



香港觀鳥會
THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY
GPO BOX 12460, HONG KONG. 香港郵政總局信箱12460號

BULLETIN NO. 150

DECEMBER 1993

Society News

New Secretary

David Carrier was unexpectedly transferred back to UK in September, and Tim Woodward has volunteered to take over until the AGM. Janet Stott had been doing a holding job in the interim, and the Committee is very grateful to both Janet and Tim for stepping into the breach.

1992 Annual Report

This Bulletin is being mailed with the 1992 Annual Report. The new editor, Geoff Carey, and his assistants are to be congratulated on maintaining the very high standard set by the 1991 Report. Get your records for 1993 in by 31st January 1994, when work starts on the 1993 Report!

Subscriptions

It's subscription time again! At the back of the Bulletin you will find a subscription renewal form. Fill in the form and send it with a cheque to Janet Stott 5A Branksome, 3 Tregunter Path, Hong Kong. You can make a donation to the new hide fund at the same time!

1994 Annual General Meeting

The 1994 AGM is provisionally scheduled for **Wednesday 30th March 1994** at the Auxiliary Police Officer's Mess, 3/F Beaconsfield House, Queen's Road Central

1994 Big Bird Race April 16/17

Don't Forget!!

Boardwalk permits

As a fund raiser for the second boardwalk hide, when you collect your new boardwalk permit in March 1994, (and thereafter) **you will be asked for a donation of \$100** (more if you want). Once the hide is built the money will be used for maintaining it. \$200 a year is a small price to pay in order to reduce the overcrowding in the existing hide, but if you are unwilling to contribute, speak to the chairman or any committee member, before collecting your permit. **Don't** shout at the WWF HK staff, who are just helping the Society out.

All contributions to the March Bulletin should be sent to Liz Leven, 1-3 Unicorn Gardens, 11 Shouson Hill Road East, Hong Kong by February 9th 1994. Many Thanks.

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

The committee members are listed below. The next committee meeting will be in late February 1994. If any member wishes a matter raised, please contact one of the committee members.

Richard Stott Chairman
Tim Woodward 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
Ng Cho-nam Conservation

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

Christmas Count

The ninth Christmas count will take place on **Monday 27 December 1993**. As in previous years the territory has been divided up into smaller areas, each with a leader or coordinator. All members are urged to take part in the Christmas Count either by contacting a leader and helping him to cover his area, or even by keeping your eyes open on 27 December and sending in your observations to Ian Tyzzer. Some of the areas are very large and difficult to cover fully with only one pair of eyes, so all the help that can be offered is greatly appreciated. A list of leaders/coordinators is given below together with contact numbers; also a record sheet is attached to this news- letter to enable individual sightings to be sent in. Participating members are invited to guess the total numbers of species seen on the count - the person closest to the actual total will win one of the new Society Tee-Shirts (currently being designed and produced).

MAI PO - Mike Chalmers

TSIM BEI TSUI/MONG TSENG - LI Wai-ki

CASTLE PEAK, incl NIM WAN - CHEUNG Ho-fai

PAK NAI, NORTHERN N.T. incl SAN TIN - Peter Stevens

SEK KONG, TAI MO SHAN - Nick Grimshaw

SHING MUN - David Diskin

LAM TSUEN VALLEY - Verity Picken

NORTHEAST N.T. incl LUK KENG, PLOVER COVE - John Edge

TAI PO KAU - Wendy Young

TAI LONG incl. TOLO HARBOUR - Geoff Carey

HO CHUNG, SAI KUNG MA ON SHAN - Martin Hale

KOWLOON - CHAN Ming-ming

STONECUTTERS ISLAND - Jim Ades

HONG KONG ISLAND - John Burton

LAMMA ISLAND - Lew Young

CHEUNG CHAU/PENG CHAU/OFFSHORE ISLANDS - John Jones

LANTAU ISLAND - Paul Aston

and John

Bryant

Completed record sheets to be sent either to the area leader or direct to : **Ian Tyzzer, Flat 39, 103 Mount Nicholson Road, 6/F, Hong Kong.**

Chinese and Asian Birding Trips

(Nigel Croft)

In trying to arrange a trip to Ba Bo Shan recently, I experienced difficulties, which, when taking into account the considerable experience within the Society of trips to China, should not have occurred. A lot of people gave me considerable assistance, however information was not always up to date (for example Guangzhou telephone numbers are now 7 digit not 6!). It has since occurred to me that it would be useful for the Society to have a central repository for information on birdwatching trips to China. This could then provide a service for Society members and also visiting overseas birders.

There are also a host of trips undertaken by members all over Asia. The destinations are so widespread and sometimes information is so difficult to categorise that I thought we could compile a list of sites visited and by whom. Contributors would have to be prepared to be contacted by others seeking information.

Initially, if you have visited China or other Asian countries recently, and have useful practical information, please complete the tear off slip at the back of the Bulletin and return to me at **1/F, Hang Tau Tsuen, Sheung Shui, NT**. I will then give you a questionnaire to complete so that the information is held in a standard format.

I believe the Society has a moral obligation to provide information on visits to China, whereas other Asian countries would be a bonus. Once information has been collected then an index of what is available can be issued and copies of relevant information made available on request.

Developments at Mai Po

(Richard Stott)

As you will already know, the Hong Kong Government is to put up funds that will allow the WWF Hong Kong to take over the whole of the core area of the Mai Po marshes. This process will take three years during which time WWFHK will build up its facilities for managing this much larger area.

With the advent of these developments and the change of sovereignty in 1997 it is important to ensure the long term security of the Mai Po reserve as a safe place for birds to feed and rest and for people to be able to enjoy them without undue disturbance to the birds. This can only be achieved with widespread popular support. We therefore need to expose as many people as possible to Mai Po so that they can see its pleasures for themselves and like us, return to enjoy them later.

The larger area will require more staff for its upkeep and to show people around. All this means money. Money for maintenance is difficult to raise as land acquisitions make eye-catching publicity but the essential funds for maintenance are difficult to find sponsors for and therefore alternate means must be found.

The achievement of these objectives will mean some noticeable differences for Society members. It will not affect the way in which we ourselves use the reserve but, at times, there will be more people using the reserve at the same time as ourselves. At present there are three types of visit being planned as follows:

1. Visitors from the general public who have been in evidence for several years will continue to be guided around the part of the reserve along the casuarina path to the wildfowl collection and back to the Scott Centre. These will simply be a continuation of the present system.

2. Parties of WWF members, who as part of their membership will be taken around the whole reserve. These parties will be accompanied by a guide and will be on the reserve at specific times. These parties will be using the boardwalk hide. (for the list of times see Mai Po Update, page 4)

3. There are to be four "Discover Mai Po" events which will take place on the last four Sundays in January 1994 ie. 9,16,24 and 30. These will take the form of sponsored walks and it is expected that as many as 1,000 people will visit Mai Po on each of these days, spread throughout the day.

The routes taken will be round the outside of the core area, that is walking around the extreme outside of the reserve and only crossing it along the path that leads from the Education Centre to the Boardwalk Hide. (Not down the boardwalk.)

Some may read the above plans and recoil with horror. However, the Committee is working closely with WWFHK to minimise the impact on both the birds and Society members. It is important to recall that the development of the Mai Po Reserve has transformed it out of all recognition as a birdwatching location. The Society has supported WWFHK throughout in its efforts to maintain and improve the facilities at Mai Po and Society members have been able to reap the rewards by being allowed access to the whole reserve subject only to Government security regulations. It is a hard fact of life that a considerable amount of money is needed to maintain the reserve and this amount will increase as the area under WWFHK control increases. Please understand that WWFHK is doing its best to ensure a long and vital existence for Mai Po.

Records Committee

1993 Records

Due to the very welcome but ever-increasing number of records being submitted, the process of collating the year's records involves greater and greater amounts of time and effort. This also means, in turn, that the production of the Bird Report swallows up a great portion of the year on the part of the Editor. In order to ensure an easier life for the collators of the Systematic List and in an attempt to shorten the production time of the annual report (thereby, preserving the Editor's sanity, what there is of it!) all members are requested to submit records for 1993 **BEFORE 31 January 1994**. Records received after that date will not be included in next year's report. Records of **non-description species** should be sent to **Mike Leven, I-3, Unicorn Gardens, 11 Shouson Hill Road East, Hong Kong**. Records of all **description species** should be sent to **Paul Leader c/o McKenna and Co. 36/f Gloucester Tower, The Landmark, Central, Hong Kong**

Those members submitting records of species requiring consideration by the Records Committee are reminded that descriptions written in Chinese are welcome. However, other species, for which descriptions are not required, should be submitted in English.

