

香港觀鳥會 The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



bulletin

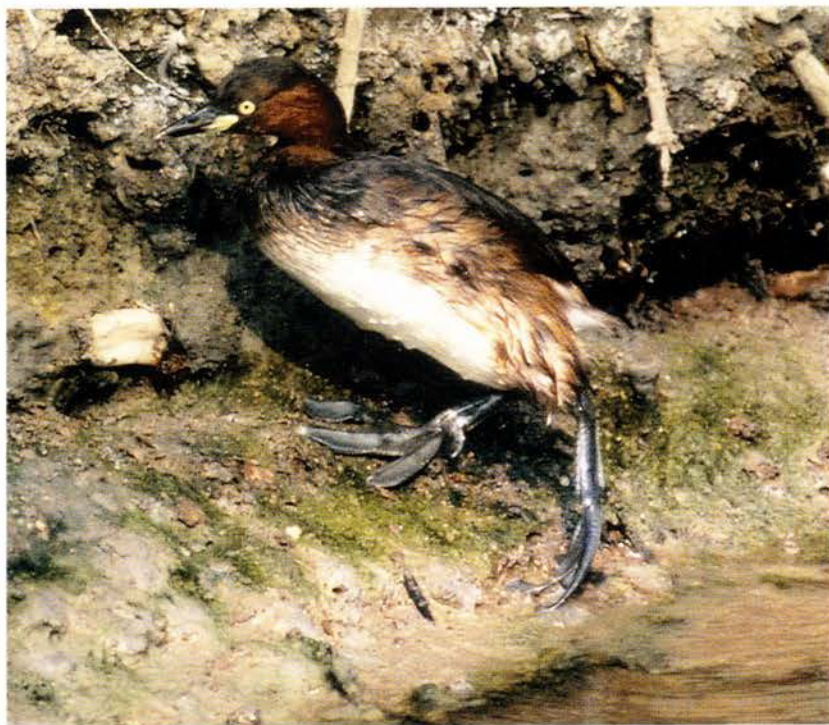
會員通訊

185

Autumn 2002 ~ 秋

Kestrel (Long Valley) – Cheung Ho Fai

紅隼(塹原) | 張浩輝



小鸕鶿(米埔) | 盧嘉孟

Little Grebe (Mai Po) – Lo Kar Man



# The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited

(Approved Charitable Institution of a Public Character)

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BirdLife International Affiliate

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John Wu & Co

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## Webmaster

Mr. Karl Ng

## Staff

<i>Project Officer</i>	Ms. Carrie Ma
<i>Asst. Project Officer</i>	Ms. Shirley Lam

## From the Chairman...

Crested Bulbuls are chatting happily among the banyan tree outside the window. Here I am stuck in my room when any worthwhile bird watcher would be out running all over Hong Kong looking for birds to celebrate the day.

I sometimes do wonder why I should be sitting in front of the desk all the time, working on endless HKBWS documents: a draft proposal to seek funding for one project, a report on an ongoing project, etc. etc. To reach out to students, to the aged, to the public, or to any other parties, means funding. And funding only comes if one works

on it persistently. It is very tiring indeed.

A Spotted Dove lands close to the window and starts pecking at invisible pieces of food, gracefully and patiently. It is so soothing to watch. Wouldn't it be nice to let more people to see this for themselves?

Well, it is thoughts like this that keeps me ticking. If I can bring the joy of bird watching to more people, then missing a few birds in the wild is but a small price to pay.


C Y Lam



## Launch of New HKBWS BBS

As of 1st October 2002, the HKBWS BBS has changed to a new, more user-friendly and informative format. The new BBS offer more features and allows users to post our messages and photos more easily. It also allows users to find and view any new or old message more quickly than before.

You can register as a BBS member or just as a guest to post your message or reply in the new BBS. Of course, only BBS members can use the special functions of the new BBS, e.g instant messages for communicating with other BBS members, notification of new messages posted in the BBS, etc.

We hope that you will enjoy using the new HKBWS BBS and continue to share your views, opinions and experience with other members and with the public. We also hope that the new HKBWS BBS will not only attract more messages and photos, but also more support for the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society! 

The screenshot shows the HKBWS BBS website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with various icons and a search box. Below that is a header section with the HKBWS logo and the text '香港觀鳥會 HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY'. The main content area features a large announcement in Chinese, followed by a list of forum topics. The topics include 'Membership Application', 'Calendar / Activities / Publicity / Notice', 'Project's Progress', 'Discussion Area', 'General', 'Birding Tips / Bird Identification', 'Conservation', 'Photo Gallery', and 'New Photo'. Each topic has a list of posts with their respective dates and times. The footer contains the HKBWS logo and the text 'Hong Kong Bird Watching Society'.

## New Society Email Addresses:

The e-mail accounts of the Society have been revised as follows:

Members please use these new e-mail accounts for correspondence.

- [hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk) – contact with BLI, international organisations, Government, & non-government organisations, etc
- [chairman@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:chairman@hkbws.org.hk) – contact Chairman
- [secretary@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:secretary@hkbws.org.hk) – general enquiry, Birdshop orders
- [recorder@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:recorder@hkbws.org.hk) – submission of records, bird identification
- [membership@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:membership@hkbws.org.hk) – membership-related matters
- [bulletin@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:bulletin@hkbws.org.hk) – bulletin-related matters
- [projects@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:projects@hkbws.org.hk) – project-related matters
- [conservation@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:conservation@hkbws.org.hk) – conservation-related matters
- [bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk) – Black-faced Spoonbill Interest Group
- [webmaster@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:webmaster@hkbws.org.hk) – website-related matters

## Hong Kong Bird Report

The HKBR 1998 was released in September. Members should have already received a copy, along with the last bulletin. The price of further issues of the HKBR 1998 is HK\$99 (p & p not included).

## 2002 Taipei Birdwatching Fair

The 2002 Taipei Birdwatching Fair was held on 26 and 27 Oct 2002. Two members, Mr. Yam Wing Yiu and Mr. Hung Wai Ming, represented the Society at the event, looking after our booth and sharing experience with other participants.



## New Bird Badges

New bird badges are available in the Bird Shop now! There are 9 assorted designs. All bird photos were contributed by members. Special thanks to Cheung Ho Fai, John & Jemi Holmes, Lo Kar Man, Henry Lui, Karl Ng, Wong Chun Yu, Wong Tin Wa for generously sharing their great photos with us.

## Greeting Card and 2003 Calendar

New year is coming! Don't forget to send those "bird" greetings to your friends and relatives. The 2003 Bird Calendars are available in the Bird Shop. Stocks are limited. Don't miss out.

## Articles to Bulletin / Translator

Contributions to the Society bulletin are always welcome. You are encouraged to share your birdwatching experience with other members. Please help to enrich the content of our bulletin by sending your articles to the new e-mail account: [bulletin@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:bulletin@hkbws.org.hk).

Also, if you can help in translating the articles, please contact the bulletin coordinator Ronely Lee [bulletin@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:bulletin@hkbws.org.hk).

## Orders for The Avifauna of Hong Kong

Several orders of The Avifauna of Hong Kong have been on hand for some time and have yet to be collected. Because we only have limited space in the office, please arrange with the project office staff to pick up your copy as soon as possible. Members wishing to collect books or other gifts from the office should pick them up within 1 month of receiving our notification. Thank you.

## Setting up of Bird Research Groups

Four research groups have been set up to study the ecology of Black-faced Spoonbill, Egret, Kite, and Tern respectively. The memberships of the groups is as follows:

### Black-faced Spoonbill Research Group

Convenor:  
Mr. Yu Yat Tung

Members:  
Mr. Dickson Wong,  
Mr. Lo Kar Man,  
Mr. Louis Cheung and Mr. Forrest Fong



### Egret Research Group

Convenor: Mr. Captain Wong  
Members: Dr. Kwok Ho Kai and Mr. Luke Woo  
(*Dr. Lew Young to give support as an advisor*)

### Kite Research Group

Convenor: Ms. Etta Hui  
Members: Ms. Karin Chan, Mr. Beta Yip,  
Mr. Henry Lui and Ms. Shirley Lam

## Tern Research Group

Convenor:

Dr. Cheung Ho Fai

Members:

Mr. Marcus Ho,

Mr. Alan Chan,

Mr. Yu Yat Tung, Ms.

Shirley Lam and Mr. Louis Cheung



## New Venue for Indoor Meetings

The Society thanks the Hong Kong Observatory for lending us the Conference room to hold our indoor meetings in the past. However, we will now have to change the venue for such meetings. Most likely, we have to rent a venue, so members should be aware that in future, participants may need to pay an entry fee to recover part of the costs.

## News: Beep into Mai Po? New Mai Po Marshes Entry Permit

Starting from this November, the Mai Po Marshes Entry Permit issued by the AFCD has been changed to a convenient format that is the size of an HKID card. Bar codes on the new permit can be read by AFCD's 24-hour identification system at the Mai Po Nature Warden Office. Registration is as simple as getting a beep. If you enter Mai Po in the evening, you may register by putting your permit on the bar code reader at the counter next to the Office. The machine will beep after registration is completed. Members entering Mai Po at any time must show their permit and register, otherwise they may be prosecuted.

Holders of valid permits who would like to use the new method of registration may mail their permits to AFCD at 7/F., Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon. Please mark "Renew permit" on the envelope.

## Acknowledgment

The Society would like to thank Mr. MAN Chup Ming for donating 2 styles of fascinating bird calendar card and Mr. KWAN Tze Hoi for donating his book "子鳥情深" (The story about his child and birds).

## A Great Contribution

You may have noticed some design changes to the recent bulletins. Special thanks are due to Miss PUK Yuk-yin, who has taken up all the design and typesetting work for the bulletin. Yuk-yin also coordinates arrangements with the printer. What's more, she helps to design the bird badges, greeting cards, bookmarks, and other items, including the jacket of the Bird Call CD-ROM. Once again, our thanks for a great job in a particularly demanding and time-consuming area.



## A Outreach

### Talks and bird watching trips



Starting from August, we have received requests from 7 organizations about bird watching activities. These included calls from the Hong Kong Cultural Museum, Hong Kong Federation of Youth, International Youth of Mountain Chamber Committee, Central and Western District Council (see below), Kerry Properties and community centers. There are also requests and enquiries from schools on organizing and handling nature-watching activities.

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### Central and Western District Council "Nature Trail" Project



The Central and Western District Council Nature Trail will be launched on 27 October. The Society has provided various voluntary support including production of material for the leaflet on birds at Hong Kong Park and Lung Fu Shan, training of nature interpreters for the Conservancy Association, and



bird watching guidance on 27 October. We thank Dr HF Cheung, Louis Cheung, Henry Lui, Dr HK Kwok, Shirley Lam and Yam Wing Yiu for the preparation of pictures and text. We also thank CY Lam for advice, Miss Carrie Ma for liaison with C & W District Council and coordination of activities, Aukie Au, Gary Chow, Robin Fung and Yam Wing Yiu for provision of guidance and training.



### Swarovski sponsored project

The Society is organizing bird watching activities including 25 school visits and 1 bird watching course for teachers.

The project is sponsored by Swarovski (Hong Kong) Limited. The response has been enthusiastic, 26 schools and 50 teachers have already signed up for the events.

### Bird Watching Courses

This winter, the Society will organize the following bird watching courses. Course 1 and 2 are open to public, please refer to the contact information below.

1. HKU Space "Watching Birds in the Wild": November 2003 (For further information: please visit: [http://www.hku.hk/space/div\\_as/progs\\_curs/as27-016-06.html](http://www.hku.hk/space/div_as/progs_curs/as27-016-06.html)).
2. Training for The Golders' Association of Hong Kong from 23 October to 19 January (For enquiry, contact Miss Jovita Lo at 2828 3837)
3. Bird watching course for teachers from 14 November to 14 December, co-organized with Hong Kong Professional Teachers Union (HKPTU) and sponsored by Swarovski H.K. Limited.
4. Q.E.S.O.S.A. Secondary School bird watching course: The 2nd bird watching course will be organized by the school on 15 and 22 February 2003 at HKPTU. The Society will provide guidance for the school.

### B Publication

#### HKBR 1998 - great effort from Society members

The 1998 Hong Kong Bird Report was published and sent to Society members by mail. We thank the editors Mr Mike Turnbull and Miss Carrie Ma for their effort. We also thank Geoff Carey, H.F. Cheung, Mike Chalmers, Richard Corlett, David Diskin, Martin Hale, John Holmes, Peter Kennerly, H.K. Kwok, R. Lewthwaite, C.Y. Lam, S.Y. Lee, Henry Lui, Anthony Lo, David Melville, Karl Ng, Richard Stott, Samson So, Captain Wong, T.W. Wong, Lew

Young, and Y.T. Yu for contribution of articles, photographs and illustrations. Others who have assisted in the production of the report include Forrest Fong, Mike Kilburn, Mike Leven and Jemi Wong.

#### Long Valley leaflet

The Society is going to produce a leaflet on Long Valley. The leaflet will serve as a bird watching guide for members and the general public. We thank Ada Chan and Thomas Lee for assisting in the preparation of the text.

