



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

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SOCIETY NEWS

THE CATHAY BOARDWALK HIDE will be officially opened on July 13, by representatives of Cathay Pacific and the Society and WWF. The hide has been moved to its final position, and the Boardwalk will be finished. Special thanks to Cathay Pacific whose sponsorship made it possible. Many thanks to all members who contributed in various ways, from donating money, organising and supervising the construction, clearing mangroves to swimming in Deep Bay to tie the anchor chains. The new hide is open for business!

THE BIG BIRD RACE on 20 April raised \$1.9m for WWF at Mai Po. Congratulations to the winners and thanks to the many sponsors who contributed this year. An inside page has a list of the team scores and money raised, at time of going to press.

TARGET 100 is the name of an outing to give members a taste of the Big Bird Race without doing it for real. The target for all participating members will be to see or hear 100 species in one day. The coach will leave Haiphong Road in Tsim sha Tsui near the Kowloon Park exit and take members to several locations in the New Territories, including Mai Po, during the day. It will be a long day: keen members can join the leaders at the entrance to the Zoo and Botanical Gardens (opposite the Governor's Residence) at 6am. Members should have their own Mai Po Permit for the day. See Meetings Page for details and reply slip.

THE JUNE BULLETIN. As promised in March, this Bulletin is being delivered late because the editor has been in Sichuan all month.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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國際保護鳥類委員會香港分部

HONG KONG SECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BIRD PRESERVATION

PRINTED ON RE-CYCLED PAPER

CLIVE VINEY MEMORIAL ISSUE.

As this Bulletin is going to press, Clive Viney is packing to leave Hong Kong. The Society will undoubtedly miss him, and we all wish him well in his retirement.

R.I.P

(Rest in Portugal)

Clive Viney

Hong Kong 1967-1996

There follows an obituary written by the great man himself before his departure:

"I arrived in Hong Kong in 1967 and have birded here ever since; mostly in HK and China. For some 14 years I was on the HKBWS Committee and took over as Hon. Recorder from Mike Webster in 1974. I set up the first Records Committee and handed over the recordership to Gavin Cooper and Mike Chalmers in 1978, but remained a member of that Committee until I resigned in May 1993. I believe that at one time under Gavin's chairmanship, I had the grandiose title of vice-chairman (civil servants were considered inappropriate material for chairman) and at other times did just about every other job, including Hon Librarian and Editor for many years. My fondest memories are of discovering Hong Kong's birds at Ho Chung in the late sixties and early seventies, when rice was still harvested in the valley and superb muddy fishponds occupied the marina site. Apart from the pictureless La Touche and chatty Herkelots, there was no guide. I still have my first descriptions of Chinese Bulbul and Black-faced Laughing-thrush; I had no idea what they were! The struggle to save Mai Po was also very important to me; at times it seemed hopeless

but we won through in the end. And, of course, the early pioneering trips into China, which began in 1976 were breathtakingly exciting. I've always valued highly, and taken very seriously, my WWF/HK trusteeship. This would not be my first 'obituary' in the Bulletin as when I left the Committee, I was the subject of one of Gavin Cooper's pranks:

It is with great sorrow
that we announce the passing (from office)
of
CLIVE VINEY
Vice chairman, Librarian, Bulletin Editor
Editor of the Annual Report, Splitter
Species and (despite fervent denial)
Secret Twitcher

It's no secret that I've always enjoyed casting a critical and hopefully constructive eye over birding activities in Hong Kong. I only ever tried to get people to take themselves a little less seriously. I hit major controversy with my Letter to Editor dated 1st April on the subject of Listing in Bulletin 136 - June 1990; this is still vividly remembered today and provoked more reaction from members than any conservation issue has ever done! (see Bulletin 137)"
Clive.

NEW BULLETIN EDITOR. The current Editor will probably be leaving Hong Kong next year, and so March 1997 will be his last Bulletin. Volunteers are asked to contact the current Editor for more details.

BOOKS FOR SALE.

Society Member Mrs Lorna Christofis has generously donated a small number of New Books for sale covering birds of Southern Africa. The whole of the proceeds of the sale will go to Society funds in support of the Mai Po nature reserve.

Steyn, P. and Arnott, G. 1990.

Hunters of the African Sky. Cape Town: Struik Winchester. HK\$300 (Normal Selling Price HK\$600)

This is a slim large format book (268mm x 356mm with 96 pages) covering 80 species of Raptors and Owls occurring in South Africa. The book is the plates, a series of beautiful drawings by Graeme Arnott excellently reproduced, interspersed with informative essays by Peter Steyn. This is not an identification book but provides an absorbing background to the African members of these groups.

Ginn, P. G., Mcillerton, W. G. & Milstein, P. le S., 1989.

The Complete Book of Southern African Birds. Cape Town: Struik Winchester. HK\$800 (normal selling price HK\$1530)

This is a big book (256mm x 327mm with 760 pages) covering over 700 species which occur in the whole of Southern Africa north to Angola, Zaire, and Tanzania. This is primarily a photographic book containing over 1000 photographs most of which are to an extremely high standard and a delight to look at. There is an introduction to the birds and an end piece describing the habitats of the region. The main body of the book is taken up with individual species accounts usually with one good photograph for each species. A small number of rare or skulking species are illustrated with paintings. Each species account comprises a range map, field recognition features, voice,

behaviour, food and feeding methods and breeding biology. Additionally there is a short essay describing general points of interest for each species.

This book will not disappoint these who love birds and African birds in particular.

If you wish to buy one of these splendid books please order quickly as the Society has only a very small number of copies. Please make cheques out to the Society.

Also for sale "The Bird of Sichuan" in Chinese-Contact Peter Hopkin for more details.

MAI PO NEWS

May 1996 By Lew Young.

Boardwalk Visits for WWF HK Members

There will be no WWF membership visits to the Floating Boardwalk and Hide for the coming months.

Lions Club 'Shrimp Harvest Museum'

The 'Shrimp Harvest Museum' funded by the Lions Club of Hong Kong South by the sluice gate of gei wai £12 is now finished and HKBWS Society members who wish to visit it (especially when they are leading a group) should let the Mai Po staff know in advance so that the door can be opened. The outer walls of the hut still has to be thatched and this will be done in autumn. Any volunteers for cutting reeds ?

Rotary Club Nature Trail

Construction work on the rain shelter and notice boards for the Rotary Club Nature Trail has been delayed because of the recent rains but we hope to have the works finished as soon as possible.

Freshwater marsh

We have been trying to set up a 'freshwater marsh' at Mai Po for a long time but the problem has always been where the freshwater would come from. Recently the Canadian Overseas Development Co. Ltd. (managers of Fairview Park), has generously donated funds for diverting the treated wastewater from Fairview Park to Mai Po so that a freshwater marsh can be established in the 'Lotus Pond' at the back of the Education Centre. This is the pond where the Cormorants roost in winter.