New Floating Hide, Mai Po

(Ian Tyzzer)

Progress on the new floating hide project has been slow as the Society is still awaiting permission from the District Lands Office to go ahead. However, problems are not anticipated and it is hoped that the necessary permission will soon be given. It is planned to locate the new hide approximately 200 metres to the south west of the existing boardwalk hide. If possible, the design features will include movable benches to make the hide more "scope friendly", extra slats to improve the "air conditioning" in summer, allowance for the direction and movement of the sun so that good lighting conditions are maximised and wooden catches on the slats to lessen noise disturbance.

The exact cost of the new hide has yet to be finalised but it is expected to be in the region of \$150,000. Fund raising has started already and profits from various Society functions have been channelled towards the project. For the future, the Working Group is considering a number of options, but has decided to produce a Hong Kong Birdwatching Society Tee-Shirt, the profits from the sale of which will go to the hide fund. Work on this is proceeding and it is hoped to have the Tee-Shirts available in the first quarter of 1994. Members will also note that there is provision on the subscription renewal form for donations to be made to the project and any sums received will be greatly appreciated. All donations will be acknowledged. As the project gathers pace a separate newsletter will be circulated to members in the New Year apprising them of progress and letting them know how they can help.

Sungei Buloh Nature Park

Mai Po's success in combining an important nature reserve with an active education and awareness programme has prompted the development of a similar reserve in Singapore. The Sungei Buloh Nature Park was opened on 6th December 1993 by Prime Minister Goh. The 87ha. area on the north west coast of Singapore is very similar to Mai Po, being an area of former shrimp ponds and mangrove. Ponds and scrapes have now been developed with hides and mangrove boardwalks. There is also a very attractive visitor centre. Any member visiting Singapore is recommended to visit this site - 140 species recorded to date and increasing as Peter Kennerley is a regular visitor!!

Hong Kong Vegetation Map

Looking for a new birdwatching site? Want to find a new, unwatched wood to explore? WWF HK's newly published Hong Kong vegetation map (scale 1:50000) shows the distribution of the main vegetation types in the Territory. Members may be surprised how much woodland there is in Hong Kong - although much of it is fragmented. The map will be a great help in planning new birding trips, so visit your nearest WWF HK shop now whilst stocks last.

Mai Po Update

Boardwalk Visits

During the coming months, there will be a number of visits to the boardwalk hide by WWF members. The dates are as follows:

4 December	0930 - 1100 *
5 December	1630 - 1800
19 December	0930 - 1100 *
22 January	0930 - 1100 *
23 January	1630 - 1800
29 January	1630 - 1800
06 February	0930 - 1100 *
06 February	1630 - 1800
20 February	0930 - 1100 *
26 February	0930 - 1100 *
27 February	0930 - 1100
6 March	1630 - 1800
12 March	0930 - 1100 *
13 March	0930 - 1100
19 March	1630 - 1800
20 March	0930 - 1100 *
26 March	1100 - 1230

* group size of about 12. Otherwise up to 36 but this number is under review.

A meeting will be held between WWF HK and the HKBWS over future arrangements for these visits, and we will keep you informed about the outcome.

Students

Just as last winter, we again have a number of final year students from the City Polytechnic of Hong Kong helping us find out more about the reserve so that we can improve its management. These students are: Whan Whi-kam, Hui So-ming, Kwok Yin-wah, Leung Chi-yan, Sun Wong-ngo, Wong Kam-wah and Yung Hung-tan. In particular they will be comparing the range of invertebrates in the Mai Po gei wais and if possible why there are more in one than another. The aim is to get a better idea of how we can increase the number of these invertebrates in the gei wais and therefore, food for wading birds who come into the reserve.

Breeding Birds Survey The First Year's Results

(Mike Chalmers)

The results of this first year's survey have been a great success in terms of coverage achieved and information obtained.

Coverage

The whole of the Territory has been divided into 96 x 5Km squares based on the Hong Kong Metric Grid as shown in Fig. 1. Survey log sheets were received for 59 x 5Km squares representing 61% of the total, and a further 8 are awaited to bring the total to 70%. In addition a high proportion of the remainder were visited and isolated records submitted. Each 5Km square comprises 25 x 1Km squares, although in many coastal areas these do not all contain land. The coverage is illustrated in Fig. 2 which shows the percentage coverage in each 5Km square based on the number of 1Km squares surveyed out of the total available. The ticks indicate squares for which logs are still outstanding. For this purpose 1Km squares with less than 10% land area have not been counted separately and any results have been combined with the next adjacent square. It can be seen that several squares have achieved the 100% target (i.e. to survey every 1Km square within the 5Km square) but that on average the coverage was around 70%, with a not unexpected tendency for the inaccessible or high altitude areas to be the least well covered. In territory wide terms there are 1,347 x 1Km squares to survey and 663 (49%) have been surveyed this first year and submitted, a very creditable effort. The additional outstanding squares are expected to bring the 1Km square coverage up to about 55%.

Species

A total of 122 species has been recorded excluding Cat. E escapes/releases and over-summering migrants. This is already more than the 117 species included in the breeding summary in the 1985 edition of the Annotated Checklist. All the 112 species listed on the survey check-list were recorded with the exception of Crimson-legged Crake (although one possible was flushed above Tai Po at Tin Liu Ha) and Azure-winged Magpie (which lurks still in the ZBG). Some species such as Black-naped Oriole and Crested Bunting just made the list, and have certainly declined in the last 15 years. As already reported, the most exciting results in rarity terms have been the Brown Fish Owls at Three

Fathoms Cove, Crested Kingfishers at Tai Lam and Tung Chung, and Hoopoes at Stonecutters Island and Shek Kong. In addition to these three species, there were a further 11 "add-ons" as follows:- Grey-checked Fulvetta, Red-headed Tit, Silver-eared Mesia (surprisingly widespread and therefore treated as provisional Cat. C/D), Osprey, Hobby, Coot, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Black-shouldered Kite and Fire-breasted Flowerpecker.

Diversity

One of the most interesting results so far is the clear indication of species diversity given by the total number of species found in each 5Km square as shown in Fig 3. To illustrate diversity at a glance the species totals in each 5Km square have been divided into four ranges as follows and are indicated by intensity of toning in Fig. 3.

Low 0 to 20

Medium 21 to 40

High 41 to 60

Very High 61 and above

As expected the offshore islands have the least species and the core areas of the New Territories have the most. What is perhaps not obvious is the rich swath of habitat through the Central New Territories including Lam Tsuen Valley, Tai Po Kau and Sha Lo Tung, which has consistently high species counts, with an outlier at Ho Chung Valley. Indeed Ho Chung (5Km square 55) has at present the highest species count at 73, closely followed by Sha Lo Tung (square 20) at 72 species, which also has the highest 1Km square count at 59 species (at Shuen Wan 1Km square 20 E4). The richest squares thus appear to be those with a mixture of natural woodland, scrub or cultivated areas and muddy shore.

Note that these interim results need to be considered in conjunction with the coverage achieved as a low species count at this stage may reflect only a low coverage.

Database

The results to date are being examined and are about to be input into a computerised database for incorporation in WWF's ecological map of Hong Kong. The vegetation map, produced in the first phase with funding from the Caltex Green Fund, has just been issued and should prove useful to members in identifying areas of interesting habitat (e.g. woodland, wetland etc). Computer literate volunteers, preferably with PCs at home to assist with inputting survey data, are

requested to contact Mike Chalmers at

Interesting Results

Previous bulletins have referred to interim findings such as the wider distribution of Richard's Pipit (Figure 4) and Silver-eared Mesia than previously thought. Scarcer species have also been mentioned above. At the other end of the scale the results have been examined to determine the most widespread species. The answers are not surprising and are given below in terms of the percentage of 663 x 1Km squares surveyed in 1993.

1st Chinese Bulbul 70%

2nd Crested Bulbul 62%

3rd Long-tailed Tailorbird 54%

4th Yellow-bellied Prinia 49%

As the survey extends to the more remote areas where grasslands are more frequent than woodland, it is possible that Yellow-bellied Prinia will overtake Long-tailed Tailorbird, but the two bulbuls are expected to remain clear ahead.

Next Year

The objectives next year are:

(a) to complete the survey of all remaining 5Km and 1Km squares.

(b) to check and augment the areas surveyed in 1993.

A tear-off slip is attached at the back of the Bulletin for observers to make their preferred choices for next year. The survey provides the opportunity to take part in a major step forward in our local knowledge, and it is fun. Don't delay in replying.

