



bulletin

會員通訊

193

Autumn 2004 ~ 秋



棕頭鴉雀 (大帽山)  
Vinous-throated Parrotbill (Tai Mo Shan)  
- 壞蛋 1 號

家燕 (米埔)  
- 深藍  
Barn Swallow (Mai Po)  
- Owen Chiang



# The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited

(Approved Charitable Institution of a Public Character)

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HKBWS Bulletin is published quarterly by  
The HKBWS Ltd.

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Front cover : Japanese Yellow Bunting –  
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Design : Puk Yuk Yin, Stanley Chan

Printing : Contemporary Development Company

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## Webmaster

Mr. Lee Kwok Shing

## Staff

<i>Manager (Administration and Projects)</i>	Ms. Carrie Ma
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## From the chairman

By the time you read this bulletin, the Annual General Meeting probably has already taken place and I would no longer be chairman of the Executive Committee. The running of the Society would be in the hands of younger and more energetic people.

The healthy development of an organization depends on nourishment in the form of diversity of ideas and thoughts. But all individuals have their own inclinations and I could not possibly be an exception. I do not want my limited perspectives to become a blockage to the long-term, balanced development of the Society. I have therefore chosen to step down, to let fresh minds and new hands contribute to the Society's growth.

As chairman of the Executive Committee for seven years, it was a period of happiness and richness in life. Members participated actively in the work of the Society, helping establish bird-watching as a respectable hobby locally and turning "birds" into the most-talked-about subject in nature conservation in Hong Kong. More people now care about birds and their habitat. An increasing number of people feel the joy of Life through bird-watching. It makes me immensely happy.

Many people have worked hard for the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. I would like to express my most sincere thanks to them all. Stepping down does not mean running away. I shall continue doing whatever I could for the Society.

See you while watching birds!

C Y Lam



## 2004 Honours List

Hong Kong Government published the 2004 Honours List in the Government Gazette on 1 July 2004. Congratulations to Dr Ng Cho Nam, who is awarded the Bronze Bauhinia Star (BBS) for his contribution to environmental protection and nature conservation in Hong Kong. Dr Ng has also contributed various support and advice to the HKBWS Conservation Committee. During the “Save Long Valley Campaign”, he worked together with the Conservation Committee and members of the Society in the front line. At that time, environmental journalists described that they have “...learnt lessons on environment” after each interview with Dr Ng. As far as we know, some environmental journalists chose to take Masters Degree courses on the environment after the Campaign.

## HKBWS Technical Reports

Starting from September, there will be a new on-line publication – HKBWS Technical Report. It is a collection of technical reports on birds of Hong Kong and mainland China. The arrangement provides a platform for HKBWS Research Groups and HKBWS members to present their findings in a systematic manner. Examples are: (i) Research Reports, (ii) Trip Reports, (iii) Observation notes on special behaviour, and (iv) Long-term observation of a species. All members of the HKBWS are welcome to contribute. For details, please visit: [www.hkbws.org.hk](http://www.hkbws.org.hk)



## Photo Gallery, membership affairs, etc.

You might find that we have more new faces at the Project Office. They are George Ho, Connie Lee and Betty Hui, who are helping us to share the work of handling the photo gallery, membership applications and magazine corner. Thanks to them for their time and kind support to the Society.

We are looking for volunteers to help us with education and publicity, production of education

material, preparation of articles and proof-reading, collection of records, field surveys, etc. Please e-mail us and let us know in which areas you can contribute.

In addition, to improve the existing photo gallery for future education and publicity (including newspaper articles), publication of bulletins and annual report, members are encouraged to deposit copies of their pictures at the Project Office. Prior approval will be obtained from photographers, and we will acknowledge the name of the photographer for each usage. Members are welcome to send us pictures in JPG or TIFF format by e-mail ([hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk)) or by mail to G.P.O. Box 12460, Hong Kong (please mark For “HKBWS photo gallery” on the envelope).

Members who can offer long-term support by spending Saturdays afternoons, or one or two evenings at the Society office to handle the photo gallery, please feel free to get in touch with us.

## “Hong Kong Bird Report 1999 & 2000”

The Hong Kong Bird Report has been sent together with the previous bulletin to individual members. Student members, elderly members and members who wish to obtain an extra copy are welcome to purchase it at the HKBWS Office, the price is HK\$120.



In order to reach the normal publication schedule within 3 years, members will find we have chosen a new cover for the HKBR. We hope that this is a signal to show that we want to reach the target and improve the bird report.

Please give us your support by contributing your bird watching records. For details of record submission, please refer to page 280.

We have started work on the 2001 & 2002 Report. Members are very welcome to offer us support by contributing articles on academic or ecological studies, sharing of bird identification skills, special records or short articles on interesting field observations. Please submit articles to the Annual Report Editor before November 2004 (in MS Word format / JPG picture

format, E-mail: [hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk)). Members may refer to past annual reports for the format;- the maximum number of words is 8,000. Please also provide us with your contact details for our ease of follow-up.

## A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) and Wan Li Book Co. Ltd. jointly launched "A Photographic Guide of the Birds of Hong Kong", so far the most comprehensive photographic record of Hong Kong's bird species. Covering 343 local bird species, the book contains colour photographs, field identification notes as well as the ecological status of each species.



The publication of A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Hong Kong is a milestone that sums up our achievements in field identification and bird photography. All production work, from photography, text writing, graphic design to editing were all done by members at their leisure. It is truly 'made in Hong Kong'. This publication consolidates Hong Kong as a leader in South-east Asia.

The Photographic Guide features a collection of 768 bird photographs, all taken exclusively in Hong Kong over many years by 52 members of the HKBWS. Writing, editing and graphic design were shared among some 10 volunteers from the Society. It was hoped that the work would present the beauty of Hong Kong birds to the general public. The book also document several important historic photo records of birds in Hong Kong as well as useful reference on the identification of birds of Hong Kong and south China (for details, see Appendix 1).

"A Photographic Guide of Birds of Hong Kong" is available at all major book stores at HK\$168 (paper-back cover) and HK\$238 (hard-back cover). HKBWS could get good discount if bulk orders were made. During the new-book period, members could get the book at 25% discount. Please send us by e-mail your

name (on membership receipt), no. of copies, and contact number. It might take some time to gather sufficient amount to place an order, members will be informed to collect the book at the HKBWS Office when the books arrived.

## English Bulletin Editor


English Bulletin Editor Steve Burrows has been our English Bulletin Editor since 2002. However, he returned to Canada in July 2004 and could no longer carry on. We have to express our gratitude to him for his contribution and wish him a happy life in Canada. We have invited John Holmes to be the new English Bulletin Editor. John has been an active volunteer for many years. He has donated himself to serve the society in many aspects. With his participation in the bulletin production team, we are looking forward to bringing you more attractive bulletins.

## Membership Affairs Committee

Because of their personal engagement, Mr. and Mrs. Luk Tsun Pun will leave this committee temporarily. We are very grateful to them for their support and contribution including membership affairs, outings leader and bulletin production etc.

Mr. Simon Wong has been in charge of membership records since 2001. His other personal engagements have made it difficult for him to deal with the huge workload from membership work. Our thanks to Ms. Chim Yuk Ming who has consolidated the membership database. Special thanks also to Miss Ada Chow who has kindly taking up the workload temporarily. Together with the assistance from Miss Betty Hui, we can speed up the processing time of membership application and renewal. Miss Hui assists not only in membership record but also in membership activities and Birdshop. We are happy to welcome her to the Committee. The new line-up of Committee Members will try their best to serve every member.

## Office staff

To meet the need of the society's operation and development, the General and Account Clerk Miss Carol Chan had left her post. 

HKBWS's project development is organized and backed up by sub-committees, research groups and over 100 active members of the Society. Members of the Society actively participate in bird and habitat conservation work and educational activities. In addition to recurrent base activities, we have initiated a number of projects. These activities were in line with the objectives of the Society:

- A. To promote the study of ornithology by encouraging the study of birds so as to understand their biology and ecology.
- B. To promote the appreciation and the understanding of birds.
- C. To aid the conservation of birds, wildlife and their habitats.
- D. To promote observance of laws protecting birds and in particular the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance No. 5 of 1976.

