

香港觀鳥會 The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



bulletin

會員通訊



198

Winter 2005 - 冬

紅頭標鷓 - 朱展強 (大埔落)

Rufous-capped Babbler -

Henry Chu (Tai Po Kau)

- 13/11/2005
- DSLR camera, 100-400mm zoom lens, speedlite



畫雀仔 [paint.bird.com](http://paint.bird.com)

- 李玉瑩 Lee Yuk Ying



大擬啄木鳥

Great Barbet



# The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited

(Approved Charitable Institution of a Public Character)

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## Chairman's word

**H**KBWS have opened a new page this year. The Long Valley project funded by the government will kick off on 1st Dec 2005. For the next two years, we will be working with Long Valley farmers to manage the land for birds and seek also to find a more sustainable and bird-friendly method of farming. This would involve a comprehensive survey to find out the effectiveness of our management practice and also the various farming practices. Let me say that HKBWS will do our very best in carrying out the project, and of course, we need all the help that we can get. As a member of the society, you are welcome to participate, to contribute any special knowledge you have in this area.

The Avian Flu pandemic has reached new heights this year. The highly pathogenic H5N1 virus has spread to the Middle East and Europe. The mass media have reported at length on this issue for several weeks already. HKBWS have provided and will continue to provide specialist information on birds that would help to combat the virus and misunderstandings caused by it. In doing that, I firmly believe that this is necessary to strengthen the society's effort on conservation.

There is now a strong bird watching movement in China. At the China Ornithological Society (COS) meeting in Hainan in November, several leaders of birdwatching societies were elected to the executive committee of the COS. From here, one can expect that the fast growth in bird watching activity in China will continue for many years to come. This period will herald golden opportunities to start various projects in China that will enhance cooperation between ornithologists and birdwatchers. Also projects may be started that would collect short-term and long-term bird information that would be important for science and conservation. 🐦

– Cheung Ho Fai

Nov. 2005

## HKBWS Office

Mr Stanley Ng resigned from the position of Manager (Administration) of the Society Office in October 2005. Mr Ng was previously the Honorary Treasurer and he has been contributing much to the Society. We thank Mr Ng for helping the Society for years and wish him a fruitful future. After Mr Ng' resignation, Miss Ada Chow has taken over the membership & accounting work temporarily. She has to manage all the account work and she is really dedicated. We sincerely thank Miss Chow for her effort.

Mr. TAM Yip-shing has just been employed as Project Officer to execute a new project implemented in Long Valley. Since September 2005 Mr Jose Alberto CHEUNG ("Kwok Jai") has been our new Office Assistant. We welcome our young generation to join in.

## Membership Affairs Committee

Mr YIP Tai-wai has just joined the Membership Affairs Committee and helps to manage membership affairs. We thank and welcome Mr Yip to serve the society.

## Membership 2006

Membership renewal forms have already been sent out. The Membership card 2006 is already printed. Thanks to Ms Michelle Kong and Mr Peter Wong for providing their Brown Hawk Owl photo and thanks also to Miss PUK Yuk-yin for her design of the card.



## Free Bird Leaflets

To thank you for your generous support to the Society, you can take the following informative leaflets free:

1. Bird Watching – Nature is our teacher (includes 36 common bird species) (Chinese only)
2. Long Valley – A Living Classroom (includes 36 bird species found in LV) (bilingual)
3. Come Near to Nature, Get to know Hong Kong (introduces a few common birds in detail) (Chinese only)
4. Birds in the City (Chinese only)
5. Black-faced Spoonbill (bilingual)
6. Wetlands and Migratory Birds (bilingual)

Please send us a return envelope with stamp, and indicate the number of leaflets you request (i.e. 1 to 6). Postage as follows:

1 piece - \$1.4 2 pieces - \$2.2 3 to 6 pieces - \$3.0

(please contact us to confirm the postage first if you request more than 6 pieces)

## Sponsored Publication of the China Bird Report 2004

The China Conservation Fund of the Society will continue sponsoring HK\$6,000 to the China Ornithological Society to publish the China Bird Report 2004.

## Acknowledgments:

- "Birds and Humans in Harmony – A Sustainable Management Scheme in Long Valley – funded by Environment and Conservation Fund
- A laser printer was donated by Ms Lin Po-ling
- Ms Winnie Poon has donated a set of telescope to Mainland China. 

## Projects – Lo Wai Yan

### Hong Kong Park Green Orienteering (19-20 Nov 2005)

<b>Participants:</b>	About 60 primary students in 11 teams
<b>Details:</b>	Talk and outdoor bird watching were arranged on the 1st day. In the 2nd competition day, students were required to identify wild birds around the park. They also needed to find and observe a variety of wildlife inside the park to answer a series of questions. In addition with a bird cap design competition, it has become an exciting, interesting and educational conservation activity.
<b>Acknowledgements:</b>	Most of the work including the training and the contest were taken up by the Crested Bulbul Club.

### "Birds and Humans in Harmony – A Sustainable Management Scheme in Long Valley" (Dec 2005 – Nov 2007)

<b>Sponsor:</b>	Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF)
<b>Project Background:</b>	It is well recognized that Long Valley has a very high conservational value, especially in bird species. Therefore, it has become one of the 12 priority sites for enhanced conservation designated by AFCD. To conserve this area, the Society and another environmental group have been funded by ECF to organize different pilot schemes starting from late 2005. Our objective is to develop different kinds of land management measures to enhance the species and number of birds. The duration of this scheme is 2 years.
<b>Details:</b>	Through the cooperation with local people and farmers, different vegetation management plans will be tried out. The basic principle is to increase the area of wetland, such as turning the abandoned land into shallow ponds; planting specific freshwater vegetation and dry agricultural crops for specific bird species. Site visits will also be organised for general public later.
<b>Volunteer Group:</b>	Those who are concerned about the fate of Long Valley are welcome to join our Volunteer Group. Please send e-mail to our Project Officer Mr YS Tam (tyipshing@hkbws.org.hk)

### Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve, TaiPo Environmental Association

Fung Yuen, famous for various species of butterfly, is an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and one of the 12 priority sites for enhanced conservation. The Society will assist TPEA to organize a 2-year bird survey in order to better understand the conservation value of the whole area.

### Guandu Water-World – 2005 Taipei Birdwatching Fair (12-13 Nov 2005)

Three members of the Crested Bulbul Club went to represent the Society at the fair. They were NG Yan-na, CHEN Chi-po and HOI Chung-pak. With the support of HUNG Wai-ming, a booth was set up in Guandu Nature Park to introduce the Society during this period.

Other than meeting with friends from different places, they also introduced the success of the Club to the mass media from Singapore.

### Crested Bulbul Club

#### 1. Early Morning Bird Watchers at Kln Park & HK Park

No. of participants in Kowloon Park from Oct to Dec 2005: 233

Hong Kong Park: 178

(Amendment: the months shown in last issue should be July to Sept)

#### 2. Bulletin of the Crested Bulbul Club

Ex-editor Mr WONG Hau-chung has resigned and Mr CHEN Chi-po will take up this job temporarily. The coming issue will be published in late Dec 2005.

## Bird watching guiding services and training activities

- |    |       |  |
|----|-------|--|
| 1. | 15/9  | Sports Association of Inland Revenue Dept. – talk (by W Y Lo)  |
| 2. | 9/10  | Fu Yan Garden Elderly Centre, HK Lutheran Soc Ser – bird watching in Mai Po (by Crested Bulbul Club)   |
| 3. | 18/10 | Ming Yu Chung Pak Comm. Serv. Ctr. – bird watching in Kln Park (by Crested Bulbul Club)                |
| 4. | 5/11  | Chinese University of HK – bird watching in campus (by Crested Bulbul Club)                            |
| 5. | 12/11 | HK Society of Community Medicine – bird watching in Mai Po (by Apache Lau, Mr & Mrs TP LUK, George Ho) |
| 6. | 12/11 | Bird Watching Day in Kowloon Park – (by Crested Bulbul Club)   |
| 7. | 15/11 | Carnoes Tan Siu Lin Elderly Ctr., CCSBS – talk (by Crested Bulbul Club)                                |

## Colours on Wings – Hong Kong Wild Bird Photo Contest

Promotion activities will start from Feb 2006.

