



THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

P. O. Box 12460, G. P. O., Hong Kong.

BULLETIN NO. 142

DECEMBER 1991

Society News

Subscription Renewals

Please return the enclosed form as soon as possible. Remember to keep your receipt as the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries sometimes requires to see it before issuing annual Mai Po permits.

Annual General Meeting

The 1992 AGM will be held on Tuesday April 7th. Please make a note of the date now.

Bulletin Illustrations

In the haste to produce the bulletin before the Christmas Rush, it has not been possible to include any illustrations. Hopefully the March Bulletin will be fully illustrated!

Editor's Address

Please note that the editor has recently moved. Articles should now be sent to Liz Leven, I-3, Unicorn Gardens, 11 Shouson Hill Road East, Hong Kong, tel

Nikon Binocular and Spotting Scope Special Offer

The enclosed flyer gives details of the two Nikon products being offered to HKBWS members at a special discount. Members wishing to avail themselves of this exclusive offer (remember, Christmas is just next week) should complete the form on the flyer and send it to the Treasurer, Richard Stott, who will place a bulk order. Forms should be returned by 7 January 1992.

Binoculars 8 X 23 List Price HK\$1,080
Special Offer HK\$700

Spotting scope 20x List Price HK\$2,320
Special Offer HK\$1,700

Society Library

Recent additions include: **The Birds of Thailand** Lekagul and Round Kukila - The quarterly journal of the Indonesian Ornithological Society.

Maura Benham, a founder member of HKBWS, has kindly donated a number of old Reports, Checklists, books and slides to the Society. These are much appreciated as requests for back numbers and slides of 'old Hong Kong' are received regularly.

The Chairman and the Committee wish you all a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and a Prosperous Chinese New Year

The next committee meeting will be in early February 1992. If any member wishes a matter raised, please contact one of the committee members listed below

Gavin Cooper

Mike Chalmers

Peter Kennerley

David Melville

Richard Stott

Simba Chan

C Y Lam

Verity Picken

Li Wai-ki

Ian Tyzzer

John Edge

Mike Turnbull

Liz Leven

1991 Report

The 1990 Report turned into a many headed monster which was surprisingly hard to subdue. It was only through great effort that the animal was mastered in time. Obviously far tighter controls are needed for the 1991 Report - snaffles, though hopefully no whips, will have to be used! ALL would be contributors are asked to contact Verity Picken on 849 6985 BEFORE they put finger to keyboard. A set of guidelines has been drawn up and should be followed by everyone - writers of short notes as well as of long papers. The deadline for the first draft of all articles is 31 March 1992.

Editorial assistant required

A sharp-eyed editorial assistant is eagerly sought. The ability to spot typos, wrong type-faces, words or numbers incorrectly aligned etc. is the main qualification. Please contact Verity Picken on 849 6985

Old Reports Auction

The Society has a surplus copy of each of the following Reports: 1959, 1961, 1962, 1969, 1970/71, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975. As we already know of a number of people who are very keen to buy these back numbers to fill up 'holes' in their collection or for their historical value, we now invite members to submit bids (on each individual Report desired) in a closed envelope, marked Auction. These should be submitted to the SEcretary, before 31 January 1992 when all envelopes will be opened. The highest bidder will be contacted.

More recent back numbers are available at the following prices (postage and packing NOT included): 1981/1982 (\$15), 1983 (\$15), 1984/1985 (\$35), 1986 (\$35), 1987 (\$35), 1989 (\$66)

Articles for the Bulletin

It makes it much easier to produce the Bulletin if authors could provide the word processor disk, as well as a printed copy. Any IBM compatible programme is acceptable, but please don't underline or use bold. It comes out as gibberish.!

Records Committee

Submission of Records.

Mike Turnbull has moved to Flat 4, 4 Mansfield Road Hong Kong tel 849 8799. please contact him if you have any interesting sightings in December.

Due to the workload of his part time college course, Mike has had to step down from coordinating the records. The Society is very grateful to Mike for all the work he has put in on this task, and wish him luck with the course. From 1st January 1992, Paul Leader will be handling all record submissions, both written and by telephone, with help from Mike Leven. All record cards for 1991 (if not already submitted to Mike Turnbull) should be sent to Paul at Flat 11B, 4C Kensington Court, Shui Fai Terrace, Stubbs Road, Hong Kong, tel 891 0694 by 31st January 1992 at the very latest. Late arrival of records leads to delays and major problems with the Bird Report, so please be prompt!!!

Species new to Hong Kong

The following records have been accepted by the Records Committee:

Category A

Blunt-winged Warbler January 1990

Northern Skylark February 1991

Ferruginous Duck February 1991

White-browed Crake April 1991

Category D

Pale Blue Flycatcher April 1991

Category Changes

With the intended publication of a new checklist, the Records Committee is currently reviewing various records. Recent decisions have resulted in the following species changing category:

Silver Pheasant D to E

Red-breasted Parakeet D to E

Shore Lark D to E

Pygmy Wren Babbler D to B

Red Avadavat D to E
Pallas's Rosefinch E to D
Emerald Cuckoo A to D
Large Cuckoo Shrike A to D

Christmas Count 29 December 1991

C.Y. Lam

The Christmas count will take place on **Sunday 29 December 1991**. On that day, members are invited to note down the number of birds they see making use of the checklist report form enclosed with this Bulletin. Please mail the completed form to **C.Y. Lam c/o Royal Observatory, 134A Nathan Road, Kowloon, preferably before 15 January 1992**. Send in your guess of the total number of species seen on the that day by all birders. It may bring you a prize - a copy of the 'Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong'.

