



THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

G P O BOX 12460, HONG KONG

BULLETIN NO. 138

DECEMBER 1990

SOCIETY NEWS

- i) Subscription renewals. Please return the enclosed form as soon as possible. Members are advised to retain their subscription receipt as the Agriculture and Fisheries Department sometimes requires this before issuing annual Mai Po permits.
- ii) Secretary's resignation. Janet Stott, who has been the Society's Treasurer as well as carrying the major Secretarial workload for the past three years, now finds that her other commitments mean that she can no longer continue in those positions. The Secretary's job is considerably more demanding than most people realise and we are extremely grateful to her for all she has done. Richard will take over the Treasurer's job and will also act as membership secretary as the Stotts have all such details on computer. Shirley O'Brien has kindly agreed to step into the breach and has been co-opted onto the Committee to take up the post of Secretary.
- iii) Change of telephone number and address for 'What's about' contact. All those who either phone or send in their more interesting sightings for possible inclusion in the Bulletin should note Mike Turnbull's new telephone number and address: 39 Buxey Lodge, 37 Conduit Road, Hong Kong.
- iv) Duplicating of Society slides. As the Librarian receives regular requests for slides from members we have arranged a showing of the Society's better slides at 1830h on Tuesday 15 January 1991 in the WWF office at 1, Tramway Path, Central. Members who wish to order duplicates of any slides should make every effort to attend as this will be the ONLY opportunity to place orders.

The Chairman and Committee wish all members of the Society
a very Happy Christmas

The next Committee meeting will be held in early February 1991. If any Society member wishes a matter raised please contact one of the Committee members on the telephone numbers given below.

Gavin Cooper
Mike Chalmers
Peter Kennerley
Verity Picken

Richard Stott
Simba Chan
C Y Lam
Mike Turnbull

Shirley O'Brien
John Edge
David Melville
Michael Webster

NATIONAL SECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BIRD PRESERVATION

- v) Bus outings. These continue to be popular so please book early to avoid disappointment. Although completed forms and cheques should be sent to the Treasurer, Richard Stott, all other communications on the matter should be made with the leader of the particular outing concerned.
- vi) Thanks are due to Miranda Hui who has once again typed and mailed the Bulletin this year - her help is greatly appreciated.
- vi) Our thanks also go to Peter Stevens for arranging the ever-popular curry lunch and to John Holmes for his unparalleled competence at the bar.
- vii) The 1991 Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 26 March. Please make a note of this now.

NIKON SPOTTING SCOPE SPECIAL OFFER

Enclosed with this Bulletin is a flyer giving details of the new Nikon spotting scope. We are pleased to announce that HKBWS members have been offered a special price on this new product: HK\$1,700 for the scope with 20x eyepiece and HK\$2,180 for the scope complete with zoom eyepiece (the list prices are HK\$2,320 and HK\$2,980 respectively). Members who wish to avail themselves of this exclusive and limited offer (an ideal Christmas present?) are asked to complete the form at the end of this Bulletin and return it to the Treasurer who will place a bulk order. Forms should be returned by 7 January 1991.

1990 RECORD CARDS SUBMISSION

The compilation of the annual Report is both inconvenienced and delayed by late submissions so PLEASE send your completed cards in to the Recorder, Mike Chalmers, c/o Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick, 1720 Ocean Centre, Kowloon BEFORE 31 JANUARY 1991.

For 1991 all members are requested to submit record cards of unusual sightings IMMEDIATELY, and not to wait until the end of the year. It is hoped that this may result in earlier publication of the annual Report. Please note that all record cards, including those sent in during the course of the year, should always be sent to Mike Chalmers even though a telephoned report or brief note should also be made/sent to Mike Turnbull for inclusion in the Bulletin.

HKBWS record cards are available from the Recorder, the WWF HQ in Tramway Path and at the Mai Po Education Centre. Species for which written records are required are listed at the back of the annual Report. Data on other species is welcome, particularly on high counts, interesting behaviour or early/late dates for migrants.

CHRISTMAS COUNT - 30 December 1990 (C Y Lam)

The Christmas count will take place on Sunday 30 December as scheduled. To make it easier for you to report, a checklist report form is enclosed with this Bulletin. Mail the completed form to C Y Lam, c/o Royal Observatory, 134A Nathan Road, Kowloon, preferably by 15 January 1991. Send in your guess of the total number of species seen on that day with the form. If you are participating as a member of one of the teams led by the leaders listed below, ask your leader to submit your guess on your behalf. It may bring you a prize. See the September Bulletin for details.

<u>Area</u>	<u>Leaders</u>
Mai Po	Clive Viney
Tsim Bei Tsui, Mong Tseng	Wendy and Andrew Young
Castle Peak (incl. Nim Wan, Pak Nai)	Mike Chalmers
Northern N.T. (incl. San Tin)	Nigel Croft
	John Holmes
Shek Kong, Tai Mo Shan	Shirley and George O'Brien
Shing Mun	Ng Wing Kong
Lam Tsuen Valley	Verity Picken
Northeast N.T. (incl. Fanling Luk Keng, Plover Cove)	Richard and Janet Stott
Tai Po Kau	Richard Lewthwaite
Tai Long (incl. Tolo Harbour)	John Edge
Ma On Shan, Sai Kung	Li Wai Ki
Kowloon	Yu Yat Tung
Stonecutters Island	Jim Ades
Hong Kong Island	Peter Kennerley
	Anthony Tse
	John Gerson
Lamma Island	John Kier
Cheung Chau	Martin Williams
Lantau Island	C Y Lam
	Roger Costin
	(see note below)

Those who are interested in joining the Lantau survey (transportation on a cost-sharing basis) please contact Roger or C Y immediately.

Special appeal to urban dwellers: do submit a return even if it covers only a few common birds. Everything counts.

Note to leaders: Please advise C Y Lam on 732 9361 (0) if you are unable to take up this task.

OVERNIGHTING AT MAI PO

A room booking form is enclosed with this Bulletin. WWF points out that the cost of a bed is little more than the cost of the tunnel charges and petrol needed to get out to Mai Po so if you're interested in a weekend's birding in the NT this really is a bargain!

OCEANS OF BIRDS - talk by Tony Soper

Tony Soper, the well-known British ornithologist, author and television broadcaster, will be passing through Hong Kong briefly while travelling on the SS Canberra as their resident ornithologist. He has kindly agreed to give an illustrated talk entitled 'Oceans of Birds' on Saturday 2 March 1991 in the Volunteer Officers' Mess, 3/F Beaconsfield House, Queen's Road Central, starting at 1800h. Admission will be by ticket only as there are a limited number of seats available and a small fee of \$30 will be charged, the proceeds going to WWF. Please fill in the form at the end of this Bulletin - first come, first served!

