

香港觀鳥會 The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



bulletin

會員通訊



189

Autumn 2003 ~ 秋





叉尾太陽鳥 (碗蜜) – 何萬邦 Fork-tailed Sunbird (Wun Yiu) – Marcus Ho



紫嘯鶇 (新娘潭) – 陳志光 Violet Whistling Thrush (Bride's Pools) – Daniel C K Chan





# The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited

(Approved Charitable Institution of a Public Character)

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# From the Chairman...

I spent the night of Mid-Autumn Festival near the Chinese-Mongolia border. A car breakdown left me in desolate land far from human habitation. In the quietude and emptiness, I did not feel alone. The moon and the stars kept me company.

In the next few days, we got Mongolian Ground-Jay, *Oenanthe* wheatears, and *Sylvia* warblers among others.

Going round the Badanjilin Desert, we turned into deep Ala Shan. Hanging cliffs, running water, shrubs, forests, gentle winds - it was like paradise. Seated on thick moss-lined ground near the ridge-line, the sea of sand in the Tengeli Desert seemed to be within an arm's length.

In the hills, we ran into Blue Sheep, Blue-Eared Pheasants, and Crested Tit-Warblers. Bird watching takes us to unexpected places, escaping the confines of the city. It allows us to realize the vastness of Nature and to re-live the basics of Life. Bird watching is not merely bird watching.

Bird watching brightens our lives. Let us do what we can to share it with our friends. Let us give them the sight of Life in action and help them appreciate the joy of Life. The HKBWS has a number of pamphlets which members may obtain for distribution to friends. In particular, I recommend the new pamphlet "Long Valley - A Living Classroom". Call the Society office if you want to have copies. 

- C.Y. Lam



## SOCIETY NEWS SOCIETY NEWS

- Carrie Ma, Jimmy Chim

### New Executive Committee 2003/2004

After the incorporation of The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 27 September 2003. The AGM elected a new executive committee for the coming year. The line up is as follows:

Chairman	Mr. Lam Chiu-ying
Vice-chairman	Dr. Cheung Ho-fai
Vice-chairman	Mr. Mike Kilburn
Hon. Secretary	Ms. Jimmy Chim
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. Stanley Ng
Hon. Recorder	Mr. Richard Lewthwaite
Executive Committee Members	Ms. Ronley Lee
	Mr. Ng Cho Nam
	Mr. Robin Fung
	Dr. Lew Young
	Mr. Henry Lui
	Mr. Forest Fong

### Hong Kong Bird Report 1999/2000

The bird report for 1999 and 2000 will be printed in a combined volume. The editor and volunteers are continuing to work on the text. We will keep you updated on developments.

### New staff

Two new staff members have been recruited to support the Project Office: Miss Li Hei, Assistant Project Officer will administer the Healthy Ageing project "Elderly leading the elderly to watch birds" for one year from 10 November 2003 and Miss Connie Chan, Temporary Clerk will assist with the "My Favourite Hong Kong Bird Election" and general clerical affairs from November 2003 to February 2004.

### New members of the Education and Publicity Committee

Apache Lau and Hung Wai Ming have agreed to join



the Education and Publicity Committee and offer help on promotional affairs. The new sub-committee member list is:

- Robin Fung (Chairman)
- Lam Chiu Yin
- Chan Ming Ming
- Chen Chi Po (Chairman, Elderly Birdwatching Committee)
- Hung Wai Ming
- Apache Lau
- Henry Lui

## Summer helpers

This summer, 3 helpers from Ecology and Biodiversity Department of HKU, Gigi Chan, Rita Kwong and Eva Cheuk, stayed in the office for 25 days to assist HKBWS affairs, including producing maps for Winter Atlas Survey, organizing training day camp for Student Environmental Protection Ambassadors in the Environmental Campaign Committee project, and entering data for press materials and draft material for the HKBWS website. We thank them for their support for the Society during this period.



## HKBWS PROJECTS

### Education and publicity

#### 1. Continuation of "Bird watching – Learning from Nature"

The 18-month project "Bird Watching – Learning from Nature" was completed in June 2003. It was warmly received, and the project enabled us to reach 8,600 senior citizens and over 90 organizations. Over 60 Elderly Nature Interpreters were recruited.

The highlight of the programme was the participation of elderly nature interpreters who shared their knowledge of birds and the environment, designed games, facilitated training for new interpreters, and took the lead in lectures, providing various arrangements. All of these shared the workload of frontline HKBWS staff and at the same time, met the demands of the community for a more healthy lifestyle, and development of ecotourism.

In order to continue providing help to the senior members of the community, an Elderly Bird Watching Committee, run by active elderly nature interpreters, was formed and recognized as part of the HKBWS. The Committee will manage daily operation of the Crested Bulbul Club, which was formally established on 16 August 2003 with an establishment ceremony. Representatives of the Elderly Commission including Wan Man Yee, JP were invited to give them encouragement. HKBWS arranged for the elderly nature interpreters to hold discussions directly with representatives of the Elderly Commission after the establishment ceremony. It was an important move which impressed the representatives and gave them an opportunity to see the value and results of the

## HKBWS PROJECTS

4 CITY NEWS

#### Bird-watching benefactor trains his sights on helping the elderly



**Hong Kong Focus**  
 "I can share this appreciation of nature with other people, why not?"  
 A man who has spent years of his life bird-watching has decided to share his passion with the elderly. He has set up a club for them to enjoy the outdoors and learn about birds and nature. The club is called the Elderly Nature Interpreters Club. The man, who is now in his 70s, has been bird-watching since he was a child. He has a vast knowledge of birds and nature, and he wants to share this with other people. He has set up the club to provide a platform for elderly people to learn about birds and nature, and to share their own experiences. The club has already attracted many members, and they are planning to hold more activities in the future.



programme. Two-year funding for a new programme "The elderly leading the elderly to watch birds and nature" was approved immediately.

The new programme will be launched in October 2003.

The programme has generated a wide range of publicity, including radio and television coverage, newspaper stories and magazine articles. Through the media, we hope to encourage the perception with the general public that bird watching is one of the ways to adopt a healthy lifestyle and enhance the image of the elderly.

A list of news report from June October 2003



8-6-2003	RTHK	Golden age "Freedom"
17-8-2003	Hong Kong Daily News	Nature Interpreter over 60 years of age
17-8-2003	Ming Pao Daily News	Watch bird by "eye-and-ear"-handicapped senior is also a competent nature interpreter
17-8-2003	Wen Wei Pao	Seventy-year older bird ecotourism interpreter
25-8-2003	Wen Wei Pao	Establishment of "Crested Bulbul Club"
28-8-2003	Wen Wei Pao	Elderly bird watching
2-9-2003	SCMP	Bird-watching benefactor trains his sight on helping the elderly
28-9-2003	Commercial Radio	Radio interview on elderly nature interpreters
5-10-2003	Commercial Radio	Radio interview on elderly nature interpreters
9-10-2003	Cable TV - news	TV interview on how to share the experience of bird watching with others.
11-10-2003	HK Economic Times	New bird watchers contribute to nature conservation.

Pictures and text for the voting form were contributed by HKBWS members, and the design of the leaflet is in the form of "bookmarks", so hopefully members could make good use of it. If you wish to obtain more leaflets and A1 size promotion poster, please contact Connie Chan of HKBWS Project Office.



This event is sponsored by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, and it is also warmly supported by a number of organizations. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department will place the leaflets at visitor centres of Country Parks. Hongkong Post will place leaflets at all post offices, while Leisure, Culture and Services Department will place them at large urban parks including Hong Kong Park, Zoological and Botanical Garden and Kowloon Park. The Department of Computer Science and Information Systems of HKU will offer help with programme design for on-line election and maintenance; Ming Pao Daily News will publish daily articles, together with voting slips. Hong Kong Discovery will publish voting forms, and Swarovski HK Limited will sponsor some gifts. This event is also supported by Gold Award Holders' Association Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Award For Young People, Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, and Tai Po Environmental Association.

## 2. Hong Kong Bird Photo Guide

The work of the photo guide was begun at the beginning of this year, and so far, photos of over 300 bird species have been collected. A great deal of material has been compiled and the project is now at the stage of text editing. A production committee has been formed to provide the final touches before getting it ready for presentation to the publisher. Members who could offer help to proofread are welcome to contact us at [hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk).

## 3. My Favourite Hong Kong Bird Election

We issued members a first-round nomination form with the last bulletin, and we immediately received support from 75 members who nominated 200 bird species. This helped us to identify 16 species to be put on the candidate list (see previous notice). Please support the protection of birds and nature, and vote for "My Favourite Hong Kong Bird". Remember, the choice of criteria is yours; it could be the commonest, the prettiest, the most melodious bird, or the species most in need of protection.