Observers

Sincere thanks go to the observers who submitted log sheets for 1993 as follows:-

P Aston, J E Burton, G J Carey, M M Chan, S Chan, H F Cheung, N J G Croft, D A Diskin, J S R Edge, M Hale, J Lazell, P J Leader, M R Leven, E Leven, R W Lewthwaite, D S Melville, V J Melville, R Morrish, W J Parfitt, V B Picken, S E Schaum, P R Stevens, N R Townsend, M Turnbull, C A Viney, G Walthew, M D Williams, F O Wong, T Woodward, L Young and G Ziarno.

Special mention is made of H F Cheung who covered 4 x 5Km squares in the western N.T. including 80 x 1Km squares, the most of any single observer, and recorded a wide range of species including the Crested Kingfishers at Tai Lam.

Shenzhen River Training Project

The Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments have agreed to carry out "training" of the Shenzhen River in order to open up the river to more boat traffic and prevent the kind of flooding problems witnessed this summer. Training involves deepening, widening and straightening the river channel and will involve substantial amounts of dredging. The dredging could well stir up unpleasant metals and affect sedimentation rates in Deep Bay, which in turn may affect the growth of mangroves and abundance of invertebrates and thus the numbers of birds using the bay.

Work on a 12-month assessment of the likely ecological effects of the project should begin in January 1994 and will provide a better understanding of seasonal changes in the ecology of Deep Bay. The information can then be used at the design phase of the project to help in reducing its environmental effects, in developing mitigation measures and in forming guidelines for future monitoring

The EIA will focus on the three most important ecological features likely to be affected mangroves, invertebrates and birds. Work on the latter will involve feeding studies and counts in order to determine the importance of the Bay to waterbirds.

The main method to assess numbers of waterfowl using the bay will be monthly counts. At present these operate anyway for the winter months November to March but they will be extended into counts every month for the whole year. It is hoped that Society members will be able to help with these counts every month as this is the only way in which this data can be collected. Waders will be counted frequently during the spring and autumn migration.

Members are encouraged to count numbers of birds in the Bay at any time of the year as all counts are potentially useful, whether waterfowl in winter or waders in spring and autumn. As the assessment will only last one year it will not be possible to include counts as part of the normal record collation process at the beginning of each year. Consequently, counts should be sent to **Geoff Carey, 1st Floor, 32A Chek Nai Ping, Sha Tin, N.T.** ; if you are a regular counter then please send them at the end of each month.

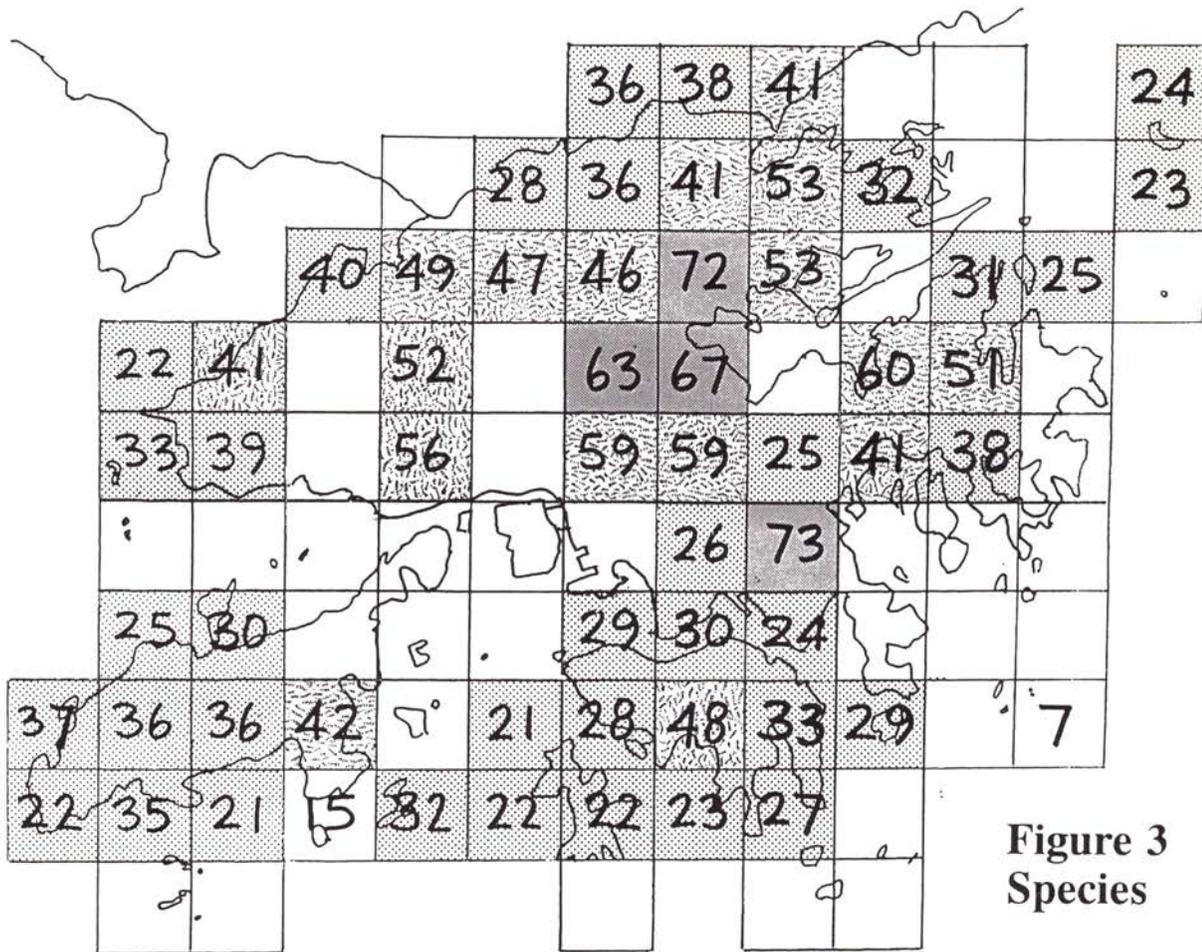


Figure 3
Species

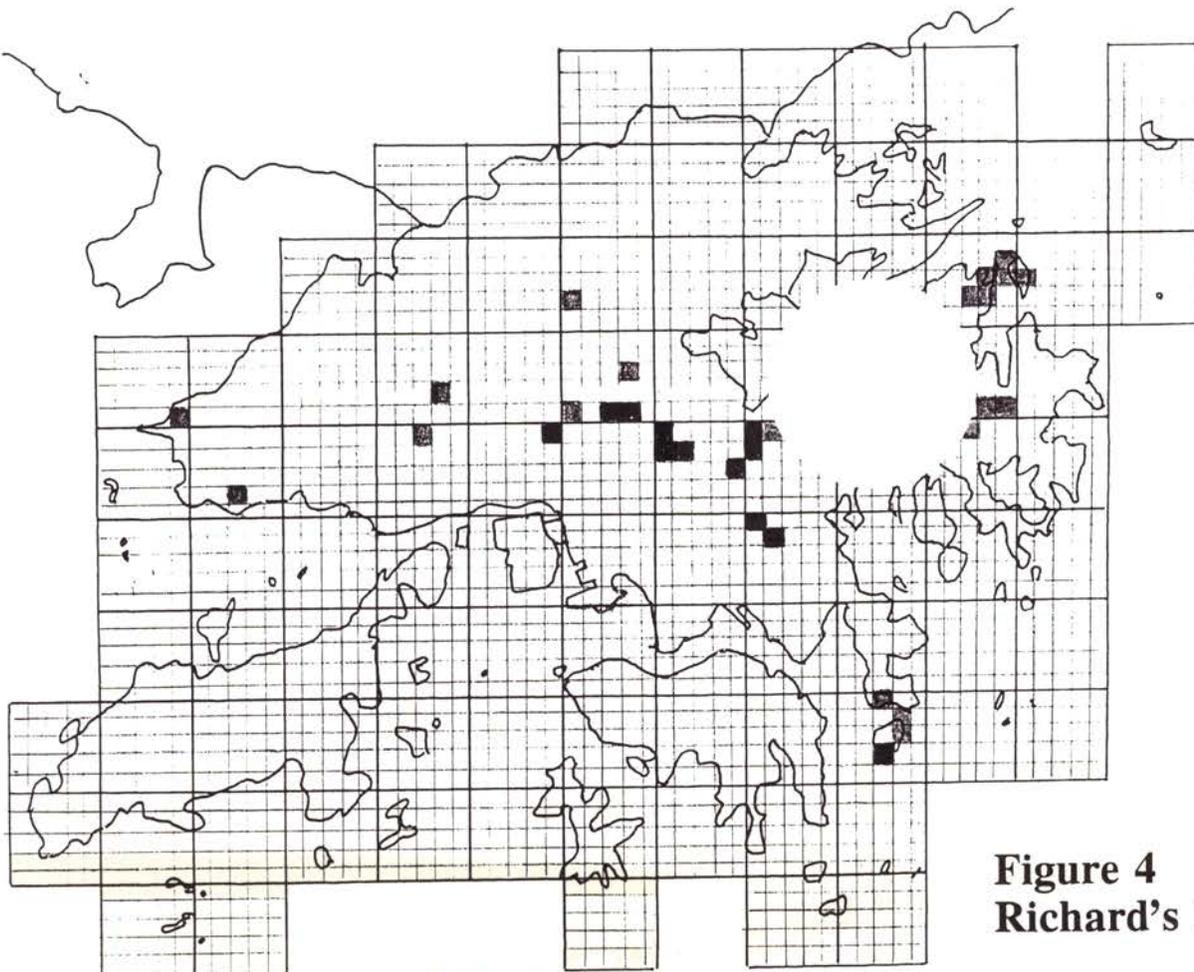


Figure 4
Richard's Pipit

Christmas Count, December 199

Observer(s) :

Places visited :

Remarks :

My/our guess : Total number of species seen in Hong Kong
= _____.