LATEST ON MAI PO (Michael Lau)

Earthmoving work

The new channel in the mangroves outside gei-wai 19 has been dredged to bring better quality water from the middle of Inner Deep Bay to its sluice gate. The dredger is now working inside gei-wai 18 to deepen the channels. A bulldozer will soon work on the site to open up the reedbeds in the middle of the pond. The three hides (the HKBWS hide and the two big newly-built ones) at the southern side of the scrape have to be closed temporarily because the access bridges have been dismantled. If the progress is good, the hides will be reopened in late January 1991. We are sorry about the inconvenience caused but it has to be done to make gei-wai 18 attractive to the waders and waterfowl again and to improve the water circulation inside the pond.

Wetlands management training course

The first wetlands management training course was run in early November 1990 in the Peter Scott Field Studies Centre. The ten participants were from the Forestry Ministry, seven different wetland reserves and a local newspaper in China. The course covered both general principles like how to identify the aims of a nature reserve and practical measures like habitat management using Mai Po Marshes as an example. Its structure followed the preparation of a management plan which is very important for the development and management of any reserve. Field visits were also organised to look at the threats to Deep Bay and other interpretation centres.

Despite the lack of experience in running such a training course, the feedback from the participants was very good and we all benefitted from it. Further cooperation between the reserves in China and Hong Kong is much needed and we hope more courses can be offered next year to work towards the goal of wetlands conservation.

Deep Bay Fishermen

If you observe fishermen causing disturbance in Deep Bay please write to the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries at the

Canton Road Government Offices, 393 Canton Road, Kowloon.

It is AFD's responsibility to remove them.

SPRING MIGRATION BIRDWATCHERS' FESTIVAL, EILAT, ISRAEL

The International Birdwatching Center, Eilat is holding a ten-day programme of birdwatching activities and events from 20 to 30 March 1991 - the height of the spring migration. The festival will include:

- * daily birdwatching excursions in the Eilat area
- * daily Bird Log and information service
- * special lectures by visiting and local ornithologists
- * flying with the birds: glider flights along the busiest birds-of-prey flyway in the world
- * a three-day birdwatching trip to the Negev desert
- * bird films, photography exhibitions etc.

Eilat offers the entire range of Palearctic birds and daily lists of over 100 species are easily reached at this time of year.

For full details write to IBCE, PO Box 774, 88106 Eilat, Israel

DESTINATION YUGOSLAVIA?

The Society has received information from a Yugoslavian tour company on ornithological and biological tours in that country. The tours would include visits to closed areas of national parks and special preserves not normally open to tourists. The sites/places of interest about which we have information include Crna Mlaka, Krapje Djol and Lonjsko Polje, Kopacki Rit, Krka National Park, the primeval forests in the Lake Plitvice National Park, Corkova Uvala (Cork Bay), Laudon's Grove and Crna Rijeka. Any member who wishes further information should contact Gavin Cooper on 481 6778 (0).

WHO DUNNIT ?

The following letter, written by Mr B.K. Jha, the Chief Officer on a ship travelling from Hong Kong to Singapore, was passed to the HKBWS by the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society. Members are invited to solve the mystery.

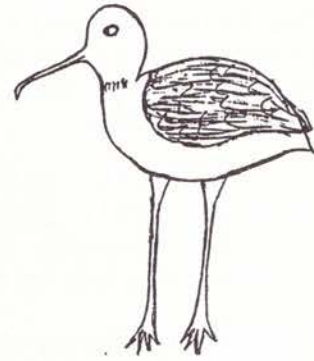
'After departing from Hong Kong on 18th of May 1990 it was observed that 40 to 50 numbers of small birds had settled on ship and enjoying free passage.

Next day morning this number had gone down drastically. Reason was one KILLER bird (unfortunately photograph of killer bird could not be taken however rough sketch is attached). This bird was black in colour and about one foot high. Its legs were unusually long compared to its body. Its beak was pointed, thin and curved at the tip. Bird seemed to be very clever. It used to catch small bird with legs and then kill them with its beak. After killing one bird it used to go to another one without eating or doing anything to the first one. It seemed as if this killer bird had come on hunt and enjoying killing small birds.

Fortunately ship was the best hunting place for killer bird as small bird could not fly anywhere else other than ship's surroundings.

I assembled about 12 killed small birds and took their photographs (photographs are attached).

It was an unusual sight for us. Third day we tried to find out Killer bird throughout ship but in vain. Probably bird flew to some other ship or island for another hunt. Finally about two to three small birds were left on ship which could complete their journey to Singapore.'



KILLER BIRD

[All identifiable dead birds in the photograph are Brown Shrikes, - Ed.]

LOCAL PATCH BIRDING - Hong Kong Island, West Side (Stewart Smith)

The 4th edition of Viney and Phillipps remarks for the first time that 'the key, for the resident birdwatcher, at least, is to find a good local patch and concentrate on that - it is amazing what turns up during the course of a year'. For five years now my exploited local patch has been the west end of the Island, initially Mount Davis and Sandy Bay, but in the last few years also Wah Fu and the reclamation at Telegraph Bay (below Baguio Villa). It has been very fruitful and I am often asked where exactly I go and what the list is, so I thought I would produce these notes. Remember that they are written in June 1990 and the pace of urban change in Hong Kong may render them invalid within a very few years. Also the list is what I have seen over five years, not of what can be seen on an average trip.

A full description of the area could take pages, so varied is the habitat, but broadly the terrain is the coastal strip west (i.e. seaward) of the Pok Fu Lam Road from Mount Davis at the northwest corner of the Island to the, now demolished, hill at the southwest corner, its adjacent area of vegetable gardens and, uphill, the watercourses below and behind Chi Fu Fa Yuen and Pok Fu Lam Gardens. The coast runs generally in a northwest to southeast direction.

Mount Davis is a low hill, 269m high, riddled with gun emplacements and other old military workings and accessed by a couple of metalled roads, one leading from Victoria Road to the summit (and motorable) with a slip road along the south side, and the other from Mount Davis Road to the covered reservoir half-way up on the south side. There is a range of side roads, alleys and tracks, and of habitat from open short grassland on the summit and reservoir top, through the prevalent scrub to some quite well developed woodland, especially in 'Banyan Valley' facing the west. There are good sea views, to the west especially. The hill is full of tai-chi practitioners in the early morning and

8.30 a.m. onwards can be better for birding.

Sandy Bay and, further southeast, Telegraph Bay are both extensive reclamations, the former now set as University playing fields (with a tiny bit of vegetable garden) and the latter, completed only in 1989, holding much promise as a bit of wasteland, with pools following rain, the beginnings of grass and scrub cover and some nearby stagnant but attractive water between the reclamation and the original shore line. It will eventually be built on, but there is great optimism for a couple of years yet. Both bays have waterfronts, with some good sightings and the prospect of more.

