



香港觀鳥會
THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY
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BULLETIN NO. 148

JUNE 1993

Society News

1993 Annual General Meeting

The 1993 AGM was held on 31st March, the minutes are enclosed with this Bulletin, but highlights included the election of a **new committee** (see below), including a **new chairman, Richard Stott**; an **increase in subscription rates** (see this page); the decision to **build a new floating hide** at Mai Po (see page 2); and **CY Lam's** illustrated talk on his **Antarctic trip** (see page 8)

Gavin Cooper

Gavin has stepped down as Chairman of the Society after ten years in office. He has overseen its increase in membership and expertise with enthusiasm and humour. The Society is very grateful to Gavin for all his hard work. He is not leaving Hong Kong and will continue to be involved in Society activities, so his familiar camouflaged figure will still be glimpsed on the Sek Kong catchwater or at Mai Po!

Cantonese Bird Hotline

The Cantonese Bird Hotline is now operating, run by Cheung Ho-fai. The number is

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

Richard Stott Chairman
David Carrier Secretary
Mike Chalmers Recorder
Liz Leven Bulletin Editor
(English)
Li Wai-ki Librarian
Ian Tyzzer Hide Project

C Y Lam Vice Chairman
Janet Stott Treasurer
David Melville WWF Liaison
M M Chan Bulletin Editor
(Chinese)
Geoff Carey Annual Report
Editor

The Bird Hotline Number is

Paul Leader c/o McKenna and Co. 36/F Gloucester Tower, The Landmark, Central, Hong Kong.

Record cards should be sent to

Suscription Increase

In order to ensure the Society continues in a healthy financial state it was agreed at the AGM that subscriptions would be increased from 1 June 1993. The revised rates are as follows:

Ordinary/Family Member	\$200
Student	\$50
Corporate Member	\$350
Overseas Member	\$250
Surcharge for English and and Chinese Bulletins	\$30

New subscription forms are available from the Secretary, so please use them to encourage your friends to join the Society!

Volunteer needed

The editor is in desperate need of a volunteer to assist with the typing of the Bulletin. Access to a word processor would be necessary. The work would involve two or three evenings once every three months for an experienced typist. Please contact Liz Leven if you can help.

All contributions to the September Bulletin should be sent to Liz Leven, 1-3 Unicorn Gardens, 11 Shouson Hill Road East, Hong Kong by August 13th. Many Thanks.

New Floating Hide at Mai Po

At the AGM it was agreed that the Society would pursue the construction of a second floating hide at Mai Po in order to relieve the pressure on the existing one. Preliminary studies have indicated that the best location is to the south-west of the existing hide. **Costs are likely to be in the region of \$250,000.** A Working Group chaired by Ian Tyzzer has been formed to manage the project and raise funds, comprising of Mike Chalmers, Lew Young and Nigel Croft. Initial work to obtain the necessary permissions from Government is in progress, and a definitive proposal is in hand. In due course all Society members will be addressed with details of the scheme and how it is planned to raise funds. However, at this stage it appears likely that the Society must bear the costs of construction, and **the support of all members will be necessary if the project is to succeed.**

Society Outings

With the increasing popularity of some of the field outings, problems are arising with over or under subscription. The Committee is in the process of drafting some simple guidelines to make life easier for members and leaders, which will be published in the September Bulletin.

In the meantime, would members please note the following:

Members intending to attend an outing should **contact the leader several days beforehand, to confirm attendance.** This allows the leader to assess numbers, and notify participants of any changes in timing, route, possible cancellation, etc. Members attending Mai Po outings (unless using the coach) should be doing this already, as the AFD permit is limited to 50, and **this will be rigidly enforced in future.**

On outings where numbers are limited, **only Society members** will be able to take part

Leaders are all unpaid volunteers, giving up their valuable time on behalf of the membership. Please treat leaders with courtesy, or we will soon have no leaders willing to do the job! **Volunteers for leaders are always welcome!**

Antarctica - Tony Soper 18th September

Once again Tony Soper is visiting Hong Kong, and will be giving an illustrated talk on Antarctica at **18.15, Saturday 18th September.** There will be a charge of **\$70 per head (including drinks),** the proceeds to be split between **WWF and the Floating Hide Fund.** The talk will be held at the **Gazetted Police Officer's Mess, Police HQ, Arsenal Street, Hong Kong.** Please complete and return the booking form **(with cheque)** at the end of the Bulletin by September 15th, to Janet Stott.

Mai Po Floating Hide

Tony Soper will be leading a group of visiting birdwatchers to Mai Po on 18th September, including a visit to the floating hide. Whilst leaders of visiting groups are normally asked to avoid using this hide at weekends, in view of Tony's fund-raising efforts and the shortness of his stay in HK, an exception was felt to be justified. Since Tony's party will be quite large (approx. 30 people) members might be advised not to visit the hide on this day, to avoid any frustration!

Jerry Ziarno

Jerry will be leaving Hong Kong in the near future, so asks all his friends to note his new address - **6208 Sturgeon Creek Pkwy, Midland, Michigan, USA.**

Jerry has been an active member of the Society over the last four years, leading outings and reporting on his overseas trips, and he will be missed. If any member is visiting his area of the US in future, he has offered to show them some of his new local specialities, so make a note of his new address!!

Commander E.D. Webb

Members, especially those of long standing, will be sorry to learn of the death of Honorary Society Member, Commander E.D. Webb. Commander Webb was one of the driving forces behind the Society in its early days, editing the early Bird Report, and was Chairman until he left Hong Kong in 1971. An active birdwatcher, he was a well known and colourful character in the Territory. Commander Webb died peacefully, in UK, in January 1993.

Breeding Birds Survey

The Survey is well under way. June and July are probably the best months for survey work with lots of young birds about. Coverage is quite high, especially in the NTs, but there are still some gaps, and we need volunteers to fill them! The list below shows who is responsible for which squares, and which ones are still uncovered. If you are interested get in touch with **Mike Chalmers**