### C Publicity

#### Press contacts

There have been a number of press reports on birds and nature appreciation recently:

#### Ming Pao Daily:

- 9 August – Mountain Bulbul at Tai Po Kau
- 2 September – Visitors cause an increase in number of abandoned tern eggs
- 4 September – Public intrudes on terns' paradise
- 15 September – AFCD is providing training to ecological tour guides
- 28 September – No EIA process in a slope construction site at Lamma Island
- 16 October – AFCD considering artificial device to attract breeding terns
- 17 October – Egret eggs contain DDT which can reduce survival rate by 10%
- 14 October – Reduction in number of swallow and swift nests
- 15 October – White-bellied Sea Eagle in Hong Kong



鳥鳴樓樹枝

一樹「葉茂」，在鳥鳴樓的樹枝上，鳥鳴聲此起彼落，在清晨的陽光下，顯得格外動聽。(Dorinda Fong攝)

#### 桂林趨成熟 夠吸引 稀客鳥鵲重臨香港

【本報訊】位於廣東省桂林市的桂林，以其秀美的山水、優美的環境、宜人的氣候，吸引了越來越多的遊客。最近，桂林的生態環境日益改善，吸引了稀客鳥鵲重臨香港。

據悉，桂林的生態環境日益改善，吸引了稀客鳥鵲重臨香港。鳥鵲是一種非常珍貴的鳥類，它的出現標誌著該地區的生態環境得到了有效的保護和治理。

鳥鵲的出現，不僅豐富了當地的鳥類資源，也為當地的生態旅遊提供了新的視角。目前，桂林市政府已採取多項措施，進一步改善當地的生態環境，吸引更多稀客鳥類重臨。

#### 叫聲清脆 池間活潑

【本報訊】在一個寧靜的池邊，一隻活潑的鳥兒正發出清脆的叫聲。這隻鳥兒是當地的一種珍稀鳥類，它的出現引起了當地居民的注意。

**Sing Tao Daily:**

weekly from 21 July to 22 September –  
Chat Room on birds

22 September –

A high number of night birds at Shuen Wan

18 October –

Luk Keng - a nice bird watching spot for families

**SCMP:**

3 August –

“Urban jungle” bird watching takes off at  
Kowloon Park

**Shing Pao Daily:**

1 September –

Bird watching spots other than Mai Po

**Apple Daily**

2 September –

Terns at Shek Ngau Chau have an unhappy  
summer vacation

**Regular articles**

The Society is preparing regular articles on bird watching spots in Hong Kong, for the Hong Kong Discovery magazine. We thank Dickson Wong and Samuel Hung of the Hong Kong Discovery for the provision of half-page advertisements on “The Avifauna of Hong Kong”. Members who have news about bird watching spots or who are interested in contributing articles are welcome to contact Carrie Ma at HKBWS Office ([hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk)).

**The Avifauna of Hong Kong**

We are looking for volunteers to assist with the publicity of the annotated checklist. Members who have contacts at bookstores or related connections are welcome to contact Carrie Ma at HKBWS Office ([hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk)).

**Education Consultant**

Robin Fung has accepted an invitation to be an advisor for Baptist (Sha Tin Wai) Lui Ming Choi Primary School on education affairs on birds and ecology in this coming academic year.

**D Projects and miscellaneous projects****1. Health and Welfare Bureau – Healthy Ageing Community Partnership Scheme****“Bird Watching - Learning From Nature”**

Progress report (Stage I: Dec 2001 - July 2002) was submitted in July. We have started work on Stage II, to reach out to more people through the elderly nature interpreters trained in Stage I. The result was warmly received. It was also further publicized on ATV news on 21 July, 2002. In addition to scheduled visits and bird watching activities for elderly centers, group activities were also planned in order to improve their skills both in bird watching and field interpretations. Some of them have started to help organizing talks, interpretations, writing articles, and facilitating coordination. All these showed the great demand for this kind of activity in the community. The Society has successfully applied for an extra amount of funding, to organize 10 more visits and 30 more outdoor bird watching activities for the elderly. Members who wish to join and share with us, please contact Shirley Lam at the project office at 2377 4387, or by e-mail at [hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk).

**2. Projects supported by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department****2.1 AFCD Black-faced Spoonbill Age Structure**

From October 2002 to April 2003, the Society will undertake a project to collect information on age structure of wintering Black-faced Spoonbills. Members who are interested in providing locations of the species are welcome to contact the Society.

**2.2 Waterbird Monitoring Programme****International Black-faced Spoonbill Census**

The Society has started coordination of an





International Black-faced Spoonbill Census. It is scheduled to be held on 24-26 January, 2003. Members who wish to join the count, or have information on the species during this time, including date, time, number, age, etc., should contact Y.T. Yu at [ytyu@hkstar.com](mailto:ytyu@hkstar.com) and [hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk).

### Waterbird Count Training: 24 November 2002

The annual bird count training will be organized on 24 November. The aim of this is to train potential bird counters in skills of carrying out bird surveys, bird counting and other techniques at the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay area. Members are welcome to join. Please fill in the attached form and send it back to HKBWS Office.

### 2.3 AFCD Flight-line Survey

The project for the breeding season in 2002 has finished. We thank Dickson Wong, Captain Wong, Luke Woo and Louis Cheung for their efforts in all aspects of this project. Members who wish to read the results and data, please contact Dr S T Tsim of AFCD at [st\\_tsim@afcd.gov.hk](mailto:st_tsim@afcd.gov.hk) or Carrie Ma of HKBWS Office at [hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk).

### 2.4 World Wetland Day Celebration - the 3rd Student Bird Race

The Society is going to facilitate the 3rd bird race for secondary school students. This will include training and a bird-watching outing. Participants will compete in the form of school teams comprised of 1 teacher and 3 students. They will join the bird race to be held on 12 January 2003. We need support from members, if you have time to help in providing students and teachers with guidance on bird identification. Please contact Carrie Ma at HKBWS Office, 2377 4387 or [hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk).

## Leg-flagged Black-faced Spoonbills

Look out for Black-faced Spoonbills carrying colour rings this winter. In addition to the Hong Kong-ringed birds, several others were ringed in Korea this summer and one has already been recorded in Taiwan at the main Tsengwan River Site, which hosts several hundred birds on migration and during the winter. The birds were ringed by Dr. Kim Soo-ill, Professor of Ornithology at the Korea National University of Education.

The bird was one of eight banded and colour-ringed on the small islands of Sok-do and Bi-do on June 6th 2002 by Dr Kim Soo-ill, Professor of Ornithology at the Korea National University of Education. Dr Kim's team put a red colour ring (with white numbers going from K31-K38) on the right tibia and a 3 colours ring on the left tibia.

Full details are as follows:

- 1) K31 - right tibia, Red-Green-Blue combination rings on left tibia, plus metal ring, number 140-00471 korea on right tarsus.
- 2) K32 - Red-Green-White, 140-00472.
- 3) K33 - Red-White-Red, 140-00473.
- 4) K34 - Red-White-Yellow, 140-00474.
- 5) K35 - Red-White-Blue, 140-00475.
- 6) K36 - Red-White-Green, 140-00476.
- 7) K37 - Yellow-Red-Yellow, 140-00477.
- 8) K38 - Yellow-Red-Blue, 140-00478.

The spoonbill (carrying the ring number K37) was sighted in Taiwan. No dates were given by the observers, just that "it was not long ago".

In addition, look out for birds ringed in Hong Kong. These birds received long green rings with numbers on the right leg and two or three colour rings on left leg.

Right leg	Left leg	Right leg	Left leg
A01	Green(above)/ Red(below)	A14	Yellow/Blue
A02	Green/Yellow	A15	Yellow/Green
A03	Green/Blue	A16	Yellow/White*
A04	Green/White	A17	Blue/Red
A05	White/Red	A18	Blue/Yellow
A06	White/Yellow	A19	Blue/Green
A07	White/Blue	A20	Blue/White
A08	White/Green	A21	Green/Red/Yellow
A09	Red/Yellow	A22	Green/Red/Blue
A10	Red/Blue	A23	Green/Red/Green
A11	Red/Green	A24	Green/Red/White
A12	Red/White	A25	Green/Yellow/Red
A13	Yellow/Red	A26	Green/Yellow/Blue

\*Please note that A16 is a Eurasian Spoonbill

Please also record information such as date, place and time of your sighting and forward it to Mr. Yu Yat Tung, the team leader of HKBWS Black-faced Spoonbill Research Group at [bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk)

## Developer shows flexibility at Fung Lok Wai

One of Hong Kong's largest developers, Cheung Kong, is about to present their EIA for their proposed Fung Lok Wai residential property development. If this application is successful, this will be a "middle-rise" development set against the hills which lie between Yuen Long Industrial Estate and the Fung Lok Wai fish ponds.

HKBWS has twice been in consultation with Cheung Kong over this project. Our concerns focus particularly on four issues:

1. The positioning of the buildings and their impact on an egretty tucked into a fung shui wood just outside the southern corner of the site.
2. The fact that Imperial Eagle – a globally threatened species – has been recorded using the hill marking the NE boundary of the site as a roosting site in previous years.
3. The original plan to have an access road connecting the development with Tin Shui Wai via an access road that would have intruded into the Wetland Park site.
4. The structure of the financial commitment which will be required to support the wetland nature reserve in perpetuity.

Of these issues the first has been resolved by Cheung Kong agreeing to shift the buildings a little further north, so as to minimise the impact to the flight lines between the egretty and the fishponds. Ecological studies conducted at the site indicated that the proposed location of the buildings would block the flight lines between the egretty and the birds preferred feeding areas. Studies carried out on the egretty at Tai Po Market show that egrets will not fly over buildings in their flight line, even at some distance from the egretty.

On the second issue, regular monitoring of the site has shown that Imperial Eagle has not roosted on the hill in question over either of the last two winters (and there is no shortage of Imperial Eagle roosting sites around Deep Bay).

Thirdly, and perhaps most encouragingly, access to the proposed development will now come to the

back of the buildings directly from the Industrial Estate. The new road will not impact or cause disturbance to the fishponds of either Fung Lok Wai or the Wetland Park. This is a major step forward; it shows that infrastructure can be rerouted to avoid ecological impact when enough time is allowed for consultation BEFORE the formal EIA consultation.

The fourth issue - funding for the nature reserve remains unresolved. We look forward to the EIA itself to assess whether Cheung Kong and their ecological consultants (Ecoscope) have fully considered the costs of staffing and operating a wetland reserve. Watch this space.

This last point is of particular importance; Fung Lok Wai is the first of several private residential developments inside the Wetland Conservation Area and inside or close to the Deep Bay Ramsar site. This means that Fung Lok Wai is likely to be used as a precedent for other developments.

While HKBWS cannot take sole credit for the changes, it is encouraging that we are able to take part in a non-confrontational consultation process which leads to lower-impact and more environmentally-sustainable developments in ecologically sensitive areas, even when, as in this case, we have little chance to stop the project completely.

The Society is yet to take a stand on the issue of any private development within the Wetland Conservation Area. However the principle of compromising Hong Kong's best wetlands in the name of profit remains highly questionable. This will be discussed in more depth in the next issue, and is likely to be the subject of much debate when the EIA is submitted for public inspection.

In terms of its birds, Fung Lok Wai is used by a wide variety of typical Deep Bay species including Black-faced Spoonbill, Cattle and other Egrets, Osprey, the four commoner kingfishers, and a wide range of ducks, waders and passerines. It also holds probably the largest concentration of Black Kites in the Deep Bay area.

The site can currently be accessed by walking along the fence from Tsim Bei Tsui (cross over the big bridge on Yuen Long Creek and after about 200 metres look for a rough road leading into the fishponds on your left) or by minibus No.74 from Yuen Long minibus station to Shing Uk Tsuen village. You should get out where the minibus turns round, and walk down the hill to the ponds.

checking over the hills and fung shui woodland for raptors including Crested Serpent Eagle and Bonelli's Eagle. In spring, drained ponds in the area are often used by large numbers of waders while still wet, and by wagtails and pipits as they dry out. Amongst a range of commoner species, Hoopoe and Whiskered Tern were seen here on a visit in late October.

### **Planning Department study encourages degradation led development.**

HKBWS is joining a number of other environmental NGOs (ENGOS) in opposing a poorly thought-out proposal to develop low quality agricultural land. The plan has been developed under the Review of Rural Land Uses in Northern New Territories conducted by the Planning Department and completed in July 2001. The findings of the review were not made public until fine work by WWF discovered that the review had been completed and a new land zoning was being presented in the highly unusual form of a test case in a routine rezoning exercise, the Tai Tong OZP.

There are several problems with the review and its findings and the approach of the Planning Department:

- a) The zoning claims to be intended to preserve the character of the rural area. No definition is offered of "rural area", except in the notes to the zoning plan which suggests that landowners can apply for permission to develop, among others, flats, shops and transport interchanges! Not exactly rural by any standard!
- b) Because it targets land which is of "low agricultural value", the review encourages landowners a) to refuse to rent their land for farming and b) instead to trash it in the hope that they will be able to obtain an OU(RU) zoning which would allow them to build small houses (three storey village houses). It was not until the environmental NGOs met with AFCD, Planning Dept and Lands Dept that we received any methodology for how AFCD reviews the quality of the land.
- c) No attempt has been made to ensure that farmland of high ecological value or of good quality for agriculture will be preserved. The Planning Department have admitted that the intention of this study is to secure land for development and to increase the plot ratio for development to encourage the building of houses on former agricultural land. This means that developers who want to develop the New Territories into low-density housing have pushed the Planning Department to help them make land available.