Members could use the voting form sent previously or vote at the following website: <http://bird.csis.hku.hk/vote/>. Voting period: 19/11/2003 - 18/12/2003.

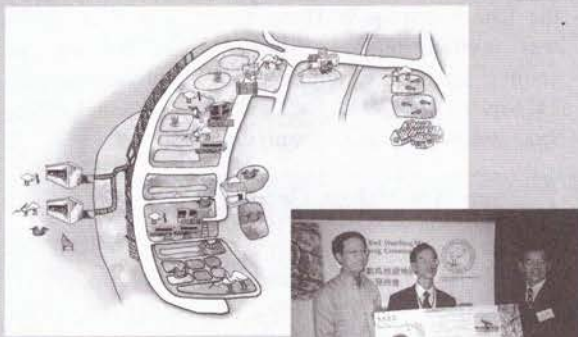
## 4. "Hong Kong Bird Watching Map"



We produced 25,000 copies of the "Hong Kong Bird



Watching Map” in October, of which 13,000 will be distributed to international visitors through Hong Kong Tourism Board at Hong Kong International Airport and Tourist Visitor Centres. A press conference was organized on 9 October and it attracted wide media coverage. BirdLife International has offered assistance on a global launch.



Sponsored by Swarovski Hong Kong Limited (for printing costs), the Map provides visitors with information on 12 of Hong Kong’s premier bird watching sites, and offers individual maps, information on the special birds of each site and detailed directions on how to find the site using public transport. The map also highlights habitat biodiversity in Hong Kong.

Besides being a beautiful and informative guide to Hong Kong’s top birding spots, the production of the HK Bird Watching Map has also created a model for co-operation which draws on the particular strengths of different sectors of society — non-government organisations, the commercial sector, and the HKTB, in raising interest and awareness of Hong Kong’s ecotourism potential. The production and value of the map was also shared with other members of the BirdLife International during the Asia Council Meeting.

In addition to distributing the map to arriving tourists at Chek Lap Kok, HKTB has made it available to tourists at its information centres in town. HKBWS will also distribute 2,000 copies to teachers through co-operation with the Hong Kong Professional Teachers Union, to raise awareness of birds and bird watching in schools.

## 5. Day camp for Student Environmental Protection Ambassadors

A day camp for 15 Student Environmental Protection Ambassadors was organized on 11 August. With support from the Environmental Campaign Committee,

HKBWS jointly organized the training camp with Hong Kong Federation of Youth Group and held the event at Lamma Youth Camp. The aim was to promote among students an awareness of the “birds and biodiversity” through bird watching, and to strengthen students’ ability in understanding the environment.



We are grateful for the support from Wong Tin Wa of HKFYP for providing the venue and reference material, field interpretation and various coordination, and also wish to thank our summer student helpers Gigi Chan, Rita Kwong and Eva Cheuk for offering assistance for the design of activity.



## 6. Hong Kong, China – Sweden Joint Issue on Waterbirds

Hongkong Post and Sweden Post jointly produce a new set of stamps using waterbird as the main theme. A launch ceremony was organized on 4 October. HKBWS has offered support including providing names of birds to match those of the Swedish set, providing pictures and information for the production of an exhibition board, and attending the launch ceremony.

The stamps include:

HK\$1.4	Pied Avocet
HK\$2.4	Horned Grebe
HK\$3.0	Black-throated Diver
HK\$5.0	Great-crested Grebe

Don’t miss this chance to go and purchase your favourite stamp!

We thank Cheung Ho Fai, Henry Lui and Wong Tin Wa for providing the pictures for the production of the exhibition board. This has further helped promotion of awareness of waterbirds in Hong Kong.





## 7. Press coverage

HKBWS actively pursued a larger publicity campaign to try to reach the general public. By the end of October, we had produced 53 press reports (including 2 headlines), 2 TV interviews, and 4 radio interviews. If members are interested in seeing any of these news clippings, please visit the Project Office between 5:30-7:30 (Mon-Fri). We have tried to tidy up the new clippings and arrange them in order, but please note that prior arrangements should be made before your arrival. This can be done by leaving a voice message on the office phone.

## HKBWS Research Groups Update

### 1. Black-faced Spoonbill Research Group

Convener: Yu Yat Tung  
 Member: H F Cheung, Louis Cheung, Forrest Fong, Anthony Lo, Dickson Wong

1. Group was inactive in summer months because only a few spoonbills stayed in Hong Kong over the summer.
2. The report of the AFCDC commissioned BFS age structure study was completed in summer 2003.
3. Discussions have been begun to any suggestion of future studies. Age structure study is recognized as an important study and aimed to carry on in future. It is also recommended to undertake this study in other winter grounds of the BFS.
4. The recent BirdLife Asia Council meeting has discussed the conservation of BFS in future. HKBWS has contributed extensively on the discussion of this issue. Information to this discussion was provided by the BFS research group.

### 2. Kite research group

Convener: Etta Hui, Karin Chan (Kite count co-ordinator)  
 Member: Shirley Lam, Henry Lui, Beta Yip

1. Started from this month, Karin Chan is the Kite survey co-ordinator of the 'Oct. 2003 - Sept. 2004 Kite Counts'.
2. Three members of the Kite group, Beta Yip (the presenter), Karin Chan and Etta Hui had attended the

3rd Symposium on Asian Raptor (10-13 Oct. 2003), Taiwan - Kenting. We had a nice communication, learning and experience exchange with professionals and experienced birders in the research of Birds of Prey. The field trip on 13 Oct. at Kenting watched migrating raptors was great.

3. A programme of the Cable TV is going to introduce the Kite-watching in Hong Kong. The Kite group was invited, outdoor filming scheduled on the coming 1st Nov., programme will be broadcasted on 14 Nov. 2003, Cable TV, No.1 news channel, 7:00, 9:00 and 11:00 p.m. routinely.

### 3. Tern Research Group:


Convener: H F Cheung  
 Member: Alan Chan, Marcus Ho, Shirley Lam, Jacob Lo, Yam Wing Yiu, Yu Yat Tung

Survey this year has been completed. It is a very fruitful year. There were several exciting results:

- (a) Disturbances at Shek Ngau Chau were finally under controlled.
- (b) Roseate Tern came back to breed this year in HK.
- (c) A new important Tern colony at Waglan was discovered.
- (d) Education programme on Terns were successfully. We are going to finish the Environment and Conservation Fund report this year, and have started plans for next year.

### 4. Egret Research Group:

Convener: Captain Wong  
 Member: Luke Woo, Kwok Hon Kai  
 Consultant: Lew Young

1. A review paper of egret nesting trend between 1989 and 2002 is nearly finished. A regression analysis was made to study the relationship between the weather (rainfall and temperature) and the nest number. Unfortunately, no clear association was found.
2. Egret Research Group (ERG) has prepared a work plan for 2004. Two desktop studies, i.e. impact of wiring and recreational fishponds on egrets and herons will be made. Also, ERG has considered applying for funding for a breeding success and movement study and a researcher from France will help if funding is granted. 



## Conservation Policy: Overdue and underwhelming

At long last the Hong Kong Government has begun the Conservation Policy consultation it promised back in 1999! In fact by the time this article appears the three-month public consultation period will have closed. It is to be hoped that this is just the first stage in the consultation process, as both the Review process and the new proposals from the Government have been a major disappointment.

The consultation document: "Nature Outlook" is a very slick, attractive brochure which introduces Hong Kong's biodiversity; the work of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department over the last ten years.

There is a heavy focus on the role played by the Country Parks and the diversity of wildlife they contain. However, little mention is made of the large number of species that do not fall inside the protected areas system. Many of these species depend on lowland freshwater habitats of various types, including wet agriculture (e.g. Long Valley), freshwater marshland (e.g. Luk Keng, Mui Wo, Shuen Wan) and fishponds (e.g. Ma Tso Lung). The report also fails to mention the fact that the Country Parks were neither set up nor managed to protect Hong Kong's biodiversity.

The review makes some proposals for improving conservation of sites of high ecological value on private land. These include a scoring system for evaluating these sites, a development-driven conservation model designed to allow large developments in ecologically valuable sites, and a proposal for a fund to encourage environmental NGOs to build management partnerships with landowners on sites of high ecological value.

This last proposal is as yet rather unclear, but

may provide the opportunity for HKBWS to work with both the Government (as provider of a conservation fund) and landowners to manage sites to enhance their conservation importance, avoiding the need to secure ownership through expensive land purchase. If this proposal develops it may provide the opportunity for HKBWS to begin some habitat management and monitoring at Long Valley.

Sadly, there is no mention of the contributions environmental groups have made to biodiversity conservation in Hong Kong over the last ten years. This is something of a slight to a range of groups (including HKBWS) that have contributed a huge amount of time, effort and commitment to cataloguing Hong Kong's biodiversity, promoting conservation through education, and campaigning strenuously to protect it.