Square No	Location	Observer
1,2,3	Sha Tau Kok FCA	NJG Croft
4,5,12,13	Kat O Chau Group	MR Leven
6,14,15	Peng Chau & Port Is	GJ Carey
7,8	Ma Tso Lung FCA	J Holmes
9,10,11	Ping Yuen, Yim Tso Ha Luk Keng/ Wu Kau Tau	PJ Leader
16	Mong Tseng	G Walthew
17	Mai Po	Simba Chan
19	Fanling	NRTownsend
20	Sha Lo Tung	R Lewthwaite
21	Tai Mei Tuk	JSR Edge
22	Tolo Channel	
23,24	Ho Ha Wan/Tap Mun	VB Picken
25	Gau Tau	
26,27,28	Tsang Tsui/Nim Wah Pak Nai/Ha Tsuen	JE Burton
29	Yuen Long	
30	Shek Kong	
31	Lam Tsuen Valley	
32	Tai Po Kau	GJ Carey
33,34	Ma On Shan/Three Fathoms Cove	PR Stevens
35	Pak Tam Au	P Aston
36	Sharp Peak/Tai Long	WK Li
37,38	Lung Kwu Tan/Castle Peak	HF Cheung
39	Tuen Mun	
40	Tai Lam Chung	CN Ng
41	Ting Kau	NS Grimshaw
42,43	Shing Mun/Shatin	DA Diskin
44,45	Buffalo Hill/Sai Kung	W Parfitt
46	High Island West	T Woodward
47	High Island East	WK Li
48	Sha Chau	
49	West Brother	
50	East Brother	
51	Yam O/Ma Wan	J Bryant
52	Tsing Yi	
53	Kowloon Res/Stonecutters Is.	
54	N.Kowloon/Lion Rock	Fox Wong
55	Kowloon Pk/Ho Chung	M Hale
56	Silverstrand	J Hackett
57	Rocky Harbour	
58,68,69	Basalt Is. Group	
59	Sha Lo Wan	
60	Tung Chung	
61	Discovery Bay/Peng Chau	J Bryant
63	Kau Yi Chau	
64	MT. Davis/Mid Levels	M Turnbull
65N	S.Kowloon	CY Lam
65S	Happy Valley/North Pt	MM Chan
66N	Lei Yue Mun	J Hackett
66S	Quarry Bay	MM Chan
67	Clearwater Bay	J Hackett
70	Tai O	G Walthew
71	Ngong Ping	
72	Sunset Peak	
73	Mui Wo/Pui O	
74	Hei Ling Chau	
75,87,88,94	Lamma	JRoll/RMorrish
76	Aberdeen	M Turnbull
77	Mt.Nicholson/Repulse Bay	VB Picken
78	Tai Tam	TR Costin
79	Tung Lung	P Aston
80,81	Ninepins	Ian Tyzzer
82	Fan Lau	G Walthew
83,84	Shek Pik/Tong Fuk	
85	Chi Ma Wan/Shek Wu Chau	
86	Chung Chau	MD Williams
89	Chung Hom Kok	G Ziarno
90	Stanley/Cape D'Aguilar	L Young
91,95,96	Waglan Is/Po Toi	I Tyzzer
92,93	Sokos	VB Melville

If you have any sightings or breeding records in any square, please contact the person allocated the square, so that the data can be incorporated into the square's record sheet.

Whilst out and about, note down any mammal, reptile, amphibian or insect sightings. It is all useful data for **WWF's Ecological Map**, so please pass it on to **WWF 1 Tramway Path, Central, HK**

Ho Chung

(Jim Hackett)

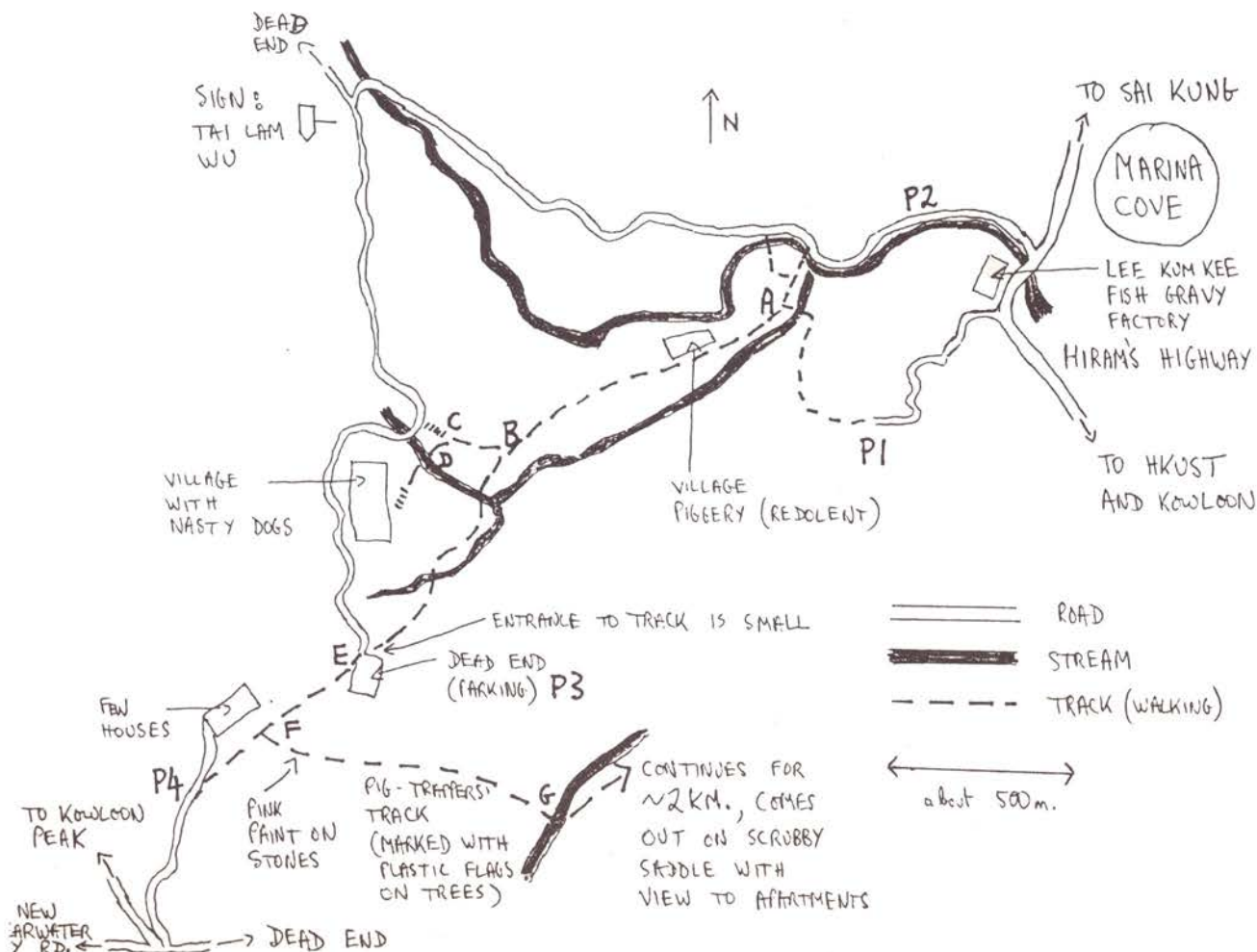
The area of Ho Chung is in the eastern New Territories, and there are two ways to get there by car. Refer to the map. (ed. note. For public transport see Geoff Carey's Guide to Birding Sites in Hong Kong, details of which were given in the March 1993 Bulletin)

First you may take the Clearwater Bay Road eastward and turn down Hiram's Highway. Watch for the Lee Kum Kee Fish Gravy Factory, and turn left just before it. There is parking after 500m. or so (P1 on map). Alternatively you can pass the factory, over a bridge, and turn left under an arch. there is a jumble of parking at P2 which you could join. Both P1 and P2 place you at the bottom of the valley. Get to the point marked A, and start walking A-B. This is a concrete path through largely cleared land: the weeds grow high in summer and are burnt off in the autumn, when buntings love them. Birds along A-B (and in the fields nearby - wander around here) have recently included Red-headed/Black-headed Bunting, Japanese Yellow, Yellow-browed and Crested Buntings, and Grey Bushchat. At B there is a poorly marked track running B-E; ignore it. Continue B-C-D. Some

forest now begins. If you get to D (a bridge over a rocky stream) you've gone too far; retreat 100m. or so to C and take the steps on the left up to the vehicular road. Turn left and walk to E (a dead end). There is a particularly horrible dog in the village on the way. You can also drive to E as shown on the map; watch for the "Tai Lam Wu" sign as you drive from the P2 area.