## Keeping Asia's Spoonbills Airborne – International Symposium on Research and Conservation of the Black-faced Spoonbill

<b>Organiser:</b>	Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
<b>Supporting Organizations:</b>	BirdLife International Asia Division, AFD, WWF(Hong Kong) and Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden
<b>Sponsors:</b>	The Croucher Foundation, Environment & Conservation Fund, Environmental Campaign Committee
<b>Date:</b>	<i>Symposium:</i> 16-18 Jan 2006 <i>Public Forum:</i> 18 Jan 2006 (7:00pm – 8:30pm)
<b>Inquiry &amp; registration:</b>	HKBWS Office 2377 4387

## Elementary Bird Watching Class for Beginners

An elementary bird watching course for beginners organised by the Society

No of enrolment:	40
Application Fee:	Member:\$650

Non-member:\$850  
Age above 55 or student member: \$450

<b>Outing Date:</b>	(half day) 5/2/2006, (full day) 12/2/2006, 26/2/2006
<b>Outing Venue:</b>	Kowloon Park, Shing Mun Country Park, Long Valley & Maipo
<b>Lecture Date:</b>	2/2/2006, 9/2/2006, 23/2/2006, 2/3/2006 (3 hrs/lecture)
<b>Time of lecture:</b>	7:00-10:00p.m
<b>Venue for lecture:</b>	Scout Association of Hong Kong, Tsim Sha Tsui
<b>Language:</b>	Cantonese
<b>Certificate:</b>	Passing certificate – pass in the examination and attendance rate 80% or above

Attendance certificate – attendance rate 80% or above

## Research Group update

### A. Black-faced Spoonbill Research Group

– Yu Yat Tung

The Black-faced Spoonbill Research Group will have a very busy time in the coming few months. We will organize some events with both local and international perspectives.

#### 1) Keeping Asia's Spoonbills Airborne – International Symposium on Research and Conservation of the Black-faced Spoonbill, 16-18 January 2006.

This will be the first time for Hong Kong and also our society to hold an international symposium on Black-faced Spoonbill. The highlight of the symposium will be providing a discussion platform to review existing information, to strengthen research efforts and to streamline conservation efforts to protect the species and its' habitats. Spoonbill experts and conservationists from all countries within the range of BFS will participate. With help of BirdLife International, the new Action Plan for the Black-faced Spoonbill will be discussed for the future direction of the conservation of this species.

#### 2) International Black-faced Spoonbill Census 2006

The census is proving to be an effective way to assess the global population of this species. The 2006 census is scheduled for 6-8 January and voluntary surveyors from mainland China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam and as far as Thailand and the Philippines will help. A total of 1475 BFS were counted in the last census and the trend is increasing

in recent years. It is likely that the number of BFS could exceed 1500 individuals.

### 3) Age structure study of wintering Black-faced Spoonbill in Hong Kong

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, HK SAR Government has commissioned the age structure study of wintering BFS in Hong Kong, winter 2005-06 to the society. We have conducted this study for AFCD since 2001, except the one in 2003. This on-going monitoring programme is important to assess and predict the population trend of the spoonbill. The BFS research group would also like to invite any interested members to join this study. Please contact Yu Yat Tung (email: [bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk))

### B. Egret Research Group - Captain Wong

The first version of China egret nesting colony distribution data base is being reviewed and revised. It is hoped that this database could be linked with the IUCN Heron Specialist Group website.

### C. Kite Research group

We conducted the monthly kite count as usual. The result for the count as below:


Date	Stonecutters Island (Highest Snapshot Count)	Magazine Gap (Highest Snapshot Count)
2/10	49	361
23/10	206	241
6/11	145	327

### D. Swifts and Swallow Research Group

2006 Swifts and Swallow Nest Survey Volunteers

Firstly we have to thank everybody for all the information and photos submitted to the Swifts and Swallows section of the Society website.

With the support of more than twenty volunteers, the 2005 nest survey was carried out successfully. Now we are preparing the report and hope it can be released very soon.

The 2006 Swifts and Swallows nest survey will be extended to traditional walled villages in the New Territories. More volunteers are needed to participate. Any interested parties please contact the office. 

## Mid-winter dredging stopped at Nam Sang Wai

In the last couple of years the mudflats and channel at the northern tip of Nam Sang Wai has become increasingly popular place for birders, and especially photographers, to get close to large numbers of duck, the globally threatened Black-faced Spoonbill, and most spectacular of all, our flock of Dalmatian Pelicans (Deep Bay is the most important wintering site in East Asia for this giant waterbird) during the winter months. For members of the public that do not enjoy regular access to Mai Po, this site offers the best chance in Hong Kong (and probably anywhere in the world!) to get close to these wonderful birds.

Several months ago HKBWS was approached by the China Harbour Engineering Co. (CHEC), subcontractors of Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) to comment on their plans for dredging in two river which feed into Deep Bay. The purpose for the project is to ensure that villages in the Yuen/Long Kam area did not flood during heavy summer rains (CEDD were contracted to do this work for the Drainage Services Department (DSD).

The intention was to dredge the channel that runs from the Marine Police pier at Tsim Bei Tsui, up the Yuen Long Creek to the bridge near the Wetland Park, and also up the Shan Pui River to the point where it meets the Kam Tin Main Drainage Channel between the southern tip of Lut Chau and the northern tip of Nam Sang Wai.

This work is projected to clear 200,000 cubic metres of mud, which has slowly accumulated as part of the natural siltation process in Deep Bay. This is a good thing – there is a genuine need to reduce the siltation, which has increased alarmingly as more and more of Deep Bay has been reclaimed, especially along the Shenzhen waterfront between Shekou in







— Mike Kilburn, *Chairman, Conservation Committee*

the west and Futian Nature Reserve in the east. The problem, however, is in the timing.

The technique proposed by CEDD and CHEC, using backhoes on barges and floating the full barges downriver for disposal outside Deep Bay, will take 25 months of continuous work, and once completed should not need to be repeated for another 15-20 years. If the work was conducted in winter this huge job would unquestionably have a direct impact on the birds that make use of this part of Deep Bay.

A loophole in the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) means there is no need to conduct an EIA before doing this work. However, the Government, aware of the ecological importance of Deep Bay, required CEDD, or their contractors to seek the feedback of HKBWS and WWF (HK) before proceeding with the work.

In an initial meeting, HKBWS made clear that we had serious concerns about the works, noting the large numbers of birds using the site during the winter months, but also making clear that we had no problem with dredging between May and October, when most of the birds are breeding, far to the north, in Mongolia, Siberia, China and Korea. We also noted that far fewer

birds used these sites at high tide, and that impact on birds could be further lessened by dredging during those times.

Unfortunately, our most important concern - disturbance during the winter months - was ignored, and the contractors made plans to begin work in November 2005, right at the start of the key time for wintering birds! Fortunately WWF(HK) have long memories and recalled that Government guidelines written in 1988 clearly stated that no dredging should occur in Deep Bay during the winter months. While eager to seek a solution that allows the dredging to be completed more quickly, CEDD have acted responsibly, putting a stop to the contractors' plans for winter dredging, and adjusting the programme so that dredging will now only be conducted during the summer months.

In closing it is important to note that HKBWS clearly recognizes the importance of good flood control measures, and the key role dredging plays in controlling the rates of siltation in Deep Bay. However, in this case, when there was no reason to rush these works, we welcome CEDD's flexibility in amending the timetable in order to minimise the disturbance to our spectacular winter waterbirds.

