with deep buff fringes that contrast with rather grey, white- or buff-tipped greater coverts. The outer wing and the flight feathers are greyish with pale tips to the secondaries and inner primaries. At rest, the contrast between the brown of the tertials, mantle and scapulars and the grey of the outer wing coverts and primaries is distinctive. The exposed primaries are dark metallic grey, narrowly edged off-white. The distinctive dark bar on the underside of the secondaries present on adults is also present though it is more diffuse.



36 Aleutian Tern *Sterna aleutica* juvenile  
Hokkaido, Japan 25 August 1980

Shigenori Okubo



**Tail** Pale brown with dark brown tips.

**Legs** Palest of the four species and coloured a distinctive pinkish-orange.

The identification of juveniles of these four species of tern should in most cases present few problems if careful attention is paid to the pattern and coloration of the head, mantle and scapular feathers and both surfaces of the wings as well as the general darkness of the bird.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Peter Kennerley for helpful comments on a draft of this paper and Verity Picken for arranging the boat necessary for many of the field observations of three of these species to be made. Thanks also to British Museum (Natural History), Tring, UK, for allowing access to skins.

本文簡介了曾經在香港錄得四種中型 *Sterna* 燕鷗的幼鳥的辨別方法：如果小心分析頭部、上背、肩羽及翼的兩面的樣式和顏色，與及雀鳥整體顏色的深淺度，辨別起來，便容易得多了。

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## BREEDING OF THE HOPOE IN HONG KONG

David S. Melville

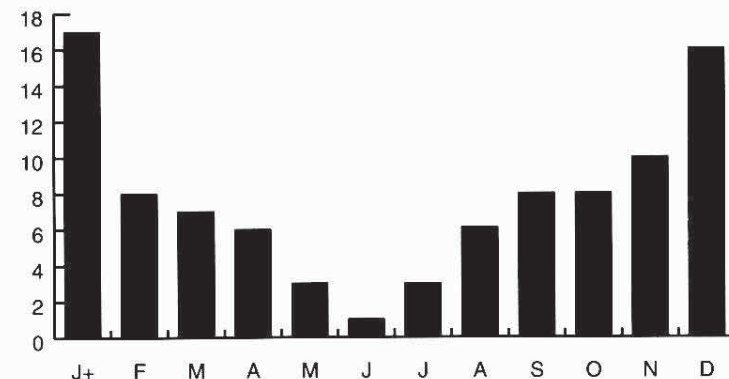
The Hoopoe *Upupa epops* is recorded as an occasional visitor to Hong Kong, being 'scarce with usually one or two sightings each year' (Chalmers 1986). It has occurred in all months of the year (Figure 1). In recent years there appears to have been an increase in the number of sightings but this may be due, at least in part, to increased observer activity.

In the summer of 1988 M. Pitts, D. Brooks and J. Mockford observed two Hoopoes near the eastern end of Stonecutters Island, Victoria Harbour, apparently collecting nesting material, but no nest was ever found. In the summer of 1992 R. Illingworth, R. Coburn and M. Pitts again recorded two adult Hoopoes around the Hong Kong Military Service Corps offices at the eastern end of Stonecutters Island. Breeding was suspected but never confirmed, although the birds were certainly present on Stonecutters from 1988 onwards.

In April 1993 R. Illingworth discovered a Hoopoe's nest, also at the eastern end of Stonecutters Island. The nest site was in a hole in a compacted, decomposed granite bank, protected above by two large granite boulders. A pair of White-breasted Kingfishers *Halcyon smyrnensis* had a nest in another hole in the same bank, about 500mm from the Hoopoe tunnel. It is considered possible that the Hoopoe nest site was a former kingfisher nest.

On 9 April 1993 D. Cook found one chick in the nest which was subsequently ringed on 15 April, when it weighed 81g. M. Pitts observed and photographed the adult birds feeding the chick at the nest on 13, 14 and 15 April. On all three days the adults were also observed copulating whilst perched in a nearby tree, suggesting that a second clutch might be laid in future. It is known that Hoopoes are occasionally double brooded in the south of Europe (Cramp 1985).

Figure 1. Numbers of Hoopoe sightings in Hong Kong 1958-1993 excluding breeding birds



+ There were multiple sightings of the same birds on Lamma in 1990



A single Hoopoe was present at King's Park, Kowloon between early July and mid-September, 1990, but there was no evidence of breeding. Breeding at King's Park was confirmed in 1993 when a single Hoopoe was seen between 28 April and 4 June by N.H. Peters and E. Duggan. The Hoopoe evicted a pair of Tree Sparrows *Passer montanus* from a weep hole in a retaining wall, actually removing a young sparrow from the nest site. A young Hoopoe was first seen on 22 May. One parent was seen to feed it regularly but food was sometimes stolen from the parent by Tree Sparrows, and sparrows were seen to enter the nest site occasionally. The young bird fledged on 1 June. It was last seen on 4 June when it was still being fed by the parent. These are the first records of breeding by the Hoopoe in Hong Kong.

The status of the Hoopoe in Guangdong is unclear. Herklots (1967), apparently following Caldwell and Caldwell (1931), records it as a 'rare winter visitor'. Both Vaurie (1965) and Cheng (1987), however, appear to record it as a resident breeding bird in Guangdong, although this is unclear in both cases. La Touche (1931) perhaps gives the best summary, stating 'The Hoopoe seems to be generally distributed throughout China as a resident, migrant, summer, or winter visitor. The mode of distribution is, however, very irregular, the bird being rare for instance...in the Province of [Guangdong]'.

Hoopoes have to rely on already existing nest sites since, unlike kingfishers, they do not excavate nest tunnels, although they may hack away rotten wood in tree holes (Cramp 1985, Fry *et al.* 1988). As a result it is likely that there are relatively few opportunities for Hoopoes to nest in Hong Kong. The compacted, decomposed granite soils of the Territory do not provide natural nesting sites and there are few mature trees with natural cavities, or banyans with suitable tangled aerial roots (c.f. Hume 1873).

Before the deforestation of Hong Kong there may have been more nest sites available but Hoopoes are unlikely to have been common since dense, more or less unbroken forest, is unattractive to Hoopoes. Traditional village houses previously may have provided suitable nesting sites in walls and under eaves, as found by La Touche (1931) in southeast Yunnan and in parts of India, Pakistan and Africa (Hume 1873, Baker 1927, Roberts 1991, Fry *et al.* 1988), but such houses are now rare in Hong Kong. The most likely sites are tunnels excavated by the similarly-sized White-breasted and Black-capped *H. pileata* Kingfishers. Interestingly, despite the widely overlapping ranges of both Hoopoe and White-breasted Kingfisher, I have been unable to find any records of Hoopoes using kingfisher tunnels in the literature, although they have been recorded using woodpecker holes in Africa (Fry *et al.* 1988).