### HKBWS recurrent baseline activities are:

1. Collect and analyze of Hong Kong bird observation cards
2. Collect and publish field record of birds
3. Publish quarterly HKBWS Bulletin: quarterly magazine featuring Society announcements, news and feature articles on birds and the environment and information on ongoing and coming activities
4. Publish Hong Kong Bird Report: an annual report on the status of birds in Hong Kong, together with papers on identification and reviews of ornithological and conservation issues
5. Maintain the HKBWS hotline: providing the most updated information on birds
6. Maintain a website [www.hkbws.org.hk](http://www.hkbws.org.hk) to provide the most up-to-date information on birds and habitat and a forum for discussion and reporting of incidents
7. Hold Regular indoor educational meetings
8. Conduct surveys and research projects on birds and their habitats
9. Organize guided field trips to watch birds all over Hong Kong
10. Provide education resource and professional assistance to government, community organizations, schools and mass media
11. Provide professional comments to the government on development programmes, with particular emphasis on the conservation of birds and their habitat
12. Participate in international conference and exchange information with overseas organizations
13. Compile and submit information for the BirdLife Red Data Book and Important Bird Area projects of BirdLife International
14. Communicate members' reports of bird trapping or cruelty cases and illegal habitat destruction cases to government
15. Organize bird races for members: an annual event to promote record submission

## List of Specific Activities from April 2003 – March 2004

### Research / Funded Projects

Period	Collaborating organization / Sponsor/Funding / HKBWS groups	Title and details
All year	HKBWS Kite Survey Group	Kite Survey at Magazine Gap and Stonecutters' Island
All year	HKBWS Egrets and Herons Research Group	Survey on egrets and heron, and fishpond lining
12/2001 – 5/2003	Health and Welfare Bureau and Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust	Healthy Ageing – "Learn from Nature"
9/2002 – 5/2003	Health and Welfare Bureau and Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust	Additional funding – Healthy Ageing "Learn from Nature"

## Research / Funded Projects (con't)

Period	Collaborating organization / Sponsor/Funding / HKBWS groups	Title and details
4/2003 – 3/2004	Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	Waterbird Monitoring at Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site
4/2003	Kadoorie Farm and Botanical Garden	Preliminary study on the conservation of the Yellow-throated Laughing Thrush at Wuyuan, Jiangxi Province
4/2003 – 7/2003	Swarovski H.K. Ltd	Produce Hong Kong Bird Watching Map to be distributed among visitor at the HK Intl. Airport, teachers on biology and environmental education
5/2003 – 10/2003	Environment and Conservation Fund & HKBWS Tern Research Group	Pilot Project to increase Awareness of the ecological importance of the breeding colonies of Terns in Hong Kong
11/8/2003	Environmental Campaign Committee	Day camps for Student Environmental Protection Ambassadors
16/8/2003	Hong Kong Bird Watching Society	Establishment of Elderly Nature Interpreter Team "Crested Bulbul Club"
10/2003 – 4/2004	HKBWS Black-faced Spoonbill Research Group	Age Structure of Black-faced Spoonbill
10/2003 – 1/2004	The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust	My Favourite bird in Hong Kong
11/2003 – 1/2004	HKBWS Records Committee & Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	Winter Atlas Survey
13/12/2003 – 11/1/2004	Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	World Wetland Day – Junior Bird Watching Race
10/2003 – 9/2005	Health and Welfare Bureau and Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust	Healthy Ageing "Elderly lead the elderly to watch birds"

## Publications – List of publications in Mar 2003 - April 2004

### Research Reports

- Anon. 2003. **Age Structure Assessment of Wintering Black-faced Spoonbill in Hong Kong 2002-2003**. Report by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, HKSAR Government.
- Anon. 2003. **Breeding Tern Survey at Shek Ngau Chau and Tolo Channel**. Report by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, HKSAR Government.
- Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. 2003. **Pilot project to increase awareness of the ecological importance of the breeding colonies of terns in Hong Kong (ECF Project 23/2002)**. Unpublished by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited. Hong Kong.
- Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. 2004. **Monthly Waterbird Counts Data April 2003 - March 2004: Waterbird Monitoring at the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site**. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited. Hong Kong.
- Wong, L.C. and Woo C.K. 2003. **Summer 2003 Report on Egret Counts in Hong Kong, with particular Reference to the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site**. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited. Hong Kong.
- Yu, Y. T. 2003. **Summer 2003 Report on Waterbird Monitoring at the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site**. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited. Hong Kong.
- Yu, Y.T. 2004. **Winter 2003-04 Report on Waterbird Monitoring at the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site**. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited. Hong Kong.
- Yu, Y. T., Carey, G. J. and Ying, H. K. 2003. **Shorebird Monitoring at the Mai Po Marshes and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site: 2001-2002**. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited. Hong Kong.
- Yu, Y. T. 2004. **International Black-faced Spoonbill Census, 16-18 January 2004**. Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited. Hong Kong.



## Publications – List of publications in Mar 2003 - April 2004 (con't)

Books	Leaflets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terns – Genies from the Sea</li> <li>• My Favourite Hong Kong Bird</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black-faced Spoonbill</li> <li>• Bird Watching in Hong Kong</li> <li>• My Favourite Hong Kong Bird Election</li> <li>• Common Waterbirds in Hong Kong</li> <li>• Kowloon Park – A place for bird watching in urban area (collaboration with Kowloon Park)</li> </ul>
Bulletins	Website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HKBWS 2003. HKBWS Bulletin No. 187 &amp; 188 – Spring &amp; Summer 2003.</li> <li>• HKBWS 2003. HKBWS Bulletin No. 189- Autumn 2003.</li> <li>• HKBWS 2003. HKBWS Bulletin No. 190- Winter 2003.</li> <li>• HKBWS 2004. HKBWS Bulletin No. 191- Spring 2004.</li> <li>• Crested Bulbul Club – No. 3 (May 2003)</li> <li>• Crested Bulbul Club – No. 4 (Oct 2003)</li> <li>• Crested Bulbul Club – No. 5 (Jan 2004)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wild Birds and Avian Flu</li> <li>• Bird Watching Spots in Hong Kong</li> </ul>

## Talks and field trips for schools

Period	Collaborating organization / Sponsor/Funding / HKBWS groups	Title and details
3 /2003 – 9/2003	Chinese University of Hong Kong	Development of bird watching activities and checklist of birds for staff and students
13/8/2003	City University of Hong Kong	Organize bird watching activity for children of age 8-12
19/11/2003 – 17/12/2003	HKU School of Professional And Continue Education	Bird Watching Course: "Bird watching in the wild"
3 – 12/12/2003	St. Paul Co-educational Primary School	Provide technical support (too detailed) for the school to design education topic on protection of Black-faced Spoonbill.
17/1/2004	MBA, The University of Hong Kong	Bird watching activity at Mai Po
22/3/2004	Ying Wa Girls' School	Lecture on globally threatened bird species
26/2/2004 – 25/3/2004	HKU School of Professional And Continue Education	Bird Watching Course: "Bird watching in the wild"
23/3/2004 24/3/2004	PLK Mrs Ma Kam Ming-Cheung Fook Sien College	Lecture on Black-eared Kite in Hong Kong

## Talk/ Training / Field Studies / Technical Support - for organizations

Period	Collaborating organization / Sponsor/Funding / HKBWS groups	Title and details
2 – 4/2003	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	Review bird list for Kowloon Park and send photo and text for production of leaflet
3 – 10/2003	Tai Po Environmental Association	Support the "Tai Po Egret Festival"
27/5/2003	Rotary Club of Hong Kong City North	Luncheon meeting on bird watching in Hong Kong
10/9/2003 14/9/2003 10/5/2003	Hong Kong Federation of Youth – Jockey Club Tseung Kwan O Youth S.P.O.T	Lectures and outings to train nature interpreters
21/9/2003	Hong Kong Society For the Blind Parents Resource Centre For Visually Impaired Children	"Hear the birds" activity Talk and trip to Hong Kong Park
27/9/2003	Hong Kong Baptist Church – Western District Elderly Centre	Bird watching lectures and outings lead by elderly nature interpreter

Talk/ Training / Field Studies / Technical Support - for organizations (con't)		
Period	Collaborating organization / Sponsor/Funding / HKBWS groups	Title and details
27/9/2003	The Conservancy Association	Guest support for a TV event on nature conservation
27/9/2003	World Wide Fund For Nature Hong Kong	Seminar: Meeting on the Management and Conservation of Mai Po Nature Reserve
4/10/2003	Hongkong Post	Issuing ceremony of the "Hong Kong, China-Sweden Joint Stamp Issue on Waterbirds" – provide material for exhibition board
18/10/2003 25/10/2003	Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation Community Rehabilitation Network	Bird watching lectures and outings lead by elderly nature interpreter
6/11/2003 9/11/2003	Green World, Chinese University of Hong Kong	Bird Watching talk (wetlands and birds) and tour to Tsim Bei Tsui
10/11/2003	Leisure, Culture and Services Department	Provide pictures for production of exhibition board for Zoo Education Exhibition on 22 to 23 November and 6 December at Zoological and Botanical Garden
10/11/2003	Macau Ecological Society	Provide a talk on promotion of bird-ecotourism among community
22/11/2003	Children's Cancer Foundation Family Service Centre	Bird watching activity at Mai Po
4/12/2004	Leisure, Culture and Services Department	Provide material, pictures and comment for the website on common birds of Hong Kong at <a href="http://www.lcsd.gov.hk">www.lcsd.gov.hk</a>
12/2003	Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden	Provide material including powerpoint presentation, reports etc. for a waterbird count training to be organized at Hainan from 27 December 2003
9/3/2003	The Conservancy Association	Dance with birds – HKBWS provide adjudicators
3/2004 – 9/2005	HKBWS Education and Publicity Committee & Leisure and Cultural Services Department	Meeting Points for Morning Bird Watchers at Kowloon Park
21 and 22/2/2004	Hong Kong Federation of Youth – Jockey Club Tseung Kwan O Youth S.P.O.T	Review education material on bird watching  Lectures and outings on nature interpretation
24/2/2003	Website of Dr the Hon Lo Wing-lok	Attend interview on bird watching
28/2/2004	Evangelical Free Church of China – Waterloo Hill Church	Organize outing to Luk Keng

