

香港觀鳥會 The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

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bulletin

會員通訊

200

Summer 2006 - 夏

白額燕鷗 (米埔) – 健忠
Little Tern (Mai Po) – Jianzhong

- 2006.4.19
- DSLR Camera, 300mm lens + 2x Teleconverter



畫雀仔 paint bird . com

– 李玉瑩 Lee Yuk Ying



聖誕島軍艦鳥

CHRISTMAS ISLAND FRIGATEBIRD.



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited

(Approved Charitable Institution of a Public Character)

Contents

Chairman's word – <i>Cheung Ho Fai</i>	2
Society News – <i>Lo Wai Yan, Henry Lui</i>	3
HKBWS Projects – <i>Lo Wai Yan, Captain Wong, Alan Chan</i>	4
Conservation News – <i>Mike Kilburn</i>	10
The issue 200	
– Editorial – Bulletin 200 – <i>John Holmes</i>	15
– Editing the HKBWS Bulletin, 1997-2002 – <i>Mike Kilburn</i>	16
– <i>Mai Po 1972</i> – <i>Clive Viney</i>	18
Hong Kong Bird News – <i>Richard Lewthwaite</i>	20
Coming Activities – <i>Forrest Fong, Yip Tai Wai</i>	22
Take a Closer Look – Group 4 Leaf Warblers – <i>Cheung Ho Fai</i>	24
Paint Bird.com – Christmas Island Frigatebird – <i>Lee Yuk Ying</i>	IFC

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- K K Hui
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Chairman's word

The Hong Kong Wetland Park was opened in May. That has raised Hong Kong's capacity in conservation education. I was surprised to learn that many Hong Kong Citizens are keen to find birds in the Park. Since there were a general request for more guides to the Park, HKBWS can come in here. Already the Crested Bulbul Club has registered as a volunteer group. In the future HKBWS will seek to co-organize more activities with the Wetland Park authorities.

This year Po Toi Island has received a lot of attention from keen bird watchers in the Society. One major reason is that the Island has a long string of excellent bird records this year. The main person behind this is Mr. Geoff Welch. His most famous deed is to risk his life staying on Po Toi Island when typhoon Dujan hit the South China coast. I also want to mention the HKBWS Seabird Survey, which uses Po Toi as an intermediate stopover site. Together with the help of many of the best eyes in Hong Kong, especially George Ho and Kwok Jai, so far five (potential) HK firsts have come from Po Toi. They are Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Olive-backed Flycatcher, Sulphur-breasted Warbler, Brown Noddy and Ruddy Kingfisher. Po Toi has clearly established itself as a good location for watching bird migration. HKBWS will explore ways to set up a bird watching station in Po Toi in the near future, to promote education and to collect further information on bird migration.

Overseas bird watching trips are on the rise. The excellent bird photo resulting from these trips have raised member's desire to join overseas bird watching trips. I will like to see HKBWS organize society overseas bird watching in the near future. With sufficient support of experienced bird watchers, and also understanding from newly joined members, I think this can be realized very soon. 

Office Staffing

Our new Project Officer Ms Vicky Yeung has reported for duty in late March to take up the Long Valley project. Ms Fion Cheung also joined the Society in mid-May to take over the China Projects from Ms Carrie Ma. Carrie Ma is now the Wetland Manager/Education of the Hong Kong Wetland Park, another step on the path of nature conservation in Hong Kong.

Special Offer to Members for buying binoculars or telescope

Offer 1:

We are pleased to have the support of Schmidt Marketing (H.K.) Ltd for buying Minox binoculars or telescopes at a special price. The company will also make a donation of 10% of the purchase price to the Society. Details are as follows:

Models, price and donation can be found in the enclosed leaflet.

The Special Offer only applies to members of the Society. Please send your order form and cheque to the Society office. Members are also required to collect the ordered equipment (allow three weeks) from the office.

Please attach the order form and a cheque payable to "The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society" and send to our office. You can also make an order at the office in person.

Offer 2:

We are also supported by the "Canon Hongkong Company Limited" in the offer of a special price to buy a designated model of binoculars. Details are as follows:

Model and price can be found in the Membership Affairs column at BBS of our website.

The Special Offer only applies to members of the Society. Interested members please forward your personal information (name, membership number and contact number only) to our office through email, fax or by post. We will send your name and contact phone

number to the staff of Canon after verifying your membership. You will be contacted by the staff of Canon later on.

Members are required to pay and collect the binoculars at the Hung Hom office of Canon.