Another limiting factor in present-day Hong Kong may be a shortage of suitable food. Hoopoes usually feed in the open, almost entirely on animals, 'primarily large insects and especially their larvae and pupae' (Cramp 1985). Cheng (1966) notes that the stomachs of 8 birds in China contained 88% insects, and spiders the rest. Elsewhere they also have been recorded feeding occasionally on worms, snails, lizards, small snakes and frogs (Witherby *et al.* 1938, Cheng 1966, Fry *et al.* 1988). Caldwell and Caldwell (1931) give a delightful description, noting 'The habits of the Hoopoe are repulsive at times as it pries around amidst the worst kind of filth for food. It appears at its best

when on a green lawn or amid other attractive surroundings examining every hole and cranny in search of food'. Hoopoes tend to avoid woodlands with a well developed understorey and currently Hong Kong's open habitats generally are lacking in much suitable prey for Hoopoes. It is notable that both sites where breeding has been recorded have regularly irrigated 'lawn' areas which may provide suitable feeding habitat. They have also been recorded periodically at the United Services Recreation Club, Gun Club Barracks, Kowloon, which has similar areas of lawn.

Hoopoes lay 2-12 eggs, the usual clutch in Europe being 7-8 (Cramp 1985). In South Africa the average clutch size is 5.4, but only 3.5 in Malawi (Fry *et al.* 1988). In one European study hatching success was 80% and fledging success was 53% (Cramp 1988). The fact that both Hong Kong nests each fledged only one young may be a further indication of a shortage of food.

As shown in Figure 1, there are a number of other potential breeding season records. Other breeding records may come to light in future if observers look for nests, rather than simply regarding the birds as migrants and/or winter visitors.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to those who provided information regarding Hoopoes breeding in Hong Kong, in particular M. Pitts, Maj. J. Ades, Col. R. Illingworth, Col. N.H. Peters and Col. E. Duggan.

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## EURASIAN REED BUNTING – A BRIEF REVIEW OF ITS IDENTIFICATION

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While identification of summer plumage males of the three species of reed bunting, Eurasian Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, Pallas's Reed Bunting *E. pallasi* and Japanese Reed Bunting *E. yessoensis* is straightforward, autumn males, females and immatures are more problematic. The identification of immature Pallas's Reed and Japanese Reed Buntings has been dealt with previously in the 1991 Annual Report (Leader 1992, Leven 1992) but insufficient attention was paid to the similarity that may be shown by some individuals of Eurasian Reed to Pallas's Reed. For a more detailed treatment of Pallas's Reed Bunting and the eastern forms of Eurasian Reed Bunting, see Alstrom and Olsson (1994); this short paper serves merely to clear up any confusion that may exist as a result of previous work published in Hong Kong.

The trapping of one winter plumage male and six female Eurasian Reed Buntings, probably of the race *pyrrhulina*, at Mai Po between 10 January and 21 March 1993 highlighted the main area of confusion, the separation of the eastern races of Eurasian Reed Bunting from Pallas's Reed Bunting in non-adult male plumages.

The palest of the birds trapped (plate xx) was remarkable in its similarity to Pallas's Reed Bunting (*contra* Leader 1992 and Leven 1992). The head pattern, blackish triangular malar stripes, grey-brown, largely unstreaked and obviously pale rump (*contra* Leader 1992) and striking, pale, sandy plumage tones are all consistent with a winter-plumaged Pallas's Reed. However, the obviously rufous lesser coverts, more conspicuous than in western races of Eurasian Reed Bunting due to the greater contrast with the rest of the plumage, quickly rule out Pallas's Reed. A female Pallas's Reed would show dull brownish lesser coverts and males bluish-grey lesser coverts; however, this is rarely apparent in the field, unlike the very obvious rufous lesser coverts of Eurasian Reed Bunting.

Japanese Reed Bunting has almost identical lesser coverts to those of Pallas's Reed. Regardless of this however, confusion between the eastern races of Eurasian Reed Bunting and Japanese Reed Bunting should not arise, Japanese being easily identified due to its warmer plumage tones, lack of streaking below, dark ear coverts, peachy nape and diagnostic peach-coloured rump, although this is rather pale on some individuals.

It can be seen that the presence or absence of rufous lesser coverts together with the rump colour will identify any reed bunting encountered in Hong Kong.

Most birds of the eastern forms of Eurasian Reed Bunting have large, bulky bills with a strongly convex culmen, very different to the neat bill and near straight culmen of both Pallas's and Japanese Reeds. Both Pallas's and



37 Eurasian Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* first-winter female  
Mai Po, Hong Kong 10 January 1993

Paul J. Leader

Japanese Reed Buntings are smaller than the eastern races of Eurasian Reed Bunting which are similar in size to the western races. Structurally, both Eurasian Reed and Pallas's Reed tend to be longer-tailed than Japanese, although a Japanese Reed Bunting caught at Mai Po in 1992 was notably long-tailed, initially suggesting Pallas's (pers. obs.).

過去在本港發表有關蘆鵪 *Emberiza schoeniclus* 東方亞種的資料，可能產生了辨別方面的疑問，本文的目的是幫助消除有關的問題。主要的結論是留意小覆羽是否紅棕色，與及腰的顏色，便能確認所有在本港碰上的蘆鵪。

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## PHOTOSPOT: SAKER FALCON

Peter R. Kennerley

Winter birding in Deep Bay is often spectacular, never more so than when the large gull, wader and duck flocks spontaneously take flight. Often these disturbances are caused by the presence of a raptor and frequently it will be a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*; then the entertainment is non-stop as it stoops at and pursues an unfortunate wader or gull, following its every twist and turn. In recent winters however, the occasional 'large, female Peregrine' has turned out to be a Saker Falcon *F. cherrug* and there have now been four records of this species in the Deep Bay area since January 1988.