At Wah Fu there are three useful areas: first, the former hill at the southwest corner has been demolished and now stands as three flat, stony areas descending towards the sea, each perhaps 70m square; next to this are the old vegetable gardens below the Wah Fu Estate and, through the kennels, a small bit of woodland with a couple of magnificent fig trees, which has thus far delivered less than it promises - through it is a way to the south end of Telegraph Bay. This whole area has been most productive over the last couple of years. Secondly, there is an area of vegetable garden, a foetid stream and the old Dairy Farm buildings above Victoria Road, the last again with magnificent fig trees (though now partly a temporary housing area). Finally, there is the upper Wah Fu stream which is east of the Pok Fu Lam Road from Lily's Flowers and runs uphill to Mount Kellett - this is now less explorable, because more overgrown, than it was a few years back.

Above the Pok Fu Lam Road are High West and the Pok Fu Lam Reservoir and Country Park. I have done little exploration there. There are various other bits of woodland, cemetery and hillside scrub typical of the Island; in particular Bethanie (once a favourite of Mike Webster) looks promising and Bob Ferguson is covering the area from his balcony.

Parking is easy on Mount Davis, at Sandy Bay and (courtesy of Park'n'Shop) at Baguio. At Wah Fu, park at the kennels off Victoria Road (turn off by the electricity substation) or, for upper Wah Fu, up the road by Lily's Flowers. Taxis will go to the summit of Mount Davis and, obviously, anywhere else.

A full list of birds seen would be misleading to both the resident and the visitor, so I shall try to give something of the flavour and the excitement of finding something new on your own patch.

The area holds an excellent selection of 'common' species year round, and I think resident or visitor would be hard pushed to find anything so extensive and varied anywhere else on the Island. On a rough count, and obviously dependent on the time of year, 30 or so of the commoner species can be picked up more or less easily. Noteworthy perhaps among these could be White-cheeked Laughing Thrush, Black-throated Laughing Thrush (Mount Davis in spring), Red-flanked Bluetail, Indian and Plaintive

Cuckoos, several thrushes, principally Grey-backed but also Grey, Pale and occasionally White's, Blackbird and Blue Rock Thrush (all in season), Crested Goshawk, Treepie, Emerald Dove, Common and White-breasted Kingfishers (both of which breed), Black-necked Starling (increasing in numbers), Common Sandpiper, Rubythroat, White-backed Munia, White-breasted Waterhen, Collared Crow, Reef Egret and Little Green Heron. In the winter Woodcock can generally be found in upper Wah Fu, and Grey-headed Flycatchers in lower Wah Fu. I have had Red-tailed Robin at Wah Fu. There is a good wintering population of Rufous Turtle Doves, especially on Mount Davis (count of up to 30). The occasional Sparrowhawk or White-bellied Sea Eagle is seen. The main feral exotics, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Rose-ringed Parakeet, are regular, though not ever-present.

But the joy, as everywhere in Hong Kong, is the passage, principally spring, but with the autumn not a total anticlimax. My own credibility (or otherwise) in Hong Kong birding began with a first for Hong Kong, Shore Lark (Category D) at Mount Davis in May 1985. Since then my own sightings, and especially those of Peter Kennerley and Steve Smith, have convinced Pok Fu Lam birders that the west side of the Island is a true line of passage for birds of a wide range of species, mainly passerines and near-passerines but including raptors, waders and ardeids too. Regular passage observations include, in no particular order, Red Turtle Dove, Yellow-breasted Bunting, Yellow Wagtail in good numbers, Richard's Pipit, Red-throated Pipit, Little Bunting, Cattle Egret, Chinese Pond Heron, Yellow Bittern, Wood Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover, Rufous-necked Stint, Oriental Pratincole, Broad-billed Roller, Large White-rumped Swift, Red-rumped Swallow, Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike, Brown Shrike, Arctic Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Von Schrenck's Reed Warbler, Grey-streaked Flycatcher and Narcissus Flycatcher.

The temptation in a piece such as this is to suggest that the odd observation is something which the casual visitor can reasonably attempt to match. I do not pretend that. But a note of some sightings may give a flavour of what is possible; and I restrict myself to what I have seen, without prompting, though usually on isolated occasions, over the last few years - Watercock, Chinese Starling, Greater Sand Plover, Asiatic Golden Plover, Long-toed Stint, Chestnut Bunting, Japanese Yellow Bunting, Von Schrenck's Little Bittern, Night Heron, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Horsfield's Goshawk, Besra (NOT well), Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Cormorant, Teal (in the lower Wah Fu stream), White-throated Needletail, Red-winged Crested Cuckoo, Wryneck, Blue and White Flycatcher, Forest Wagtail, Black-tailed Hawfinch and Black-naped Oriole. Escapes are always a problem, but I have had accepted to the D list ('may be, may be not') my Shore Lark, Small Niltava and Burmese Shrike (all firsts for Hong Kong). Red-headed Tit in 1988 and Meadow Bunting, Rock Bunting and Black-headed Bunting this year are more doubtful, and even more exotic are Pied Bushchat and Red-crested Cardinal. I was especially pleased that the Pied Wheatear at Wah Fu in September 1989 was accepted to the A List - a vindication, I think, of the real value of the area.

But I'm still envious of the records of other Pok Fu Lam followers, Peter Kennerley and Steve Smith in particular. Their regular records would add, *inter alia*, Pechora Pipit - currently my target now Horsfield's Goshawk has been ticked -, Two-barred Greenish Warbler, Greater-spotted Woodpecker, Black-winged Stilt, Chestnut Bittern, Himalayan Swiftlet (still open) and - possible escape - Green-billed Malkoha. On top of that there is a variety of other records for the district. I have made an effort to go through the Bulletins and Reports to flush out a list of things 'seen by others, but not by me' for the area. It included, and I do not vouch for it, Yellow-throated Bunting, Brambling, Brown Thrush and Imperial Eagle. Records accepted include Slaty-legged Crake. Bob Ferguson (by proxy of Christina) has Black-winged Kite to his credit.

I hope this has generated some enthusiasm - not for Pok Fu Lam, because I want you to keep off my patch - but for the identification and consistent exploitation of your own patch. Shek O and Big Wave Bay must be promising; who will do Deep Water Bay in depth; and what of Tai Tam?

Today my own Pok Fu Lam list for the period, disregarding probable and possible A to D list escapes, is 150A, 3C and 3D with a number of E and several to be decided this year.

[A full list of the species seen by Stewart Smith in Pok Fu Lam is held in the Society library - Ed.]