(When reporting, please give approximate numbers of birds seen in each area - see map. Avoid phrases like 'several', 'a few hundred', etc.; use numbers e.g. 4, 70, 300, 6000.)

001 Little Grebe	049 Shoveler	106 Little Ringed Plover
002 Great Crested Grebe	050 Common Pochard	107 Ringed Plover
006 Cormorant	051 Baer's Pochard	108 Kentish Plover
007 Dalmatian Pelican	052 Tufted Duck	109 Lesser Sand Plover
009 Lesser Frigatebird (Sp)	053 Scaup	110 Greater Sand Plover
010 Bittern	056 Red-breasted Merganser	112 Asiatic Golden Plover
013 Chestnut Bittern	059 Black-shouldered Kite	113 Grey Plover
016 Night Heron	060 Black Kite	114 Grey-headed Lapwing
017 Little Green Heron	061 White-bellied Sea Eagle	115 Lapwing
018 Chinese Pond Heron	062 Black Vulture	116 Great Knot
019 Cattle Egret	063 Serpent Eagle	117 Knot
021 Reef Egret	064 Marsh Harrier	119 Red-necked Stint
022 Little Egret	068 Japanese Sparrowhawk	120 Temminck's Stint
023 Intermediate Egret	069 Sparrowhawk (Sp)	121 Long-toed Stint
024 Great Egret	070 Crested Goshawk	124 Dunlin
025 Grey Heron	073 Buzzard	129 Fantail Snipe
026 Purple Heron	074 Spotted Eagle	130 Pintail Snipe
027 Black Stork	075 Imperial Eagle	135 Woodcock
028 White Stork	076 Bonelli's Eagle	136 Black-tailed Godwit
030 White Ibis	077 Osprey	139 Whimbrel
031 European Spoonbill	079 Kestrel	140 Curlew
032 Black-faced Spoonbill	083 Peregrine Falcon	142 Spotted Redshank
036 Ruddy Shelduck	084 Chinese Francolin	143 Redshank
039 Mandarin	085 Japanese Quail	144 Marsh Sandpiper
040 Wigeon	088 Slaty-legged Crane	145 Greenshank
041 Falcated Teal	090 Banded Rail	147 Green Sandpiper
042 Gadwall	095 White-breasted Waterhen	148 Wood Sandpiper
043 Baikal Teal	096 Moorhen	150 Common Sandpiper
044 Teal	097 Watercock	153 Red-neck Phalarope
045 Mallard	098 Coot	156.1 Relict Gull
046 Yellow-nib Duck	101 Painted Snipe	157 Saunders' Gull
047 Pintail	103 Black-winged Stilt	158 Black-headed Gull
048 Garganey	104 Avocet	159 Brown-headed Gull

160 Black-tailed Gull	248 Chinese Bulbul	294 Fulvous-faced Flycatcher Warbler
162 Herring Gull	249 Red-vented Bulbul	295 Large Grass Warbler
163 Slaty-backed Gull	250 Chestnut Bulbul	296 Long-tailed Tailor Bird
168 Caspian Tern	251 Black Bulbul	297 Sulphur-breasted Warbler
179 Red Turtle Dove	251.1 Orange-bellied Leafbird	298 Blyth's Leaf Warbler
180 Rufous Turtle Dove	255 Red-tailed Robin	300.2 Two-barred Greenish Warbler
181 Spotted Dove	256 Rubythroat	302 Pallas's Warbler
183 Emerald Dove	257 Bluethroat	303 Yellow-browed Warbler
189 Plaintive Cuckoo	259 Red-flanked Bluetail	304 Radde's Warbler
193 Koel	260 Daurian Redstart	305 Dusky Warbler
194 Greater Coucal	261 Plumbeous Water Redstart	309 Verditer Flycatcher
195 Lesser Coucal	262 Magpie Robin	313 Brown Flycatcher
196 Collared Scops Owl	263 Stonechat	314 Red-breasted Flycatcher
200 Barred Owllet	264 Grey Bushchat	315 Mugimaki Flycatcher
209 House Swift	265.1 White-throated Rock Thrush	318 Grey-headed Flycatcher
210 White-breasted Kingfisher	267 Blue Rock Thrush	319 Asian Paradise Flycatcher
211 Black-capped Kingfisher	268 Violet Whistling Thrush	321 Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher
212 Common Kingfisher	269 Orange-headed Ground Thrush	321.2 Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler
213 Pied Kingfisher	270 White's Thrush	321.5 Vinous-throated Parrotbill
217 Hoopoe	272 Grey Thrush	323 Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush
218 Great Barbet	273 Blackbird	324 Black-throated Laughing Thrush
219 Wryneck	275 Grey-backed Thrush	325 Hwamei
227 Swallow	276 Pale Thrush	326 White-cheeked Laughing Thrush
230 Richard's Pipit	277 Eye-browed Thrush	327 Black-faced Laughing Thrush
231 Upland Pipit	278 Dusky Thrush	328 Pekin Robin
232 Olive-backed Pipit	280 Short-tailed Bush Warbler	330 White-bellied Yuhina
234 Red-throated Pipit	281 Chinese Bush Warbler	331 Red-headed Tit
235 Water Pipit	282 Mountain Bush Warbler	332 Yellow-bellied Tit
237 Yellow Wagtail	282.5 Russet Bush Warbler	333 Great Tit
239 Grey Wagtail	283 Fantail Warbler	333.1 Yellow-cheeked Tit
240 White Wagtail	283.1 Bright-capped Cisticola	334 Penduline Tit
242 Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike	284 Plain Prinia	335 Fork-tailed Sunbird
245 Grey-throated Minivet	285 Yellow-bellied Prinia	336 Fire-breasted Flowerpecker
246 Scarlet Minivet	292 Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler	337 Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker
247 Crested Bulbul	293 Chestnut Crowned Warbler	339 Whiteye

343 Rufous-backed Shrike	822 Indian Grackle
345 Black Drongo	831 Yellow-fronted Canary
346 Ashy Drongo	
347 Hair-crested Drongo	
348 Jay	
349 Blue Magpie	
350 Treepie	
351 Magpie	
352 Jungle Crow	
353 Collared Crow	
354 Silky Starling	
357 Chinese Starling	
358 European Starling	
360 Grey Starling	
361 Black-necked Starling	
362 Crested Mynah	
363 Tree Sparrow	
364 White-backed Munia	
365 Spotted Munia	
367 Chinese Greenfinch	
369 Common Rosefinch	
370 Black-tailed Hawfinch	
371 Black-faced Bunting	
373 Grey-headed Bunting	
374 Tristram's Bunting	
376 Little Bunting	
601 Feral Pigeon	
602 Rainbow Lorikeet	
603 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	
604 Rose-ringed Parakeet	
605 Common Mynah	
606 Azure-winged Magpie	
712.1 Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	
715 Hawfinch	
816 Silver-eared Mesia	

Finches and Sparrows, An Identification Guide .

Clement, Harris & Davis,
Christopher Helm 1993

(Reviewed by Michael Leven)

This is the sixth volume to be published in Christopher Helm's excellent series of group monographs and it fully lives up to the reputation established by its predecessors. Like the majority of these, this is, as its title suggests, primarily an identification guide, covering the finches (*Fringillidae*), the sparrows (*Passeridae*) and the estrildid finches (*Estrildidae*). The grouping of these three "families" and the exclusion of others which are probably very closely related, in particular the weavers (*Ploceidae*), is perhaps somewhat arbitrary but the book already covers some 290 species and the authors had to stop somewhere!