Binoculars and Telescopes Borrowing Scheme

We would like to express our gratitude to "Swarovski Hong Kong Limited" and "Schmidt Marketing (H.K.) Limited" for lending some of their high quality binoculars and telescopes to members of the Society for trying. The borrowing period is 2 weeks. It is free of charge but a deposit is required. Please call the office to reserve and pick up in our office at the agreed time. The models for borrowing are as follows:

Provided by Swarovski Hong Kong Limited

- Swarovski EL 10 x 42 (binoculars)
- Swarovski ATS65HD
- Swarovski STS80HD (telescopes)

Provided by Schmidt Marketing (H.K.) Limited

- Leica Ultravid 8 x 32 BR
- Minox BD 10x42 BL
- Minox HG 8.5 x 43 BR ASPH (binoculars)
- Leica Apo-televid 62 (telescopes)

Acknowledgments:

1. CLP Power Hong Kong Limited – for sponsoring the programme "Fly with the Swallow"
2. Schmidt Marketing (H.K.) Ltd – offering special price to members for buying Minox binoculars and telescope as well as providing binoculars and telescope to be used by the members of the society.
3. Swarovski Hong Kong Ltd - providing binoculars and telescope to be used by the members of the society
4. Canon Hong Kong Company Limited – offering special price to members for buying designated binoculars
5. Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department – appointed the Society to conduct the Waterbird Monitoring Programme 2006-07 

Record 206 and Target 100

21 teams participated in the Bird Records Competition. Below is the result within 24 hours.

Name of Team	Number of Species	Best Record
Wild Birds (IT) 2006 Team	104	Great Crested Grebe
Nightjar	114	Large Hawk-cuckoo
HK, Kln & NT United Team	106	Silver-eared Mesia
MPEC Team	119	Ferruginous Flycatcher
What's Up Team	121	White-bellied Sea Eagle
大咀烏鴉大戰小葵花鸚鵡隊	101	Oriental Pratincole
Lark Team	102	Bluethroat
芳華十八隊	119	Painted Snipe
EnviroBirding Team	138	Dusky Thrush
球走龍隊	107	Oriental Pratincole
Common Rosefinch	125	
Drongos Team	105	
Shenzhen Birdwatching Society	112	Purple Heron
Shenzhen & Hongkong United Team	102	Great Crested Grebe
Team B	90	Collared Scops Owl
Chinese Francolin	82	Grey-headed Lapwing
Friends of Kowloon Park #	65	
Great Crested Grebe #	97	Asian Paradise-flycatcher
Crested Bulbul Club Team #	70	Large Hawk-cuckoo
BENS Team	138	Sand Martin
hkNature.org Team	101	

#Elderly teams

The Awards

Name of Award	Winning Team	Description
HKBWS Record Award	BENS Team & EnviroBirding Team	recorded 138 species within 24 hours
Best Record Award	Nightjar Team & Crested Bulbul Club Team	Large Hawk-cuckoo (The best record was voted by all the participants of the Annual Dinner)
President's Choice	What's Up Team	Mr. CY LAM, HKBWS President, chose White bellied Sea Eagle as his beloved species of the competition
Crested Bulbul Award	Great Crested Grebe	The elderly team that recorded the highest number of bird species
Tree Sparrow Award	Friends of Kowloon Park	Team For best sportsmanship

There were about 70 members attending this year's "Target 100". We would like to acknowledge the following members as the guiders of the activity: Carrie Ma, Ada Chow, Wong Chak Cheung, Robin Fung, Siu Ka Po, Hung Wai Ming, Lee Kam Cheong, Joanne Au and May Lam.



BENS Team



Crested Bulbul Club Team



Crested Bulbul Club Team and Nightjar



Great Crested Grebe



EnviroBirding Team

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

Project Progress:

The Society is cooperating with 7 local farmers. Currently, there are about 55,000 ft² of shallow ponds, 20,000ft² of fallow dry agricultural land, 23,500ft² of wet agricultural land and 171,000 ft² of farmland margin vegetation operating under the management scheme. Water Chestnut corms were germinated in May and transplanted into the wet agricultural land in late June. Paddy rice and Chinese Arrow-head will be planted in July and August respectively. The first round of flowering Chinese Cabbage has produced seeds and wilted. The farmland will be cleared and ploughed for planting another round of crops in July. Tomato and other herbaceous plants were also planted on farmland margins.



Recent activity:

A visit to Long Valley was arranged for Crested Bulbul Club in mid April to introduce the scheme and the volunteer scheme. About 30 volunteers participated in a Mikania removal activity organized by the Conservancy Association in June.