SELANGOR 1990 INTERNATIONAL BIRD RACE (Paul Leader)

I was fortunate to deputise for the ever-busy David Melville in the Selangor International Bird Race which took place over 12-13 October in Malaysia. The event was organised by the Malaysian Nature Society to raise funds for the Kuala Selangor Nature Park, a coastal wetland reserve managed by the Society.

The reserve itself consists mainly of mangrove but an artificial lake has been created with the aim of providing an alternative high-tide wader roost to the one that was lost to development fairly recently. The old roost was attracting up to 8,000 waders (including Malaysia's only record of Spoon-billed Sandpiper) so the potential is definitely there. The potential educationally is also great.

The Race was a very similar affair to the Hong Kong Race - 24 hours, 8 p.m. to 8 p.m. It finished with an excellent meal and presentation ceremony, and was very well organised.

Eight teams took part; I was a member of the MNS International team and we came a very respectable second with a score of 132, highlights being two hornbills, Black and Rhinoceros. The winning team, led by Denis Yong, saw 152 species.

The Race raised about HK\$40,000 which I think compares well with the first Hong Kong Race, and bodes well, I hope, for the future.

OUTING REPORTS

[These seem to have grown longer and longer and I am forced to remind report writers that space and finances are limited! While in no way wishing to receive reports which lack 'flavour', I would very much appreciate articles which concentrate on birds (and the more interesting ones at that) and which are preferably not more than 275 words long. Please send them in as soon as possible after the outing has taken place - Ed.]

LUK KENG - 8 September 1990 (Nigel Croft)

At the appointed time there were only three of us who were prepared to try and bash through Luk Keng swamp. As it turned out, we saw as much of interest before getting our feet wet as during the bash itself. These were White-winged Black Tern, two Yellow-breasted Buntings perched prominently, and a cuckoo shrike sp. which flew into a tree and argued with a Crested Goshawk. At the time, these sightings were thought to be mere appetisers for what was to come. It is, of course, difficult to do a thorough job at Luk Keng with only three - but we gave it our best. We put up relatively few snipe, two of which were Swinhoe's, and two grasshopper warblers which, after consultation with PRK who found them on the Sunday, were identified as Pallas's. Not a bad effort I suppose. I don't think I'll bash through again without long trousers - the mud sticks like the proverbial to an army blanket!

TAI PO KAU - 22 September 1990 (Mike Chalmers)

The group of less than ten split at the dam and circled the Red/Blue Walks in opposite directions, exchanging news and 'gripping' each other off at the cross-over.

In typical Tai Po Kau fashion there were relatively long monotonous periods punctuated by periods of hectic activity. The best birds were a sparrowhawk sp. which crashed into the trees near the dam defying positive identification, a flock of 14 Black Bazas flying overhead, an obliging pair of Forest Wagtails on the path, a mixture of paradise flycatchers totalling at least two Japanese and four Asian, a quick glance at a 'blue' flycatcher (was this the Hill Blue seen previously?) and, surprisingly, a flock of at least four Red-tailed Minlas (Category D/E).

TAI MEI TUK/LUK KENG - 29 September 1990 (Peter Stevens)

A couple of weeks before this outing I had asked Nigel Croft to cover for me on the Luk Keng paddy-bash. He agreed and, from what I hear, got very wet and muddy for his efforts (I refuse to talk about the Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler!). I therefore agreed to reciprocate on his Tai Mei Tuk outing, despite a social function the night before.

What a surprise when at the appointed hour the glitterati of the

HKBWS (apologies to GCHC, PRK and MLC) turned up and I could assume the role of tour guide, whilst Messrs Viney, Edge and Costin would answer the awkward questions. The fact that they (CAV *et al.*) were on a recce for next year's BBR should not go unmentioned.

To cut a long story short, we all dutifully walked the length of the catchment road and back, knowing that it was the wrong time of the year (please note, Committee) and didn't see any thrushes or bluetails or buntings or any of the other interesting winter birds for which the area is so good at the right time of the year. Also at the right time of the year, the tracks down from the villages are navigable (i.e. burnt out). Not so on this trip. We were, therefore, back at the car park by 9.00-ish, and, spurred on by Mike's reports of the bird about which I refuse to talk having been seen at Luk Keng (or was it the noodles and beer?), off we went.

After a quick scout around the ponds we decided that, even by JSRE's reckoning (come back JEB - all is forgiven) it was too early for the noodles and beer so most of us duly walked up through the fung shui woods at the back of Luk Keng (where even Clive admitted that he had never seen anything), over to Nam Chung and thence back to Luk Keng, where we at last partook of solids and amber. Thereafter things deteriorated rapidly.

Highlight of the day was CAV to PRS: 'You can write an outing report without mentioning any birds, you know.' Really?

MAI PO - 7 October 1990 (Mike Turnbull)

About 35 members enjoyed an extremely pleasant stroll around the reserve on a day which was sunny throughout, without being too hot.

A Pale-legged Leaf Warbler and an Oriental/Common Cuckoo were the most interesting birds seen in the casuarinas but a Brown Shrike of the race *cristatus*, which had been present nearby before the outing officially began, could not be relocated. Single Black-naped Orioles were noted on three or four occasions, mostly in flight across the marsh and all four regular species of kingfisher were seen, an achievement on which we congratulated ourselves until hearing news of JSRE's exciting discovery. The Collared Kingfisher was, however, certainly not on the Boardwalk rail when we walked along a little over an hour after John. Good views of several wader species were obtained though, and members also enjoyed sightings of a Whiskered Tern, a first-winter Purple Heron and at least two Marsh Harriers, with a single Cormorant and a couple of Dusky Warblers in the vanguard of much heavier arrivals of those species.

Thanks are due to Janet Stott for arranging the transport, of which almost all present availed themselves, and to Tony Galsworthy and his colleagues for showing their usual patience with us and answering a variety of questions on ringing.

TSIM BEI TSUI - 21 October 1990 (Richard Stott)

This bilingual outing took place on an unseasonably warm day but provided several interesting species for the thirty or so people who turned up. The road beside the police post provides an excellent vantage point for scanning Deep Bay and a distant Osprey was soon located as well as an obliging White-fronted Kingfisher making a spectacular flash of colour over the fishponds at the foot of the cliff.

When the bus arrived the party split into two, one party using the road along the Fence and the other, led by me, taking the road back towards Lau Fau Shan, latterly cutting across the hinterland to the village of Mong Tseng. As we walked down the road Red-vented Bulbuls were to be seen in their usual haunt, an accipiter, tentatively identified as a Northern Sparrowhawk, passed over and more exotically a Yellow-fronted Canary on overhead power cables was there to indicate that the bird trade in Hong Kong is alive and well.