The following members will cover the areas indicated against their names. Other members are welcome to join them.

Area Leaders

Mai Po

Simba Chan Fox Wong

Tsim Bei Tsui/Mong Tseng

C.Y. Lam Chan Ming Ming

Castle Peak, incl. Nim Wan

Mike Chalmers

Pak Nai Northern N.T., incl. San Tin

Peter Stevens

Sek Kong, Tai Mo Shan

Volunteers Needed

Shing Mun

Ng Wing Kong

Lam Tsuen Valley

Charles and Verity Picken

Northeast N.T., incl. Luk Keng, Plover Cove

Tai Po Kau

Andrew and Wendy Young

Tai Long, incl. Tolo Harbour

Li Wai Ki

Ho Chung, Sai Kung, Ma On Shan

Richard and Janet Stott

Kowloon

Yu Yat Tung

Stonecutters Island

Jim Ades

Hong Kong Island

Ian Tyzzer

Lamma Island

Jeremy Pearse

Cheung Chau

Martin Williams

Lantau Island

Roger Costin

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

Note to leaders: please advise C.Y. Lam if you are not able to do it on 29 December.

Trip to Mindanau, Philippines.

The dates for this trip are now confirmed: **31st January to 7th February 1992**. Contact Gavin Cooper 765 2896 (O) or 488 2870 (H) if you are interested.

Big Bird Race 1992

The Bird Race will be held on **10/11th April 1992**. Note the date down in your diaries now!

Hong Kong Ecological Map

WWF Hong Kong is working on the production of an Ecological Map and database for the Territory. Data is being collected in various ways, and one method is input from

local people on sites they are interested in. Enclosed with this Bulletin is an explanatory letter from WWF HK, and notes on registering sites of biological sites. If you know of any sites deserving of protection, please pass the information to WWF HK.

Records for Lantau

Because there is no Ecological Database at the moment, WWF HK have issued a plea for any information on birds (or anything else!) on Lantau. With the airport development, there is a pressing need for data on potentially threatened habitats. Any information you have would be useful. Contact David Melville (526 1011 (O)) if you can help.

Yencheng Nature Reserve

Yencheng Nature Reserve is becoming known as the first site in the world where **Saunders' Gull** is known to breed. However, it is also the main wintering site for **Red-crowned Crane** in China. Last year the Vice Director of the reserve, Mr. Liu Xi-ping, visited Hong Kong as a member of a group of mainland Chinese wetland managers visiting Mai Po. Since then he has been trying to encourage ties with foreign conservation bodies in order to further research in Yencheng.

Mr Liu has issued an invitation to Hong Kong ornithologists to visit the reserve. He says that food and accommodation (including electricity and hot baths!) will be less expensive than Poyang Lake and would be 'negotiable'. From Shanghai the Reserve is an overnight bus journey, or there are weekly flights to Yenching City with an hour and a half car journey. There are English speaking guides at the Reserve. If anyone is interested, write to **Mr Liu Xi-ping, Yenching Nature Reserve Management Centre, Xin Yangguang, Yencheng, Jiangsu Province, China**, telling him when and for how long you wish to stay in the reserve, and contact phone and fax numbers.

Young Ornithologists' Club

The YOC is the junior membership of the British Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and is organising an **International Garden Bird Survey** (the fourteenth) on 25th January 1992. The survey is aimed at

young birdwatchers and takes one hour. The YOC also runs an **International Penfriend Project**. If your children are interested Liz Leven (554 7424) has the details.

A Pictorial Guide to the Wild Birds of Taiwan

This is a publication modelled after the book "A Field Guide to the Birds of Japan". It is produced by the joint efforts of the Taiwan Society of Wild Bird Information and the Wild Bird Society of Japan. The copy I have acquired is in Chinese, published in April 1991. It is understood that the English version will be available through the Wild Bird Society of Japan later.

The book takes the form of a field guide and a total of 458 species are described. The birds are illustrated opposite their respective descriptions and distribution maps. The drawings are nicely done and the printing is of high quality. The distribution maps, especially those of endemic species and subspecies, are very informative, reflecting the cumulative experience of Taiwanese birders over the years. Although this is a book about Taiwan birds, it should also be useful for birding in the southern and eastern parts of China which share many species, especially passerines, with Taiwan.

The names of birds in Chinese and English are given together with the scientific names. A tri-lingual checklist is given at the back of the book.

For a long time, the Chinese literature on birds suffered from the absence of good illustrations in colour. This gap is now filled and the book should prove to be a great help to Chinese-speaking birders in Hong Kong. However, readers should be aware that the Chinese names in the book sometimes differ from those in use in mainland China.

The book has a total of 274 pages. The price in Taiwan is NT\$850. The copy I obtained in Tokyo was sold at 4,900 yens. If there is sufficient interest expressed, I shall try to arrange a bulk purchase with the publisher in Taiwan. Please call me at 732 9361.

