



香 港 觀 鳥 會

THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

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通 訊 Bulletin 175 Spring 春季 2000



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雀影集

Photographing Birds VIII:

飛鳥 Feiniu



圖一：這張圖片由 DV 機拍攝後擷取出來，沒有經過修飾。

Picture 1: Original image captured from DV tape.



圖二：經電腦修飾的影像，與圖一比較，顏色豐富一些，不過像數仍只有 697 x 567 (134 KB)，出現齒角，不能再放大。

Picture 2: Image of photo 1 is enhanced by computer software, image size: 134 KB (697 x 567 pixels) 'Teeth' can be seen & can't be enlarged.



圖三：傳統相機拍攝的底片用掃瞄器HP掃瞄，掃瞄時經修正以貼近正片效果，像數：2204 x 1463 (12.4M)，可放大至 8" x 10" 的圖片。

Picture 3: Taken by traditional camera & scanned by film scanner HP. Image size: 12.4M (2204 x 1463 pixels) still acceptable when enlarged to 8" x 10" photo.

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Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Committee Members

Chairman	C.Y. Lam		Conservation	Ng Cho Nam	
Vice-Chairman	H.F. Cheung		Conservation	Mike Kilburn	
Secretary	Ada Chow		Bulletin	Henry Lui	
Treasurer	Julian Webster		Publicity & Publication	Carrie Ma	
Membership	T.P. Luk		WWF Liaison	Lew Young	
Recorder	Geoff Carey		Chinese Birdline	(24 hours)	
English Birdline	(24 hours)				

STOP PRESS!

In a government gazette notice dated 25 April 2000, the Secretary for Transport announced amendments to the Sheung Shui - Lok Ma Chau spur line scheme. Unfortunately, to the extent we could understand, the alignment of the spur line was not among the amendments. The line is still going to cross Long Valley in the worst possible way.

The Society will have to step up its efforts to save this valuable piece of land both for conservation and heritage. We shall have to show the government that Long Valley is important to the whole Hong Kong community, rather than just a few crazy bird watchers. We are organizing publicity, etc. If you could help in one way or another, please contact Mike Kilburn (2580 7802, e-mail: mkilburn@hkstar.com) or Carrie Ma (9041 3021, e-mail: ckwma@netvigator.com).

Desperately Seeking . . .

by Mike Kilburn

The search for a new editor for the English bulletin continues... Sadly, my workload has increased rather than diminished, while the new efforts made by the Society towards saving Long Valley have also been time-consuming.

After the publication of this issue the English Bulletin will become an edited version of the Chinese bulletin. While this may seem an easy solution, it does present problems. The principal issue is that English and Chinese birders have rather different approaches to birding. The bulletins reflect these differences, with distinctly different content (although key features such as the recent reports and Society and Conservation News are always included in both. We feel it would be a shame to lose the diversity offered by producing each issue in both languages.)

As a result we are looking for a new editor. If you are a native English speaker with an interest in birds and birding in Hong Kong (and China), and have the time (20 - 30 hrs

per issue) to source, collate and edit articles (and probably write a good number), then please contact Mr. C.Y. Lam at 2369 8138 or by e-mail: chairman@hkbws.org.hk.

Bulletin No. 174 - Save Long Valley

Recently, most of our effort were put into the Save Long Valley campaign. In replacement of the winter issue, No. 174, a bilingual special issue "Save Long Valley" has been published and sent you together with this bulletin.

Membership Reminder

Subscriptions fall due now. Will all members who haven't renewed their membership, please complete the enclosed form and return it as soon as possible. Subscriptions for this year are as follows:

Ordinary/Family Membership	\$255
Student	\$60
Corporate Member	\$415
Overseas Member	\$310

Please send cheques to the Society GPO Box or pay directly into the Society's new Hongkong Bank number: 004-500-208152-838.

Annual General Meeting – A new line up

The AGM on 28 March 2000 elected a new committee for the coming year. The line up is:

Chairman	Mr. C.Y. Lam
Vice Chairman	Dr. H.F. Cheung
Hon. Secretary	Ms. Ada Chow
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. Stanley Ng
Hon. Recorder	Mr. Geoff Carey
Membership	Mr. T.P. Luk
Conservation	Mr. Mike Kilburn
Conservation	Dr. C.N. Ng
Publicity/Publications	Ms. Carrie Ma
Bulletin	Mr. Henry Lui
WWF Liaison	Dr. Lew Young

The AGM also endorsed the idea of a one-year project with full-time staff and a small office.

HKBWS Office - Request for Donations

Follow the earlier decision made at AGM dated 28 March, the HKBWS will recruit a full-time employee on contract terms for a period of one year. A Society office is going to be set up. We would be grateful for donation of following items:

1. An Office:

This is our dream!! If any Society members can donate an office, or if you know any office of

any size of rental about HK\$3000 - 4000, please let us know.