### Participation in events in mainland China and international activities

18 – 23/10/2003	8th BirdLife Asia Council – Bogor, Indonesia
9 – 10/10/2003	Meeting of Asia Waterbird Census Coordinator – Kuala Lumpur
12/11/2003	Assist global launch of "Saving Asia's Threatened Birds"
10 – 13/10/2003	The 3rd Symposium of Raptors in Asia

## Participation in events in mainland China and international activities (con't)

10/2003	Submission of the Important Bird Area (Tai Po Kau, Shing Mun, Tai Mo Shan) information to BirdLife International
4 – 8/2/2003	Participation in Bird Race at Dung Ting Lake
29/1 – 8/2/2004	Participation in Lower Yangtze River Waterbird Survey
7 – 13/3/2004	BirdLife International World Conference and Global Partnership Meeting

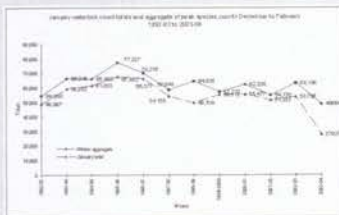
TV/Newspaper/Radio Interview – 141 news reports

## HKBWS Projects Update

### A. Research Projects

#### 1 Waterbird Monitoring Programme at the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site

Reports of the 2003-04 programme have been uploaded onto the Society website (<http://www.hkbws.org.hk/waterbird/report.html>).



The 2003-04 Winter Report mentions that the total number of waterbirds in winter 2003-04 was 50,896. Separate trial surveys organized in January and February 2004 also gave comparable results. There is a drop of 6-20% from the previous range of 54,000 to 64,000 waterbirds since winter 1997-98. Given the difficulties of accurately counting waterbirds in the intertidal areas of Deep Bay, it is unclear how accurate this figure is, or whether it really indicates that a significant decrease has occurred since last winter.

From field observation and records, however, it is certainly the case that habitat deterioration caused by sedimentation of mudflat, encroachment of mangrove trees, and disturbance from mudskipper collectors is on the increase. The open mudflat is the key area of this ecosystem, as it serves as an important feeding habitat for most of the wintering waterbirds in Deep Bay, and as a loafing site during low tide. The report has also made the following recommendations:

1. Efforts to site a new boardwalk hide further out in the mudflat should be encouraged. This would allow greater accuracy in determining waterbird numbers in Deep Bay, which is a key tool of Ramsar Site management.
2. The relevant government department should instigate appropriate research into the apparent decrease of available mudflat area, and if necessary action regarding conservation and management of the Ramsar Site.

#### Looking Forward

There were quite a lot of changes in the last few months. The AFCD has changed the way of support to the Waterbird Monitoring Programme from annual subvention (2000-2004) to tender project (2004-05).

We will keep members and the general public the latest information. Data of waterbird count will keep upload onto the Society website each month. Your support would help continuing the Society's effort over the last 25 years, and provide valuable information for monitoring the value of wetlands, endangered species, population and environmental changes in this wetland of international importance. Members who wish to spend half a day each month to join the monthly count programme could contact us at [hkbws@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:hkbws@hkbws.org.hk) or [bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk).

#### 2. HKBWS Research Group – update

##### 2.1 Tern Research Group

2.1.1 Members are welcome to share with us your tern watching records, or to report observations of human disturbance to breeding terns. Please send the information to the Project Office or post your message onto the "Tern Conservation Section" of our BBS on the Web.

2.1.2 Some local tour operators are running commercial tern-watching tours this year. Members of the Tern Research Group are giving volunteer interpretation services to these tours. This can spread the conservation message, provide demonstration to the tour guides and also help to monitor the amount of possible disturbance to the colonies.

##### 2.2. Black-faced Spoonbill Research Group

2.2.1 The Research Group has completed the 2003-2004 age structure study of wintering Black-faced

Spoonbill. Preliminary results show there is an increasing ratio of young birds. Comparing this trend with that of the global population, we believe that the population of this species is growing healthily.

2.2.2 A mathematical model of predicting the Black-faced Spoonbill global population trend and an internet programme on colour ring record of Spoonbills have been developed and are undergoing a testing phase. The 2004 International Census result has been incorporated into the model for comparison. Thanks also for George Ho for helping us with data input.

2.2.3 The HKBWS Black-faced Spoonbill website (<http://www.hkbws.org.hk/bfs/index.html>) has received recognition from BirdLife International as a part of international conservation of this globally threatened species. This is encouraging news! We encourage members' support to continue sharing with us their information and field observations. Information can be posted onto the Black-faced Spoonbill section of the Society bulletin board.

2.2.4 An International Symposium in South Korea was held. We were unable to send a representative to attend the event due to the lack of funding. Thanks to the BirdLife International Indochina representative to help us report the result of "International Black-faced Spoonbill Census: 16-18 January 2004".

2.2.5 We received a report from Captain Wong of Egret Research Group that a sign has recently been erected at the wetland in Hainan where 51 Black-faced Spoonbills were observed in a joint wetland survey conducted this January jointly by representatives of KFBG, HKBWS, Hainan Forestry Department and Hainan Normal University.

2.2.6 We continue to receive reports about colour-ringed Black-faced Spoonbill in other areas:

- T17 and K36 were found at Sih-Cao. Although T17 has only one leg, its condition remains healthy;
- T26, T30 and T37 were observed at Tainan in June;
- T35 was observed at a paddy field at Sundoori, Kanghwai Island in South Korea on 3 May.



2.2.7 Information has been received from mainland China that a feeding site of Black-faced Spoonbill has been discovered at a remote island off the Liaoning coast. Observations were originally made in summer 1999, but no sign of feeding was seen. Prof. Zhou Haicxiang of the Ecological Environment Research Centre of Shenyang Ligong University has conducted a three-year survey with funding supported by WWF China programme. On 27 June 2004, a total of six spoonbills were found in the intertidal area near Zhuanghe town, three of them were observed feeding.



2.2.8 We received support from Schmidt Marketing (H.K.) Ltd. for the coordination of the 2004-05 International Census of Black-faced Spoonbill. The sponsorship will cover the cost of printing and postage. We thank LEICA supporting conservation of the globally threatened species. Further details will be posted onto the bulletin and the next bulletin later on in autumn.



### 2.3. Egret and Heron Research Group

2.3.1 Monthly data of survey from April 2004 has been uploaded onto HKBWS website for members and public access.

2.3.2 A total of 860 nests were found at 19 sites, of which 315 were nests of Chinese Pond Heron, which is the highest number ever in Hong Kong. The nesting colonies in Stonecutters Island and Tai Po market were abandoned, but a new colony at Little Green Island was found.

2.3.3 The Research Group organized a joint nesting colony survey with the Hainan Normal University in May. A total of 2,700 nests of four egrets and herons (Little Egrets, Cattle Egrets, Chinese Pond Herons and Black-crowned Night Herons) were recorded at 9 sites. Most of them were recorded at the northern part of the Island. The event was reported by local media which



attracted reports from local farmers. 7 colonies were added to the record.

## 2.4 Kite Research Group

2.4.1 Etta Hui has stepped down from the position of Research Group Convenor for personal reasons from July. She would continue to participate in the monthly Black Kite counting. Etta has organized various coordination for the Research Group since 2001. We thank her for her contribution over the last 3 years. The position of Convenor will be taken up by Karin Chan.

2.4.2 Breeding and wintering habitat of Black Kite at Stonecutters Island has now been affected by bridge construction. There were records of Black-eared Kite since 1959. There were also separate reports in the 1970s' and 1990s'. The monthly Stonecutters Island Kite population survey and Kite breeding survey were launched since 2001 till now. All of these indicated the area is an important habitat for all-year roosting, local breeding and wintering kites. However, the Environmental Impact Assessment Report didn't include the habitat on the island for consideration. The Research Group is coordinating effort to reflect views to relevant departments.

2.4.3 The Research Group has conducted a Kite Watching Event for Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service on 25 July.