While there is no doubt that the Administration has focused on private land because it contains many currently unprotected sites, it is unfortunate that this represents the full breadth of the consultation at this stage. There are several significant aspects of conservation which have not been addressed at all. These include:

- The marine environment (only Pink Dolphin and Green Turtle are mentioned)
- Endemic and threatened species (dragonflies, freshwater fish, amphibians etc)
- Convention on Biological Diversity and other international treaties on conservation
- Exotic and invasive species (e.g. mikania, catfish)
- Ecological hotspots on Government land (e.g. tern colonies)
- Hong Kong's ecological footprint (wild bird trade)



We believe that this is the best opportunity we will have to raise the profile of key bird-related conservation issues, and the HKBWS submission has focussed on these rather than the broader issues of policy which have been well covered by other groups, and by the joint submission of environmental NGOs. It is unclear what will happen to the submissions that are made, but the HKBWS submission and the joint submission can be found in the 'Conservation' section of the HKBWS website.

Let us hope that this is just the first step in the process of building a comprehensive conservation policy for Hong Kong. The Secretary of Environment, Transport and Works, Dr. Sarah Liao is to be congratulated for bringing us to the starting line of consultation. Now other senior decision-makers in the Administration need to be persuaded to work together to deliver the world class Conservation Policy the Chief Executive promised back in 1999.

### Spur Line News:

#### Road plans threaten Wetland Conservation Area and Lok Ma Chau Reserve.

At the last meeting of the Environmental Committee for the Sheung Shui- Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, the committee were shown a draft plan by the Government to build a public transport interchange (PTI) at Lok Ma Chau Station.


The current plan being proposed by the Highways Department Roads Development Office is to widen the emergency access road to the station and open it to over 300 vehicles per hour (including double-decker buses) and to cut 2,800m<sup>2</sup> from the reserve's reedbed to provide the land for the interchange! What is equally shocking, when this proposal was first made, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) were willing to allow this massive increase in

disturbance to go ahead without the need for any environmental impact assessment (EIA) or public consultation! Only strong objection from the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) persuaded EPD of the need to conduct an EIA at all!

It seems that the cause for this ludicrous scheme is that one or two Legco members believe that KCRC will have a monopoly on cross-border travel and the PTI should therefore be built to introduce "competition". Adding to the absurdity of this proposal is the fact that the current Lok Ma Chau-Hung Gang road crossing (which is less than 500 metres from Lok Ma Chau station) is being doubled in size to accommodate much more traffic and yet another cross-border highway – the Deep Bay Link is being built across Deep Bay to Shekou just a few kilometres further to the southwest!

Birds of conservation concern in the Lok Ma Chau area include Great Spotted and Imperial Eagles, Black-faced Spoonbill, Great and Little Egret, and Grey Heron. In addition, it appears that the road would create a significant threat to the mammals that use this site, including the protected Eurasian Otter.

This road would cut an important wildlife corridor, causing habitat fragmentation between Lok Ma Chau and Ma Tso Lung fishponds. Neither the Spur Line nor the current and planned Lok Ma Chau- Huang Gang roads do this because they have been raised on a viaduct and bridge respectively, whereas the road to the PTI would be at ground level.

It seems astonishing that EPD was willing to simply agree to this proposal when it fought so hard in its appeal against the first Spur Line proposal on the basis of unacceptable disturbance. Surely, EPD should have fought this time against a wholly unnecessary and highly disturbing development. 



# Mai Po update

SEPTEMBER 2003 – Lew Young

## Earthmoving in gei wai 16/17

Gei wai 16/17 is managed as one of the main roosting sites for the waterbirds that use Mai Po Nature Reserve. This is done by carefully adjusting the water level inside the gei wai over the course of the year, so that the ponds has a range of water depths, from deep to shallow, for the different birds to roost and feed in, depending on their requirements.

However, the bottom of the gei wai has been silting up over the past few decades because of mud that is brought into the pond each month when water exchange takes place. As a result, some parts of the bottom of the pond have slowly been rising and are now difficult to cover with water. These drier areas can become quickly invaded by tall grasses and so are not used by roosting birds. One such area is the bottom of the pond in front of Birdwatching Hide #3.

As a result, gei wai 16/17 will be drained down from September to December 2003 so that earthmoving works can be carried out to lower this part of the pond. A bulldozer and backhoe will be used to carry out the works, and the silt that is removed will be placed along the side of the pond. The aim is to complete the work by December 2003 but Mai Po staff will try their best to finish the work as soon as possible so that the pond can be refilled and the wintering waterbirds can once again use it for roosting and feeding.

To further minimise disturbance to the wintering waterbirds, we have lowered the water levels in a number of other gei wai (e.g. gei wai 6 and 11), so that these waterbirds can use other ponds in the reserve in the meantime.

## Dredging channels in gei wai 7

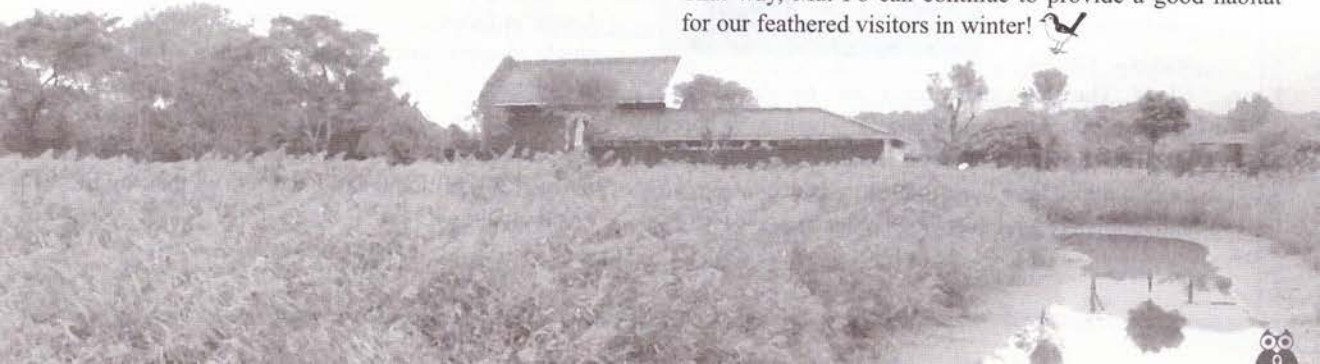
The problem of siltation is common in all the gei wai, and was even recognised by the fishermen who used to manage the Mai Po gei wai before WWF Hong Kong arrived. Silt that comes with the water that is flushed into the gei wai, settling in particular on the bottom of the perimeter channels and it has been estimated that these channels are silting up by around 1.3 cm per year!. These channels provide a deeper area of water for the shrimps and fish in the gei wai, where they can avoid the heat of the summer and the cold of water but if they become increasingly shallow, then this will affect the survival of these shrimps and fish.

As a result, a dredger on a pontoon is used to dredge out the silt that has built up in the channels on a periodic basis. In the case of gei wai 7, the perimeter channels have not been dredged for a long time, even before WWF Hong Kong took over management of the pond. As a result, the water channels in the pond have silted up and are now covered with reeds. Therefore, Mai Po staff will be using a dredger on floating pontoons to dredge this channel over the coming 12 months. However, work will temporarily stop from November to April in order to reduce disturbance to the migratory waterbirds.

The silt from the bottom of the channel that has been dredged up is usually placed on the side bunds of the pond. In the case of gei wai 7, the bunds are now heavily overgrown with trees and so trimming of some branches will have to be carried out.

## Grasscutting in Pond 20 and 24

From 1998, when earthmoving works began to turn Ponds 20 and 24 into rain-fed freshwater ponds, they have become increasingly popular as roosting sites for wintering ducks that visit Deep Bay. These ducks prefer to roost on the bunds with short grass or mud, and in the open areas of water. As a result, each year in autumn before the ducks return to Deep Bay, the tall dense grasses that have grown up along the bunds over the summer have to be cut and removed. Over the coming weeks and until the end of October, therefore, these grasses will be cut and removed. That way, Mai Po can continue to provide a good habitat for our feathered visitors in winter!







## Crows Use Cars as Nutcrackers

The corvids (crows, ravens, and their relatives) are famous for their resourcefulness and curiosity. In fact, they have the highest ratio of



brain size to body size of any birds. And now, a zoologist at Oklahoma State University believes she has observed crows using cars to crack nuts. Carolee Caffrey says she has seen American crows land on wires above a road, drop pecans onto the pavement, and not fly down to inspect or retrieve them until a car had passed.