No one need have any worries about the quality of the effluent as it is treated to tertiary standards and meets EPD guidelines on water quality. Then once the project is running, the engineers in charge of the treatment plant and EPD will continue to monitor the quality of the discharge so that there will be no adverse effects to Mai Po.

We intend to develop the new marsh as an additional educational facility for students and the general visitors, and will do this by landscaping the ponds to create islands; planting it with local freshwater plants which are not presently found at Mai Po; and possibly providing boardwalks and pond-dipping areas. The overflow from this ponds will be piped to the small pond at the rear of gei wai 16, and then onto the "Scrape" before discharge via the sluice gate into Deep Bay. Work is expected to start this autumn.

A TRIP TO HKU AND LUNG FU SHAN.

By Carrie Ka-wai Ma

If you have time before going to work or to school, or if you like to spend only one or two hours birdwatching, then the campus of the University of Hong Kong and Lung Fu Shan is highly recommended.

Lung Fu Shan is located above Pokfulam, behind the University of Hong Kong. It is composed of mostly scrubland, with fruiting peak in winter and flowering peak in summer. These provide a resting site and resources for omnivorous local residents, passage migrants and seasonal visitors. Together with beautiful scenery, it is a place worth visiting.

Before going up to Lung Fu Shan, let us have a walk in the campus of HKU. There are several bird watching sites: for example around the "Lotus pond", you can easily find the local residents like bulbuls, Common Kingfisher, Blue Magpie, Violet Whistling Thrush and Great Tit. Behind the Shaw's Buildings, near the tennis court, there is a garden where warblers, flycatchers and thrushes can be observed as well as local residents. If you walk and search for thrushes along the bushes at the path besides the University Drive, may be a Chinese Bush Warbler will stand in front of you and give you a surprise. Another place is behind the May Hall, where a small path with trees growing luxuriantly at both sides provides a good resting place for the birds. One fascinating thing is that, within the small garden beside the path, there is a tree with a hole nesting Yellow-crested Cockatoo. If you feel interested, you can have a visit and see whether it is guarded by the

parent cockatoo or maybe see a young cockatoo flying out.

If you want to see more forest birds, Lung Fu Shan is a good place. Searching along the path besides the catchment area near the University Drive, especially in early morning, there will be unexpected discoveries, such as Mugimaki Flycatcher, Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike, Fujian Niltava, warblers and thrushes. Then walk along the path below the Conduit, and up the hill, over this area, Grey Treepie, Scarlet-backed Flowerpicker and White-backed Munia are commonly observed. In addition, Mountain Bush Warbler, Short-tailed Bush Warbler, Rufous-tailed Robin, Fire-breasted Flowerpicker, Grey Bushchat...., will also be met with opportunity. Once reaching the Lung Fu Pavilion you will probably be attracted by the beautiful view of Victoria Harbour, and you can consider waiting for raptors to appear. After reaching the intersecting point with Hatton Road, continue walking up the mountain, along the road, and reach an abandoned defense site. There is a large meadow area, and it is not difficult to find active birds between this area and the shrubs. Walking down the mountain, lets have a try waiting at Hatton Road near the catchment, for the arrival of a bird-wave and for new discoveries. May be you will get surprise with a Plumbeous Redstart passing in front of you silently in the catchment.

In these three months, within this two hours journey, I have recorded 61 species of birds. This really encouraged me as a beginner. I like visiting this fantastic place during free time or after lessons, searching for discoveries and bird nests. If you want to have an unexpected surprise

without spending too much time in field trip, then the campus of HKU and Lung Fu Shan is no doubt an ideal place !

CHINESE BIRDING HOLIDAYS

CHE BA LING (23-29 Dec 95)

By Yu Yat Tung

After the visit to Che Ba Ling by Dr. H.F. Cheung last year, he discovered that it was a good place for bird watching because of various species of birds, the convenience of transportation and its cheapness. Most important of all is the presence of **Blyth's Kingfisher** which is little known in South China. He suggested a second visit during the Christmas holiday and I strongly supported it.

We started our journey on 23 Dec., with a group of fifteen people, including Dr. Cheung, Mr. M.M. Chan. We spent the whole day in travelling and reached the Che Ba Ling Nature Reserve area at 8:00 p.m. We went to bed early after dinner.

In the early morning, about 5:45 a.m. of 24 Dec., we started bird watching around the headquarters of the reserve area. Everyone saw the first tick, **Brown Dipper** and several **Plumbeous Redstarts**. When we entered the forest area, we saw many species such as **Striated Yuhina**, **Slaty-backed Forktail**, **Blyth's Leaf Warbler**, **Crested Goshawk** and This was a good start for our trip! In the afternoon, we recorded **Silver Pheasant**, two pairs of **Mandarin** and our target - **Blyth's Kingfisher**. The terrible thing is that I missed all these birds@!!!

On the next day, we went to a village which was about 700 metres above sea level called the Wan's Village. On the way, we found **Mountain Bush Warbler**, **Grey-backed Thrush**, **Collared Finchbill** and **Plain Flowerpucker**. We were attracted by the beautiful village scenery. Around the village, several species including **Common Pheasant** and **Hill Prinia** were observed. Then we returned to the headquarters individually. All of us were surprised by the amazing discovery of a **Bay Woodpecker** by Mr. M.M. Chan. In the end, I saw **Blyth's Kingfisher** before sunset.

On 26 Dec., after we separated from our fellows, we started walking the roads through the nature reserve area. We were excited to observe three **Red-headed Trogons**. We were impressed by their charming plumage coloration. Afterwards, only a few birds were found and we took a rest at the largest village in the reserve area, enjoying our lunch. In the afternoon, we found that birds were comparatively less active, so we spent more time in appreciation the beautiful scenery. Nevertheless, I found **Hill Prinia**. We also found a **Serpent Eagle** perching on a tree branch, in a valley. At that moment, we noticed a large raptor gliding towards us. From its unique tail and wing shape, and coal-black feathers, we identified it as a **Black Eagle**..... It is probably the first record for Guangdong Province. We were extremely excited (especially me) by this observation. Until evening, we had no other special discoveries.

The next day, we took a journey to Duo Heng, outside the reserve. Along the highway, there was a small river, and we met several hundred **Scarlet Minivet**, **Black Bulbul** and **Grey-**

cheeked Fulvetta. Near the gate of the reserve, we found a **White-crowned Forktail**. Afterwards, I found two **Crested Kingfishers** - fulfilling one of my expectations for the trip. Near Duo Heng, there was a gradual change, from woodland to farmland birds, such as **Collared Finchbill**, **Hill Prinia**, and **Black faced Bunting**. On a bridge, we saw a male **Bull-headed Shrike**. Later, on some farmland, after we found **Chinese Greenfinch**, **Stonechat**, and two species of buntings, we were hungry and rushed to the market of Duo Heng and had our lunch there. In the afternoon, we continued birdwatching in the fields around Duo Heng. My most superb discovery was a pair of **Yellow-throated Buntings**. Besides, there were also **Rufous-necked Scimitar Babblers**, **Chestnut Bittern** and **Greater Coucal** (a rare species there).