Point E is a car park (P3); as you enter watch for steps on the right. Take them to F. This marks the point of departure (on the left) of a forest track - there is pink paint on some stones. Take this track and watch carefully for the plastic bits on the trees: these can lead you for 2km. or so through good forest. Recent birds in the area E-F-G (G is a stream crossing - no bridge) included Chinese Blue Flycatcher, Fulvous-faced and Yellow-eyed Flycatcher-Warblers, and Sulphur-breasted Warbler. The area is not unlike Tai Po Kau.

If you want to do the forest only, you can take New Clearwater Bay Road out of Kowloon and turn sharp left for Kowloon Peak. After a short distance there is a further sharp left for Kowloon Peak; do not take it. Instead, drive slowly until you see an obvious track on the right rising from the forest. Park (P4), and walk down until you find yourself at F.



Records Committee

Committee Membership

Long standing members of the committee, Clive Viney and Peter Kennerley have recently resigned. Following their stepping down, the committee has decided to appoint Mike Leven.

The four members of the committee are now:

Mike Chalmers, Recorder and Committee Chairman

Paul Leader, Secretary

Geoff Carey, Bird Report Editor

Mike Leven,

Chinese Language Records

The Committee now has the capability, in the person of Geoff Carey, of **translation from Chinese to English**. Thus members who wish to submit records in Chinese are encouraged to do so, using the normal record cards. However, to avoid Geoff being overwhelmed, members who have used English in the past, are asked to continue submitting records in English.

List of species requiring descriptions

The following species have been deleted from the list:

Swinhoe's Egret
Baikal Teal
Black-shouldered Kite
Chinese Goshawk
Ruddy Crake
Little Stint
Little Whimbrel
Crested Kingfisher
Siberian Blue Robin
Grey Bushchat
Orange-headed Ground Thrush
Siberian Thrush
Brown Thrush
Lanceolated Warbler
Purple-backed Starling
European Starling
Siskin
Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler
Vinous-throated Parrotbill

For ease of reference a revised list of species requiring descriptions from **1 January 1993** is appended to this Bulletin. The Records Committee may, however, request details of any unusual record of a species not on the list.

Category changes

- i) Cat E to Cat D **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch**
- ii) Cat D to Cat A **Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler**

Submission of records

Observers are now requested to submit cards for species requiring descriptions twice yearly. Accordingly, any such cards for the **first six months of 1993** should be submitted **now**. Descriptions of potential additions to the list should be submitted as soon as possible after seeing the bird. All observers are requested to submit details (date, place, number etc) for **all** non-description species. These should be submitted at the end of the year.

Japanese Gull Guide

This guide, written in Japanese, illustrates all the gull species recorded from east Asia. The plates detail every known plumage and are technically very accurate. The quality of the text is at yet unknown, but it is hoped that a translation can be made locally, for an additional cost. The Society will make a bulk order if sufficient people are interested. The cost will be **\$200.00 (incl p&p)** if 15 books or more are ordered. If you are interested please **complete the reply slip** at the end of the Bulletin and **return to the Secretary**, with a cheque for HK\$200.00, made out to Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, by **July 23rd**. The translation cost will depend on the number of people interested

Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Bali MacKinnon and Phillips

It may be possible, depending on numbers, to purchase this recently published, ground breaking field guide in bulk, in order to reduce the cost. The published price is GBP50.00 (hardback), GBP25.00 (softback). It should be possible to reduce these costs by **25%**, if a sufficient number of people are interested. John Edge has very generously volunteered to co-ordinate the bulk order. If you want a copy of this guide, **complete the reply slip** at the end of the Bulletin and return it to **John by July 23rd**. Do **not** send any money at this stage!

Leg Flagged Waders 1993

Leg flagging of waders in Australasia has continued during the last year, with a further 10,000 being marked. Birds are now flagged with **yellow, orange, white and green**, depending on where they were marked. Sightings have been made in Japan, Taiwan, Brunei, Indonesia and New Zealand, as well as China and Hong Kong. One of the most interesting sightings has been that of three Bar-tailed Godwits in the one roosting flock at the Ariake Sea, Kyushu, Japan in April 1992. The birds had white, green and orange flags, indicating that they had originated from New Zealand, Queensland and Victoria respectively.

In previous years records from Mai Po have been:

At least two individual Curlew Sandpipers in April 1990 and one in May 1992;

Single Red-necked Stints in May 1991 and 1992.

There were quite a few sightings this spring, so please keep a look out this autumn. Records from Mai Po are particularly valuable as they can be cross referenced with count data for statistical analysis. Take note of any marked bird you see, and either record it in the Book at Mai Po or pass the information to David Melville at WWF.

Waders In Hong Kong

Overseas member **Ray Tipper** has published a superbly illustrated article in the May 1993 edition of *British Birds*. All the photographs are up to Ray's usual standard, and the article is highly recommended. If you do not subscribe to *BB*, a copy is available in the Society Library, **contact Li Wai-ki**

BIG BIRD RACE '93; A personal view.

(Martin Hale)

The problems start this year with selection of the leader. Richard Stott has for many a long year ably guided the Bird Watching Society Team through the Bird Race, but this year he and Tony van der Linden are not available, Peter Garland declines, and so the mantle of leadership falls to my shoulders. I try to brush it off of course, mostly by declaring, even up until a couple of months before The Race, that I am not available either, but my bluff is called and leader I become.

Jim Hacket and John Bryant are persuaded to join the team with false promises of Birding Glory, and this then is how we march on to meet our destiny:

Friday 1545: Disaster. Half an hour ago every wader you ever wanted on a bird race was to be found on the drained pond beside the bridge at The Fence. Half the waders have now disappeared with the falling tide. Spoon-billed Sandpiper is nowhere to be found, and it takes many a long minute and a few false starts before we can relocate the Little Stint. However at five minutes to four we each have a 'scope glued to a different species, and at four we quickly do the round of the 'scopes to get some important ticks. A large number of teams have also chosen to start at the drained pond, and the scene here now resembles an old fashioned Grand Prix start as drivers race for their vehicles. We follow the Professionals to Tsim Bei Tsui paddies, where all except Red-vented Bulbul quickly falls into place. The Professionals are obviously having the same problem, but hold on, Phil Round is pointing something out, and, yes, it's in the bag. Thanks Phil, even if the Professionals look as though they would rather we hadn't seen it. A quick walk out onto the Police Post Pier for Shellduck and Little Tern, an even briefer stop to pick up a staked-out Japanese Yellow Bunting, and, courtesy of Peter and his jeep, we are off on the back road towards Yuen Long. The Green Sandpiper and House Martin that were here two hours ago are nowhere to be seen, but now we have run into the Professionals again, and they are all peering into a tree. They've got Common Mynah, and although on any normal day this wouldn't merit even a glance, on Race Day we need it. As we fall out of the cars the Mynah flies and disappears behind a nearby hill. One of our team has been rather slow in dismounting and doesn't get onto it, so it doesn't count! I decide to stride over and poke my fingers in his eyes as a token of my displeasure, but before I can do this the Mynah re-appears and flies past us. Close call, save two fingers. A quick dash to Lok Ma Chau where we "persuade" a few Snipe to take flight, and watch the Professionals do the same. Even in the rapidly failing light we can only convince ourselves of Fantail Snipe, and I know now in my heart of hearts that we are doomed. With a lack of imagination such as this we don't stand a chance. On to Chau Tau where just about every other team is waiting to hear Savannah Nightjar, which soon obliges. We now move on to Tai Po Kau for the owls. A Barred Owlet has been calling here during daylight hours for several days, and together with the Ladies

