



香港觀鳥會
THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY
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BULLETIN NO. 146

DECEMBER 1992

Society News

Subscription Renewals

Please return your cheque with the enclosed form to the Stotts as soon as possible. **Note the addresses on the form!** Remember to keep your receipt as AFD sometimes requires to see it before issuing annual Mai Po permits.

Annual General Meeting

The 1993 AGM will be held on **Tuesday 30th March** at the Auxiliary Police Officers Mess, 3/F Beaconsfield House, Queen's Road Central.

New Secretary

Ian Tyzzer has been the Society Secretary for two years, and feels it is time to hand the task on. **Any volunteers to take over?** Contact Ian if you are interested in this very important job.

Old Annual Reports.

The editor, Verity Picken, would like to thank whoever returned three old Annual Reports. The envelope was damaged in the post, and any enclosure was lost, so personal thanks are not possible.

Notes for Contributors

Formerly the editor could only accept articles on disk if the system used was IBM compatible. Thanks to Jim Hackett it should now be possible to access Mac disks as well. Mac users should contact Liz Leven for instructions on how to save their files in a suitable format.

All contributions to the March Bulletin should be sent to the editor by 26th February 1993

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

The next committee meeting will be in February 1993. If any member wishes a matter raised, please contact one of the committee members listed below

Gavin Cooper

Richard Stott

Ian Tyzzer

Mike Chalmers

Simba Chan

Liz Leven

David Melville

C Y Lam

Li Wai-ki

Verity Picken

The new Bird Hotline Number is **450 9061**. As this is a recently installed phone line, if there are any problems with it try 540 8240. Record cards should be sent to **Paul Leader c/o McKenna and Co. 36/F Gloucester Tower, The Landmark, Central, Hong Kong.**

The Society Librarian is Fox Wong Kai-on

Island House, Kwong Fuk Estate, Tai Po, NT

Christmas Count 20 December 1992

The Christmas Count is before Christmas this year, in the hope that more observers will be in Hong Kong to take part at this time. Due to other commitments, C Y Lam has been unable to organise the count this year, so Ian Tyzzer has stepped into the breach.

On December 20, use the checklist enclosed with this bulletin to note down the numbers of birds you see, and send it to **Ian Tyzzer, Flat 39, Mt. Nicholson Gap 6/F, 103 Mt. Nicholson Road, Hong Kong by 15 January 1993**. Also guess the number of species seen that day by all observers and you could win a prize - a copy of the 'Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong'.

The following members will cover the areas shown. Other members are welcome to join them.

Area Leaders

Mai Po

Simba Chan

Tsim Bei Tsui / Mong Tseng

Mike Leven

Castle Peak and Nim Wan

Mike Chalmers

Pak Nai, Northern NT and San Tin

Ian Tyzzer

Sek Kong, Tai Mo Shan

Nick Grimshaw

Shing Mun

David Diskin

Lam Tsuen Valley

Chan Ming-ming

Ng Cho-nam

Northeast NT, Luk Keng, Plover Cove

Peter Stevens

Tai Po Kau

Andrew and Wendy Young

Tai Long and Tolo Harbour

Li Wai-ki

Ho Chung, Sai Kong, Ma On Shan

Jim Hackett

Kowloon

Yu Yat-tung

Stonecutters Island

Jim Ades

Hong Kong Island

John Burton

Lamma Island

James Rowell

Cheung Chau

Martin Williams

Lantau Island

Roger Costin

Special appeal to urban dwellers: please submit your sightings even if only a few common species. Everything counts!

Leaders: if you cannot take part please let Ian

Breeding Survey and Winter Count

(Mike Chalmers)

In order to improve our knowledge on the distribution of breeding and wintering birds, the Committee has decided to undertake both breeding and winter surveys on a detailed "atlas" system. Both surveys will use the same 5km grid system based on the Hong Kong Metric Grid.

Observers are invited to adopt one or more of the **96** squares and to undertake to make at least **2** survey counts during the winter period (**December to March**) and at least **2** during the breeding season (**May to August**). All members are encouraged to take part, even with casual records for areas which are not assigned to them.

The objective is to use the large pool of observers currently resident to improve our knowledge for conservation purposes and with a view to publication in the next Checklist. The Survey will commence in May 1993 and cover two complete years

For breeding, it is proposed to use the new simplified codes (S = seen; B = breeding) from the New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland. For winter counts an estimate of the total number of each species is needed (not just order of magnitude as in the past).

Survey forms will be issued in the March 1993 Bulletin, but in the meantime if you are interested, or want more details contact **Mike Chalmers 492 8131 (O)**. A lot of volunteers will be needed so please do get involved.

Mai Po Update

Deep Bay Mudflats

August this year the Hong Kong Government put forward a proposal to list Inner Deep Bay as a **restricted area** under the Wild Animal Protection Ordinance, which means that **entry into the area will only be allowed** for those people who have the **relevant permits**. This **excludes** the **mainland fishermen** who have been operating on the mudflat for many years now, and if they are seen, then the Marine Police at Tsim Bei Tsui and the Agriculture and Fisheries wardens at the Mai Po Checkpost will have the power to arrest them as illegal immigrants. If you do see such people on the mudflat, please telephone the **Marine Police (Tel: 452 9261) and the AFD wardens (Tel: 471 4411)** for them to take immediate action. Let the WWF staff at Mai Po know as well and we will follow the incident up with a letter. If you want to write a letter to the Director of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries about it as well, then please go ahead. The more people we have writing, the better.

The bad news is, however, we have had the first report of shooting in Deep Bay this winter. If you ever see such an incident, then please report it **AT ONCE** to the Marine Police and the Mai Po AFD wardens at the telephone numbers above.

Floating hide

Over the next six months there will be an increasing demand by HKBWS members to use the floating hide at Mai Po. May I remind everyone that school groups will also normally be using the hide during weekdays, so if you are planning on leading a group to the hide and think that there may be a clash, then **please** telephone **Lew Young or any of the Education Officers (Judy or Christine) at Mai Po (471 6306)** and we will see if we can do something to avoid it.

To prevent any unnecessary disturbance to people already in the hide, **the Checking in/Checking out book is being reinstated**. It will either be in the rainshelter (the previous location) or on the fence itself. (Conflicting information from WWF personnel!). Please fill in the book when you go out and come back again. This way WWF can check on hide use. **Do not forget!!!**

WWF Membership Cards

WWF will be checking members' cards in the future. You should carry your card at **all times** when visiting Mai Po to save everyone embarrassment (not to mention being thrown out of the hides!)

Students

WWF has been very lucky with the number of undergraduate and postgraduate students doing projects at Mai Po, and their results have been very useful to us in improving the management of the reserve. At the moment we have four students studying birds on the reserve. They are:

Ma Ka-keung (CPHK)

Habitat use by wintering Cormorants;

Kwok Ming-gon (CPHK)

Use of the Mai Po gei-wais by wintering waterbirds (incl. Black-faced Spoonbills, Oriental White Storks etc.);

Chan Chun-wai (CPHK)

Ecology of Black-headed Gulls and Saunders' Gulls on the Mai Po mudflats;

Steve McChesney (HKU) Wading birds and their food supply on the Deep Bay mudflats.

Keep an eye open for them around the reserve next time you're birdwatching there. If possible, please share your observations with them (and other birdwatchers) by **writing down** interesting species or count data of particular species in the **Bird Records Book** by the entrance to the Peter Scott Field Study Centre.

Photos Needed

WWF is asking for donations of photos of local birds (and other wildlife presumably) to display in the Peter Scott Field Study Centre. If you have any suitable photos please contact Lew, they would be very much appreciated.

Records Committee

All records should be submitted as soon as possible after **31st December 1992**, and by 31st January 1993 at the latest, to **Paul Leader c/o McKenna and Co. 36/F Gloucester Tower, The Landmark, central, Hong Kong**. How and what to submit were detailed in the September 1992 Bulletin. Please do not be late as it makes compiling the systematic list in the Annual Report almost impossible if records come in late.

Birdlist

In order to facilitate access to checklist numbers, which are needed when submitting records, Mike Turnbull has compiled a **complete list of the birds of Hong Kong** based on the Annotated Checklist (Chalmers 1985), and subsequent HKBWS publications. The List gives **checklist number, English name and scientific name of every species**, and also notes whether the submission of a description is required.