- d) The Planning Department has obliged with a mechanism that encourages developers to believe that their agricultural land (current development rights: zero) has a legitimate expectation of becoming rezoned for development. When there is massive oversupply of property and perhaps the weakest property market Hong Kong has ever known, such urgency to release more land simply makes no sense.
- e) This approach is clearly not acceptable. The Planning Department's proposal is set to totally undermine plans to secure land of high conservation value under the upcoming Conservation Policy. In response, the ENGOS are proposing a system whereby developers seeking to develop truly trashed areas must surrender land of high agricultural or ecological quality in return for their increase in plot ratio and development potential. They would receive higher credit for land of higher ecological or agricultural value. This would encourage landowners to release land for farming and to preserve the ecological integrity of their land. The top government planner at the meeting with ENGOS in October, Ophelia Wong agreed that "as a planner..." this was a great solution.
- f) Until WWF alerted the other environmental NGOs and requested a meeting with the Planning Department, no attempt had been made to consult the public (only planning professionals had been consulted because the Planning Department thought the issue was "too complicated" for the general public). The only publicly released document was made available to the environmental NGOs only AFTER the closing date for official objections to the Tai Tong rezoning!

### **Looking Forward**

The only legal way to stop the damage that OU(RU) would cause lies with an objection lodged by Kadoorie Farm. However, in the October meeting the Planning Department agreed to ask the Town Planning Board to allow other groups to raise their views in order to add more transparency to what has been a disturbingly secretive process.

The alternative proposal presented by the ENGOS provides the opportunity for a sensible and sustainable solution which will both secure land for development and ensure that the best areas of agricultural land and most ecologically important sites can be secured to preserve Hong Kong's ecological and agricultural heritage. Much of Hong Kong's unique biodiversity is found in areas that enjoy little or no protection. Wisely used, OU(RU) may be the way to save them.



# Mai Po update

– Lew Young

Relatively few large-scale maintenance works will be carried out over the coming months in order to reduce disturbance to the wintering birds. The main works will include continuing to trim the branches of the trees along footpath between the AFCD Warden Post and the Education Centre, so that they do not block the view of visitors into the reserve. Branches of the trees along selected bunds separating the different gei wai will also be trimmed so that the reserve does not appear to be too overgrown, and so affect the number of waterbirds that use the gei wai.

The dredger that you normally see in the gei wai, cleaning out the channels, will be taken out of the water for its annual maintenance. It will be temporarily parked on the bund between gei wai 12 and 13 just before Gate 107, which goes out on the floating boardwalk. The maintenance works will be finished by the end of May 2003, when it will be put back into the water.

## Request for Reports of Injured Spoonbills

The recent discovery of a Black-faced Spoonbill with a missing foot has served as a reminder to all birdwatchers to be vigilant for signs of illegal activity concerning these (and indeed, all) birds. Although there is no evidence to suggest how this bird lost its foot, birdwatchers are being asked to pay particular attention to any sick or dead spoonbill observed or picked up in the wild. Interested parties like AFCD, WWF-Mai Po and KFBG keenly monitor the welfare of spoonbills and immediate reporting is very helpful in keeping their data current. In a similar vein, if birdwatchers discover any suspected illegal traps or devices in the field, they should also report these to AFCD.

Injured or dead spoonbills and ducks should be reported to Mr. Choi (2150 6927 or 9466 2859) or Mr. Tsim (2150 6923 or 9464 9257) of AFCD “at any time”. On matters concerning other species of birds, or to report suspected illegal trapping, please call the Mai Po Nature Warden Post (2471 4411).



## Large Population of Pheasant-tailed Jacana Discovered in Guang-dong

– Gao Yuren, *Guangdong*

The South China Institute of Endangered Animals conducted a joint research project on the ecology of Pheasant-tailed Jacana, in collaboration with ornithologists from Taiwan and Shanghai. They found a significant breeding ground of the species at Yong-an Country in the Dinghu area of Zhaoqing, Guang-dong. The population was about 500 at the beginning of the breeding season in May 2002. Towards the end of the breeding season, by mid September, the population exceeded 1000, about two-thirds of which were juveniles. Such a large breeding population has not been recorded before in China. This site currently does not have any protection status, and the information has been submitted to provincial and local authorities, with a view to promoting early protection measures.

# In Memoriam: Joshua Luo Kai Yu

– Mike Kilburn

It was with great sadness that many Hong Kong birders learned of Joshua's death in a road accident in Tibet. He was a pioneer in establishing bird tours in Sichuan, Qinghai and Tibet and was widely recognized as having the best understanding of what is involved in arranging the logistics for a successful birding trip. He has almost certainly helped more people to see more top quality Chinese birds than anyone else.

When on a trip with Joshua you always knew that the rooms would be booked, the food good, there would be enough fuel in the vehicle and enough sweets, chocolate, noodles, drinks and beer to last to the end of the trip and beyond. He did everything possible to allow birders to get the most from their trip - marshalling drivers, staying behind to pay the hotel bills at the beginning of the day, catching the group up on the trail then going forward to arrange a meal and rooms at the next stop. This was an absolute godsend to any guide bringing a group into China, as it enabled him to entrust all the logistics to Joshua with absolute confidence and to focus solely on finding birds, and making the best use of the day.

While he made no claims to being a birder himself he certainly learned the sites where his respective groups went to look for particular birds and freely shared the information to ensure that any group he led had the best opportunity of seeing the birds they were after.

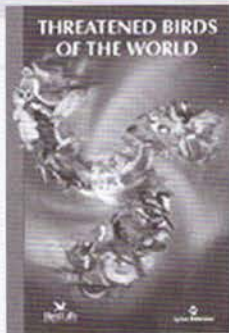
For his groups this meant that closed doors opened miraculously and that you learned about the places you birded with the insight of a locals. One example from a trip to Wolong and Juizhaigou in 2001 was the fact that Blue Eared and White Eared Pheasants were not hunted by the local as much as Tibetan Snowcock, Chinese Monal or Snow Partridge, because they were simply not that tasty!

While scoping a Golden Eagle on the nest we attracted the attention of a couple of very old, traditionally-dressed ladies working in a nearby field with a short, crude hoe. They harangued us for a few minutes and ambled off leaving Joshua laughing out loud. He told us they had ordered him not to shoot the birds, and when offered a look through our telescope, had said: "No fear! Those things give me hypertension".

Yet the true measure of Joshua was his kindness, friendliness, thoughtfulness and his genuine interest and pleasure in meeting a wide variety of people. It did not matter whether they were roadmenders living in ramshackle huts on the edge of the Tibetan plateau, sullen desk clerks who found themselves being more helpful than they realised, or difficult and demanding tour leaders and clients from overseas.

Joshua is survived by his wife and daughter, who live in Chengdu.





# **BirdLife International's Globally Threatened Bird Update -**

## **An Invitation to Join In**

BirdLife International's 'Globally Threatened Bird Update' aims to feed the latest information on threatened birds into the 2004 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species - and, most importantly, into setting priorities for bird conservation. The project will build on the wealth of information already compiled by BirdLife and others on the status of the world's birds, including, for example, Threatened Birds Of The World (2000) and Threatened Birds Of Asia (2001).

We'd like to invite you to take part in this important project. An exciting component is the launch of discussion forums on BirdLife's website, where contributors can share information on Globally Threatened Birds. Specifically you can

- see which species are proposed for revised threat status
- contribute comment or new information on the proposed revisions
- suggest other species that may need revising.

The discussions forums are organised by region and in some cases by species group (e.g. seabirds).

We are now launching the Threatened Asian birds forum, and invite you to join in. For background to the project and links to the forums, click the Globally Threatened Bird Update button on the BirdLife homepage ([www.birdlife.net](http://www.birdlife.net)) or go straight to <http://www.birdlife.net/gtbirds/index.cfm>. You can browse the discussions as a guest, but to post a comment or to contribute new information you will need to login.

You don't need to keep visiting the forum through the web. You can choose to receive emails with new postings automatically, or daily or weekly digests. These can cover the whole forum or particular species only. You can also contribute your information by replying to email messages. The new system will make it much easier to credit information from particular contributors, and to acknowledge the large pool of experts whose participation is vital for ensuring that accurate and up-to-date data are used in assessing the threat status of these birds.

The Globally Threatened Bird Update focuses on species

whose threat status may need revising (or assessment for the first time). It will complement and link to the 'Red Data Book: Threatened Birds of Asia' website project - another BirdLife initiative being developed by the Asian Partnership. This will shortly be up and running, and more detailed bird data relevant to the RDB accounts can be added here.

Here are a few examples of the initial list of topics for discussion in the Threatened Asian Birds Forum:

- **Baikal Teal:** The latest winter counts from South Korea suggests this species may deserve downgrading to Near Threatened. But has there been genuine population growth, or just a shift in wintering distribution?
- **Saker Falcon:** Has capture for falconry reduced populations such that this species should now be listed as Near Threatened or even Vulnerable?
- **Spoon-billed Sandpiper:** New surveys suggest that this species should be upgraded to Critical. Is this warranted?
- **Indian Spotted Eagle:** should this newly split species be classified as threatened? All recent records and comments on its status are sought.

Other species under discussion include: Black-necked Stork, Giant Ibis, Chestnut-headed Partridge, Okinawa Rail, Sharpe's Rail, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Black-bellied Tern, Sumatran Ground-cuckoo, Javan Woodcock, Little Sumba Hawk-owl, Javan Trogon and Large-billed Reed Warbler. Additional species and issues will be added in due course, and contributors can suggest new topics for discussion.

We expect the discussion forums to be an ongoing process and part of an annual cycle to review the status of threatened birds. For this round, we will aim to reach decisions on revised assessments by July 2003. This will allow them to feed into the 2004 IUCN Red List, which will comprise a major review and revision of several taxonomic groups.

BirdLife is the official Listing Authority for birds for the IUCN Red List. While we provide coordination and facilitation, the quality and relevance of the information itself rely fundamentally on the participation of thousands of individual experts and key organisations, notably the bird specialist groups. We hope very much that you will want to be part of this important project, and look forward to your contributions.

If you have any questions or suggestions, don't hesitate to contact Stuart Butchart ([stuart.butchart@birdlife.org.uk](mailto:stuart.butchart@birdlife.org.uk)) who is coordinating this initiative.

## **Best wishes**

**Stuart Butchart**, Global Species Officer, BirdLife International, Cambridge, U.K.

**Ali Stattersfield**, Global Species Programme Co-ordinator, BirdLife International, Cambridge, U.K.

**Mike Crosby**, Research and Data Manager (Asia Division), BirdLife International, Cambridge, U.K.

**Simba Chan**, Head of Conservation and Database Division, Wild Bird Society of Japan, Tokyo, Japan

**Richard Grimmett**, Head of Asia Division, BirdLife International, Tokyo, Japan

### Tracking Satellite Leads to Hunter's Home

Scientists using satellite technology to plot the migratory route of a goose tracked it all the way to the deep freeze of an Arctic hunter.

The bird, a Light-bellied Brent Goose, was one of 6 fitted with transmitters in May when they stopped off in Iceland on the way to their breeding grounds. The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) was attempting to plot the bird's 6,000-mile round trip from Northern Ireland, across Greenland to north-east Canada.

In July, Canadian Wildlife Service staff were notified that the bird had been tracked moving from Bathurst Island to Cornwallis Island, and set out to look for him. "The team searched at several wetland sites but returned to the town unsuccessful," said James Robinson of the WWT. "However, as they reached the town the transmission signals became stronger and they tracked it to the home of a hunter."

The Inuit hunter admitted that he had shot the goose on Bathurst Island and brought it back in his boat.

"The goose hadn't been plucked and the transponder was still on him," said James Robinson. "Although it is sad, we now have evidence that Brent Geese are hunted for food."


### Five Million Mile Bird

A Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) first ringed in 1957 has been recognised as Britain's oldest wild bird and has likely travelled more than five million miles in its lifetime, say leading ornithologists. The bird was most recently captured in spring of this year, in north Wales. Despite being ringed on four occasions, the bird's sex has not been recorded.

"Most wild birds live short lives before falling prey to a car or the family cat, but some seabirds can live for a very long time," said Chris Mead, consultant to the British Trust for Ornithology "This one is an amazing case in point."

Britain has 90 per cent of the world's population of Manx Shearwaters with



*P.S. You may be interested to see BirdLife's recently published booklet: Globally Threatened Birds: indicating priorities for action. This summarises global analyses (with regional examples) of information on globally threatened birds. It can be downloaded at [http://www.birdlife.net/gtbirds/GTB\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.birdlife.net/gtbirds/GTB_Booklet.pdf), and hard copies are available on request (please email [sarah.kendall@birdlife.org.uk](mailto:sarah.kendall@birdlife.org.uk) with your postal address).* 

World Bird News  
World Bird News  
World Bird News  
World Bird News

– Steve Burrows

235,000 pairs. The birds' long-distance travels take them to South America, where they are found off Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay in winter. "Allowing for its interminable feeding flights, the distance it has covered during its life is probably in excess of five million miles," said Mr. Mead

The Manx Shearwater's scientific name is a result of an error. A Victorian taxidermist who named the bird was told it was a puffin and named it accordingly.