The format is similar to previous volumes in the series with all species (and in most cases both sexes, all ages and all races distinguishable in the field) illustrated and a short text and a range map opposite; supported by a main text of 1/2 to two pages. A minor irritation, to me at least, is that whilst the plates are generally in Voous systematic order, in some cases unrelated species occurring in the same geographic area are grouped together instead. This has the bizarre effect, for example, of Linnet and Yemen Linnet being separated by several pages of South American siskins whilst Yemen Linnet shares a page with Arabian Waxbill the congeners of which are found some 50 pages further on.

The illustrations by John Davis and Alan Harris are excellent and for some species, in particular the rosefinches, are far superior to anything published elsewhere. Personally, I prefer the crispness of Alan Harris's paintings to those of John Davis, some of which are slightly 'fuzzy' and do not always capture the proportions of the species as observed in the field, but this is a very minor, and relative, criticism.

The strength of John Clement's text is in the sections on identification and description which are very useful both in fully covering little known groups such as the rosefinches and snowfinches and in providing details absent from the readily available English-language field guides (for example sexual plumage differences in Japanese Grosbeaks). The information on status and distri-

bution is less comprehensive. The range maps are very small and hence hard to read and the text, whilst including some records from 1992, is variable in its accuracy. Thus whilst reference is made to The Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986), more recent Hong Kong records are not included. Black-headed Greenfinch which is listed in Category E in Chalmers (i.e. a suspected escape) is listed from Hong Kong without comment as to its status, but Brambling (which was at that time a Category D species (it is now on Category A with several records), is not mentioned as occurring here. This weakness, however, detracts little from the value of the book.

Whilst this is not a book to which I expect to refer regularly in Hong Kong, it would be invaluable for a trip to Tibet or western China (rosefinches and snowfinches), whilst for travels to other parts of the world it surpasses existing readily available guides for, to name but three 'difficult' groups: siskins in South America, serins in Africa and munias in Wallacea.

Published price UK Pounds 29.99

Guizhou Bird Watching Society Call for help

Several groups of society members have visited Cao Hai ("Sea of Grass") in Guizhou Province. All are impressed by their expert guide, Mr Yang Jiongli, who is an enthusiastic conservationist, a rare species indeed in China. He is about to launch the Guizhou Bird Watching Society in association with the Guizhou Institute of Environmental Sciences. It is hoped to develop among the local population a healthy respect for wildlife and the environment through the promotion of bird-watching.

The new society intends to publish a leaflet on common birds of Guizhou (like our Mai Po leaflet) for distribution to schools. It is also hoped that binoculars could be acquired for selected school-teacher leading student bird-watching groups.

Members are invited to help either by **enrolling as overseas members** (annual subscription \$200) or by **donating second-hand binoculars**. It is understood that overseas members will be sent occasional newsletters. Contact **C Y Lam** for details.

Outing Reports

Kowloon Park, 17 October

(C Y Lam)

Some twenty members joined this rare outing to an urban destination. Our presence in the park was a curiosity for many passers-by.

Night Herons were a good start while the resident Alexandrine Parakeet family added much colour to the morning. Crested Bulbuls were amazingly beautiful when studied closely. Two fearless Blue Magpies were well watched by all. Red Turtle Doves were seen among Spotted Doves, an interesting discovery for those who assumed all doves to be Spotted.

The duck pond yielded both Common and White-breasted Kingfishers, free-flying Yellow-nib Ducks, White-breasted Waterhen and unexpectedly a Great Reed Warbler.

The birds were not overwhelming but good enough for beginners having their first taste of bird identification. The location and timing also allowed families to share the experience together. It would be of interest to repeat a similar visit to Kowloon Park sometime in spring.

Mai Po Bilingual 3 October

(John Holmes)

Does the title of this outing remind anyone else of "High School Confidential", the song by Jerry Lee Lewis? Just thought I'd ask... A pleasantly cool breeze greeted all at the Scott Centre at 0900. While NG Cho-nam and C.Y. LAM led the "Jade Channel" contingent down the casuarinas the rest of us followed the Border Fence. Early winter visitors included Wigeon, Garganey, Shoveler and a single Marsh Harrier. Two Cormorants had also arrived. All four expected species of Kingfisher showed themselves early on, to the enjoyment of all. We met most of the locals again in the "Society/Swire" hide. There were umpteen different species of drably-plumaged wader on view, as well as about two hundred Teal and assorted Egrets. A single Reeve was present. I tried to avoid further identification queries by distracting my companions with the new "Field Guide to the Waterbirds of Asia", the Wild Bird Society of Japan/AWB production. If Pink-headed Duck or Obi Woodcock ever turns up at Mai Po this is the book to have! But I digress. Very pleasant viewing conditions for a species tally of sixty-seven.

Ho Chung 28 November

(Jim Hackett)

Punctually at 07.30, eight people assembled at the bottom of the valley, and off we went. It was a cool overcast morning. A quick survey of the Ho Chung river as it flows around accumulated rubbish near Hiram's Highway yielded Grey and White Wagtails, Common Sandpiper, and a few Dusky Warblers. Yellow-browed Warblers were in the trees nearby. We crossed the bridge, passed a dead dog, and were at the foot of the valley. A pause for a lungful of dung-laden air by the piggery, and we ascended towards the hills. There has been relatively little burning at Ho Chung this year, so we had to work for our buntings. Black-faced were common, and a small flock of Little provided some members with their first view of the bird. Spotted Munias were also of interest, while Olive-backed Pipits were abundant. Eagle-eyed Burton found a Crested Goshawk swooping down the valley. Blackbirds were common but a single Rubythroat eluded most. At the old schoolhouse a Brown Flycatcher gave good views, while Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers seemed common but seldom paused to be appreciated in full. We entered the woods in the upper reaches of the valley, and emerged on the road near the dog-ridden village. In the space of few moments, Dollarbird and Treepie flew past, and a Japanese Sparrowhawk gave brief but good views. Ho Chung woods were frustratingly quiet. Grey-backed Thrushes were seen by a few, but a Jay was uncooperative. A Stub-tailed Bush Warbler put on a splendid show. We returned via the narrow track that leads down the valley from the car park near the woods; White-backed Munias were a good comparison with the earlier Spotted. The day's third bunting species, Chestnut, was well seen. The finale was provided by two very obliging Wrynecks, which gave excellent views to all. We were back at the cars in five hours. Most people got new birds, and the morning had been pleasantly spent

Tai Long Wan 24 October

(John Edge)

Now that the 'kai-to' from Ma Liu Shui does not leave until 0830, making it a rather short day, a number of us met at Pak Tam Chung at 0730: Li Wai-ki (joint leader) and C.Y. Lam operated an efficient shuttle service to Uk Tau, from where we started walking. The first 90 minutes or so were excellent, with a variety of raptors up early; these included Crested Honey Buzzard (new for the

area running list), Serpent Eagle and a pair of Japanese Sparrowhawks. Two or three House Martins and Red-rumped Swallows were mixed in with a feeding flock of swifts, and there was a flock of Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrushes near Uk Tau. Apart from that, it was a totally unremarkable day birdwise. If it were not for the good start between Uk Tau and Chek Keng, the total for the day would have been comfortably less than the previous lowest for this outing - 33. The previous day was the Chung Yeung holiday and the area was therefore very busy; the birds had gone to ground and even the Ham Tin marsh was dead. The weather, however, was beautiful; we had met up with the Ma Liu Shui contingent at Chek Keng and those who knew a thing or two headed straight for the beach, not to be seen again all day.

Overseas Birding

Sulawesi, Indonesia 30 March-5th April 1993

(John Holmes)

This spring I managed to fulfill a long-held ambition to get to Sulawesi, if only for a few days. I aimed for Dumoga-Bone Park via Manado in the North-east of the island. For information I used a trip report "Wallacea" by David Gibbs. I was able to hire a Toyota Kijang through the New Queen Hotel in Manado for US\$40 per day. Setting off at about 1500 I found the road in good condition and adequately signposted but darkness soon fell and I spent the night in Kotomobagu, about 200km away. Day 2 found me driving the 90km to Park HQs at Toraut through the sort of countryside I had always imagined Indonesia to be. There were encouraging numbers of Javan Pond Herons and Cattle Egrets in the paddy fields on the valley floors (very hard to find in Bali, for example). The lower slopes of the hills had extensive banana plantations and clove trees. Further up were patches of natural woodland with larger tracts of forest as I approached my destination. I saw Buff-banded Rail and Isabelline Waterhen (my first endemic) from the van, as well as flocks of Lesser Treeduck

The permit to stay in the park is obtained from a well-hidden office, with the Park Headquarters about 10km further on. There I paid about \$25HK for a room with four beds with a separate tiled bathroom and western-style toilet. Meals with the

warden's family were \$20HK, including all the bat stew I could eat. From the yard in front of my block I could see both Knobbed and Sulawesi Hornbills. Once in the forest I found Great Slaty Woodpecker and flocks of Red-billed Malkohas. Noisy flocks of Racket-tailed Parrots added to the atmosphere, as well as twenty-or-so Sulawesi Starlings which appeared to be using the crevices in a dead tree to nest.