On 28 Dec., we decided to enter the forest, in the reserve area again. Unfortunately, we didn't get any new birds, only **Black Eagle** and **Red-headed Trogon** again. After lunch, Dr. Cheung, Mr Wai-yan Law and myself had our journey separately. I walked along the highway again so as to find my missing Mandarins. Beyond my expectation, I found a **Mountain Hawk Eagle** (It should be better than observing Mandarins! Ha! Ha!). Next, I returned to the farmland to find the **Yellow-browed Bunting** which was claimed the day before, in the end, Mr. Law and I found five **Yellow-browed Buntings** with 100% certainly!

We came to the end of our trip on 29 Dec. in the morning, although we had only one hour of free time and not sufficient time for bird searching. I took lots of photos. At eight o'clock, we gathered at the headquarters of

the reserve area and walked for the bus to Shao Guan. A flock of **Black-tailed Hawfinch** flew past and suddenly a villager questioned us about a bird perched on a tree. "An **Asian Barred Owlet**" We took out our telescope (and viewcam) and set up with "record-breaking time" as we were running short of time (due to the coming bus). Finally, the owlet flew away before the arrival of the bus.

This was wonderful trip for me - a beginner in overseas birdwatching. Every species (or even every bird) was worth a lot. Maybe, I will visit Che Ba Ling again in the coming autumn or winter. The experience of the trip has been most beneficial to me.

OVERSEAS BIRDING HOLIDAYS

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

21 Oct. to 4 Nov. 1995

By John Edge.

I spent two highly productive and enjoyable weeks at Taman Negara, The Gap (Semangkok Pass) and Frasers Hill, which made for a good combination of lowland and upland birding. all were sites which I had not previously visited despite being in Hong Kong for 17 years and as always I was left asking myself "why not?".

I reached the very popular Kuala Tahan, the main resort area of Taman Negara, a little less than 24 hours after leaving Hong Kong, via Kuala Tembeling and an overnight stop in Kuala Lumpur. Travelling by boat from K. Tembeling to K. Tahan, which takes 2 1/2 hours, is delightful. There

were plenty of birds to be seen in and around the resort of which the more visible were **Little Green Pigeon**, **Chestnut-breasted Malkoha**, **Collared Falconet**, **Oriental Pied Hornbill**, **Black-and-Red Broadbill** and a variety of bulbuls. I spent six nights at K. Tahan, punctuated by two nights further up the Sg. Tembeling at the delightful Kuala Keniam. At both places I was generally in the rainforest from 0900 till dusk (about 1800) armed only with water - an effective way to diet. Early in the morning it is pleasant to bird around camp.

At K. Tahan I did not venture very far afield and covered most trails twice, seeing different birds each time. The trail north along the Sg. Tahan was the most productive; generally, the nearer I was to water, the more birds there were. I also climbed Bukit Tereseke twice; there is one very good north-facing lookout point where one is above the canopy. If I'd spent days there, I might eventually have seen **Helmeted Hornbill**, often heard but seldom seen! Good birds at K. Tahan included (but were not limited to) **Crested Fireback**, **Great Argus**, **Black-bellied Malkoha**, **Silver-rumped Swift**, three species of trogon, **Blue-banded Kingfisher**, **Crimson-winged** and **Banded Woodpeckers**, **Green Broadbill** (bogey), **Garnet Pitta**, **Fiery Minivet**, several difficult bulbuls, eighteen species of babbler and **Chestnut-capped Thrush**. My favourites from this area, however, were **Chestnut-naped Forktails**, which I've travelled many miles trying to see, and **Straw-headed Bulbul**, with its loud, far-carrying, jangling song. They look most decorative in bushes overhanging rivers, and really should be garrulaxes.

Stars of the two days at K. Keniam were a **Malaysian Rail Babbler** which I whistled in - when calling, it bends its neck down so that its chin almost touches the ground, and the blue skin on the side of the neck becomes visible - and a superb **Leopard** (commonly referred to as the **Black Panther**) with which I had a 50-metre encounter on the only straight stretch of trail in the area. I looked at him, he looked at me.... well, I'm still here !

I hired a car from KL for the Fraser's Hill sector. Getting out of KL in the rush-hour was nightmarish and the drive up to The Gap on pitch-dark, unlit, twisting road and in pouring rain, was dramatic. It was a relief to reach the splendidly-situated Gap Rest House, my base, at the foot of the 8-km, single-track road up to Fraser's Hill. Traffic goes up and down in alternate hours, but a new "down" road is being built so this arrangement will not last much longer. I found The Gap relatively disappointing for birds, but the habitat and scenery were superb. Here again, one of the "stars" was a mammal, the impressive **Siamang** (Black Gibbon); of the birds, **Black Laughingthrush**, **White-hooded Babbler**, **Green Magpie** and **Blue-winged Leafbird** were obvious, while various swiftlets whizzing through The Gap were a challenge.

On Fraser's Hill, I walked the Bishop's Trail twice, and also the Telekom Loop, with a quick look at the immaculate High Pines. On the Bishop's Trail, two of the birdwaves I bumped into were phenomenal and the other merely good; between waves, there was plenty of time to contemplate the state of the world, or to count leeches. Catalogue time again : the better birds were **Black**

and **Rufous-bellied Eagles**, **Wreathed Hornbill**, **Fire-tufted** and **Black-browed Barbets**, **Orange-backed Black-and-Crimson Oriole**, the superb **Blue Nuthatch**, **Large Scimitar-Babbler**, **Streaked Wren-Babbler**, **Golden Babbler** (very inquisitive), **Cutia** (Telekom Loop), **Black-eared Shrike-Babbler**, **Rufous-browed Flycatcher**, **Large Niltava**, **Black-throated Sunbird** and **Streaked Spiderhunter**.

I only had four days in the area and needed at least a week. I dipped on several target species/bogey birds, particularly **Red-bearded Bee-eater** and **Red-headed Trogon** (I know that in autumn at Ba Bao Shan, one has to flick the latter off one's shoulder !) but altogether it was a marvellous two weeks.

OF WIMPS AND PIMPS AND ONE-UP FREDDIE: BUTUNG, SULAWESI

5 Nov. TO 14 Nov. 1995

By John Edge.