We turned off the road along a broad track and within a few hundred yards we saw a Wryneck which kindly stayed in view in spite of the passage of some unconcerned villagers. As we approached Mong Tseng there was a pair of late Black Drongos catching flies from the vantage point of an overhead wire.

Then on towards the Fence delineating the closed border area. This fence passes impregnably over the new road bridge leaving a convenient pathway beneath the bridge along the foreshore. Here we met the other half of the party on their way back - they reported having seen Banded Rails. Grey Wagtails and Richard's Pipits were seen on the way. Water birds became more apparent as we approached the Bay along the much-tidied stream which has been widened as part of the Tin Shui Wai development. Yellow-nib Duck and a lone Mallard were seen on the Bay and good views were obtained of Grey-headed Lapwing on one of the landward pools. By mid-afternoon we had made our way back to a crowded car park with a total species count of 56 and collapsed into our respective forms of transport.

TAI LONG WAN - 27 October 1990 (John Edge)

A combination of glorious weather and the Chung Yeung holiday the previous day meant that the Chek Keng area was alive with campers, abuzz with ghetto-blasters and piled high with litter. The majority of those on the outing headed straight for the beach at Ham Tin but three of us dutifully scoured Chek Keng, turning up very little, a first-winter male Black-naped Oriole being the best.

The Tai Long/Ham Tin area was, not surprisingly, more rewarding, and an excellent lunch was taken in Tai Long village. The area is good for raptors and apart from Kestrel (two or three) and the usual White-bellied Sea Eagles, two Bonelli's Eagles, six Grey-faced Buzzard Eagles, one Horsfield's Goshawk and a Crested Goshawk were found. We did not have enough people to adequately

thrash the paddies, but we did turn up three snipe (one each of Fantail, Pintail and Swinhoe's), a Lanceolated Warbler, bang on time and behaving exactly as described, and two or three Yellow Wagtails. With the Crested Mynahs were two or three Silky Starlings and a Pied Mynah, the latter new for the area but of suspect origin.

The total number of species now recorded for the Tolo Harbour/Tai Long Wan area is 201, and 54 were recorded on this outing. I had hoped for more winter visitors following the passage of a cold front a few days earlier (Blackbirds having arrived at Leighton Hill, for instance), but by way of compensation there was still plenty of evidence of the autumn passage. A Grey-rumped Sandpiper was at Chek Keng late in the day, disturbance notwithstanding.

PING YEUNG - 28 October 1990 (Stewart Smith)

As ever an SPS outing to a less popular spot produced only a small, but in fact perfectly formed, party. John Burton had given me advance warning as had Joan and Gordon Griffiths, two welcome newcomers, and it was while John and I were waiting for them that we were joined by a surprise pair of Pickens with one of Charles' partners from London. Seven of us, then, did the usual circuit, though in reverse, over four hours from 7.30 on a fine but not too hot morning.

John was on spanking form, conjuring up at least three new species out of unlikely bits of timber before I had locked the car. The market garden wood and its surrounds held what can only be described as a small flock of Red-breasted Flycatchers, with at least four birds and probably more. There were also good falls of Stonechats and Dusky Warblers, and Blackbirds in good numbers showed an interesting field character in always moving in multiples of seven. (I confess I was surprised at one point when my silent count of 14 was roundly announced by John as '28 - a pie and a half'). There was a single Silky Starling, but still no buntings.

As we approached the rough grassland John decided he had seen a Wryneck; this was clearly correct because none of the rest of us saw it, a concerted bash failed to raise it, and the Griffithses had seen one at Tsim Bei Tsui the week before. This was followed by 'Skylarks', or Richard's 'Skylarks' as they are more properly known.

We were temporarily distracted from an extended Burton rag by a very nice male Daurian Redstart and a Buzzard ('Why is it a Buzzard?' from CMP - something to do with parentage, I decided), before John got us back on track by identifying as his Wryneck each of a succession of eight Red-vented Bulbuls travelling line astern. More raptors emerged, with a pair of Bonelli's Eagles and another of Kestrels, the latter (I am ashamed to say) first identified by me as Crested Goshawks and, on a later sighting, as parakeets. Charles celebrated this by finding a Lesser Coucal and throwing his partner into the ditch.

In the tall stand of trees John picked out a Brown Flycatcher, and we were unaccountably treated to a short recitation of scientific names by Mr Picken. Returning, six of us were absorbing some Brown Prinias and a lathish Great Reed Warbler when John, facing the other way, asked if anyone else could hear a canary. This was treated with appropriate ridicule but proved for once to be fair comment when a Yellow-fronted Canary appeared. On the basis of what he calls 'Police Bird Race Rules' John treated this as conclusive evidence of the existence of the Wryneck.

We rounded off with Red-throated Pipits on the paddy and a drive to Luk Keng for excellent noodles and a beer or two. A most enjoyable morning in good and uniformly incompetent company produced a total of 48 species for the area including three J List and one E.

TAI PO KAU - 3 November 1990 (John Burton)

This was a 'curate's egg' outing: good in parts - the first part and the last part. To begin with only one member turned up to be led; well done Mark Nunns and thank you.

In the event Tai Po Kau was at its most daunting and frustrating, the birding made more difficult by gloomy light conditions, a fair bit of disturbance by a stream of support vehicles using the road to service teams doing a charity walk on the Maclehorse Trail, by monkeys, and last, but not least, by an Orange-bellied Leafbird!

The day's final tally was 28 but did include quality birds such as Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush, a Forest Wagtail and several superb views of sunbirds. I mentioned a leafbird as a disturbance factor. The source of the loud distinctive calls of Yellow-browed Warbler, Great Tit, minivet and Serpent Eagle proved to be a young Orange-bellied Leafbird in fine feather which went through its repertoire responding loudly to our range of 'pishing'. The lesson, once again reinforced, is beware identifications 'on call' in Tai Po Kau!

LAM TSUEN VALLEY - 10 November 1990 (Wendy Young)

It was such wet and windy weather on the night preceding the field trip that I expected very few starters. However the day dawned and eight of us assembled at the Chung Uk Tsuen car park in vaguely sunny weather. We set off through the recently cleared area adjacent to the road and soon came across a Brown Flycatcher of which all eight of us had an excellent close view. As we got to the clearing at the end of the road we had a flock of Blackbirds - at least 20, as well as half a dozen snarling and barking dogs - the bane of my life.

Returning to the rubbish collection point we heard before we saw, a flock of Hair-crested Drongos, 17 in all, which then flew, frightening off the Blackbirds settled in a nearby tree. Overhead the trees were alive with sound. Looking up and about

we were able to get clear close views of Yellow-bellied Tits, the first of the season (and the year for me). We made our way along the back road past more ravaging, howling, barking and snivelling dogs, collecting Green Sandpiper, a couple of kingfishers, White-backed Munias and Crested Goshawk.