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## China Conservation News

### Julianshan National Nature Reserve Trashed by Dam and Development Projects

In Bulletin 193 we reported on the destruction of important habitat for the rare Blyth's Kingfisher and the endangered White-eared Night Heron at Chebaling National Nature Reserve in northern Guangdong following visits to the site in April and May 2004. The two principal causes of the destruction there were roadbuilding along key stretches of river, and the construction of multiple dams for generating hydro electricity to fuel the demand arising from the relentless pace of economic development in southern China.

During that visit HKBWS members also visited Julianshan Nature Reserve, a newly created national nature reserve which is around 50km east of Chebaling as the crow flies, but lies across the provincial boundary at the southernmost tip of Jiangxi Province.





In 2004 Jiulianshan promised everything that Chebaling once was – good quality lowland forest and wonderful rivers and streams supporting good numbers of Blyth's Kingfishers (up to 6 daily were noted) and consistent reports of White-eared Night Heron, as well as Cabot's Tragopan and Rickett's Hill Partridge.

A return trip in October/November 2005 revealed that the cancer had spread into Jiulianshan. A large dam is being built in the centre of the reserve, which will have serious construction-phase (heavy siltation) and operational-phase (reduced water flow) impacts on the river and its associated biodiversity, including the night heron and the kingfisher.

In an even grosser act of wanton destruction one of the large bends in the river has been cut through and flattened to make way for some sort of property development. This is especially depressing as there is plenty of land available in the immediate vicinity that could have been used – and with a greatly reduced impact on the river.

It is not clear exactly who is responsible for these works, which make a sick joke of the fact they lie within the reserve's "Wise Use" zone, which lies between the two core areas. There is no doubt that the reserve staff are aware of the projects, but said that they were unable to act as both projects were approved before Jiulianshan gained National Nature Reserve status in 2003.

However, during the visit a daily maximum of four Blyth's Kingfishers were recorded. The night heron once again remained elusive, although one of the staff ecologists informed us that 3 birds had been seen together in June 2005, suggesting successful breeding had occurred earlier that year. Whether these species will last long here, or anywhere else in South China, sadly, seems increasingly unlikely. ♪

# Mai Po update

– Lew Young

## Avian influenza

Over the past months, a lot of media attention has focused on the role of migratory waterbirds in spreading the avian influenza virus. Whilst wild birds may have a role to play, the media has mentioned very little about the role of the international trade in pet birds and the movement of commercial poultry as other possible routes for the spread of the virus. For the former, there have been a number of cases of legal and illegally traded pet birds being found carrying the H5N1 virus. As for the latter, there is little information on the movement worldwide of commercial poultry, e.g. how far abroad do the farmed poultry from China (or elsewhere in Asia) go to be sold?

Furthermore, the media has largely ignored the fact that most of the people who have died from H5N1 infection have been because they have been in close contact with infected poultry, not wild birds.

In the case of Hong Kong, the Microbiology Department of the University of Hong Kong has been monitoring the occurrence of the avian influenza virus in the birds wintering at Mai Po since 2003. Birds are caught and blood and swab samples are taken for analysis. Droppings are also collected for analysis from sites where the birds roost, e.g. from the islands in front of the Tower Hide and in the Waterfowl Collection. Of the more than 16,000 samples that have been collected so far, none have tested positive for the H5N1 virus.

The collection of samples has increased this winter because of the growing concern of the spread of avian influenza. As a result, scientists from Hong Kong University come into Mai Po every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings to collect droppings, and then there will be special trapping session for ducks and shorebirds on the Scrape (*gei wai* 16/17) to take blood and swab samples.

Such surveillance work will no doubt cause some disturbance to the wintering birds at Mai Po but these should be small scale and should not affect the birds in the long term. Without such research, we would not be able to tell the media that so far, latest research shows that the birds wintering at Mai Po do not have avian influenza. ♪

# Publication of the “2004 China Bird Report”

— Editors, China Bird Report, 4 November 2005


The China Ornithological Society has published the “China Bird Report 2004”. As with the “China Bird Report 2003” there were three main information sources for the 2004 report: “Birdtalker” records centre for amateur birdwatchers, letters or e-mail correspondence from ornithologists or birdwatchers in mainland China, and the same from overseas birdwatchers.

The 2004 annual report was produced after information from these sources was reviewed, selected and compiled. The information was sourced from 23 Provinces, four autonomous regions, three cities and one special administrative region (records from Hong Kong and Taiwan were excluded, as these two regions have their own bird reports). No records were received this year from Chongqing City and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. The records covered a total of 987 species from 69 families and 17 orders, which is about 74.15% (Zheng 2005) of bird species recorded in China; this is an increase of 130 species compared to those submitted in 2003. These include protected bird species of National-protected Grade I and Grade II, and categories of Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable and Near-threatened as listed in the Asia Red Data Book. Four species are new to the China List: Alexandrine Parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*), Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipitxcan*), Spot-winged Starling (*Saroglossa spiloptera*) and Wire-tailed Swallow (*Hirundo smithii*) as well as a good number of new provincial records. All of these provided new information on bird distribution as well as background information for research on their distribution range.

Highlights of the “China Bird Report 2004” include: (1) Greater participation in record submission, covering a wider range. The 2004 bird report received nearly a thousand records from 170 local and international birdwatchers, and 4 new records were added to the China checklist. (2) We noted that there are developments on taxonomy, in particular with the advanced technology on molecular biology and acoustic analysis. These offer us information on bird identification and view points, which has been added

briefly into the Bird Report. (3) During the production of this annual report, we were happy to find that records submitted were quantified and greatly improved, and we received no more records comprising the species name only. This result reflects that the importance of record submission is becoming recognized by birdwatchers, and therefore further increases the quality of the Bird Report.

We received much positive comment after the last China Bird Report was published, which was gratifying as it means our work is being recognized. However, this brings its own added pressure: How should we maintain and improve the style and quality? How may we increase its scientific value and increase its practicality? At the end of 2004, we asked for comments and suggestions about the 2003 report, and were prepared to carry out the initial review for the 2004 report, to attract participation and to arrange sharing of workload. After one year of effort, the second report is published. We are certain that there is improvement in this report, but we are equally sure there are errors or omissions. We sincerely hope readers could provide us with comments and suggestions, as well as providing birdwatching records as usual.

Finally, we thank the Working Group of the annual report for offering lots of support over the last year. We also thank for various their help and technical assistance the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society and the Beijing Bird Watching Society. We are also very grateful for sponsorship from Swarovski Hong Kong Limited. 



## Japanese Paradise-flycatcher

– Maicha

Last year, a Japanese Paradise flycatcher was standing in front of a banyan tree outside my window. The bird was flying quickly, I could only remember its shadow.

On 24 October noon, there was a bird flying in a wave-like pattern outside my office. From the size of its shadow, it should be a Japanese Paradise-flycatcher. Nearly at the same time of the year as last year, could the Japanese Paradise flycatcher have returned this year?

At the backyard of my office, the hungry flycatcher was busily hunting a big bug in a spinney. The bird



was so hungry that it moved around my leg to chase a moth!

The flycatcher did not pay any attention to me as it seemed to treat me as a part of a window, or a slightly moving tree branch. The bird was running between two banyan trees, searching for big bugs. Finally, an unlucky butterfly was caught, the bird shining yellow beak looked like a beautiful blossom.

This was my first time to observe a paradise flycatcher at such a close distance. Sometimes I could even put down my binoculars and carefully recognize its remarkable features.

The back of the bird was dark brown which was a little bit different from a normal paradise flycatcher.

Its dark brown back was obviously separated from the deep blue head, and the deep blue throat was also distinguished from its white chest.