November 4th saw the reunion of the old, or should I say former, WWF HK Big Bird Race team in Singapore. Stewart Smith, Clive Viney and I joined Angus Lamont there, prior to taking part in Operation Wallacea; Angus got us in the mood by showing us some fine stake-outs, including **Red-legged Crake** and **Spotted Wood Owl**, before we met up with the fifth member of our Survey Group, Clive Briffectt, for a splendid supper.

Early next morning we set off on a long journey to our eventual destination, Bau Bau, at the south end of Butung, an island 135 km long off south-east Sulawesi. We flew via Jakarta and an overnight stop in

Ujung Pandang to Kendari, where Wayan, our scientific officer, joined us, and from there took a fast ferry south to Bau Bau. That evening we met up with Tim Coles, who organises Operation Wallacea, Freddie *, the bird guide and our two drivers, Yusuf and Mahmoud. (Freddie * was so-called because he always saw one more of each species than did Wayan: thus Wimps-Wayan, 47; Freddie * 48). Tim gave us a run-down of the objectives of the survey and then left us in Wayan's very capable hands.

The survey, designed to last three years (we were the last group to participate at the end of the first year), is intended to provide sufficient data to encourage the Indonesian Government to establish the island as a reserve for many of Sulawesi's 84 endemic bird species and to establish an eco-tourist infrastructure, with the assistance of funding from Hong Kong Bank in Singapore. The bird survey is being conducted in conjunction with a marine survey based on Hoga in the adjacent Tukangbesi Islands, which we visited briefly at the end of our trip.

Our surveying was done in twelve designated squares, mainly in the north, south-centre and southeast of the island, never very far from roads. Our opening and closing position were established by a satellite navigation system and we counted all birds of every species, completing records at the end of each day. We operated as a group throughout, though sometimes we became fairly strung out. Butung is subject to the Government's transmigration policy, whereby people from different parts of Indonesia are moved about and encouraged to establish their own ventures, mainly agricultural; what

has happened in practice, however, is that large areas, particularly those close to roads, have been cleared of forest, maybe leaving the odd tree standing, but then abandoned without being cultivated as the people move on to the next "patch". We therefore spent a disproportionate amount of time surveying such areas, because they were accessible; we could not reach what appeared to be the best habitat, in the relatively mountainous extreme north of the island, although we could see it from a distance, and it looked magnificent !

What of the birding ? Much of it was good and we recorded 42 of the 84 endemic (depending on the currency of various splits and lumps). Of the raptors, we saw **Barred Honey-Buzzard, Sulawesi Serpent Eagle, Sulawesi Sparrowhawk, Sulawesi and Spot-tailed Goshawks and Sulawesi Hawk-Eagle**. A small group of the much-prized **Maleo** was found; **Pink-headed Imperial Pigeon** (the Pimps of the title) and **White Imperial Pigeon** (the Wimps) were common; four of the parrots were widespread (looking for places to hide !); we found both hornbills and both woodpeckers, and three mynas (**Sulawesi Crested, White-necked and Finch-billed**) none of which look like typical south-east Asian birds. Disappointingly, we only found one endemic kingfisher. Other non-endemic species were exciting, for example **Jerdon's Baza, Oriental Hobby, Comb-crested Jacana** and the weird, enormous **Channel-billed Cuckoo**.

Accommodation on Butung was basic but adequate, consisting of local inns (losmen) or village houses. Food was generally very good, and plentiful. Cold beer could not always be guaranteed ! We were well looked

after wherever we went, and in a friendly manner.

In many ways the highlight of the trip was the two days spent on Hoga, sharing accommodation with the Operation Wallacea marine survey team. We were able to snorkel and dive and the island was lovely to walk around - or off, if the tide was low enough. Crossing from Butung to Hoga we saw **Red-footed** and **Brown Boobies**, **Pomarine Skua**, two flocks of **Grey Phalarope** and numbers of **Common Terns** (race longipennis). The last two species were very unusual for the area. On and around the island we recorded **Beach Thick-knee**, **Malay Plover**, **Pacific Baza**, **Great-billed Heron**, **Island Monarch** and a good selection of waders and terns.

The above is necessarily only a sketch; please contact me if you'd like to know more.

John Edge

BIRD NEWS.....BIRD NEWS.....BIRD NEWS.....BIRD NEWS.....BIRD NEWS
By Richard Lewthwaite

FEBRUARY 1996

The first day of the month brought three **Buff-bellied Pipits** to Lim Barn Tsuen, near Mai Po (PJL). Up to four of these birds remained in the area until at least the end of the month, by which time one was in summer plumage. On 2nd a **Common Starling** was at Penfold Park (GJC) and on 3rd a male **Fukien Niltava** was again seen on the Blue Walk in Tai Po Kau (MRL). On 4th, a count of 387 **Tufted Duck** in the bay north of the Tsim

Bei Tsui paddy was a new high (RWL). Gull passage was first evident on 6th when from off the north Lantau coast a first-year **Glaucous-winged Gull**, five **Black-tailed Gulls** and adult **Herring Gulls** of the races 'mongolicus' and 'birulai' were found (GJC), while gulls seen from the Mai Po boardwalk included an adult **Great Black-headed**, two **Black-tailed** and an adult **Herring** 'mongolicus' (RWL). Gull passage continued with an adult **Herring** 'mongolicus', four adult **Vega Gulls** on 7th, the adult **Great Black-headed** on 8th, and a first-winter **Common Gull** considered to be of the Central Siberian race heinei (PJL et al), the first such record for Hong Kong, on 9th. On the same day another first-winter **Slaty-backed Gull**, a second-winter **Great Black-headed**, two **Vega** and a **Herring** 'mongolicus' gull were also present. Another species of diving duck achieved a new high when 11 **Common Pochard** were seen in flight over the Mai Po Waterfowl Collection on 10th (GJC). However, in a fine year for Tufted Duck, Scaup and Common Pochard, **Baer's Pochard** was worryingly absent, apart from the earlier report from Ma Tso Lung.

The month was warm and dry up this point and, apart from the gulls, rather uneventful for birds. Highlights in mid-month were six **Striated Yuhinas** and two **Slaty-backed Forktails** at Ng Tung Chai (GJC), a large owl, a **Barred Owlet** and the first **Savanna Nightjar** of the year at Chau Tau, all on 10th (MRL), the Hatton Road **Plumbeous**

Redstart on 11th, and a **Little Green Heron** at Brides Pool on 12th.

The discovery of a **Paddyfield Warbler** (2nd for HK) at Mai Po on 13th (PJL), was the first real excitement of the month. The cold surge that came through during the lunar new year brought in a small influx of birds. **Barn Swallows** were suddenly evident and two **Common Reed Buntings** were trapped in a large reed-bed at Mai Po on 18th (PJL et al), while there were unseasonal records of **Oriental Pratincoles** with one in front of the boardwalk on 18th (JGH) and one at Kam Tin and two at Lim Barn Tsuen on 19th. The run of buntings continued on 20th with a **Pallas's Reed Bunting** feeding beside a drained pond (DAD) and three **Common Reed Buntings** in the same reed-bed as before (WY, DAD).