(what a lovely team) we wait just beyond the car park hoping to hear it. We don't wait long before another team strides out of the forest, but my "did you get it" is greeted with a grunt that could mean yes, no, or something really quite rude (most teams prove to be generous with information, and this is certainly the approach that we adopt, but there are exceptions, and their names are not forgotten). Since this team obviously has something to hide, we go off into the forest and before long hear the owl calling in the distance. We now head off for Ho Chung, where a Collared Scops has been calling recently, while the Ladies sensibly stay at Tai Po Kau. They get Collared Scops within minutes of us leaving, while, after half an hour, we are still at Ho Chung having heard nothing. There are now vague mutterings about food from my fellow team members, and I make a fatal error of judgement and allow a democratic vote on whether we go on to the Island for Collared Scops, or jack it in for the day. I of course vote for the Island, but there are two votes against me and one abstention. I therefore decide to punish the rebellion by bringing the start time for tomorrow morning forward to 0500, so that we can have another go at the Collared Scops on Ho Chung.

Saturday. It's 0455 and there is no sign of one team member. Frankly this does not come as a surprise, since this particular individual does, how can I put it, have a problem with early starts. Anyway, the upshot of all this is that we only get five minutes on Ho Chung, and no Collared Scops. We now re-muster at my place to await the arrival of Thompson Tse in a top-of-the-range Volvo, which will be the team transport for today. Thompson kindly sacrifices a day each year to drive us during the Bird Race, but the unusual pick up point (it's usually Richard's place) seems to have thrown him, and he is now late as well. We load up my car and set off, but luckily meet Thompson driving into Marina Cove as we drive out. Making up for lost time he quickly has us at Coombe Road, which is where we hope to hear Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler at day-break. Scimitar Babblers prove to be less than abundant, but we do run into the Professionals yet again! It's now off to the ZBG where we get everything except Black-throated Laughing Thrush, and then onto Kowloon Park, and yet again more than half the teams are present. After our first circuit we discover that we have missed Slaty-legged Crake. We peer into the bushes but

all we can see is one of the other team leaders, fresh from having bashed the Crake into view for his team, but out of view for ours. Since bashing the bush seems to be the order of the day we pile in (yes, I know, it was a bit O.T.T.) but dip. It's now off to Tai Po Kau, which proves to be much quieter than it has been in the last few days. Still, we are fairly happy with the way that things are going until we meet up with the Stonechats, and are regaled with stories of the luckiest ever sighting of Grey Nightjar (mobbing a Black Kite as they drove out of the Cross Harbor Tunnel), and of the wonderful time that they have just had on Ho Chung. Now, as everyone hopefully knows, Ho Chung belongs to Jim and myself, and so it is obviously galling when a rival team has a) scored well here but more importantly b) not even asked our permission to bird here! We leave Tai Po Kau depressed, and the gloom deepens at Bride's Pool (against my better judgement we have decided to do the Plover Cove area), where we are repelled by the noise made by 10,000 (or so it seems) holiday makers. We don't even bother to look for a staked out Blue and White flycatcher; if it has got any sense it has fled. Luk Keng provides a few useful birds, but time is getting on and we are off again to do the Golden Triangle and Sek Kong woods. We get very little here, and I feel an impending sense of doom. We are stalled on about 130 species, with just Mai Po left, but with most of the waders already accounted for. We waste time looking for that ever illusive Green Sandpiper, but a stop at a drained pond just before the Education Centre gives us Spoon-billed Sandpiper. Our presence here attracts other teams, and, starting to wonder at my sense of fair play, I pass the info. on. A scamper down the Casuarinas gives us a few more species, but now Japanese Yellow Bunting seems to have become locally abundant and we realise that everyone will get it. We do the Scrape quickly, a little too quickly because we apparently miss Oriental Pratincole. Under the last minute amendment to the Race rules two of us proceed along the Boardwalk, while the other two are left to fill out the log and total our score so far. Back at the Boardwalk John is especially sharp and picks out three new species for every one that I find. There is much activity as everyone is peering through everyone else's 'scope to get those final few ticks. Some of our earlier ticks are now duplicated, and for once it is irritating that so many Spoon-billed Sandpipers are present (I never thought I'd hear myself say this!) since

everyone will have it on their list. Having rejoined the other team members I find that we are very close to my personal minimum target of 150 species, with about 15 minutes left. John once again comes to the rescue with Gadwall, and then Jim, but no-one else, sees a Yellow Bittern fly into the reeds close by. A well aimed brick forces the latter to shift a couple of feet (sorry, I'm pretty desperate by now) and we are (apparently) on 150. Back at the check-in point we have 30 minutes to tidy up the log book, but the score doesn't add up. With ten minutes to go Jim realises that we haven't written in a couple of species, but that brings us to 151, and something is still wrong. Out of time, and it's only at the post race dinner that we realise that we haven't written in Black-tailed Gull. This is particularly galling since we put this on the Race list last year (under some protest from the Adjudicator I might add) and it now becomes apparent that the list, although reprinted for the '93 Bird Race, has not been updated. WHY NOT? We subsequently hear that we are not the only team to fall into this trap. It costs us a place, but it also loses money for WWF, so let's sort this one out please. We also find out that at least one well placed team has decided not to adopt the rule that requires species identified on call to be indicated with a "H" (heard for the uninitiated) written alongside. Judging by some of the (apparent) feats of identification on call this year this is probably a very sensible approach. How long will it be before someone in the Society claims to be psychic, and is able to identify species on "feel", as in "I feel the presence of such and such a species". Allow me to get ahead of the game and suggest this be indicated in the Bird Race Log with the letter "F".

And the final score: We came in, well, nicely average, at eighth, although, thanks to the tireless efforts of Richard and Tony, we did do rather better in the fund raising. More importantly, the event raised over \$1.7 million for Mai Po, (a record, and a magnificent achievement) which is where we will see you, dear reader, next Bird Race.

Editor's Note. The 1993 Big Bird Race raised \$1.72 million for Mai Po. The Stonechats won with a record breaking **171 species**. Once again the Professionals raised the most sponsorship with a fantastic **\$300,000**. All the teams and helpers and WWF staff are to be congratulated on a highly successful event.

OVERSEAS BIRDING

Antarctica and Indian Ocean, 27 December 1992 - 26 January 1993

(C Y Lam)

I boarded the Russian icebreaker Kapitan Klebnikov at Fremantle on 27 December 1992. This marked the beginning of a one-month cruise that would take me to the Indian Ocean side of Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic islands: Heard, Kerguelen, St Paul and Amsterdam.

As the ship left the port in the late afternoon, we were accompanied by Silver Gulls. Australian Gannets, Pied Cormorants and Crested Terns were spotted in the vicinity of the coast, as the ship headed south in the direction of Casey Base operated by Australia.