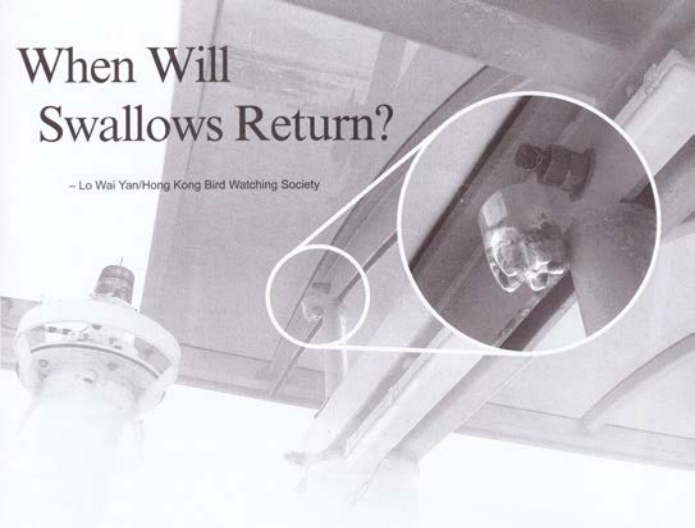
Thus, the blue eye-ring and big eye started to attract bird-lovers. Starting on that day, the flycatcher visited the banyan tree several times everyday, flying in the forest, or just staying thoughtfully. Many bird-lovers came for that lovely creature, deeply appreciated its impressive mien, and the bird also showed up itself in an appropriate time.

Japanese-Paradise flycatcher is a passage migrant in Shenzhen, this is only the second written record. Just getting into November, Japanese-Paradise flycatcher was elected by those bird-lovers to be their most co-operative partner this year. ♪



# When Will Swallows Return?

— Lo Wai Yan/Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



In mid May 2005, our member Paul Lau found that a swallow nest near Sok Kwu Wan Pier, Lamma Island, was cleared by people. Only traces of mud remained at the pavilion where the nest was located. Suspecting that the nest was removed as rubbish by cleaners, Paul lodged a complaint with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

A few days later, Paul found another swallow nest under the cover of the pier had fallen to the ground. Two chicks were struggling on the floor, another two were thrown into the sea, while their parents circled excitedly above. Meanwhile, Mr SIN So and Mr KWOK Ka Chun, crew members from an arriving ferry, managed to pick up one of the chicks from the water, but the second chick could not be found. The two kind-hearted men put the three surviving chicks into the nest and hid it temporarily before their ferry departed for the return trip. They soon came back again, together with a makeshift nest cut from the lower part of a plastic bottle. They placed the chicks into the bottle nest and fixed it next to where the original nest was, hoping that the parents would attend to the chicks again.

Miraculously, the swallow parents did feed their chicks immediately and adopted the new nest as their home. A few days later, Mr Sin and Mr Kwok finally



## When Will Swallows Return? *(Con't)*

sighed with relief as they witnessed the chicks took to the air.


HKBWS is very pleased with the good deed by Mr Sin and Mr Kwok. While the makeshift bird nest may not always work, the men's heart for nature is definitely to be recognized. The incident also highlights current loopholes and deficiencies in the policy for protecting wildlife. All wild birds in Hong Kong are protected under the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance, Chapter 170 of the Laws of Hong Kong. Section 5 of the Ordinance states that no person may take, remove, injure, destroy or wilfully disturb a nest or egg of any protected wild animal, unless in possession of a special permit.

The above story also tells us that Barn Swallows have adapted very well to living with man. Being part of Nature ourselves, how should we look at the incident?

If the swallow nest was removed by tourists or citizens, then it shows that there is a lack of understanding about relevant laws – a problem with education and publicity. If the nest was removed by the cleaners from either the government or its contractors, then we would ask if they would break the law when working, and whether their management were aware of and had means to prevent their staff from breaking it.

Damage to the nests of swallows and swifts could be a typical problem. Barn Swallows generally nest at rural buildings and structures (e.g. the damaged nest in the above case was built inside a pavilion), while House Swifts would nest under overhangs in town buildings. Both species are close to people. People may damage these nests due to the lack of good information, or perhaps just out of mischief. Cleaners may remove the nests because of cleanliness and hygiene considerations. The size of the problem is difficult to assess. The above incident may be just the tip of an iceberg.

HKBWS suggest the government should work closer together with us and other NGOs. To prevent people from breaking the law out of ignorance, promotion should be given, especially during the breeding season, to educate and to remind the public about the care for birds and relevant legislation. Breeding terns at remote islands and swallows and swifts nesting at housing are obvious subjects for regular promotion. Education is more important in the long term – there is a serious lack of conservation education in the current formal curriculum. Laws alone cannot prevent similar incidents when the public and students have little understanding of wildlife.

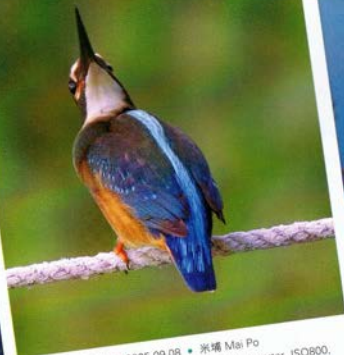
As the number of building overhangs reduces through development and redevelopment, nesting swallows in urban areas may be soon consigned to history. 

# 普通翠鳥

## Common Kingfisher



- 許光杰 KK Hui • 2005.10.15 • 米埔 Mai Po
- DSLR camera, 500mm/f4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter + 2x teleconverter



- 健忠 Jianzhong • 2005.09.08 • 米埔 Mai Po
- DSLR camera, 300mm/f2.8 lens + 2x teleconverter, ISO800, f6.3, 1/160s



- 深藍 Owen Chiang • 2005.11.05
- 米埔 Mai Po
- DSLR camera, 300mm/f2.8 lens + 2x teleconverter, 50% crop



- 陳志光 Daniel Chan • 2004.04.20 • 米埔 Mai Po
- DSLR camera, 500mm lens + 1.4X teleconverter, ISO200, f8, 1/1600s



- 葉偉雄 Yip Wai Hung • 2005.10.30 • 南生圍 Nam Sang Wai
- DSLR camera, 400mm/f5.6 lens, ISO200, f7.1, 1/2000s, crop

# 斑魚狗 Pied Kingfisher



# 白領翡翠 Collared Kingfisher



- 盧嘉孟 Lo Kar Man • 2005.02.27 • 大澳鹽田 Tai O salt pan
- SLR camera, 500 mm/f4 lens + 2x teleconverter, ISO200 slide



- 黃卓研 Cherry Wong • 2005.10.02 • 米埔 Mai Po
- DSLR camera, 50-500mm zoom lens + 2x teleconverter

# 白胸翡翠 White-throated Kingfisher



- 杜賓炯 Hendrix To • 2005.11.27
- 米埔 Mai Po
- DSLR camera, 600mm/f4 lens + 1.4X teleconverter, f6.3, 1/1000s



- 健忠 Jianzhong • 2005.08.22 • 九龍公園 Kowloon Park
- DSLR camera, 300mm/f2.8 lens + 2x teleconverter, ISO200, f5.6, 1/500s, -2/3EV



- 劉劍明 Angus Lau • 2005.10.13 • 米埔 Mai Po
- DSLR camera, 600mm/f4 lens, ISO320, f4, 1/2000s

# 藍翡翠 Black-capped Kingfisher

# Japan: Eastern Hokkaido, Tokyo and the ferry

3rd–14th October, 2005

## 7th October

Having made the decision to go to Hokkaido, everything started badly when I left it too late to get to the 23:45 ferry by taking a slow train from Tokyo to Mito and misdirecting the taxi driver in a place he knew and I didn't. Stupid. Anyway I got onto the ferry from Oarai to Tomakomai through the truck door with five minutes to spare... then failed to sleep because of the snorer in my 6-bed berth. At times the noises were so tortuous I thought he might be gasping his last. No such luck, which meant a dreadful night's sleep. I overslept and missed the first hour of daylight for seawatching.