- 2. Computer / Printer / Scanner / Fax machine: PC, printer, scanners or fax machine of any model, brand new or used, would be most gratefully accepted.*
- 3. Table / Chair*
- 4. Book-shelf / Furniture*
- 5. Photocopying machine*
- 6. Funding / Office set-up fee*

Please contact Mr. C.Y. Lam at [REDACTED] or Ms. Carrie Ma at [REDACTED] or by e-mail to HKBWS: hkbws@hkbws.org.hk at any time for delivery arrangement.

Midwinter Big Bird Race 2000

Big Bird Race 2000, held on February 25-26 was a great success, proving especially popular with the birders. Despite cold and overcast weather the winning team logged 154 species, just 4 less than the winning score in last year's April Bird Race. In the first year, with strategies being worked for a different season and different birds this score shows the tremendous potential for winter birding in Hong Kong, and the feeling among the teams was that this score could certainly be pushed higher in years with more cooperative weather and greater numbers of wintering passerines.

Some of the best birds of the day were Black-legged Kittiwake, Glaucous-winged Gull, Long-billed Dowitcher, and a recording of what subsequently proved to be Hong Kong's first Pygmy Wren Babbler. "Cooper's Crippler" Bird of the Day was a White-bellied Green Pigeon.

Drawing of Lok Ma Chau

Field Marshall Sir John Chapel, a Society's member of very long standing, visited Hong Kong recently and donated to the Society a copy of a drawing of Shenzhen River from the Lok Ma Chau lookout dated 1954. It shows Shenzhen as serene countryside, in stark contrast to the city it is now. Much natural habitat has been lost in the half century past.

Even in the 1970s it was possible to go to Lok Ma Chau and look across a mosaic of fishponds and duck farms, where now only skyscrapers stand.

Sir John was instrumental in advocating the designation of the Mai Po Marshes as a potential conservation area in the 1970's. We appreciate his continued interest in the natural habitat in Hong Kong.

Nestboxes Donated

The Guizhou Friends of the Earth, a non-governmental conservation group, organized a "green" trip to Hong Kong last winter and as part of its programme donated 99 nest boxes to the Society. Members who are interested in experimenting with these boxes in their gardens or maybe balconies may contact Mr. C.Y. Lam for details. Some of the boxes have been supplied to Agriculture Fisheries and Conservation Department for trial in country parks.

Books from HKBWS

The price of HKBWS Bird Reports have been revised. They are now available for sale at the following prices :

Year	HK\$
1992	60
1993	75
1994	90
1995	90
1996	90
1997	100

Postage for local mail order remains \$20 per copy. Postage for overseas mail order is adjusted to \$30 per copy (surface mail).

Copies of "The Birds of East China" by J D La Touche (HK\$300) and "Field Guide to the Birds of China" (in Chinese (HK\$430) are now in stock. The postage for local mail order is \$30 per copy.

Except for the 1997 Bird Reports, the stock of all other items are limited. Please check whether the books are available before placing your order.

For enquiries, please contact the Society Secretary, Ms. Ada Chow at Tel:2580-6472 Fax: 2518-8171, or e-mail : secretary@hkbws.org.hk

The 22th BirdLife World Conference

The BirdLife World Conference has held on October 13-17, 1999 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The conference shared new information and analysis on bird and biodiversity conservation. It also demonstrate how biodiversity can be used

as an indicator for biodiversity and environmental health. Discussion and experience were made on how to achieve conservation practice on biodiversity conservation, model of collaboration between NGOs, governments and corporation.



Participants of BirdLife World Conference

Conservation News

Long Valley

[Please refer to Bulletin No. 174 "Save Long Valley", for information and latest news about the site.]

Tai Ho - Mui Wo Road

Interesting developments are afoot for this area. Tai Ho Stream has won SSSI designation as a most important site for freshwater fish.

In addition the landowners - Swire Properties and Sun Hung Kei have proposed an Ecology Park be established in the valley. While the valley itself is of little conservation significance for Hong Kong birds (with the possible exception of Little Green Heron

Mr. C.Y. Lam and Ms. Carrie Ma represent HKBWS to attend the event.

We thank WBSJ for supporting HKBWS financially in this World Conference.



HKBWS exhibition counter

which may breed here), this would put further pressure on the plans for the road.

In addition, the Highways Department's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the road was rejected by the Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE). It is encouraging to see that poorly prepared EIAs are not merely rubber-stamped in the name of commercial expediency.

Mai Po Update

by Lew Young

Earthmoving this winter

Over the winter 1999/2000, there have been a number of earthmoving projects going on within Mai Po. One of the earliest, has been the lowering of one of the bunds inside *gei wai 22* (by the southern helicopter pad), so as to give visitors a better view of the whole

of *gei wai* 22 from the FCA Border Fence road. At the same time, the bund which has been lowered can act as another roosting site for waterbirds because the water level is managed so that it normally just covers the bund. Many waterbirds like to stand in shallow water, or areas of wet mud.