28 December: This was my baptism in seabird watching in the open sea. I enjoyed seeing Flesh-footed Shearwaters doing what their name said, that is, flying and banking from time to time with the wing tip apparently slicing the water surface. A few Arctic Skuas were seen flying somewhat higher. White-chinned Petrels would often follow the ship during the trip (mostly outside Antarctic waters). A Little Shearwater flew close to the ship and dived just in time to avoid being hit.

29 December: The day commenced with two stately-looking Wandering Albatrosses, followed by a Sooty Albatross. Petrels began to appear and I scored Soft-plumaged and White-headed Petrel. The first of numerous Wilson's Storm-Petrel seen during the trip was recorded in the afternoon. Prions were encountered but proved difficult to identify. I thought I saw a Royal Albatross but experts on board were skeptical.

30 December: Still crossing the roaring forties. With the help of a French expert, Antarctic Prions which were small low-flying birds with an "M" mark on the upperparts, were positively identified, together with Fairy Prions at a somewhat lower level of confidence. New species recorded included Grey-headed Albatross, Northern Giant Petrel and Black-bellied Storm-Petrel. The birds were few and far between; watching seabirds was definitely a test of patience.

31 December: Crossed into the furious fifties, another day with infrequent encounters with seabirds. Blue Petrel, which was a prion-like bird, was added to my list. The day closed with a Black-browed Albatross at 7 p.m.

1 January: First iceberg sighted. There tended to be more birds near icebergs, where petrels, storm-petrels and prions might be found. Mottled Petrel was added to the list of petrels. Also observed were Antarctic Fulmar and Antarctic Skua. We crossed 60 degrees South in the afternoon, thus formally entering Antarctic waters. The air temperature was 1°C and the sea surface temperature was around 6-8°C.

2 January: Antarctic Petrels, Pintado Petrels and Snow Petrels were observed. Together with Antarctic Fulmar, these four species accompanied us all through the period as we cruised along the Antarctic coast. The Snow Petrel is an amazing bird, the plumage being completely white. It is sometimes split into two species based on size but it was difficult to judge at sea. Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses were also spotted in the morning. The ship hit pack ice in the afternoon and the number of Snow Petrels shot up. On the pack ice, Crab-eater Seals (they eat only krill) and Ross Seals were seen from time to time. A few Adelie Penguins were noted as well as a flock of Arctic Terns, the latter a great surprise to me at the time. The Antarctic Tern was not seen until many days later.

3 January: We landed at the Australian Casey Base by inflatable "Zodiacs". South Polar Skuas were seen wandering around in the base. They have apparently learnt to share the habitat with Man (and his rubbish). They were also seen in the nearby Adelie Penguin colony, preying on penguin eggs and juveniles. At Peterson Island, close approaches to Snow Petrels and Pintado Petrels nesting on cliffs were made. Near to the water's edge, there were Weddell Seals and Elephant Seals. A Southern Giant Petrel was seen walking on sea ice with wings spread out like a cormorant, towards midnight (but before sunset).

4-5 January: I saw my first two Emperor Penguins standing on ice floes off Shackleton Ice Shelf on the 4th. A helicopter flight inland on the 5th took us to a group of highly photogenic Emperor Penguins surrounded by a dreamy world of total whiteness. The scenery was overwhelming.

6 January: More ice scenery before arriving in the Russian station Mirny in the afternoon. It was a very untidy place, thus attracting a large

number of South Polar Skuas feeding on rubbish. A not inconsiderable walk on nearby sea ice took us to a group of about 100 Emperor Penguins and hundreds of Adelie Penguins. The chicks of Emperor Penguins were very cute indeed but unfortunately experts said that this group would not moult in time for winter. The day closed with a Minke Whale less than 30 metres away from my Zodiac, presumably feeding on krill at the ice edge.

7-8 January: Westward cruise through pack ice of various shapes and density. Penguins, petrels, fulmars, skuas and storm-petrels were seen from time to time, as well as Crab-eater Seals and Ross Seals. Hundreds of Arctic Terns were sent into the air when our ship passed very close to an iceberg on the 8th. On the same day, a lonely White-chinned Petrel was seen after several days of absence.

9 January: Visited the Australian Davis Base and the nearby Adelie Penguin rookery. I was struck by the sight of large number of carcasses, well preserved by low temperature and dryness. That's life.

10 January: Flew inland to a small Australian summer base and walked a few kilometres to the Zhongshan Base of China. South Polar Skuas and Snow Petrels were breeding on exposed rocks.

11 January: Another cruise among pack ice, seeing the usual birds and seals. A Leopard Seal was added to my list of seals.

12 January: Approached Murray Monolith, a giant volcanic rocky structure where Antarctic Fulmars, Antarctic Petrels and Wilson's Storm-petrels nested. Unfortunately, poor weather did not permit landing but views through binoculars were sufficiently impressive. The last stop in Antarctica was Mawson Base of Australia in the afternoon. Hundreds and hundreds of Snow Petrels marked nicely the end of this part of the journey.

13-15 January: We turned north and left the generally calm coastal waters of Antarctica. Weather turned foul and the ship rolled 30 degrees from the vertical crossing the furious fifties. Bird-watching was sometimes performed behind windscreen wipers on the bridge. Around 60°S, Antarctic Prions and White-chinned Petrels came back into view, followed by sightings of Blue Petrel, Kerguelen Petrel, Northern Giant Petrel, Wandering Albatross, Royal Albatross (no argument this time), Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Black-browed Albatross and Diving-

Petrel(probably Georgian). We reached Heard Island in the afternoon on the 15th but could not land owing to high winds. The disappointment was compensated by the sight of a Heard Island Shag which flew out of the island to inspect our ship. The evening ended with the exciting sight of Black-browed Albatrosses mobbing a fur seal which had just captured a penguin in the sea.

16-17 January: We visited Kerguelen Island, which is the biggest island in this part of the Indian Ocean. The King Penguin rookery on the south of the island contained, I imagine, approaching 100,000 birds. There were smaller rookeries of Macaroni Penguins, Gentoo Penguins and Rockhopper Penguins. Near the rookeries, we encountered also Lesser Sheath-bills, both Northern and South Giant Petrels and Antarctic Skuas. Kerguelen Shags and Kerguelen Terns were easy to find but the Kerguelen Pintails were more difficult because suitable habitat has been invaded by rabbits. The island was surrounded by masses of kelp and appropriately Kelp Gull was everywhere to be seen. On leaving Kerguelen in the evening of the 17th, the ship was surrounded by thousands of prions (Antarctic and perhaps others). There was a Black-bellied Storm-Petrel among the numerous Wilson's. Hundreds of Diving-Petrels were also noted.

18-19 January: At sea crossing the roaring forties. White-chinned Petrels became the dominant petrel species. My first Yellow-nosed Albatross was recorded on the 19th.

20 January: Visited the tiny St Paul Island which is a caldera breached on one side by the sea. Among the numerous fur seals, hundreds of Antarctic Terns were seen busy feeding juveniles with fish. Rockhopper Penguins with long crests wandered around, their nests being hidden by tussock grass. A Sooty Tern was also seen, and this is apparently the limit of its breeding range. The ship skirted Amsterdam Island in the afternoon but fog prevented any landing. We waited but no Amsterdam Albatross came to inspect us this time.