Copies can be obtained either on a disk or as a written printout. For the disk send a clean floppy disk (either format) and \$1.60 in stamps, with a stamped addressed envelope (SAE) to **Mike Turnbull, Flat 4, 2/F 4 Mansfield Road, The Peak, Hong Kong**. For the printout, send \$3.20 in stamps and SAE to Mike.

Big Bird Race April 9 /10 1993.

Note the date - **Good Friday and Easter Saturday!!**

Tsim Bei Tsui SSSI

Members may have noticed the recent press reports on the dredging of the mangrove area near Mong Tseng at Tsim Bei Tsui, or even seen the destruction of the mangroves for themselves. The dredging work would appear to be **incompatible with the status of the area as a Site of Special Scientific Interest**. Sluice gates have now been constructed so that there is no longer free movement of water in and out of the area. These sluice gates appear to be unauthorised and the whole situation is very serious, as an **SSSI designation should protect areas from this sort of activity**.

WWF are obviously very concerned and are lobbying hard to get some positive action from government. **Public support is essential**, so please help by writing to the Secretary of Planning, Environment and Lands expressing your concern and asking what official action is being taken. Letters to the press would be very helpful as well. This is important not just for this area but for all SSSIs previously considered 'protected'.

Conservation Action

Still in a campaigning mode, if you see **wildlife** of any kind **being sold in Hong Kong**, please contact **Billy Hau at WWF 526 1011 (O)** at

once, two days later is too late!!

Also a reminder from the September Bulletin. Please contact Billy Hau if you see any **fish-ponds being filled in**. He can check if the landfilling has permission, and if not WWF can take action.

Further ramblings

(The Old Sage)

Stewart Smith's challenge in the last bulletin has stirred me to put quill to parchment. Having just had the satisfaction of one of my last predictions (Carrion Crow) being added to the HK List (subject to those youngsters on the Records Committee accepting it!) and assuming progress is made with at least one (and possibly all three) *Bradypterus* species, my remaining forecast of firsts for the balance of this century would favour species already suspected or claimed, but not yet accepted to Categories A-D. These include Wilson's Petrel, Bulwer's Petrel, American Wigeon, Steppe Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Long-billed Plover, Western Sandpiper, Chinese Crested Tern, Collared Pygmy Owllet, Drongo Cuckoo, Bay Woodpecker, Pacific Swallow, White-browed Shrike Babbler, Blyth's Pipit, White-browed Hill Warbler, and Yellow-bellied Willow Warbler.

My top ten selections of entirely new birds would be Brown Booby, Swinhoe's Yellow Rail, Little Cuckoo, Ruddy Kingfisher, Speckled Piculet, Brown-capped Fulvetta, Chinese Song Thrush, Lesser White-throat, Gray's and Middendorf's Grasshopper Warblers. Any other suggestions?

(P.S. If you split Manchurian Reed from Paddy-field Warbler, that would be another with Japanese Marsh Warbler as a side bet).

Porcupine

Porcupine is the newsletter of the HK University Ecology Research Group, and publishes all records of mammals and reptiles, including snakes. **If you have any such records please contact Gary Ades 488 9385.**

Guizhou, China April 1993

John Holmes is hoping to organise a trip to Guizhou (see the report on page 7) in April 1993. If you are interested in going contact **John, 471 1684 (O)**.

SAUNDERS GULL - HEADING FOR EXTINCTION ?

(Geoff Carey)

With winter upon us we are again honoured with the spectacle of Deep Bay in all its glory as it plays host for the winter to thousands of birds escaping the extremes of climate further north. However, due to the relative ease with which we can get to see these largely undisturbed birds and the level of protection afforded to them, it is all too easy for us to forget the pressures and the threats that await them further north in the spring.

The breeding ecology of Saunders Gull is a fascinating example of how a species has adapted to the eternal processes of nature but also a rather disturbing testament to what happens when man interferes too drastically in the process. Over thousands of years China's great rivers have brought silt down from the hinterlands to the coast in huge quantities, building up the coastal land as a result with, in some areas, accretion rates as high as 3-400m/year. This process has a number of effects, one of which is the creation of vast areas of mudflat (especially along the Jiangsu coastline) 5 kilometres or even more wide, which provide important feeding grounds for shorebirds on migration.

Behind here however, as the land dries out when it ceases to be washed over by the tide, is created an area of saltmarsh at varying degrees of development according to what stage of succession it is at in the change from mudflat to dry land suitable for cultivation. At a certain stage, where the land is not too damp and the salt content not too high to prevent a reasonable covering of vegetation but where it is also not too dry or free of salt to allow other, taller and denser vegetation to encroach, is where Saunders' Gull breeds. As the saltmarsh moves further out with the accreting land, so does Saunders' Gull.

There are only three known breeding areas and all are within China. The most northerly is at the Shuangtaizi River Nature Reserve in Liaoning Province where the accreting mudflat is created by a number of small rivers. The most southerly is at Yancheng Nature Reserve, Jiangsu Province, which is formed by Yangtze borne silt and the third, consisting of only two small colonies, is near the mouth of the Yellow River.

China's coast however is in great demand and the pressures being brought to bear on the breeding grounds are severe indeed, especially at Shuangtaizi Reserve where land is being reclaimed at such a rate that in 1992 breeding success was almost ZERO. The process here is

that land is being reclaimed as far out to the sea as possible such that all salt marsh is being destroyed and at high tide the sea reaches 3-4 metres up the sea wall. Obviously, under such circumstances, nothing can breed, never mind Saunders' Gull, and it will be many years before the land has accreted sufficiently to create an area where they can breed.

The land is being reclaimed for shrimp ponds and rice fields and to build reservoirs to provide the water for these. The newly-reclaimed land must be left for a period to allow the salt content to drop during which time Saunders' Gull can still breed but the land rapidly dries out, dense and tall vegetation invades as do mammalian predators. Breeding success at all three areas is also affected by egg-collecting and human disturbance, caused by the sometimes thousands of people who go out to the shore to collect crabs or dig up worms.

At present WWF is attempting to arrange temporary stop-gap measures at Shuangtaizi that might ensure the presence of the bird at the reserve until suitable salt marsh appears beyond the sea wall. These include a project to clear some of the invasive vegetation behind the sea wall this winter to provide areas for next spring and, in the medium term, attempting to arrange the construction of a large island in a reservoir that is now being built on the site of a large Saunders Gull colony with the aim of attracting birds to breed. However it is by no means certain that the species will be able to hang on until the appearance of suitable salt marsh - indeed, it is not even certain how long it will be before this happens.

The situation at Shuangtai Reserve is complicated by the fact that the development which is taking place was decided upon at the very highest levels in government and will require a major effort to reverse. This is where Society members can make their own contribution to the race to save Saunders Gull. I would like to urge you to write directly to The Nature Reserve Management Office, Ministry of Forestry, Hepingli, Beijing 100714, China, in order to express your concern and that of the international community. Point out the rarity of Saunders' Gull and request that it be listed as a Category One protected species and ask the Ministry to ensure proper management of the reserve where it breeds.

Please remember that international pressure can have an effect in China and we, as well as they, have a responsibility to do all we can to save this species from extinction.

THE BIRDS OF INDONESIA, A CHECKLIST (Peter's Sequence)

Paul Andrew. Indonesia Ornithological Society, Jakarta

This checklist is the first complete list of the birds to be found within Indonesia. At 1531 species (plus a further 3 introduced species), the variety is remarkable as is the number of endemic species at 381. The checklist divides Indonesia into seven regions, namely Sumatra, Java (including Bali), Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Lesser Sundas, Moluccas and Irian Jaya and the distribution of each species recorded from Indonesia is referenced to one of these regions.

Indonesia spans three faunal regions, the Oriental in the Great Sundas, Wallacea and the Australasian region in Irian Jaya. As most birders visiting Indonesia are likely to travel widely and pass through more than one faunal zone, this list is a useful reference to those species which can be found in the regions currently covered by a field guide. However, no information regarding status, abundance, habitat, altitude etc. is included so readers will still need to refer to other texts before embarking on a visit to Indonesia. Many of the endemics, particularly in Wallacea are restricted in their distribution, and often confined to a single island so reference to White and Bruce, *The Birds of Wallacea* (1986), remains essential.