Gei wai 15c

This is triangular pond at the back of the Mai Po Education Centre where many of the wintering Cormorants roost. Whilst the aim is to manage this pond as a freshwater pond using rainwater to provide the freshwater, there had been problems with leaks in the bunds of the pond allowing brackish water in from adjacent ponds. Therefore, the whole pond has had to be drained and the leaks plugged. It is hoped that the works can be completed before the end of April.

Gei wai 23

This pond has been managed over the past winter to provide an open freshwater habitat using rain to provide the freshwater as with *gei wai* 15c. Student volunteers have removed much of the unwanted vegetation in the pond and earthmoving has begun to repair the leaks in the bunds. Due to the pond being so large, the earthmoving works will have to be continued during the winter of 2000/01 when work to re-profile the pond bottom will begin.

Changes to the management of 'the Scrape'

Observant visitors will have noticed that many of the wooden boards across the sluice gates of the Scrape' have been removed and that as a result, the pond is now tidal. This is another experiment which the reserve is

carrying out to try and attract more shorebirds to use the pond as a roosting site when there is a high tide in Deep Bay. The results have so far been promising but with the main spring shorebird passage still to come in April (*this piece was written at the end of March), we are all keeping our fingers crossed.

Mini-tower Hide

Visitors to *gei wai* #20 would have seen a mini-tower hide at the back of the pond made from scaffolding and green tarpaulin. The money to build this mini-tower hide was generously donated by Dr. Steve Cheung and is for everyone to use. The only access to the hide is only from the footpath between *gei wai* #18 and 19, and then across a small wooden bridge. If the hide proves itself to be successful, then we may consider building a slightly larger hide at the point. *[During the winter the bare tree close to this hide has often been used by an adult Imperial Eagle as a vantage point. As the tree is less than 50 yards away, the hide provides a wonderful opportunity to see this magnificent bird up close. Look out for it here next winter - ed.]*

Field trials for aquatic plants

The Territory Development Department's aquatic plant field trials are continuing in *gei wai* 24b with some modifications, such as the netting having come off the cages now. This is in order to see if any of the plants are grazed by birds (such as wintering Wigeon), or if their seeds are taken by seed-eating birds. If HKBWS members see any birds feeding on these plants, then please let Lew Young know and he will pass the message on to TDD.

Bulletin Board: Tern Survey

For the second year, Cheung Ho Fai will be doing a regular Tern Survey in the Tolo Harbour, Tap Mun, Shek Ngau Chau area. He will go there every Sunday to record the species, number, site and behaviour of all the terns in the area. This data will be sent to government and related parties for the protection of these species. In past years Bridled, Black-naped, Roseate, Common and, rarely, Crested Terns have been seen. In addition, migrant tern species sometimes seen in the area include White-winged, Whiskered, and Aleutian. Members interested in sharing in the survey work or simply visiting the area should contact Cheung Ho Fai on 2788 7882 or at e-mail: APCheung@CityU.edu.hk.

Woodland Breeding Bird Survey 2000

The 2000 Woodland Breeding Bird Survey will be carried out monthly from March to August at Tai Po Kau, Shing Mun and Kowloon Hills Catchment. This survey will focus on recording resident breeding species, such as food-begging Minivets, tail-less Tailorbirds, and the summer bird species composition. Don't miss this chance to see juveniles of resident woodland birds and their interesting behaviour, which can only be seen in these months of the year.

Any members taking part should contact Captain Wong on 9207 5611 or wongcaptain@yahoo.com

Request for Information Sites for HKU Biodiversity Survey

by Jackie Yip

Jackie Yip of the University of Hong Kong is undertaking a territory-wide review of the terrestrial biodiversity in protected areas, using data collected by the Biodiversity Survey and kindly supplied by others (such as HKBWS). I have used the standard method to compare sites based on their total species richness, and contribution to species of conservation interest. The use of standard method is to avoid subjective judgment in different taxa (8 taxa altogether).

I am using the Society's breeding bird data (1993-1997) for picking the sites good for birds, but environment is quickly changing, and I appreciate your help if you know the following areas well:

Mui Wo & Luk Tei Tong, Lantau - any detailed information on the species associated with the habitats there?

Stonecutter's Island - have habitats of breeding kites survived the reclamation?

Mt Davis - which part of the hill are particularly important for birds?

Ho Pui village - how is the site affected by the West Rail project?

Lam Tsuen - any information about the recent sighting of species in areas of the Lam Tsuen valley along the Lam Kam Road?

Tate Cairn - are the breeding sites of the upland species, e.g. Richard's Pipit, all found in the Country Park?

Kau Sai Chau - any areas with ornithological interest outside the golf course?

East of Needle Hill - anybody knows exactly where the Bonelli's Eagles breed?

More information about my research can be found at: http://web.hku.hk/~yyipc/biov_main.htm

You are most welcome to email me at yyipc@hkusua.hku.hk or fax to (852) 2517 6082.