A distant Saker in flight is structurally quite distinct from the more familiar Peregrine. Saker is invariably larger and bulkier than even the largest female Peregrine, although this can be difficult to judge on a distant raptor chasing a shorebird at high speed. Structurally however, Saker differs from



38 Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* light phase  
Qinghai Province, China 11 October 1992

Peter R. Kennerley

HK Bird Report 1993: 195-198, Dec. 1994



39 Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* intermediate phase  
Qinghai Province, China 11 October 1992

Peter R. Kennerley

Peregrine in its longer tail, proportionally longer and broader-based wings and less compact, heavier body. Peregrines, even large females, are short-tailed with relatively short, stubby wings and a thickset appearance.

Behaviour can also be indicative of Saker. When hunting, Saker may move slowly along the edge of the mangroves in an almost harrier-like manner, trying to flush birds which may be hiding there. It will then accelerate rapidly in pursuit of any bird which takes flight. Rarely does Saker stoop in the manner of a Peregrine, nor does it pursue gulls and waders in the spectacular manner of its congener, preferring to surprise its prey and overtake it in a rapid burst of speed. Even so, this method of hunting is frequently very impressive and the response of a flock of ducks to a Saker sitting a couple of metres above them is both novel and, to the observer, highly entertaining (see Kennerley 1989). Perhaps due to its larger size, Saker in flight seems to lack the sense of purpose which Peregrine shows when running down its quarry and can appear rather ponderous by comparison.

[The cost of reproduction of Plates 38-39 in colour has been subsidised by Carl Zeiss Far East Co. Ltd.]





40 Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* dark phase  
Qinghai Province, China 11 October 1992

Peter R. Kennerley



41 Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* dark phase  
Qinghai Province, China 11 October 1992

Peter R. Kennerley

[The cost of reproduction of Plates 40-42 in colour has been subsidised by Carl Zeiss Far East Co.



42 Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* intermediate phase  
Qinghai Province, China 11 October 1992

Peter R. Kennerley

Although the identification of Saker has been reviewed in detail by others, including Porter *et al.* (1976), this has centred on the nominate form found in eastern Europe and west Asia. In East Asia, the race *F.c. milvipes* differs in many respects from the nominate form and it is birds showing the plumage characters of *milvipes* which occur in Hong Kong.

The plumage of Saker is highly variable as plates 38-42 demonstrate. These birds were photographed near Madou, Qinghai Province, China, in October 1992 and illustrate the high degree of variability shown by Saker. On a typical bird the mantle and wing coverts are grey-brown, fringed paler in young birds. The tail is distinctly barred with several dark and light brown bars. It is, however, the head pattern of the eastern form which is most interesting. Unlike the western race, in which the crown is usually whitish, the crown of *milvipes* is grey-brown, similar to the mantle and separated from it by conspicuous pale patches on the nape. Furthermore, *milvipes* shows narrow, but well-defined, dark moustachials, a dark eye-stripe and a whitish supercilium, giving a head pattern not dissimilar to that of a female Merlin *F. columbarius*.

Below, Saker is highly variable; some individuals are white with a random scattering of blackish spots appearing, in extreme cases, like Gyr Falcon *F. rusticolus*, (Plate 38); others are streaked brown to a varying degree (Plate 39). A minority of individuals have the white breast almost entirely obscured by heavy blackish streaking. These individuals also have unbarred central tail feathers and are considered by some to be a separate species, Altai Falcon *F. altaicus*, but it is perhaps more likely that they are merely a very dark morph of Saker (Plate 40). In Hong Kong all birds have been of the type in Plate 39 and this form was the most numerous of over 400 Sakers seen in Qinghai province.



Juvenile female Peregrine of the large northern migratory race *calidus* can show similar plumage characters to Saker including ash-brown mantle and wing coverts, fairly narrow, brownish moustachial stripes and contrastingly pale ear coverts which reach the level of the eye. Some may occasionally show pale nape patches and an indistinct supercilium but these are less obvious than in Saker and most pale birds still retain the characteristic hooded appearance of Peregrine. The dark band along the centre of the underwing of Saker, if seen, is diagnostic (see plates 41-42). Although *calidus* occurs in China during the winter months, there are as yet no records from Hong Kong.

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## FOOD PREFERENCE AND FRUIT HANDLING TECHNIQUES OF JAPANESE WHITE-EYES AND THE ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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#### INTRODUCTION

Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonicus* (hereafter referred to as White-eye) is one of the commonest frugivorous species in Hong Kong. Hence, it can be assumed to play an important role in local seed dispersal. This paper describes attempts to investigate aspects of its feeding ecology and the ecological implications of the findings.

#### AIMS AND METHODS

1. To investigate whether there is any significant preference among sugars by White-eyes. 15%-solutions of the three main sugar constituents in fruit or nectar, glucose, fructose and sucrose, (Brugger and Nelms 1991) were offered.
2. To determine whether there is any correlation between fruit preference and the parameters of fruit weight, seed weight, seed load (seed weight/fruit weight), water percentage and percentage fresh weight of lipid and protein. A fixed number of fruits (see Appendix 1) were given in each trial to see how many fruits the birds ate within a certain period of time.
3. To gain an idea of fruit handling techniques and gut passage time by direct observation.
4. To draw ecological implications from the results obtained.

From September to December 1992, five White-eyes that had been bought were kept indoors in individual cages. All the experiments were done in a laboratory of the University of Hong Kong.

#### RESULTS

White-eyes exhibited no significant preference (SAS non-parametric test) among glucose, fructose and sucrose. The five birds behaved similarly in this respect. None of the parameters studied (see Appendix 2) was significant at 0.05 level. However, at the 0.15 significance level, seed load became significant. As seed load increases, there was greater difficulty in handling the fruit. Hence, it is implied that White-eyes prefer fruit with a smaller seed load.

White-eyes had two main fruit handling techniques: crushing with the bill, often dropping the seeds, used for example, with *Psychotria rubra*; swallowing intact fruits, as used with, for example, *Evodia lepta*. Gut passage time was less than 30 minutes and seeds were rarely regurgitated.



## DISCUSSION

### 1. Sugar preference test

The generally accepted hypothesis to explain sucrose avoidance in passerines is the inefficient assimilation of sucrose, due to both the lack of intestinal sucrase activity (Martinez del Rio and Stevens 1989) and the extremely fast passage rates (Martinez del Rio *et al.* 1989a). If sucrase-deficient birds consume sucrose, digestive problems such as osmotic imbalance and diarrhoea may occur. Consequently, the birds may learn to avoid sucrose (Martinez del Rio and Stevens 1989; Brugger and Nelms 1991). Moreover, as fast passage rates seem to be characteristic of small frugivores, the problem of inefficient sucrose assimilation may be aggravated by insufficient processing time for the hydrolysis of sucrose (Martinez del Rio *et al.* 1989).