The sequence of species follows that of Peters' Checklist of the Birds of the World with certain exceptions where taxonomic changes have been published. Although comparison is made with Sibley and Monroe's, *Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World* (1990), the author has, quite rightly, not followed their decisions to lump or split species except where a published reference exists. He does however follow the English names used in Sibley & Monroe except where the English name in regular use in Indonesia differs. In most cases, the differences are familiar to those used to King (1973) or Lekagul and Round (1991). However some names such as Asian Martin and Inornate Leaf Warbler may cause confusion to those familiar with Hong Kong's (more appropriate?) Asian House Martin and Yellow-browed Warbler. Furthermore the addition of the word Leaf to Arctic Leaf Warbler and Eastern-crowned Leaf Warbler appears unique to Indonesia.

At US\$ 12 (plus US\$ 6 for air mail) this list is of value to those with an interest in Indonesia's

birds. However, it is a rather inconvenient size to take on a birding trip and its paperback cover offers no protection from the elements or damage. However, it is a good step in the right direction and will be of considerable use to anyone planning a visit to Indonesia.

Peter Kennerley

Ping Chau

(Martin Williams)

(East) Ping Chau, which I visited on 17th and 18th October, has evidently been little visited by birders, yet surely has the potential to be a fine place to watch migrants and, perhaps, seabirds. Changes in the ferry company and ferry schedules have made visits more convenient; unlike previously, it is now possible to visit for just one day.

The island is small, just 2 km long; there are several villages, but only two permanent inhabitants. As farming has ceased, much of the island has 'gone wild', affording some fine habitat for migrants. There are small fung shui woods, extensive scrub and grassland, and even a tiny reservoir. There are mudstone cliffs along the west and south coasts, beaches along the east shore. On 17th - when I arrived after 11am - the chief birds were a Hobby and a Savannah Nightjar. On the morning of 18th, visible migration was evident: I noted 11 Richard's, ten Olive-backed and four Red-throated Pipits, two Yellow and 21 White Wagtails, three Pacific and one Little Swifts passing over (heading west). Migrants present included one Radde's, 13 Dusky, one Yellow-browed and one Arctic Warblers, two Rubythroats and two Blackbirds.

As it lies in Mirs Bay, the island may be a good place to try seawatching, especially from the south end. Ferry journeys to and from Ping Chau provide an opportunity to look for seabirds. Ferries depart from Ma Liu Shui (near the University KCR station), at 9am and 3.30pm on Saturdays and 9.30pm on Sundays; return ferries are at 5.30pm both days. I left the island on a Sunday '10.30am' ferry to Wong Shek Pier, from where bus 96R leaves for Choi Hung MTR station, or there is transport via Sai Kung. For ferry information, tel. 7711630 (Cantonese only). There are hostels, north of the ferry pier, and at Tai Tong, (to book, try calling 661280 or 6610241; probably Cantonese only). Food and drinks are available on the island. A circuit of the island via the beach and cliff top paths is straightforward; paths cut across the island and there is a map board near the pier.

OVERSEAS BIRDING

Fan Ching Shan, Kwei Chau, 23 September - 2 October 1992

(H.F.Cheung)

NB. All specific names follow Cheng (1987)

On Sept 23rd to Oct 2nd 1992, six of us (CY Lam, CN Ng, TW Wong, WY Law, W Jetter and I) went to Fan Ching Shan Reserve for birds. We arrived at Kwei Yang one day late at noon due to plane engine problem. At the airport, we were warmly welcomed by a few Staff of the Kwei Yang Normal University. These included Mr Yang, Ms Chung and Mr Xiao who accompanied us the whole trip.

After settling down at the hotel, we went immediately to the neighbouring Kin Ling Park for birds. Not many birds were present at that time. The only interesting birds being a small flock of Vinous-throated Parrotbill. Other than birds, we saw a big group of monkeys, which seemed to present a real threat to the birds in the area. On Sept 25th, we started travelling to Fan Ching Shan Reserve. Our driver was Mr Yung who also had a sharp eye for birds. It took us about 10 hours to go 300 km. We arrived at a small village just outside the Reserve at midnight. During lunch time and on our way we picked up Chinese Greenfinch, Grey Bushchat, Yellow-throated Bunting, Anderson's Bulbul, Red-rumped Swallow, Asian House Martin, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Collared Finchbill, Horsfield's Goshawk and Eagle Owl.

On Sept 26th, we visited the Reserve Headquarter. We had a chance to see a specimen of a newly-discovered species for Fan Ching Shan Reserve - the White-necked Long-tailed Pheasant. In the afternoon, we went directly into the mountains. We spent the night at a place a few kilometres inside the reserve called Tong Kong Cheung, right by the stream. The weather was not good at all, with thick fog and cloud over our heads. The road going into the reserve is along a mountain stream all the way. Plumbeous Water Redstart, Brown Dipper, Slaty-backed Forktail and Little Forktail seem to enjoy life very well here. We saw a different groups of these three birds every 50 metres or so. Other interesting birds that we added to our list were White-crowned Forktail, Treepie, Grey-sided Laughing-Thrush, Mountain Bulbul, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Grey-spotted Flycatcher and Red-breasted Flycatcher.

On the morning of Sept 27th, the lodge manager showed us a pair of captured Chinese Tragopans. While this bird is very rare elsewhere, it seems to be sufficiently abundant here for it to be sold for meat. After breakfast, we walked up 7000 very steep steps to the peak, passing a place called Wui Heung Ping. It was foggy most of the time. Other than birds in the stream, interesting birds that we picked up were the Green-backed Tit, Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, Grey-headed Flycatcher, Yellow-browed Flycatcher, Indian Edible- Nest Swiftlet, Crested Honey Buzzard, and Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler. In Wui Heung Ping, we had an excellent view of three Black-Headed Sibia. Close to the peak, we saw Chinese Babax, Vinaceous Rosefinch, Chinese Bamboo Partridge, Golden Pheasant, White-Collared Yuhina, Chinese Greenfinch and Grey-headed Parrotbill.

We spent the night inside a large bamboo-tent. Rain and strong winds came at midnight. That ended all our sweet dreams and started our nightmares! At one critical time, a pole inside the tent collapsed. Nevertheless, the tent remained intact till morning. The rain and wind did not stop until about 9 am, Sept 28th. That spoiled our plan to see those wild Chinese Trapogans. The only interesting bird that morning was the Orange-winged Laughing-Thrush. Instead we took a lot of scenic photographs and hiked up a 300 feet cliff to see a temple. In the afternoon, we started going down to Tong Kong Cheung. No new birds were found close to the peak. However, as we got down close to the valley, we saw within one flock of birds a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler, a Chestnut-crowned Warbler and a Fulvous-faced Flycatcher Warbler. In another flock of birds 50 metres away, we saw two Grey-crowned Pigmy Woodpeckers, and a Sulphur-breasted Warbler. What an exciting 20 minutes! Back to the stream, and this time we picked up Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler and Black-chinned Yuhina.

On Sept 29th, the weather was excellent. In the early morning, CN and I went up the stream again for a short excursion. We had some very good views of the White-crowned Forktail. On our way back for breakfast, we first caught sight of some Grey-cheeked Fulvetta on a bush, then we noticed a small fat bird without tail. That turned out to be a Pigmy Wren Babbler. When CY and I went back to check this site again, we missed the Wren Babbler but we found a flock of Rufous-capped Babblers. After breakfast, we continued our journey out of the reserve. On the way, we came across several huge flocks of warblers and other small birds. Other than the more usual birds, we saw Two-barred Greenish Warbler,

Fulvous-faced Flycatcher Warbler, Black Bulbul, Collared Siva, Rufous-backed Crake, Crested Goshawk, Red-headed Tit and Barred Owl.

In the afternoon, we went for the Crested Kingfisher. With the help of the local people, we quickly found two by a large pond in a stream. We again saw the Black-headed Sibia, and also Sooty Flycatcher, Jay and a large flock of unidentified Laughing-Thrush.