Large and medium gulls were again seen with adult **Herring 'barabensis'** on 21st and 27th (RWL et al), a second-winter **Common Gull** on 22nd and 24th (PRK et al), up to two first-year **Slaty-backed** and at least three **Herring 'mongolicus'** and **Vega Gull** adults from 21st to the end of the month. Other notable birds at this time included a female **Northern Sparrowhawk** near the Waterfowl Collection on 21st-23rd, a **Hoopoe** and **Northern Skylark** at Long Valley on 23rd, six **Jays** in Aberdeen Country Park (rare HK Island record) and a **Styan's Grasshopper Warbler** at Mai Po on 25th, a male **Meadow Bunting**, the

fifth individual of the winter, at Chek Lap Kok (GJC) on 27th, and a **White-tailed Leaf Warbler** on the Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 28th (DAD). The month ended with a drake **Baikal Teal** at Tsim Bei Tsui, three **Chestnut-flanked White-eyes** in Tai Po Kau and six **Chinese Grosbeaks** near Lau Fau Shan (MRL).

March 1996

The first day of the month brought a promising mix of rarities and breeding bird data with an **Ancient Auk** off northern Lantau (GJC) and nesting **Yellow-cheeked Tits** beside the Kowloon Hills Catchment (PS), a together with a single **Mugimaki Flycatcher** trapped at KFBG. On 2nd, a **Styan's Grasshopper Warbler** (JAH) was found beside the boardwalk and the overwintering male **Fukien Niltava** was again seen at HKU, this bird remaining until at least 21st (YYT). The influx of **Common Reed Buntings** noted in February was maintained with one trapped at Mai Po on 3rd, up to four seen at Lim Barn Tsuen from 11th into April, and two seen at Lut Chau on 12th (all PJL). Two unusual reports for early March were a **Thick-billed Warbler** trapped at Mai Po and a **Forest Wagtail** seen at Shing Mun (PA), also on 3rd. More typical wintering birds on this date were a **Golden-spectacled Warbler** at Ng Tung Chai on 255 **Great Crested Grebes**, possibly a new high, at Tsim Bei Tsui (MRL). An **Ancient Auk** was seen near Tap Mun on 6th (ML,GR), another **Golden-**

spectacled Warbler was found at HKU on 7th and remained until 28th (YYT), and a **Long-billed Dowitcher** found off the boardwalk on 9th was seen regularly until the end of April. A walk along the Kowloon Hills Catchment on 11th turned up five **Grey-headed Parrotbills** (DAD). Not more than one **Grey-headed Lapwing** was reported during the month from Kam Tin. This decline from the flock of 15 present in December 1995 can be attributed to the large-scale engineering works which have seriously damaged the site.

The first major influx of the spring was noted on 12th, with 1400 **Barn Swallows**, 100 **Asian House Martins**, 100 **Pacific Swifts**, 25 **Penduline Tits**, a **Common Rosefinch** and a **Citrine Wagtail**, all at Lut Chau (PJL). On the same day a **Meadow Bunting** was found at Chek Lap Kok (GJC) and **Buff-bellied Pipit** at Lim Barn Tsuen on 13th.

A lull followed until 20th when an **Ancient Auk**, the third of the month, was seen from Sandy Bay (MRL). Signs of spring returned on 21st with single male **Blue-and-white Flycatchers** at Victoria Park and Shing Mun. Other late migrants included a **Ruddy Crake** at Lim Barn Tsuen from 22nd to 31st, 12 **White-throated Needletails** at Ng Tung Chai on 23rd (EMSK), 106 **Grey-faced Buzzards** at Cheung Chau (MDW) and 14 more at Shing Mun on 24th, a male **Narcissus Flycatcher** at Ng Tung Chai on 30th and a **Japanese**

Paradise Flycatcher in Tai Po Kau on 31st.

Over-wintering or rare resident birds reported in late March included 12 **Striated Yuhinas** beside the Kowloon Hills Catchment on 23rd, a **Black Bulbul** at Shing Mun and a **Glaucous-winged Gull** at the boardwalk (DAD), both on 24th, a male **White Wagtail** of the race *personata* at Chek Lap Kok on 27th (GJC), three **Yellow-bellied Tits** in Tai Po Kau Park on 29th, a **Meadow Bunting** at Tai Tam on 30th (IT) and a male **Red-breasted Merganser**, one of only two in the year, at Tsim Bei Tsui on 31st (RWL).

April

With three potential firsts, a tremendous diversity of buntings, regular sightings of **Spoon-billed Sandpiper**, record numbers of **Long-tailed Skuas** and high quality birding sustained throughout the month, April 1996 will be remembered as the best April so far in the 1990s. North-easterly and easterly winds prevailed bringing cool weather early in the month (below 10 degrees Centigrade in the northern New Territories) as well as cloudy conditions and light rain. The only heavy rain fell on 19th when a trough of low pressure crossed the coast.

On the first day of the month, a **swiftlet** considered to be "Type 1" (and thus, tentatively, a **Himalayan Swiftlet**) was found at Mai Po (PJL). One was subsequently present at Mai Po on 3rd and two

on 4th. On 2nd at Mai Po a male **Ruddy Sparrow** was found in the casuarinas (SR) while a session in the boardwalk turned up a **Swinhoe's Egret** and the overwintering **Long-billed Dowitcher**. On 2nd, a flock of 65 **Chinese Grosbeaks** was present at Nam Sang Wai and an **Oriental Plover** was seen at Chek Lap Kok (GJC). During a heavy passage of swifts and hirundines at this time, which included 105 unidentified needletails at KFBG, 50 **White-vented Needletails** and up to 150 **Asian House Martins** at Mai Po, the discovery of a **Common Swift**, the first for Hong Kong, at Mai Po on 3rd (D&NM, MDW) still came as a surprise. This bird was also present on 4th and 5th. A visit to Long Valley on 4th turned up a **Watercock**, a **Chestnut Bittern**, 15 **Penduline Tits**, a **Black-naped Monarch** and a **Chestnut-cheeked Starling** (MT).