Although short passage time in White-eye was confirmed, no symptoms associated with digestive problems were observed. There are two important ecological implications of this. Firstly, the bird can utilize a wider range of potential food items. Secondly, if the White-eye is a pest of fruit crops, it will be impossible to reduce bird damage by changing the relative sugar content of the fruits. In the United States the American Robin *Turdus migratorius* is a pest of cultivated blueberries and cherries but it lacks sucrase. It was suggested that by developing high-sucrose fruits through artificial breeding, the degree of damage of fruit crops may be mitigated. However, the development of high-sucrose fruit needs further investigation into its feasibility with different fruit types and whether sufficient market demand exists to support it.

These results are based on a relatively short-term study. It may be that the experimental period was too short for the birds to develop an aversion to sucrose. Obviously, further research on gut enzymes is important in predicting the fruit choice of the birds and hence its impact on plant ecology.

### 2. Fruit acceptability test

The lack of correlation between fruit preference of White-eyes and the parameters studied agrees with some other studies on frugivorous birds (Sorensen 1984). However, other variables such as fruit accessibility in nature were not assayed (Foster 1990). Moreover, in this study the percentage fresh weight of lipid and protein are crude values only. Sorensen (1984) found that the amount of nutrients and energy available to the birds in a digestible form is much more crucial than the crude total values. These factors require further study.

High seed loads reduce fruit acceptability. It may be that the energy spent on removing the seeds before ingestion is still lower than processing them in the gut. Moreover, seeds are indigestible ballast that occupy gut space but have no nutritional value and may decrease the ingestion rate. It is thus to be expected that the lower the seed load, the more rewarding the fruit will be (Herrera 1981).

### 3. Fruit handling techniques

White-eyes tend to drop seeds before swallowing the pulp of some fruit species such as *Psychotria rubra*. This has two important ecological implications:

a) Studies of White-eyes diet composition based on faecal samples or gut (stomach) content may be biased;

b) Observations of fruit removal in nature may not accurately predict the seed dispersal role by White-eyes.

### 4. Gut passage time

White-eyes have a relatively short gut passage time of 15-30 minutes. This agrees with the finding that retention time is comparatively short in frugivorous birds (Herrera 1984). The ecological significance is four-fold. First, it may affect the fruit preference of the bird. Sorensen (1984) discovered that Blackbird *Turdus merula* fruit preference had a close relationship with seed passage time. Secondly, White-eyes often defaecate but rarely regurgitate seeds. Defaecation of seeds has higher dispersal efficiency compared to regurgitation which often results in seeds being dropped around the parent plant (Snow 1971).

Thirdly, the high ingestion rate of fruit by White-eyes means a fast depletion of fruits in nature. Since fruits are usually in great abundance and displayed conspicuously, their availability is not problematic. The fast depletion of fruits is also advantageous from the seed dispersal point of view because ripe fruits may become rotten or dry up quickly and fall, which in turn results in poor dispersal of the seeds (Moremond and Denslow 1983; Stiles 1989).

Lastly, a high passage rate means short-range seed dispersal which is advantageous in Hong Kong (Stiles, 1989; Corlett pers. comm.), where the vegetation is patchy. If a seed of a shrub is dispersed distantly, for example to a deeply-shaded woodland, it may not be able to grow well because of insufficient sunlight or the new soil type being simply unsuitable for its germination or growth (Levey 1987).

## CONCLUSION

Japanese White-eye is a common and widespread frugivorous bird species in Hong Kong. Based on this study, there does not seem to be any significant preference among glucose, fructose or sucrose. Among the studied variables, seed load seemed to be important in fruit preference. Fruit handling techniques were sophisticated and seed(s) might be dropped before the pulp was swallowed. The short gut passage time may be beneficial to local seed dispersal. All these findings have ecological implications regarding aspects such as local seed dispersal and control of bird damage.

Fruit preference is a complex issue. Besides the parameters studied, others such as fruit accessibility and the physiological state of the birds may also be important. The results of this study should be regarded as preliminary due to the small sample size of birds and the limited amount of data. Nonetheless, this study has begun research on ecological roles of birds in Hong Kong. Hopefully, in the future, more detailed investigations over a longer time period will be carried out, together with field studies, in order to draw a more conclusive picture.

[This report is only a brief summary of my research. Anyone who is interested in more details is welcome to contact the author.]



## Appendix 1

### Fruit species used in this study

1. <i>Asparagus lucidus</i>	14. <i>Mallotus paniculatus</i> *
2. <i>Brucea javanica</i>	15. <i>Melastoma sanguineum</i> *
3. <i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>	16. <i>Psychotria rubra</i> *
4. <i>Coëculus trilobus</i> *	17. <i>Psychotria serpens</i> *
5. <i>Choerospondias axillaris</i>	18. <i>Pyracantha crenulatus</i> #
6. <i>Daphniphyllum glaucescens</i>	19. <i>Rapanea neriifolia</i>
7. <i>Eurya japonica</i> #	20. <i>Rhaphiolepis indica</i>
8. <i>Evodia lepta</i> *	21. <i>Rhodomyrtus tomentosa</i>
9. <i>Ilex cinerea</i>	22. <i>Rhus hypoleuca</i>
10. <i>Ilex pubescens</i> *	23. <i>Sapium discolor</i> *
11. <i>Jasminum lanceolarium</i>	24. <i>Syzygium buxifolium</i>
12. <i>Lantana camara</i> *	25. <i>Wikstroemia indica</i>
13. <i>Maesa perlaris</i>	26. <i>Zanthoxylum scandens</i>

\*: Seeds of these fruit species have been found in the droppings of White-eyes (Corlett, pers. obs.).

#: White-eyes have been seen feeding on these fruits in the wild (Corlett pers. obs.).