The fung shui wood produced a splendid male Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker and in the lower paddy we heard the call of a Rubythroat. On the She Shan side of the road we had a good view of a male Chestnut Bunting. However it was lunchtime and becoming quite warm so we headed back to the car park adding Kestrel and one lone Olive-backed Pipit to the list. The total for the day - 43 species!

LAMMA - 17 November 1990 (John Edge)

Once again I was left cursing the weather, wondering why, during the dry (?) season, bad weather invariably strikes at weekends. This time, the combination of Typhoon Mike and the winter high-pressure system over China produced very strong east northeasterly winds, gusting to gale force, thick cloud and drizzle - absolutely ideal birding conditions. At 0650h I was still the only person with binoculars on the Yung Shue Wan ferry and I was tempted to disembark then and there; eventually I decided to persevere in case the storm had blown in any unusual pelagic species. In the event, there were only Black-headed Gulls; nothing unusual about them at this time of year.

The Yung Shue Wan area was relatively sheltered and a few birds were visible, mostly common stuff - solid blue dot jobs in Clive's book. Between there and Sok Kwu Wan I recorded 28 species, adding Hair-crested Drongo, Black-necked Starling and Indian Grackle (Category E) to the Lamma outing list, which now stands at 68. The only remotely interesting bird was an unidentified brownish warbler in scrub near the power station; silent, with a long, creamy-white eyebrow but a tail too long for Short-tailed Bush Warbler. Radde's, possibly?

More by good luck than good management I reached Sok Kwu Wan just before 11 and caught the ferry back to Central. That part of the island was gale-swept, as the southern circuit would have been, and it seemed futile to carry on. A visit during the spring migration may, however, be worthwhile.

REPORT ON THE BIRDS - 1 September to 30 November (Mike Turnbull)

[These unchecked reports include sightings of possible escapes]

September

Forest Wagtails were reported in good numbers throughout the month with singles at Mai Po on 2nd (PRK,MT) and at Tai Po Kau on 9th (WLY), 25th (RWL) and 30th (KP). There were also two together at the latter site on 23rd (LWK,PRK,MT). There were also frequent sightings of Asian Paradise Flycatchers at Tai Po Kau - three on 2nd (SO'B), at least one on 9th and 13th (WLY), four on 23rd (MLC) and one on 30th (KP) - also more sightings

than usual there of Japanese Paradise Flycatchers - one on 2nd (SO'B), at least one on 9th (WLY), two on 23rd (RWL,WLY) and two again on 25th (RWL). Tricolour Flycatchers appeared in even better numbers with singles at Mai Po on 8th (trapped), at Tai Po Kau on 13th (WLY), Tai Mo Shan on 15th (RWL), Mai Po on 16th, 29th and 30th (PJL), and another at Tai Po Kau also on 30th (RPT,CYL). There were also two together at Tai Po Kau on 23rd and three at Mong Tseng on 28th (RWL). Other flycatchers reported, apart from widespread Brown, were a probable Sooty on 23rd (RPT,CYL), a male Blue and White on 25th (RWL), a Red-breasted on 29th (CYL,VBP), and a Black-naped Monarch and a Grey-streaked Flycatcher on 30th (KP); all these reports came from Tai Po Kau.

There were several other interesting birds there this month, among them a female/immature Tiger Shrike on 9th (WLY) - Hong Kong's third record - and a Chinese Pitta on 23rd (RR) - Hong Kong's fourth, but the first away from Hong Kong Island (both, of course, 'if accepted'). Two Ashy Minivets were there on 15th, an Orange-headed Ground Thrush showed itself to the same fortunate observer who saw the pitta on 23rd, and a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was an exceptionally early sighting on 9th (ML,EL). Colonisers of one form or another continued to be noted in the shape of the now very well established White-bellied Yuhinas and Yellow-cheeked Tits, and of the more recently 'arrived' Velvet-fronted Nuthatches - one on 9th (WLY) and at least two on 29th (CYL,VBP) - and Red-headed Tits - two on 7th (IT,NSJG). There was also a Golden-fronted Leafbird on 2nd (SO'B) and a flock of at least three Red-tailed Minlas on 23rd, (both Category E).

Tai Po Kau was also the scene of several of the reports of Eastern Crowned Warblers this month, with singles noted on 15th (LWK) and 29th (CYL,VBP) while one was also found at Ng Tung Chai on 27th. Pale-legged Leaf Warblers were reported from Tai Po Kau and other widespread locations from around 15th. Flocks of Black Bazas were noted at Tai Po Kau on three occasions - 11 on 16th (JH,PRS,NJGC) and 18th (WLY) and 14 on 23rd (MLC). There were also four at Fanling Golf Course on 9th (DRB), six over Tai Po Road near the Chinese University on 18th and three at Ng Tung Chai on 27th (RWL). The only reports received of Broad-billed Rollers were again from Tai Po Kau with singles on 13th and 18th (WLY).

Trapping inevitably produced several interesting records during such a period of migration activity. A Siberian Blue Robin caught on the Peak early on 4th was one such bird, and others included two Thick-billed Warblers at Mai Po on 29th and 30th (DSM,PJL,AJG) and an immature Von Schrenck's Little Bittern also at Mai Po on 29th. Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers have been scarce in recent years but when two were reported at Luk Keng on 8th (ML) it was perhaps not surprising when two also turned up in the Mai Po nets later the same day (AJG). In fact four were seen at Luk Keng the next day (PRK,MT,PJL) so there had clearly been something of an influx. A male Ruddy Sparrow (currently Category D) was trapped at Mai Po on 8th; there was some reason

to believe a sighting on 15th (PRK,PJL) could involve a different bird, and that was certainly the case with a female in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 30th (RWL).

Other rare or unusual birds were a Hoopoe at King's Park, present in fact since July, a probable Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle near the Chinese University on 18th (RWL), a Lanceolated Warbler at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28th (RWL), at least two Purple-backed Starlings in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 29th and 30th (RWL), an Oriental Cuckoo at Mong Tseng on 28th (RWL) and 20 Asian House Martins at Mai Po on 29th (PJL).

Influxes of Stonechats and Black-capped Kingfishers were noted around 22nd and 29th respectively, and an Imperial Eagle was present near Mai Po from 7th to the end of the month. An immature Serpent Eagle over the scrape at Mai Po on 4th was an unusual record and, as well as small numbers of Red-necked Phalaropes in the Deep Bay area around the middle of the month, there were also about 30 at Nam Chung on 16th (JH,PRS,NJGC).