21-25 January: Long boring sea trip heading eastward to Fremantle. An unexpected record was that of a Gannet (most probably Australian) on the 22nd near 37°S 94°E far away from land in all directions. A White-capped Albatross was seen on the 23rd. The 24th was practically birdless. In the afternoon of the 25th, birds became relatively more numerous as we approached the Australian coast. Here we recorded Flesh-footed Shearwater, Sooty Tern, Little

Shearwater and, my last new species of the cruise, Great-winged Petrel.

26 January: Back in Fremantle, back on land, and the close of a chapter for me. Now, I have great respect for seabirds and penguins which in their own individual ways adapt perfectly to the environment they live in.

OUTING REPORTS

Ho Chung 5 March

(Stewart Smith)

A warm and slightly humid, but generally overcast, morning saw six of us begin the wander up the valley at 07.15. Everyone including me, was a stranger to the starting point designated by Wendy, and the week before was marked by enquiring phone calls from those intending to turn out. Even with a 15 minute grace period two still did not make it.

Birdwise it was pretty ordinary for the area, with the first purple patch being a good deal of action between the pig farm and the stream, including the winter's Grey Bushchat and Daurian Redstart. It was a bit difficult to put a number on the Blackbirds, which periodically appeared in groups of up to nine, but I suspect there might have been 20 or 30 in total. At the catchwater we had the best experience of the day with a pair of Crested Goshawks, and no less than four Crested Serpent Eagles, all in the air at the same time. After 16 years I was quite pleased to get the former on call in the first instance. Lots of Forktailed Sunbirds calling, but we could not pin one down well enough for our newcomers. Excellent views of a Rose-ringed Parakeet, and a good Buzzard, closed the day, subject only to a visit to the noodle stall. The day's total was 46. Most intriguing for me was an unidentified mild "tuk" from a retiring LBJ before we kicked off - any ideas?

Tai Po Kau 20 March

(Keith Wilson)

A surprisingly cold and overcast day which, though dry, always looked as though it might rain, produced an excellent day's birding with lots of birds and few periods without something interesting to look at.

Yellow-browed and Pallas's Warblers, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Grey-chinned Minivet, Ashy

Drongo, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Grey-headed Flycatcher, a pair of Black-naped Monarch Flycatchers and a party of Red-headed Tits were found at the entrance to the Reserve, providing a promising start for our party of five.

We set off clockwise on the blue walk, and flushed a Crested Goshawk on route, and had poor views as it perched amongst the thick foliage. A good bird wave appeared at the southern most part of the blue walk, including several Blue-winged Minlas and White-bellied Yuhinas. Breaking off from the blue walk and walking south west up the hillside towards the brown walk produced a few more birds.. these included Emerald Dove, Chestnut Bulbul, a large party of Eye-browed Thrushes(two positively identified out of a flock of at least 20 birds, and probably many more), a party of Silver-eared Mesias and Peking Robins and two Red-tailed Minlas, which gave excellent views as they pecked at pine cones, and were observed by all the party.

Red-tailed Minlas, together with Blue-winged Minlas, are considered to be escapes, as they are not recorded from Guangdong Province, and are reported from fairly high altitude, (4-8000ft. and 5-10000ft. respectively). However, both species are present in Guangxi (the province west of Guangdong) and occur at lower altitudes in the winter. Blue-winged Minlas have also been observed at White Cloud Mt., Guangzhou recently. I first saw both species in Tai Po Kau (with Nick Doyle) in January 1992, and they appear to have been in more or less the same location ever since.

Returning back along the blue walk, Tristram's Bunting, Scarlet Minivet, a single Blyth's Warbler, more Velvet-fronted Nuthatches and White-bellied Yuhinas completed a cool winterish walk on one of Tai Po Kau's livelier days.

In Search of Skuas 1 May

(Michael Leven)

Following the success of the previous exploratory seabird trip organised by the Society in which Aleutian Tern was added to the Hong Kong list, it was no surprise that there was a full complement for the junk kindly supplied by David Carrier. Rather optimistically, perhaps, the trip had been billed as a quest for skuas, in fact recent reports from the north of Mirs Bay suggested that two species of skua (Long-tailed and Arctic) had been present recently, so perhaps the optimism was not misplaced?

Setting out from Aberdeen, we soon found that there were no skuas (and not much else either) to the south of Lamma or around Po Toi, but nothing daunted we set out into Mirs Bay where a few Red-necked Phalaropes were found and a couple of interesting terns remained unidentified when they flew into Chinese waters. Heading north to the Ninepins all was rather quiet until the Ninepins themselves where an flock of Black-naped Terns gave superb views and looked as though they would be nesting shortly. Just as interesting, large numbers of Pacific Swifts were clearly nesting on the cliffs. The "Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong" states that this species probably breeds on the Ninepins but there have been no recent records.

Heading north again, we hoped to find terns or skuas to the north of Gau Tau but heavy rain and low visibility forced us to head for a sheltered bay and lunch. With no time remaining for Gau Tau it was decided to retrace our route but to little avail except for a bedraggled Peregrine on Waglan Island. However, as we headed homewards, a few distant terns were seen in the West Lamma Channel and one of them looked rather familiar... Much quartering of the sea later, we all had good views of White-winged Black and Common Terns and a single adult Aleutian Tern. A year ago this would have been cause for wild celebrations, now it was more a matter of studied curiosity as to whether we will find that this species is a regular visitor to Hong Kong waters.

A fitting end to the day and a chance to reflect on how little we know about Hong Kong's seabirds. Clearly, Society "pelagic" trips are here to stay.. but where are those skuas?

Tai Po Kau Breeding Survey 22 May

(Peter Stevens)

Not being able to remember whether this trip should start at 0700 or 0730 I arrived at TPK at 0645 and set about my breakfast in the carpark. At about 0715hrs a chauffeur-driven Daimler swished into view and disgorged two gents with bino's around their necks. "DUDES" thought I and studiously peered at a Magpie Robin in the opposite direction, hoping they wouldn't notice me. Out of the corner of my eye I saw them start off up the hill with a copy of KING firmly tucked down the back of the ROHANS (at last, someone's found a use for that book!!) "Good" thought I, "peace and quiet. Hopefully nobody will turn up and I can do something about my hangover." Then DUDE came running back down

the hill and spoke urgently to the (by now supine) driver, who leapt up and opened the boot. "Ha!" thinks I "Probably forgot the mobile 'phone. Perhaps his FILOFAX has got a puncture." But what's this? ...a QUESTAR??!! Hang on a minute, this DUDE, him mighty good fella!

After a suitable delay I sidled up the hill after them and found to my delight that they were visitors who had never been in TPK before. I also quickly found out that one of them knew Stewart Smith (and he seemed such a nice chap!). I didn't let this put me off and started to regale them with avian exploits of yours truly, when who should turn up but SPS himself (quote - "I wasn't sure whether it was at 7 or 7.30 so came at a quarter to eight").