### Snowy Owls' Spanish Holiday Comes To An End

Seven snowy owls have been sent home to the Arctic after being rescued in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean earlier this year. The birds were picked up by Spanish fishermen after landing on the fishing boats, many days' travel from the coast. It is thought the owls were blown off course by a freak storm lost while migrating to new feeding grounds.

The fishermen took the owls in and fed them, before taking them to animal rescue centres. The owls have now been sent to Finnish Lapland, where they have been placed in wildlife reserves for observation.



– Captain Wong

## Results highlights

Since 1998, volunteer birdwatchers have visited Tai Po Kau (Red, Blue and Yellow/Brown Walks), Shing Mun and Kowloon Hill Catchment once a month from April to July to record breeding birds and their summer populations. Significant breeding records between May and July in this breeding season are (1) one food carrying Mountain Bulbul in Shing Mun and (2) an unidentified cuckoo juvenile in May and June in Tai Po Kau: probably either a Large Hawk-Cuckoo or Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo.

The Mountain Bulbul would be a new breeding species to HK if this record is accepted by the Records Committee of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society.

(Remark: "food carrying adult" is considered as "confirmed breeding" in European Ornithological Atlas Committee).

The followings are the result highlights:

May

Tai Po Kau	Shing Mun
i. Unidentified newly fledged cuckoo juvenile. No foster parent was seen	i. Hainan Blue Flycatchers: 3 territorial calls
ii. Grey-throated Minivet: 1 nest	ii. Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo: 3 calls
iii. Crested Goshawk: display flights	
iv. Hainan Blue Flycatcher: 5 territorial calls and 1 female	
v. Eagle Owl: 1 present	

June

Tai Po Kau	Shing Mun	Kowloon Hill
i. Grey-cheeked Fulvetta: 1 food carrying	i. Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush: 1 begging food juvenile	i. Hawmei: 2 juveniles
ii. Blue-winged Minla: 1 juvenile and 1 food carrying/holding adult	ii. Grey-throated Minivet: 1 juvenile	ii. Red-capped Babbler: 1 juvenile
iii. Grey-throated Minivet: 1 food carrying	iii. Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo: 1 call	iii. Blue-winged Minla: 2 juveniles
iv. Hainan Blue Flycatcher: 2 juveniles		iv. Crested Goshawk: 1 juvenile with an adult (flying)
v. Pekin Robin: food carrying adults		
vi. Silver-eared Mesia: 1 food carrying and 1 holding prey		
vii. Chestnut Bulbul: 1 holding prey		
viii. An unidentified cuckoo juvenile (size = Hodgson's Cuckoo; two white spots between the shoulder and the neck)		

July

Tai Po Kau	Shing Mun
i. Yellow-cheeked Tit: 1 juvenile	i. Red-capped Babbler: 1 begging food juvenile
ii. Grey-throated Minivet: 2 juveniles	ii. Pekin Robin: 1 begging food juvenile
	iii. Mountain Bulbul: 1 food carrying adult (observed distance: 3 - 15m)
	iv. Blue-winged Minla: 1 juvenile

Apart from these woodland specialists, Crested and Chinese Bulbuls, Great Tits, Japanese White-eyes, Common Tailorbirds and White-backed Munia were also found to breed in these woodlands.

This survey could not have completed without the involvement of these birdwatchers: Chan Yung (especially), Dickson Wong, Luke Woo, Rupert Griffiths, S.H. So, Karin Chan, Cheung Hok Jose Alberto, Louis Cheung, Samuel Tsoi, Mr and Mrs Chu, Regina Chow, Winky Huen, Vera Hung, Rosita Lee, Wong Choi On and Yam Wing Yiu.

Please contact me at [wongcaptain@yahoo.com](mailto:wongcaptain@yahoo.com) if you want to join us in next seasons breeding bird survey. Thanks. 



# Sri Lanka



In March this year Jemi and I spent nineteen days in Sri Lanka. After doing some research, we had already booked a vehicle and driver from Bours of Colombo. Thus it was in the middle of the night that we met our driver, "Abey", at the airport and set off for our first birding area, Sigirya, about four hours drive away.

Around six o'clock we came to an open patch of countryside and found several Indian Nightjars on the road. We checked into our hotel just as dawn was breaking and, ditching our bags in the room, set off to explore the hotel grounds. My mind was fixated on the "Breakfast buffet" at 07:30, rather than birds, but hunger was soon forgotten as we saw a bird bounding across the lawn in the gathering light; - Indian Pitta ! This creature appeared at the same place, same time, three mornings out of four, and obligingly allowed its' photo to be taken. If, like me, you have been to India several times before, but not seen Indian Pitta, a visit to Sri Lanka will tell you why; - they're ALL in Sri Lanka in the winter. It seemed like every second hotel had at least one in the grounds.

Sigirya lies in the centre of Sri Lanka, a 200metre plug of rock with the remains of a palace on the top and surrounded by an extensive network of ramparts and moats. One morning we spent a couple of hours near a fruiting fig tree and counted twenty species of bird coming to feed, including the endemic Sri Lankan Hornbill. A walk through nearby woods revealed many Tickell's Blue Flycatchers and a Brown Fish Owl, disturbed from its' roost quite low in a large tree. As dusk fell we went to a gateway in the western city walls and the driver taped out Oriental Scops Owls.

We made a daytrip of visiting the ruined city at Polonnaruwa. On the way we saw Fantail Snipe, Hoopoe and Barred Buttonquail by the roadside. The extraordinary call of Jerdon's Nighthawk was heard after some late afternoon rain, and we got decent views of these.

- John Holmes

From Sigirya, we headed south for two nights at Kandy. There isn't much in the way of birding that you can't do better elsewhere, but the Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya are laid out on a magnificent scale. The roost of several thousand fruit bats there is also an impressive sight (and an impressive smell, too!)

Next stop was three nights at a lowland rainforest site called Kitulgala. A large river had to be crossed in an outrigger canoe before birding could commence. Once in the woods we had our first encounters with Malabar Trogons, and heard, but failed to see, Sri Lankan Frogmouth. We spent some time looking for Chestnut-backed Owlet, another endemic, which we heard, but didn't see. The expert Abey, however, had a site for this creature in a rubber plantation, and it responded to tape almost immediately, giving good views.

For Sri Lankan endemics the "must-visit" site is the forested hill range of Sinharaja, which was saved from the chainsaw as recently as the 1970s. Accommodation at the park entrance is at a place known as "Martin's". Martin is a former park ranger who has three spare rooms in his house, and has recently built two small outhouses. The level of luxury might be described as "modest", but a sleeping bag liner is all you need if you're worried about the bedding. The endemics are right on the doorstep, including Sri Lankan Junglefowl, White-faced Starling, Sri Lankan Blue Magpie and Yellow-fronted Barbet.

We spent a memorable four nights here, with up-close-and-personal views of Sri Lankan Frogmouth at the back of the Sinharaja Park visitor centre on two evenings. Other birds seen were Spot-winged Thrush, the endemic form of Scaly Thrush, and many, many

Emerald Doves. These were common everywhere.

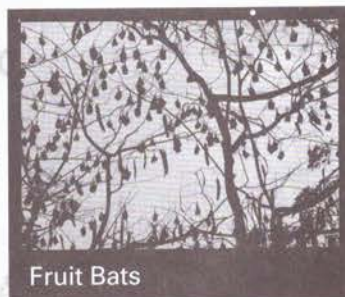
From Sinharaja to the coastal reserve of Yala National Park. This had very African looking savannah with Asian elephants and spotted Deer on view. I managed to glimpse the legs and tail of a Leopard that had crossed the road in front of us. There were Bee-eaters aplenty at Yala, Blue-tailed, Green and Chestnut-headed. We also visited a "stake-out" for White-naped Woodpecker, and a pair of these magnificent woodpeckers obliged after a short wait.

Last main birding site was the hill area of Nuwara Eliya. We arrived in late afternoon at Victoria Park and got what we called the "Magnificent Four" in less than twenty minutes. These were the Yellow-eared Bulbul, Pied Thrush, Indian Blue Robin and Kashmir Flycatcher. An early start took us to the "Arrenga Pool" on the Horton Plains, where the Arrenga (Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush) made a grand entrance. At one stage I tried to photograph one in a tree above me; but flushed by a Blackbird, the Arrenga dived down towards me and flew between my thigh and the tripod leg. If I'd ever been any good at cricket, I might have caught it in my hand.

Our last evening at Nuwara Eliya was spent at the Hilltop Club, where non-members are admitted for a modest fee, and jacket and tie -if you haven't brought them - are loaned free of charge. The Club must have been a reminder of an English Country House to homesick Tea Planters seventy years ago. Inside, numerous hunting and fishing trophies adorn the walls. Dinner is served on starched tablecloths by ancient waiters.

For a Field Guide we used "A guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka" by John Harrison, illustrated by Tim Worfolk. A glance at the illustration of Brown-breasted Flycatcher will give some indication of its' accuracy. I also used a fifty-year-old guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka by G.M.Henry. This was not only an enjoyable read, but very good on the habits of many of the birds. We used the Lonely Planet Guide to Sri Lanka to help us decide which of the other local attractions we would visit. The vehicle and driver from Baur's (tourism@baur's.com) came to a reasonable US\$30 a day. Some of the local hotels were US\$15 to US\$20 per night, food not included.

Sri Lanka is reasonably priced and very birdy. People were friendly and courteous everywhere and we felt completely safe. Not only did we see 200 species in 19 days, but we saw all the recognized endemics. What lingers in the memory is how easy the birding was, and the quality of the views we had of most species. 🐦



# the Philippines

Angus Lamont (from Singapore), David & Minnie Robertson (from Adelaide), Clive Viney (from Portugal) and I joined Tim Fisher for this demanding three-week tour. For Angus, Clive and me, it was a reunion of the old WWF HK BBR team; the route more or less followed that taken by Birdquest earlier in the year. On this expedition, 0430 was a late start!

Having assembled in Manila, we drove south to Los Banos at the foot of Mt. Makiling. Almost immediately we started birding the rather noisy University campus, finding Indigo-banded Kingfisher and Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker in a good couple of hours before dusk. After an incredibly disturbed and noisy night at our 'resort hotel' we took great delight in rattling our crockery and cutlery at our very early breakfast before driving up to the foot of Mt. Makiling. Spotted Wood-Kingfishers were already calling all around us, but our first bird seen was a Philippine Hawk Owl which flew onto an overhead branch across a patch of dawn sky. We spent the morning walking slowly up and down the forest track, which is accessible by Jeepney; eventually we had superb, prolonged and close views of the Wood-Kingfishers, as well as decent looks at other target endemics such as the bizarre Red-crested Malkoha, Grey-backed Tailorbird, White-browed Shama and up to ten Stripe-headed Rhabdornis. To take the gloss off this, the return 60 km. trip to Manila that evening took 3 1/2 hours! Tim kept us sane by nipping into filling stations for supplies of San Mig.

Next morning, we concentrated on waterbirds at Lubao fish ponds, near San Fernando, with Mt. Pinatubo as a backdrop. There was still volcanic ash everywhere. Here we picked up good numbers of Philippine Duck and some beautiful Pheasant-tailed Jacanas. Then it was a long haul to Banaue via Dalton Pass, and an early night to prepare for our 0530 start at Mt. Polis. Despite the good weather and scenery, this was a somewhat disappointing day. There was very little 'big stuff' around; of our two principal targets, there was not a sniff of Flame-breasted Fruit-Dove, and Whiskered Pitta was only distantly heard, at the bottom of a very deep, impenetrable valley. We did however connect with Luzon and Benguet Bush Warblers, Blue-headed Fantail, Green-backed Whistler, Chestnut-faced Babbler and some very smart Metallic-winged Sunbirds. Lower down the mountain, at Bay-yo, there were some highly photogenic, spectacular rice terraces, and on the river a 'scoped Luzon Water Redstart. Our nightcap that day was a cracking Philippine Scops Owl in the hotel grounds.



(13 April to 5 May, 2002) – John Edge

We were on Mt. Polis at 0450 next day, to try for Luzon Montane Scops Owl, which unfortunately remained a 'heard'. Not for the first time, Tim was imploring "Come on, birds!", but we did find a White-cheeked Bullfinch and, at last, a very handsome Mountain Shrike. Then it was time for another long haul, to Baler in Aurora on the east coast, but passing through some lovely forest in the Sierra Madre mountains en route. Our next base was the relatively recently-discovered Talaytay watershed, but on the way, at a place called Pinpolisan, we had one of the trip's best moments - we found a Celestial Monarch nest, apparently a 'first' for science. It was in the 'y' of a fallen branch, caught in lianas, which would have blown away at the first hint of a typhoon, but the female was sitting quite happily. The male relieved her for a while, but he merely perched on the lip of the nest, with his elongated crown feathers lax, quite unlike the illustration in Kennedy et al. Anyway, a stunner, and one of my top three targets. Rufous Hornbills nearby were almost incidental.