2.4.4 Kite counts were conducted as usual; there are records at the Stonecutters Island and Magazine Gap to share with you:



photo by Etta Hui

### Stonecutters Island

25 Jan 2004	- 275 individuals (Snapshot)
15 Feb 2004	- 112 individuals (Snapshot)
7 Mar 2004	- 94 individuals (Snapshot)
11 Apr 2004	- 83 individuals (Snapshot)
2 May 2004	- 69 individuals (Snapshot)
13 June 2004	- 99 individuals (Snapshot)
18 July 2004	- 33 individuals (Snapshot)

### Magazine Gap

25 Jan 2004	- 169 individuals (Snapshot); 1039 individuals (Incremental)
15 Feb 2004	- 195 individuals (Snapshot); 975 individuals (Incremental)
7 Mar 2004	- 130 individuals (Snapshot); 616 individuals (Incremental)
11 Apr 2004	- 42 individuals (Snapshot); 181 individuals (Incremental)

2 May 2004	- 36 individuals (Snapshot); 202 individuals (Incremental)
13 June 2004	- 45 individuals (Snapshot); 199 individuals (Incremental)
18 July 2004	- 114 individuals (Snapshot); 771 individuals (Incremental)

## 2.5 Swift and Swallow Research Group

2.5.1 2.5.1 Summer surveys has started, 12 surveys were conducted covering area including the Chinese University, Tai Po Market, Fan Ling market, Sheung Shui market, Sai Kung market and Yuen Long Town.

2.5.2 Three new volunteers, who are Ms. Vera Hung, Ms. Norman Law and Mr. Lawrence Lau, have joined the Group and are providing assistance to the existing survey. The total number of volunteers is up to 5. We have received survey reports of breeding barn swallows at Cheung Chau from Ms. Norman Law and Mr. Lawrence Lau who are Society members living in Cheung Chau. Members who wish to adopt a small village/island/urban area the survey could contact the Research Group at [swallow\\_swift@yahoo.com.hk](mailto:swallow_swift@yahoo.com.hk).

2.5.3 Members are welcome to provide us information. Picture records can be posted at the bulletin board of "Swift and Swallow". Regarding nest records, consideration has been given to the welfare of the breeding birds. In order to avoid unnecessary disturbance, the Research Group has constructed an on-line record submission system. Members are welcome to send us record at the following links: English : [http://www.hkbws.org.hk/swallow/Swallow\\_e.php](http://www.hkbws.org.hk/swallow/Swallow_e.php), Chinese: [http://www.hkbws.org.hk/swallow/Swallow\\_c.php](http://www.hkbws.org.hk/swallow/Swallow_c.php)



2.5.4 Fox Wong has donated data sheets of his survey in the early 1990s, he will continue to provide the Research Group with professional advice. We thank him for his kind support.

2.5.5 Apache Lau has assisted RTHK in filming work for a programme "Talking to the Animals". He has coordinated various activities, provided comments and technical support, and



made contact with various audiences. The programme was broadcast at 7:00 pm on 13 July on ATV. RTHK also organized a press announcement on 5 July. We sent a representative to attend.

## B. Education and Publicity

### 1. Elderly Lead the Elderly to Watch Birds

We have submitted the quarterly report to Healthy Ageing Commission of Health and Welfare Bureau. Members who wish to read the report are welcome to come to the Project Office.

The Bureau has organized a "Healthy Ageing Seminar" on 5 June at Sha Tin Town Hall. Leung Kwok Wa and Lo Yiu To offered a presentation to introduce the "Crested Bulbul Club" of Elderly Volunteer Nature Interpreters and to share their experience. Guests and audience who attended the event praised their presentation. Chen Chi Po received a souvenir on behalf of HKBWS.

The Nature Interpreters actively participate in various promotional activities. On 5 June, Singtao Daily reported their interest in learning bird watching and passing on what they have learnt to others, as a part of life after retirement.

Some of them have also joined the TVB "Friends of the Elderly" interview to share their experience. The programme was broadcast at 2:25pm on 28 June 2004.



The "Crested Bulbul Club Bulletin" (Issue No. 7) has been published. It is coordinated by the elderly nature interpreters of the Club. The bulletin will be distributed to the interpreters and elderly centres during the project period. A PDF version has been uploaded onto the HKBWS bulletin board. Please visit the "Projects" section for details.

We also thank Robin Fung who offered an advanced training for the trained interpreters. Apache Lau has prepared to follow the area of record submission. He has prepared record form to encourage the interpreters to collect records.



## 2. Leisure and Cultural Services Department

### Morning Meeting Point at Kowloon Park; -

the Friday bird watching events continue to be well received. Participants have included the elderly, students, house-wives, tourists and others. Apple



Daily reported it on 16 June using the title "Visitors amazed by the 'Hong Kong's Phoenix'". [Ed - Visitors think the Blue Magpie is comparable to a "Phoenix"]. We have received recent news from Hong Kong Tourism Board that this event will be published in its regular tourism promotion material. Members are welcome to join the event.

Date: Every Friday  
Time: 7:30am to 9:30am  
Gathering point: Kowloon Park Arcade (near the entrance of McDonalds Restaurant)

### Hong Kong Park "Flying Feather of the City" -

We have collaborated with Hong Kong Park to organize packages including talks and guided tours at the Park during the summer vacation. The Society has promised to provide volunteers and recruitment effort, and the Park provides venues for the event. This event could help the newly trained nature interpreters to increase their confidence and build up experience of interpretation. We hope through this event, to better prepare serving the elder generation.



## 3. Hong Kong Observatory 2005 Calendar

The Society is offering support to the Hong Kong Observatory for the production of 2005 Calendar. Thanks for the support from members to contribute their "masterpiece" for the production. They are Lo Kar Man, K K Hui, Stanley Fok, John and Jemi Holmes, Henry Lui, Michelle and Peter Wong, Lee Hok Fei and Daniel Chan. We hope the calendar will raise awareness of birds and nature.

## 4. "Bird Watching - Starting from the City"

The Society received support from the Quality Education Fund to reprint "Bird Watching - Starting from the City". The book will be sold at a price near to the cost price to students, teachers and members of the public. In Chinese, it introduces urban ecology, suggests bird watching spots and illustrates 20 common birds in the urban area. The selling price is HK\$20.- We will donate 50% of any net profit to the Quality Education Fund, your support will benefit quality education.



## 5. My Favourite Hong Kong Bird

We still have some stock of the book "My Favourite Hong Kong Bird" available for free distribution. Members who wish to obtain a copy could send a return envelope (not smaller than A5 size, with HK\$4.4 stamp) to the Project Office. This book is not only a blueprint for wildlife elections in the future, it could also be used as reference material for nature conservation and tourism development, to increase the green image of Hong Kong. This book also provides practical education material on the environment, ecology and tourism. It could increase the awareness of students and the general public on birds and nature.



## C. China mainland and overseas activities

### 1.1 "Swan Protector" in Inner Mongolia

Mr C Y Lam visited Inner Mongolia last year, he reported in the last bulletin about the "Swan Protector" Mr Zhang Chang-lung at Wuliangsu Lake. A total of HK\$5,000 was raised and donated to Mr Zhang through Professor Xin Lianlian. The donation represented our recognition of his effort in contributing to a better environment and habitat for swans.

### 1.2 Yellow-throated Laughingthrush Survey in Jiangxi

As a follow-up to last year's KFBG sponsored survey on

Yellow-throated Laughingthrush at Jiangxi, Wuyuan. Members of the Society conducted radio tracking of the bird species this summer. The survey was sponsored by Dr H F Cheung. It is a collaborative project with Professor Ho Fen-qi of Academia Sinica. Researchers include Yu Yat Tung, Ying Hak King, Liu Yang and Gary Chow who joined the event as volunteers. Apache Lau helped coordination work. Some Society members including Emily and Forrest Fong, Aukie Au, Lo Kar Man, George Ho and Carrie Ma formed groups to visit and continue the monitoring work before and after the survey period.



### 1.3 JFGE sponsored BirdLife for "Bird-ecotourism" Project

We received positive result from BirdLife International that the small grant for "Bird-ecotourism" project was approved. The "Bird-ecotourism" project is sponsored by Japan Fund for Global Environment, managed by BirdLife International. Participants of the project including Hong Kong and bird watching organization in Asia region. In Hong Kong, we are proposing to promote Kite-watching, through the support from the Kite Research Group, at Autumn and Winter of this year.



## Not an Advertisement

### Bird Photography on line database


We have received information from Shenzhen Bird Watching Society that the China Ornithological Society has recognized the "World of Flying Feather" bird photography database. The database was constructed by volunteers in China mainland. Members are encouraged to contribute their photos to the database at: <http://www.cnbird.org.cn/mysite/bird.asp>





# Hong Kong Ringing Group

With the departure of wintering and migratory birds, ringing activities have also been rather quiet over the past two months. The Hong Kong Ringing Group has conducted two wader-ringing sessions and three times ringing in the reed beds in May. Of the 135 birds ringed in that month, 25 were Black-browed Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*), 22 Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*) and 17 Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus orientalis*).

The only ringing we did in June was six Black-winged Stilt chicks (*Himantopus himantopus*) in Mai Po pond 20. They were all fitted with Hong Kong leg-flags (\*white over yellow above the tarsus). Do look out for them! (These flagged chicks were seen and photographed within a few days; see the "Photo Gallery" section of the Website Bulletin Board – Ed.) 