Volunteer work:

The Society is currently recruiting members to join the Photographic Team and "Friends of Long Valley". All members are welcome to join. Details please refer to the notice in our website or contact our Project Officer Miss Vicky Yeung yvicky@hkbws.org.hk / yvicky@hkbws.org.hk.



Colours on Wings – Hong Kong Wild Birds Photo Contest 2006

Sponsor: The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust

Objectives

- To promote birdwatching and arouse the public awareness on protecting wild birds in Hong Kong
- To raise the level of bird photography
- To broaden and increase the public awareness on Hong Kong's biodiversity

Theme

- To express the natural beauty of wild birds

Categories and Entry Requirement

- Open Group – Open to any interested party
- Senior Student Group – Student at or above 15
- Junior Student Group – Full time student below 15

HKBWS PROJECTS (con't)

Deadline

- Deadline for submitting photos 15 Nov 2006

Criteria for Assessment

- Creativity (20%), Technique (20%), Composition (20%), Natural Beauty (40%)

Prizes

• Open Group

- This group will have a Champion, a first runner-up, a second runner-up and five outstanding awards. A book coupon of HK\$2,000, HK\$1,000 and HK\$500 will be awarded to the winners respectively.

• Student Group (Senior and Junior)

- Each entry group will have a Champion, a first runner-up, a second runner-up and three outstanding awards. A book coupon of HK\$500, HK\$300 and HK\$100 will be awarded to the winners respectively.

Guidance Notes

1. The location where photos are taken must be within Hong Kong's boundary (wild birds found in urban area and gardens are also acceptable). The birds must be wild birds found within Hong Kong, including migratory birds. Competitors must certify that no captive birds have been photographed. Please call the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) if you have any query. HKBWS reserves the right to make the final decision.
2. People from different countries and different ages are welcome to take part in the Open Group.
3. Student applicants are welcome to take part in the Open Group, but each photo can be submitted into no more than one category.
4. Only minimal adjustment of photos will be allowed. (For example, repositioning or removing objects is not allowed. But exposure compensation and contrast adjustment is allowed).
5. Photos must be taken on or after 1st Nov 2004.
6. The entrant should be the sole author and copyright owner of the image. Rotographing, plagiarizing or copying are strictly prohibited. The organizer reserves the right to disqualify any prize winners if the above behaviour is verified.
7. Pictures that have won awards in other competitions are disqualified from entry.
8. Each entrant can submit at most 3 entries in each category, and they should be submitted at the same time.
9. Photos that have been published will not be accepted. All entries will not be returned to photographer.
10. Documents for submission
 - Open Group: One full size print of image at 8 x 11 inches, or A4 size or 12R photos as well as a digital file are required.
 - Student Group: A4R photo and a digital file are required.
11. The Organizer reserves the right to examine the original entry, and to publish or exhibit the works submitted by the participants for other uses in relation to promoting the activity, such as exhibition, producing booklet or publishing in our bulletin or report.
12. Directors, members and direct relatives of the Executive Committee of HKBWS are prohibited from taking part in the contest.

Enquiries

- Website: www.hkbws.org.hk
- Tel: 2377 4387, Fax: 2314 3687, E-mail: hkbws@hkbws.org.hk

Fly with Swallow

- Objectives: To arouse the public awareness on the conservation of swallows and swifts.
- Sponsor: CLP Power Hong Kong Limited
- Date: June – December 2006
- Contents:
 - Swallow Ambassador Scheme – students will be invited to record and monitor the nest of swallow and swift around their living environment.



- Training and site visit will be provided to these Ambassadors.
- Talk for school – talks are provided to interested secondary schools introducing the characteristics of swallow and swift.
- Producing booklet, exhibition board and a webpage.

Crested Bulbul Club

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

No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from Apr to June 2006: 120

No. of participants in Kowloon Park from Apr to June 2006: 271

2. Community services or activities

3/6/2006 – Celebrate the World Environment Day 2006 (providing game booth in Olympian City and talk about protecting the living habitat of birds)

3. Joining the organization member of the Hong Kong Wetland Park Volunteer Scheme

Members of the Crested Bulbul Club attended the guided tour organised by the Wetland Park on 26 June 2006 as one of the activities of Wetland Conservation Week.

4. Basic Photographic technique sharing

A sharing section has been organised by David Choi, Dominic Yip, CK Chan and Billman Man for CBC members on 3 July 2006. Forty two people attended the activity.