## 8th October

I went on deck to find a grey and overcast sky, the distant coastline shrouded in mist, but relatively calm seas. The first bird to appear was a Streaked Shearwater – easily recognised by its pale head and bill as is tilted first one way then the other – the first of ten thousand or more on the day! And that was all there was for the first few hours, except for the odd Black-tailed or Slaty-backed Gull, until a pale phase skua shot south at speed, allowing time, however, for its, front-heavy, big-shouldered structure, flashes of white on both sides of the wing, and broad breast band to be noted – Pomarine! – a very, very long-awaited tick!



The situation stayed the same for the next couple of hours – with occasional groups of Streaked Shearwaters numbering in their thousands the major highlight. After Sendai a few more Poms passed – curiously going north, as were a couple of small groups of Red-necked Phalaropes. But the big excitement came from the two albatrosses – Black-footed (3 birds

in total) and a single Laysan, both species with wings that seemed to go on and on forever. Like all albatrosses they left me in awe as they slid effortlessly past, dwarfing the Streakers (and everything else).

The standout birds in terms of quality, if not charisma, were the three dark *pterodroma* petrels when stayed with the ship for over three hours. They were dark smoky

## Japan: Eastern Hokkaido, Tokyo and the ferry (Cow's)

grey-brown, (looking lighter and browner in bright sunshine) and all had distinct white facial patches, which positively gleamed in full sunlight. About 20% smaller than the Streakers, two birds in particular held station on the right side of the



vessel, giving excellent views of a head darker than the body, a clear white patch on the base of the underwing primaries and primary coverts, divided by thin, but distinctive, crescents of dark edges to the coverts. The best-looking bird had no white on the upperwing except for the faintest hint of a covert bar, probably caused by wear. This bird appeared not to need to flap its wings – I counted just two beats in the full three hours. A second bird appeared to be moulting its inner primaries, showing distinct white feathering on the upper primaries, but not on the shafts. I can only speculate that this is an aberrant, moult-related plumage. This bird's wings correspondingly looked more pointed, and it was evidently having to work much harder – giving at least a few flaps on every pass.

All birds had pale bellies (the moulting bird noticeably more so) and short, almost square, tails which projected less than the head. Leg colour was not noted. The bill and eyes were black. On first inspection these features appear to suggest Providence Petrel, a rare bird in Japan but, having seen the still unidentified *pterodroma* in Hong Kong in March 2001, I take nothing for granted and look forward to hearing more informed opinions!

My good fortune with time held true as I was offered a lift from Tomakomai port to Sapporo city – from where I caught an 11:15 night bus to Kushiro in eastern Hokkaido (NB there is also a 10pm bus directly from Sapporo to Nemuro which arrives at 6:30am). After an uncomfortable, but not unbearable, night I changed buses in Kushiro, benefiting from the early arrival to get the 6:05am bus on to Nemuro. On the way the road

passed through a wonderful diversity of marshland, forests and protected areas – it ought to be stunning in a week or two as the leaves turn red. I was able to get off at Tobai (8:15am), the town for Lake Furen, rather than carrying on into Nemuro and retracing my steps. A 5 minute walk saw me at Matsuo-san's Lodge Furen (email: matsuo-t @ plum.plala.or.jp) on the lake-shore.

### 9th October

Knackered, but eager to get birding, I kicked off with a juvenile Peregrine whizzing overhead, disturbing the 25 Eurasian Oystercatchers roosting on the other side of the sea wall. Matsuo-san kindly dropped me about 1 km west at the Onneto Bridge before going back to his ringing. I was preparing to sort out all the 1,000 plus duck (mostly Pintail and Eurasian Teal, with Mallard and the odd Shoveler) but was spared by the constant distraction of good birds! The first of these were a couple of Japanese Cranes, which strolled into view. They looked as majestic on the ground, picking carefully along the edge of the water, as they had gliding past the Lotus Hills in Beidaihe, where I first saw them 15 years ago!

My attention was distracted from the cranes by an immature White-tailed Eagle, which was slouched on the ground about 300m from the roadside. Before I could get closer it came to me! – flying low over the water in an attempt to surprise some of the feeding ducks on the other side of a low spit. I have also seen Imperial Eagle fail with this rather clumsy-looking technique, and wonder



seriously how these big eagles actually feed themselves. This was the first of at least eight and possibly as many as 16 White-tailed Eagles on the day. One of these flew past as I was having lunch in a funky-looking pink restaurant overlooking the Onneto Bridge and the bay!

A group of loafing gulls in Onneto's small harbour revealed two Glaucous-winged Gulls amongst a group of Black-tailed and Slaty-backed Gulls. These were my first adults, and I was pleased to pick out their pale grey wing-tips quickly amongst the darker-tipped Slaty-backed Gulls. Later in the day I found several Glaucous Gulls on rocks at the river mouth. The Glaucous looked bigger and chunkier, and the all-white primaries stood out distinctively. Curiously, all were adults except for a single all-white second winter bird.

Passerines in the area included several very smart *lugens* White Wagtails (also known as Black-backed Wagtail) flashing lots of white in the wing, Olive-backed and Buff-bellied Pipits, a couple of Siberian Stonechats and a jangling group of Oriental Greenfinches. The Onneto trail was stuffed with Black-faced Buntings, but amongst them were couple of female Long-tailed Rosefinches – my first since that same 1990 autumn in Beidaihe!

I also had good views of Coal, Great and Marsh Tit, as well as Eurasian Treecreeper, the elegant Hokkaido race of Eurasian



Nuthatch (muted colours and fine white supercilium), and both Japanese Pygmy and Great Spotted Woodpeckers. I also had brief views of what I immediately assumed was Brown Shrike, only to discover from Matsuo-san that this is a rare bird here and it is usually the reddish race that appears, rather than the dirty buffy-grey *luconensis* colour this bird showed. Bull-headed is the regular shrike here.

On my way back to the minshuku I surprised a pair of Japanese Cranes just 30 metres away, and had tremendous views of them flying down to the river's edge from the field where they had been feeding.



Matsuo-san had kindly offered to take me to a nearby site for the iconic Blakiston's Fish Owl, which also had a Ural Owl territory nearby. The BFO depends on small streams with close trees and shrub cover, where it roosts during the day. We waited from before dusk for the birds to start calling, which they did with a low "boo-oo", followed by a deeper "oom" every three to four minutes. As I waited as close as possible to where I thought the noise was coming from, one rose heavily from its invisible perch onto an unobstructed branch less than 40 metres in front of me!

There was enough light for me to see every detail of its plumage, but I was initially transfixed by the unblinking yellow eyes staring straight at me down the scope. Its sheer bulk was apparent from the moment it lurched onto the branch like a demonically animated heap of grey-brown leaf litter! The head was distinctly narrower than the body, and I was surprised by how distinctive the white throat



## Japan: Eastern Hokkaido, Tokyo and the ferry (Con't)

patch was, especially as it called. After a while it turned round, crapped, and flew off to a more distant, but still visible branch from where it continued its duet with the female for another 20 minutes or so, before it took off, and first one bird, then the other flew almost directly over my head – big and bulky – and not a little menacing. A wonderful end to a superb day!



### 10th October

This morning I started off by again looking at the gulls by the bridge, and failing to resolve the puzzle of the *mongolicus* types or the looming Slaty-backed-like Vega gulls, but pix will, I hope lead to a solution. I was dropped deep in the forest by Mrs Matsuo as my plan was to walk to Ochiishi Headland in search of more seabirds.