On Sept 30th, we started our first day of driving back to Kwei Yang. We spent the night at a very beautiful small town called Chun Yuen by the river. On the way we saw David's Hill Warbler, Northern Sparrowhawk, Meadow Bunting, Grey-headed Bunting, Yellow-breasted Bunting, Paddyfield Pipit, Red Turtle Dove, Crimson-legged Crake, Peregrine Falcon, Grey Bushchat and Red-rumped Swallow. We also saw two Chinese Bulbuls. Later we were told that they are very difficult to see in Kwei Chau!

Oct 1st is the National Day in Mainland China. We were awaked very early by firecrackers and loud radio music. However, the scene by the river was extraordinarily beautiful. Continuing the journey back to Kwei Yang, we saw Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Mountain Hawk Eagle and Pied/Hen Harrier. At one place we ran into two Kestrels chasing a kite away. At another place we saw two farmers each holding a shot common pheasant for sale by the road. Those two Pheasants were confiscated by Mr Yang who worked for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Oct 2nd was our last day in Kwei Chau. We spent the morning in the Kwei Yang Forest Park. In a short walk we added Dusky Thrush, Pale Thrush and Siberian Thrush to our list. We also observed several Crested Honey Buzzard on migration. Back at the Forest Station, we saw a captured Chinese Bamboo Partridge. In the afternoon we took the newly-established direct flight back to Hong Kong.

We found that Fan Ching Shan Reserve was an excellent place for birds. The number of people going into the reserve was not high. Other than the tourist route which seemed to have too much construction going on, the forest inside the reserve is extremely well-preserved. Bird-hunting does not seem to be a problem here, as reflected from the behaviour of the birds. Most of the birds were seen clearly with overly sufficient time. Many locally common species are rare in Hong Kong. With the direct flight to Kwei Yang already in service, it seems to be quite attractive to bird watchers who could spend around 8-10 days there.

QINGHAI AND TIBET, OCTOBER 1992

Peter Kennerley

The arrival of a cold front on 1st October, accompanied by a massive temperature drop and continuous cloud cover between Beijing and Xining, the capital of Qinghai province, marked the start of this mini-expedition to the Tibetan plateau. I had joined up with the Birdquest tour to "The Roof of the World" with the aim of seeing all the species endemic to the plateau as well as those typical of the region and we had a month in which to achieve it.

The hills to the north of Xining are well known as a stake out for Przevalski's Partridge, Daurian Partridge and Sinai Rosefinch and upon arrival at Xining we went out and connected with the former and latter as well as Pied Wheatear, but dipped on Daurian Partridge. The following day it was off to Laoye Shan, 35 km north of Xining (see Hornskov 1990 Bird Report for further details). Despite the continuing unseasonal cold and damp weather, Laoye Shan was superb. Red-throated Thrushes were abundant, feeding on recently ripened fruit while other goodies here included Tickell's, Yellow-streaked and Pallas's Warblers of the race *chlorotos*, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Elliot's Laughingthrush and Northern Sparrowhawk. However, the star bird which we had come here especially to look for was the stunning little Crested Tit Warbler which give crippling views when we finally reached the fir trees near summit.

Travelling south across the plateau from Xining, over the next three days we encountered a wide range of plateau specialities including Hume's Ground Jay, Red-necked, Pere David's and Tibetan Snowfinches, Horned and Long-billed Calandra Larks, Chinese Grey Shrike, Bar-headed Geese, Ibisbill and Black-necked Crane as well as Daurian Partridge previously missed. Best of all though were the raptors. Sakers and Upland Buzzards were very common and were frequently found sitting on roadside telegraph posts, while other species included Altai Falcon, Pallas's Fish, Steppe, Golden and Spotted Eagles, Himalayan Griffon Vulture and Lammergeier. In the last hour of daylight on our approach into Madou, south of Xining, we counted over 125 Sakers and even more Uplands sitting on telegraph posts, an amazing sight and one quite unexpected.

Nangqian in southernmost Qinghai was our base for the next three days. We were the first group

of foreigners allowed into the area and, apart from Craig Robson and Dave Farrow who, in 1986 got to Yushu and were then deported by the PSB, the first birders into the area since the 1930's. Over the next few days we birded a wide range of habitats and saw virtually everything we had hoped for including White-eared Pheasant, Szechenyi's Monal Partridge, Tibetan Partridge Giant Laughingthrush, Solitary Snipe, Kessler's Thrush, Koslov's Babax and best of all Koslov's Bunting. Some of the least known and most highly sought after eastern Palearctic specialities, amongst some of the most spectacular scenery in the world!

Although we were fairly close to Tibet, the road through the mountains from Nangqian to Qamdo and onto Lhasa was in poor condition and the journey would take over 7 days. Furthermore, the current opposition to the Chinese presence in Tibet has recently resulted in serious rioting in the area and we had been forbidden to travel this route. Although this meant a long detour via the famous Koko Nor and Golmud, we had time to plan this well in advance and the available time allowed us to visit many areas which had not be previously explored. Going north, we spent many hours searching scree slopes at 4500 metres for the ultra-elusive Roborovski's Rosefinch but without success - the only major dip of the entire trip.

The Koko Nor had changed quite a lot since my previous visit in 1985. There were many more people, sheep, houses and fences. The whole area appeared to be undergoing a development boom and tourist groups are now a regular feature to this lake on the roof of the world. The milder climate and wider range of habitats produced a greater variety of species than had been hitherto encountered with many duck, mostly Pintail, Bar-headed Geese, Brown-headed and Great Black-headed Gulls on the lake, while the hills of the South Koko Nor Range held Severtzov's Tit Warbler, White-browed Tit, Guldenstadt's Redstart and Tibetan Snowfinch.

Heading west, we entered Ziadam, a vast desert area which had once been a huge lake, and quickly found our first and only Pallas's Sandgrouse of the trip near Chaka salt works. Being slightly milder, many villages had small plantations around them and it was in one of these where we finally caught up with Przevalski's Redstart, a bird I had been after for a long time, the last redstart I needed for the set as well as completing my Przevalski set (excluding his horse!). Shortly after this, we found Henderson's Ground Jays to be common along the road towards Golmud, in areas with very low scattered

bushes.

Hot water was on the menu in Golmud, the first opportunity to shower in 19 days. Unfortunately, as it was only available between 9 and 11 pm, it proved rather inconvenient as well as erratic so I managed to miss it on the two nights we spent here. Jesper Hornskov, Denmark's resident birder in Goldmud, met us here and spent the next day showing us some of the sights in this town which he calls home (although he has now given it up for the bright lights of Xining). The city park held a female Eversmann's Redstart, Red- and Black-throated Thrushes, Chiffchaff of the race *tristis*, Desert Lesser Whitethroat and Brambling while the reservoirs just outside of town produced Bearded Tit, Asian Short-toed Lark and numerous waterfowl including Red-crested Pochard and Grey-lag Goose.

South of Golmud we drove through the spectacular Kun Lun mountains which reach over 6000 metres. During random roadside stops we picked up Blandford's Snowfinch and Great Rosefinch as well as Tibetan Antelope. This animal, once common, is now being regularly hunted and horns were frequently seen for sale in the tourist hotels in Lhasa and even in Beijing. Furthermore, the conversion of the grasslands, to grazing for domesticated Yak and sheep has further reduced the suitable habitat available to them. Hopefully they remain abundant further west, away from the busy Golmud-Lhasa highway.

Nam Tso, a huge salt lake at 4500 metres was our next stop. Rumour had it that it was a possible site for the ultimate plateau bird, the Tibetan Sandgrouse. To reach the lake required crossing a fairly substantial range of mountains which at the time were snow covered. It didn't help that we did not know the way to the only road which traversed them and when we did eventually find it, there were several trucks already stopped on it contemplating the best way up (and down) without plummeting over the edge. Eventually however, we did reach the lake and spent the whole day scouring the area for sandgrouse but without success. Between the frequent snow showers, we did see Black-necked Crane, Ferruginous Duck, Wallcreeper and migrants which included Bluethroat and House Sparrow.