Next day I was led across a new suspension bridge into the forest behind the accommodation. There was plenty of birdsong in the canopy but it was hard to find anything new. It rained heavily in the afternoon. Day 4 found us going to a Maleo (Megapode) site near the village of Imandi, about 35km from Toraut. There the Maleos perched in full view. "Also seems" were Slender-billed Crow, Sulawesi Serpent Eagle and a variety of Tree-swifts, Doves and Parrots. Odd birds from unrecognised families cropped up. Oh for a field guide to this lot! Back at Park HQs I was greeted by Purple-winged Roller before the rain set in again. I consoled myself with Duty-free Scotch and returned to Manado the following day with a bit of a hangover, but I still managed to pick up a few new birds on the way. I only got about sixty recognised species in four rain-affected birding days, but it was really good fun. The bottom line is that I missed Purple-bearded Bee-eater, so I'll have to go back!

Fan Ching Shan, Guizhou (Kwei Chau) Province, PRC 19 to 29 April 1993

(John Holmes)

C.Y.LAM and party originally visited this site in September 1992 (see Dec 92 Bulletin). I had missed the trip, and so was glad to finally get there in April this year. Unlike C.Y.'s party we got the train to Yu Ping (8 hours) in the eastern part of the province, and travelled by minibus the last 170km. The weather was warm and humid throughout, shorts and T-shirt adequate even near the 2,500 metre "Golden Summit", which is reached after a 10km walk along a drivable track and an ascent of over 6,000 steps. The Reserve area covers about 400 sq.km. of wooded mountains in the far north-east of the province.

At lower levels the calls of Grey-headed Flycatcher and Yellow-eyed Flycatcher-warbler *Sei-cerus burkii* were constant. At the summit were White-collared Yuhina, Greenbacked Tit, Chestnut-flanked White-eyes, Orange-winged (Elliot's) Laughingthrushes and Orange-gorgetted flycat-

chers - but not all at the same time! A large flock of Indian Edible-nest Swiftlets circled overhead. The highlight of the trip was the sight of two male Chinese (Temminck's) Tragopans on the rubbish tip behind the temple. I can record for ornithological posterity that Temminck's Tragopan likes chilli-flavoured noodles, especially at breakfast time!

The streams on the mountain held three species of Forktail, Dippers, Plumbeous Water Redstart and White-capped River Chat. Crested Kingfisher and Mandarin Duck were seen on the larger streams at the edge of the reserve. Perhaps my expectations were too high, but despite the birds mentioned above I found the birding quite hard work, eighty-one species in my week in the area of the reserve. Compared to Omei Shan there was much less in the way of Himalayan exotica, but it was still a noteworthy woodland site. Fan Ching does not yet appear in the better-selling English-language guide books to China, so few foreigners go there. The site is not a closed area and can be visited independently. A promise of beer will secure a copy of my trip report, which gives directions!

I should thank our friends at the Guizhou Environmental Protection Bureau for looking after me and for providing me with one of the most mind-blowing experiences managable without the aid of drink or drugs. After an afternoon watching Ashy-throated Parrotbills and Swinhoe's Minivet in the Park at Guiyang I returned to the hostel at Guiyang Teachers University to see a cricket match on TV. It was West Indies versus Pakistan with live commentary by Geoffrey Boycott! Thanks to omnipresent satellite TV life is too full of good things...

North West Thailand

The following two reports cover the same area, but at different times of year providing an interesting contrast. To avoid duplication both reports have of necessity been heavily edited. Detailed trip reports are available from both Johns, if members need information on hotels, transport etc.

20-26 December 1992 and 31-7 January 1993

(John Edge)

I spent two most enjoyable short breaks in this area based near Chiang Mai, the first with Nigel Croft, John Holmes and Kevin Lewis and the second with Stewart Smith, Peter Stevens and

Clive Viney. I had not planned the later visit but it seemed irresistible after the promise shown by the Christmas trip, even though this was partly spoilt by unseasonably foul weather. The fact that it was also Stewart Smith's last birding trip before leaving Hong Kong provided a further excuse. On both occasions we used the Sunday mid-morning Thai flight to Chiang Mai, collected a hire car at the airport and used the delightful Lanna Gardens Pavilion Resort hotel as a base, staying for one or two nights at Doi Inthanon Park Headquarters as the Lanna Gardens, while only about 15 km. southwest of the airport, is about 50 km. from the entrance to Doi Inthanon National Park. Days tended to start at 0500, to allow time for the drive to Inthanon, Thailand's highest mountain at 2565 m., and finish by about 2200 - suitably refreshed. There is a good, if somewhat busy, road all the way to the summit.

Principal sites on the road up Doi Inthanon, and the more interesting birds seen (common names are as per Lekagul and Round's "Guide to the Birds of Thailand" (1991)) were as follows:

Park Entrance & Visitor Centre (Km. 8)

Small Minivet, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Rufous-winged Buzzard, Crested Honey Buzzard, Little Green Bee-eater, Purple Sunbird.

Km. 11 - 12 : mixed dry Dipterocarp and broadleaf forest either side of the Mae Klang River

Collared Falconet, White-rumped Falcon, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Lineated Barbet, Grey-headed Parrakeet, Black Baza, Large Wood Shrike, Large Cuckoo Shrike, Chestnut-tailed Starling.

Km. 34 : a jeep-track leading south through somewhat degraded forest which gives open views

Asian Emerald Cuckoo, Speckled Piculet, Maroon Oriole, Grey-headed Parrotbill (in the canopy), Slaty-backed Flycatcher.

Km. 37.5 : another jeep-track leading north and the Mae Chaem road leading south. Superb forest and secondary growth; the richest area on Inthanon

Mountain Hawk Eagle, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Collared Owlet, Golden-throated Barbet, Stripe-breasted Woodpecker, Long-tailed Broadbill, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Golden Babbler, Silver-eared Mesia, Chestnut-fronted Shrike Babbler, Spectacled Barwing, Black-headed Sibia, Purple Cochoa, Grey Thrush (first for Thailand!), Grey-sided Thrush, Vivid Niltava, Black-throated

Sunbird.

Km. 46 the Summit : a habitat unique in Thailand, with a Sphagnum bog surrounded by evergreen forest in which every tree is host to epiphytes

Rufous-throated Partridge, Chestnut Thrush, Dark-sided Thrush, Chestnut-crowned Laughing Thrush, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Pygmy Wren Babbler, White-browed Shortwing, Chestnut-tailed Minla, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Green-tailed and Gould's Sunbirds and a variety of Phylloscopus warblers.

There are other sites within the Park where 'specials' are known to occur; we were lucky with the rather handsome Black-tailed Crake at a well-trodden site in a valley behind Park Headquarters. I should not forget to mention Mr. Deang's cafe near Park HQ (Km. 31) where excellent food and cold drinks are always available; he keeps a bird log which is a useful source of information, and it is easy to return to the cafe from the Km. 37.5 area at midday, so that catering is not a problem.

During both visits we also spent time on Doi Suthep, immediately to the west of Chiang Mai, paying particular attention to an area at Km. 16 on the Doi Suthep road, where there is a convenient lay-by opposite some attractive flowering trees and, a little further on, a road leading to a Meo village which passes through some good forest and with fine views south and west towards Doi Inthanon. At various times at Km. 16 were Blue-throated Barbet, Blue-winged and Orange-bellied Leafbirds, Spot-winged Starling and many Streaked Spiderhunters. Clive had a male Golden Bush Robin there while the rest of us were at the other end of the lay-by, distracted by a Tailorbird of all things! The Meo village road tended to be patchy but produced some good birds, for example Slender-billed and Maroon Orioles, Lesser Yellownape, Chestnut-flanked White-eye, White-browed Scimitar-Babbler and Rufous-bellied Niltava.

The Lanna Gardens Hotel is set in a valley, with the surrounding hills covered in mainly secondary growth and bamboo, with one or two old trees remaining as raptor snags. An attractive stream runs through the grounds, where Hill Blue Flycatchers and Siberian Blue Robins come down to drink; Racket-tailed Treepies, Green-billed Malkohas and White-browed Piculet were also seen in the grounds.