This seems to refute earlier research, which concluded that the crows were simply dropping the nuts on the road to crack them, and were no more likely to drop nuts when a car was approaching than when the road was empty. The inference now is that the crows know what will happen to a nut when a car runs over it, and they are deliberately taking advantage of passing traffic to crack the nuts for them.



## Kingfishers Return to Guam

Three Micronesian Kingfishers returned to Guam recently as the pioneers of a programme to re-establish the species on the



island. The three male birds will be placed in a massive 90-metre square aviary where it is hoped they will thrive and establish territories. Females will be introduced later in an effort to establish a captive, and ultimately wild, breeding population.



– Steve Burrows

The birds are the offspring of the last 29 Micronesian Kingfishers, collected from the wild in a bid to save the species from extinction. Micronesian Kingfishers have been extinct in the wild since 1988. Only this species and the Guam Rail survived the devastating introduction of the brown tree snakes onto Guam. Nine other endemic species were driven to extinction by the introduced reptile.



## Albatrosses face growing peril

BirdLife International, has sounded a warning that all 21 species of the world's Albatross are now thought to face some risk of extinction. BirdLife's director, Dr Michael Rands, said: "The number of seabirds killed by longlines is increasing, as is the number of albatross species in the higher




categories of threat due to their continued use. Longline fishing, especially by pirate vessels, is the single greatest threat to these seabirds." Longliners are blamed for killing 300,000 seabirds annually, a third of them albatrosses. The birds swallow the baited hooks on the fishing lines, which can be 80 miles (130 km) long, and either die of their injuries or simply drown.





# Ringed Pintail turns up in Russia – Dead

- Paul Leader    A first-winter female Northern Pintail which was trapped and ringed in the Waterfowl Collection at Mai Po Nature Reserve on 6 February 2002 was shot near Lake Khanka (Vladivostock, Russia) on 5 April 2002. The distance was 3030 km. from Hong Kong. 

## Zino's Petrel

A new colony of Europe's rarest breeding bird, Zino's Petrel, *Pterodroma madeira*, has been found in the central mountains of the island of Madeira, Portugal.

The colony, with 20 chicks and at least 9 occupied nests, is also the largest known for this bird, which was previously thought to number only 20-30 pairs and is listed under IUCN Red List criteria as Critically Endangered.

The colony was discovered in the Pico do Areeiro area of Madeira Natural Park by the park authorities who have now closed off access to the breeding site until the exact size of the colony and potential risks from visitors are assessed. The site is located some distance from the only other three previously known colonies, all on inaccessible mountain ledges.




"This recent discovery reinforces the significance of this Important Bird Area for the conservation of this highly threatened species and moreover, it shows that more research is needed to locate and protect the breeding grounds of the species" says Helder Costa, President of SPEA, BirdLife International's Portuguese Partner.

Paulo Oliveira, head of the conservation division at the park, said that he believes further colonies may be found and that work was continuing to locate them. However, Zino's Petrel continues to teeter on the brink of extinction. In addition to threats from black rats, feral cats and humans, the proposed construction of a NATO radar station near the summit of Pico do Areeiro also poses a considerable danger to the birds.

BirdLife and SPEA have successfully campaigned for a new location for the radar in a building currently used as a hostel, thus reducing the impact of construction, and they have asked for a public Impact Assessment Study. The organisations also encouraged the European Commission (who supports a LIFE project to protect the Zino's Petrel) to ask the Portuguese Government to justify its decision to house the station near the breeding colonies and now demand the Precautionary Principle be applied, given that the area has the highest level of protection under European law.

  
**BirdLife**  
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A photograph of Zino's Petrel is available on the website <http://www.birdlife.org/news/pr/index.html> and for more information on the proposed radar station, readers can visit: <http://www.birdlife.org/news/pr/2002/11/724.html>. 



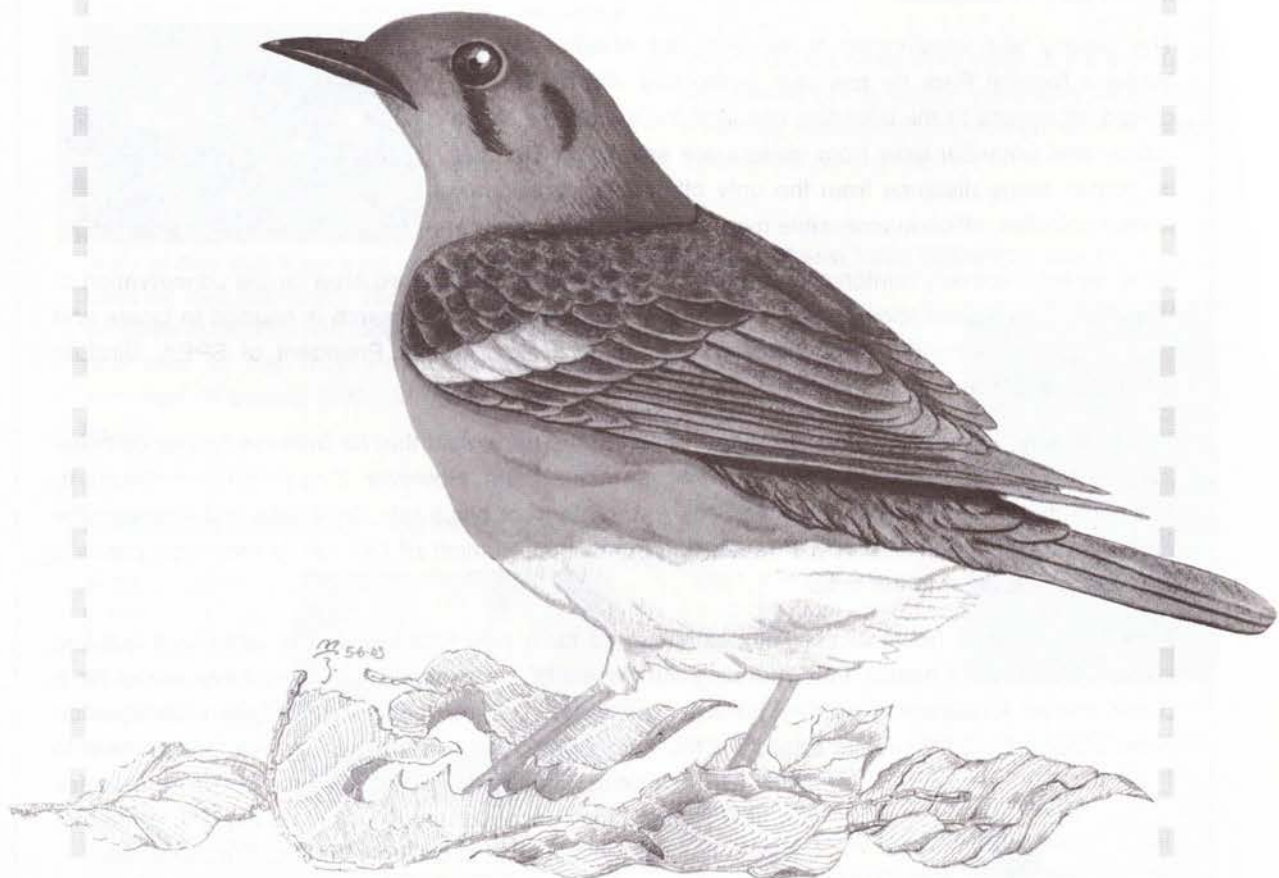
# Take a Closer Look

– Cheung Ho Fai, Lee Yuk Ying

The **Orange-headed Thrush** is a very rare bird in Hong Kong. For several years, birds used to appear at the entrance of Tai Po Kau in early mornings in the winter months. The species was also recorded breeding in Tai Po Kau in the summer around 1997.

The bird's orange head makes it quite distinctive, but its small size and secretive behaviour on the ground make it easy to confuse with Japanese Robin, which also occurs in Tai Po Kau in winter.

Hong Kong Park holds several Orange-headed thrushes and offers good opportunities for viewing them. 





# Birds and Nature

- Ko Wei Sum

There are still many people who do not realize that, despite recent development projects, Hong Kong still has a lot of wildlife treasures to offer. Nature shows itself in many forms, from the tranquil beauty of berry-covered shrub to the exciting flurry of a visiting flock of waxwings.

Like the reedbeds at Mai Po, those in Northern London seem to have little to offer at first sight, but both host a handful of shy Bitterns. As I entered a bird hide adjacent to a Bittern's haunt, I wondered what it was that brought ten strangers to a little wooden house before a stand of disarrayed vegetation. What was behind our interest in the bird, and in nature itself? Birds kindle a fascination in the world around us, and through birds, people can begin to understand nature's value.