## Conservation News Summer 2004

– Mike Kilburn,  
Chairman, Conservation Committee

### Black-faced Spoonbill Injured by Fishhook has Wing Amputated

In the last issue we reported that a Black-faced Spoonbill had been picked up injured in the San Tin area with a fish hook caught in its wing. Unfortunately the bird responded poorly to treatment and the infected wound never healed. As a result the wing had to be amputated and the bird will never be returned to the wild.

Furthermore the damage to the wing makes it highly unlikely that this bird will be able to breed in captivity as mating is extremely unlikely when the bird has no way to maintain its balance. The bird is likely to spend the rest of its days in captivity at Kadoorie Farm.

We are again posting the relevant numbers and procedures to follow if you find injured wildlife, traps or people causing harm to the environment.

- 1) Immediately report any fish hooks (either hanging from wires or found in fishponds and baited with fish), mist nets or other traps to AFCD: the senior AFCD Officer responsible

for preventing illegal activities is Wong Che Lok. His email is [clwong@afcd.gov.hk](mailto:clwong@afcd.gov.hk) and his phone number is: 2150 6921.

- 2) Call the nature wardens responsible for patrolling on 2474 8974 or 2476 9430 or 2471 4411 (especially outside office hours and at weekends). Keep these numbers on your phone or in your notebook
- 3) Post your sighting, with photos if possible on the HKBWS BBS Conservation section. This does 2 things: i)it keeps us all informed and ii)allows AFCD to see that we are serious about supporting their conservation efforts.
- 3) Copy to HKBWS Conservation Committee all correspondence, especially responses from AFCD in relation to such actions.
- 5) Follow up with AFCD to see what actions have been taken. The Conservation Committee can also help with this.

### Ramsar Site Threatened by Shenzhen Sewage Scheme

Earlier this year the Shenzhen Municipal Government sent its leading sanitation engineers to Hong Kong to present its plans for handling the build-up of untreated sewage, which flows directly into the Shenzhen River. It



wants to pump highly saline seawater from Mirs Bay through a 20 km pipeline into the river, which will flush out into Deep Bay, where the water is much less salty because it is made “sweeter” (o.k. less saline!) - by water flowing out of the Pearl River.

While we welcome the opportunity for early consultation provided by the Shenzhen Government and recognizes this as a landmark in “Closer Environmental Partnership” between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, HKBWS remains deeply concerned by this project. Our concerns fall into two main areas.

### **The project addresses the symptoms, not the causes.**

The problem has been caused by the fact that Shenzhen is growing in size, population and in its economy faster than the sewage system is being developed. Environmental standards are not being maintained in the rush for economic growth. As a result a great deal of untreated sewage is pumped directly into the Shenzhen River. The obvious and responsible solution is to build and connect up more sewage treatment facilities. It was extremely disappointing that this was never even raised during the presentation by the officials from Shenzhen. We very much agree with Karen Woo of Green Power that “Dilution is not the solution to pollution”.

### **Potential catastrophe of pumping highly saline water into a brackish ecosystem**

Before the project can proceed the impact be fully assessed and the report made available for public inspection Owing to the national, regional and international significance of the Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site we believe international best practices must be adopted in assessing the potential impact of this project.

Of these the most importance is the Precautionary Principle, whereby no activity should begin when its impacts are not known, especially where there is a risk of serious negative impact (which we believe is extremely likely in this case).

While we welcome the proposed 6-months studies on mangroves and Black-faced Spoonbills, we do not believe this short timeframe and narrow scope of study will be enough to establish the impact to the Inner Deep Bay ecosystem as a whole. We believe the impact of flushing the Shenzhen River with highly saline water is likely to affect the following:

- The water chemistry of Deep Bay
- The rate of siltation

- The benthic invertebrate community (which provide food for many species of birds, especially waders, several of which are of global, regional or national conservation concern ( e.g. Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Nordmann's Greenshank).
- The crab population (food for globally-threatened Saunders' Gull)
- mudskippers and other fish (food for spoonbills, herons and egrets)

### **Opportunity: Funding coming from World Bank**

The World Bank has rather higher standards for ecological assessment than Shenzhen municipality – if it chooses to apply them. It is understood that the World Bank will be funding this project, which probably led to the meeting with environmental NGOs in Hong Kong. We will seek further opportunities to put greater pressure on the Beijing office of the World Bank.

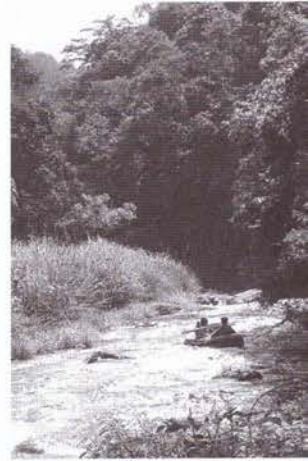
## **China Conservation News**

### **Chebaling's key birds threatened by “contradictions”**

Over two visits in April and May HKBWS members have found that Chebaling and the once scenic approach to the reserve has been comprehensively trashed by two projects in a sad reminder of the darker side of China's rampant economic development.

The once beautiful river that flows out of the reserve has been dammed 6 or 8 times to provide hydro-electric power to drive the rapid economic growth of Shixing County, in which Chebaling lies (ironically the county government is promoting Shixing as a centre for ecotourism!). The result is that the river has become a series of channelised rapids, dry river bed and long lakes which have drowned farmland and all suitable habitat for the reserve's two most important waterbirds – White-eared Night Heron and Blyth's Kingfisher. White-eared Night Heron was seen on the first visit at a known site outside the reserve, but not on the second.

Inside the reserve there is a maximum 5km of suitable river habitat for the near-threatened Blyth's Kingfisher, although about 1 km has been lost as the nearest dam, which was built just a few metres outside the gates of the



reserve, has backed up the river, creating a still lake where clean, fast-flowing water once ran.

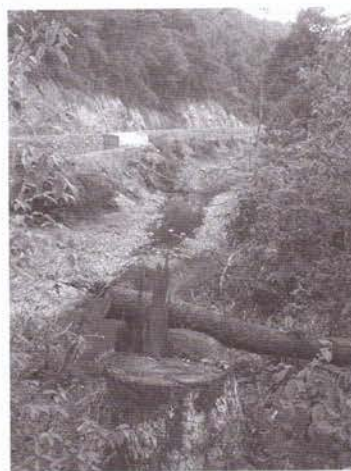
Adding insult to injury the more than adequate road to the reserve is being widened to 12 metres (a project sponsored by the Guangdong Provincial Government) to allow a million visitors per year to visit the reserve in 50-seater coaches! Anything in the way, from the once beautiful limestone cliffs to trees of more than 100 years has simply been pushed into the river, causing siltation, narrowing of the river and loss of the remaining riverside habitat that had not been trashed by the hydro-power schemes. Inside the Reserve itself the road is being widened to 7 metres, with the same brutal approach to engineering – i.e. push the rubble into the river. This is perhaps the most serious problem for the reserve itself as the siltation will affect the water quality for almost every section of the river used by Blyth's Kingfisher.

Perhaps even more worrying is rumours of White-eared Night Herons being shot for sale as specimens. Apparently each bird sells for several thousand yuan, and therefore the justification is that this provides income for the reserve. We also heard that the villagers inside the reserve have begun catching Crested Serpent Eagles for specimens – none were seen flying during a two-day visit previous high counts of over ten birds in a day were a regular feature in former times! If either of these worrying problems are indeed true a major rethink is needed!

As a final lesser impact the reserve is now hiring out rubber rafts, which bounce happily through the sections of the river that are the last remnants of breeding and feeding habitat for Blyth's Kingfisher, causing further disturbance to this already embattled species.

While the reserve management can do little or nothing about the damming outside the reserve (ironically, the


area was at one time being considered as an extension of the reserve boundaries), which are privately funded and strongly supported by the county government, they must accept at least partial responsibility for the road and other activities inside the reserve and the plans for so many visitors. Reserve staff talk about the “contradictions” between environmental protection and economic development, but seem not to understand that if by trashing the habitat for the sake of development you lose the value of having a nature reserve in the first place.



### Chebaling not Alone

Sadly the situation at Chebaling is not unique. The main river at Guan Shan in Jiangxi – the best place in the world to see Elliot's Pheasant is also being dammed – several were under construction in April, causing the known breeding locations of another South China Endemic – Cabot's Tragopan to be abandoned according to the reserve staff. We have also learned about a new hydro-electric power dam at Ba Bao Shan, which had its principal river compromised by a hydro power scheme many years ago.

### The Root of the Problem

The root of the problem lies in two areas. The first is the burgeoning demand for electricity caused by the economic development, which is spreading deep into the countryside in southern China. The second is that since the nationwide ban imposed by the Central Government on cutting timber, the Forestry Department has been seeking alternative ways to make money. Since forestry areas and reserves are often good water catchment areas, hydro-electric power – which has long had an “eco-friendly” tag – has been enthusiastically adopted, and sadly the principal function of a nature reserve seems to have been forgotten. 