## Appendix 2

### Physical parameters of the fruits studied (n=15)

Species	fruit weight/g	seed weight/g	seed number	water %	seed load
1	0.4200	0.0870	1.0	NF	0.21
2	0.2600	0.1200	1.0	76.6	0.46
3	11.6500	2.5200	1.0	81.7	0.22
4	0.5100	0.1500	1.0	67.7	0.29
5	0.1500	0.0310	1.0	NF	0.21
6	0.2900	0.0900	1.0	80.0	0.31
7	0.1200	0.0037	6.5	70.3	0.031
8	0.0068	0.0054	1.0	NF	0.057
9	0.2100	0.0120	4.0	71.0	0.057
10	0.0890	0.0020	5.9	76.5	0.022
11	0.6300	0.3300	1.0	79.6	0.52
12	0.0880	0.0200	1.0	77.1	0.23
13	0.1400	0.0002	28.0	87.5	0.0014
14	0.0190	0.0150	1.0	11.1	0.79
15	0.2600	0.0001	999.0	82.2	0.00038
16	0.3600	0.0450	2.0	90.7	0.125
17	0.1100	0.0120	2.0	91.8	0.11
18	0.4100	0.0058	5.0	79.2	0.014
19	0.1900	0.0590	1.0	81.8	0.31
20	0.2400	0.1000	1.0	63.9	0.42
21	2.1900	0.0033	58.4	79.2	0.0015

Continued

## Appendix 2 (Continued)

23	0.0530	0.0380	1.0	11.1	0.72
24	0.4200	0.2700	1.0	86.8	0.64
25	0.2100	0.0270	1.0	80.8	0.13
26	0.0400	0.0360	1.0	NF	0.90

Seed load values are calculated from the data obtained (seed load = seed weight/fruit weight; NF=not found). Please refer to Appendix 1 for species. (Data obtained from Dr R.T. Corlett, Department of Botany, University of Hong Kong.)

## Appendix 3

### Nutrient contents (lipid, protein and carbohydrate) of the fruits studied

Species	as percentage of dry weight		
	lipid	protein	carbohydrate
<i>A. lucidus</i>	NF	NF	NF
<i>B. javanica</i>	2.0	21.3	NF
<i>C. axillaris</i>	2.0	4.7	42.0
<i>C. camphora</i>	23.0	8.0	NF
<i>D. trilobus</i>	NF	NF	NF
<i>D. glaucescens</i>	1.0	4.7	NF
<i>E. japonica</i>	1.0	3.8	70.0
<i>E. lepta</i>	NF	NF	NF
<i>I. cinerea</i>	0.8	5.6	63.0
<i>I. pubescens</i>	0.8	4.6	60.0
<i>J. lanceolarium</i>	1.5	5.3	63.0
<i>L. camara</i>	1.0	6.6	51.0
<i>M. perlaris</i>	3.0	6.3	NF
<i>M. paniculatus</i>	NF	8.4	NF
<i>M. sanguineum</i>	1.0	12.0	NF
<i>P. rubra</i>	3.0	6.0	NF
<i>P. serpens</i>	1.7	4.9	70.0
<i>P. crenulata</i>	NF	NF	NF
<i>R. neriifolia</i>	5.0	3.8	NF
<i>R. indica</i>	1.7	3.8	28.0
<i>R. tomentosa</i>	1.0	3.4	62.0
<i>R. hypoleuca</i>	22.0	3.8	NF
<i>S. discolor</i>	70.0	5.9	NF
<i>S. buxifolium</i>	1.0	3.7	25.0
<i>W. indica</i>	2.0	5.3	NF
<i>Z. scandens</i>	NF	NF	NF

(Data obtained from Corlett, R.T., Department of Botany, University of Hong Kong.)  
(NF = not found)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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本文介紹一些關於暗綠繡眼鳥 *Zosterops japonica* 的覓食習性，及其對生態的影響的研究。主要的結論是牠們對於葡萄糖、果糖和蔗糖沒有特別偏好；種子的重量似乎是選擇果子的重要因素；而食物在體內停留的時間是較短的。所有這些發現，都有生態上的意義，例如種子的傳播和鳥患的控制等。

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## REPORT ON A WWF HONG KONG SURVEY OF NESTING SWIFTS AND SWALLOWS

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## INTRODUCTION

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* and House Swift *Apus affinis* both breed on buildings in Hong Kong. House Swift is a resident species while Barn Swallow is a breeding, summer visitor (Chalmers 1986). The objective of this study was to locate the nests and to record nest details of the two species in three new towns in Hong Kong, namely Tai Po, Sheung Shui and Yuen Long. A similar study was conducted in 1991 (Wong 1991).

## METHOD

The survey was conducted by 13 teams of students from Chiu Lut Sau Memorial Secondary School and Tak Nga Secondary School. Each team was composed of three or four students and was led by an undergraduate from either the Chinese University of Hong Kong or the University of Hong Kong. The undergraduate leaders were trained by the author during two field sessions before the actual survey to ensure consistency of recording.

Each team was assigned an area in Tai Po, Sheung Shui or Yuen Long. The team then walked through the streets in the assigned area. Once a nest was found the location was marked on a 1:1,000 map and a sketch of the building was made to allow more detailed comparison in future. A nest record form was also completed with the relevant details. The survey was carried out between 1 March and 30 April 1993 and, within this period, each team made two visits to its survey area. The visits were separated by at least two weeks. Two teams however, were not able to carry out the second visit.

## RESULTS

A record may be for either a single nest or a colony. A colony is defined as two or more nests which touch each other. Table 1 provides a summary of the 470 records, comprising 1419 nests.

Table 1. Summary of Record and Nest Data

	House Swift	Barn Swallow
Total no. of records	375	95
Total no. of nests	1324	95
No. of colonies	199	0
No. of nests in colonies	1149	0
No. of dead birds found	58	1
No. of nests visited twice	278 (1070)*	66 (66)*
No. of new nests found on second visit	20 (52)*	7 (7)*
No. of nests recorded as active	152	55
No. of nests at Tai Po	86 (227)*	15 (15)*
No. of nests at Sheung Shui	95 (373)*	8 (8)*
No. of nests at Yuen Long	194 (724)*	72 (72)*

\* first number refers to record number, number in brackets refers to number of nests.



Tables 2 and 3 summarise details of the nest sites. The height of the nest was estimated from ground level. Under eaves denotes a nest built less than 1m below an overhang; against wall denotes a nest built more than 1m below.

**Table 2. Nest Site Details**

	House Swift (n=374)	Barn Swallow (n=94)
Mean height of nest ( $\pm$ S.D.)	5.3 ( $\pm$ 2.6)	4.3 ( $\pm$ 1.3)
Range of nest height	2–48m.	1–9m.
Location under eaves	98.0% (n=375)	96.0% (n=95)
Location against wall	1.1%	1.0%
Other locations	0.6%	0.0%
No location data	0.3%	3.0%

Table 3 details the nest support utilised, i.e. the material immediately below the nest which is assumed to act as the nest support.