Hong Kong Birding

Recent Reports October 1999 – January 2000

by *Richard Lewthwaite*

Please note that these are unchecked records and not accepted records. Members are strongly encouraged to submit records of all species on the Excel spreadsheet, or rarity card, which can be downloaded from the Society website. If you have no access to the website, please submit hard copy reports to the Recorder at the HKBWS postal address.

October

A fine month for birding got off to a good start with a Baillon's Crake at Long Valley on 1st. Other highlights from the Deep Bay area in the first part of the month were a Black-winged Kite at Mai Po on 4th, two Schrenck's Bitterns and three Lanceolated Warblers at Long Valley on 5th, up to 19 Black Bazas at Ping Kong on 4th and 9th, 22 Broad-billed Sandpipers and a Grey-headed Lapwing among 1900 shorebirds on the Mai Po scrape on 8th with a Pied Harrier at Long Valley on the same day.

At Tai Po Kau, an Orange-headed Thrush was found on 7th and a Mountain Tailorbird, one of four potential first records reported during the month, on 8th-9th. This bird coincided with an unusually early White-throated Rock Thrush at Mai Po on 9th and 10th which in turn overlapped with a Swinhoe's Minivet there on the latter date. Female Siberian Thrushes were at Kadoorie

Farm and Mount Austin on 12th and 14th, a Crested Kingfisher showed at Plover Cove on 13th and an Oriental Scops Owl, the first in an excellent autumn for this species, was spotlighted at Cloudy Hill on 15th. Further sightings were made on 20th, 22nd, 24th (two) and 30th.

At Mai Po, a Pheasant-tailed Jacana remained on Pond 20 from 11th to at least 16th and a Pied Harrier and Black-winged Kite were seen on the latter date. A Nordmann's Greenshank, a much rarer bird in autumn than in spring, eight Gull-billed Terns and two Black-faced Spoonbills, the first for some weeks, were seen from the boardwalk and 503 Black-winged Stilts, a new high, were counted on the reserve, all on 17th. On the same day, a Golden-spectacled Warbler was seen in Tai Po Kau.

On 18th, a Greenish Warbler was at Shan Tong Tsuen, nine Grey-headed Lapwings at Kam Tin and a Large Cuckoo-shrike, a potential first record, reported near Mui Wo. The next day, a Great Bittern and six Blue-tailed Bee-eaters were at Mai Po and a Greater White-fronted Goose, found emaciated at Discovery Bay, was taken into care at Kadoorie Farm. This bird, a potential first record, was later released into the Waterfowl Collection at Mai Po, where it was still present in late January.

A run of raptors included a Crested Honey Buzzard, two Hobbies and a Kestrel at Mount Austin on 21st, a Black-winged Kite at Kau Sai Chau on 22nd, and an Amur Falcon at Mai Po on 24th. The latter was a potential first.

On 23rd, a Black Bittern found injured at Tuen Mun was taken into care at Kadoorie Farm, a Common Ringed Plover was first seen from the boardwalk and a Collared Dove started to be regularly seen at Mai Po and near Palm Springs. At Mai Po, 10 Ruff (a new high) were seen on 25th, a Schrenck's Bittern on 26th and 30 Black-faced Spoonbills on 29th.

A fine month ended with a Red-throated Flycatcher at Mai Po on 30th and a Brown Crake at Nam Chung, a Brown Hawk Owl and a Grey Nightjar at Sha Lo Tung, a Eurasian Sparrowhawk at Long Valley, a Greenish Warbler at Shing Mun, two Collared Finchbills at Leadmine Pass and a Baikal Teal at Mai Po, all on 31st.

November

Most of the significant reports in the early part of the month were from Mai Po, with a Long-billed / Short-billed Dowitcher on 2nd, 107 Black-faced Spoonbills on 3rd, a Pied Harrier on 4th and a Carrion Crow on 11th. Elsewhere, there were 14 Grey-headed Lapwings at Kam Tin and a Grey-faced Buzzard at Fanling Golf Course on 7th and an Oriental Scops Owl at Cloudy Hill on 12th, with another there the next evening.

Influxes on 13th included 160 Red-throated Pipits at Long Valley and 400 Chestnut Buntings, 350 Eyebrowed Thrushes (both new highs) and the first Sulphur-breasted Warbler and Red-flanked Bluetail of the winter at Kadoorie Farm. The next day, a Chestnut-flanked White-eye, 10 Grey Thrushes, an Orange-headed Thrush and a Radde's Warbler were there,

while an Oriental Greenfinch, now something of a minor rarity, was at Ping Yeung. Only the second Pheasant-tailed Jacana of the autumn was found at San Tin on 15th, whilst an early Red-breasted Merganser was at Shuen Wan on 16th. Reports from Tai Po Kau during 17th-18th included a Red-tailed Robin and three Blyth's Leaf Warblers, while at Cheung Sheung on 20th there were Grey, Grey-backed and Eyebrowed Thrushes, two Red-tailed Robins, three Mugimaki Flycatchers and a Blue-and-white Flycatcher.