Seabird migration survey in southern and southeastern Hong Kong waters, spring 2006

- Sponsor: Environment and Conservation Fund
- Date : mid March to mid May 2006
- Preliminary Result: 20 surveys had been organised and conducted during this period by YU Yat Tung.
- Preliminary results are as follows:
 - During these 20 surveys, 6616 Red-necked Phalaropes were recorded from 17 March to 8 May this year. While not totally unexpected, this is a record high total number in spring compared to the best year in the past. The data shows that Red-necked Phalarope migrates through Hong Kong in several flocks spanning the period from late March to May this year. Next, Jaegers and Shearwaters will be discussed. See the attached table.

Table 1

Long-tailed Jaeger	113
Streaked Shearwater	52
Pomarine Jaeger	17
Short-tailed Shearwater	15
Arctic Jaeger	13
Ancient Murrelet	3
Jaeger sp.	18
Shearwater sp.	3
Unidentified Seabird	2
Total:	236

This is by the far the best year for most of these species. In the past, only small number of Streaked Shearwater and Long-tailed Jaeger was known to occur more or less annually. This year's result confirms that Streaked Shearwater probably occurs in Hong Kong all year around, although most have been seen from May to September in the past. This year's result suggests that Long-tailed Jaeger is not as rare as previously thought. There is a clear passage through Hong Kong in April.

In the past, Pomarine Jaeger is known to occur occasionally, and Arctic Jaeger and Short-tailed Shearwater are vagrants. For example, only one Short-tailed Shearwater was recorded in HK before this survey. From the result this year, it seems they are regular migrants in Hong Kong. Significant numbers of Pomarine Jaeger seems to pass through Hong Kong from late March to early April, Short-tailed Shearwater from late April to early May, and Arctic Jaeger from early April to early May.



◀ Short-tailed Shearwater, the sea near Po Toi, 26 April 2006 by Jemi and John Holmes. Before 2006, this species is seen only once in Hong Kong.

(Photo: Jemi & John Holmes)

Sooty Tern, the sea near Po Toi, 2 May 2006 by Jemi and John Holmes, photographed for the first time in Hong Kong. ▶



period. The number of Greater Crested Tern recorded this-spring (10) is by far the highest in Hong Kong. Another interesting thing is that a Sooty Tern was successfully photographed in Hong Kong for the first time.

Table 2

White-winged Tern	754
Black-naped Tern	258
Common Tern	212
Aleutian Tern	200
Bridled Tern	55
Greater Crested Tern	10
Whiskered Tern	6
Gull-billed Tern	5
Caspian Tern	4
Roseate Tern	2
Little Tern	1
Sooty Tern	1
Tern sp.	219
Total:	1727

Terns have always been a very important component of the Seabirds of Hong Kong. This year, the major discoveries are the significant improved data of Common Tern, Aleutian Tern, and Greater Crested Tern. The movement of Aleutian Tern is a great mystery among bird watchers and ornithologists. This year, Aleutian Tern was found passing through Hong Kong from mid April to early May. Record numbers (100 and 54) of Aleutian Terns passed through Hong Kong in two different days while there were almost none in other days. The time of passage is also about two weeks later than the data in previous years. In great contrast, Common Tern and Greater Crested Tern show a very broad passage period, with small numbers every day in the

Radio Tracking Yellow-throated Laughingthrush

(Sponsored by China Conservation Fund)

Radio tracking of Yellow-throated Laughingthrush in Wuyuan, Jiangxi, China has been conducted since 2004. This year, Cheung Mok Jose Alberto has been invited again to conduct the tracking in Wuyuan. Prof. He Fengqi of the Chinese Academy of Sciences keeps helping within these years as he has spent several years in study of this bird species. Tracking will be conducted between June and August 2006.

Black-faced Spoonbill International Census 2006

A full report has been posted in our website www.hkbws.org.hk/bfs/indexc.html.

Swallow and Swift Research Group

The Swift and Swallow Research Group is carrying out a comprehensive Little Swift and Barn Swallow nest survey at some 70 sites in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories and remote islands during April to August 2006. In order to strengthen the estimation of swift and swallow nests in hundreds of villages, some ten sites in villages have been newly added in this survey. To have a better understanding of the survey, some 40 volunteers have participated a workshop held at The Chinese University of Hong Kong on 2 April 2006 (Sunday).

Birdwatchers in Beijing and Macau have also started to organize Swift and Barn Swallow nest surveys in 2006. We hope this SS nest research planning can be extended to all China as a popular environmental protection and educational activity.