**Table 3. Nest Site Details**

	House Swift (n=375)	Barn Swallow (n=95)
No visible support	39%	20%
Iron bar	6%	17%
Lamp bracket	10%	12%
Electric Socket	1%	11%
Wire	2%	7%
Uncertain	3%	14%
Swallow's nest	33%	—
Other*	6%	15%
No data	2%	5%

\* includes nails, shop name plates, swift nests.

Second visits were made 24, 30 and 36 days after the initial visit. Information collected revealed that four Swallow nests had been taken over by swifts. There was also a change in numbers of swift nests but the recorded changes indicated both an increase and a decrease in nests. Counting swift nests in colonies is difficult and variation in numbers of up to five nests is considered to be due to observer error. Considering only those instances where more than five new nests were noted, there were five records accounting for 17 additional nests.

## DISCUSSION

Generally House Swift nests were higher above the ground than those of swallows which could be because swifts have to drop vertically from the nest for a short distance before they are able to take flight. In addition, although they are fast fliers, swifts are not particularly adept at manoeuvring and may require greater clearance to reach their nests. The same height phenomenon was found among Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* nests breeding in China (Gao and Zhou 1985).

Most swift nests were in colonies but all swallow nests were single. The majority of nests (98% of swifts and 96% of swallows) were found under eaves. Such protection is likely to be important against sun and rain (average monthly rainfall in March and April is 66.9mm and 161.5mm respectively). A very high proportion of both species' nests were built touching a painted surface; however, it is not possible to say whether these sites were actively selected since most buildings in the study areas had painted surfaces.

Although the areas surveyed were not exactly the same as those surveyed in 1991, the results of the two surveys are similar in most aspects (Wong 1991). An improvement of survey procedures and consistency of data obtained has been achieved in this survey.

Most swallow nests (75%) had a support of some sort but no particular preference was observed. Swift nests were not obviously supported but 33% of those that were, had swallow nests as supports. This indicates that there is a preference to take over swallow nests when a support is desired.

Three active and one inactive swallow's nest were taken over by swifts between the two survey visits (spaced out at 24 to 36 days). It is interesting that swifts will take over active swallow nests; swallow nests would appear to be intrinsically vulnerable as they are open-topped. It is unclear how swifts achieve this take over; however, I was told of one possible aggressive interaction between House Swift and Barn Swallow involving fighting between a 'bigger black and smaller white swallows' in front of a swallow-supported swift nest in summer 1991.

House Swifts successfully evicted a Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* from a nest in Japan (Nomura and Uchimura 1987). Also in Japan, House Swifts have readily taken over Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* nests (Obara 1983) and elsewhere Kennedy (1986) reported Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* taking over a House Martin *Delichon urbica* nest in Spain. A Swallow's nest has also been found occupied by House Martin (Andrew 1993) and the author speculated that the habit that swallows have of nesting on the outside of buildings makes them more susceptible to this. This phenomenon is worthy of more attention in order to understand the effect on both birds.

It is of interest that quite a few dead swifts were found by the nests. I have previously seen a living swift caught in a nest which died after a few days. Swifts can be caught up by nest materials which nowadays may include non-natural components such as plastic, paper and string.

Two cases were recorded of property owners placing wood under the nests of both species to stop the droppings causing a nuisance. This exhibits a certain tolerance and appreciation of these urban nesting birds. It is generally true that people notice the existence of these birds and appreciate the nests which are traditionally thought to be lucky. This was revealed during the survey when many property owners or shopkeepers were able to provide information regarding nests. Obviously, such goodwill is very important if wildlife is to survive in urban areas.



## CONCLUSION

Since in Britain there are indications that increasing populations of House Martin were related to improved air quality and an increase in aerial plankton (Sharrock 1976), long-term monitoring of the numbers of nests of House Swifts and Swallows might be used as a means of monitoring air pollution. It is recommended that schools be encouraged to undertake annual surveys of selected areas in the three towns concerned. The surveys should be conducted in the period March to April annually. It is important that the same areas are visited each year and that standard survey methods are used.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to acknowledge the help of the two schools which took part in this survey, Chiu Lut Sau Memorial School and Tak Nga Secondary School. I am also very grateful to David Melville for making many valuable suggestions and putting much time in to commenting on drafts of this paper.

本文敘述世界自然（香港）基金會舉辦的雨燕及家燕繁殖分佈調查。調查地點為大埔、上水及元朗。一共錄得鳥巢 1419 個，同時記錄每一鳥巢的位置，築巢條件及分佈等等。經分析後一些築巢條件已被認定，並且發現雨燕有佔用家燕巢的特性。若這樣長期調查得以繼續，或許可用調查結果作為空氣質數的指標。

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## NOTES

### Wilson's Storm Petrel and other seabird records from the South China Sea during April 1992

During a trip from the Philippines to Hong Kong in late April 1992 on the yacht 'Windseeker' two separate sightings of white-rumped storm petrels were made.

The first involved two birds flushed from the sea in the early evening of 27 April 1992, about 330 nautical miles southeast of Hong Kong. The birds flew on long, narrow, pointed wings, bent at the carpal joint; there was a pale wing-bar on the upper wing coverts. Because of the distance positive identification was not possible.

Early the following morning, about 270 nautical miles southeast of Hong Kong, five or six birds were flushed from under the bows of the boat. These birds seemed small with white rumps and slightly concave tails (similar to photograph 233 in Harrison 1987). The long, dangling, trailing legs showed chrome-yellow webs between the toes as the birds paddled along the water surface during take-off. This characteristic feature is diagnostic of Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*. The wings had a pale wing bar and seemed more rounded than those noted on the birds seen the previous evening. The birds' flight was erratic and darting as they flew close to the surface of the sea.

Weather conditions on both days were calm and sunny with almost no wind or swell at all.

Harrison (1983) states that Wilson's Storm Petrel moves north past Australia in April to winter off Malaysian coasts. It is thus not greatly surprising that birds occur further north, in the South China Sea, particularly at times of whale migration. Furthermore, Harrison (1983) also states that stragglers reach Japan and non-breeding birds may remain in the area throughout the year. It is possible that an earlier Hong Kong record of two unidentified storm-petrels in March 1989 concerned this species.