Gulls from the Mai Po boardwalk included one Black-tailed, 25 Saunders' and eight Heuglin's together with a Caspian Tern on 20th, an early Vega on 23rd, 90 Heuglin's and a Slaty-backed on 27th and three Yellow-legged on 28th. A Spoon-billed Sandpiper was found in Deep Bay on 22nd and there were 164 Black-faced Spoonbills (a new high) at Mai Po on 24th.

Elsewhere, there were two Northern Skylarks at Long Valley on 20th-21st and a Daurian Starling there on 21st. A Grey Nightjar at Cloudy Hill on 28th and a White's Thrush at Queen's Hill Camp on 29th were the last noteworthy reports of the month.

December

A quieter month than usual opened with news of two Ashy and 35 Hair-crested Drongos at Sek Kong Catchment on 2nd. Two days later, an Eagle Owl was seen displaying at the top of Kadoorie Farm and an Oriental Scops Owl was found injured at Shek Kip Mei, while a Pheasant-tailed Jacana was found at Mong Tseng.

On 5th, a Long-billed Plover, only the third for Hong Kong, was found near Mai Po and the next day eight Dalmatian Pelicans, the first of the winter, were noted in Deep Bay.

A visit to Sha Lo Tung on 11th produced a Wryneck, two Russet Bush Warblers, a Brown Bush Warbler, three Bright-capped Cisticolas and four Lanceolated Warblers.

On 15th, a Crested Honey Buzzard was seen soaring over the orchard at Tai Po Kau and a Black Stork visited Pond 20 at Mai Po and was again seen at Mai Po on 28th. A Mugimaki Flycatcher and a Brown Shrike were at Sek Kong Catchment on 15th. The Mugimaki and a Red-throated Flycatcher were there on 23rd, whilst an Orange-headed Thrush, the third of the autumn/winter, was in Tai Po Kau on 20th.

The spell of cold weather in the third week of the month when temperatures fell to two or three degrees celsius was rated the coldest on record for the winter solstice period, but brought no reports of influxes. The only unusual report was an Eastern Grass Owl found injured near Tai Po on 23rd and taken into care at Kadoorie Farm.

A quiet month ended with a Golden-spectacled Warbler at Kap Lung, a Paddyfield Warbler and Lanceolated Warbler at Nam Sang Wai on 31st and, amazingly, a ringed Oriental Stork at Mai Po. The ring number was later read and enquiries yielded the information that this bird had been ringed as a chick in Habarovsk, eastern Siberia, in July 1999.

January 2000

A Crested Honey Buzzard at Tai Po Kau and 20 Dalmatian Pelicans in Deep Bay were the birding highlights on 1st. Away from Deep Bay, a Plaintive Cuckoo was heard singing at Pat Heung on 4th, an unusually early date, and a Grey Phalarope was the highlight of a boat trip to Po Toi on 8th.

The January waterfowl count ensured wide coverage of Deep Bay, bringing reports of a Black-billed Kittiwake and Glaucous-winged Gull on 13th, 560 Black-winged Stilts (a new high) at Wo Shang Wai, the Oriental Stork at Tsim Bei Tsui, two Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers and a Paddyfield Warbler at Nam Sang Wai and 20 Chinese Penduline Tits at Sha Po on 14th, a Brown-headed Gull, the Black Stork, 413 Great Crested Grebes (a new high), a Hoopoe and a Ruddy Sparrow at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15th, a Common Ringed Plover and 36 Long-toed Stints in front of the boardwalk on 17th, and three Long-billed/Short-billed Dowitchers at Mai Po on 21st.

On 17th, the second Eastern Grass Owl of the month was found. This was also injured and was taken into care at Kadoorie Farm.

A Golden-spectacled Warbler was in Tai Po Kau on 26th.

A series of higher than expected tides created a fine spectacle in front of the boardwalk from 22nd to 30th, enabling the wintering flocks to be scrutinised. A Whiskered Tern was seen on 22nd, but the noteworthy feature was the number of gulls present during this period, including two different Glaucous-

winged, a minimum of 850 Heuglin's (new high), seven Slaty-backed (new high), 23 Yellow-legged (new high), up to 17 Black-tailed, five Vega, three Common of the race *heinei* and one Kamchatka.

Take a Closer Look - Crows

by *H F Cheung*

Illustrated by *YY Lee*

Crows are mostly black in colour. They eat anything including corpses and have developed a strong bill for that. There are several "all-black" crows in Hong Kong.

The commonest is Jungle Crow while House Crow has become more common in recent years in Kowloon Tong and the port area near Cheung Sha Wan. Carrion Crow is the rarest, with only a single confirmed record. Confusion among them is highly possible. All of these prefer forest with some open area.