Egret Research Group - by Captain Wong

Acting upon an invitation from Prof. Liang Wei of Hainan Normal University, members of ERG conducted a joint survey of egret nesting colonies in Guizhou between 3 and 7 May 2006. The survey covered northeast and central Guizhou and about 1350 nests of 4 species (Little Egret, Cattle Egret, Chinese Pond Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron) in 10 colonies were found. A report will be produced later.

Members of ERG helped The City University of Hong Kong to collect egret eggs for examining the baseline level of organic pollutants. This study is commissioned by AFCD. Over 75 nests of 4 species (Great Egret, Little Egret, Chinese Pond Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron) at 5 sites were collected between February and May.

ERG ran an egret count training workshop on 30 April. A total of 14 delegates attended the workshop. Basic nest count techniques were introduced, and subsequently practiced in three nesting colonies.



Tern Research Group - by Alan Chan

The tern breeding season has already started. The Tern Group is organising the following activities during the period:

1. Weekly Tern Surveys between May and mid September at Mirs Bay (mainly on Saturday mornings)
2. Tern Surveys to eastern waters in mid June and mid July
3. Publicity on tern conservation at Tap Mun on Sat. and Sun. in mid July

Volunteers from HKBWS members are welcome. If you are interested, please send your name and contact phone no. to terngroup@hkbws.org.hk. We will contact you shortly.

As in previous years since 2003, AFCD wardens will be stationed on Tern Island on Sundays and public holidays throughout the breeding season. The Tern Group will also maintain a log book on disturbance to the breeding site. Let's hope that the terns can have a safe and successful breeding year. 🐦



Conservation News

– Mike Kilburn, *Chairman, Conservation Committee*

Planning Department are now legally in a stronger position to stop dumping

There is an English enforcement pamphlet, viewable online at: www.pland.gov.hk/info_serv/cep/enforcement/enforce_e.htm#q19.

To date there has been enforcement at two birding sites – Kam Tin and Ho Sheung Heung.

Birders are encouraged to report suspected illegal landfilling to Planning Department by contacting the Planning Enquiry Counters of the Planning Department at 17/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong; or 14/F, Sha Tin Government Offices, 1 Sheung Wo Che Road, Sha Tin, New Territories for advice and assistance; or making enquiries to the PD enquiry hotline at 2231 5000 or through e-mail at enquire@pland.gov.hk.

Alternatively, suspected illegal dumping/environmental destruction events could also report to Captain Wong of Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (Tel: 2483 7146; Email: captainw@kfbg.org). Captain will preliminarily investigate the case and report to Planning Department and other relevant government departments for follow up.

Chairman of the HKBWS Conservation Committee, Mike Kilburn <mkilburn@hkstar.com> should also be notified.

Wind Farm under investigation for the Ninepins

- Principal concerns – WB Sea Eagles
- Pacific Swifts on Ninepins
- Feeding Terns
- Other migrants

HK's White-bellied Sea Eagle population is the most significant in China

Wind Turbines kill eagles all round the world and the most likely impact will be on wandering sub-adult birds without territories (especially as HK may be close to its maximum carrying capacity and immatures will wander every year. 🦅)



鐵嘴沙鴉

• 陳志光 Daniel Chan • 2006.5.13 • 米埔 Mai Po • DSLR Camera, 600mm 1/4 lens +1.4x Teleconverter, f/5.6, 1/1000s, ISO 250

Greater Sand Plover



• Martin Hale • 2006.4.26 • 米埔 Mai Po • DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 2x Teleconverter, f/8, 1/800s, ISO 400

紅胸濱鶻

Red-necked Stint



彎嘴濱鷸

Curlew Sandpiper

• Martin Hale • 2006.4.26 • 米埔 Mei Po • DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 2x Teleconverter, f/8, 1/1250s, ISO 400



翹嘴鶻

• 深藍 Owen Chiang • 2006.4.21 • 米埔 Mai Po • DSLR Camera, 300mm f/2.8 lens, 1/8, 1/400s, ISO 200

Terek Sandpiper





Editorial – Bulletin 200

– John Holmes

A landmark edition of the Bulletin then, and a time to pause for reflection. Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Society. A few friends gathered in August 1957 with the intention of bird watching in a less casual manner than had previously been the case, and methodically recording their bird observations. (A note by E.D. Webb about the society's "Early Days" appears in the 1970-71 Annual Report.)

The Bulletins and the Annual Reports chronicle our Society growing and evolving over the years. There have been exchanges between those who celebrated the joys of "listing" and those who were keen on a stricter ornithological course, but so far the Society has remained true to the spirit of its' founders all those years ago.