Since we were only two hours drive north of Lhasa we revisited Nam Tso the next day. This time, without the convoy of trucks and the snow having melted we made much better progress and were soon driving along parallel to the lake. Fairly quickly, a distant flock of birds which could

only have been sandgrouse were spotted and followed at high speed. We then set out on foot for a kilometer or so to the area where we thought they had landed. Several more groups of sandgrouse flew in as we walked and Tibetan Sandgrouse were on the list! They proved to be remarkably confiding but extremely frustrating to photograph. They moved in a single tightly packed group, rarely raised their heads and seemed to have their eyes closed most of the time. Still an extremely satisfying bird. We even then had time to make a stop in the mountains before continuing onto Lhasa and this produced Tibetan Snowcock, Brandt's Mountain Finch and White-throated Dippers with entirely brown underparts - a pitfall for the unwary.

On arrival in Lhasa I caught up with my long awaited shower and since we had by this time seen most if not all the species which occur around Lhasa, a rest day was taken. We spent it wandering around the Potola Palace where a few birds were apparent, including Crag Martin and Blue Hill Pigeon, but nothing of note. Lhasa itself was a superb place. The Chinese are allowing Buddhism to flourish once again and many of the temples and monasteries which were devastated during the Cultural Revolution are reopening. Religious practices are openly performed and we found that everywhere we travelled, we were asked for pictures of the Dalai Lama. However, it was very depressing to see large cat skins including Tiger and Leopard being openly sold in the market around the Jokhang temple.

Our final destination on the trip was to be Yamalung monastery. Yamalung (Emalu Gompa) lies 20 kms up the valley from Samye, some 150 kms south west of Lhasa in the Tsang Po (Brahmaputra) valley. After the 90 minute river crossing during which we ran aground several times, we chartered a truck which took us to the last village in the valley beyond Samye. From here, we rented yaks and mules to transport our tents to a campsite in a scrub-covered valley above Yamalung. Almost immediately, one of our target birds, Giant Babax was in view and not long after that, Elwes' Eared Pheasant flew over and then gave good views as they walked across the hillside. Another speciality of the region, Prince Henri's Laughing Thrush were also around in small numbers and we succeeded in catching one the next day along with a few White-throated Redstarts, Brown and Robin Accentors, Tickell's Warbler and Severtzov's Tit Warbler.

Our final day in Tibet was spent near the Yongbulagong monastery where the surrounding

fields held big numbers of Henri's Laughing Thrush, Eastern Great Rosefinch and Guldenstadt's Redstart.

The flight to Chengdu, remarkably for CAAC, was not cancelled and even departed on time, allowing us to spend the entire afternoon in Du Fu's cottage, a well-wooded park in Chengdu. This proved to be remarkably interesting as many migrants and birds normally found in the mountainous areas of Sichuan province, such as Wolong and Jiuzhaigou were present, presumably birds moving down out of the mountains prior to the onset of winter. The more interesting species included White-tailed Robin, a couple of male Indian Blue Robins, Chestnut-headed Tesia, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker and Yellow-browed Tit; quite unexpected for a park in one of China's most populous cities.

A trip not to have missed and one well worth repeating, I would certainly recommend it to anyone despite the somewhat basic hotels and appalling or non-existent loos! The birds, spectacular scenery and the hospitality of our hosts more than made up for a few minor inconveniences and made the trip a spectacular success.

Peter will be presenting an illustrated talk of his adventures in Qinghai and Tibet at Police Headquarters on 19th February 1993. See Future Meetings for details.

Baiyun Shan (White Cloud Hills) 17 November 1992

(Martin Williams)

On 17th November, I visited Baiyun Shan (White Cloud Hills), a scenic area on the northern outskirts of Guangzhou. Though hardly worth the trip from Hong Kong in itself, a visit to Baiyun Shan may be worthwhile for any birder with time to spare in Guangzhou. The hills are well wooded, though the cover is evidently secondary; I did not see any grand, old trees, but the vegetation is dense and varied. Birds I noted included one or two Blue-winged Minlas (interesting in the light of the Hong Kong records), a Pekin Robin, a couple of singing Hwameis (suggesting trapping pressures are not severe?), and a Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler, as well as several Red-flanked Bluetails, Yellow-browed and Pallas's Warblers, and thrushes heard but not seen. The trip from the city takes perhaps half an hour by taxi (costs ca. HK\$30-45); there are buses, but they are perhaps infrequent.

Luo Fo Shan, Guangdong 28-29 November 1992

(Tim Woodward)

Inspired by John Holmes's trip in June I decided to go to Luo Fo Shan to see for myself. Getting there is relatively easy - 90 minutes on the train from Shenzhen and then about the same by minibus and motorbike/pick-up.

I arrived at about 11.30 on Saturday morning and climbed up to about 4-500 metres (the hill is 1280m). At that level there is a reasonable amount of good mature forest. I was soon able to find the species that might be expected - Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, Rufous-capped Babbler, Pekin Robin, Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler (which were particularly common), Scarlet and Grey-chinned Minivets (also numerous - though I forgot to check carefully for short-billed), Yellow-bellied and Red-headed Tits. It was also interesting to find a couple of 'striped palm' squirrels.

Later in the afternoon I spent an hour in the surrounding meadows and found a single Bull-headed Shrike - orange-brown head and nape contrasting strikingly with the grey-brown back and wings. I also noted a pair of Rufescent Prinias - this bird is also present at Dinghu Shan and seems more widespread in Guangdong than the books suggest - a candidate for the HK list?

That evening questions at the local restaurant (pointing at the illustration in the Thai book with a "have you seen this bird here?") indicated the possibility of Silver Pheasants - but I was sceptical. The next morning when I found a group of five (including a resplendent male) at quite low altitude below the pagoda I was very pleased - and surprised - the three jolly hunters I saw the previous day who cheerfully admitted they were shooting birds cannot have been as efficient as might be expected.

The final intriguing bird seen was a Bush Warbler *sz* - square, medium length tail, whitish unspotted below grading to fawn on lower flanks and undertail coverts, uniform rich brown above, cream supercilium, call continuous low 'chip' and a rather subdued chuckle - all of which led me to consider Pale-footed Bush Warbler. This was found in ferns at about 200m. on the hillside.

All in all this was a successful trip and well worth doing: it would be interesting to see what is found at higher altitudes. It would also be interesting to search for barbets, woodpeckers, piculets etc - I found none. The great advantage of this place is that it can be done comfortably in a weekend

from HK, particularly if you stay in Shenzhen on Friday night as I did - though I would recommend booking the Shenzhen hotel in advance as I had trouble getting a room at all, let alone a cheap one!

If anyone is interested I will be glad to supply details of how to get there etc.

OUTING REPORTS

Mai Po 13 September 1992

(Wendy Young and Li Wai Ki)

Quite an uneventful day. However most of the party enjoyed the outing, particularly as we had the most superb views of an Asian Paradise Flycatcher literally just above our heads alongside the wardens' hut. The bird flitted backwards and forwards in the casuarinas for at least ten minutes giving everyone glorious views.

The tide was high on the boardwalk and so although we still had 18 species of wader the counts were not quite as high as expected. We did have a melanistic-type Little Egret - grey with a white face which we tried to turn into a White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* but without much success! A total of 59 species in all.

Mai Po 30 August 1992

(John Holmes)

A round dozen members of varying degrees of experience turned up for the 07:30 start. We began with a walk down the casuarinas and found that there were a good variety of waders present, although the Asiatic Dowitchers spied the previous day were in hiding. Yellow Bitterns were everywhere and the outing leader got an overdue Hongkong tick with the sighting of Cinnamon Bittern!

There was a good array of commoner birds on the scrape but by the time we reached the Border Fence interest was starting to wane, due mainly to the temperature on what the R.O. later reported to be the "hottest day of the year". Species tally for the day - fifty.

Mai Po 27 September 1992

(John Edge and Fox Wong)

A visit to Mai Po the previous day had produced

33 species of wader (up to Bird Race standards in terms of variety) and a total of 95 + two spp., an impressive autumn total which boded well for this outing. As it was, we did not do as well (68 was our combined total) but we did not have time to visit the floating hide.