C.Y.Lam

OVERSEAS BIRDING

Bao Ba Shan Revisited 14-18 June 1991

(Clive Viney)

This was very much a private social visit with a few friends to 'experience' rural China.

14 June. After a relatively painless passage through Lo Wu formalities, we took the direct soft class train to Shaoguan. An enjoyable journey in air-conditioned comfort with excellent scenery north of Guangzhou and almost enough birds on the wires to keep us on our toes. Shaoguan City was reached in about six hours and in the three years since my last visit had undergone considerable expansion. Apart from several new, but seedy-looking hotels, the town now boasted a huge night market, many touts and even a karaoke bar! The overland journey to Ru Yang took two hours including the almost mandatory flat tyre. Our minder from Guangzhou was a surly, bespectacled youth who seemed to typify modern, urban China, but he was accompanied by an 'old school representative', the baffling Assistant Professor Liao Wei-ping, who had joined us from Hainan on the orders of some higher authority. At Ru Yang nothing seemed to have changed, except the arrival of three sit down WCs (without seats) and the fact that we now fetched our own buckets of hot water. Still very damp and musty rooms but good enough.

15 June. Arose at the crack of dawn in soggy surroundings to take a lorry to the 'top of the mountain' (Shi Keng Kong 1922m.). Predictably thick, cold mist enveloped the summit and the birds were tricky to see and identify. We descended through the mist into Hunan and the border hamlet of 'Sod Off' (actual name unknown), and recorded most of the known montane birds with no surprises. Birds seemed thin on the ground but there was no obvious habitat deterioration. Below 'Sod Off' the sun came out and the going got harder. Buckets of tea were drunk at the reserve entrance and, although tired, we agreed it had been great fun and all in all quite good for birds, especially for the first-timers in the party.

16 June. Everyone was delighted to see the primary forest still very much intact at 'Shang Ri La' (Shek Hung Mei), and only the presence of cartridge cases by the road caused concern. Professor Liao attributed these to foreigners, since villagers use muzzle-loading guns! Nevertheless the forest looked magnificent. On the way up in the lorry birds were everywhere, but were difficult to find once on foot. An extraordinary white and black bird hawking insects from atop a distant tree was watched for an hour (without a telescope) and in the end was eagerly and confidently identified as a Pied Falconet; a bird Ben King regards as extinct! Most of us went up the valley again for a second attempt at Silver Orioles and although recorded, were not seen well. In the afternoon I took the tourist element to the fabulous gorge at White Horse Pits and some excellent swimming. I noted a few raptors, but again birds were hard to come by. The best, however, was saved for last - nesting Crow-billed drongos with a quietly sitting Mountain Scops Owl just below.

17 June. Awoke to crashing thunder and abandoned my plans to do the seven hour primitive walk - a mistake as it turned out. Instead I decided to escape the group and was dropped at the head of 'Shang Ri La' whilst the rest (those that got up) headed up the mountain again - my second mistake. I saw even fewer birds in awful conditions, but took some good 'misty mountain' photos and converted (to everyone's dismay) the Pied Falconet to an aberrantly plumaged Broad-billed Roller! Meanwhile the mountain group had 'crippling views' for 15 minutes of a male Cabot's Tragopan casually feeding on leaves by the roadside! It was splendid news they survive in secondary forest, but I would love to have seen it!

18 June. Roger awoke me very early for a last minute visit to the 'paddies' when all I needed was Panadol and sleep. It was worth it, a memorable hours birding in a splendid setting and some of the prettiest girls I'd seen in China. I then realised that by not doing the 'primitive walk' I'd missed a great deal, not only birds but a return to rural China.

We managed to record 101 bird species in

the Ru Yang/Ba Bao Shan area and an additional 10 species only en route. Two or three snakes were seen but only Wolf Snake was satisfactorily identified. Blue-tailed and other skinks were noted, as were delightful Banded Squirrels.

I have updated my paper on recent ornithological findings at Ba Bao Shan, which may appear in the Annual Report, but is available in the library, for those wishing to visit this splendid area.

Cameron Highlands, Malaysia 22 August - 6 September 1991

(Scott Shaum)

Although this was strictly classified as a family holiday, we had some wonderful birding in the Highlands. The Cameron Highlands are approximately 5500' above sea level and heavily forested, thus all birds seen were of upland species. King's 'Birds of South East Asia' was used though it proved difficult on some birds. I think the new 'Birds of Thailand' would be very helpful.

We quickly got on to the 'local' birds which included Silver-eared Mesia, White-bellied Swiftlet, Black-throated Sunbird, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Barred Cuckoo-Dove and the striking Fire-tufted Barbet. This bird's call was easily identifiable as it sounds very much like a cicada's buzz, and the red tuft of feathers at the base of the bill is easily seen at closer distances.

As in other forest birding, the daily lists were greatly enhanced by the roving mixed flocks. The core of these flocks were made up of Mountain Fulvetta, Golden Babbler, Black-eared Shrike-babbler, Mountain Leaf-Warbler, White-throated Fantail and Yellow-breasted Warbler (very similar to the Chestnut-capped). On our jungle walks (complete with our two small boys in tow) we also saw the tame Large Niltava, White-browed Shrike-babbler, Chestnut-capped and Chestnut-crowned Laughing Thrushes, and one striking sighting of the Pigmy Blue Flycatcher tagging along with these flocks.