Talaytay was not as good as Tim would have liked - birds were apparently breeding early and there was a distinct shortage of mixed feeding flocks. Nevertheless, over a couple of days we did find a superb Cream-bellied Fruit-Dove of the crimson-crowned race faustinoi, Philippine Hawk-Eagle, Philippine Falconet, flocks of noisy and very active Rufous Coucals, Luzon Hornbill, Black-and-White Triller, Buzzing Flowerpeckers, a Pechora Pipit and non-twitchable views of a Luzon Bleeding-Heart. Furtive Flycatchers were just that - invisible and unresponsive. Next stop was Palawan, for three nights. On the return leg to Manila we stopped again at Pinpolisan, where we had great views of a gorgeous Philippine Trogon, on a particularly hot morning. Shortly after landing at Puerto Princesa, Palawan's capital, we found a couple of Hooded Pittas and three Palawan-endemic White-vented Shamans, in scrub just behind the shoreline. This put us in a good mood for lunch and the bumpy ride over to Sabang in St. Paul's National Park, on the west coast of this long, narrow island. We had two days here, and one morning on the Balsahan Trail at Iwahig, close to Puerto Princesa. The coastal, forest and mountain scenery at St. Paul's is lovely, and during our two days here we did fairly well, getting Palawan Peacock Pheasant (between downpours), Malaysian Plover, Blue-headed Racquet-Tail and Blue-naped Parrot, Oriental Dwarf and Ruddy Kingfishers,

Palawan Hornbill, Yellow-throated Leafbird, Blue Paradise Flycatcher, Ashy-headed Babbler and Palawan Flowerpecker. The fortunate few (how I missed it I'll never know) also saw a Javan Frogmouth near our lodge. We dipped on Philippine Cockatoo, despite our best efforts.

The Balsahan Trail was memorable as much for the birds we missed - Palawan Scops Owl, Falcated Ground Babbler (frustratingly close) and Palawan Flycatcher - as for the fine White-bellied Woodpeckers, Melodious Babblers, Brown-backed Needletails, smart Black-headed Bulbuls, a couple of Palawan Blue-Flycatchers and the very dapper Palawan Tit that we did see. Upsetting, however, was meeting an old fellow coming out of the forest clutching a pathetic Blue-naped Parrot chick, from a nest he'd just raided, virtually under our noses.

Uniquely for this trip, we had wine with lunch today, thanks to birthday-boy Clive, before flying on to Cebu for a whistle-stop, hoping to catch up with its endemics. We started with a bonus of four Blue-crowned Racquet-tails, then in the remnant forest found Streak-breasted Bulbul, Black Shama and White-vented Whistler, but not, unfortunately, Cebu Flowerpecker. A surprise there, however, was three Mangrove Blue Flycatchers.


That evening found us at Bislig, on the east coast of Mindanao, via Davao. There, the very pleasant Paper Country Inn was to be our base for 31/2 days, near the species-rich PICOP lowland forest. Our first day in the area gave us our highest daily total - 82 - and undoubtedly the best overall session of the trip. In an exhilarating hour or so, we saw two Streaked Ground-Babblers, Short-crested Monarch, Blue Fantail, the stunning Rufous Paradise-Flycatcher (which really does glow in the dark recesses), Black-faced Coucal and a Steere's (or Azure-breasted) Pitta, which we goggled at in the 'scope for about ten minutes. All this excitement prompted the trip's earliest beers, at 0810! On the way out of the forest that day, we rounded things off wonderfully with a Silvery Kingfisher, one of my top three birds of the trip, with its outrageous scarlet feet contrasting vividly with its blue-black, white and silver plumage. A superlative little bird. A visit to the abandoned Bislig airport on the way home gave us Philippine Nightjar and, distantly and briefly, a Grass Owl.

Such a good day was hard to follow, but over the next 21/2 days, with diligence and, I suppose, a little luck (if we had any, we deserved it!), we managed to consolidate 29 of the 34 species that we were chasing. The more notable birds included Writhed Hornbill, Sooty Woodpecker, Amethyst Brown-Dove, Philippine Drongo-

Cuckoo, Philippine Frogmouth (National Geographic views) and Pygmy Babbler. Jungle flycatchers were again elusive. Although there was some terrific birding here, it was very disconcerting to do it to the sound of chainsaws and falling trees. Good habitat had disappeared even since Tim's last visit a month or so earlier. Squatters and their large young families are rapidly taking over; we felt we were there only just in time.

Roughly 24 hours later we were at our wasp-infested lodge on Mt. Kitanglad, Philippine Eagle territory, accessible only on foot or on horseback. We had a physically testing time here, with very early starts so as to get to the forest, which is quickly retreating up the mountainside, by dawn. We had a different spread of birds here, including the charming Black-and-Cinnamon Fantail, Cinnamon Ibon, Mindanao Racquet-Tail, McGregor's Cuckoo-Shrike, Grey-hooded Sunbird and the bizarre Apo Myna, with its Mohican crest. One morning we got high enough (in altitude!) to see Apo Sunbird, but we spent countless hours at various lookout points waiting for a fly-by from a Philippine Eagle. Anyway, on the last morning, with a decidedly pessimistic air prevailing, we got a message that an Eagle had been located. So we fifty-somethings half-walked, half-jogged down the mountain for about 30 minutes to the site, wondering what the bird really was - Brahminy Kite, perhaps? Tim lined up the 'scope, had a quick look, stepped back and breathed "It's a Philippine Eagle". After we'd all settled down, we had good long looks at the bird, front, side-on and back. It was last year's chick, now in almost full adult plumage, which called loudly and evocatively from time to time. Number One objective was achieved; the euphoria was so total that if a Dodo had walked across the path, no-one would have batted an eyelid. What a bird to finish with!

We happily struck camp and headed off home. Before we left, there was still time for a delightful vignette of a Coletto trying to dislodge a Falconet from its perch - the Coletto gave up after ten minutes, put off by some choice *Microhierax* language, no doubt.

Even though the birding was rarely easy, and the birds were generally very shy, the tour was successful. We recorded 310 species, including 129 endemics, a good number of which were stunners. By Birdquest criteria, 125 endemics is par for the course; the major gaps in our list were jungle flycatchers, babblers and Bleeding-hearts. Logistically, everything went extremely well, and we lost only a few hours to rain. The rate of habitat loss, at PICOP in particular, is alarming, but the Government appears to have no will to control the situation. Nevertheless, there's still plenty to return for ..... 

# Red Rocks, Pink Birds and Blue Lizards

## Jordan

21st August – 5th September 2001

– Mike Kilburn



I was in Jordan on behalf of HKBWS for a BirdLife International training program intended to improve the professionalism and management skills of Birdlife partners and affiliates. The course was excellent, partly because we had two hours of light at each end of the day for birding.

### Wadi Dana Nature Reserve



#### Visitor Centre

The workshop was held at Wadi Dana Nature Reserve Visitor Centre, which is managed by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) - the BirdLife

partner in Jordan. It perches on a promontory, 200 metres below the edge of a huge canyon (wadi in Arabic), several hundred metres deep, which stretched 60km to the lower Jordan Valley. The centre is right next to a village with a large spring and a couple of hectares of orchards. This provided some wonderful birding during the week we were there.

There were good numbers of birds in the scrub oak and holly trees around the centre. These included migrant Northern Wheatears, a bewildering variety of resident Black-eared Wheatears, a highly elusive male Hooded Wheatear and a couple of pairs of the similar, but substantially more co-operative, Mourning Wheatear. Both sexes showed buff-tinged undertail coverts, slightly longer legs, a shorter bill and more rounded head than the low-slung and slimmer Hooded. A chestnut-capped Woodchat Shrike loitered in a tree right next to the rubbish dump and one morning a Blackstart from lower down the valley made a brief appearance.

The cliffs above and below the centre held good-sized

flocks of Chukar Partridge - which are thriving under the no hunting regime imposed on the reserve by the Jordan Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature. They provided good views on an almost daily basis. Probably the most spectacular sight of the trip for me was seeing a flock of 30 birds whizzing over my head and down the wadi in a near vertical dive like a squadron of very fat, stubby fighter planes, the wind rushing over their wings. It is likely that they had been scared by a patrolling Barbary Falcon (we saw two birds during our stay) and were taking evasive action.

Other good cliff birds included up to ten dusty-brown African Rock Martins floating and jinking along the precipice right below the verandah, a noisy party of Rock Sparrows near the village spring, and several riotous Scrub Warblers, which hopped about, tail cocked vertically, scolding the universe and everything in it.

Other birds seen from or near the centre included a couple of Blue Rock Thrushes, which seemed most at home on large boulders. The cliffs across the wadi provided roosting perches for ten or so Eurasian Griffon Vultures (not nearly as pale as the Himalayan Griffon of Western China) and thermals for soaring Fan-Tailed Ravens, Long-legged Buzzard and several Short-toed Eagles. One evening, a pair of Bonelli's Eagles swept past the balcony, just fifty yards from us.

Probably the most productive area was the terraced orchards on the other side of the village. These were visited most mornings and evenings, and provided the best evidence of a vigorous early autumn migration, particularly of sylvia warblers. Every fig tree seemed to hold three to five Blackcaps, while a couple of days hard work resulted in confidently claiming the vast majority of the smaller sylvias as





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Lesser Whitethroat, and the larger birds as Orphee. In addition, the odd Garden Warbler and Common Whitethroat popped up, and I found a single Sardinian Warbler. Other migrants included three or four Spotted Flycatchers and samamiscus Common Redstarts each day. The best rarity of the trip was a first year Rosy Starling which appeared briefly, kindly showed most of its diagnostic features, then disappeared, never to be seen again.

Resident birds in the same area included Yellow-vented Bulbuls, a few Blackbirds, several flocks of recently fledged Goldfinches, the world's most brightly coloured Great Tits and some real class in a Sooty Falcon and Jordan's only regular breeding population of Syrian Serin. These can be easily told from any interloping European Serin (there weren't any) by the pure yellow-green greater coverts. We also saw one or two Rufous Bushchats a day and good numbers of Tristram's Grackle - a black, long-tailed starling with big orange wing patches, which flew about in flocks so it could be easily seen.

Probably the worst named bird in the entire Middle East is Orange-tufted Sunbird. It's an iridescent purple-black sunbird, which apparently shows two tiny tufts of orange feathers under the wings. Not a single one of the hundred plus birds I saw over the week showed even the least sign of either orange bits or tufts! Politics aside, Palestine Sunbird is a far better name.

We had a couple of outings away from the centre. At the Bedouin campsite across the wadi we added a large group of Sinai Rosefinches, a couple of Pale Rock Sparrows and several Woodchat, Masked and Red-backed Shrikes. On a trip to Wadi al Mujib, a very narrow and steep-sided canyon which guides a freshwater river into the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, we added White-breasted and Common Kingfishers, several Blackstarts and Olivaceous Warblers, Grey Heron, Great Grey Shrike, Glossy Ibis, Crested Lark, Graceful Prinia, Little Egret and NO Dead Sea Sparrows! I found ample compensation in floating gently along the wadi and looking up to catch the silhouettes of a pair of Bonelli's Eagles circling high above.

### Petra

The day after the course, Thai bird guide Uthai

Treesucon (utree@loxinfo.co.th) and I headed south to the famous ruins at Petra. Being first through the Siq canyon to see the famous Treasury building carved into a sandstone cliff made rising at 5:30 well worth it. Combining some amazing geology, a 2000 year-old ancient city and some very good birds, Petra can safely be labelled as a top class site for birders with wider interests. We saw good numbers of the lovely Sinai Rosefinch, - at the other end of its range from the birds at Xining in Qinghai, and added White-crowned Black Wheatear to our tally. One of these fluttering round a huge knarled fig tree like a Pallas' Leaf Warbler was joined to my delight by a Hooded Wheatear, which I had missed at Dana. We also saw several Fan-tailed Ravens, which fitted perfectly with the historical context, especially of the High Place of Sacrifice, which in days gone by doubtless swam with the blood of slaughtered animals. However, the oddest creature here was the Blue Agama - a stunning bright blue lizard which stands out a mile on the reddish sandstone gorges of Petra.

### Aqaba

We spent the next four days in Aqaba, Jordan's only town on the Red Sea and a choke point for migrants. We found Chiffchaff, Willow, Olivaceous and Garden Warblers and Masked Shrike in small parks around the town, and in the allotments behind the waterfront added a couple of Hoopoes, Red-backed and Masked Shrikes, Yellow Wagtail, two unidentifiable "Pied-type" flycatchers and lots of House Crows.

Birding off the beach produced a couple of Caspian Terns, up to six or seven Middle-East specialist White-eyed Gulls, a single unidentifiable shearwater and a Tern which drifted by against the sunset, showing only its silhouette as either Lesser Crested or Crested Tern - both mega-rarities in Jordan - major frustration! However, we did have good views of an adult White-cheeked Tern, which obligingly showed us an elongated



pale cheek patch between uniform pearly grey upperparts and underparts.

An area known as the scattered palms near the big beachside hotels was better than it looked. We found several Little Green Bee-eaters, Red-backed, Masked and Lesser Grey Shrikes, a Wryneck, and a pair of Isabelline Wheatears and four flyover White Storks.