Good species seen on the outing but not seen the previous day included a female Schrenck's Bittern, the winter's first Cormorants, a juvenile Bonelli's Eagle which settled on or overflew the scrape for some time, shuffling the pack on several occasions, and singles of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope and Red-rumped Swallow. Also on the scrape were three Ruff (one with a curious slaty-blue belly-band) and one or two Asiatic Dowitchers.

Saunders' Gulls were also reported from Deep Bay but the previous day's Pied Harrier was missed. The weather was most pleasant.

The outing was scheduled from 1000h to 1500h, but by the time we had complied with the red tape it was at least 1030h before we started in earnest. I suggest these outings start an hour earlier (or finish an hour later) to allow for this - five hours just doesn't seem long enough. No-one was complaining of binocular fatigue, as far as I know!

Tsim Bei Tsui 25 October 1992

(Mike Chalmers)

Despite the lack of reply slip in the last bulletin, a coach was organised for the bilingual trip and 19 members took part. It was a bright sunny day with high tide in Deep Bay and the weather at its autumn best. Duck numbers were increasing for the winter and the first Cormorants and gulls had also returned. Having been dropped by the coach driver at the far end of the Fence, the outing split into two groups for the return. Newly arrived winter visitors such as Stonechats, White Wag-tails and Olive-backed Pipits were everywhere. A good selection of birds of prey included one Spotted Eagle, one Marsh Harrier, several Ospreys and Buzzards, two Japanese Sparrowhawks and lots of Black Kites. Several Yellow-breasted and Chestnut Buntings were also located, and a quail was flushed. The highlight for one of the groups (not mine!) was a Black Stork circling over Tin Shui Wai.

Ping Yeung 1 November 1992

(Keith Wilson)

Not too many species were seen by the four members who attended the Ping Yeung outing,

just 45 in total, but good views of birds not often encountered in Hong Kong were enjoyed. John Burton kicked off the tally with a fine male Daurian Redstart which was one of five seen during the trip, the remainder all females. Black-birds were seen in small parties ranging in size from four, to 'the sky was full of them' to quote one member of the party. At least one Red-breasted Flycatcher was seen for brief periods and often heard with its unusual rattling song, giving plenty of opportunity to compare with Brown Flycatchers present at the same time. Views of a female Rubythroat were extracted from a dense thicket, with the aid of a Kowa telescope.

John Burton made a bet for a can of beer when he staked his reputation on a ki-ki-ki-ki call belonging to a sparrowhawk. The Kowa telescope sorted out the mystery bird, which was perched in a small dead tree in an area of tall grass, with its bill raised to the sky to deliver its song. The singing Wryneck had cost John a beer but not too much reputation - it did sound a bit like a raptor. Interest was lost in the Wryneck, which carried on singing for all it was worth, when a full summer-plumage male Chestnut Bunting appeared in full view at close range. This was one of the many Chestnut Buntings seen with Black-faced and Little Buntings during the outing.

A few raptors were encountered during the trip: a Crested Serpent Eagle calling and soaring overhead, a pair of Peregrine Falcons seen at close range and, of course, Black Kites.

John Homes joined the party towards the end of the morning and with the addition of a further pair of 'policeman's feet' a couple of Japanese Quails were duly flushed.

Richard's Pipit, Grey Starling, a Spotted Munia and a beer at Luk Keng rounded off a very pleasant trip.

Lam Tsuen Valley 22 November 1992

(John Burton)

A very pleasant mild morning it was at Chung Uk Village in the Lam Tsuen Valley at the appointed rendezvous time of 0730h. Only two other members turned out for this meeting - Jerry Ziarno and B.R. Chapman; but what the little group lacked in numbers it made up for in quality!

In a conscious effort to concentrate on investigating what exotics might be found in the old rice

paddies, the group birded only the south side of the valley, walking a circuit from San Tsuen, She Shan and Tin Liu Ha.

In the event the day's list was unremarkable. Very pleasing were the number of the commoner birds. The valley was alive with birdsong, at least indicating that this area of habitat still supports sizable populations.

Not so pleasing was the quietness of the wooded areas which we visited; the sun was warming the tops of the trees. For some reason thrushes, small warblers and flycatchers were simply not there! Highlights of the morning were a fine male Daurian Redstart, an obliging Chinese Bush Warbler together with Chestnut and Yellow-breasted Buntings giving clear comparisons at close range in a bare tree.

The continuing decline of agriculture in the village has led to fields being abandoned. The back path from She Shan to Tin Liu Ha is now overgrown and impassable, leading to critical comments such as 'a fine mess you've got us into!' and other uncalled-for brickbats about my pathfinding abilities from both B.R. and Mr Z.

No matter, when restoring flagging spirits at the local noodlery, morale was lifted further by a small flock of Black-tailed Hawfinches, the last addition to the day's list of 43 species.

REPORT ON THE BIRDS

(These unchecked records include sightings of possible escapes)

September

The typical September passerine migrants were particularly numerous and widespread this year. Noteable counts are as follows: Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, 12 on 6th and 15 on 13th, both at Luk Keng (PRK,PJL,MRL *et al*). Eastern Crowned Warbler, 10 at Shing Mun on 6th (DAD); Pale-legged Leaf Warbler, 12 in Tai Po Kau on 27th (VBP); Brown Flycatcher, six in Tai Po Kau on 6th (DAD); Yellow-rumped Flycatcher, eight at Mai Po on 5th (PRK); and Asian Paradise Flycatcher, four at Shing Mun on 6th (DAD).

Single Forest Wagtails were in Tai Po Kau on 1st (DAD) and 4th (MH) with another at Wong Chuk Yeung also on 4th (MH). An immature Tiger Shrike was seen in Tai Po Kau on 5th (DAD,MRL) with either the same or another there

the following day (DAD), when a male Siberian Blue Robin was also present (CYL). A Sooty Flycatcher was seen there on 8th (RWL) and the following day at Mai Po there were three Asiatic Dowitchers, one Red-necked Phalarope and an Oriental Cuckoo (RWL).

A surprise find on 12th was an immature Lesser Tree Duck on fish ponds near Mai Po (DAD *et al*). This is the first record for over 21 years and those who saw it are glad not to be waiting for the next one! Also on 12th there was a Black-shouldered Kite at Tin Shui Wai (PJL,MRL *et al*). On 13th there were two Mandarin at Mai Po (RWL) and on 16th three Red-rumped Swallows were at Shuen Wan.

Aleutian Terns were still present in good numbers up until 17th when about 80 were seen (PRK,PJL,VBP). At Chek Keng on 19th a Barred Owllet and a Brown Shrike were present (DAD), and the following day in Tai Po Kau there was another Siberian Blue Robin and 10 Red-headed Tits (CYL). There was yet another Siberian Blue Robin on 21st; this individual flew into an 11th floor Mount Butler flat at about 10 p.m. (DC)!

A flock of six Daurian Starlings were at Tin Shui Wai on 26th (MLC). Around the same time the number and variety of waders at Mai Po was excellent with Ruff (up to three), Grey-headed Lapwing, Asiatic Dowitcher and Eastern Curlew being seen among the commoner waders. Also on 26th there was a very obliging Lanceolated Warbler at Mai Po (PRK,PJL,MRL). On 27th there were 14 Red-headed Tits and a Forest Wagtail at Shing Mun (DAD) and a Tiger Shrike in Tai Po Kau (VBP).

October

On 2nd two Siberian Blue Robins were trapped at Kadoorie ARC (DJC) bringing the year's total to an unprecedented seven. Also on 2nd came an interesting report of a spoonbill sp. over Kai Tak (MH). A male Black-throated Sunbird at Tai Tam on 3rd (RCN) was almost certainly an escape. At Tin Shui Wai on the same date the Black-shouldered Kite was seen again and at Mai Po there were two early Black-tailed Hawfinches, seven Purple Herons and an Eastern Crowned Warbler (PJL). Also on 3rd at Shing Mun two Japanese Paradise Flycatchers, a Forest Wagtail and a Black-naped Monarch were noted (DAD). The fourth Blyth's Reed Warbler for Hong Kong was trapped at Mai Po on 8th (ACG) and the following day the second ever Paddyfield Warbler was seen at Mai Po (RWL). Also on 8th a White-vented Needletail was found dead at

Kadoorie ARC (GA), surprisingly this is the first autumn record of either needletail species. At Shuen Wan the first Blackbird and Falcated Teal of the autumn were recorded (RWL).