A male **Yellow-browed Bunting** found in the Mai Po casuarinas on 4th remained until 8th. The first signs of a **Japanese Yellow Bunting** influx were also noted on 4th with a flock of eight at the southern end. **Japanese Yellow Buntings** were subsequently seen in record numbers with two trapped at Mai Po on 5th, up to six at Lim Barn Tsuen on several dates between 5th and 17th, up to five at Tai Po Kau Tsuen from 9th to 11th, one at Ma Tso Lung on 8th, three at Sandy Bay on 11th, a new high count of 17 at Long Valley on 6th with birds remaining until 20th, one at Dong Ping Chau on 13th, one in the Mai Po casuarinas on

20th, and one at Nam Sang Wai from 22nd to 24th. The bunting passage in April was very diverse with sixteen species reported. Roughly in order of abundance these were **Little, Black-faced, Japanese Yellow, Yellow-throated, Meadow Pine, Yellow-browed, Rustic, Crested and Black-headed**. As a further indication of the diversity of the bunting passage, six species were present in a small patch of reeds at Lim Barn Tsuen on 7th. This gathering included up to three **Common Reed Buntings** (PJL) which remained until at least 8th. Of the rare buntings, there were reports of a **Meadow Bunting** at Sandy Bay on 11th (MT) and a male **Black-headed Bunting** at Long Valley on 20th (per MLC). While the vast majority of buntings reported at this time were undoubtedly wild, rare buntings of uncertain origins included single male **Yellow-throated Buntings** near Tai Po Kau on 8th (LB) at Tai Tam on 9th (MT) and 10th (two birds) (JAH), and single male **Pine Buntings** at Stanley on 6th (JS) and Tai Po Kau Tsuen on 8th-10th (JGH, GJC), the former described as "tame" and the latter with damaged tail feathers.

The first **Spoon-billed Sandpiper** of the spring was found on 6th, the day when the new Cathay-Pacific boardwalk hide came into use. Up to three **Spoon-billed Sandpipers** were subsequently reported from the boardwalk or on the Mai Po scrape on at least twelve dates from 6th-24th. Shorebird numbers were generally good at Mai Po. By mid-month roosting flocks were on

the scrape and in front of the Tower Hide. The spacious new Cathy-Pacific (HKBWS) boardwalk hide was an instant success and has hopefully put an end to the crowded and chaotic conditions of previous years. Counts of globally threatened birds included 41 **Black-faced Spoonbills** on 2nd. Rarities reported from Mai Po were a **Water Rail** on 8th (GJC), a summer-plumaged **Slavonian Grebe** (JB), a new bird for Hong Kong, swimming in front of the boardwalk at high tide on 9th, a **Little Stint** on 20th (MRL) and up to two **Little Whimbrels** on 22nd (MDW, PS). Also reported from Mai Po were a **Pectoral Sandpiper** on 15th (PJL) and single **Baillon's Crakes** on 10th and 28th (JAH). It was in fact an excellent spring for these two species with single **Pectoral Sandpipers** also present at Shuen Wan from 19th-21st (JSRE) and Nam Sang Wai on 24th (JAH). There were also single **Slaty-legged Crakes** at Wo Hop Shek on 19th and Shuen Wan on 26th (MRL).

In a strange spring of thrushes, flycatchers and warblers, **Eye-browed** was the most regularly reported thrush with peak counts of 50 at KFBG on 28th. Hard to see in the swirling mists at Mount Austin between 5th and 10th were up to 20 **Grey-backed**, two **Grey** and single **White's Thrush** (VBP). On 5th and 6th a **Siberian Thrush** and a late **Red-flanked Bluetail** were seen here. The cool weather early in the month may have delayed the flycatcher passage. Although there were single **Ferruginous** and **Narcissus**

Flycatchers in Tai Po Kau on 5th and a male **Narcissus** and seven **Blue-and-White Flycatchers** on Dong Ping Chau on 6th, the main flycatcher passage did not really get under way until 10th and was then short-lived. On 10th a female **Fukien Niltava** was seen at Tai Tam (VBP), while **Ferruginous, Narcissus, Red-breasted and Japanese Paradise** were reported from Tai Po Kau. In Kowloon Park a male **Siberian Blue Robin** was present on 10th and 11th, and a **Brown Shrike**, four species of flycatcher, including both Paradise Flycatchers, and six species of migrant warblers, including **Pallas's, Pale-legged Leaf, Arctic and Short-tailed Bush**, were all present on 12th. Influxes involving various species of thrushes, chats, flycatchers or warblers were noted at Hatton Road on 10th, Ho Chung on 12th and 13th, Dong Ping Chau on 13th, Cheung Chau on 16th and KFBG on 17th. Other passerines reported at this time included a flock of **38 Chinese Grosbeaks** at Nam Sang Wai and a female **Siberian Thrush** at Ng Tung Chai (GJC), both on 14th. Rare or unusual passerine reports towards the end of the month included a **Chestnut-cheeked Starling** at Long Valley on 19th, a **Daurian Starling** at Mai Po on 20th (both PJL), up to five **Pechora Pipits** at Nam Sang Wai from 22nd-28th (RWL et al), a singing male **Orange-headed Ground Thrush** at Tai Po Kau on 24th (MG), and a **Mugimaki Flycatcher** trapped at KFBG and a female **Citrine Wagtail** at Lim Barn Tsuen on 28th (DD) and a **Slaty-backed Forktail** was found at Shing

Mun on 30th (JNP).

Raptor movements were noted on 5th with 17 **Grey-faced Buzzards** in Tai Po Kau and on 14th, with 70 **Chinese Goshawks** heading north over Pok Fu Lam (YYT) and a single **Black-winged Kite**, 60 **Chinese Goshawks** and 40 **Grey-faced Buzzards** at Mui Wo, Lantau (PJH). An influx of **Black Bazas** was noted at various sites from 26th. The mid-month period saw a passage of needletails with 150 **White-vented** and one **White-throated** at Ho Chung on 12th (JAH, MH), 30 **White-vented** over Mui Wo on 14th, 100 **White-vented** and 10 **White-throated** over KFBG on 15th and finally three **White-vented** over Tai Po Kau on 20th. Singing cuckoos that were possibly **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo** were heard at Ng Tung Chai on 17th (NJGC), and at Shing Mun (RWL) and Mount Nicolson (CAV) on 20th. Three flock of bee-eaters were found in the last week of the month - six **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters** at Long Valley on 23rd (EMSK), then seven unidentified bee-eaters containing two birds with chestnut heads at Mai Po on 25th (per MDW), and finally eight **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters** at Lim Barn Tsuen on 28th (IT). Of three **Brown Hawk Owls** found, one was flying low over Mirs Bay and seen from the Dong Ping Chau ferry on 13th, one was at Mount Nicolson on 20th, and the third, one of the month's highlights for many people, remained in a small and very urban park at Tai Koo Shing from 24th-28th.