Much of the Society's internal communication is now done on the society website. Thanks to technology members can exchange views in seconds. We can all enjoy the latest sightings and rarity photos at the click of a button. However, we need to be aware that all this instant gratification on the internet might be affecting our appetites for the old-fashioned virtues of getting into the field, and identifying and recording species seen. In 2000 the Society drew on the collected written records of the first forty years of the HKBWS to produce the landmark "Avifauna of Hong Kong", an organised presentation of tens of thousands of individual bird observations. In an ever-changing Hong Kong, let's make sure our observations continue to be properly recorded.

The lobbying and fundraising noted in past bulletins serve as reminder of the diligence of our predecessors in fighting to conserve Hong Kong's natural heritage. We now have volunteers dedicated to a number of special projects, such as the Long Valley Management Scheme, the Breeding Terns Survey, and so on. The Society has a larger and more varied membership than ever before and all sorts of activities are going on to share our enthusiasm for birds with the wider public. The recent, arbitrary closure of Mai Po by the government should remind us that we can't afford to take any of the sites and facilities we now enjoy for granted. 🐦

1997-2002

Editing the HKBWS Bulletin

Issues 163 – 173 – Mike Kilburn

I was invited to edit the HKBWS bulletin in 1996, starting with issue number 163. I was advised when I took it up that it was a big job and was likely to cut into my birding time. It certainly turned out to be a big job, requiring 30-40 hours per issue. And this was just the English language version! I was privileged to be part of an editorial team, which included Chan Ming Ming, Carrie Ma and Henry Lui as editors of the Chinese bulletin at different times.

This was a time of great change, when HKBWS started to look at birding bulletins and magazines from overseas. The principal changes came in the format of the bulletin, but were very much Carrie's initiatives. Within the space of 5 issues the photocopied A4 newsletter was transformed into an A5 booklet, a colour photo was added on the front cover, and then the whole cover was printed in colour on glossy paper.

At the same time an attempt was made to increase the variety of articles that appeared. Perhaps the most enjoyable of these was digging into the old birding literature of Hong Kong and China, notably *The Hong Kong Naturalist* (1930 onwards) and *A Handbook of the Birds of Eastern China* by J D D La Touche (1925-1934). HKBWS retains copies of both of these works and it has in the past been possible to obtain photocopies.

The extracts selected included a memorable quote from Charles Darwin: "I took much pleasure in watching the habits of birds and even made notes on the subject. In my simplicity I wondered why every gentleman did not become an ornithologist." (bulletin 167) While I'm sure no-one would disagree with Darwin, one of the notable changes in Hong Kong Birding, even in the 8 years since 1998 is the very welcome increase in the number of female birders in Hong Kong! Hong Kong is unusual in this respect – in many countries birding remains a highly male-dominated activity.

Also of great interest in looking back was an article from Bryan Webster comparing birding in Hong Kong in 1958 – 60 with a visit in 1999 (Bulletin 168). As a resident of the Lam Tsuen Valley I read with longing about the Rufous and Grey-headed Woodpeckers seen there, and wonder why, with the great increase in forest cover all over Hong Kong, that Woodpecker records remain so sparse. The article also points out that in the late fifties there was almost no mangrove in Deep Bay!

The Bulletin also played an important role in Conservation. During the Long Valley Campaign two issues (Bulletins 174 & 177) were dedicated to documenting the progress of the campaign and the letters of support for Long Valley. Even before the campaign started a report in Conservation News in Bulletin 166 noted: "Members visiting the site are urged to take full records of all the birds they see – it may in future help to protect Long Valley." Today, the importance of collecting data remains to the conservation efforts of HKBWS. Because of the data collected, collated, reviewed and published by our members, the Society remains the principal authority on birds in Hong Kong.

While the importance of the Bulletin has diminished somewhat following the runaway success of the website, and the Bulletin Boards in particular, the Bulletin remains the principal method of communicating with the HKBWS membership and serves as a focal point to stimulate regular reporting on a wide variety of issues. All the best for another 200 issues! 🐦

Historically there is not much to say about the HKBWS Bulletin except that it took almost 50 years to evolve into the splendid modern version. When I first joined the Society in 1971 it was a simple roneoed document that appeared twice a year. The primary purpose was to announce forthcoming outings but it also gave news such as a list of new members and the date set for the AGM. From 1972 onwards various office bearers implanted their personality on the Bulletin and gradually conservation news, topical articles, outing reports and overseas trip reports expanded the content. Also the quality of the publication improved as it expanded. The following is an edited version of my journal entry for my first HKBWS outing to Mai Po.