However the forest itself produced close views of a third winter White-tailed Eagle perched on a tree and five close Crossbills, including a rather drab male and some streaky females, feeding silently in the top of a conifer. I also added more standard forest birds – Wren, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit and Bullfinch before starting my route march to Ochiishi, adding little except for a rather white-bellied Common Buzzard.

Ochiishi is a fishing port set in a cliff-hemmed bay protected by a formidable set of breakwaters. The cliffs themselves are impressive – 100 metres high and including an arch and several stacks around the mouth of the harbour. Equally impressive were the huge numbers of gulls – at least 3,000 covered the sea and every breakwater. However I gave them short shrift, as my target here was Harlequin, which I found by walking out to the northern promontory and looking down into the sea below. The eight birds I saw included one wonderful male showing off its outrageous plumage – a kaleidoscope of white spots and broad white lines

against a deep grey-blue and dark chestnut body – as good, in its way, as the fish owl yesterday!

I also found a Pelagic Cormorant here, but was disappointed to rush against the clock to the lighthouse on the island, only to dip on Spectacled Guillemot, Rhinoceros Auklet, and Red-faced Cormorant, only to rush

back another 4 km to catch the last train back to Tobai. I stopped for 2 minutes to scan the bay to the south of the town and scored well with several small flocks of Black Scoter – a new species for me – and a single Red-necked Grebe. I also enjoyed the spectacle of an adult White-tailed Eagle causing havoc as it flew down the length of the longest breakwater, filling the air with a snowstorm of angry gulls. My last good birds of the day were a pair of Whooper Swans in the Onneto River – the remainder of 32 seen by Matsuo-san – and the first arrivals of the autumn.

### 11th October

The morning started with thick sea-mist over the river and as a result very few birds – only a few Japanese Skylarks on the path in the fog and I flushed an adult White-tailed Eagle from the sea wall, which later sat in full view on the appropriate dead Sakhalin Spruce. Just before heading out to Nosappu Headland I had three Goosanders and a couple of Greater Scaup just in front of the house. Despite the shortage of birds, the walk itself was beautiful – with the dew heavy on the grass, and making complex string-pearl filigrees of the cobwebs suspended between the taller seed heads. Most curious was a curious “fog-bow” which arched across the spit in front of me – like a colourless rainbow.

The headland itself was windless and bathed in the warm sunshine of the continuing high-pressure system. I found none of the hoped-for Spectacled Guillemot or Rhinoceros Auklet, but there were lots of Pelagic

Cormorants and, even better, I enjoyed close views of a couple of female Harlequin, and close fly-bys by four different drakes – a truly outstanding duck! I also had a single sawbill and half a dozen Black Scoters, and half a dozen Long-tailed Ducks. It was nice to see more Kittiwakes and a couple more Glaucous-winged Gulls – again loafing on the rooftops. Raptors were represented by a single Peregrine, an old female Kestrel and a couple of White-tailed Eagles sitting on a cormorant rock a kilometre out to sea to the north of the point.

The bus arrived in Tobai just before dusk and I counted 26 Glaucous Gulls on the roost just outside the entrance to the river, their pale backs and pure white primaries standing out clearly in the last rays of light.

As the sun dropped I watched the sunset spreading the finest palette of mauve and gold across the water, the rising tide sending a steady flow of ripples across the inlet. As the light faded darker older colours appeared – reds, oranges and progressively deeper blues and purples slid slowly towards black, leaving just enough light to provide a backdrop for the silhouettes of several herons poised to strike at the final meal of the day.



## 12th October

Next morning there was no mist, so an early start in the woods brought the immediate reward of three thrushes: Eye-browed, Brown and Dusky, all of which behaved like all thrushes should, but usually don't – they flew up from cover into the bare branches of nearby trees – and showed wonderfully! The same wood held a trio of Wrens on the moss-carpeted floor, and another trio – this time of Red-flanked Bluetails, including a fine male – and a pair of Crossbills in the treetops.

A spell on the watchtowers produced good views out to

sea, including double figures of both Red-necked and Black-necked Grebes, several Red-throated and several more Pacific/Black-throated Divers, plus lots of Black Scoter and a single male Velvet Scoter. A pond inland of the dunes held a pair of Japanese Cranes and a good mixed flock of duck including Greater Scaup, Common Teal and the first four Goldeneye of the autumn. More exciting than any of these was watching the attempt by a male Goshawk to nail any of them in an abortive sweep out of the nearest trees.

Other random additions to the list included a Fantail Snipe and a group of about 40 Dunlin, which disappeared out to sea at high speed. Other migrants included impressive numbers of Buff-bellied Pipits – over 150 were in the dunes – and a pair of Whooper Swans, which flew in off the sea. My final bird in Furen was a fine adult White-tailed Eagle, which soared overhead as I waited for the bus, its tail shining out against the background of the chilly azure sky.

## 13th October

I again overslept on the ferry and missed the first ninety minutes in the "Hokkaido Sea". I woke up to Laysan Albatrosses going past before I even got outside, and when I did immediately got onto a *pterodroma* petrel which turned out to be one of at least three, and it seemed highly likely were the same birds I'd seen on the northward passage! Most persuasive in this respect was a bird with absent inner primaries and clearly visible white feathers showing through underneath. This bird also showed a clear line of wear along the coverts as a thin white bar. More significantly I was able to confirm that there was no white shafts to the primaries, which should eliminate Kermadec Petrel and leave Providence as the only likely contender. Other key features of all the birds I saw included a darker head than the body, especially compared with the undersides, a white facial patch around the bill and the pale under-primaries and coverts. As before, the birds held station with the ship

## Japan: Eastern Hokkaido, Tokyo and the ferry (Cont)

for up to 90 minutes, only leaving the ship as it approached the Honshu mainland and left the fishing fleet behind.

Other top birds included a group of three Black-footed Albatross, including a white-rumped juvenile and 25 more Laysans, but, perhaps because of the late start, there was little variety – only one southbound Pomarine Skua, and close to dusk an all-dark shearwater that looked bigger than the Streakers.

### 14th October

The effort of getting up early to go to Kotoku-numa paid off when I had a flash-by Green Pheasant from the train (from Mito station) and then another in a field on the road to the reservoir, which gave longer views. The reservoir had few ducks but an excellent variety – 30-odd Chinese Spotbills, and a few each of Wigeon, Teal,

and Mallard, plus a lone female Gadwall and a pair of Tufted Duck. Other new birds for the trip here included a couple of juvenile Night Herons, a few Japanese Bush Warblers, a loudly duetting pair of Chinese Bamboo Partridge, an unidentified *phyllosc* with an odd call that half-flicked both wings, and four Bull-headed Shrikes.

Two birds stood out, however. The first was a Meadow Bunting which was singing from a tree in the middle of the marshy valley, and the other a female Narcissus Flycatcher, which came in very close to investigate me, and gave fine views of its uniform olive upperparts, rufous-tinged tail and lemon-tinted underparts. Later, another bird was chased off by a male, which showed only briefly.

I added a few more list fillers from the train and the bus to the airport to bring the total for the fortnight to 100 species, but in reality this trip was all about the quality of





# Hong Kong Bird News

September-October 2005

— Richard Lewthwaite



the top birds rather than the number of ticks or the total list. I should add that 2 morning trips to Tokyo's Meiji Shrine on 5th and 7th produced three target species — Brown-eared Bulbul, Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, and the charismatic Varied Tit. I also found a curious female Siberian Thrush (just a week after having a very shy one at home in Ng Tung Chai). Other birds in the park

included a couple of Kingfishers, Oriental Turtle Dove, a flyover Northern Goshawk and a small group of Mandarin in a wooded pond on the east of the park.