It was a fine spring for **Red-necked Phalaropes** with counts of 240 from the Cheung Chau ferry on 4th, 370 from the Dong Ping Chau ferry on 6th, over 50 at Shuen Wan on 10th, 450 at Cape d'Aguilar on 11th, 135 on one pond at Tsim Bei Tsui on 14th, over 200 between Aberdeen and the Ninepins on 16th, 650 from the Dong Ping Chau ferry on 20th, and 300 between Aberdeen and the Ninepins and 700 from the Dong Ping Chau ferry on 21st. Boat trips during the month were very productive with at least 77 **Long-tailed Skuas** reported, by far exceeding counts in previous years. Seabirds seen from the Dong Ping Chau ferry included seven **Ancient Auks**, a new high, on 6th (MDW et al), two **Long-tailed Skuas** on 14th (JAH), five **Long-tailed Skuas**, seven unidentified skuas, 300 **Common Terns** and two **Aleutian Terns** on 20th (MDW), and a **Wedge-tailed Shearwater**, potentially a first, as well as three **Long-tailed Skuas**, two unidentified skuas and a female **Red-breasted Merganser** on 21st (JS). In addition, 21 **Long-tailed Skuas** were counted from Dong Ping Chau island on 13th (PJL,RWL), a private boat trip to Mirs Bay on 27th logged at least 15 more (KDW) and one other was seen from Cheung Chau on 15th (MDW). Boat trips from Aberdeen to the Ninepins produced an **Ancient Auk**, 26 **Long-tailed Skuas**, 22 **Aleutian Terns** and 42 **Common Terns** on 16th (VBP et al) and three **Long-tailed Skuas**, nine **Aleutian Terns**, 130 **Common Terns** and three **Greater Crested Terns** on 21st (YYT et al).

FUTURE MEETINGS

Please contact the leader several days before the meeting to confirm attendance, otherwise you may miss out on changes in timing.

DATE	LEADER		VENUE	TIME
14 Aug Wednesday	Paul Leader	#	Intermediate Birdwatching Course Lecture 1, Royal Observatory, Nathan Road	18:30
17 Aug Saturday	Cheung Ho Fai Fiona Lock		Ping Chau by Kaido Meet on the boat at Ma Lui Sui, Chinese University (Public boat)	09:00
22 Aug Thursday	Wong Tin Wa		Slideshow: Xinjiang: Birds and Scenery Royal Observatory, Nathan Road	18:30
11 Sept Wednesday	Paul Leader	#	Intermediate Birdwatching Course Lecture 2, Royal Observatory, Nathan Road	18:30
15 Sept Sunday	Ng Cho Nam Mike Leven		Mai Po Bi-Lingual. Coach from Kowloon Tong MTR or meet at Peter Scott Centre	08:00 09:00
22 Sept Sunday	C.Y.Lam		Kowloon Park Meet at T-S-T MTR next to Mosque Meeting ends 10:00 approximatly.	08:00
29 Sept Sunday	Tai Sheung Lai Yu Yat Tung	##	"Target 100" See Bulletin text. Coach leaves Haiphong Road, T-S-T	08:30
6 Oct Sunday	Carrie Ma		University of Hong Kong Meet at Bonham Road Entrance	09:00 -12:00
13 Oct Sunday	John Holmes Fung Po Kei		Mai Po Bi-lingual Coach from Kowloon Tong MTR or meet Peter Scott Centre	08:00 09:00
16 Oct. Wednesday	Paul Leader	#	Intermediate Birdwatching Course Lecture 3. Royal Observatory, Nathan Road	18:30
27 Oct. Sunday	Jemi Wong Shui Tin Kit	##	New Territories Woods and Plains Coach leaves Kowloon Tong MTR	08:00

Talks for members only, illustrated with slides. Please send return slips to the address shown on the slip, to register your intent to come.

Outdoor meetings with coach provided. \$100 deposit required in advance, additional money may be required to share the cost of the coach, tips for the driver etc, on the day. Enquiries to C.Y.Lam.

The maximum number of members who can attend a Mai Po meeting is 50, as set by the AFD permit. It is therefore essential that members inform the leader whether they will attend in advance. Failure to do so will result in other members being refused access to Mai Po. Members who use the coach must confirm their attendance by using the booking slip.

Please phone leader five days in advance to confirm departure time.

A coach will collect members from Kowloon Tong KCR (except for Target 100) one hour before assembly time and return there after the meeting. Contact the leader to find out exactly where the coach collection point is.

Please return the form given at the end of this bulletin with a cheque in **English** (note the prices for guests) made out to the **Hong Kong Birdwatching Society** if you wish to use the coach. Payment can also be made by Electronic Transfer to Account No 004-567-899661-001 Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank in favour of "**The Hong Kong Birdwatching Society**", but please send the attendance slip in as well to confirm your payment and attendance.

Please bring drink and food, and appropriate clothing (e.g. Wellington Boots for Tsung Pak Long), and suncream!

Leaders are requested to find a substitute leader and contact C.Y.Lam if they are unable to attend.

Telephone numbers : Cheung Ho Fai

Li Wai Ki ; Yu Yat Tung ; Fiona Lock ; Mike Leven
; Tai Sheung Lai ; Carrie Ma ; John Holmes

Fung Po Kei

Remainder of numbers on the front cover, or telephone a Committee Member.

mount. It is particularly important now that members to visit China to watch birds prepare a report of their trip and lodge a copy with the Society. Even today, up to date ornithological information is scarce or non-existence for most parts of China and therefore such reports form an important addition the our knowledge of this important country."

David Melville asked if the Society had written to the Agriculture and Fisheries department congratulating them on the decision to designate Mai Po a Ramsar Site. The Chairman responded that he had done so. DJM urged members present to write letters to Agriculture and Fisheries stating the importance of making Mai Po a Ramsar site.

Tim Woodward wished to thank Janet Stott for the hard work which she had put in behind the scenes over the last year. The meeting applauded her efforts over the year.

4. Treasurer's Report

In the absence of the Treasurer the Chairman presented the accounts for the year to the meeting. The accounts for the year were approved by the meeting and there were no questions.

A copy of the accounts for 1994 is attached.

5. Recorder's Report

Geoff Carey gave the recorder's report

i) The following species were added to Category A: Long-billed Plover, Booted Warbler, Yellow-streaked Warbler.

ii) Species currently under consideration include Red-headed/Black-headed Buntings, Brown-throated Bunting, Mew Gull and Vivid Niltava. Progress has been made on small accipiters, large adult gulls, and frigate-birds.

iii) The review of old records continues.

iv) The other highlight for 1994 was the appearance of a Glossy Ibis in Deep Bay, the first for 16 years.

v) the monthly Waterfowl counts achieved very good coverage during 1993-4 and 1994-5. This has now become a monthly event throughout the year. GJC commented that this was a very useful part of the Society's activities and work done had helped to clear up the controversy over cormorants eating all the fish in the fishponds around Mai Po. The counts had facilitated presentation of figures going back over a number of years to disprove the claims made. David Melville mentioned that the counts were also useful in assessing the effects of the Shenzhen river project.

vi) Mike Chalmers noted that 1994 was the second year of the Breeding Bird Survey, with the majority of the 1300 km squares in the territory now completed. The principal gaps remaining are some offshore islands and bits of Lantau.

manage without her help, many thanks Liz.