Mai Po

My first organised visit to the Mai Po marshes was when I attended a Society outing with John Chapman, an engineer with the Highways Department on 28th August 1972. It was an unseasonably cool and cloudy morning with squally showers and some bright periods - No. 1 signal was hoisted as a severe tropical storm was 230 miles SSW of Hong Kong. There were ten or so of us in the party and I recall the jovial Dave Galloway, a New Territories based police officer being there. The only items carried were binoculars and cameras as nobody had a telescope. We parked the car at the Tai Yuen Fishery Garden and the group assembled at the area then generally known as Chuk Yuen fishponds. This was the southern and then more popular way into the Mai Po marshes. The pundits regarded the northerly access at Tam Kon Chau as not so good for birds. We started by looking at a large, unpromising, recently filled-in area that held a few plovers around the puddles. At the northern edge of this area was a fine and in Hong Kong terms unique freshwater marsh where Watercock and Pheasant-tailed Jacana bred and Lesser Whistling Teal were sometimes seen (shortly after this visit, this marsh was filled-in and now lies beneath Fairview Park). Afterwards we weaved our way through small ponds and past huts guarded by vicious dogs



and accessed the southeast corner of the Mai Po gei-wais across a rickety wooden bridge. One of the old hands (before the days of outing leaders) selected a cross-bund that he hoped was passable and aimed for the outer causeway that linked the seaward ends of the gei-wais (the perimeter fence and road had not yet been constructed). This was a matter of luck as breaches made by gei-wai operators were often too wide to jump and at times of maintenance, dredgers dumped thick, gooey mud on the bunds. On the seaward side of the causeway was an impenetrable belt of mangroves growing out of dangerously soft mud - the mudskipper collectors used special wooden skis to cross the mud. It was impossible to view the Deep Bay mudflats but a pile of oyster shells provided just enough elevation to glimpse the tidal mouth of Yuen Long Creek. A rocky outcrop at the northwest corner of the gei-wais (Shek Shan) provided an excellent viewpoint but was in the Closed Area and strictly out-of-bounds. Although not a problem on this day, outside of the close season, hunters were a menace, especially on a Sunday, and could ruin a day's bird-watching. The state of the tide affected the likely water level in the gei-wais (drained when low) and the number of shorebirds feeding and roosting on the marsh but, surprisingly, was not taken into account when setting dates and times for outings. Access to the marshes was uncontrolled and the degree of human disturbance pot luck.

As for the birds, I was pleased to see my first Yellow Bitterns, which were numerous over the entire area. Also logged among my 28 species were Purple Heron, Striated Heron, Pacific Golden Plover, sand plovers (the Honorary Recorder did not permit them to be split in the field) and 'the best' a very good view of a Black-tailed Godwit, then regarded as scarce. There were Spot-billed Duck and with John's help I identified Whiskered Terns that including a summer adult. We had drifted away from the main body of the outing and our terns met with a degree of scepticism. Also recorded were an Osprey and Chestnut Munias. The outing tally was around 40 and the surprisingly cool verdict in my journal was 'an enjoyable morning, if not too exciting'. ~

Mai Po

1972

- Clive Viney

Hong Kong Bird News

February – March 2006 – Richard Lewthwaite

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

Late news from October 2005 – a first-winter Ortolan Bunting, a potential 1st record for Hong Kong, Guangdong and southeast China, was present at Long Valley on 20th (GW) and later identified from photographs (P.JL).

February

This was a memorable month with a Chinese Song Thrush *Turdus mupinensis* and an Orange-breasted Green Pigeon *Treron bicincta* found in a two-day period at Po Toi. Memorable for the wrong reasons, however, was the government's decision to close Mai Po as part of its response to the avian flu scare, a move roundly condemned by the birdwatching community as scientifically unjustified. The reserve was out of bounds to all but a small group of staff and researchers from early February to the middle of April.

The first week of February brought reports of parties of up to six Yellow-bellied Tits at Sha Lo Tung and Tai Po Kau Headland (R&KB, EMSK). There were still 18 Buff-bellied Pipits at Lok Ma Chau following the record influx noted in January, a wintering Large Grass Warbler at Sha Lo Tung, a male Fujian Niltava and White's Thrush at Shing Mun (GH), a Grey Bushchat at Ng Tung Chai, a Bright-capped Cisticola and Hume's Leaf Warbler at Kam Tin (JA) and a Brown Fish Owl at Tai Lam Chung (YYT).