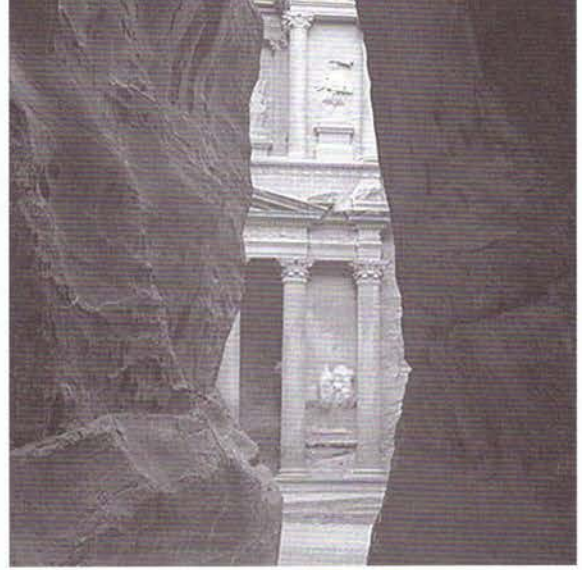
The most important site here is the Aqaba Sewage Farm, which we eventually got into after a day patiently dealing with the local bureaucracy. We eventually got our permissions from the Agriculture Ministry and had it duly chopped by the army and headed onto the sewage farm. Such is the power of attraction that water holds over migrant birds in the desert that we saw more birds in three hours in the middle of the day here than we had with seven or eight birders out every morning and evening in Dana!

Highlights over the two days we visited included four Glossy Ibis, a Greater Flamingo, ten White Storks and a Black Stork, which took off and soared over us before heading south. We also saw 5 Squacco Herons, which in winter look very similar to Chinese Pond Herons (they are both *Ardeola* herons), over 100 Grey Herons, a single Barbary Falcon resting on the causeway between two of the large pools, and a Booted Eagle. Any one of the flock of 30 Slender-billed Gulls, which should easily identified with even brief views of the head, would have been a major rarity in Hong Kong.

Having dipped on Collared Pratincole in Xinjiang, it was great to see three birds here, flying over our heads and clearly displaying reddish underwings. On both days we had good views of a hyperactive male Namaqua dove with a ring on its leg, 150 plus Spur-winged Plovers, 60 plus Ruffs, and 3 Pied Kingfishers. Other additions included a female Desert Wheatear, a briefly seen Golden Oriole and a pair of first year Black-headed Buntings, showing the black streaking on the head which is a key feature in separating this species from Red-headed Bunting in Hong Kong.

## Rum Desert

The next day we headed into the spectacular Rum desert, famed for its connection with Lawrence of Arabia, 2000 year-old rock carvings and a pair of



Verreaux Eagles which we didn't see. However we did add Lesser Grey Shrike to the reserve list on our way out. We went in by 4-wheel drive - a practice that will be more tightly controlled when the reserve comes under the management of RSCN - but benefited by finding Arabian Warbler and Little Green Bee-eaters in an acacia tree in the stony desert. We also found several Desert Larks, a couple of migrant Barred Warblers and two Sand Partridge - a specialist of arid desert mountains. We also saw more Mourning and White-crowned BlackWheatears, around 30 Brown-necked Ravens, Sinai Rosefinch, Blackstart, Rock Martin and Scrub Warbler. Top mammal was a Rock Hyrax, a cliff-loving creature the size of a hare (but without the big ears), whose closest relative is the elephant!

## Amman

For our last two days we headed north to Amman, and spent a morning at Amman National Park adding only Tawny Pipit and the distinctive white-faced race of Jay. Nashat, the reserve's ecologist for RSCN, very kindly drove us an hour and a half east to the Azraq oasis, where RSCN has a reserve and another guesthouse.

That evening we birded the reserve, which is a small, heavily reed-fringed pool. This is a major wintering site for waterfowl - important enough to receive Ramsar designation, but in the summer the flat areas around the reedy pool are as bare and arid-looking as any desert. The area has suffered from overuse of the natural groundwater, drying the spring, and the reserve now requires artificially pumped water. We added Squacco and Grey Herons, a female Marsh Harrier, 3 Whiskered Terns, a Namaqua Dove, and a Common Mynah, the first record for Jordan, although tainted by the possibility of escape.



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Having left the reserve for the evening we stopped to share an apple and while casually scanning the darkening sky I got onto a group of raptors flying towards the reserve. Over the next 30 minutes at least 120 Honey Buzzards dropped in to the reeds and bushes to roost - the sort of sight I'd hoped for when thinking about autumn migration at a desert oasis! Four Night Herons came in at exactly the same time although it is possible they had roosted elsewhere and were coming in to feed under cover of darkness.

Next morning the Night Herons had increased to ten, and we also added a young Purple Heron, a female Namaqua Dove, Sedge and Reed Warblers, Yellow Wagtail, Green and Wood Sandpipers and Ruff. We again saw the Jackal that came to the pool to drink the previous evening.

### Shaumari Reserve

The final stop on our tour was RSCN's Shaumari Reserve close to Azraq. This is a desert reserve dedicated to breeding programmes for the former wild Ostrich and Arabian Oryx. Our key target here was the desert larks we hadn't seen elsewhere. We were dropped by the Shaumari reserve manager on the drive a couple of miles from the reserve centre and began walking into the stony and rather barren-looking desert. A dead jerboa on the road and a Hedgehog a little way into the desert showed how rich the habitat is. We soon found a couple of groups of Temminck's Horned Lark, which obviously fills the same ecological niche as the Horned Larks in NW China. It took a further hour to find a Bar-tailed Desert Lark, which has a helpful dark sub-terminal band on its tail to separate it from the slightly larger and heavier-billed Desert Lark.

My major target was Hoopoe Lark, which I wanted compare with the similar-looking groundjays of Xinjiang and Qinghai. They turned out to be something of a disappointment, looking more like a stretched and scraggly Richard's Pipit with an overlong bill, but with the same ground jay flashes of white in the wing. They appeared to fill a different niche from the ground jays, picking insects from the foliage of small bushes, rather than ripping apart sand dunes as Biddulph's Ground Jay does in Xinjiang. However their spring song display is meant to be impressive.


Around the reserve headquarters we found good numbers of early autumn migrants. These included a female Montagu's Harrier, Olivaceous, Barred and Garden Warbler, Great Grey, Lesser Grey and Red-backed Shrikes, and a full breeding plumaged Black-headed Bunting - one of the most beautiful birds I have ever seen. We finished off with my first Barn Owl for over ten years, a Golden Oriole, a Red-breasted Flycatcher and our final bird - a very grey-toned juvenile Thrush Nightingale.

Jordan is a superb country for the visiting birder: good birds - we saw close to 150 birds at a rather quiet time of year, good food, reasonably-priced accommodation, and wonderful kindness and hospitality from the Jordanian people. In particular Omar and Mousa from RSCN ([www.rscn.org.jo](http://www.rscn.org.jo)) looked after us superbly during the Birdlife training and helped out whenever we asked during our week long travels, while many others were happy to share their time and information with us. Ian Andrews' book *The Birds of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan* is an essential planning tool as is his website: [www.andrewsi.freeserve.co.uk/jordan-home.htm](http://www.andrewsi.freeserve.co.uk/jordan-home.htm).

On my way home to Hong Kong I stopped for a couple of days in Dubai. With information gathered from the web I birded the sewage farm, the golf course, the top end of Dubai Creek and a stretch of coastline to the south of the Djebel Ali. Best birds were Little Green Bee-eater, Indian Silverbill, Crested Lark, White-cheeked and Yellow-vented Bulbul from the airport hotel, 6 Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters on the golf course, 125 Lesser Crested Terns and Western Reef Heron on the beach, Black-crowned Finch Lark at the sewage farm, and in Dubai Creek, a couple of hundred Greater Flamingoes, five Eurasian Spoonbills, several Slender-billed Gulls and an escaped Crowned Crane.

As in Jordan, this was a little early for peak passage, and it was blisteringly hot. However it is worth pointing out that Dubai and the United Arab Emirates are very good places to bird and well worth a couple of days if you are flying to or from the UK. Lots more information is available on the Web.



Anyone interested in receiving more detailed information on the birds or logistics of this trip should email me at [mkilburn@hkstar.com](mailto:mkilburn@hkstar.com). 



# Last chance for Sumatra's forest

– Richard Grimmett

**BirdLife International Asia Division, Bogor, Indonesia**

*(extracted from BirdLife International World Birdwatch)*

Sumatra's forests are fast disappearing, a victim of the world's insatiable appetite for timber, palm oil and paper. Richard Grimmett, Head of BirdLife's Asia Division, based in Indonesia, examines the crisis facing Sumatra's forests.

Sumatra's lowland tropical forests are amongst the most biologically diverse on earth. But from 1985 to 1997, over 6 million ha (60,000 sq km) of Sumatra's forest were cleared and forest cover decreased from 49% to 35%. 1997 and 1998 were particularly bad years. Dry conditions, resulting from a strong El Nino, meant that fires were lit to clear forest, often by plantation companies, blanketing the whole region in thick smoke. Since 1997 forest loss has, if anything, accelerated. Another El Nino is brewing in the Pacific, another extended dry spell is likely, and forest fires will once again become a major international environmental concern.

It is mainly the lowland forests (non-swampy forest below the hill-foot boundary) that have been lost. These forests, occupying around 16 million ha in 1900, were reduced from 5.6 million ha to 2.2 million ha between 1985 and 1997. Without immediate and fundamental changes in policies and management, the World Bank has predicted that virtually all lowland forest will have been cleared in Sumatra by 2005.

Birds' value as indicators of the state of the environment bear this out too. Research for Threatened Birds of Asia (the BirdLife Red Data Book) reveals that 70% of Asia's threatened forest birds are endangered because of moist tropical lowland forest loss. Nowhere is this more acute than in Sumatra where 21 species of forest birds are considered threatened (up from 17 in 1994) and, alarmingly, 85 are Near Threatened (compared to just 27 in 1994). Mammals are suffering too. The Sumatran Rhinoceros numbers possibly fewer than 100 individuals. The Orangutan population in Sumatra has declined by around 85% during the 20th Century, and, on current trends, will become ecologically extinct by 2010. How

can we humans justify our own existence on this planet if we drive this great ape to extinction?

The causes of forest loss are complex and interlinked. But we are all involved, although generally do not realise it. Forest clearance is being driven by a global demand for commodities. Coffee, rubber and cinnamon are products from Sumatra grown at the cost of natural forest. The timber industry has been a major driving force in opening up forest areas and degrading forest resources. Illegal logging is now providing as much wood in the market place as legal logging concessions. Weaknesses in governance and management contribute both directly and indirectly. However, two commodities, palm oil and paper, stand out as playing a major role in forest clearance in Sumatra over the past decade.

## Palm oil

Palm oil, financially Indonesia's most important agricultural commodity, has become the main agent in accelerating deforestation in Sumatra during the 1990s. Produced from the fruit of the oil palm, a tree growing up to 15 m tall and originating from West Africa, it is the world's highest yielding vegetable oil crop. Between 1984 and 1998 the area under oil palm increased from 0.4 million to 2.2 million ha. in Sumatra. Of the 6.7 million ha of forest lost in Sumatra between 1984 and 1987, it is estimated that 1.7 million was replaced by oil palm estates with up to a further 2 million ha cleared and destined for this use. Expansion is continuing. Indonesia is aiming to overtake Malaysia to become the world's leading producer. The world's largest palm oil importers are China (1.8 million tonnes in 1997), India (1.4) and Pakistan (1.2), where palm oil is primarily used as cooking oil. Next are the Netherlands (0.6), Germany (0.4) and UK (0.4). In 1997, the EU bought 37% of total Indonesian palm oil exports.

In Europe, palm oil is widely used in the food

manufacturing industry to make biscuits, crisps, chocolates, ice cream, cooking oil, margarine and frying fat. Non-food uses include soaps, lubricants, and cosmetics (lipstick, hand creams, and sun cream). Next time you eat a packet of crisps, or wash your hands, think about what vegetable oil you might be using.

Big corporate names are major users of palm oil. Household names include Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive and Procter & Gamble. Some companies, particularly in the food industry know where their palm oil comes from (Walkers, a major UK crisp manufacturer, reportedly sources its palm oil from nominated and inspected plantations in Papua New Guinea). A major supermarket chain in Switzerland, Migros, has recently committed to source palm oil from suppliers that do not contribute to forest loss. Other corporate users need to do the same, otherwise, along with the general public, they may unwittingly be supporting forest clearance in Sumatra and elsewhere.

Financial institutions continue to fund the expansion of the oil palm sector and often the most costly phase of plantation establishment land clearance. Few institutions seem to guard against financing tropical deforestation, even though their customers and shareholders might reasonably expect them to do so. However, there are some encouraging signs. Three of the top four banks in the Netherlands ABN AMRO Bank, Rabobank and Fortis Bank are to stop, or substantially restrict, the financing of oil palm development involving forest clearance. In Sumatra, the Commonwealth Development Corporation, which has recently taken over management of a large plantation, appears to be committed to conserving areas of natural forest within its concession and supporting conservation efforts in adjacent natural forests. Could the tide be turning?

Many of Indonesia's palm oil corporate groups are also active in the timber and pulp and paper industries. Following selective logging, such groups apply for land-use to be changed to conversion forest, for plantation development, with the residual timber being used as pulp-fibre. Over the last 10 years, more than US\$15 billion has been invested internationally in the Indonesian pulp and paper industry. But this industry is responsible for seriously damaging Sumatran forests, through clearance for pulpwood and the establishment of pulpwood plantations. It is also accused of being linked to high levels of illegal logging. Currently, most of the wood consumed by the pulp industry

comes from natural forests.