Yet our neighbours the city birds also encourage us to look at nature. In Hong Kong the urban birds are thriving. Walk in any park and you may encounter over twenty species of common urban birds. Hearing a sharp chatter one day, I raised my binoculars and found a slender blue bird with a streamer-like tail and a red bill. Close behind came more of its kind; a family of four chasing each other through the canopy, sharing a social bond. I thought about the relationship between humans, and between humans and birds. As I watched the birds, I found myself relaxing, and my mind drifting.

As in life, the bird world has its share of characters, among them the opportunists, cunning tricksters full of resourcefulness



*A pair of waders perform a ballet-dance on a sleepy August afternoon. Perhaps the juvenile Knot in the foreground wishes it could join in.*



and invention. Mid-April is time for Magpies to raise their young, and for the last two years I have been lucky enough to witness this phenomenon at close quarters. However, the Magpie's devoted efforts were not for her own babies - but for those of the Koel. The

parasitic Koel mother had laid her egg in the Magpie's nest, and after it hatched, the Magpie's maternal instinct had taken over. As I watched the Koel soliciting food from the Magpie, I marvelled at the

versatility of nature and the varied methods birds use to re-produce successfully.

I still remember the thrill I felt when a little Plumbeous Redstart showed itself, flicking its tail and making sallies above a drain in Tai Po. At first I was most concerned about getting a photo. But after I captured the bird on film, I carried on watching it, and a thought came to me. It does not matter what we get from bird-watching; a photo, a visit to a reedbed, a 'vignette' of a foster parent feeding an oversized chick. Through the appreciation of birds, we become more aware of nature, and the need to protect it. And in the end, ensuring we all live harmoniously will bring the greatest benefits to us all.



*This Snipe, photographed at Long Valley, stood exposed in the hazy heat for more than half an hour, staring at me as I stared at it.*



*A spectacularly decorated Painted Snipe in the waterlogged fields of Long Valley. The Painted Snipe is a master of hiding and camouflage, and I have seen birds seemingly vanish before my eyes.*





# An Appointment with Terns

- BWA

## Tern Island

Located at Mirs Bay to the northeast of Hong Kong, Tern Island is a small islet unknown to most people. However, hundreds of terns come there to breed every summer. Reference to the island can be found in a Chinese book titled *Exploring the Remote Attractions of Hong Kong*, published in the 1980's, which advises the reader that, "Many exotic birds nest among the cracks and crevices in the rocks. People who land on the island may pick up eggs." According to *The Avifauna of Hong Kong*, the presence of breeding terns was first recorded in June 1985, when nests of Roseate Terns were discovered by the Society. Breeding was interrupted between the late 1980's and early 1990's, when the island became a smuggler's outpost in Mirs Bay. Breeding gradually resumed towards the middle of the decade.



Since 1998, HF Cheung and YT Yu of HKBWS have been conducting tern surveys at the island each breeding season. The progress of breeding was monitored and systematic counts were recorded. The studies began to be funded by AFCD in 2001 and more comprehensive reports appeared as formal technical papers.

The recent rise of ecotourism has seen the increasing popularity of sea cruises as a summer pastime. On weekends and holidays, most outlying islands in Hong Kong are flooded with tourists. Although Tern Island is located in a remote corner on the border, it has not been spared from the deluge – a rocky feature called "Tripartite" on the island proves an attraction for hikers. When the weather is fine, anglers also land on the island to spend the day.

## Tern Conservation

Everyone has the right to enjoy himself on an uninhabited island like Tern Island. However, few people appreciate that such act could seriously affect the breeding terns. Out of curiosity, most people find it hard to resist the temptation to pick up and play with the eggs, or even bring



them home as souvenirs. Even if the visitors don't touch anything, their very presence on the island can scare away the adult birds, leaving the eggs and chicks to be baked by the sun. Some chicks will also fall from the cliffs when they flee in panic.



As human disturbance at Tern Island has increased year by year, some bird-watchers lodged their complaints with AFCD last summer, demanding that the problem be properly addressed.

The Society also discussed with AFCD the possibility of more positive measures, such as closing the island during the breeding season. It was also suggested that the place should be designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Unfortunately, the proposal was not accepted. AFCD finally decided to take an 'educational' approach, producing an attractive leaflet on tern conservation for distribution among local tours. Formal advice was also issued to tour operators and hiking groups, asking them not to disturb breeding terns.

A large warning notice has been posted at the jetty on Tern Island, and a chain fence was set up around the core area on the island to mark the boundary, beyond which visitors should not enter.

In addition, AFCD also conducted an experiment with artificial nest boxes this year. 16 nest boxes and 88 tern dummies were placed on a slope at Port Island (Chek Chau), together with some loudspeakers that reproduce the calls of terns. The objective was to encourage the real terns to start a new breeding colony away from Tern Island. A few more nest boxes were placed at Tern Island to test the birds' acceptance.



At the same time, the Society has successfully obtained sponsorship from the Environmental and Conservation Fund for a tern conservation project, which includes tern surveys and publicity on tern conservation. To undertake the project, a Tern Research Group comprising eight members from the Society was established in November last year.

## Starting Out

Our first task was to write an article on terns. Following a highly successful piece on Black-faced Spoonbill last year, we produced another article on terns in the July / August 03 issue of the Hong Kong Discovery magazine. The work covered terns that can be found in Hong Kong and their breeding ecology. Members of the Tern Research Group spent several weeks on the work, collecting information, writing passages, selecting photographs, producing illustrations and proof-reading the draft. The final version of the article was published in July 03.

One of the products of the Tern Research Project is a pamphlet. Using the previous tern article as a starting point, we occupied ourselves again with rewriting, editing, and working with a printer. The product, written in Chinese and titled "Genies from the Sea", was distributed to participants during tern watching tours. Despite its relatively plain layout, the pamphlet was well-received due to its informative content, and interesting photographs and illustrations.

## Weekly Surveys

The main task of the Tern Conservation Project was to conduct weekly surveys on breeding terns



in the Mirs Bay area. During the four months between mid-May and mid-September, AFCD and the Tern Research Group counted the birds in the area and monitored the progress of breeding every week. The work was shared equally between the two parties, with each taking the lead every alternate week. Our surveys were done on Saturdays. Starting from Ma Liu Shui Pier, the route covered the Tolo Channel, Tap Mun, Kung Chau, Port Island and Tern Island. AFCD did their part on Sundays, usually with one or two members from our group. In addition to counting, they also landed on Tern Island and Port Island to check the nest boxes. The boat also ferried AFCD wardens to and

from their half-day posts on Tern Island.

The first AFCD survey was carried out on May 18, when two tour groups happened to visit Tern Island. After some waiting at Tern Island, representatives from AFCD and the Society gave a briefing on tern breeding and conservation on board the tour cruisers. Both vessels circled around the island with us to enjoy the spectacular view of flying terns. Acting on our advice, they left without landing on the island; the first success for both AFCD and ourselves against human disturbance to the colony. Another tour group visited Tern Island during the Dragon Boat Festival, but we were not there at that time. However, from photos posted on the Internet by one of the tourists, it appears they also followed AFCD's advice and left without landing.

AFCD's approach appears to be working. Very few people, anglers included, were seen on Tern Island during subsequent surveys. Other than AFCD's bi-weekly nest box inspections, the amount of human disturbance has clearly been reduced this summer. Probably because of this, the number of Roseate Terns increased from less than 10 last year to over 30 this season. Some chicks were also found as well – the first time since 2000. In addition,



Bridled and Black-naped Terns finished their breeding activity earlier than before (of course, the fewer number of typhoons was also a contributing factor).

From our observations, Bridled Terns prefer more open waters and seldom appear south of Tolo Channel. Black-naped and Roseate Terns, on the other hand, are more widespread and can be seen anywhere from Hoi Ha to Mirs Bay. By the end of July and early August, Black-naped and Roseate juveniles began to fly. Peak counts of over 200 birds were found around Kung Chau and Tap Mun, providing the best opportunity for watching these two species. The period lasted only about 3 weeks. No Black-naped or Roseates could be found again after mid-August. Bridled Tern chicks mainly stayed around Tern Island and did not start to migrate until mid-August. Some birds were still seen around the island in mid-September.





## Large-scale Surveys

Large-scale surveys were conducted to provide a more complete understanding of terns breeding in different waters in Hong Kong. The following three routes were taken:

- **Northeast Waters:**

Starting from Wong Shek Pier, visiting Kat O, Double Haven and then Sai Kung via Tai Long Wan and Long Ke Wan, finishing at Sai Kung Pier

- **Southeast Waters:**

Starting from Sai Kung Pier, visiting the Ninepin Group, Po Toi Islands, finishing at Aberdeen

- **Southern Waters:**

Starting from Aberdeen, visiting the Soko Islands and finishing at Aberdeen



To make the best use of these rare occasions, interested members of the Society were invited to join and provide help each time. This both maximized the sighting of terns and allowed more people to appreciate the work and have some fun at the same time. As the surveys were carried out on open waters, we had some “pirate-ship” rides on rough seas and faced our share of inclement weather. These included a thunderstorm on June 14th, where there was a real danger of being struck by lightning, and a second near-miss at Double Haven, where we were stranded for one hour in thunderstorm when the engine of our boat failed. Despite the bad weather, we were well compensated on two counts: breeding of Black-naped Terns was confirmed around Kat O, and we logged a total of 12 sightings of the White-bellied Sea Eagle during the trip. When we approached Sai Kung Pier, everyone had terrific views of a WBSE swooping down to pick up something from the water, just 20 meters from the boat.