Jungle Crow



is black all over, sometimes showing an iridescent blue-green sheen on the body. It is the largest (size 51 cm / 20 in) and strongest of the three. It also has the most powerful bill. Its very steep forehead and large bill can be used to distinguish it from Carrion Crow.

However, the sloping angle of the forehead can be difficult to see. Even if the steep slope is not seen, care must be exercised before claiming a Carrion Crow. Its call is "ar".

Carrion Crow



In comparison to Jungle Crow, Carrion Crow is similar in length (size 48 cm / 19 in) and colour. However, it is less strongly built and its forehead slopes at a much gentler angle than Jungle Crow. Its call seems to be identical to that of Jungle Crow.

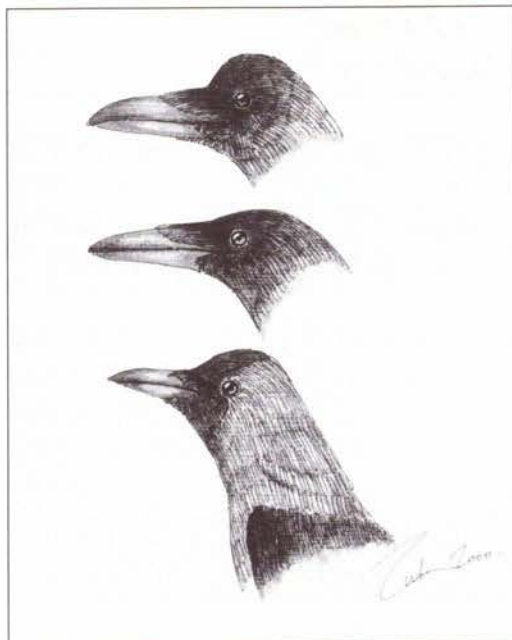
House Crow



House Crow is not totally black. Its hind neck and upper back areas are greyish in colour. While birds in India show a silverly-grey colour, birds in Hong Kong are typically duller on the collar. Its size (42 cm / 16.5 in) is smaller. Its call is “gair”.

There is evidence that the earlier House Crows in HK arrived here naturally (assisted only by ships but not feed by human being). In principle they should be considered wild

birds. However some 40 years ago, they were introduced as pest controllers into South-east Asia and the current population of the region is descended from these birds. Because of this, House Crow is a special Category E species according to the Society Record Committee.



Photographing Birds VIII

Exposure

by *Feiniu*

Don't expect too much when you first begin taking bird photos – it's not easy to obtain good results. But although we often fail, the process of learning is the most valuable thing you could have in bird photography. You should bear this in mind when you take up photography, whether it is with a traditional camera or a digital video camcorder (DV). Many people give up too soon because they set their expectations too high. When you are ready, you can begin your 'job'.

Firstly, you should learn how to manage your camera. The most important thing is exposure. Whether you have a traditional camera or a digital video camcorder, you expose film or tape to obtain images. You can find two buttons or dials on your camera or DV. They are aperture and shutter button.

The aperture button or dial (on older cameras aperture is set on a ring around the lens) is used to control the size of the opening which admits light to the film, dictating the amount of light to which film or tape is exposed.

The shutter dial is used to control the length of time for which the film or tape is exposed to light.

As both control the amount of light which gets to the film, the aperture and shutter

are related. You can use larger aperture and higher shutter speed or smaller aperture and lower shutter speed. For example, if conditions require an aperture of F4 and 1/60 second shutter speed, you can change to F8 and 1/15 second for the same degree of total exposure to the film. DV is similar to a traditional camera in operation but has different effects.

To illustrate this, Feiniu has chosen three photos of White's Thrush as examples. Photo 1, 2 and 3 (see inside cover) were taken at similar distances and in similar light conditions.

In fact, 1 and 2 are the same photo, but 2 has been computer-enhanced. The original image was captured by a 3 CCD DV with a 180mm camera lens. The White's Thrush occupies a large area of the image. Exposure is F4 at 1/60 second. Photo 3 was taken by a traditional camera with a 300mm, F4 lens plus 1.5x extension (i.e. equal to 450mm F6.5). Shutter speed is 1/30 second & aperture is fully opened.

The object size is smaller than photo 1&2. This shows the advantage of DV to traditional cameras in such low light conditions. Actually 450mm telephoto lens with 1/30 second low shutter speed must require a very solid tripod & very careful operation to avoid obtaining blurred images.

On the other hand, DV is intended for taking moving footage. Even with unstable video film, you can still capture

a clear still image from it. This also lets you to take a good bird image in compare with traditional cameras.

But don't rejoice too soon over the DV. The best DV captured still image, still cannot compare with the best photos taken with traditional cameras. You can see the difference in photos 1,2 and 3. But the technology is improving and the differences will be smaller and smaller.