October

The passage of Pale-legged Leaf Warblers which had begun in September continued into October, probably peaking during the first week. One particularly interesting record involved the recapture at Kadoorie Farm on 6th of an individual which had been caught in the early part of last winter at the same locality (PJL *et al.*) An Eastern Crowned Warbler was found in the Aberdeen Country Park on 4th, together with an Asian Paradise Flycatcher and a Grey-streaked Flycatcher (VBP) while at Tai Po Kau on the same day there was another Asian Paradise Flycatcher and a Forest Wagtail (CYL). A Hill Blue Flycatcher (Category E) was seen on several occasions around this period at the Royal Observatory (CYL). Black-capped Kingfishers and Great Reed Warblers continued to be recorded in large numbers during the first week of the month, sightings of both species on Lamma being considered noteworthy (JP). Rufous Turtle Doves were also new arrivals noted there at this time, and the sight of a juvenile Bonelli's Eagle accompanying two adults near Mount Stenhouse suggested that successful breeding might have taken place in the area. This period also produced an immature male Grey Bushchat at Mai Po on 5th (RWL,JP,NJGC). This species has become very scarce in recent years but the most surprising discoveries during the early part of the month both represented first records for Hong Kong (pending acceptance) - a Pale-footed Bush Warbler *Cettia pallidipes* trapped at Kadoorie Farm on 6th (PJL *et al.*) and a Collared Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris* at Mai Po Boardwalk on 7th (JSRE). A Brown Shrike of the race *cristatus* was also seen at Mai Po that day (MT) and a Broad-billed Roller was observed at Tung Chung, Lantau (KCS).

There was a rare autumn sighting of two Spoon-billed Sandpipers at Tsim Bei Tsui on 10th (WLY), with what could well have been one of those birds being trapped at Mai Po on 17th (DSM *et al.*). The arrival of around ten Grey-headed Lapwings was also noted at the Fence on 10th (WLY).

A Yellow-browed Bunting - not ringed so not the spring individual - was at Mai Po on 11th, and on the same day a Barred Button Quail was captured when it entered one of the buildings there (SC). Both Spotted and Imperial Eagles were present that day, as well as a Pied Harrier and a Hobby (RWL). A flock of 20 small starlings near Lok Ma Chau also on 11th may have been Chestnut-cheeked (NJGC). Another interesting raptor at Mai Po was an immature Brahminy Kite on 13th (RWL). Seven Black Bazas were located at Cheung Uk near Hok Tau also on 13th (JSRE). A Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher, an Emerald Dove, a Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike, a Barred Owlet and a Peregrine were also noted in that area. A Pale-legged Leaf Warbler at Pok Fu Lam Country Park on 14th represented the last report received (JSRE).

Blackbirds started to arrive around the middle of the month, being noted at both Mai Po and Lam Tsuen on 19th (RWL), and from about 23rd at Leighton Road (JSRE), and at the ZBG where there was also a Grey-headed Flycatcher (KCS). Other interesting records in this period included a rare autumn record of Nordmann's Greenshank on 19th, one or two Buzzards, a European Spoonbill, a White Ibis and much greater numbers of Cormorants than previously, with over 500 on 19th (all RWL).

On 20th a Japanese Sparrowhawk, a Forest Wagtail and two free-flying Mandarins were reported at Mai Po (PJL) while the next day no less than 42 Dusky Warblers were trapped there (PJL) indicating a major arrival. A Bull-headed Shrike was seen well and photographed at Tsim Bei Tsui on 24th (MH).

A count of eight Reef Egrets at Repulse Bay on 27th was a high one for a species normally seen individually or in pairs (AGY), while three flocks of Chinese Starlings moving through Mai Po on the same day totalled 43 birds (PJL). An unidentifiable bee-eater was also seen high over Mai Po on 27th (KCS). A Society outing to Tai Long Wan, again on 27th, produced several interesting records: apart from the usual species, raptors included one Horsfield's Goshawk, six Grey-faced Buzzard Eagles and two or three Kestrels, while amongst the waders noted were Grey-rumped Sandpiper, and Fantail, Pintail and Swinhoe's Snipe in the paddies. A Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher and a Lanceolated Warbler were also seen (JSRE *et al.*). All three snipe species were also present at Lok Ma Chau on 27th, with about 100 Fantail and ten Swinhoe's. One of the latter was amongst the birds trapped, which also included an Oriental Pratincole. An immature Pheasant-tailed Jacana was also observed (PJL *et al.*). A Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler was recorded at Jardine's Lookout on 28th (JSRE), and a Brown Shrike was noted on Lamma on 30th (JP).

November

A further report of a Bull-headed Shrike came from Tsim Bei Tsui on 2nd. There were also Yellow-breasted, Chestnut and Grey-headed Buntings there that day, while at the Boardwalk two Brown-headed Gulls were found amongst the growing numbers of Black-headed Gulls and an early Great Crested Grebe was also present

(RWL). A Blyth's Reed Warbler was trapped at Mai Po on 3rd, an experience it must have enjoyed as it turned up again in the nets on two subsequent occasions. Four Rubythroats were also netted that day and throughout the month numbers of that species seemed higher than usual. A Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Black-naped Oriole were also seen at Mai Po on 3rd, as well as two sparrowhawks, one believed to be Northern, the other believed to be Japanese (PJL).

On 4th at least one Grey-headed Flycatcher was in Tai Po Kau, and a Spotted Eagle was at Mai Po (KCS). Numbers of Spotted Eagles predictably increased to two or three in the Mai Po area, but larger numbers than usual of Grey-headed Flycatchers were a feature of the arrival of a large and interesting array of passerines, mainly from about the 10th onwards, in the face of a very marked cold front. From that time to the end of the month up to about 20 Grey-headed Flycatchers were regularly seen or heard on visits to Tai Po Kau.

Saunders' Gulls arrived at Mai Po during the early part of the month; not apparently present on 2nd, ten were seen on 5th (MLC) and there were soon over 30. Twelve Tufted Duck, an Australian Curlew, small numbers of Broad-billed Sandpipers and four Imperial Eagles were observed on the Marsh that day, while the first sighting of a Painted Snipe at Lok Ma Chau for some time was also reported (MLC). A Chestnut Bunting was again seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6th and this species was regularly recorded in small numbers in Tai Po Kau during the middle part of the month (PA, PRK, MT *et al.*) A single was located at Mount Nicholson on 27th (CAV). A male Siberian Thrush was seen in Tai Po Kau on 7th and a Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike was noted regularly there from that date on (WLY).