Poor weather was encountered again during the survey on southeast waters in early September. The wind was not particularly strong but the sea was quite rough. With visibility falling to just 30 meters, our boat ploughed forward under heavy rain, surrounded in all directions by a curtain of white spray. We had to take refuge in the cabin and hold on tightly to the fixtures to steady ourselves. While watching splashes of water and rain against the windows, we were surprised to find a few Common Terns foraging over the water, totally undeterred by the poor weather. We also had a brief glimpse of a fascinating sight: a Bridled Tern skimming over the water, with the waves splashing against the rocks in the background. Sadly, the



bird was gone by the time I picked up the camera.

Tern surveys on fine days were a real treat. While on the look out for terns, we could enjoy a wide variety of spectacular landscapes around Hong Kong, including those at Kat O and Double Haven, the heavily eroded rocks and caves along the coast of Sai Kung, and the highly individualistic islets of the Ninepin Group and Soko Islands.

A total of eight Large-scale surveys were completed this summer, two for each for northeast and southern waters, and four for the southeast. The main findings were:

- Among the three species that bred in Hong Kong, Bridled Terns were the most numerous with a count of over 600, Black-naped Terns came second at about 200, while there were only about 70 Roseates
- Black-naped terns were found in all three survey routes. Apparently this is the most adaptable species
- In comparison, Bridleds and Roseates were more restricted in their choice of breeding sites - they were only found to breed at Tern Island and another island in the southeast. One Roseate chick was also found at Kung Chau.
- The island in the southeast is the second largest tern-breeding colony in Hong Kong. All three species were present, giving a total count of about 170 birds.
- The colony at Soko Island was the smallest. Only 14 Black-naped Terns were found.

Two follow-up visits were made to the tern colony in the southeast in end of August / early September. The Black-naped terns and Roseates had already left by that time, but some Bridleds were still lingering at the island. These trips also saw the appearance of passage migrants such as Common, Aleutian and Whiskered Terns.



## Tern Watching Tours

In order to improve the public's understanding about tern conservation, 7 tern watching tours were organized this summer, bringing about 200 people to see the birds for themselves at Tap Mun and Mirs Bay. Participants of the tours included university students in ecology and biology, teachers, elderly bird watching interpreters, local tour groups and conservation associations.

The 3-hour tours began from Ma Liu Shui Pier or Wong Shek Pier, visiting Tap Mun, Kung Chau, Port Island and finishing with a tour to Tern Island. Tourists were first primed with a briefing on the appearance and ecology of terns. A copy of the pamphlet was then distributed, followed by guided tern watching at individual islands. The response was very positive. The tourists were particularly impressed by the sight of hundreds of birds taking wing together at Tern Island. Through discussions and questionnaires, we found that most participants agreed that current conservation efforts should be strengthened. Most people did not object to closing the island during the breeding season.

Some strange behaviour was noticed among the birds during the regular survey at Tern Island in the morning of August 9. The birds were flying high in the air and not landing on the island; something they had never done during previous surveys. Attack by Peregrine Falcon was ruled out after a complete scan of the island. When we visited the island again in the afternoon with a tour group, all the birds were gone! Having got used to hearing numerous bird calls in normal surveys, the silence of the scene was quite eerie. It was rather embarrassing to have nothing to show the tour group after telling them the wonderful sights they would be seeing. Fortunately, the group understood that Nature has her own rules and no one complained, even though we returned empty-handed.

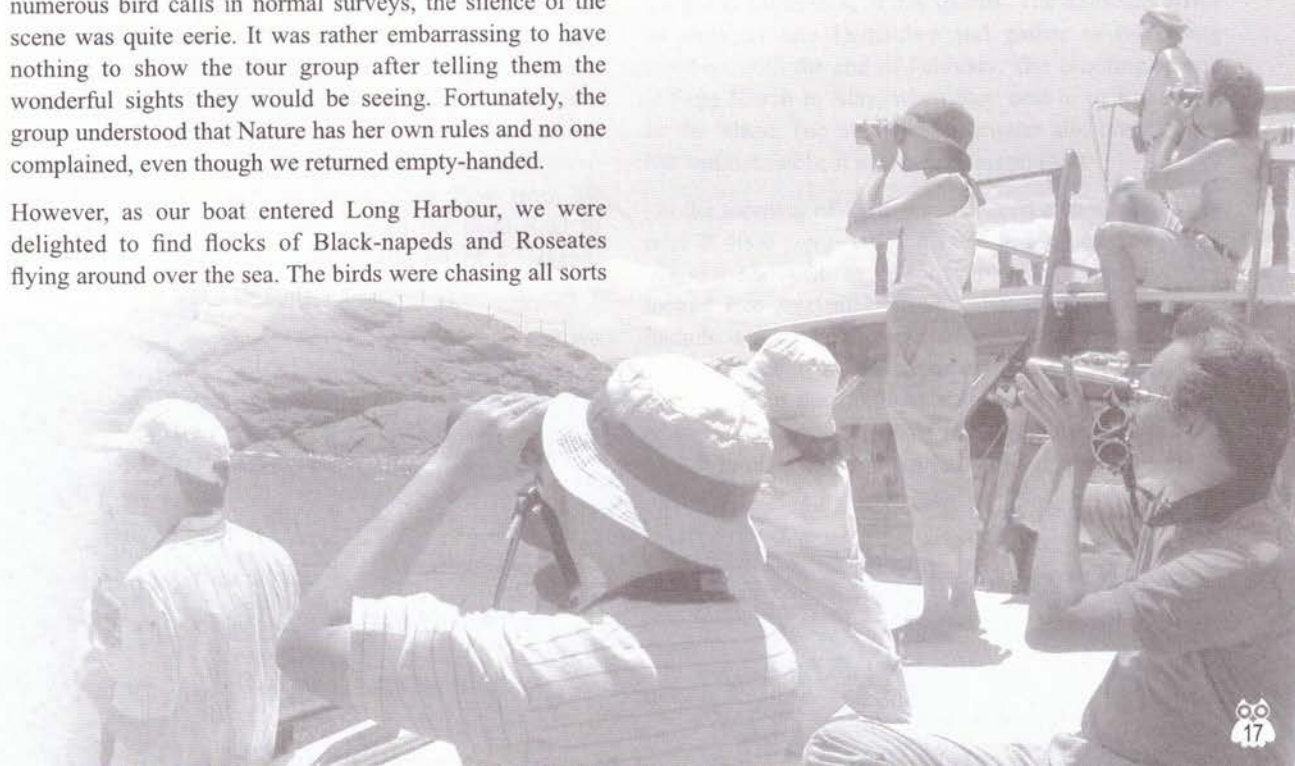
However, as our boat entered Long Harbour, we were delighted to find flocks of Black-napeds and Roseates flying around over the sea. The birds were chasing all sorts

of moving vessels in the area, coming to as close as 2 to 3 meters from the boat. The group enjoyed superb views and took lots of photographs. The show continued until the birds eventually dispersed near Wong Shek Pier. The boat-chase was only seen once this season, and the Black-napeds and Roseates were all gone before the next survey. We believe that such behaviour is an indicator of their readiness for the return to the ocean.

What was more puzzling was the discovery that the Bridled Terns at Tern Island had not left. On the Sunday after the tour, some 300 birds were seen again. The counts then declined gradually to 7 by the middle of September. This raises some interesting questions. Why did all the birds leave the island on August 9? Where had they gone? Could those that appeared afterwards have come from another population? In the absence of solid evidence, these questions remain unanswered.

## Should we disclose the Locations of the Breeding Sites?

Members of the Society had a vigorous debate over whether we should disclose the locations of the breeding sites to the public. Some thought that we should reveal the locations to improve understanding and raise concern among the public. Others were worried that this might bring adverse effects to the birds. After some intense discussion, the conclusion was not to disclose the sites, for





the time being. Current protection measures are still inadequate, and if we disclose the locations of the sites, there is no guarantee that a subsequent flood of sight-seeking tourists would not bring additional disturbances.

Our work did catch the attention of some newspaper reporters, who joined some of the surveys to find out what was happening. A story eventually appeared in full colour on the front page of Ming Pao on August 3, under the mysterious-sounding title "Roseate Terns Give Birth in Secret Quarter".