Returning to exposure, we can see the result of exposure directly & instantly on the DV monitor screen, making it's easy to obtain correct exposure. Traditional cameras do not have this advantage, but require more knowledge and experience in

setting the correct exposure. Nevertheless, some exposure problems still exist when using DVs - better training & experience are unavoidably required for both. Next time Feiniu will talk more about exposure.

Photo information

Photos 1&2: Canon XL-1 DV camcorder, Zeiss 180mm F2.8 Contax camera lens, computer DV card: Pinnacle DV 300, graphics software : Microsoft Picture It 2 .

Photo 3: Contax 167 camera, Zeiss 300mm F4 plus 1.5x extention, film scanner: Nikon Coolscan 2.

雀影集
Photographing Birds VIII:
飛鳥 Feiniu

圖一：原裝圖片由 DV 攝錄機所攝取出來，沒有經過修飾。
Figure 1: Original image captured from DV tape.

圖二：這幅圖片經過修飾，與圖一比較，顏色變淡一些，不過畫質仍只有 497 x 567 (14:9)，畫質最劣，不能夠放大。
Figure 2: Image of photo 1 is enhanced by computer software, image size: 497 x 567 pixels (14:9), "bad" can't to win "best" to be enlarged.

圖三：原裝的傳統相機的圖片用掃描器以 35 釐，掃描時用 21 釐正片取景，畫數：2204 x 1463 (12:84)，可放大至 8" x 10" 的畫質。
Photo 3: Taken by traditional camera & scanned by film scanner (17. Image size: 12 463 (2204 x 1463 pixels)) still acceptable when enlarged to 8" x 10" photo.

[Ed - See inside - front Cover]

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

by Michael Chalmers

With the publication of the new checklist soon, I have taken a “tongue-in-cheek” look back to Hong Kong over 25 years ago to highlight some of the old records which you will not find in Category A of the new list, and to illustrate how much easier bird watching in Hong Kong has become.

The Society was still in its teenage years. There were no illustrated field guides. The standard local reference was Herklot's Hong Hong Birds, which was mostly words. Ben King's South-East Asia guide was not first published until 1975 and Clive Viney's Colour Guide was not launched until 1977. In the New Territories, the new town programme had not begun other than at Tsuen Wan. Shatin and Tuen Mun were still just fishing villages. Hunting was still widespread, especially for Duck and Snipe. A visit to the Deep Bay Marshes was quite a challenge. At Mai Po, all gei wais were under private control. You did not know which cross bunds had just been cut or buried under newly dredged mud. When you reached the outer bund, having avoided the mad dogs, there was no access to Deep Bay itself. The best that could be achieved was a climb to the top of the rocky outcrop to peer out over the mangrove. It was not until around the

early 1980s that the “fence” was constructed, which suddenly opened up Deep Bay from Tsim Bei Tsui.

If you were lucky you might have seen the flock of 80 Spotted-billed Pelicans in Deep Bay. In spring, if you were able to find the drained down pond used by the shorebirds at high tide, you might have come across a flock of over 250 Sanderling, which was regarded as a common passage migrant, but you would have been hard-pushed to find a Red-necked Stint! With luck, a Merlin might have been seen hunting over the marshes. The most numerous passage tern in Deep Bay was considered to be Black-naped and the most numerous large gull was either Mongolian or Vega Herring Gull. A trip to the hills at Lok Ma Chau often produced both Golden and Steppe Eagles. A ferry trip to an offshore island would give the challenge of separating possible Pelagic Cormorants from the commoner species, and if you saw an immature sea-eagle, care was needed to separate it from White-tailed Sea Eagle, which was occasionally reported. Throughout the Territory, the most likely large cuckoo to encounter on passage was the Common Cuckoo. In June the Society always had a field trip to Tai Mo Shan to see the upland specialities which bred there including David's Hill Warbler.

And if you had a good day, like Herklots record on 14 April 1941, you might have seen 69 species! We have come a long way since then.

Hong Kong's Commonest Birds

by *Michael Chalmers*

With the growing interest in birds among school children and others, a wide range of educational material is being prepared for beginners. A good starting point is getting to know the common every day species which can be seen throughout the year in most places. The breeding bird survey carried out by the Society between 1993 and 1996 provides a numerical basis on which to judge how widespread breeding species are by summing up the number of different 1km squares in which each species was recorded. The full results are due to be published in the new checklist

but this advance look at the common species will I hope prove useful for the reasons above.

In all 1,222 separate 1km squares were surveyed and the results are most readily understood by presenting the percentage of the total number of squares in which each species was recorded. A separate assessment was also carried out for 57 urban squares which included the most heavily populated areas of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and Tsuen Wan. Even here a variety of birds can be found in the areas where the greatest numbers of people live, work and go to school. The results are tabulated below.