In the skies above we daily heard the call of the Crested Serpent Eagle and saw on

several occasions the Blyth's Hawk-eagle, and on the last two days we had great views of the Rufous-bellied Eagle.

Some of the 'right place at the right time' birds were the large, dark-eyed Brown Wood Owl which landed in a tree some thirty feet away for me to see clearly, Green Magpie, Green-billed Malkoha, Golden-throated Barbet, Grey-headed and Bay Woodpeckers, Black and Crimson Oriole and Streaked Spiderhunter, with its big orange feet and long curved bill

The area is full of very well marked jungle trails, all of which are a short walking distance or taxi ride from local hotels. With the cool mountain air (15-22C) and easy accessibility to the birds this is great summer option. I obtained a complete list of the birds of the Tegra Nengara National Forest, published by the Malaysian Nature Society (1982) if anyone is interested.

Sabah November 1991

(Verity Picken)

A week spent in Sabah, at Kota Kinabalu, Mount Kinabalu and Poring Hot Springs, produced many of the anticipated species and two unexpected species. These were White's Thrush on Pulau Gaya - apparently only the second record for Borneo - and four Black-winged Stilts on the lagoon at Kota Kinabalu - also a rare vagrant.

A word of warning to anyone planning a trip to Sabah: check the school holidays first. Poring Hot Springs was swarming with people - blaring pop music all day - as well as crowds in the springs area. The birds appeared, very sensibly, to have left the area for more remote parts of the forest: even at dawn there were few birds to be seen or heard and only one bird wave was encountered during our time there. Very different from John Edge's visit last year (see June 1991 Bulletin).

Although the hordes climbing the mountain created a horrendous traffic jam, the trails around the Headquarters area remained empty so some excellent birding, which included nine endemics, was enjoyed there.

OUTING REPORTS

Tai Po Kau 14 September 1991

(John Burton)

With guest appearances from Richard Lewthwaite and Peter Stevens, only 4 members were present for the whole of the field trip to Tai Po Kau. The weather was fine, warm and still. Initially, the trees near the car park were very lively - in fact it took 45 minutes to get up the road. Yellow-cheeked Tits and White-bellied Yuhina were the star attractions of a good mixed flock.

This very auspicious start was followed by more good quality sightings with Tricolour Flycatchers being seen well in a mixed flock. A quick movement across the road was "felt" to be an Emerald Dove (PRS), the rest of the party being content with its spotted relative, bulbuls and a Chinese Pond Heron in the orchard. Chestnut Bulbuls were in evidence and were heard along all parts of the Red Walk, perhaps due to the fact that the population of Great Barbets was strangely silent.

In the vicinity of the picnic ground monkeys were a noisy nuisance which prompted the party to step out. At the point where the Red Walk joins the Blue we came upon a memorable mixed flock which contained both Blue and White and Asian Paradise Flycatchers, two yuhinas and Yellow-cheeked Tit again, plus Grey-throated Minivets. The same flock had at least three Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, one of which appeared to be a first year fledgling. The commonest bird in the forest, with many young birds noted, was the omnipresent Great Tit.

The star of the day was a spectacular bird, not seen by all but tentatively identified as a Chinese Pitta. Full field notes will be submitted by Scott Shawm and Nick Townsend.

The full list for the day totalled 29 species with some good quality birds.

Luk Keng 15 September 1991

(Michael Leven)

Five of us thrashed the swamp and flushed 55 Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers, a juvenile Watercock, two Yellow Bitterns and all three regular species of snipe. In the surrounding area we saw a Common or Oriental Cuckoo, an adult Bonelli's Eagle, a Black-naped Oriole and a Brown Shrike as well as hearing two Pale-legged Leaf Warblers.

Luk Keng is the largest remaining freshwater marsh in Hong Kong. There is currently a proposal to turn it into a golf course.

Tai Long Wan 12 October 1991

(Verity Picken)

Tai Long Wan is always worth the effort but effort is certainly required. The Chek Keng area initially produced so little that we thought the day's tally might be close to an all time low but by the end of the day we were one off last autumn's total of 54. Non-residents included two Yellow-breasted Buntings, one Brown and two Red-breasted Flycatchers and several Dusky Warblers. Three people took the ridge route finding c10 Richard's Pipits at the top and a Two-barred Greenish Warbler on approaching the lunch-stop village. Raptors (which, other than Black Kites, only appeared after mid-afternoon) included adult and juvenile White-bellied Sea Eagles, the latter being dive bombed by a Kestrel, an Osprey and a small accipiter. Turn-out for the swamp bash was surprisingly good, perhaps because it looked (but wasn't) fairly dry. Pintail and Swinhoe's Snipe, c5 Fantail Warblers and a Yellow Bittern were flushed but far more interesting was the Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler which we coralled and had good views of down to 15 feet. There were possibly two more of the same species seen. The ferry ride over had produced five Red-necked Phalaropes and two Reef Egrets but no terns.