Many thanks to Richard Lewthwaite for lending me Mark Brazil's, essential, out-of-print, but still remarkably current site guide for Japan, to Bando-san from Birdlife Asia for helping me with details for the ferry (Lonely Planet was worse than useless!) and to the Matsuo's at Furenko for their expertise in finding the key species, being kind enough to drive me to hard to access places nearby, and for the huge feasts of seafood and the six kinds of home-made jam for breakfast! All told a fabulous trip. ~

These are unchecked records, members are reminded of the importance of submitting all records on cards or electronically

## September

A month that seemed much hotter than usual nevertheless produced a steady stream of interesting reports.

In the first week, a count of 174 Whimbrels at Mai Po on 1st (BS) was noteworthy, there being only two previous records involving larger numbers. Next came a Siberian Blue Robin at Leadmine Pass on 3rd (SLT), by one day the earliest ever in autumn, a Little Whimbrel at Mai Po on 4th (by 14 days the earliest ever) and a Manchurian Reed Warbler and a Blunt-winged Warbler there during 4th-6th. The week concluded with a report of two Brown-chested Flycatchers and a Blue-throated/Hill Blue Flycatcher at Tai Po Kau on 7th (GH).

A Chinese Goshawk at Lamma on 9th (GS), a rare autumn report, was followed the next day by a Pechora Pipit of the taxon *menzbieri* at Long Valley (PIL), a Bright-capped Cisticola at Ma On Shan (GH) and a Collared Kingfisher at Mai Po (LKM), the third found in Hong Kong in the last 18 months. Reports on 11th included an Orange-headed Thrush at Tai Po Kau Headland (RB), an Eastern Crowned Warbler, nine Pale-legged Leaf Warblers

# Hong Kong Bird News

September-October 2005 (Cont.)

and 26 Arctic Warblers at Ngong Ping and a Greater Crested Tern and 20 Aleutian Terns near Po Toi and 20 more Arctic Warblers on the island itself.

A Crested Honey Buzzard, five Crested Serpent Eagles, three Besras and a Crested Goshawk were all seen riding thermals over Ng Tung Chai on 14th.

A quiet spell ensued, after which the final week of the month was dominated by Typhoon Damre, which tracked well to the south of Hong Kong before making landfall on Hainan Island. During Damre's approach on 24th, four Long-tailed Skuas, 1500 Red-necked Phalaropes and (very hard to predict!) a Crested Bunting (GT, CC) were seen from Cape d'Aguilar, 120 Red-necked Phalaropes were watched moving out of the way of the Star Ferry in Victoria Harbour, and a juvenile Rosy, six Daurian, two Silky and ten Grey Starlings were found inland at Kam Tin (JA). The next day two Streaked Shearwaters, two all-dark shearwaters, two Long-tailed Skuas and a single Arctic Skua were logged from Cape d'Aguilar and 200 Red-necked Phalaropes were found along the Shing Mun River, Sha Tin (CA). As Damre receded, there were reports of a female Siberian Thrush and a Mountain Bulbul at Ng Tung Chai on 28th (EMSK), a Chestnut-checked Starling at Kam Tin on 29th (YYT) and a Manchurian Reed Warbler at Mai Po on 30th (PJL).

## October

Reports in the first week of the month included a Collared Kingfisher again at Mai Po (photo on HKBWS web-site), two Pechora Pipits at Long Valley, single Orange-headed Thrushes at Tai Po Kau Headland (RB) and Mount Austin (CC) and two Swinhoe's Minivets at Ping Kong (KJ). Also of interest was an Asian Lesser Cuckoo (only the 3rd ever Hong Kong record) showing signs of having been cat-

mauled, which was found at Sai Kung, taken into care at Kadoorie FBG and subsequently released (AH).



Subsequently, rarities reported at Mai Po were a Spotted Bush Warbler of the taxon *davidi* first noted on 11th (PJL), only the second record, a juvenile Rosy Starling also on 11th (PJL), a Daurian Jackdaw on 12th-13th (BS), three Amur Falcons and a Blunt-winged Warbler on 17th (PJL), and a Bull-headed Shrike on 22nd (YYT). Rarities reported elsewhere were a Brown Crane at Sha Lo Wan, Lantau on 16th (PA), a Blyth's Reed Warbler on 15th and a Northern Boobok *Ninox japonica* ("Brown Hawk Owl *Ninox scutulata*" prior to recent split) on 17th (JA), both at Kam Tin, two Amur Falcons and a Siberian Thrush at Mount Austin on 19th (JoH), and a Radde's Warbler at Fung Yuen on 22nd (GH).

The second and third weeks of the month saw notable influxes. The second week brought reports of nine Black-naped Orioles at Tai Po Kau Headland (RB), 3000 Barn Swallows, by far the largest ever autumn count, 60 Black-browed Reed Warblers and 75 Black Drongos, all at Mai Po (PJL), and 40 Dusky Warblers, 10 Pale-legged Leaf warblers and 20 Asian Brown Flycatchers at Disco Bay Golf Course (PJL). In the third week, reported influxes included 100 Black-browed Reed Warblers and 150 Dusky Warblers at Mai Po (PJL).

During 14th-17th, single Purple Herons were noted at Shuen Wan, Po Toi and Kam Tin (RWL, PA, JA) and flocks of five and 16 Blue-tailed Bee-eaters were seen at Mai Po (MDW, PJL).

The month ended with 11 Gadwalls at Mai Po on 25th (GT), the highest number in recent years, a Greenish Warbler at Mount Austin on 28th (DT), a Common Starling at Pui O on 29th (PS), possibly the first for Lantau, and a Nordmann's Greenshank and Long-billed Dowitcher at Mai Po on 31st (YYT). ♀

# Coming Activities

Date	Leader / Speaker	Activity / Details	Time	Difficulty
15 Jan (Sun)	LI Wai Ki	<b>Small Group Activity: Tai Po Au</b> Limited to 6 members only Please reserve place by email membership@hkbws.org.hk	07:30 – 12:00	XXX
	HO Man Fai	<b>Small Group Activity: Shing Mun</b> Limited to 6 members only; Please reserve place by email membership@hkbws.org.hk	08:00 – 12:00	XX
16 Jan (Mon)	YU Yat Tung	<b>"Keeping Asia's Spoonbills Airborne" International Symposium on Research and Conservation of the Black-faced Spoonbill</b> Volunteers wanted; Please send email to bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk		
22 Jan (Sun)	LAM Ngao Lun	<b>Nam San Wai</b> 08:00 West Railway Yuen Long Station (7-11 Shop)	08:00 – 12:00	X
1 Feb (Wed)	Paul LEADER	<b>Indoor Meeting: ID of Birds (3): Flycatcher</b> Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon; <i>(HKS10 member, HKS30 non-member)</i>	19:00 – 20:30	
4 Feb (Sat)	CHEN Chi Po TSUI Kam Fung <i>(Crested Bulbul Club)</i>	<b>Tsim Bei Tsui</b> ** 08:30 Light Railway Tin Shui Wai Station	08:30 – 13:00	XX
5 Feb (Sun)	CHEUNG Jose Alberto OR Wai Hung	<b>Small Group Activity: Ng Tung Chai</b> Limited to 4 members only; Please reserve place by email membership@hkbws.org.hk	07:15 – 12:00	XXX
	FUNG Robin YAM Wing Yiu	<b>Tsim Bei Tsui</b> 08:00 Hang Heng Cake Shop (near LRT Tai Tong Road Station, Yuen Long)	08:00 – 12:00	XX
12 Feb (Sun)	Kite Group	<b>Kite Watching</b> Detail to be announced soon, please reserve place by email membership@hkbws.org.hk	16:00 – 18:00	X
15 Feb (Wed)	Speaker to be announced	<b>Indoor Meeting: Bird Records of Years 2004&amp; 2005 &amp; HK Spring Migrant</b> Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon; <i>(HKS10 member, HKS30 non-member)</i>	19:00 – 20:30	
18 Feb (Sat)	LAU Apache AU Aukie	<b>Small Group Activity: Mt. Davis</b> Limited to 8 members only; please reserve place by email membership@hkbws.org.hk	15:00 – 18:00	X
19 Feb (Sun)	CHEUNG Jose Alberto Mike CHALMERS	<b>Boat Trip: Po Toi, Lamma Channel</b> 08:00 Aberdeen Public Pier (near Ocean Court) 16:00 back to Aberdeen Public Pier <i>(Member \$150, Non-member \$200)</i>   <i>Note: This will be a long trip on open waters. The ride could be quite rough and some people may be seasick.</i>	08:00 – 16:00	XXX

Further details or changes of outings/indoor meetings will be announced in the HKBWS Website (<http://www.hkbws.org.hk>) and BBS (<http://www.hkbws.org.hk/cgi-bin/yabb/YaBB.pl>).