Most Widespread in Whole Territory		Most Widespread in Urban Areas	
Rank	Species	Rank	Species
			%
1	Chinese Bulbul	1	Eur. Tree Sparrow
2	Red-whisk.Bulbul	2	Spotted Dove
3	Common Tailorbird	3	Chinese Bulbul
4	Yellow-b. Prinia	4	Or. Magpie Robin
5	Spotted Dove	5	Jap. White Eye
6	Crested Myna	6	Crested Myna
7	Jap. White Eye	7	Red-whisk. Bulbul
8	Masked L.Thrush	8	Black Kite
9	Barn Swallow	9	Common Magpie
10	Eur. Tree Sparrow	10	Common Tailorbird
11	Or. Magpie Robin	11	Masked L.Thrush
12	Hwamei	12	Barn Swallow
13	Common Magpie	13	Little Swift
14	Common Koel	14	Black-coll.Starling
15	Little Swift	15	Rock Pigeon
16	Black Kite	16	Common Koel
17	Great Tit		

The lists only include those species which have achieved over 33% [i.e. found in more than 1 in 3 squares]. Those occurring in both lists [14 species] are marked by asterisks. Not surprisingly, the two bulbuls take the first two places for the whole territory with Common Tailorbird beating Yellow-bellied Prinia into third place. In the urban areas Tree Sparrow is the great opportunist in first place with the less tolerant Yellow-bellied Prinia, Hwamei and Great Tit giving way to Rock Pigeon and Black-collared Starling.



Black-throated Laughing Thrush by Matthew Kwan

Coming Activities

Date	Leader	Activity / Gathering location	Time	Difficulty
6-7 May (Sat/Sun)	Luk Tsun Pun [REDACTED] Wong Tin Wa [REDACTED]	Lamma Island overnight 14:30 Central Pier to Lamma, Finish at 14:00 next day at Central		XX
14 May (Sun)	Captain Wong [REDACTED]	Hong Kong Woodland Breeding Bird Survey (please contact the leader)		XXX
21 May (Sun)	Karl Ng [REDACTED] Beta Yip	Mai Po * 08:00 Kowloon Tong KCR station (taxi station exit); or 09:00 Mai Po carpark	08:00/ 16:00	X
21 May (Sun)	Geoff Carey [REDACTED]	Waterfowl Monitoring in the Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site (Please contact the leader)		XXX
25 May (Thur)	Lam Chiu Ying [REDACTED]	Indoor meeting: The effect of weather on birds 18:45 Hong Kong Observatory	18:45	X

Date	Leader	Activity / Gathering location	Time	Difficulty
4 June (Sun)	Chueng Ho Fai [REDACTED]	Tap Mun 08:15 Ma Liu Shui Pier Finish at 14:30 at Sai Kung	08:15/ 14:30	XX
10-11 June (Sat/Sun)	Stanley Ng [REDACTED]	Yung Shue O overnight 16:00 University KCR Finish at 12:00 next day at Yung Shue O		XX
11 June (Sun)	Captain Wong [REDACTED]	Hong Kong Woodland Breeding Bird Survey (please contact the leader)		XXX
15 June (Thur)	Fox Wong Samson So [REDACTED] Henry Lui [REDACTED]	Indoor meeting: The effect of weather on birds 18:45 Hong Kong Observatory	18:45	X
18 June (Sun)	Geoff Carey [REDACTED]	Waterfowl Monitoring in the Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site (Please contact the leader)		XXX

Note

Priority is given to members of the Society. Please contact the leader several days before the meeting to confirm attendance, otherwise you may miss out on changes in timing. The X rating conveys the degree of difficulty in each outing in terms of seeing the birds; members are of course more than welcome to attend any event.

* Members who use the Society coach to Mai Po must confirm their attendance by returning the booking slip with payment. Those using own transport please also notify Dr H F Cheung - this is important because the maximum number of members who can attend the outing is 50, as set by the AFD permit. Failure to do so may result in being refused access to the reserve

From 2000 onwards, non-members joining Mai Po trips will have to pay the coach fare irrespective of whether they make use of the coach.

Payment to the society may be made in two ways:

- (1) Please return the attendance slip with a cheque in English made out to the "Hong Kong Bird Watching Society"
- (2) Payment can also be made by depositing money into A/C no. 004-500-208152-838 of Hongkong Bank in favour of "Hong Kong Bird Watching Society", but please send the booking slip in as well to confirm you payment and attendance.

On all outdoor meeting please bring drink and food, appropriate clothing for the location, and sun cream and mosquito lotion if needed!

Tidal information: <http://www.info.gov.hk/hko/astron/pretide/epremap.htm>

Long Valley

A vanishing 'home' ?

塋原

你嘗過失去「家」的滋味嗎？



班文鳥 (塋原)
Spotted Munia (Long Valley)

盧嘉孟
Lo Kar Man



棕背伯勞 (塋原)
Rufous - backed Shrike (Long Valley)

黃亞萍、孔思義
Jemi and John Holmes



黃角鴞 (九龍坑山)
Oriental Scops Owl (Cloudy Hill)

黃亞萍、孔思義
Jemi and John Holmes