Ping Yeung 3 November 1991

(Stewart Smith)

Warm if mainly overcast conditions made me the butt, later in the morning, of some ridicule as the carrier of a precautionary woolly, but 10 of us had a most enjoyable amble round, more or less, the usual circuit. It was particularly good that John Burton, Peter and Peggy Stevens and Bob Ferguson had cast off their various afflictions of the day before as it was they, to the exclusion of the leader, who found the birds.

Before the official start we had a Sparrowhawk (*nisus*) on the list, and only the mandatory injection of coffee prevented Peter fully identifying a small pigeon-like object as a Wryneck - the rest of us made no real attempt. Thereafter, the wood held a Brown Flycatcher and a fine adult Black-naped Oriole. Peter then lighted on a Barred Owlet under the canopy and we were able to 'scope it to good effect.

The middle sequence was "attain high ground and look around" and this brought much small stuff including some excellent Black-tailed Hawfinches, an almost certain Red Turtle Dove (which has gone on the list) and, most unusually, a flushed Savannah Nightjar - a female showing no white. Has any other outing ever achieved that? Another sparrowhawk (sp) looked smaller to me and PRS but larger to JB. Blackbirds had been seen from time to time and the flock seemed to be about 60, although we added another seven or eight later.

A Kestrel, a good range of pipits and a small party of Silky Starlings took us to the river and to a purple patch at the "dam" beyond the paddy, where John put up a Japanese Quail and Bob found a couple of Chestnut Buntings. We had been on the alert for Daurian Redstart, and a fine male emerged on the culvert wall and demonstrated himself to good advantage.

A Blue Rock Thrush took us back to base and then (who guessed) to Luk Keng for for noodles etc. En route Bob picked up a large (150+) flock of duck (probably Teal), with a single Wigeon - unusually, on Starling Inlet; also a Coot. A post lunch wander through the

water meadow brought more Japanese Quail and a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler for some, and small numbers of Grey-headed Buntings.

An excellent day, with 52 species at Ping Yeung.

Tai Po Kau 9 November 1991

(John Edge)

Weather: mainly overcast, humid, wind E3. I had been looking forward to the cooler, clear weather which had been forecast.

Eight people squeezed 34 species out of the Red Walk, of which the more interesting ones were Ashy Drongo, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Chestnut-flanked White-eye (picked out of a flock of about 1000 White-eyes by Wendy Young), Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Red-tailed Robin, Blyth's Leaf Warbler, Grey-headed Flycatcher, Short-tailed Bush Warbler and three or four Chestnut Buntings. Other regular species must have been higher up; the general impression was that it was a quiet morning. Another six species, including several Blackbirds, were seen east of Tai Po Road.

REPORT ON THE BIRDS

(These unchecked reports include sightings of possible escapes)

1 September to 30 November

(Mike Turnbull)

September

A Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle was seen over Aberdeen Country Park on 2nd (DNB). The first report of a Forest Wagtail involved one at Ho Chung on 5th and 6th. An Asian Paradise Flycatcher at Chuk Yeung, also on 6th, was, rather unusually, seen flycatching from long grass. A Yellow-breasted Bunting was another migrant at Ho Chung on 7th (MH) and the first Stonechat of the autumn was noted at Luk Keng that day (RWL). There was also a Black-winged Stilt at the unusual location of Hebe Haven (ARL). At Lok Ma Chau on 8th a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler

was seen, with at least one Swinhoe's Snipe also present (RWL,JNP). Also that day an Oriental Pratincole and a Wryneck were seen at Mai Po.

A Tricolour Flycatcher was seen at Tai Po Kau on 11th (MH). On 14th a pitta, believed to be Chinese, showed itself to at least one observer during a Society outing there (SES). There were also three Tricolour Flycatchers there that day, as well as two Asian Paradise Flycatchers, one Blue and White Flycatcher and one Pale-legged Leaf Warbler, and Arctic Warbler passage seemed to be at its heaviest from this time and for the following fortnight. Also on 14th, a Hoopoe was seen at Stubbs Road (IT), and six Common Terns were seen in Mirs Bay, with two there the next day, as well as twenty-six Red-necked Phalaropes (ARL).

On 15th a very early Red-flanked Bluetail was seen at Tai Po Kau (RWL). More surprising still, however, was the discovery of an estimated 55 Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers at Luk Keng swamp. A juvenile Watercock and all three regularly occurring species of snipe were also present, with a Brown Shrike and a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler nearby (MRL *et al*). Also on 15th a Sooty Flycatcher was reported from Aberdeen Country Park (JEB), and reports of a Northern Sparrowhawk and a Lanceolated Warbler were received from Shek Kong (NSG). At least two Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers were still present at Luk Keng on 16th (MH), when a pitta was again seen at the same location within Tai Po Kau (RWL). Also there that day were an Asian Paradise Flycatcher and an Eastern Crowned Warbler (NSG), while a flock of 12 Black Bazas were seen over Sha Tau Kok Road (MH). Meanwhile at Mai Po a Black Bittern and a White-winged Black Tern were seen (ARL). On 19th one Forest Wagtail was at Mai Po (JH) and another two were in Lam Tsuen Valley (RWL).