# Mai Po update (July 2004) – Lew Young

## 1. Draining of Pond 20

From May this year, the six ponds that make up Pond 20 have been drained in turn so that the water inside can be replaced by cleaner rainwater when the typhoon season begins. This work is needed because over the winter, the thousands of ducks that roost in the ponds would cause the water quality to deteriorate and so after the ducks depart in spring, the water inside needs to be replaced.

Apart from draining the ponds, we are also using a backhoe to remove the dense grass that has grown up along the bunds of the ponds. This will open up the pond bunds again and allow them to be used by birds. In future, these bunds will be kept open by regular cutting,

## 2. Draining of Waterfowl Collection

In the same way that the water in Pond 20 has to be replaced after the departure of the wintering ducks, the water in the Waterfowl Collection also needs to be drained in early summer and the pond in the Collection replaced by cleaner rainwater in late summer. We will use this opportunity to carry out maintenance of the Collection, such as repairing any leaks in the bunds.

## 3. Earthmoving in *gei wai* 16/17

Over the past couple of year, WWF Hong Kong has been dismantling the large island in *gei wai* 16/17 and using the soil that has been removed to create a number of smaller and lower islands around the pond. This is because the large islands have never been very successful in attracting a range of birds to use them

and overseas experience has shown that smaller islands would be used by a greater variety of roosting birds, particularly shorebirds.


Work has been completed dismantling two of the islands and this summer, the new smaller islands that have been created have been used quite extensively by breeding Painted Snipe and Black-winged Stilts.

It is proposed that this September, *gei wai* 16/17 will be drained so that work to dismantle the third and final island can proceed. We will try and complete the work as soon as possible but at least by November, so that the pond can be used by the waterbirds wintering in Deep Bay.

To minimise disturbance to the waterbirds that normally use *gei wai* 16/17, we will lower the water levels in a number of other *gei wai*, such as *gei wai* 11, to compensate for the draining of *gei wai* 16/17.

## 4. Dredging channels in *gei wai* 7

One of the problems that Mai Po faces is that of 'old age'. It is natural for coastal wetlands to silt up and gradually turn into dry land. Mai Po is no exception since each time water exchange take place in the *gei wai*, the incoming water brings silt with it into the pond. This silt settles onto the pond floor and needs to be removed or else the pond will 'dry up'.

As a result, the Reserve's dredger is now busy clearing the silt from the channels around the perimeter of *gei wai* 7. This pond has not been dredged for over 10 years and the channels have now been colonised and blocked by tall reeds. Work will continue until the end of October when the wintering waterbirds return. 

# Pheasant-tailed Jacanas at Prickly Water Lily *Euryale ferox* ponds

– Richard Lewthwaite, Ruy Barretto, Karen Barretto & Mo-yung Yuk Lin

Following Professor Gao Yuren's report in summer 2002 of a post-breeding population of over 1000 Pheasant-tailed Jacanas at Yong-an county near Dinghu, Guangdong (HKBWS Bulletin 185: 10), we were keen to visit the area and see for ourselves. The SARS scare kept us away in summer 2003, so it was not until summer 2004 that we visited.

A further impetus for us to make these visits was the historical perspective: Yong-an ("Wing On") is one of the localities in the Delta and along the West River visited in the early 1900s by R.E. Vaughan and K.H. Jones. Their duties as naval officers allowed them unprecedented coverage of the region, resulting in their *Ibis* paper of 1913 on the birds of Hong

Kong, Macau and the West River. Pheasant-tailed Jacana is one of about 270 species which they listed for the region, and their account is typically informative. They described it as a common summer visitor to certain parts of Guangdong, breeding in considerable numbers on ponds where the "prickly-leaved lotus" grew, constructing a nest on this plant, laying four eggs in late June or early July, and being single-brooded. Among other aspects of the bird's behaviour described were its vocalisations, tameness and ability when nesting to assimilate with the water and leaves (so that an individual can be very hard to see despite its stunning black, white and yellow colours and long-tailed and long-necked appearance).



On our visits of 16 May and 26 June 2004, we found that these observations still very much apply, except that birds may now be laying earlier. The jacanas were at all times observed at ponds of the Prickly Water Lily *Euryale ferox*, surely the same plant as Vaughan & Jones's "prickly-leaved lotus". Most ponds were about a hectare in size and some, on the first date, were attracting congregations of up to 15 birds. The birds were then conspicuous, frequently calling and chasing each other. On the second date, however, they were very much harder to detect, taking to flight much less often and only occasionally calling. One adult on 26 June was already accompanied by three very young chicks, and a number of other adults were observed in postures suggesting that they were incubating eggs or shading chicks from the sun.

At Yong-an, we logged 47 birds, nearly all in full summer-plumage, in two discrete areas of Prickly Water Lily ponds on 16 May, and 29 summer-plumaged birds on 26 June, though due to a misunderstanding with our driver, only one of the two areas was covered. Other wetland-dependent species noted during these visits were Little Grebe, Striated Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Yellow and Cinnamon Bitterns, White-breasted Waterhen and Pied Kingfisher.

Between our two visits, the two areas of Prickly Water Lily ponds at Yong-an received coverage during 6-7 June, when an estimated 110 Pheasant-tailed Jacanas were present, including birds thought to be incubating (Paul Leader, Ying Hak King *pers comm.*).

These counts at Yong-an, however, were much lower

than Gao Yuren's. The cause of the reduction can be directly attributed to loss of habitat, a much smaller area being given over to Prickly Water Lily ponds in summer 2004 than in summer 2002 (Gao Yuren *in litt.*).



On 26 June, we also covered another area on the southern bank of the river opposite Yong-an. The site, Shapu, was of added interest to us because it had been covered by Vaughan & Jones, who knew it as "Shia Po" and described it as "a big marsh". We found over 50 Prickly Water Lily ponds and logged a further 69 adult Pheasant-tailed Jacanas there, as well as the three chicks already mentioned. Our coverage was from a raised embankment which runs for about 20 km from Jinli past Shapu to the road's end at Lingyang Gorge. We found that most of the area was covered by narrow irrigation channels between which rows of banana trees had been planted.






These irrigated banana plantations were occasionally interspersed on the inland side of the embankment with ponds of Prickly Water Lily and Indian Lotus, fish ponds and marshy rice fields (the closest thing to marshland that we encountered there); there were also a few extensive areas of rough grass bordering the river. In addition to the jacanas, wetland-dependent species seen were Little Grebe (nesting in the marshy rice fields), Striated Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Cinnamon Bittern, White-breasted Waterhen, Common Moorhen, and Pied, Common and White-throated Kingfishers. Also of interest were three adult Black-winged Kites and no less than 26 Long-tailed Shrikes and 17 Zitting Cisticolas (the latter all apparently on territory). Vaughan & Jones's visits to Shapu can be dated to the autumn, winter and early spring during 1905-1907. The quality of the site in their day was such that they recorded Yellow-legged Buttonquail, Water Rail, Swinhoe's, Baillon's and Brown Crakes as well as Eastern Marsh Harrier and Bluethroat.

Gao Yuren has emphasized the need to conserve the breeding habitat of Pheasant-tailed Jacana. We have summarised below our observations of the key plant and its ponds together with information from the literature and the internet. Obviously, information gathered in situ from farmers experienced in cultivating the plant would greatly add to the picture.

Ponds of the Prickly Water Lily (also known as the Foxnut or Gorgon Plant in English, Qianshi, Ch'ien-shih, Tz'u-shih or Zhaoshi in Mandarin and Shi Sut, See Sut or Siu Sup in Cantonese) can be recognised at some distance because the leaves, which can reach 1-2 metres in diameter, are bronzy-brown in colour and float on the water, unlike the leaves of a commoner species, Indian Lotus *Nelumbo nucifera*, which are bright green and hang from the top of emergent stems 20 cm or more above the water surface. In addition, the leaves of the Prickly Water Lily tend to curl up at the sides, showing a dark purple underside, and are armed with numerous upright spines, which give rise to the plant's vernacular and scientific names (*ferox* is Latin for "fierce"! ). The Prickly Water Lily is cultivated for its seeds, which are edible and medicinal, being used for various genito-urinary conditions and also for analgesic and aphrodisiac purposes.

The only locality for the jacana mentioned in Vaughan & Jones's species account is Sanshui ("Samshui"). There are also three specimens in the Vaughan Collection (BMNH, Tring, UK) from Qingqi ("Ching Ki"), an island c 8 km west of Sanshui. These two localities and the two sites with recent records, Yong'an and Shapu, are all located in the extreme north-western corner of the Pearl River Delta. It seems very likely that the Prickly Water Lily ponds in this area hold a substantial proportion of the breeding population of Pheasant-tailed Jacana in China and are therefore of high conservation importance.