The world's two largest pulp mills are sited in Riau Province, Sumatra. Both have recently expanded their production capacities. The Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) group's Indah Kiat mill and the APRIL group's Riau Andalan mill (PHOTO) have production capacities of 1.8 and 2.0 million tonnes, and are capable of consuming 9.0 and 10 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood per year, respectively. Together they account for 70% of Indonesia's pulp processing capacity. In 2000 Indah Kiat sourced approximately 75% of its logs from clear-cutting natural forests, and their operations have accounted for 287,000 ha of deforestation over the last 10 years.

Recently, APP and APRIL announced plans to source all of their raw materials from sustainably managed pulpwood plantations, by 2007 and 2009, respectively. To meet these targets, the two producers intend to clear a combined area of 440,000 ha of natural forest above and beyond the large areas that each has already cleared at its existing pulpwood plantation sites. This threatens to undermine the Indonesian Government's 1998 moratorium on natural forest conversion. Furthermore, APP and APRIL are two of Indonesia's largest corporate debtors, owing a combined total of US\$15 billion, and these debts may restrict further investments in sustainably managed plantations. The only option, other than continuing massive forest loss, is a major scaling back of the industry until plantations come on line or importing wood at substantially higher costs than they have paid thus far.

APP has recently been accused of flooding the UK market with un-branded and re-branded paper products, and of covering up the environmental impacts of its operations. Major UK stationary suppliers, such as Robert Horne, Spicers, Kingsfield Heath and Thomas Potts have all been accused of distributing APP paper. Many of us may have, unwittingly, been party to writing off great swathes of tropical forest.

Major financial institutions heavily involved in financing the pulp industry over the last 10 years include Barclays Bank, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, Credit Suisse First Boston, GoldmanSachs, Franklin Templeton, Merrill Lynch, Bank of America, Deutsche Bank, National Westminster Bank, Legal and General, Royal Bank of Scotland, and ABN Amro. I have banked with one of these since my

childhood, and have modest savings with another. My heart sank when I recently learnt of my personal investment in forest destruction.

Continued forest clearance for oil palm and paper cannot be allowed to continue. In the rush to exploit forests, and establish land holdings, huge areas of land have been cleared but not replanted. The World Bank has estimated that around 3.8 million ha of Sumatra, cleared between 1985 and 1997, is either under arable (mainly subsistence) farming or else is lying idle. It is this land that should be utilised for any expansion of plantations. But, of course, investors double their money if they can cut forest as well as establish plantations.

With the recent change of government in Indonesia came the appointment of more conservation-minded officials to senior positions in the Ministry of Forestry. This, combined with continued pressure from the NGO and donor community, gives cause for some optimism. The government has signalled several important intentions. These are: to tackle illegal logging, especially those loggers operating in national parks, and close illegal saw mills; to place a moratorium on all natural forest conversion until a National Forest Programme is agreed; and to downsize and restructure the wood-based industry. The Ministry has passed a decree establishing a moratorium on any new allocation of forest land for conversion, and has said that from 2003 onwards it will not allow any new clearance, even if land conversion has previously been approved. Significantly, the Ministry appears unwilling to grant any new forest land for supplying pulp fibre or land for plantations for APP's pulp mill in Riau. But politics and pressure from vested interests could overrule these good intentions.

The plantation industry, with advice from the conservation community, should develop 'best practice' guidelines for the establishment and management of plantations as a step towards environmental responsibility. These should include commitments not to clear natural forest; careful management and safeguarding of remnant forest patches including those along watercourses within existing concessions; adherence to ASEAN's policy against land-clearance through burning; and the prohibition of hunting within concessions. Owners of plantations adjacent to protected or important areas of natural forest should be expected to assist with any strategy to protect those areas.

Financial institutions with interests in the pulp and paper industry in Indonesia should adopt policies so they are not funding illegal or unsustainable practices. They should ensure that processing capacity is reduced and that timber from natural forests is replaced with sustainably harvested pulpwood from independently certified sources. Paper buyers should likewise ensure that they only purchase from suppliers that do not depend on natural forests for their pulp fibre. These measures may lead to an increase in world paper prices, but surely this is a price that is worth paying?

## BirdLife's work

BirdLife is addressing the issue of forest loss in Sumatra through two major initiatives. BirdLife is a key member of an NGO consortium that is raising awareness about the loss of tropical forest and biodiversity in Indonesia. The project, funded by the GEF, will focus on journalists and the media, and local government and decision-makers, to build broader and deeper national support for forest conservation efforts.

Secondly, the Important Bird Areas (IBA) project is assessing, and has already identified, many important lowland forest areas in Sumatra. Partnerships are being developed with local NGOs to establish Site Support Groups (SSGs) around priority forest areas. These SSGs will review current land-use, and develop and implement conservation plans. The 2002 British Birdwatching Fair will support this work and the Fair itself will be a key arena for raising awareness amongst the birdwatching public.

Finally, every concerned individual should be telling their bank, pension fund holder, supermarket, stationery supplier, and biscuit and cosmetics manufacturers about the problems related to oil palm and pulp and paper. Ask them what precautions they take to ensure that they are not helping to destroy rainforest. The producers of coffee, rubber, cinnamon, and many other products, are all implicated in global deforestation too, but that will have to be the subject of another campaign!

## Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges the important work on the pulp and paper industry in Sumatra by Christopher Barr, Forest Policy Scientist with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia.

# Chocolate or Rainforest?

## Threats to the Biodiversity of Sumatra



*the following is a translation of an article which appeared in Ming Pao on September 8th, 2002*

**W**hen you are enjoying your chocolate, potato chips or using skincare products have ever thought that it might cause our precious rainforests to disappear.

The lowland tropical rainforest in Sumatra in Indonesia has one of the world's highest levels of biodiversity. However, the demands from humans are becoming greater. The primary rainforests are being cut to clear land for the "Palm oil kingdom". Palm oil is used to produce soap, skincare cream, lotions, potato chips, and chocolate. The deforestation threatens wildlife including hundreds of species of threatened birds, mammals and the largest flowers in the world.

### **Felling forest for oil-palm plantations will destroy all rainforest within 5 years.**

Sumatra is one of the five largest islands in the world, producing large amounts of timber, palm oil and paper with strong support from international investors. Indonesia will soon overtake Malaysia as the world's leading producers of palm oil. The World Bank, which assists the development of poorer countries, predicts that if the policy for tree felling is not changed, the rainforest will disappear within 5 years.

### **No Space for our Priceless Wildlife**

World Birdwatch, the magazine of BirdLife

International points out that forest coverage of 16 million hectares in 1900 was reduced to one third of that during the 1980s and now just 2.2million hectares. Scientists describe deforestation a s spreading like a cancer, which reduces living space for wildlife.

### **Sumatran Rainforest Holds the Largest Flowers and Smallest Tigers on Earth**

The Sumatran Rhinoceros now numbers less than 100 individuals, while just 500 remain of the Sumatran Tiger, the smallest tiger in the world. Furthermore, more and more birds are threatened. Now there are 21 and 85species are considered threatened and near-threatened respectively. In 1994 these numbers were 17 and 27 species respectively. The world's largest species of flower - rafflesia - is also found in the same forest.

### **China and EU are the Greatest Consumers**

According to figures China is one of the worlds largest importers of palm oil, followed by India and Pakistan. This oil is mainly used for cooking. The EU also imports a large amount of palm oil, which covers 37% of the amount exported from Indonesia, which is used for the production of soaps, lubricants, and cosmetics, for example lipsticks, lotions and suntan lotion. The production of potato chips, biscuits, chocolate and ice cream also consumes large quantities of palm oil. Some household brands including Colgate and Procter and Gamble are large buyers of palm oil.

In addition palm oil, paper production and illegal logging also threaten the forest. The two largest paper mills are planning to switch to wood sourced from sustainably managed plantations within 7 years. However the clearing of 440,000 hectares of rainforest will be required. The Indonesian Forestry ministry is planning to ban the opening of new forestry area, but expects to face considerable political pressure.

### **Choose Products from Sustainably Managed Plantations**

Although there are few alternatives to many palm oil products, consumers can choose products from sustainably managed plantations or use recycled paper, playing a small part in helping to preserve our precious forest wildlife.



*Take a Closer Look -*

## **Chinese Pitta** *(Fairy Pitta)*

- Cheung Ho Fai, Lee Yuk Ying

All Pittas are rare in Hong Kong. The Chinese Pitta has been recorded only several times in Hong Kong, in widespread forested areas including Pokfulam, Deepwater Bay, the Botanical Gardens, Tai Po Kau, Kap Lun Trail, Tai Mo Shan Country Park, and Shek Kong. There were 2 records in April, 3 records in September, and 1 odd record in July.

The most commonly confused species is the Blue-winged Pitta. The head pattern (supercilium and crown) is probably the best field mark to distinguish between them. The Chinese Pitta has a buff supercilium (eyebrow), an orange crown, and a thin black crown stripe. The Blue-winged Pitta has a pale orange supercilium and a lateral crown stripe. Its crown stripe is thick and black. Since Pittas tend to stay in dark forested areas, these field marks could be difficult to see, but on a closer look, there is also a thin black lateral crown slightly above the supercilium. The blue shoulder patch is iridescent turquoise blue on the Chinese Pitta, but royal blue on the Blue-winged Pitta. The white spot on the wing, which is best seen in flight, is small (roughly 2 cm) in the Chinese Pitta, but much larger (roughly double the size) in the Blue winged Pitta. For photos, see p. 57 of the 1993 Hong Kong Bird Report.



# Wu Kau Tang,

**14th October 2002** – T. H. Kwan

38 participants started at 8:45am from Wu Kau Tang car park. The weather was sunny and warm but fortunately, it wasn't very humid. A gentle breeze blowing through out the day made our trip even more enjoyable.

We reached the fish ponds near Lai Chi Wo at 11:30am. Crested Kingfisher has been found here before, but we failed to spot any this time. Nevertheless, at the fishponds in the area, we found a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and Scarlet-backed Flowerpeckers were abundant; their beautiful colors enjoyed against a background of 'forget-me-not' blue sky.

One of the most impressive moments of the trip was a "fight" between a gorgeous White-bellied Sea Eagle and a smaller but swifter Crested Goshawk. The show lasted for about 30 seconds and was well observed by almost all of us.

Our bird count of 34 was not too bad for such a warm and sunny day, and included White-bellied Sea Eagle, Crested Goshawk, Common and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Common, Black-capped, and White-breasted Kingfisher, Blue Rock Thrush, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, Long-tailed and Dusky Shrike, and possible Besra (not enough time to confirm) and Peregrine Falcon (too far away to confirm).

Overall, we travelled almost 15 km. The outing should actually be given 3 asterisks instead of 2, as it turned out to be rather strenuous. Luckily, it seems that most of our birders are good hikers too!

Please note, these are unchecked records. Members are reminded of the importance of submitting all records on cards or electronically, to ensure that the Bird News report is as accurate and complete as possible.

## July

Few reports were received. At Mai Po, a Garganey and Asian Dowitcher on 1st were unusually early, whilst a Nordmann's Greenshank on 21st and 27th was the first ever in summer. Also at Mai Po on 1st was a Black-winged Kite. Elsewhere, a Pheasant-tailed Jacana and an Oriental Turtle Dove were at Lok Ma Chau on 14th, and 34 Black-naped and 35 Bridled Terns were logged at Tap Mun on 27th.

## August

Habitat improvement work on the Mai Po scrape contributed to over 40 shorebird species being reported there during the course of the autumn. In August, the high tide roost on 9th comprised 27 species including the over-summering Nordmann's Greenshank and 30 Asian Dowitchers. Also at Mai Po, two Avocets on 22nd were the earliest ever.

Reports from elsewhere included a Lesser Shortwing at Tai Mo Shan on 14th, 33 Whimbrels at Shuen Wan on 27th, (an unusually large gathering outside of Deep Bay), and a Eurasian Wryneck at Chek Lap Kok on 28th, the earliest by 10 days.

Towards the end of the month, there were the first signs of autumn passerine migration, with a Black-naped Oriole and six White-shouldered Starlings at Lamma on 28th and small influxes of flycatchers (Hainan Blue, Asian and Japanese Paradise) and *phylloscopus* warblers (Arctic, Eastern Crowned and Pale-legged Leaf) reported from several upland sites in the central New Territories on 31st.

## September

Flycatchers and *phylloscopus* warblers continued to be reported in this month, with the first Yellow-rumped and Sooty Flycatchers at Kadoorie FBG

on 7th. Also there on this date was a Two-barred Greenish Warbler, potentially the earliest ever record by 3 weeks. Single Siberian Blue Robins were reported at the latter site, Tai Po Kau and Kap Lung during 7th - 20th, and observers at Lamma Island reported a fine series of Dollarbird and Black-naped Oriole sightings throughout the month from 8th.