We visited one more site - the Genes Conservation Centre at Km. 46 on the R. 107 north of Chiang Mai - en route for Doi Chiang Dao, which must be worth visiting for Hume's Pheasant and

Giant Nuthatch. At the Centre there was a large flock of c. 2,500 Lesser Treeduck, plus three Mandarin and one Ferruginous Duck, as well as Pintail and Garganey. A nearby swamp held a smart Citrine Wagtail, with a Black-shouldered Kite and several Indian Rollers on the fringes.

Both visits were highly satisfying and I for one would very much like to go back yet again : March would probably be the best month for Doi Inthanon, with some birds, pre-breeding, easier to see than usual. Thailand is also such a pleasant country to visit; the friendliness and helpfulness of the people make one want to return. Anyone planning to go can make do with Lekagul and Round, together with the Checklist of Birds of Doi Inthanon National Park, published by the Conservation Data Centre at Mahidol University, Bangkok - although this needs to be updated.

22-28 October 1993

(John Burton)

(John and Adrian Chapman had considerable difficulties with Avis and stayed in Chiang Mai, which caused some problems!)

Having chivvied Avis into action by the crack of 0930 hrs, we headed to Doi Inthanon. To our dismay Sat 23rd October is a Thai National holiday consequently the local tourist attractions were very congested. The journey to Doi Inthanon was somewhat fraught; our morale was further lowered by finding the summit of Inthanon cold, windy, crowded, noisy and wreathed in cloud with visibility NIL. No birding possible at all that the summit. We retreated and made our first call at Mr Deang's for beer and noodles. After this we virtually threw in the towel and retreated to Chiang Mai.

Day 2 saw an 0630 hrs start. We headed out of the city on Route 107 to a "marshy area" reputedly rich in wildfowl. Look out for the Genes Conservation Centre at Km 46. This is easily identified by the pine plantation lining the road which stands out as obviously as the big concrete sign in English. Approx 400 metres past the entrance to the Genes Centre are a small cluster of police buildings; turn right into the dirt road for approx 1/2 km and you've found it.

It was quiet at the time of our visit but we picked up Lesser Treeduck, Quails, Black Shouldered Kite, Emerald Cuckoo, Wyneck, Bee-eaters and bushels of Bushchats. Worth a visit but it is surprisingly quite a small lake surrounded by rough fields that repay a good bash.

By mid-morning we began to retrace our steps heading for an exploratory first visit to Doi Suthep right on the city doorstep. En route we made a few brief detours as the fancy took us, achieving almost nothing at all.

Our arrival on Doi Suthep confirmed that the temples and palaces are particularly favoured visitor locations but we were able to familiarise ourselves with the geography of the area, adding a few ticks to the list. It was very hard work so once again we threw in the towel and headed ale-wards.

Day 3, Monday saw us up and away early. One hour and 20 minutes from Chiang Mai Centre to the summit of Doi Inthanon (105 kms) is a mark that will stand for some little while I think!

Once again the summit and boggy area were very misty. We managed a Green Tailed Sunbird and had excellent views of the Pied Imperial Pigeon and Ashy Wood Pigeon plus Collared Falconet. But once again the weather was very "iffy"; we met Phil Round at the top with a group of U.S. birders who advised that Oct/Nov is far from being the ideal time to visit; he recommends Feb-Mar.

We did the jeep track and made numerous roadside stops; gradually we started to acquire a reasonable cross section of species. However none of it was easy and such birdwaves as we did have, few and far between, were dominated by White Eyes and Phyllos Warblers, all seen in the canopy of 250ft trees, silhouetted against a glaring misty sky.

Day 4 saw our first serious attempt at Doi Suthep and with results similar to Inthanon. We had our best birding along the road to Sri Nehru School which follows the ridge running north past the summit Royal Palace. Particularly good was a small spur signposted "Sun Ku", a semi-ruined stupa.

Again the weather was unkind with birds difficult to see against a glaring background of white mist, but we persevered and racked up some good birds; of note, Speckled Piculet, Small Niltava and Chestnut Fronted Shrike Babbler. Leafbirds, Ashy Drongos and Fantails were common and often precursors of interesting mixed flocks. But once again quiet, difficult birding with very large numbers of Phyllos warblers that we tended to disdain in favour of more exotic species. Our list suffered accordingly.

On the way back to our hotel we detoured through the University Grounds and the Arbore-

tum. This is definitely worth a visit since we had ideal views of Shikra and tantalising glimpses of a small fast owl, tentatively tagged as an Asian Barred Owlet.

October 27 saw a more relaxed return to Inthanon. From afar we saw the summit again wreathed in mist, so ascended no further than km37 concentrating on the jeep track and the road to Mae Chaem. Actually, it was from the car on this road that we had some really good tweets, notably Spectacled Barwing, Long Tailed Minivet (as illustrated on front cover of Dr. Round's book) and Racket Tailed Treepie.

For our last half day, we again returned to Doi Suthep. Our 4 hours on the mountain can only be described as aggravating. All but birdless, what was about was silhouetted against the sun or a misty glare. There was some relief on the west ridge road at Sun Khu where we had pretty good views of a Green Billed Malkoha slithering around a reasonably open tree.

To Sum up

Learning from our experience, this can be an expensive trip. Hotels and hire cars as introduced via a HK travel agent are on the high side. A few beers with each meal add very significantly to the costs of the trip. If we were to go again:

we would:

- take a tracksuit and waterproof jacket - the top of Inthanon at 4,000 metres can be miserably cold;
- travel Thai Airways;
- hire a car from a local agent;
- apply liberal amounts of anti-bug potions - tick bites are still irritating 1 week on;
- take "picnic rations" and;
- book into Park HQ for at least 2 full days on Inthanon;

we would not:

- go again at the end of October
- hire Avis or Hertz
- stay in an "international" hotel
- drive to Inthanon every day
- eat Thai food (speak for yourself John! ed.)

Do not be put off by any doom and gloom described above. Chiang Mai is a very nice tourist destination. Non-birding spouses and kids can find things to do and occupy their day.

Report On The Birds

(These unchecked records include sightings of possible escapes)

August-October 1993

(Paul Leader)

Pride of place must go to the unprecedented series of seabird records seen from Cape D'Aguilar during typhoons. The discovery that large numbers of seabirds move off HK during the correct weather conditions has already indicated that species previously considered extreme rarities may well be annual in reasonable numbers. Potential firsts during the period are Red-footed Booby on Cheung Chau, Christmas Frigatebird from Cape D'Aguilar, White-rumped Sandpiper at Mai Po, and Little Pied Flycatcher in Tai Po Kau. There were two seconds for HK, Pomarine Skua and Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler, the former being some 36 years after the only other record, the latter a mere seven months.

Streaked Shearwater Two off Cape D'Aguilar on 21/8 (MRL,PJL), another there on 17/9 (MRL *et al*) and three there on 25/9 (PJL,MRL). There are only two previous records, in May 1985, and June 1986.

Shearwater sp. A small all-dark shearwater flew SSW off Cape D'Aguilar on 21/8 (PJL,MRL). Streaked is the only shearwater on the HK list.

Petrel sp. From Cape D'Aguilar unidentified all-dark Petrels were reported as follows: 4 21/8, considered most likely to be Matsudaira's (MRL,PJL); 1 17/9, probably Bulwer's (PJL,RWL); and 25/9 5 probable Swinhoe's and 11 probable Bulwer's (MRL,PJL). Swinhoe's is the only petrel on the HK list although there is a record of a white-rumped petrel.

Red-footed Booby One was seen over Cheung Chau 23/8 (JB). If accepted this would be the first record for HK.

Dalmatian Pelican Two were at Mai Po from the very early date of 1/10 (JB *et al*).

Christmas Frigatebird A first-stage female was seen off Cape D'Aguilar on 17/9 (MRL,PJL,IT). This species is not currently on the HK list, although all frigatebird records are currently being reviewed.

Schrencks Bittern A female/imm was present in Shek Sheung (Long) Valley on 3/10 (MRL *et al*). There are now 5 autumn records, all fall between 23/9 and 3/10.

American Wigeon Hybrid Two males considered to be American Wigeon hybrids were at Mai Po from 20/10 (RWL *et al*).

Crested Honey Buzzard Singles at Mai Po on 4/9 (SS *et al*), Tsim Bei Tsui on 13/9 (GW) and 2/10 (DAD), and at Mt. Austin on 10/10 (DAD).

Black-shouldered Kite Two were present in the Tin Shui Wai-Tsim Bei Tsui-Mai Po area throughout, and one was present on (E) Ping Chau on 11/9 (GJC) and 18/9 (DAD).

Besra Singles were at Mt Austin on 28/8 (RWL), and trapped at Mai Po on 12/9 and 2/10 (DSM,PJL *et al*) and KARC on 25/10 (DPC).