Should anyone want to visit the area, we recommend Mr Chu (Mobile 1382 461 1782) as a driver who now knows the way to the jacana sites at Yong'an and Shapu. The major town in the area is Zhaoqing, which is about 4 hours by ferry from Hong Kong. The drive from Zhaoqing to Yong'an takes under an hour. Shapu is a little further away and involves a local ferry journey across the river. 

# Birding Report of 2 trips to Dailing, Lesser Hingan Range, Heilongjiang, China

(30/5-2/6/2001 & 22-27/4/2004) – Alex and Catherine Choi

Two trips were made to Dailing in 30/5-2/6/2001 and 22-27/4/2004 under the auspices of Mr Liu Bowen (Ornithologist of the Northeastern Forestry University, Heilongjiang and co-author of *A Field Guide to the Birds of Northeast China* (Chinese)). In the first trip, only one female adult Scaly-sided Merganser was seen.

Other interesting species included Black Woodpecker, Band-bellied Crane (plenty were heard), White-throated Rock Thrush, White-throated Needletails (seen flying over water) and Mandarin ducks (males only). We were sad to see a specimen of a male Scaly-sided Merganser at the home of a reserve warden. Fish-nets were observed spanning the river. Mr Liu told us that a duck had been caught inside these nets, presumably it was Scaly-sided as this is the only resident diving duck in the region.

In the second trip, we saw a flock of 500+ Bramblings, Ural owl and Yellow-throated buntings and up to 10 Scaly-sided Mergansers (3 adult males, 5 adult females and 2 immature male adults). All mergansers were seen in the middle part of the Yong Cui River where Bi Shui Reserve is. They were all at leisure floating on the stream or sunbathing on the rocks. Pairing up was observed and 2 female adults often stayed close to one immature male. Mating was not observed. They were mostly silent. Very weak calls were occasionally heard. They sound like regurgitation of stomach gas (but much softer). Only around five old Poplar trees with suitable tree holes were available for nesting in the reserve. Man-made nests had also been placed in suitable areas but had never been used by the birds. According to Mr Liu, in his recent trip in 2003, the number of breeding pairs in Chang Bai Mountain is about the same as in Dailing, but the birds are more scattered. One last sad story is that



one Lynx and her two cubs were killed recently by hunters near the reserve. Lynx has not been observed in the region for more than 10 years. We feel that there remains a lot to do for the conservation of this endangered species in China.

After reading the account of Scaly-sided Merganser in the Red Data Website of Birdlife International, we would like to clarify a few points about the local geographical names in English which may be sometimes confused:

1. Liang Shui is a National Nature Reserve of 13000 Hectares protecting primary mixed deciduous and evergreen forest in the Lesser Hingan Range. There is one small stream, Liang Shui River, running in the centre of the reserve. It drains into Yong Cui River at the south border of the reserve. Liang Shui River is too small for the ducks to feed and breed. However the part of Yong Cui River in the south border of the reserve provides most of the old Poplar trees for the ducks to breed.
2. In 1997, Bi Shui Reserve (or Bi Shui Nature Reserve for Chinese Merganser) was established under the advice of Mr Liu Bowen through his breeding study of the Scaly-sided Merganser in the region. It protects a 50-100 meter width of riverbank along a 40+km stretch of Yong Cui River. It is a Provincial Nature Reserve.






## A Guidebook to Bird Watching in the City

(Authors: Fong Wai Wang & Fung Sheung)

As city dwellers, we have varying degrees of expectancy of nature and are keen to escape from the hustle of downtown to be with our feathered friends. In fact, it is not just the privilege of rural residents and academics to be familiar with birds. Even in the “concrete jungle”, many bird species can be observed right around us, given that appropriate techniques are adopted. The joy of bird watching can, without exception, be found in the city.

“A Guidebook of Bird Watching in the City”, has been compiled by leading lights of bird watching in Taiwan, namely Fong Wai Wang and Fung Sheung, with photos by Wong Kin, an experienced bird photographer. The book covers 105 species of bird living in garden, rural and residential areas in


the Taiwan region. It is a practical guidebook to bird watching in the city. With over 300 fascinating photos contributed by enthusiasts in bird watching and photography, the volume also essential reference information on bird ecology and tips on birding. Although not all species in the book can be found in Hong Kong (it includes 3 Taiwan endemic species and 25 endemic sub-species) and some are not as common here as they are in Taiwan. Still, you might consider that this is a good, practical guidebook to add to your collection.

Published in A5 size with 240 pages, the book is printed by the “Taiwan Owl Publishing” at a price of NTD 500. (ISBN-986-7879-63-5) 

## Befriending the Birds

(Authors: Chan Wah Heung, Wong Ming Hong)

With the gradual growth of bird watching activity locally, there has been an improvement in bird watching skills and enlightenment in life from bird observation. Bird watching is no longer merely meant to be just an identification game. Through the observation of birds, we can not only nurture a deeper understanding of these feathered creatures under the same sky, we also develop our grasp of environmental issues. In the book titled “Befriending the Birds”, the authors introduce 25 common bird species in Taiwan in a story-telling manner with vivid text, superb photos and lively illustrations. Although the text is based on fairy tales and legends, it is supplemented by scientific fact. The book is therefore a good reading piece for birdwatchers at leisure, a useful teaching tool for family education, and also a reference book to enrich our general scientific knowledge.

This book is published by “Taiwanese Publishing Ltd.” as the third volume in the “Making friends with Nature” series at a price of NTD 280. ISBN 986-7916-51-4 





These are unchecked records. Members are reminded of the importance of submitting all records on record cards or electronically.

## April (second half)

Birds typical of all four seasons in Hong Kong were at Tai Po Kau Headland on 18th in the form of a White's Thrush (winter), a Grey-streaked Flycatcher (spring and autumn) and two Hainan Blue Flycatchers (summer) (R+KB). Sought-after migrants on the same day and the next included a Narcissus Flycatcher (GJC), Oriental Cuckoo (SLT) and Spoon-billed Sandpiper (YYT), all at Mai Po, and a Brown Hawk Owl at Kowloon Park (CM-G).

Visits to Tai Mo Shan at this time brought reports of three Lesser Shortwings and four Mountain Bush warblers, all singing.

A Grey-backed Shrike at Tai Po Kau on 23rd (KPK), a potential first for Hong Kong, was found on the same day as a Collared Kingfisher at Plover Cove (PC), potentially only the second for Hong Kong and the third for continental China. Subsequent searches of the Plover Cove area led to a further sighting on 25th (MRL) and reports of a Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo and Crested Kingfisher.

In addition to the shorebirds already mentioned, other noteworthy reports from Mai Po included a Pectoral sandpiper on 23rd (YYT), a Blue-tailed Bee-eater on 25th (GJC) and five Swinhoe's Egrets and four Nordmann's Greenshanks on 27th.

In the last few days of the month, passage of Chinese Goshawks was noted at several sites, the peak count being 31 at Lamma on 29th (GS).

## May

The first half of the month brought several noteworthy reports from Mai Po, including a Pectoral Sandpiper and five Nordmann's Greenshank on 4th, seven Blue-tailed Bee-eaters and a Pechora Pipit of the taxon *menzibieri*, a potential first Hong Kong record (PJL) on 9th, and 300 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers on 10th (YYT), a new high count.

Among potential breeders were up three singing Mountain Tailorbirds at Ng Tung Chai (EMSK), a Grey Nightjar at Kam Tin on 8th, up to two Black Bazas at Tsui Hang and Sai Kung on 8th and 13th, and up to five Lesser Shortwings, three Russet Bush Warblers and six Mountain Bush Warblers, all singing in the upper sections of Tai Mo Shan.

Elsewhere, hopes that a Swinhoe's Egret found at Luk Keng in mid-month might remain to breed were unfortunately not realised.

A shearwater photographed in eastern waters on 16th (GC) and thought to be a Sooty Shearwater was potentially a first for Hong Kong.

Migrants found in the Deep Bay area in the second half of the month included a Spoon-billed Sandpiper at Mai Po on 19th and two Swinhoe's Egrets there three days later, two Pheasant-tailed Jacanas at Lok Ma Chau on 21st, and a Black Bittern at Long Valley on 28th.

A boat survey of the Tolo Harbour-Tap Mun area on 29th logged over 500 terns (135 Black-naped, 46 Roseate and 350 Bridled), as well as the latest ever Ancient Auklet (CHF).


## June

Except for a Little Stint and a Spoon-billed Sandpiper at Mai Po on 8th and two Black-faced Spoonbills there on 15th, all other noteworthy records in this month concerned potential or known breeding species.

Breeding reports at Mai Po included at least three Black-winged Stilt chicks on the Mai Po scrape on 12th and at least two broods of Greater Painted Snipe chicks and one other clutch of eggs. In addition, a dependent juvenile Oriental Pratincole seen there with an adult on 8th was thought to have been reared either locally or very close by (YYT).