Those of you who were at the last Annual General Meeting will recall that Tim Woodward had been co-opted up the post of Secretary. He has done a splendid job over the last two years but his job has become too demanding of his time for him to continue. I would like to offer a particular vote of thanks for his efforts on behalf of the Society during this period. At present we have no replacement for him and therefore members will have to be patient when the services the Society offers fall short of their expectations. They could always volunteer to be Secretary!

One of the most important items of news during the year concerns Mai Po. As you will all have seen in the press, on 6 March 1995 Mai Po was formally approved by the Executive Council as being listed as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. The Ramsar Convention is an International agreement to which the People's Republic of China is a signatory and which sets out to protect important wetlands from destruction by the forces of development. Government, through the good offices of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department are to be congratulated on getting Mai Po listed. It is pleasing to note that the protected area extends out across the mudflats as far as the low water mark and therefore will provide much needed additional protection. While this listing is important but it is not the end of the story. The Shenzhen River project is proceeding and could have seriously affected the viability of Mai Po without the constant vigilance and lobbying of the WWF Hong Kong. The responsibility for the management of the whole of the listed area is to be given to the Agriculture and Fisheries Department which will include the management of a buffer zone around the core area. Already, this area is under threat from a number of developments whose environmental impact will need to be carefully examined before vigilance can be relaxed. The Society has offered its support in developing a comprehensive management plan for the listed area.

The fund for the new boardwalk hide now stands at a little under HK\$100,000, all due to the generosity of members. In addition to this the WWFHK will pass over 85% of all fees collected for issued the Frontier Closed Area permits issued to members for access to the present boardwalk hide. During the year permission has been received from the District Lands Office to build the hide and we are in the process of tendering in order to obtain a realistic cost for the construction of the hide and the boardwalk. It will almost certainly be necessary to seek the support of a sponsor for the balance of the cost. It is worth noting that if there is sufficient interest within the Society that costs could be reduced by members themselves carrying out some of the work. If anyone is prepared to devote some time and effort please let a member of the Committee know so that the level of interest in doing this can be assessed.

The Society has started work on another project recently and this is the production of a new edition of the New Annotated Checklist. Once again, Mike Chalmers has agreed to be the editor. It is intended that the content will be much enhanced by the inclusion of the breeding bird survey data to which so many of Society members have contributed. It is the committee's intention that the Society would publish this edition during 1997.

The Society is now the representative of BirdLife International. This means that as before we are committed to support BirdLife's projects in the region in any way we can. In particular this could mean that we should support such bird surveys in China that they may choose to

6. Mai Po Update

Lew Young provided the Mai Po update:

The Hong Kong Government has previously provided HK\$16m for purchase of the remaining gei wais. In February 1995 the purchase of the southern block was completed, so that all of Mai Po is now under the control of WWF. Under the five year management plan gei wais 20-24 will be kept with a relatively fresh water habitat. G. Walthew, a Phd student and a member of the Society, has been granted a year to experiment with different water levels and stocking regimes to find the optimum for each in order to attract birds and to conform with the overall plan for Mai Po.

The police have constructed a bridge from the southern end of the reserve to Lut Chau, the old bridge has now been dismantled.

Although the government has announced the intention to list Mai Po and buffer zone 1 as a Ramsar site there remain eight development proposals ringing the area. A judicial review will be made on the Nam Sang Wai proposal in April. All the developers are now going to the Appeal Board, with the next scheduled to take place from 15th-19th May. The first project to be taken to appeal lies wholly within buffer zone 1 of the new Ramsar site and thus the result is of critical importance.

Over the last year a number of primary school groups have visited Mai Po. This has been a success and more are planned for this year. John Yan, from the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge, has adapted the programme used there. It is intended to have 50 primary school groups per annum visiting Mai Po. Funding has also been received from deaf charity groups to conduct visits. It is hoped to conduct trips for blind people in the future too.

In April three RSPB staff on sabbatical will be at Mai Po assessing the reserve and they will present a report with regard to possible improvements in the management of the reserve.

John Burton asked how many overseas birding groups would be at Mai Po in April - it was confirmed that there would be four. Clive Viney noted that the Agriculture and Fisheries department had received HK\$3m to fund a six month consultancy project to determine how to manage the Ramsar area. John Edge asked what the latest cost of the floating hide would be. Mike Chalmers responded that as yet the cost was not known for certain with the tendering process not yet completed. It is expected that tenders will go out in the third week of April with the requirement to construct a hide from wood other than tropical hardwood, potentially with soft woods from New Zealand.

Richard Lewthwaite asked if the Ramsar site includes the woods at Tsim Bei Tsui. Mike Chalmers responded that the foreshore on the north side of Tsim Bei Tsui is included but not the hillside nor the large drained pond.

7. Election of New Committee

Nominations for the new committee were as follows:

Chairman	Richard Stott
Deputy Chairman	CY Lam
Secretary	[To be determined]
Treasurer	Julian Webster

Recorder	Mike Chalmers
Bulletin Editor	Peter Hopkin
Chinese Bulletin Editor	MM Chan
Annual Report Editor	Geoff Carey
WWF Liaison	David Melville
Librarian	HF Cheung
Conservation Officer	Ng Chou Nam

Jim Ades proposed that the new committee be elected en bloc and this was seconded by Andrew Young. The meeting voted to accept the new committee.

8. Increase in Subscriptions

The committee proposed that subscriptions (which had remained static for the past two years) be increased from the the date of the AGM to the following rates:

	Date of Joining	
	Before 30 Sept	After 30 Sept
	HK\$	HK\$
Ordinary/Family	240	315
Student under 21	50	50
Corporate Member	390	465
Overseas Member	290	365

The increase was proposed by Geoff Cary and seconded by Cheung Ho Fai. The meeting voted to accept the increase.

9. AOB

i) Valedictions:

David Melville wished the Society to note the great efforts made by Ken Searle over the years now that he is in the process of leaving Hong Kong and moving to Portugal. Clive Viney noted that Ken had raised around HK\$3m for Mai Po and in the past had been Chairman of the Mai Po Management Committee. His latest achievement was the establishment of the fine aviary in Hong Kong Park. The meeting acknowledged Ken's efforts with loud applause.

ii) Big Bird Race 1995

The aim for 1995 is HK\$2m. David Melville urged members to put their best efforts into the fund-raising.

The meeting then adjourned for beer and sandwiches, after which Mike Chalmers delivered an stimulating illustrated talk on the subject of his trip last year to the Russian Far East.