On 11th, sea-watches during STS Hagupit found a probable Swinhoe's Storm-petrel, a Long-tailed Skua, two Greater Crested Terns and over 250 terns, mainly Bridleds, at Cape d'Aguilar, and very much smaller numbers of terns from Cheung Chau, Lamma and Plover Cove dam. Meanwhile, a flock of 200 Pacific Golden Plovers at Shuen Wan was an unusually large gathering away from the Deep Bay area. The following day, 37 shorebird species were logged at Mai Po, including four Oriental Plovers and a Pheasant-tailed Jacana, and on 20th-21st a Pectoral Sandpiper was noted there. The over-summering Nordmann's Greenshank was also occasionally reported during the month.

Single Japanese Sparrowhawks at Cheung Chau on 18th and Palm Springs on 20th were about two weeks earlier than any previous records, and a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler at Long Valley on 19th was the first of the autumn.

A Drongo Cuckoo was photographed in Tai Po Kau on 21st - 22nd. Assuming that the May 1999 individual at Po Toi is accepted, this is potentially only the second Hong Kong record and the first in autumn.

Among other noteworthy reports in the second half of the month were single Eurasian Hoopoes at San Tin on 18th and Shuen Wan on 27th, two Daurian Starlings at Mai Po on 22nd, a Eurasian Collared Dove at Mui Wo and an Oriental Cuckoo at Long Valley on 27th, a Ruddy Sparrow at the latter site and a Crested Kingfisher at Nam Chung on 28th, and a Eurasian Eagle Owl at Robin's

Nest on 30th. Also on this date, a Little Bunting at Sai Kung was by 7 days earlier than any previous records.

## October

This was an exciting month, with large influxes, a flurry of rarities, and two potential Hong Kong 1st records.

An influx to the Mai Po reed-beds on 1st included 50 Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers, 120 Oriental and 30 Black-browed Reed Warblers. Amongst them were a Manchurian Reed Warbler and a Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler. On the same day there were also nine Blue-tailed Bee-eaters at Mai Po, as well as 15 Black-naped Orioles at Lamma and a Black Bittern at Kam Tin.

On 3rd, a Japanese Waxwing was found at a banyan tree at the Yin Kong end of Long Valley. Although it soon became clear that the waxwing was cage-damaged, the banyan tree (which was fruiting abundantly) attracted record numbers of Purple-backed Starlings during 3rd - 8th, including 50 on 4th. Other migrants reported in the vicinity of the banyan included a Swinhoe's Minivet, an Ashy Minivet, a Chestnut-cheeked, up to 20 White-shouldered and, intermittently, a juvenile Rose-coloured Starling, only the 4th record. Peak starling numbers reported at Kam Tin during this period were 20 Purple-backed, two Chestnut-cheeked, 30 White-shouldered and 30 White-cheeked. Among other migrants reported at this time were a Blue-throated Bee-eater (only the 3rd record) at Mong Tseng, up to five Black Bazas and two Lanceolated Warblers at Long Valley, an early Silky Starling at Shuen Wan and, bizarrely, a juvenile Slaty-breasted Rail in a private garage at Hong Lok Yuen.

On 8th, Hong Kong's first Blyth's Pipit was discovered at Kam Tin and a Rufous-bellied Woodpecker (only the 3rd record) seen at Mai Po. Also found on this day were a Swinhoe's Minivet, a Black Bulbul, a Red-throated Flycatcher and an Oriental Greenfinch at Palm Springs and a Crested Honey Buzzard at Mai Po.


Amazingly, the very next day (9th), Hong Kong's first Sylvia warbler was found in the banyan tree at Yin Kong. It was photographed and identified as a Lesser Whitethroat. Other reports on the same day included the Nordmann's Greenshank at Mai Po, two Pygmy Wren Babblers at Kap Lung, and three Oriental Plovers at Chek Lap Kok.

The Blyth's Pipit was reported until 11th but the Lesser Whitethroat was not seen again.



Among noteworthy reports during the middle of the month were two Pied Harriers and a Black-winged Kite at Mai Po, a Eurasian Sparrowhawk at Kam Tin, five Black Bazas and two Oriental Cuckoos at Long Valley, five Sanderlings and a Yellow-billed Grosbeak at Tai Long Wan, single Middendorff's Grasshopper Warblers at Mai Po and San Tin and on the 16th, two Japanese Sparrowhawks and 50 Black Drongos at Braemar Hill, a Siberian Thrush at Tai Mo Shan, and a Lesser Shortwing singing at Sek Kong catchment.

On 20th, a total of three Pheasant-tailed Jacanas were logged at Ma Tso Lung and Lok Ma Chau, whilst at Mai Po there were 250 Sand Martins, the first Great Bittern of the autumn and a Blunt-winged Warbler. Reports the next day included a Ruddy-breasted Crake near Mai Po and a loose flock of at least six falcons at Wu Kau Tang among which were two Eurasian Hobbies and two possible Amur Falcons. At Robin's Nest in the evening, an Oriental Scops Owl was seen.

On 25th, a Mountain Hawk Eagle and a Eurasian Collared Dove were reported at Fung Lok Wai. Raptor sightings continued the next day with a Greater Spotted Eagle and five Crested Honey Buzzards, a Japanese Sparrowhawk, two Amur Falcons and two Eurasian Hobbies at Kadoorie FBG, and in the evening, a Brown Hawk Owl at Robin's Nest. A Black Stork was found at Mai Po the same day.

On 28th, six Ashy Minivets, a Verditer Flycatcher and three Ashy Drongos were noted at Pak Hok, Lamma. The minivets were thought to have been present since 14th. 



Date	Leader / Speaker	Activity / Gathering location	Time	Difficulty
21 Dec (Sat)	Cheung Hok Jose Alberto John Holmes	<b>Long Valley</b> 15:00 Yin Kong carpark	15:00 – 18:00	X
22 Dec (Sun)	Cheung Ho Fai	<b>Winter Atlas Surveyor &lt;Mirs Bay&gt;</b> Volunteers are needed, please contact leader	07:00 – 11:00	
29 Dec (Sun)	Stanley Ng	<b>Lui Kun Tin</b> 08:00 Hang Heung Bakery (LRT Tai Tong Rd Station, Yuen Long)	08:00 – 15:00	X
4 Jan (Sat)	Cheung Hok Jose Alberto Robin Fung	<b>Ping Kong</b> 15:00 Sheung Shui KCR Station Taxi stand, exit from the platform to Lo Wu	15:00 – 18:00	X
5 Jan (Sun)	Cheung Ho Fai	<b>Winter Atlas Surveyor &lt;Lantau&gt;</b> Volunteers are needed, please contact leader	07:00 – 11:00	
12 Jan (Sun)	Chu Cho Yan Chu Chi Ping	<b>Tsim Bei Tsui</b> 08:00 Kowloon Tong KCR Station (B1/B3 exit) or 09:00 Tsim Bei Tsui carpark. Leave at 15:00 and back to Kowloon Tong at 16:00 	09:00 – 15:00	XX
19 Jan (Sun)	Simon Wong Tam Yiu Leung	<b>Shum Chung</b> 08:15 Ma Liu Shiu Pier	08:15 – 13:00	X
23 Jan (Thur)	Michelle Kong Peter Wong Man Chup Ming	<b>Indoor meeting: &lt;Bird photography&gt;</b> Conference Hall, HK Observatory (Non-member please contact membership@hkbws.org.hk to reserve seat)	18:45 – 20:00	
9 Feb (Sun)	Ronley Lee Jemi & John Holmes	<b>Lunar New Year Gathering and Indoor meeting &lt;Trip to Sri Lanka&gt;</b> Conference Hall, HK Observatory (For members only)	15:00 – 18:00	
16 Feb (Sun)	Etta Hui Beta Yip	<b>Tai O</b> 13:30 Tung Chung MTR Station Hang Seng Bank	13:30 – 18:00	XX
23 Feb (Sun)	Mike Leven Au Chun Yan Robin Fung	<b>Mai Po</b> 08:00 Kowloon Tong KCR Station (B1/B3 exit) or 09:00 Mai Po carpark coach leaves at 15:00 and back to Kowloon Tong at 16:00 	09:00 – 15:00	XX
27 Feb (Thur)	Cheung Ho Fai	<b>Indoor meeting: &lt;Wader Identification&gt;</b> Rm 902, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (Member: \$10, non-member: \$30)	19:00 – 20:30	
1 Mar (Sat)	Kwan Tze Hoi Ada Chow	<b>Long Valley</b> 15:00 Yin Kong carpark	15:00 – 18:00	X
9 Mar (Sun)	Yam Wing Yit Simon Wong	<b>Nim Wan</b> 08:00 Hang Heung Bakery (LRT Tai Tong Rd Station, Yuen Long)	08:00 – 16:00	XX
16 Mar (Sun)	Cheung Ho Fai	<b>Shum Tseng, Tin Fu Tsai and Ho Pui Village</b> 08:00 Junction between Castle Peak Road and Shum Hong Road	08:00 – 16:00	XXX
23 Mar (Sun)	Au Chun Yan Ho Man Fai	<b>Tai Mo Shan</b> 08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Station Hang Seng Bank	08:00 – 13:00	XXX

Date	Leader / Speaker	Activity / Gathering location	Time	Difficulty
28 Mar (Fri)	Paul Leader	<b>Indoor meeting:</b> <b>&lt; Identifying the most difficult birds in Hong Kong &gt;</b> Rm 902, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (Member: \$10, non-member: \$30)	19:00 – 20:30	
30 Mar (Sun)	Li Wai K Chan Yung	<b>Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve</b> 08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark (Tsung Tsai Yuen)	08:00 – 13:00	XXX
6 Apr (Sun)	Tam Yiu Leung Hung Wai Ming	<b>Mai Po</b> 08:00 Kowloon Tong KCR Station (B1/B3 exit) <b>or</b> 09:00 Mai Po carpark, coach leaves at 15:00 and back to Kowloon Tong at 16:00	09:00 – 15:00	XX

**Notes! 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. **Please wear thr member badge when joining the activities.**

- \* 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 Ms. Ada Chow, the Mai Po tour coordinator - this is important because the maximum number of members who can attend the outing is 50, as set by the AFCD permit. Failure to do so may result in being refused access to the reserve.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by phone or by e-mail at least one week before the outing. If you wish to check your booking, please contact Ms. Ada Chow at 2580 6472.

**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 Ltd**” OR
- (2) Payment can also be made by depositing the fee into the A/C no. 534-361423-838 of Hongkong Bank in favour of “**Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Ltd**”, but please send the booking slip in as well to confirm your payment and attendance.



Transportation arrangement



Please fill in the booking slip and return

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

### Activity Booking Slip

I wish to reserve places for \_\_\_\_\_ members and \_\_\_\_\_ non-members for the tour on: \_\_\_\_\_.

\*  12 Jan 2003 (Sun) Tsim Bei Tsui     23 Feb 2003 (Sun) Mai Po     6 Apr 2003 (Sun) Mai Po

The number of person(s) using the coach is \_\_\_\_\_. Coach fare:

\*  \_\_\_\_\_ x HK\$40/Member     \_\_\_\_\_ x HK\$60/Guest    #  \_\_\_\_\_ x HK\$20 Student member

# Non-members joining Mai Po trips will have to pay the coach fare irrespective of whether they make use of the coach.

Cheque for HK\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (In English. Payable to The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Ltd)

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Contact No. : \_\_\_\_\_

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_ Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Please send this application together with crossed cheque by mail to Ms. Ada Chow, P.O. Box 28554, Gloucester Road Post Office, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

Application should be made at least two weeks before the date of the outing. Late application will only be accepted if places are available.

\* Please  as appropriate

# The Story of "Bad-luck Spoonbill" (3)

## 黑仔的故事 (三)

— 任永耀 Yam Wing Yiu

黑仔終於忍受不了饑餓的折磨，在一條受污染的河上找尋食物！

Bad-luck spoonbill cannot stand the hunger pains and is looking for food in a polluted river.



黑仔終於病倒了！

Bad-luck spoonbill finally got sick!



..... 未完待續 to be continued

## 翠雀店

**Hello!** 各位鳥友，秋天到了，又是觀賞雀鳥的黃金季節，有沒有發覺大家的裝束也早已換了季呢？「翠雀店」今期展示的一系列醒目襟章，正好配合閣下的新形象，讓您在野外活動時陪添生氣，也把這些漂亮的鳥兒展示給你的朋友欣賞一下吧！所有的襟章都是出自本會鳥友的精傑傑作，充份表露鳥會人才濟濟。每款襟章只售港幣十二元正，有興趣的鳥友可參閱本期附上的訂購表格，亦可親臨本會項目辦公室或於出席本會舉辦之講座時選購。謝謝！



(呎吋 Size : 1.5')



**Hello!** Dear Birders, autumn is here and it's the golden time for bird watching. Have you noticed that you have changed your clothing for the season already? In this issue of "Bird Shop", we have displayed a series of extraordinary pins which will fit your new image, give you a lift and let others see these beautiful birds. All the pins are masterpieces designed by HKBWS members, showing what great resources we have among our membership. Each pin costs HK\$12, please fill out the order form attached with this issue to order. You can also purchase them in our project office or at our indoor meetings.

**Thanks!**



麻鷹 (尖鼻咀) — 李鶴飛 Black-eared Kite (Tsim Bei Tsui) – Lee Hok Fei



灰喉山椒鳥 (大埔濶) — 黃理沛 Grey-throated Minivet (Tai Po Kau) – Peter Wong