An exciting ringing session at Mai Po on 10th resulted in the capture of a juvenile Styan's Grasshopper Warbler, an Eye-browed Thrush, a Red-breasted Flycatcher and a rather late Tricolour Flycatcher as well as the first recapture of the Blyth's Reed Warbler. However, an even more exciting day lay in store at Kadoorie Farm the next day. By this time (and probably also because of the location) the effects of the cold front which had swept down across China during the preceding days were even more evident. A Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher, a Daurian Redstart, five Red-tailed Robins, a Japanese Sparrowhawk, a Chestnut-flanked White-eye and a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler were amongst the birds trapped. However they also included Hong Kong's second Pale-footed Bush Warbler *Cettia pallidipes*, a White-tailed Robin *Cinclidium leucorum* (though this bird exhibited damage to its soft parts so its origins are dubious) and, most exciting of all, Hong Kong's first White-throated Rock Thrush *Monticola gularis* - an apparently pristine first-winter individual of a species whose appearance in the Territory has long been hoped for and predicted (PJL *et al.*).

A Robin Flycatcher, 11 Blackbirds and large numbers of other unidentified thrushes and buntings, mainly in flight overhead, were also noted on 10th. Six Siskins were seen at Stanley Mound

the same day (JSRE,CAV). A visit to Tai Po Kau on 12th produced another male Siberian Thrush, as well as at least two Grey Thrushes and a White's Thrush, and about ten Blyth's Leaf Warblers (MT). A Blue and White Flycatcher was also present with another the next day (MT,PA). On 13th Hong Kong's first Rufous-bellied Woodpecker was discovered near the Rhodoleia stand in Tai Po Kau, in which area it remained to the end of the month (RWL *et al.*). Several Yellow-bellied Tits were also recorded in Tai Po Kau from this date (PA *et al.*) and there were reports of large numbers elsewhere, especially in the Lam Tsuen Valley (RWL). Another Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher was located in Tai Po Kau on 13th and Tristram's Buntings were noted there from 14th. On 16th a Ferruginous Flycatcher was seen there, as well as the first of an influx of Sulphur-breasted Warblers (WLY *et al.*). At least three appeared to be present on 18th (PRK,MT,PRS *et al.*) and up to eight were there on 22nd (RWL). A single was observed at Mount Nicholson (CAV). A considerable number of *Phylloscopus* warblers were present in Tai Po Kau and elsewhere at this time, not all of which were easily attributable to any of the commonly occurring species. Robin Flycatchers were regularly reported from the middle of the month, with up to four a day noted in Tai Po Kau.

A Water Pipit and two Red-breasted Mergansers were at Mai Po on 17th (MT,PJL *et al.*) and a Japanese Sparrowhawk stunned itself badly when it crashed into Michael Lau's balcony at the Peter Scott Centre. It was promptly leapt upon by a quick-thinking PJL who duly ringed the injured bird which was then taken into care. A Black Stork was discovered at Mai Po around 19th (ABL), and the following day a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was again located at Tai Po Kau with a Red-flanked Bluetail also being seen (RWL). On 23rd a visit to Chek Lap Kok yielded a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler, a Crested Bunting, three Red-tailed Robins and c50 Chinese Greenfinches (ML) while a trip to Tai Long Wan on 24th produced sightings of a Whimbrel, a Chestnut Bittern and an immature Imperial Eagle, a first for that particular area (JSRE,CAV). A Ruddy Shelduck was seen at Mai Po the same day (per CAV). Also on 24th another flock of Siskins, initially numbering around 35 but later up to 60 birds, was found near Shek Kong (JH,WLY *et al.*). A flock of 30 was also seen at Mai Po the next day (per CAV) and the Black Stork was found again too (RWL *et al.*).

A Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher was noted at Mai Po on 28th, on which date an intriguing report was received of six or maybe ten White Storks seen by workers on the scrape. This early unsubstantiated report hardly lessened the shock the following day when it was confirmed that at least 43 (Oriental) White Storks were indeed present, with rumours of 60 or even 100. In fact there were 86 birds present, surely one of the most remarkable ornithological events in Hong Kong's history (SC,ML *et al.*). Also on 29th what was confidently believed to be another White-throated Rock Thrush was seen well in Tai Po Kau (RWL). The storks (now up to 97 in number) were still present on 30th, when both Grey and Eye-browed Thrushes were noted in Tai Po Kau, as well as Grey-backed (RWL).

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>	<u>VENUE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
16 December Sunday	Gavin Cooper C Y Lam	Tsim Bei Tsui*++ Bilingual	1100-1700
30 December Sunday		CHRISTMAS COUNT	
5 January Saturday	John Edge	Kap Lung Trail Meet: lower Tai Mo Shan car park	0730
20 January Sunday	Mike Chalmers Simba Chan	Mai Po Meet: car park Bilingual	1300
26 January Saturday	Andrew Young	Tai Po Kau Meet: car park	0730
3 February Sunday	Richard Stott C Y Lam	Tsim Bei Tsui* COMPLETE ENCLOSED FORM Bilingual	1000-1600
9 February Saturday	John Burton	Lam Tsuen Valley Meet: Chung Uk Tsuen car park	0730
17 February Sunday	Gavin Cooper	Mai Po Meet: car park Bilingual	0800
23 February Saturday	John Holmes	Luk Keng/Nam Chung Meet: Luk Keng car park	0800
2 March Saturday		OCEANS OF BIRDS - 3/F BEACONSFIELD HOUSE an illustrated talk by Tony Soper	1800
3 March Sunday	John Edge Li Wai Ki	Mai Po*^^ COMPLETE ENCLOSED FORM Bilingual	0900-1500
9 March Saturday	Roger Costin	Tai Po Kau Meet: car park	0730
17 March Sunday	Paul Leader	Mai Po Meet: car park	0630
23 March Saturday	John Edge	Lantau - Fan Lau/Tung Chung>> Meet: phone John for details	

31 March Easter Sunday	Michael Leven	Mai Po Meet: car park	0730
21 April Sunday	Simba Chan Gavin Cooper	Mai Po*^^ COMPLETE ENCLOSED FORM Bilingual	0900-1500

Leaders are requested to find a substitute leader if they are unable to take an outing.

++ If any member wishes to use the coach but did not send off the form provided in the last bulletin please phone the leader to see whether there are still seats available (\$30 coach hire charge).

* A coach will collect members from Kowloon Tong KCR one hour before assembly time and will return them there at the end of the outing. Please return the form at the end of this Bulletin with a cheque for \$30 (\$15 for students) made out to the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society if you wish to use the coach. Please bring drink and packed lunch.

^^ Would members who plan to use their own transport to reach this venue please inform the leader in advance as problems with permits can arise if the Mai Po outings are over-subscribed.

>> It may no longer be possible to hire a bus so this outing may be conducted using public transport. Please contact John in advance.