\*\* Crested Bulbul Club's Activities



Transportation arrangement



Please fill in the booking slip and return

Date	Leader / Speaker	Activity / Details	Time	Difficulty
25 Feb (Sat)	WONG Ondy	<b>Small Group Activity: Tai Po Au</b> Limited to 6 members only; Please reserve place by email membership@hkbws.org.hk	07:30 – 12:00	XXX
26 Feb (Sun)	WONG Hok Sze WONG William	<b>Kadoorie Farm</b> 07:30 Tai Wo KCR station Taxi station	07:30 – 12:00	X
4 Mar (Sat)	CHEUNG Jose Alberto TAM Yip Shing	<b>Long Valley</b> 15:00 Sheung Shui Station Taxi stand	15:00 – 17:30	X
5 Mar (Sun)	CHEUNG Ho Fai CHAN Alan CHAN Yung FONG Forrest CHAN Miranda	<b>Mai Po</b> 08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road exit) or 09:00 Mai Po carpark, coach leaves at 15:00 and back to Kowloon Tong at 16:00 	08:00 – 16:00	XX
11 Mar (Sat)	HO Wai Chun	<b>Small Group Activity: Fung Yuen &amp; Sha Lo Tung</b> Limited to 6 members only; Please reserve place by email membership@hkbws.org.hk	07:30 – 13:00	XXX
	HAN So WONG Chiu Shu (Crested Bulbul Club)	<b>Luk Keng</b> ** 08:30 Fanling Railway Station	08:30 – 13:00	XX
12 Mar (Sun)	WONG Peter KONG Michelle	<b>Boat Trip: Po Toi, Lamma Channel</b> 08:00 Aberdeen Public Pier (near Ocean Court) 16:00 back to Aberdeen Public Pier  (Member \$150, Non-member \$200) <i>Note: This will be a long trip on open waters. The ride could be quite rough and some people may be seasick.</i>	08:00 – 16:00	XX
15 Mar (Wed)	LAU Apache	<b>Indoor Meeting: Report on Nest Survey of Swifts &amp; Swallows - Survey Records Reporting, 2006's Prospect and Survey Technique Explanation</b> Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon; (HKS10 member, HKS30 non-member)	19:00 – 20:30	
25-26 Mar (Sat-Sun)	<b>Records 206 - Bird Watching Competition 2006</b> 24 hours; Detail to be announced soon; for registration, please send email to membership@hkbws.org.hk		16:00 – 16:00 (24-hours)	
26 Mar (Sun)	<b>Target 100</b> Member \$80, Non-member \$120 Detail to be announced soon; For registration, please send email to membership@hkbws.org.hk 		07:30 – 16:30	
	<b>Annual Dinner</b> (Member only) Detail to be announced soon; about HK\$120@; For registration, please send email to membership@hkbws.org.hk		17:00 – 20:30	

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Transportation arrangement



Please fill in the booking slip and return

\*\* Crested Bulbul Club's Activities

# Booking Note

Priority is given to members of the Society. 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 show your membership card 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 their own transport please also send in their booking slips – this is important because the maximum number of members who can attend the outing is 50, as set by the AFCDC permit. Failure to do so may result in being refused access to the reserve.
- + According to the requirement of the Hong Kong Police and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, participants for the Mai Po activities should provide their full names and Hong Kong ID No. to register for access to the Frontier Close Area and Mai Po Marshes.
- \* If their applications for joining Mai Po/boat trips are not accepted, applicants will be notified by phone or by e-mail at least one week before the outing.

**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: by returning the Activity Booking Slip with a cheque payable to "The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Ltd"

For all outdoor activities please bring food and drinks, 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 :

5 Mar (Sun)      Membership no.: \_\_\_\_\_      The number of person(s) using the coach is \_\_\_\_\_.

\* Coach fare:       \_\_\_\_\_ x HK\$40/Member       \_\_\_\_\_ x HK\$20/Student member

\_\_\_\_\_ x HK\$60/Non-member\*

# *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.*

*Please indicate whether the participant(s) have the following permits and bring them along with you during attending the Mai Po Outin.*

Mai Po Marshes Entry Permit:  Yes  No      Frontier Closed Area Permit:  Yes  No

+ Attendance full name \_\_\_\_\_ HK I.D. No. \_\_\_\_\_

*(If more than one attendance, please add paper to fill in the information of the other attendances)*

### ► Boat Trip (Fare: HK\$150/member, HK\$200/non-members)

\*  19 Feb (Sun) : Poi and Lamma Channel (      member,      non-members)

12 Mar (Sun) : Poi and Lamma Channel (      member,      non-members)

Enclosed please find a Cheque for HK\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Payable to The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Ltd.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact No.: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Note: Please send this application together with crossed cheque by mail to The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Ltd, 1612 Beverley Commercial Centre, 87-105 Chatham Road South, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong.*

*Application should be made at least 10 days before the date of the outing. Late applications will only be accepted if places are available.*

\* Please  as appropriate

<For registration, please send the following details by email to [membership@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:membership@hkbws.org.hk). >

### Small Group Activity (For members only)

I/We (total \_\_\_\_\_ member(s)) would like to participate the Small Group Activities to be held on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Membership No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact No(M): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Group 2 Leaf Warblers –

### Eastern Crowned Warbler

### & Blyth's Leaf Warbler

Eastern Crowned Warbler and Blyth's leaf Warbler resemble each other closely. Both have a pale crown stripe, a yellow tint to the underparts, and a lower mandible totally pink. Both are usually silent in Hong Kong. Fortunately, they do not occur in HK at the same time. Eastern Crowned Warbler occurs mainly in September and October. Blyth's Leaf Warbler occurs from November to March. Their behaviour is also an important field mark. Eastern Crowned Warbler usually stays on thin branches in the upper canopy, while Blyth's Leaf Warbler often walks along thick branches like a Tit or Nuthatch. Blyth's Leaf Warbler has a shorter and broader bill, more noticeable from below. It also has two clearly marked wingbars. In comparison, Eastern Crowned Warbler has much thinner wingbars and usually only one is noticeable. ♀



- 張浩輝  
Cheung Ho Fai
- 中國四川 Sichuan, China
- 18/05/2002

## 冠紋柳鶯 Blyth's Leaf Warbler



## Eastern Crowned Warbler 冕柳鶯



- 黃理沛、江敏兒  
Peter Wong, Michelle Kong
- 大埔滘 Tai Po Kau



白喉林鶇 – 譚耀良 (米埔)  
Brown-chested Jungle Flycatcher –  
Tam Yiu Leung (Mai Po)

- 10/09/2005
- DSLR camera + fieldscope



牛頭伯勞 – 葉偉雄 (米埔)  
Bull-headed Shrike – Yip Wai Hung (Mai Po)

- 23/10/2005
- DSLR camera, 400mm/f5.6 lens, ISO800 f8, 1/800s,  
+2/3EV, cropped