Other pelagic species seen during the voyage included dark phase Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*, Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*, dark-rumped Storm Petrels, probably Swinhoe's *Oceanodroma monorhis*, Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*, Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*, Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*, Long-tailed Skua *S. longicaudus*, Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata* and Bridled Tern *S. anaethetus*. The skuas were seen following a fishing fleet five nautical miles east of the Lema Islands, which are just south of Hong Kong waters. The Long-tailed Skua record is in line with previous sightings in the same area at the same time of year (Lamont 1990).

My thanks are due to Clive Viney for his useful comments on an earlier draft of this note.



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### Great Barbet eating a lizard

While bird watching on a small hill above the fung shui wood at San Tau Kok village, Shuen Wan, on 20 June 1993, I noticed a Great Barbet *Megalaima virens* carrying an object in its bill. The bird, an adult on the basis that it did not show the dull plumage tones of young birds seen in late summer (pers. obs.), was initially seen in flight but landed briefly in a lone tree when I was able to see through a telescope that the object was in fact a lizard about 6-10cm long, gripped around the body and held crossways. Still carrying the lizard, the barbet then flew into a large tree in the wood where it was lost to sight for a short time. However, when it showed itself again it was in the act of swallowing its prey head first. The lizard's head and body had apparently already gone down the bird's throat and only its long, thin, banded tail could be seen projecting out of the barbet's mouth.

I can find no reference to lizard or other reptiles as food items for the Great Barbet. Although La Touche (1931-34) describes Great Barbet as 'seemingly omnivorous', the only specified food items that he lists are berries, insects and 'small birds according to David and Oustalet'. Similarly, Ali and Ripley (1987) note the food of the Great Barbet as chiefly fruit, insects and flower petals while Herklots (1967) states that its food consists in the main of fruits and berries of native woodland trees. Roberts (1991) echoes the above and lists berries and fruits but says 'will take insects when available'.

After reference to Karsen *et al.* (1986), I was able to identify the lizard as a juvenile Crested Tree Lizard *Calotes versicolor*.

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### Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler in Hong Kong

On 29 November 1992 A.C. Galsworthy and I were mist-netting birds at Mai Po Nature Reserve when an unusual warbler was caught. Its general structure and rather strong bill and legs suggested that it was a *Cettia* warbler and this identification was confirmed by its having only ten rectrices.

The crown was grey-brown and the mantle and rump were russet-brown. The lesser coverts were russet-brown and the median and greater coverts were brown with a rufous fringe to the outer web, as were the flight feathers and tail. There was an indistinct, but broad, pale brown supercilium and a darker eyestripe in front of and behind the eye. The cheeks and lores were mid-brown. The throat and upper breast were a uniform milky grey-brown with a gingery tinge on the flanks. The belly was pale buff washed with yellow and the undertail coverts were gingery, as the flanks. The axillaries and underwing coverts were yellow-cream. The bill was dark brown on the upper mandible with a pale cutting edge; the lower mandible was pinkish-horn, darker towards the tip except on the cutting edge. The legs were grey-brown, the iris was grey-brown and the palate was yellow-pink.

Measurements and wing formula were as follows:

wing (maximum chord)	50 mm
bill (to skull)	13.0 mm
tarsus	22.2 mm
tail	45 mm
weight	7.6 g
fat score (after Anon 1984)	2

Wing formula

	PC	+11	-11	-3	-1	WP	-2	-4	-6	-7	-8	-9	
Primary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	SS		

PC = longest primary covert; WP = wing point i.e. longest primary; SS = secondaries

It was tentatively aged as a first-winter bird by analogy with Chinese Bush Warbler *C. diphone* on the basis of the grey-brown iris and the yellow-pink palate coloration.

The bird was clearly not one of the regularly occurring *Cettia* species in Hong Kong, nor was it the vagrant Pale-footed Bush Warbler *C. pallidipes*. ACG considered that it was probably Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler *C. acanthizoides* but the virtual absence of yellow on the underparts was surprising. In order to get a further opinion, D.S. Melville, who had trapped the only previous example of this species in Hong Kong at Mai Po on 8 December 1989 (Melville 1990), was contacted and he also examined it before it was photographed, ringed and released (see plates 10-11).



The bird was not seen in the field but it was retrapped on 30 January 1993 by F.K.O. Wong when the weight was almost unchanged at 7.5g.

In assessing both records, the Records Committee observed that there were several features described below which did not correspond to the published characters of *C. acanthizoides* or their own field experience.

De Schauensee (1984) states that the nominate form *C.a. acanthizoides*, which occurs as a montane breeding species over much of central and southern China, shows a long white eyebrow extending from bill to nape which does not accord with the rather indistinct supercilium present on the second individual and the rather buffy coloration of that of the first.

La Touche (1925-30) describes the chin and throat as light greyish-brown blending in to buffish primrose-yellow on the rest of the underparts, brightest and purest on the flanks and undertail coverts. Similarly, de Schauensee (1984) states that the throat of *C.a. acanthizoides* is light olivaceous-grey, gradually turning to pale yellow on the rest of the underparts. Neither bird had an underpart pattern matching exactly either of these descriptions nor any other subspecies. Thus, the underparts of *C.a. brunescens* of the Himalayas and *C.a. concolor* of Taiwan are 'buffy' (de Schauensee 1984). However, Ali and Ripley (1983) describe the underparts of *C.a. brunescens* as pale yellow in the field but, confusingly, they also state 'Museum Diagnosis.....underparts greyish-buff, browner on flanks'. Wang *et al.* (1991) shows *C.a. concolor* as having yellow-buff underparts and this was a constant feature of this form when several singing birds were observed in Taiwan in April 1992 (pers. obs.). Viney (*in litt.*) noted that singing birds of *C.a. acanthizoides* on Wu Yi Shan, Fujian Province, China, showed a darker breast band contrasting with a bright yellow belly.

After reviewing both records the Records Committee concluded the two individuals were probably the same species but, in view of the discrepancies within the literature, and, in particular, the apparent variability in the extent of yellow on the underparts, further research was required. Accordingly, P.J. Leader visited the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, where a number of skins were examined and photographed. These showed that there was considerable variation in the extent of yellow on the underparts in winter, some individuals showing the predominantly buffish tones and more rufous flanks and undertail coverts of the second bird trapped at Mai Po. Both records from Mai Po were therefore considered to be fully acceptable as referring to Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler.

Some questions do remain, however. Whilst it is now clear that some birds can show little or no yellow on the belly, it is not known whether this feature is age-related, related to time of year or is a feature of particular populations.