## What Happened to AFCD's Nest Boxes?

Our surveys found no terns using the nest boxes at Port Island, but two pairs of Black-naped terns raised at least two chicks at a rocky recess not far away from the site. Perhaps the recess was a more natural and safer nesting place for the birds. Terns were seen occasionally inside the nest boxes on Tern Island, and chicks did appear in some boxes as well. AFCD announced the results of the experiment in mid-August. Details can be found in their press release.

## The Next Step

With the completion of the last weekly survey on September 14, the Tern Conservation Project has come to a close for this season. We would like to thank all members and our Project Officer for their contributions, which are so essential to the success of the project.

Probably as a result of the guided tours, news about the spectacular views at Tern Island has been spreading among tour operators and hikers. In a recent sea cruise tour, tern watching at Tern Island was included as an attraction. We therefore have an obligation to monitor the development of such activity, in case further disturbance is brought to the island in the name of ecotourism.

Continuing from the work completed in this summer, the Tern Research Group plans to proceed further with tern conservation next year. Some initial ideas are:

- Continuing the weekly and large-scales surveys to monitor tern breeding
- Organizing self-financed tern watching tours. These will serve the dual purposes of spreading the correct conservation message and setting an example of best practices for potential tour operators
- Carrying out regular patrols at Tern Island to spot and report illegal activities that create disturbance to the breeding terns
- Submitting an application to designate Tern Island as a Site of Special Scientific Interest to provide a better basis for further protection

The Society will apply to various sources for funding to support next year's work. Interested members are welcome to join the Tern Research Group. Your contribution will surely help to keep the appointments with terns going next year!





# Birding Kyushu

– Alex & Catherine Choi

***in February (19/2/2001 - 26/2/2001)***

By February, it is already late winter in Kyushu. The weather is mild and the days are usually calm and sunny. In this month, the wintering cranes have not yet returned to Siberia but a rare and interesting seabird, the Japanese Murrelet, has already arrived to prepare for breeding. These species were our targets on our birding trip from 20th to 23rd February of this year.



Arasaki, a freshwater marshland made up of paddyfields, is a major wintering ground for cranes in Japan and in East Asia. It is close to the town of Izumi, 1.5 hours by train from Kagoshima or 2.5 hours from Fukuoka. There are direct flights from Hong Kong to both cities. From Izumi, we rented a car at the train station and explored the region. Driving in the countryside added to the pleasure of the journey.

This winter, a new record of 13000-plus cranes gathered in Arasaki. Around eleven thousand of these were Hooded Cranes, with White-naped Cranes making up the remainder. There were of course some stragglers among the big flocks. We saw one Siberian White Crane, two Common Cranes and one Sandhill Crane. The cranes were fed by the warden of a minshuku where we stayed for two nights. Every morning, they flew from all directions from their roosts towards the paddyfield in front of our room. Although a little bit of a 'staged' setting, it was still a magnificent view.

The area is also very good for lowland birding and we recorded a total of 55 species in 2 days. Besides the cranes, we saw Ruddy Crake (a very nice tick), Northern Lapwing, Common Snipe, Dusky and Pale Thrush, Penduline Tit, Black-faced, Chestnut-eared, Rustic, Common Reed and Siberian Meadow Bunting. Oriental Greenfinch, Water Pipit and Rook were also present in great numbers. The greenfinches here are gregarious and tend to feed near the ground, unlike those we have observed in Hong Kong and Szechuan, which stay high up in trees in small flocks. We also found a pair of Mandarin Ducks among Teal and Wigeon in a river

mouth. A group of Swedish birders also saw common spoonbill and long billed plover, but we missed them both.

On the 22nd, we took the train and headed for Kadogawa, a small town north of Miyasaki on the east coast of Kyushu. The Japanese Murrelet breeds on the island of Biroujima, which is about 3 km off the coast. This is the largest known breeding ground in the world, with a breeding population of around 3000, about half the global population of this species. The murrelets arrive as early as late December and gather in increasing numbers until the end of February. The breeding season is from March to May, when they nest in rock crevices on the island. The Streaked Shearwater also breeds there but, unfortunately, it was out of season for us.

On the morning of 23rd, we chartered a small passenger boat at 4000 yen (~HK\$270) and headed for the island. We saw about 30 to 40 birds in the sea nearby. They looked like Ancient Murrelets, but distinctive features include a grey bill instead of yellow and a crown of white extending to the nape, with a tuft of black hair growing from the front. At a distance, it appears like a black crown with a pair of thick white eyebrows. The crest is evident only when wind blows up the hair tuft.

At noontime, we explored the rivers around Kadogawa for kingfishers. Instead, we saw a flock of around 20 Mandarin ducks in one river (Izusukawa). This was a really nice surprise for us. In the evening, we returned to Fukuoka.


The rest of the trip was taken up mainly with shopping



## Birding Kyushu (con't)

and one side trip to Hakata Bay, which was not very fruitful except for a Peregrine Falcon.

One discovery for this trip was a new book called "A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Japan". Most of Maki Hirozo's photographs are of excellent quality, with neutral lighting. There are two particularly good photos of the mysterious Scaly-sided Merganser (male and female). There is also a map showing the worldwide distribution for each species. The price is 3500 yen (~HKD 350) if ordered from the Japanese bookshop in Hong Kong (ISBN4-582-54230-1). The Japanese text is comprehensible for Chinese readers.

I would recommend this relaxing trip for every birder who also likes sashimi and tatami. 

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## Hong Kong Bird News, mid May – August 2003 – Richard Lewthwaite

[Note: these are unchecked records. Members are reminded of the importance of submitting all records on cards or electronically.]

### May (second half)

Except for a Mountain Tailorbird singing at Ng Tung Chai on 21st, all noteworthy reports in this part of the month concerned non-passerines.

On boat trips into eastern waters on 25th and 31st up to 400 Bridled, 105 Black-naped and 12 Roseate Terns were logged, as well as 6 White-winged and 10 Common Terns. On 26th, a Black Bittern was seen at Kam Tin, and on 28th there were 13 Nordmann's Greenshank, (presumably a record count for the time of year), and two Asian Dowitchers at Mai Po.

### June

Highlights of the first week of the month were a Brown Booby at Po Toi on 4th, six Black-faced Spoonbills, two Greater Painted Snipe chicks and still five Nordmann's Greenshank, all at Mai Po on 5th, and a singing Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo at Ng Tung Chai on 6th, the latest ever report.

Among birds reported at Mai Po on 20th were six Black-faced Spoonbills, two Nordmann's Greenshanks and a

particular cause for celebration, two Black-winged Stilt chicks; the first known instance of successful breeding for this species in Hong Kong.


A boat trip on 21st brought reports of up to 70 Bridled, 70 Black-naped and seven Roseate Terns, apparently founding a new nesting colony on the rocks next to Waglan, and 80 Pacific Swifts potentially nesting at the Ninepins.

### July

Most years, very few reports of birds of note are phoned in to Birdline in July. This year, due to an equipment failure, none at all were received.



### August

Boat trips into eastern and southern waters provided the reports of interest in the first three weeks of the month. A Lesser Frigatebird, a Swinhoe's Egret and a Greater Crested Tern were logged on 14th, and 150 Bridled and 12 Aleutian Terns on 23rd.

Subsequently, there were reports of three Eurasian Hobbies at Hong Lok Yuen on 24th, two Grey-headed Lapwings at Kam Tin on 27th (the earliest ever in autumn), and the first Sooty Flycatcher of the autumn at Plunkett's Road on 30th. 