Spotted Eagle An immature of the *fulvescens* type was at Mai Po on 17/10

Yellow-legged Buttonquail One was reported from Tsim Bei Tsui 10/10 (JAH), and another in the Tan Shan Valley on 30/10 (DAD).

Slaty-legged Crake One found wandering the streets of Mong Kok 16/10 was in perfect condition and was later released at Sheun Wan (*per*NA).

Painted Snipe Recorded from Kam Tin and Shek Sheung Valley during the period with maximums of 14 at the former, on 5/9 (HFC), and 13 at the latter on 9/10 (PJL,MRL).

White-rumped Sandpiper One at Mai Po 29/8 will be the first for HK if accepted (AC *et al*).

Spoon-billed Sandpiper One at Mai Po on 24/10 (RWL).

Grey Phalarope The summering individual at Mai Po was last seen on 7/8 (PJL,GJC).

Pomarine Skua A light-phase adult was seen from Cape D'Aguilar 26/8 (PJL,MRL), and eight other skuas seen the same day were probably the same species. This the first record for 36 years, the only other record being a single bird in Victoria Harbour in February 1957.

Long-tailed Skua From Cape D'Aguilar three were seen 21/8 (PJL,MRL) and one 26/8 (MRL,PJL). These as the first autumn records.

Skua sp One 21/8 (PJL,MRL), another 17/9, and 15 including those mentioned above 26/8 (PJL,MRL). All from Cape D'Aguilar.

Roseate Tern Up to 30 at the tern colony in Mirs Bay during August, and recorded from Cape D'Aguilar 28/8, three (RWL), and 25/9, two (MT). On the latter date two were also seen near Discovery Bay (JBr).

Aleutian Tern Recorded on at least 12 dates between 14/8 and 5/10. High counts were of 130 from Cape D'Aguilar 22/8 (PJL,MRL *et al*), 40 there 28/8 (RWL), and 130 mainly south of Hong Kong Island 29/8. One at Sheun Wan 25-26/9 was the first 'inland' record (RWL). This species has now been on the HK list for a little over a year.

Bridled Tern Unprecedented counts during seawatches from Cape D'Aguilar were of 179, 18/9 (MT), followed by a staggering 749 between 0700-1630hrs the next day (PJL,MRL *et al*). The highest other count was of six.

Sooty Tern An adult was seen from Cape D'Aguilar 17/9 (PJL *et al*). The fourth record for HK.

Crested Kingfisher One was still present at Tai Lam Res. on 15/8 (PA).

Blue-throated Bee-eater Four were seen flying over the fence at Tsim Bei Tsui 6/10 (GW). The third record for HK.

Chinese Pitta One was reported from the north side of High West 20/9 (GW).

Siberian Blue Robin Two were seen at Shing Mun 4/9 (DAD), one there 11/9 (MT), and a male was found dead at Discovery Bay 4/10 (Jbr).

Grey Bushchat One was trapped at KARC 8/10 (DPC), and two days later singles were reported from Ho Chung (JB) and Tsim Bei Tsui (JAH).

Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush A first-year female was at Mt Austin from 2/10 (MT *et al*). This, the first for some time, was a widely appreciated bird.

Siberian Thrush A first-year male was trapped at KARC 27/10 (DPC), followed by a female at Shing Mun four days later (DAD).

Slaty-backed Forktail One near Tsuen Wan 15-17/8 (TW *et al*) and another at Shing Mun 29/9 (GW).

Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler One was trapped in the Shek Sheung Valley 1/10 (PJL,MRL,RPT). This is the second record for HK, the first being at Mai Po earlier this year.

Lanceolated Warbler Singles were reported from Shek Sheung Valley, trapped, 3/10 (DSM,PJL *et al*) Tai Wai 4-5/10 (DAD), Mai Po 17/10 (RWL), and Tin Shui Wai 27/10 (GW).

Thick-billed Warbler Singles were trapped at KARC on 11/9, 20 and 25/10 (DPC), and Mai Po 10/10 (PJL,MRL).

Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler An early individual was found in Tai Po Kau 11/9 (CAV), and one was trapped KARC 30/10 (DPC).

Two-barred Greenish Warbler One was trapped at KARC on 1/10 (DPC), one was seen at Mai Po on 10/10 (PJL), one recorded Tai Mo Shan on 17/10 (DAD), and another was in the Golden Triangle on 30/10 (JAH).

Sooty Flycatcher One was at Sha Lo Tung 11/9 (RWL), and 2 at Mt Nicholson 15/9 (CAV). On 18/9 there were two in Kowloon Park (YYT), one at Mt Davies (MT), and one in Tai Po Kau (CAV). Finally two first-winters were in Tai Po Kau on 2/10 (PJL,MRL).

Little Pied Flycatcher A female was in Tai Po Kau on 12 and 15/8 (JAH,RWL). If accepted this would be the first record for Hong Kong.

Striated Yuhina Two in Tai Po Kau 8/8 (JAH).

Rufous-capped Babbler One at Shing Mun 2/10 (PJL).

Grey-cheeked Fulvetta Recorded from Tai Po Kau as follows: on 7/8 (JB); two 8/8, one of which was a juvenile (RWL); two 12/8 (JAH); and seven 18/9 (CAV).

Tiger Shrike Singles were at Mai Po on 29/8 (JH,RDES), Shing Mun 9/9 (GW), and Mt Austin 16/9 (WLY).

Daurian Starling Singles were noted as follows, Lam Tsuen Valley 5/9 (JAH), Tsim Bei Tsui 2/10 (DAD), and Mai Po 3/10 (PJL,MRL). Seven were at Mai Po on 10/10 (PJL,MRL).

Chestnut-cheeked Starling Two adult males were recorded at Shuen Wan 26/9 (RWL), this is the first ever autumn record.

Hawfinch One was found feeding on the ground at Mai Po on the remarkably early date of 12/9 (JAH).

FUTURE MEETINGS

Please contact the leader several days beforehand to confirm attendance, otherwise you may miss out on any changes in timing, venue etc.

DATE	LEADER	VENUE	TIME
27 December Monday		Christmas Count Contact area leader for details	
1994			
8 January Saturday	LI Wai-ki	Tai Po Kau Meet at Car Park	07.30
22 January Sunday	John Edge	Wu Kau Tau Meet at Car Park	07.30
24 January Monday	A Selection of Southern Hemisphere Birds An Illustrated Talk by John Holmes Police Headquarters, Arsenal Street, Wanchai The date and venue are provisional. Please contact Liz Leven after January 14th 1994 for confirmation		18.30
30 January Sunday	Andrew Young NG Cho-nam	Tsim Bei Tsui Bilingual	09.00-15.00
19 February Saturday	H F CHEUNG	Tai Po Kau	07.30
27 February Sunday	John Holmes	Tsui Keng Meet at HK Golf Club Car Park, Fanling	07.00
5 March Saturday	Nigel Croft HF CHEUNG	Tsim Bei Tsui Bilingual	09.00-15.00
12 March Saturday	Jim Hackett	Ho Chung Meet at P2 (see June 1993 Bulletin)	07.00
20 March Sunday	Peter Stevens CHAN Ming-ming	Mai Po * Bilingual	09.00-15.00
2 April Saturday	Richard Stott	Tai Po Kau Meet at Car Park	07.00

* 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.

++ 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 CY Lam to see if any seats are still available. Please bring packed lunch and drink.

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

Please complete these forms and make out your cheque in English

Tsim Bei Tsui Sunday 30th January 1994

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: **CY Lam, Royal Observatory, 134 Nathan Road, Kowloon by 7 January 1994**

NAME _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____

Tsim Bei Tsui - Saturday 5th March 1994

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: **CY Lam, Royal Observatory, 134 Nathan Road, Kowloon by 18 February 1994**

NAME _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____

Mai Po Sunday 20th March 1994

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: **CY Lam, Royal Observatory, 134 Nathan Road, Kowloon by 11 March 1994**

NAME _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____

NEW BREEDING BIRDS SURVEY (1994)

1.I would like to undertake the 1994 survey work in the following 5Km square(s)

1st Choice _____

2nd Choice _____

2.I would like to check/augment the results in the following 5Km square(s) which I surveyed in 1993 (if applicable)

Name _____

Address _____

Tel Office _____ Home _____ Fax Office _____ Home _____

Post/fax to **Michael Chalmers, 1 Fairview Villa, 52 Ma Lok Path, Kau To Shan, Shatin (fax 6057719)**

CHINA AND ASIA BIRDING TRIPS

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Fax:

Country:

Site(s) visted

Return to Nigel Croft, 1/F, Hang Tau Tsuen, Sheung Shui, NT