Among other breeding season reports of wetland-dependent birds during the first half of the month were a Chestnut Bittern at Long Valley, up to five Greater Painted Snipes at Luk Keng and Long Valley, and a Black Bittern in Tolo Harbour.

Elsewhere during the month, a juvenile Black-naped Oriole was seen at Tai Po Kau Headland (R+KB) and a male Chinese Grosbeak was observed feeding two fledged young at Sha Po while a female sat on a nest nearby (JA).

Reports of other potential breeding species included a Pygmy Wren Babbler, a Mountain Bulbul and at least five Hainan Blue Flycatchers at Tai Po Kau (MDW), and both Russet and Mountain Bush Warblers again at Tai Mo Shan. 

# bird hop

— Mail Order Items (for members only) —

## Compact Disk



Common Birds of Hong Kong CD-Rom  
(English edition)  
HK\$100 each  
ID : A-1



Wild Birds of Western China CD-Rom  
(English edition)  
HK\$120 each  
ID : A-2



Bird Calls of Common Birds of Hong Kong  
HK\$60 each  
ID : A-3



## Bulletins



HKBWS Bulletin  
(Chinese or English version)  
HK\$25 each  
ID : B-1

## Annual Reports



Hong Kong Bird Report  
(English edition)  
ISSN: 1017-118  
HK\$60 (HKBR 1970 & 71, 73, 79, 84, & 85)  
HK\$75 (HKBR 1992)  
HK\$75 (HKBR 1993)  
HK\$120 (HKBR 1994, 96, 97, 98)  
HK\$140 (HKBR 1999 & 00)  
ID : B-2

## Books



The Avifauna of Hong Kong  
ISBN: 962-7508-02-0  
HK\$310 each  
pick up offer  
HK\$250 each  
ID : B-4



Bird of Hong Kong & South China  
(Chinese, paperback cover)  
HK\$190 each  
pick up offer  
HK\$164 each  
ID : B-3

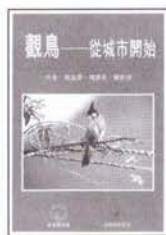


The Field Guide to the Birds of China  
(Chinese edition)  
HK\$200 each  
pick up offer  
HK\$150 each  
ID : B-8

## Books



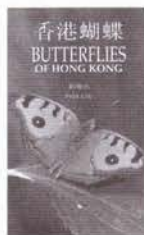
A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Hong Kong (Bilingual)  
HK\$238 each (hard cover)  
HK\$168 each (paper-back cover)



Bird Watching – Starting from the City\* (Chinese edition)  
ISBN: 962-7508-01-2  
HK\$25 each  
pick up offer  
HK\$20 each



飛羽神思 (Chinese, 1st edition)  
ISBN: 962-7508-01-2  
HK\$35 each  
pick up offer  
HK\$28 each  
ID : B-6



Butterflies of Hong Kong (Bilingual)  
ISBN: 962-7508-01-2  
HK\$125 each  
pick up offer  
HK\$99 each  
ID : B-5



Hong Kong Flying Colour I: Birds  
HK\$40 each  
pick up offer  
HK\$30 each  
ID : B-7

\* (Note: 50% of net profit will be donated to Quality Education Fund)

## Gifts



Hong Kong Birds Greeting Cards (4 cards per set)  
HK\$20 / set  
pick up offer  
HK\$16 / set  
ID : C-1



Hong Kong Birds Stickers (31 species, 4 stickers per set)  
HK\$10 / set  
ID : C-4



Hong Kong Birds Bookmarks (6 bookmarks per set)  
HK\$18 / set  
ID : C-2



Backyard bird toys (some come with bird calls)  
HK\$60 up each (pick up only)  
ID : C-4

## Gifts



Hong Kong Birds Badge

HK\$15 each

pick up offer

HK\$12 each

ID : C-5

More are available at the HKBWS Office!! (Prior appointment required)  
All price included postage and packing, except the pick-up offer.



# Coming Activities

(for activities held in October, please refer to summer bulletin no. 192)

Date	Leader / Speaker	Activity / Gathering location	Time	Difficulty
2 Nov (Tue)	Cheung Ho Fai	Indoor meeting <Bird Watching Activities in China> Room 1113, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (Member \$10, Non-member \$30)	19:00 – 20:30	
7 Nov (Sun)	Ada Chow Cherry Wong	Long Valley 08:00 Yin Kong carpark	08:00 – 13:00	X
14 Nov (Sun)	Cheung Ho Fai	Lo Kei Wan, Lantau 08:00 Tung Chung MTR Station, Hang Seng Bank	08:00 – 12:00	XX
20 Nov (Sat)	Choy C.P.  Cheung Wah (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	Kowloon Park ** 08:30 McDonald, Kowloon Park	08:30 – 11:00	X
21 Nov (Sun)	Luk Tsun Pun Or Wai Hung	Tsim Bei Tsui 08:00 Hang Heung Cake Shop (near LRT Tai Tong Rd Station, Yuen Long) (Please bring food & drink)	08:00 – 16:00	XX
28 Nov (Sun)	CC Wong Ying Hak King	Kadoorie Farm 08:00 Tai Wo KCR station (Taxi stand)	08:00 – 12:00	XX
5 Dec (Sun)	Peter Wong Michelle Kong	Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve 08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark (Tsung Tsai Yuen)	08:00 – 13:00	XXX
11 Dec (Sat)	Chen Chi Po  Tsang Wa (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	Kam Tin ** 08:30 Nam Cheong West Rail Station (front-end office)	08:00 – 15:00	XX
12 Dec (Sun)	Dickson Wong Jacob Lo	Tung Chung to Tai O 08:30 Tung Chung MTR Station Exit B (Please bring food & drink)	08:30 – 15:00	XXX
19 Dec (Sun)	Wong Ming Stanley Chan	Sai Kung/Ho Chung 08:30 Ho Chung Road junction to Hiram's Highway (Sai Kung Road)	08:30 – 13:00	X
26 Dec (Sun)	Stanley Ng Tam Yiu Leung	Lui Kung Tin (near Shek Kong) 08:00 Hang Heung Cake Shop (near LRT Tai Tong Rd Station, Yuen Long), or 08:30 Minibus No.72 Terminal at Shek Kong (Please bring food & drink)	08:00 – 15:00	X
2 Jan (Sun)	Carrie Ma Ho Man Fai	Lai Chi Wo 08:00 Tai Po Market KCR Station (Taxi stand)	08:00 – 17:00	XXX
9 Jan (Sun)	Li Wai Ki William Wong	Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve 08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark (Tsung Tsai Yuen)	08:00 – 13:00	XX
	Leung Kwok Wa Wong Lai Yee  (Crested Bulbul Club Leader)	Tsim Bei Tsui ** 08:30 Hang Heung Cake Shop, Yuen Long	08:00 – 13:00	XX
16 Jan (Sun)	Jemi Wong William Wong	Shing Uk Tsuen 08:00 Hang Heung Cake Shop (near LRT Tai Tong Rd Station, Yuen Long)	08:00 – 13:00	XX
23 Jan (Sun)	Chu Chui Ping Chu Cho Yan	Chung Mei 08:00 Tai Po Market KCR Station (Taxi stand)	08:00 – 13:00	X

今頁睇真D：

# 短耳鴞

Take a Closer Look :

Short-eared Owl

**短**耳鴞是香港最罕見的鴞，在香港只有一個被接納的記錄（香港鳥類名錄 1998）。在香港的鴞類之中，短耳鴞屬中型，牠的體長（34厘米）為雕鴞、褐魚鴞、草鴞之後的第4位。

跟短耳鴞最容易混淆的是長耳鴞，後者未曾在香港錄得。兩者的分別，在於短耳鴞有較橢圓形的臉盤，雙耳距離較近。牠的眼周圍是黑色，瞳孔是黃色（長耳鴞是橙色）。短耳鴞的飛行姿態像大蝴蝶，牠翼尖羽毛的特別構造亦使牠可以無聲地飛行。

Short-eared Owl is the rarest owl in HK, with only one accepted record (The Avifauna of Hong Kong 1998). Short-eared Owl is medium-sized among the owls in Hong Kong. Its size (34 cm) puts it in fourth place after Eagle Owl, Brown Fish Owl and Eastern Grass Owl.

The only species confusable with Short-eared Owl is Long-eared Owl, which has not been recorded in Hong Kong. To distinguish them, Short-eared Owl has a more oval facial disc and its ears are much closer together. It has a black coloured ring around the eye, and its iris is yellow (orange for Long-eared Owl). Short-eared Owl is said to have a flying style that resembles a large butterfly. Like most owls, it's wing-tip feathers are also specially built for silent flight.



— 文：張浩輝 / 圖：李玉瑩

Text : Cheung Ho Fai / Illustration : Lee Yuk Ying



彩鷸 (米埔) – 陳皓賢  
Painted Snipe (Mai Po) – Chan Ho Yin Dominic