On 9th, at Mansfield Road there were two Black-winged Cuckoo-shrikes (JB), a Daurian Starling was in the Lam Tsuen Valley (RWL) and a Mountain Hawk Eagle was at Lok Ma Chau (JH). At Mai Po on 10th 11 Brown Flycatchers were noted along with two Eastern Crowned Warblers and a Two-barred Greenish Warbler (GJC,PJL). Further Two-barred Greenish Warblers were recorded the following day in the Lam Tsuen Valley (WLY), at Kadoorie ARC, where one was trapped and another seen (PJL *et al*) and again at Mai Po (JAH). Also at Mai Po there was a Red-breasted Flycatcher and over the landfill area nearby a Northern Sparrowhawk (DAD) which remained in the general area until late November. A Bluethroat was near Tai Wai on 14th (DAD) and on 15th there was a Common Rosefinch at Ho Chung (MH). On 16th a Red-tailed Robin, the first of the autumn, was seen on Cheung Chau (MDW).

An immature bunting at Ho Chung on 17th was either a Red- or Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps/melanocephala* (MH), either of which would be a first for Hong Kong. However, separation of the two species in immature plumage is, unfortunately, not possible. A female Siberian Thrush was at Mount Austin and nearby a Bull-headed Shrike was present (MT). A female Painted Snipe was at Shing Mun (DAD). At Mai Po, still on 17th, there were four Red-breasted Flycatchers, a Bittern, a Hobby and another Two-barred Greenish Warbler (PJL *et al*).

A trip to Ping Chau on 18th proved fruitful with a Radde's Warbler being found (MDW) but also good numbers of the more regular migrants. At Kadoorie ARC a Pale-footed Bush Warbler was trapped, the third there and for Hong Kong (ACG,PJL) although another was seen later that day at Mount Nicholson (CAV).

Two Red-/Black-headed Buntings were at Ho Chung on 19th (MH) again in immature plumage, although they were considered different to the first individual. The following day there were two Hoopoes in Kings Park, Kowloon (CAV). By 23rd Mai Po was teeming with birds with 2800 waders present, three White Ibis, eight Black-faced Spoonbills, various raptors, a Saunder's Gull and single Caspian, Little and Gull-billed Terns. Remarkably, a further immature Red-/Black-headed Bunting was found at Mount Austin (MT). Two Oriental Skylarks were at the landfill area

near Mai Po on the same date (DAD) and remained into November. Two Grey Bushchats were at Ho Chung the following day (JAH) both of which also lingered for some time.

A Blue-and-white Flycatcher was noted from Mount Austin on 25th and a Black Stork and a Banded Rail were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui (CMM). At Kadoorie ARC a very young Emerald Dove, a Short-tailed Bush Warbler and a Black-headed Sibia (escape) were trapped (FW *et al*).

A House Crow (also presumably an escape) was at Shuen Wan on 27th and the following day at Sha Lo Tung a Radde's Warbler and a Black-naped Monarch were present. On 29th at about 0300 hours a first-winter Daurian Starling was trapped in the wader nets on the scrape, also trapped that night were two Painted Snipe (DSM,PJL *et al*). Another 'autumn first' on the 29th was a Japanese Yellow Bunting at Ho Chung; Tristram's, Grey-headed and Chestnut Buntings were also present. An adult Brahminy Kite near Kowloon Reservoir on the same day (GCHC) was the first for some time.

An early Sulphur-breasted Warbler, a Pallas's Warbler, a Red-flanked Bluetail and two Mugimaki Flycatchers were at Mount Austin on 30th (MT), and at Sha Lo Tung a Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike and a Crested Bunting were present (RWL). An obliging adult male Siberian Thrush and 10 Grey-cheeked Fulvettas were in Tai Po Kau on 31st (MH,JAH) and a Yellow-browed Bunting was at Ho Chung (MH,JAH). Also on 31st at Kadoorie ARC 145 Chestnut Buntings were seen and a Besra was trapped (PJL *et al*).

November

At Shing Mun on 1st there were two Radde's Warblers, a Blyth's Leaf Warbler and a Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler (DAD). Another Radde's Warbler was at Mount Austin, where a Chestnut-flanked White-eye was also noted (MT). At Ping Yeung there was a singing Wryneck and a Tiger Shrike was seen near Magazine Gap Road (KW). On 4th a flock of 10 Siskins was seen at Mount Nicholson (CAV).

On 6th at Sha Lo Tung a Spotted Bush Warbler *Bradypterus thoracicus* was seen (PJL,VBP) which, if accepted, would be a first for Hong Kong. Four Bright-capped Cisticolas were seen at Ping Yeung (PJL,VBP) and at Ho Chung later that day a Russet Bush Warbler *Bradypt-*

terus seebohmi was caught and ringed (PJL,MH,VBP). This finally proves that *seebohmi* does occur in Hong Kong and, more interestingly, strongly indicates that the bird trapped at Sha Lo Tung back in January was in fact a Brown Bush Warbler *B. luteoventris* which, if accepted as such, would also be a first for Hong Kong.

On 7th at Sha Lo Tung there was a Radde's Warbler, a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler and three Yellow-bellied Tits (JAH). Two further Radde's were trapped at Kadoorie ARC along with one Chestnut-flanked White-eye (PJL *et al*) At Ho Chung a Bull-headed Shrike was seen (MT *et al*) and the male Grey Bushchat was still present. Mugimaki Flycatchers were exceptionally common around this time with widespread reports including up to five trapped in a day at Kadoorie ARC, up to three in Tai Po Kau on 9th (GJC) and two in Kowloon Park, also on 9th, one of which was an adult male (PJL). At Ho Chung on 8th 100 Asian House Martins were present (MRL,PJL) - a good autumn count. A Black-shouldered Kite was on Lamma on 9th (NH).

Yet another Radde's Warbler was found at Mount Austin on 12th (MT) and at Sha Lo Tung that day there were two Bright-capped Cisticolas, two Mountain Bush Warblers and two Bradypterus warblers (RWL). A Northern Sparrowhawk was trapped at Mai Po on 13th (FW,GJC) and a returning flock of 14 Oriental White Storks was seen (GJC).

Early morning movements of passerines at Kadoorie ARC on 14th included 90 Eye-browed Thrushes, 12 Grey Thrushes and almost 100 Chestnut Buntings (MRL,PJL *et al*). In the Tan Shan Valley near Ping Yeung eight Crested Buntings were found and at Ping Yeung five Bright-capped Cisticolas and a Grey Bushchat were present (DAD). At Mai Po a rare autumn Spoon-billed Sandpiper was found (RWL) and a Styan's Grasshopper Warbler was trapped (MRL *et al*) and the second Japanese Yellow Bunting of the autumn was at Ho Chung (JAH) along with a Crested Bunting. No less than 13 Crested and five Yellow-browed Buntings were seen in the Tan Shan Valley on 15th (DAD) when at Mai Po

the first Penduline Tits of the autumn, a Scaup and a very entertaining Saker were seen (PJL,PRK).

A Large Grass Warbler at Ho Chung the following day (RWL) was rather unusual but this was somewhat overshadowed by a flock of 14 Bewick's Swans *Cygnus columbianus* in front of the Boardwalk Hide at Mai Po (SC,WLY), another first for Hong Kong. On 20th, at Tsim Bei Tsui, four Grey-headed Lapwings were present with another at Mai Po on 22nd (RWL).

On 21st a first-winter Relict Gull was seen from the Boardwalk (PRK,MRL *et al*), the second record for Hong Kong. Another second was found on the nearby landfill that afternoon in the form of a female Japanese Reed Bunting which was subsequently trapped and ringed (PJL). A flock of 40 Lapwings were noted flying overhead (PJL) and another flock of 16 was seen at Mai Po (RWL). In Tai Po Kau a Chestnut-flanked White-eye and a Black-naped Monarch were present (DAD).

A Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* at Mai Po on 22nd (MLC *et al*) is another potential first. A new high count of 62 Black-faced Spoonbills was made the same day (RWL) and 170 Blackbirds in the Tan Shan Valley was also a record count (DAD).