# Coming Activities

Date	Leader / Speaker	Activity / Gathering location	Time	Difficulty
3 Jan 2004 (Sat)	Choi Chong Pak (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	<b>Kowloon Park</b> ** 08:30 McDonald, Kowloon Park	08:30 – 11:00	X
7 Jan 2004 (Wed)	Tsim Siu Tai Kite Research Group	<b>Indoor meeting: &lt;White-bellied Sea Eagle Study &amp; Kite Research in HK&gt;</b> Room 1113, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (Member \$10, Non-member \$30)	19:00 – 20:30	X
11 Jan 2004 (Sun)	Shirley Lam Henry Lui	<b>Aberdeen Country Park &amp; Magazine Gap</b> 14:30 Admiralty MTR Station Hang Seng Bank	14:30 – 17:30	X
18 Jan 2004 (Sun)	Chan Ming Ming 2568 3004 Luk Tsun Pun	<b>Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve</b> 08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark (Tsung Tsai Yuen)	08:00 – 13:00	XXX
	Chen Chi Po Li Ngan (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	<b>Sha Kiu Village/Mong Tseung/ Yuen Long</b> ** 08:00 CityBus #968 bus stop (HongkongBank Headquarter, Central)	08:00 – 16:00	XX
31 Jan & 1 Feb 2004 (Sat & Sun)	Au Chun Yan Apache Lau	<b>Records 202 – Birdwatching Competition 2004</b>		XXX
7 Feb 2004 (Sat)	Choi Chong Pak Chan Man Cheung 9623 7226 (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	<b>Hong Kong Park</b> ** 08:30 Museum of Tea Ware, Hong Kong Park	08:30 – 11:00	X
	Luk Tsun Pun Ronley Lee	<b>Lunar New Year Gathering and Indoor meeting &lt;Photograph of China&gt;</b> Conference Hall, HK Observatory (Members only)	15:00 – 18:00	
15 Feb 2004 (Sun)	Mike Chalmers William Wong Tsim Siu Tai	<b>Mai Po (afternoon)</b> 10:30 Kowloon Tong KCR Station (Kent Road exit) <b>or</b> 11:30 Mai Po carpark coach leaves at 17:30 and back to Kowloon Tong at 18:30  	11:30 – 17:30	XX
22 Feb 2004 (Sun)	Wong Chiu Shui Tsui Kam Fung (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	<b>Mai Po</b> ** 08:00 CityBus #969 bus stop (HongkongBank Headquarter, Central) (Only for those who have their own Mai Po Entry Permit)	08:00 – 15:00	XX
	Richard Lewthwaite Hung Wai Ming	<b>Tsim Bei Tsui</b> 09:00 Tsim Bei Tsui Carpark	09:00 – 15:00	XX
25 Feb 2004 (Wed)	Yu Yat Tung	<b>Indoor meeting &lt;Identification of Gulls &gt;</b> Room 1113, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (Member \$10, Non-member \$30)	19:00 – 20:30	X

\*\* **Crested Bulbul Club Activity** –  
These activities are led by elderly nature interpreters, members are  
welcome to join with elderly members of their families.












Transportation  
arrangement











Please fill in the booking  
slip and return



Date	Leader / Speaker	Activity / Gathering location	Time	Difficulty
29 Feb 2004 (Sun)	Cheung Ho Fai Ada Chow Captain Wong	<b>Bird Watching Class (Kowloon Park)</b> 08:00 Tsim Sha Tsui MTR Kowloon Park exit 	08:00 – 11:00	X
	Jimmy Chim Apache Lau	<b>Tai Lam Chung</b> 08:30 Tai Lam Marine Police Base 52M bus stop. (opposite to Grand Pacific Views)	08:30 – 13:00	XX*
6 Mar 2004 (Sat)	Choi Chong Pak Tsang Wa (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	<b>Hong Kong Zoological &amp; Botanical Garden</b> ** 08:30 The Kiosk	08:30 – 11:00	X
7 Mar 2004 (Sun)	Cheung Ho Fai Wong Chun Yu	<b>Bird Watching Class (Tai Po Kau, Long Valley)</b> 08:00 Kowloon Tong KCR Station (Kent Road exit)   16:00 Back to Kowloon Tong	08:00 – 16:00	XXX
14 Mar 2004 (Sun)	Cheung Ho Fai Ada Chow Alan Chan	<b>Bird Watching Class (Mai Po)</b> 08:00 Kowloon Tong KCR Station (Kent Road 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
14 Mar 2004 (Sun)	Chen Chi Po Hon So (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	<b>Kam Tin</b> ** 08:00 CityBus #968 bus stop (HongkongBank Headquarter, Central)	08:00 – 13:00	XXX
21 Mar 2004 (Sun)	Ho Man Fai Tam Yiu Leung	<b>Tai Mo Shan</b> 08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Station Hang Seng Bank	08:00 – 13:00	XXX
28 Mar 2004 (Sun)	Luk Tsun Pun Stanley Ng Shirley Lam	<b>Mai Po</b> 08:00 Kowloon Tong KCR Station (Kent Road 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
31 Mar 2004 (Wed)	Mike Leven	<b>Indoor meeting &lt;Spring Migration&gt;</b> Room 1113, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (Member \$10, Non-member \$30)	19:00 – 20:30	X
11 April 2004 (Sun)	Mike Turnbull Au Chun Yan	<b>Boat Trip: Lamma Channel</b> 08:00 Aberdeen Public Pier (near Ocean Court) 16:00 back to Aberdeen Public Pier (Member \$150, Non-member \$200)  	08:00 – 16:00	XXX
	Wong Chiu Shui Ng Yan Lai (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	<b>Tsim Bei Tsui &amp; San Pui Ho</b> ** 08:00 CityBus #969 bus stop (HongkongBank Headquarter, Central)	08:00 – 16:00	XX



Date	Leader / Speaker	Activity / Gathering location	Time	Difficulty
18 April 2004 (Sun)	Ying Hak King Lo Kar Man	<b>Long Valley</b> 08:00 Yin Kong carpark	08:00 – 13:00	X
25 April 2004 (Sun)	Yu Yat Tung Forrest Fong Ho Man Fai	<b>Mai Po (afternoon)</b> 10:30 Kowloon Tong KCR Station (Kent Road exit) <b>or</b> 11:30 Mai Po carpark coach leaves at 17:30 and back to Kowloon Tong at 18:30  	11:30 – 17:30	XX
9 May 2004 (Sun)	Cheung Ho Fai Marcus Ho	<b>Boat Trip: Po Toi, Wanglan Island</b> 08:00 Aberdeen Public Pier (near Ocean Court) 16:00 back to Aberdeen Public Pier (Member \$150, Non-member \$200)  	08:00 – 16:00	XXX
16 May 2004 (Sun)	Alan Chan Shirley Lam	<b>Tap Mun Tern Survey</b> 08:15 Ma Liu Shiu Pier  	08:15 – 14:00	XXX
23 May 2004 (Sun)	Luk Tsun Pun Tai Sheung Lai	<b>Mai Po (afternoon)</b> 10:30 Kowloon Tong KCR Station (Kent Road exit) <b>or</b> 11:30 Mai Po carpark coach leaves at 17:30 and back to Kowloon Tong at 18:30  	11:30 – 17:30	XX

**\*\* Crested Bulbul Club Activity –**

*These activities are led by elderly nature interpreters, members are welcome to join with elderly members of their families.*

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

**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) by returning the attendance slip with a cheque in English made out to the **“Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Ltd”** OR
- (2) by depositing the fee into the A/C no. 534-361423-838 of Hongkong Bank in favour of **“Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Ltd”**. Please send the booking slip in as well to confirm your payment and attendance.

 Transportation arrangement  Please fill in the booking slip and return

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



## Activity Booking Slip

### ► Mai Po Trip

I wish to reserve places for \_\_\_\_\_ members and \_\_\_\_\_ non-members for the following Mai Po tour :

- \*  15 Feb (Sun pm)       28 Mar (Sun)       25 Apr (Sun pm)       23 May (Sun pm)

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

- \* Coach fare:  \_\_\_\_\_ x HK\$40/Member       \_\_\_\_\_ x HK\$20/Student member  
 \_\_\_\_\_ x HK\$60/Guest #

# *Non-members joining Mai Po trips will have to pay the coach fare irrespective of whether they make use of the coach. Members not using the coach do not need to pay coach fare.*

### ► Boat Trip

I wish to reserve places for \_\_\_\_\_ members and \_\_\_\_\_ non-members for the following boat trip :

- \*  11 Apr : Po Toi, Lamma Channel (HK\$150/member, HK\$200/non-members)  
 9 May : Po Toi, Wanglan Island (HK\$150/member, HK\$200/non-members)  
 16 May : Tap Mun (HK\$150/member, HK\$200/non-members)

### ► Bird Watching Class

I wish to reserve places for \_\_\_\_\_ members and \_\_\_\_\_ non-members for the Bird Watching Class :

3 indoor meetings on 25 Feb 2004, 3 Mar 2004 & 10 Mar 2004 at Room 1107, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, 8 Austin Rd, Kowloon

3 outings on 29 Feb 2004, 7 Mar 2004 and 14 Mar 2004

(HK\$300/member, HK\$400/non-members)

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 **The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Ltd, G.P.O. Box 12460, Hong Kong (member activity)***

*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





林夜鷹 (南丫島) – 黃天華 Savanna Nightjar (Lamma Island) – Wong Tin Wa



灰頭椋鳥 (九龍公園) – 文緯明 Chestnut-tailed Starling (Kowloon Park) – Man Chup Ming





赤腹鷹 (蒲台島) – 張浩輝 Chinese Goshawk (Po Toi Island) – Cheung Ho Fai



黃斑葦鶉 (蒲台島) – 江敏兒、黃理沛 Yellow Bittern (Po Toi Island) – Michelle Kong, Peter Wong