Anyway, off we went into the woods where we met Verity Picken and (latterly) Jim Hackett. The six of us settled under the shelter in the picnic area when Stewart brought up the subject of Jim's DNA (see the 3/93 bulletin). I was just about to say that I'd had my doubts about it ever since I first met him, when my pager went off and my day's birding came to a premature end. SPS led the visitors from then on and, by all accounts, I was better-off in my nice dry office!

As for the birds, there was not much of interest about (although VBP and JH both saw the Orange-headed Groundthrush). Both Minivets; one Nuthatch; Crested Goshawk; Hainan Blue Flycatcher (a pair); Great Tits (some young in string-able plumage); Barbet; Chestnut Bulbul etc

Lantau Breeding Survey 11-14 June

(Michael Chalmers)

A concerted attempt was made by a team comprising Paul Leader, Michael and Liz Leven, David and Vicky Melville, Verity Picken, Martin Williams and myself to survey as much of Lantau as possible over the holiday weekend. From our base at Tai Long Wan next to Shek Pik and using a hired minibus, we succeeded in covering 87(71%) out of a total of 122 x 1km squares in the western and central parts of Lantau, south from Mui Wo (Silvermine Bay), excluding small coastal squares of less than 10% land. A total of 54 species was recorded including Upland Pipit on Sunset Peak, Crested Kingfisher at Tung Chung and a Cockatoo at Chi Ma Wan. Violet Whistling Thrushes and Blue Magpies were surprisingly widespread, reminiscent of Hong Kong Island. Wetland areas produced seven species of rails, heron and bittern including Little Green Heron, Night Heron, Banded Rail and Yellow Bittern but, contrary to expectations, no Chestnut Bitterns. Birds of prey were Black Kite, White-ellied Sea Eagle, Crested Goshawk and Bonellis Eagle, with no Serpent Eagles, Peregrines or owls. The most productive 1km squares were in the low wetland areas with a maximum of 30 species at Tung Chung and Pui O. Low cloud base prevented serious surveys of the high peaks on this trip. We intend to return next year to finish off these and the other 35 squares. Any volunteers?

REPORT ON THE BIRDS

(These unchecked records include sightings of possible escapes)

March - May 1993

(Paul Leader)

A typically exciting spring, highlights of which include three potential additions to the Hong Kong list, Bay Woodpecker, Arctic Skua and Yellow-bellied Sunbird.

There were unprecedented numbers of skuas in April, including the third ever Long-tailed. The second and third records of Grey Phalarope came during the period, including a long-stayer at Mai Po. Second and third records came also for Aleutian Tern, and the second record for Paddyfield Warbler came in March.

Of the regular migrants, the spring was notable for record numbers of Grey-faced Buzzards and Japanese Yellow Buntings. During April, everyone's favourite, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, was impossible to miss!

Bittern Six at Sheun Wan on 27 Mar, and four there the following day (RWL *et al*). Only the third record away from Deep Bay.

Schrenck's Bittern A female at Luk Keng on 25 May (JAH,JBr,PJL).

Chestnut Bittern Three at Luk Keng on 25 Apr, and singles elsewhere.

Swinhoe's Egret First recorded at Mai Po on 13 Apr (GJC), then regular there for the next ten days, with a maximum of three on 18 Apr (RWL). One at Po Toi on 2 May (PRK *et al.*), and lastly one at Mai Po on 16 May (RWL).

Black-faced Spoonbill Forty-one, a very high count for so late, were still present at Mai Po on 3 Apr, and at least one was there on 30 May.

Lesser Treeduck One at Tin Shui Wai from 5-15 May (GAW *et al.*).

Black-shouldered Kite Singles at Mai Po on 27 Mar (PJL,GJC), 9 Apr (MRL *et al.*), and 23 Apr (RWL), at Tsim Bei Tsui on 3 Apr (MH,JAH), and (E) Ping Chau 17-18 Apr (JBr,RWL *et al.*).

Pied Harrier An adult male at Mai Po on 12 Apr (MT,EPL).

Japanese Sparrowhawk Adult males at Mai Po on 11 Apr (PJL,MRL) and near Sai Kung Harbour 24 Apr and a female at Tsim Bei Tsui on 8 Apr (MDW).

Northern Sparrowhawk A male at Mong Tseng on 22 Mar (MDW), a female at Lok Ma Chau on 27 Mar (PJL) and an adult male on (E) Ping Chau 18 Apr (PJL,PRK *et al.*).

Chinese Goshawk The only significant count was of 19 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 Apr (GJC).

Grey-faced Buzzard Enormous numbers passed through 21-22 Mar. On 21, large flocks included 24 at Tsim Bei Tsui (MC), 42 over Cheung Chau (MDW), and 56 over Aberdeen CP (MT). The following day, 57 were noted at Mong Tseng (MDW), 47 at Mai Po (MDW), 11 at Shek Kong (GCHC), 24 over Aberdeen CP (MT), and a separate count of over 100 at Mai Po (per GJC).

Slaty-legged Crane One in Kowloon Park 5-13 Apr (PJL,MRL,MT *et al.*).

Ruddy Crane Two at Nam Sang Wai 19 Apr (GAW,NW).

Painted Snipe Two near Sheung Shui on 6 May (GAW).

Sanderling Sixty-seven at Mai Po on 4 May (GJC), by far the highest ever count.

Little Stint First recorded at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 Apr (PJL *et al.*), thereafter recorded from Tsim Bei Tsui and Mai Po on at least seven other dates in Apr, with two at Mai Po on 1 May.

Pectoral Sandpiper One at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 Apr (GAW), two at Mai Po on 1 May (PJL), one the following day, and one there 12-13 May (GJC,DAD).

"Cox's" Sandpiper One at Tsim Bei Tsui 30 Apr (JAH). The "first" for Hong Kong.

Spoon-billed Sandpiper First records were on 2 and 8 Apr (two), thereafter recorded on at least eight other dates in April, with a max of five on 11. After such a good April, there were remarkably no records in May.

Ruff One at Mai Po on 28 Mar (LWK).

Asiatic Dowitcher Highest count was 100+ at Mai Po on 13 Apr (GJC).

Woodcock One at Ha Bak Nei on 6 Mar (GCHC).

Little Whimbrel One at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui from 28 Apr to 1 May (GJC *et al.*).

Nordmann's Greenshank First recorded from Mai Po and Tin Shui Wai on 30 Mar, thereafter peaks of 29 on 5 Apr, and fifty-plus on 13 Apr (GJC), a new record count.

Grey Phalarope One in the East Lamma Channel on 20 Mar (VBP), and a first-summer trapped at Mai Po at night on 4 May, which remained into June (PJL,DSM *et al.*). The second and third records for Hong Kong, following the first earlier this year.

Long-tailed Skua One over (E) Ping Chau on 12 Apr (MDW). The third for Hong Kong.

Arctic Skua Singles in Mirs Bay and from (E) Ping Chau on 12 and 17 Apr (MDW,MT). If accepted the first records for Hong Kong.

Skua sp. Unidentified Skuas were noted in Mirs Bay on 12 (three) and 18 Apr (four). Prior to this spring there are only four skua records.

Relict Gull One of the wintering first-winter birds was last noted at Mai Po on 8 Mar (DAD).

Saunders's Gull Last recorded on 30 May when a first-summer bird was at Mai Po (PJL), an exceptionally late date.