For field observers the most useful identification character, if the belly coloration is not obviously yellowish, is the rufous appearance of the upperparts, especially the flight feathers; if this feature is noted on a small, thick-set warbler, this species should be considered.

I should like to thank A.C. Galsworthy, whose documentation of the record forms the basis of this note, as well as fellow members of the Records Committee, M.L. Chalmers, G.J. Carey and P.J. Leader, who commented on an earlier draft. The British Museum (Natural History), Tring, kindly allowed access to the skin collection.

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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 do this 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.

The Society also maintains a collection of reports of birds recorded during members' visits to various parts of Southeast Asia and China to assist others in planning overseas trips.

### Rarities

While the birds of Hong Kong are better known than those of many 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 reporting is maintained. A list of species considered by the Committee is given below. The list may seem dauntingly long and includes some apparently unmistakable species such as Oystercatcher but, nevertheless, field descriptions of the birds listed are required if the record is to be considered for publication. 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 the observer, weather and light conditions.
- c) Description of habitat and what other birds, if any, it was associating with.
- d) Angle of view and actions: at rest, in flight, swimming etc. The more varied the conditions the better.
- e) Its general size, shape and structure compared with other more familiar species. Structural features which may be important should be detailed e.g. bill length compared to length of head; relative position of wing tips to uppertail coverts; projection of primary tips beyond closed tertials; length of hind claw etc.
- f) The most detailed description possible of the plumage and bare parts, not just those parts thought to help in identification. This description should be logical and organised. The following sequence is suggested:

- i) Head
- ii) Upperparts
- iii) Wings, including underwing if seen
- iv) Tail, both upper and lower sides
- v) Underparts
- vi) Bare parts (iris, bill, gape if seen, legs and feet)

More experienced observers will expand on features known to be critical e.g. extent and shape of supercilium and wing bars in warblers, pattern of scapular feathers in waders etc. A rough sketch or diagram is helpful.

g) Any calls, indicating especially the quality of the sound (harsh, rattling, shrill, hoarse, liquid etc.) and comparison with calls of other species.

h) Notes on previous experience with the species or species with which it may be confused.

i) Names of other observers present, if any.

If possible try to 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. 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 straightforward, 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.

The following list of species (for which written descriptions are required) is based on the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong* (Chalmers 1986) plus additions detailed in the annual Hong Kong Bird Reports from 1984/85 onwards. In some 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 of rarities submitted without descriptions will not be considered.

The list is subject to revision each year to include new species and delete those for which descriptions are no longer needed because of better defined status or fewer identification problems. Species for which written descriptions of all sightings must be submitted to the Recorder for consideration by the Records Committee are:



## CATEGORY A

Red-necked Grebe  
Black-necked Grebe  
Streaked Shearwater  
all storm petrels  
all frigatebirds  
Black Bittern  
Japanese Night Heron  
Glossy Ibis  
Lesser Treeduck  
all swans  
all geese  
Cotton Teal  
Ferruginous Duck  
Velvet Scoter  
Goldeneye  
Smew  
Crested Honey Buzzard  
Brahminy Kite  
Hen Harrier  
Pied Harrier  
identified accipiters except  
    Crested and Chinese Goshawks  
Upland Buzzard  
Mountain Hawk Eagle  
Amur Falcon  
Saker Falcon  
all button quails  
Water Rail  
all crakes except Ruddy  
Purple Gallinule  
Common Crane  
Oystercatcher  
Ringed Plover  
Oriental Plover  
Little Stint  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Jack Snipe  
Long-billed Dowitcher  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Grey Phalarope  
all skuas  
Great Black-headed Gull  
Relict Gull  
Slender-billed Gull  
Common Gull  
Slaty-backed Gull  
Glaucous-winged Gull  
Glaucous Gull

Kittiwake  
Greater Crested Tern  
Aleutian Tern  
Sooty Tern  
Ancient Auk  
Bar-tailed Cuckoo Dove  
White-bellied Green Pigeon  
Thick-billed Pigeon  
Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo  
Common Cuckoo  
all owls except Collared Scops Owl  
and Barred Owllet  
Grey Nightjar  
all swiftlets  
Collared Kingfisher  
all woodpeckers  
Blue-throated Bee-eater  
Chinese Pitta  
all larks except Oriental Skylark  
Pechora Pipit  
Water Pipit  
Citrine Wagtail  
White Wagtail (all races other than  
    *leucopsis* and *ocularis*)  
Rosy Minivet  
Brown Dipper  
Wren  
Japanese Robin  
Pied Wheatear  
White-capped Redstart  
White-throated Rock Thrush  
Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush  
Slaty-backed Forktail  
Pale-footed Bush Warbler  
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler  
Brown Bush Warbler  
Bright-capped Cisticola  
Styan's Grasshopper Warbler  
Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler  
Blunt-winged Warbler  
Paddyfield Warbler  
Blyth's Reed Warbler  
Thick-billed Warbler  
Chestnut-crowned Warbler  
Fulvous-faced Flycatcher Warbler  
Two-barred Greenish Warbler  
Yellow-browed Warbler  
    (race *humei*)  
Radde's Warbler  
Chiffchaff

Fukien Niltava  
Sooty Flycatcher  
Striated Yuhina  
Gould's Sunbird  
Plain Flowerpecker  
Tiger Shrike  
Bull-headed Shrike  
Daurian Jackdaw  
Carion Crow  
Chestnut-cheeked Starling  
Rosy Starling  
Brambling  
Japanese Grosbeak  
Yellow-throated Bunting  
Yellow-browed Bunting  
Rustic Bunting  
Reed Bunting  
Pallas's Reed Bunting  
Japanese Reed Bunting

## CATEGORY B

Ring-necked Pheasant  
Pygmy Wren Babbler

## CATEGORY C

none

## CATEGORY D

Emerald Cuckoo  
Blue-winged Pitta  
Singing Bushlark  
Greater Cuckoo Shrike  
Brown-breasted Bulbul  
Japanese Waxwing  
Bohemian Waxwing  
Small Niltava  
Pale Blue Flycatcher  
Blue-throated Flycatcher  
Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher  
Rufous-capped Babbler  
Grey-headed Parrotbill  
Grey-cheeked Fulvetta  
Chestnut-tailed Starling  
Ruddy Sparrow  
Burmese Shrike  
Pallas's Rosefinch  
Hawfinch  
Rock Bunting  
Meadow Bunting  
Grey-necked Bunting

## CATEGORY E

all new species

## CATEGORY F

all