On 20th 97 Bar-tailed Godwits, two Marsh Harriers, several Dusky Warblers, a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler and a Ferruginous Flycatcher were seen at Mai Po. There were also two Pale-legged Leaf Warblers at Tai Po Kau that day, as well as a Forest Wagtail (RWL,SES). The following day, Temminck's,

Long-toed and Red-necked Stints were all present at Tin Shui Wai in small numbers and a *Locustella* sp. was seen nearby (RWL,JNP). Also on 21st a Sooty Flycatcher and at least two Asian Paradise Flycatchers were seen at Tai Po Kau, with a Forest Wagtail again being noted (IT *et al*), while at Mai Po the same day birds trapped included another Forest Wagtail, a Brown Shrike, a Tricolour Flycatcher, two Wrynecks, two Dusky Warblers, several Arctic Warblers and about 70 Great Reed Warblers. A Hobby, an Imperial Eagle, eight Swinhoe's Snipe, an Oriental Cuckoo, a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler and 15 Chinese Starlings were also seen at Mai Po (PJL,CAV *et al*), and two Broad-billed Rollers were noted at Ho Chung (MH).

Twelve Pale-legged Leaf Warblers, three Eastern Crowned Warblers and three Yellow-browed Warblers were noted at Tai Po Kau on 22nd, as well as at least seven Arctic Warblers. Also noted were two Tricolour Flycatchers, a small *Accipiter* sp. and at least five Velvet-fronted Nuthatches (MRL,PJL). The same day another pitta, again believed to be Chinese Pitta, was seen at Shing Mun (AW). A foray into Luk Keng swamp on 23rd produced an adult male and a female/immature Von Schrenck's Little Bittern, one Swinhoe's Snipe and one Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, plus another more problematical *Locustella* sp., with four Pale-legged Leaf Warblers, two Broad-billed Rollers and a Wryneck nearby (MRL,PJL).

A juvenile Slaty-legged Crake, unfortunately dead, was none the less an interesting find at Parkview, Tai Tam Country Park on 24th (IT). Also reported that day, and for the first time in Hong Kong, was a Blue-winged Leafbird *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*, seen in the company of two Black-winged Cuckoo Shrikes and a Black-naped Oriole at Mount Davis, though the range of this species makes it an unlikely candidate to occur in a wild state (RWL). Another first for Hong Kong, this one a much more likely candidate for natural occurrence, was reported the next day when two separate groups of four and six Blue-throated Bee-eaters *Merops viridis* were

seen in rapid succession in the casuarinas at Mai Po. The birds appeared to pass through quickly but were seen well and photographed (JH). Also on 25th a Forest Wagtail was again seen in Tai Po Kau (ARL).

At Tai Po Kau on 27th four Pale-legged Leaf Warblers and a Sooty Flycatcher were present (RWL,JNP), with another of the latter at Tai Long Wan the next day, when at least 50 Red-necked Phalaropes, one Chestnut Bittern, one von Schrenck's Little Bittern and one Swinhoe's Snipe were also seen (RWL). From Chek Lap Kok came reports of an immature male Siberian Blue Robin (MDW) and five nightjars, not specifically identified (ML), both on 30th, when another Hoopoe was seen, this time at the Chinese University (FW). Up to three Blue Rock Thrushes noted in the Tai Mei Tuk area around this time included one red-bellied bird (JNP).

October

A visit to Lantau on 1st produced several interesting finds, in the form of a Japanese Paradise Flycatcher at Ngong Ping, a Plain Flowerpecker in song on the mountainside above Tung Chung and a Pechora Pipit in the paddy there, with a Banded Rail also present (MDW). The next day a Besra was seen well at Mount Nicholson (CAV). On 4th flocks of 14 Black Bazas and 11 Grey-faced Buzzard Eagles were noted at Wu Kau Tang and Hebe Haven respectively, with a further four Black Bazas at the latter location (MH,ARL). Also a Baillon's Crake was seen at Mai Po (MH), while at the same location the following day four Blue-tailed Bee-eaters were present (PRK,PJL), with a Northern Sparrowhawk also reported (CAV,ARL). Pale-legged Leaf Warblers continued to be reported at this time from widespread locations, including Sai Kung Country Park, where Japanese Paradise Flycatchers were seen at separate locations on 8th and 10th (MH).

On 11th a Crested Honey Buzzard was seen at Tsim Bei Tsui, with a Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike and three Red-rumped Swallows also present (MH). At the Chinese University the same day a Grey-headed Lapwing was observed in flight over Chung Chi Lake and later at rest on one of the playing fields (FW). On 12th an exciting ringing session at Mai Po included

the capture of a Two-barred Greenish Warbler. Another local rarity trapped was a Thick-billed Warbler, and a further individual of this species was trapped at Kadoorie the same day. Other birds to turn up in the nets at Mai Po were single immature Japanese Sparrowhawks of each sex and a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler, as well as Arctic, Dusky and Great Reed Warblers, the latter two in considerable numbers, while at Kadoorie a Blue and White Flycatcher, Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher and a Wryneck were also netted (PJL *et al*). Also on 12th another Two-barred Greenish Warbler was confidently identified in the field at Tai Long Wan and up to three Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers were seen in the paddies there. Other birds of interest noted on a particularly fruitful Society outing were five Red-necked Phalaropes and two Red-breasted Flycatchers (VBP *et al*). On 12th and 13th two Grey-streaked Flycatchers were seen at Mount Nicholson (CAV) and on 15th two Hobbies were seen at Marina Cove, Sai Kung (MH), with another at Tai Mei Tuk (JNP).

A Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler was seen in the paddy at Tai Long Wan on 16th, as well as a Chestnut Bittern. A rather early Rubythroat were also noted in the area and three Hobbies were seen at Luk Keng (CAV,ARL). The same day, during a break in the heavy rain which occurred around this time, an unprecedented six Lanceolated Warblers were seen at Luk Keng (MRL *et al*). On 19th a Crested Kingfisher was seen at Shing Mun Reservoir, with one, or possibly two Yellow-legged Button Quails nearby (JHCG), while at Mai Po a Long-billed Dowitcher was seen and another Thick-billed Warbler was trapped, with at least one other seen. A Chestnut Bittern was also reported (CAV,PRK *et al*). On Lamma a Brown Shrike, a Broad-billed Roller and a Red-breasted Flycatcher were seen (VBP). The following day at Mount Nicholson two Two-barred Greenish Warblers were present (CAV). The Long-billed Dowitcher was seen again at Mai Po on 22nd, when a Woodcock was also present (VBP).

On 21st a Verditer Flycatcher was seen at Wong Chuk Yeung, Sai Kung (MH). On 25th a Common Tern was noted at Mai Po (ARL). On 26th another Thick-billed Warbler was

trapped at Kadoorie. Twenty one Chestnut Buntings were also present, and a Japanese Sparrowhawk was noted (PJL *et al*). The following day at Mai Po a first-winter Styan's Grasshopper Warbler was trapped. A large influx of Dusky Warblers and Black-faced Buntings was also noted, and several Chestnut Buntings and an Asian Paradise Flycatcher were also present. At the Boardwalk a Saunders' Gull, a Caspian Tern, 57 Red Knot and 40 Great Knot were seen, and at least 12 Purple Herons were seen around the Reserve (PRK *et al*).

Also on 26th an Ashy Drongo was seen at Aberdeen Country Park, where two Velvet-fronted Nuthatches were again present (VBP), while at Shing Mun a Hobby and a Woodcock were seen (PA). Blackbirds were first reported around this time, with three at Hebe Haven on 21st and four at Ho Chung on 26th (MH). By 29th up to 29 were present at the former location (ARL).

November

A Bull-headed Shrike was seen at Ho Chung on 1st (MH), when a Red-tailed Robin was noted at Aberdeen Country Park (MT). The following day at Mai Po a Lanceolated Warbler was trapped for the first time in Hong Kong. A further two were seen, and other interesting records included 41 Sand Martins, two Northern Skylarks, four Chestnut Buntings, a Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Japanese Sparrowhawk. In addition, 80 Rufous Turtle Doves, 60 Masked Buntings and 20 Olive-backed Pipits were present, and the first Silky Starlings and Black-tailed Hawfinches were reported (PJL, PRK *et al*). Three Red-headed Tits and a Tufted Duck were also seen (MJ). A Verditer Flycatcher and a Daurian Redstart were noted at Ho Chung (MH), with a Two-barred Greenish Warbler being reported from Tai Po Kau (WLY). At Kadoorie on 3rd a Radde's Warbler and a Yellow-legged Button Quail were trapped. Other interesting birds reported there that day were a Lanceolated Warbler, a Common Rosefinch, a Robin Flycatcher, a Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher, an Eye-browed Thrush, a Grey Thrush, a Red-flanked Bluetail, a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler and 15 Chestnut Buntings (PJL *et al*). The

same day, on the reclamation near Mai Po, two Japanese Reed Buntings *Emberiza yessoensis* were seen, potentially a first record for Hong Kong (MRL), and a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler was reported from Tsim Bei Tsui (WLY). The following day a search of the reclamation area near Mai Po produced five Grey-headed Buntings (RWL). Three Scaup were seen from the Boardwalk at Mai Po on 4th (MH).

A Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was seen at Tai Po Kau on 5th (WLY). On 9th another Two-barred Greenish Warbler was trapped at Mai Po. A Japanese Sparrowhawk and 20 Chestnut Buntings were also seen and on this occasion the nearby reclamation area held six Oriental Skylarks and two Lanceolated Warblers, with two Grey-headed Buntings again present. A Chestnut-flanked White-eye was present at Tai Po Kau the same day, as well as a Red-tailed Robin, at least two of which were subsequently regularly recorded there (WLY *et al*). Another interesting ringing session on 10th at Kadoorie produced further records of several of the species recorded there on 3rd, including another Common Rosefinch, and there were also reports of a Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle, a Daurian Redstart, a Wryneck and four Red-tailed Robins (PJL, PRK *et al*). Also on 10th a Red-headed Tit was seen in Tai Po Kau (MMC). On the same day a Yellow-browed Bunting was found amongst a mixed bunting flock at Mai Po, which also contained several Chestnut Buntings (RPT). An immature male Pied Bushchat was reported by several observers from Lok Ma Chau around this time (RWL *et al*). Another Radde's Warbler was seen near Sha Lo Tung on 12th (RWL), while the same day another Two-barred Greenish Warbler was seen, this time in the Magazine Gap area (MT). The highlight of another ringing session at Kadoorie on 13th was an Oriental Scops Owl (grey phase) which was trapped. A male Japanese Sparrowhawk and yet another Common Rosefinch were amongst the other birds captured, which once again included small numbers of Eye-browed Thrushes, Robin Flycatchers and Red-tailed Robins (PJL). A Lapwing was seen at Mai Po on 14th (PN). On 16th two potential firsts for Hong Kong were claimed in the form of a Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinensis* at