ON 28th a Besra and four Mountain Bush Warblers were among the many migrants trapped at Kadoorie ARC (PJL *et al*). At Mai Po the Saker was seen again as well as a Black Vulture (RWL,JAH), a Bittern (MDW) and the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. A Siberian Thrush was at Mount Austin (MT) and the Relict Gull was found again, this time at Tsim Bei Tsui (MLC) and was still present the following day. A Two-barred Greenish Warbler was in the Lam Tsuen Valley (RWL).

Two more Russet Bush Warblers were trapped at Sha Lo Tung (PJL,PRK,MLC) on 29th and a Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler, second for Hong Kong, was trapped at Mai Po (ACG *et al*). A Grey-sided Thrush *Turdus feae* at Kap Tong near Wu Kau Tang the same day was an excellent find (KW) and yet another potential first, bringing the total for the month to four.

FUTURE MEETINGS

DATE	LEADER	VENUE	TIME
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13 December Sunday	Mike Turnbull	Hok Tau Reservoir Meet Car Park, off Sha Tau Kok Road	7.30
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Followed by THE CURRY LUNCH
NT Depot, Fanling

20 December Sunday		Christmas Count contact Ian Tyzzer for details	
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1993

2 January Saturday	Wendy Young	Tai Po Kau Meet Car Park	7.30
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9 January Saturday	John Holmes	Tsui Keng New Outing Meet RHK Golf Club Car Park off Fan Kam Road	7.00
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✓ 10 January Sunday	Fox Wong Ian Tyzzer	Mai Po*++ Bilingual	10.00-15.00
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16 January Saturday	Mike Leven	Tai Mei Tuk / Nam Chung Meet at AFD Car Park	8.00-12.30
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30 January Saturday	Peter Stevens	Tai Po Kau Meet at Car Park	7.30
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7 February Sunday	Wendy Young Chan Ming-ming	Shek Kong Bilingual Meet at Bus Stop west of roundabout	9.00
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→ 14 February Sunday	Li Wai-ki Mike Chalmers	Mai Po* Bilingual	10.00-15.00
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19 February Friday	INDOOR MEETING		
	TIBET AND ITS' BIRDS Peter Kennerley will give an illustrated talk on this superb birding area, using some of the many photographs taken on his trip in October 1992		18.30
	Police Headquarters, Arsenal Street, Wanchai. Please phone Ian Tyzzer, to confirm attendance and if parking is required, before 17 February		

→ 21 February Sunday	C Y Lam Andrew Young	Tsim Bei Tsui Bilingual	10.00-15.00
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27 February Saturday	Nigel Croft	Luk Keng / Nam Chung	7.30
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6 March Saturday	Stuart Smith	Ho Chung Meet end of main road, past Nam Pin Wai Village Contact leader for details.	7.00
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14 March Sunday	Keith Wilson Simba Chan	Mai Po* Bilingual	10.00-15.00
20 March Saturday	John Burton	Tai Po Kau Meet Car Park	7.00
25 April Sunday	Roger Costin Ng Cho-nam	Mai Po* Bilingual	10.00-15.00

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

|| 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 \$35 (#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.

++ 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 861 5416 (O) to see if any seats are still available. Please bring packed lunch and drink.

Please complete these forms and make out your cheque in English

Mai Po - Sunday 14th February 1993

I wish to reserve ___ places on the coach (\$35 for ordinary member,
\$15 for student member)

I enclose a cheque for \$ _____ (make cheque payable to Hong Kong Birdwatching Society)

Please return to:

Ian Tyzzer, Flat 39, Mt. Nicholson Gap 6/F, 103 Mt. Nicholson Road, Hong Kong by 29th January 1993

NAME

TELEPHONE NO.

Tsim Bei Tsui - Sunday 21st February 1993

I wish to reserve ___ places on the coach (\$35 for ordinary member,
\$15 for student member)

I enclose a cheque for \$ _____ (make cheque payable to Hong Kong Birdwatching Society)

Please return to:

Ian Tyzzer, Flat 39, Mt. Nicholson Gap 6/F, 103 Mt. Nicholson Road, Hong Kong by 5th February 1993

NAME

TELEPHONE NO.

Mai Po - Sunday 14th March 1993

I wish to reserve ___ places on the coach (\$35 for ordinary member,
\$15 for student member)

I enclose a cheque for \$ _____ (make cheque payable to Hong Kong Birdwatching Society)

Please return to:

Ian Tyzzer, Flat 39, Mt. Nicholson Gap 6/F, 103 Mt. Nicholson Road, Hong Kong by 26th February 1993

NAME

TELEPHONE NO.

Mai Po - Sunday 25th April 1993

I wish to reserve ___ places on the coach (\$35 for ordinary member,
\$15 for student member)

I enclose a cheque for \$ _____ (make cheque payable to Hong Kong Birdwatching Society)

Please return to:

Ian Tyzzer, Flat 39, Mt. Nicholson Gap 6/F, 103 Mt. Nicholson Road, Hong Kong by 2nd April 1993

NAME

TELEPHONE NO.

New Hong Kong Breeding Birds Survey

In order to determine the up-to-date distribution of Hong Kong's breeding birds in greater detail for conservation purposes and for publication in the next edition of the Annotated Checklist, all members are invited to take part in a new breeding survey commencing in 1993. Members are asked to undertake surveys in one or more **5km square** (see map overleaf) during the breeding season (March to September). It is the intention to repeat surveys for at least one and possibly two more years, but observers may change for subsequent years.

A new set of simplified breeding codes and criteria are to be used based on the new BTO Atlas of Breeding Birds. Only two categories are used, **S for seen (or heard)** and **B for breeding**.

Observers are asked to visit their adopted squares covering all major habitats **at least twice** in the breeding season, and preferably more frequently.

It is also proposed to enter results into a database for the Hong Kong Ecological Map being developed by WWF. To give the degree of detail compatible with the habitat zones in the map, observers are asked to report the location of breeding birds by noting the nearest 1km square reference within each 5km square (A-E across and 1-5 down) on the form provided. Thus the square highlighted would be 23 B4. Add extra species to the list as necessary

SQUARE 23

	A	B	C	D	E
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

For rarer species please also indicate location by marking up a copy of the 1:20,000 map for your area (copies available from Mike Chalmers; originals from Government Map Sales, Murray Building). Confidentiality will obviously be maintained for threatened species.

This is your chance to contribute to our local

knowledge in a very meaningful way, it need not take much time and it should be fun. How many different species can you find and how does one visit compare with the last? How many S records can you upgrade to B?

Please also send in records for squares other than your own: all records are of use. Visits to offshore islands or remote parts of the NT are especially noteworthy e.g. does Large Grass Warbler breed on the Ninepins (80D1)? Are there still breeding Slaty-legged Crakes at Tong Fuk, Lantau (72A5)?

Records should be submitted by the **end of September at the latest**. Photocopy extra forms as needed. Please phone or fax Mike Chalmers for details (Office: 4928131, Home: 6057719, fax: 4110143) or write c/o SWK, 38/F Metroplaza Tower 1, Kwai Fong, N.T.

Breeding Codes

Breeding (enter B) for:

- Bird apparently holding territory
- Courtship and display; or anxiety call/agitated behaviour of adult indicating presence of young or nest
- Brood-patch on trapped bird
- Adult visiting probable nest-site
- Nest building (including excavating nest-hole)
- Distraction display or injury-feigning
- Used nest found. Recently fledged young
- Adult carrying faecal sac or food. Adult entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating occupied nest (including colonies)
- Nest with eggs found, or bird sitting but not disturbed, or eggshells found near nest.
- Nest with young; or downy young of ducks, gamebirds, waders or other nidifugous species.

Seen (enter S) if species seen (or heard) but with no evidence of breeding. Singing birds are included in this category because song does not always imply breeding. The term means making use of the square for any purpose other than flying over. For example, gulls flying over are not included but swallows taking insects or kestrels hovering are. Birds which are clearly late winter visitors or passage migrants should be excluded. However, summering (non-breeding) birds should be included.

THE TERRITORY OF HONG KONG 香港全境