Common Gull Singles at Tsim Bei Tsui on 16 Mar (GAW), and Mai Po on 23 Mar (GJC). The latter was the first ever record of an adult.

Slaty-backed Gull Two at Mai Po on 14 Apr.

Kittiwake The third for Hong Kong, a first-winter, was on Mai Po on 3 Apr (RJ *et al*)

Greater Crested Tern One in front of the Boardwalk Hide on 19 Apr (VBP *et al*). The first record since 1984.

Aleutian Tern Thirteen in Mirs Bay on 17 Apr (JBr,RWL *et al*), and one south of Lamma Island on 2 May (MLC *et al*). The second and third records for Hong Kong. The first was last autumn when up to 190 were present during Aug-Sep.

Ancient Auk Two, one in summer plumage, in Mirs Bay on 24 Apr (MH *et al*). The fifth record for Hong Kong.

Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo One calling in Tai Po Kau on 17 Apr (JRSE). The only accepted record is one trapped at Clearwater Bay as long ago as Oct 1971.

Eagle Owl Singles at Chau Tau and Shek Kong Catchment on 9 and 14 Apr (GCHC).

Brown Hawk Owl One in Tai Tam CP on 10 Apr (PA).

Grey Nightjar One over Kowloon on 10 Apr (MRL *et al*), and one on Tai Mo Shan on 17 Apr (JAH).

Swift sp. An unidentified dark-rumped swift was at Mai Po from 20-22 Mar (PRK *et al*). While quite possibly one of the swiftlets, the bird showed many of the features of the so-called "Beidaihe Swift", a swift noted only from Beidaihe and the identity of which is still unresolved.

Crested Kingfisher Two at Tai Lam Reservoir from 21 May (KW).

Hoopoe A pair bred on Stonecutters Island in Apr, the first breeding record for Hong Kong.

Great Spotted Woodpecker One at Wang Shang Kuk Ha Tsuen in the Pat Sin CP on 29 May (CAV).

Bay Woodpecker A male in Tai Po Kau from 17 Apr (JRSE *et al*). If accepted the first record for Hong Kong.

Chinese Pitta One flew into a window in Shek Kong on 19 Apr (TJA *et al*), and was later released unharmed.

Pechora Pipit Two at Shuen Wan on 11 May (RWL), and one at Tin Shui Wai the next day (GJC,MLC).

Water Pipit Sixteen at Luk Keng on 13 Mar (CAV).

Forest Wagtail One at Nam Sang Wai on 19 Apr (GAW).

Black-backed Wagtail A male at Sheun Wan 18-19 Mar (RWL,MH).

Ashy Minivet Fifty at Tsim Bei Tsui on 8 Apr (MDW), and 40 at Lok Ma Chau two days later (PRK).

Siberian Blue Robin A male in Kowloon Park on 12 Apr (DAD).

Orange-headed Ground Thrush Two in Tai Po Kau from 17 Apr (GCHC).

Siberian Thrush An adult male trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 28 Mar (DPC).

Russet Bush Warbler One singing in Ho Chung Wood on 10 Apr (PJL *et al*).

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler One singing at Mai Po on 15 May (PJL,PRK *et al*).

Styan's Grasshopper Warbler Singles at Mai Po on 14 Apr (GJC), 2 May (trapped)(DSM,AGC), and

8 May (PJL,PRK *et al*). These are the first May records.

Paddyfield Warbler One at Nam Sang Wai on 4 Mar (GAW), the second record for Hong Kong.

Large Grass Warbler Two at Buffalo Hill in Sai Kung on 21 Mar (WP), one of very few records of this species away from Tai Mo Shan.

Pale-legged Leaf Warbler Two on (E) Peng Chau on 10 Apr, one there on 18 Apr, and one at Mai Po on 12 Apr.

Two-barred Greenish Warbler One in the Lam Tsuen Valley Golden Triangle on 6 Mar (DAD), and two there on 9 Apr (PJL,MRL *et al*).

Ferruginous Flycatcher Singles in Tai Po Kau on 20 Mar, 6 and 10 Apr.

Mugimaki Flycatcher Single females in Kowloon Park on 8 Apr, and on (E) Peng Chau on 10 Apr.

Narcissus Flycatcher One on (E) Ping Chau 17-18 Apr (JBr,RWL *et al*).

Rufous-capped Babbler One trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 6 Mar (DPC).

Yellow-bellied Sunbird One in Tai Po Kau on 1 May (JAH), if accepted the first for Hong Kong.

Brambling One on Cheung Chau on 29 Mar (MDW).

Japanese Grosbeak Three in a flock of Black-tailed Hawfinches near Tin Shui Wai on 30 Mar (GAW).

Japanese Yellow Bunting First recorded at Mai Po on 3 Apr (RWL), after which record numbers during the middle half of April, with peak counts of 10 at Mai Po, and up to 15 at Tsim Bei Tsui. As other buntings were unusually scarce around this period, this was at times the commonest bunting!

Rustic Bunting One reported from near Mai Po on 22 Mar (*per* MH), two at Mt Davies on 11 Apr (MT), one at Mai Po the next day (KW *et al*), and two at Pok Fu Lam on 24 Apr (PRK), with three there the following day.

Reed Bunting Two trapped at Mai Po on both 6 and 21 Mar (DSM,AGC,PJL *et al*).

FUTURE MEETINGS

DATE	LEADER	VENUE	TIME
14 August Saturday	David Carrier	Junk Trip for Terns Meet Aberdeen Boat Club. A few places left, contact leader	0900-1700
29 August Sunday	Richard Stott	Mai Po Meet in Car Park	07.00
11 September Saturday	Ian Tyzzer	Tai Po Kau Meet in Car Park	07.00
18 September INDOOR MEETING Saturday Well known British Naturalist Tony Soper will be talking about 18.15 ANTARCTICA . The cost is \$70 (including beer and soft drinks) in aid of WWF and the new hide fund. Gazetted Police Officers' Mess, Police Headquarters, Arsenal St Please complete booking form at end of bulletin and return to Janet Stott with your cheque!			
19 September Sunday	Mike Leven	Luk Keng Swamp Bash Wear rubber boots/long trousers Phone leader to confirm attendance	07.00
26 September Sunday	Nigel Croft	Mai Po Meet in Car Park	07.00
3 October Sunday	John Holmes Ng Cho-nam	Mai Po * Bilingual	09.00-15.00 note one hour earlier than usual
17 October Sunday	CY Lam	Kowloon Park Beginners Trip Meet at stairs between mosque and MTR exit	07.30-09.30
24 October Sunday	John Edge Li Wai-ki	Tai Long Wan Meet on Ferry, Ma Lui Sui Pier, near University KCR station	08.15-18.30 approx.
31 October Sunday	Mike Chalmers Chan Ming-ming	Tsim Bei Tsui Bilingual	09.00-15.00 note one hour earlier than usual

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

* The maximum number of members who can attend a Mai Po meeting is 50, as set by the AFD permit. In future this number will not be exceeded. It is essential therefore that members inform the leader that they will be attending, before the trip date. Failure to do so may result in members being refused access to Mai Po! Members using the coach need not inform the leader, as they will have already confirmed their attendance by returning the coach booking slip.

||A coach will collect members from Kowloon Tong KCR one hour before assembly time and will return 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 a packed lunch