Tai Po Kau village (SPS) and a Singing Bushlark *Mirafra javanica* at Ho Chung (CAV). Both are apparently Guangdong breeders, albeit perhaps rather scarce ones, and were reported to be in good condition. The Babbler eluded all subsequent searchers, but the Bushlark was still present the next day (WLY,MT), when a Yellow-browed Bunting was some recompense for one disappointed searcher (MH). Also on 17th three Mountain Bush Warblers were amongst the birds trapped at Kadoorie (PJL *et al.*) whilst two Lapwings were now at Mai Po (MP,RPT). Another visit to Ho Chung on 20th produced two Crested Buntings and a probable Russet Bush Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmi* (PRK,PJL) and the same day a Ringed Plover was seen from the Boardwalk at Mai Po by overseas visitors. At Cheung Chau on 21st a Chestnut-crowned Flycatcher Warbler was seen (MDW), with a Hoopoe in Hong Kong Park the same day (CAV).

A visit to Ping Yeung on 23rd proved particularly interesting. As well as an Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius* - a potential first record for Hong Kong - and another Yellow-browed Bunting, three small warblers *Cisticola/Prinia sp.* aroused considerable interest

and were seen by other observers the following day (CAV *et al.*). Other interesting birds in the same area at this time were two Grey-headed Buntings, a Hoopoe, a Wryneck, a Bluethroat and a Brown Thrush (JSRE,MLC *et al.*). Also on 23rd the first report of returning White Storks was received from Mai Po, with ten birds involved (per MLC). The following day two were seen (MRL *et al.*) and there were also at least 50 Penduline Tits present, and a Brown-headed Gull and a Black-tailed Gull. On 25th a flock of 25 Asian House Martins were seen at Mai Po (MH).

On 30th trapping confirmed the identification of the warblers at Ping Yeung as Bright-capped *Cisticola Cisticola exilis*. Three were netted and a further two were believed to be present (MLC,PJL). During the ringing operation Two Black-shouldered Kites flew over. Earlier in the day, two Mountain Bush Warblers were amongst the birds trapped at Mai Po, and two more were seen at Wu Kau Tang (JSRE,WLY *et al.*). The final day of the month also saw a report of a Yellowish-bellied Warbler *Cettia acanthizoides* from Cheung Chau, the second record for Hong Kong if accepted (MDW).

FUTURE MEETINGS

DATE	LEADER	VENUE	TIME
22 December Sunday	Mike Chalmers Simba Chan	Mai Po ++ Bilingual	10.00-16.00
29 December Sunday		CHRISTMAS COUNT See Page 3	
1992 4 January Saturday	Nigel Croft	Tai Po Kau Meet: Car Park	07.30
18 January Saturday	Peter Stevens	Tai Mei Tuk Meet: Tei Mei Tuk Visitor Centre	07.30
26 January Sunday	C Y Lam Wendy Young	Mai Po ++ Bilingual	10.00-16.00
1 February Saturday	Roger Costin	Tai Po Kau Meet: Car Park	07.30
INDOOR MEETING			
11 February	English	IDENTIFICATION OF COMMON	18.30
12 February	Cantonese	WINTER VISITORS Police Headquarters Arsenal Street Wanchai Please phone Ian Tyzzer 861 5416 (O) by 4th February to confirm attendance	
16 February Sunday	Ian Tyzzer Li Wai-ki	Shek Kong Bilingual Meet: Bus Stop west of Roundabout	09.00
23 February Sunday	John Edge Simba Chan	Mai Po *!! Bilingual	10.00-15.00

INDOOR MEETING
26 February

		BIRDING IN KAKADU Richard Stott describes his recent trip to Northern Australia Fully Illustrated!! Police Headquarters Arsenal Street, Wanchai Please phone Ian Tyzzer 861 5416 (0) by 19 February to confirm attendance	18.00
29 February Saturday	John Holmes	Luk Keng/Nam Chung	07.30
8 March Sunday	Mike Chalmers Chan Ming-ming	Tsim Bei Tsui!! Bilingual	10.00-15.00
14 March Saturday	John Burton	Tai Po Kau Meet: Car Park	07.00
22 March Sunday	A & W Young Fox Wong	Mai Po *!! Bilingual	10.00-15.00
20 April Easter Monday	Richard Stott C Y Lam	Mai Po *!! Bilingual	10.00-15.00

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

++ If any member wishes to use the coach, leaving Kowloon Tong one hour before assembly time and returning there after the outing, but did not send off the form in the last bulletin, please phone Ian Tyzzer to see if there are still seats available. Please bring packed lunch and drink.

|| 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.

* WWF HK has asked that all participants on a Mai Po outing must inform the leader they will be attending before the meeting. Please co-operate with this request as there have been problems of too many people attending, in the past. Members using the coach need not inform the leader, as they will have already confirmed their attendance by returning the coach booking slip.