The variety and quality of birds was sustained in the second week when there were reports of a Bianchi's Warbler and two Mountain Bulbuls at Ng Tung Chai (EMSK), a Blyth's Reed Warbler at Ma Tso Lung (P.JL), only the fifth or sixth for Hong Kong, a Brown Crake and Buff-bellied Pipit at Nam Chung (LW), a Brown-headed Thrush at Hong Kong University, an adult Imperial Eagle at Tai Tam Reservoir, Hong Kong Island (JoH), a rare sighting away from Deep Bay, a Common Rosefinch at Shek Kong, the over-wintering Hume's Leaf Warbler at Lam Tsuen, and a Forest Wagtail and Hainan Blue Flycatcher at Shing

Mun (LW).

On 16th, a Chinese Song Thrush was found at Po Toi (GW). Since one had been trapped and photographed at Kadoorie FBG in winter 2003/04 (but not reported until almost two years later), the Po Toi bird was actually a potential 2nd record for Hong Kong and Guangdong. Appreciated by many observers over the next seven weeks or so, it favoured the area around the island's main fung shui wood.

On 17th, a Water Pipit, perhaps the individual first seen in January, was noted at Mai Po (BS) and 19 Grey-headed Lapwings were counted at Kam Tin (JA).

On 18th, just two days after the discovery of the Chinese Song Thrush, an Orange-breasted Green Pigeon was found and photographed in amazing detail, again at Po Toi (GH, MK, PW, YYT). It was subsequently seen on about four dates until the second week of March, mainly at or near a fruiting fig-tree some way above the main fung shui wood. This is potentially the first Hong Kong and Guangdong record of a species that is little known in China, with records from the interior of Hainan Island and one old record from Taiwan.

Also seen at Po Toi on 18th were four Black Bulbuls, whilst a Black-shouldered Kite was noted at Lau Fau Shan (MDW).

On 19th, a party of nine Ancient Auklets, a record count, were photographed from the Po Toi ferry, a Black-necked Grebe and 83 Greater Scaups, also a new high, were counted off Tsim Bei Tsui, a Relict Gull was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk, and 13 Red-rumped Swallows and two Chestnut-eared Buntings were noted at Ma Tso Lung.

The final week of the month produced reports of four Mountain Bulbuls, a male Mrs Gould's Sunbird and two Eurasian Siskins at Tai Po Kau, a Forest Wagtail at Kowloon Hills Catchwater and a Citrine Wagtail and four Buff-bellied Pipits at Kam Tin.



March

This was another excellent month, with sightings of Streaked Shearwaters and Pomarine Skuas during the inaugural Hong Kong seabird survey and an unusually good spread of passage migrants in the last week, including a potential first record for Hong Kong of Owston's Flycatcher *Ficedula (narcissus) owstoni*.

In the first half of the month a Greater White-fronted Goose, possibly the individual originally found at Lok Ma Chau in the autumn, a Ruddy Shelduck and three Ferruginous Duck were all present at Mai Po (though seen by very few observers as the reserve remained closed throughout the month). The nearby commercial fish ponds, which remained open, held wild duck, wild doves and many other migratory birds, most notably 109 Oriental Pratincoles and at least ten Buff-bellied Pipits. Elsewhere, there were reports of four Eurasian Siskins at Tai Po Kau (GT), a Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush at Kadoorie FBG, a Brown Shrike, two Dusky Thrushes and four Common Rosefinches at Airfield Road, Shek Kong, three singing Brown Bush Warblers at Sha Lo Tung (R&KB, EMSK, RWL), an Oriental Plover and five Common Rosefinches at Kam Tin (JA), two Brown-headed Thrushes and two Siberian Thrushes at Hong Kong University and another Brown-headed Thrush at Po Toi, where the Orange-breasted Green Pigeon remained until at least 12th.

During this period, the fields and nullah beside Airfield Road, Shek Kong hosted a wide range of wintering birds, whilst Hong Kong University campus was the premier site for thrushes.

A Black-legged Kittiwake seen from the Aberdeen-Po Toi ferry in the first week of the month (GW) augured well for the Hong Kong seabird survey, which started in the middle of the month and comprised a series of boat trips at three-day intervals into waters around the Ninepins and south of Hong Kong Island. Among the highlights in March were day-counts of up to seven Pomarine Skuas and up to nine Streaked Shearwaters.


Reports from Mai Po on 22nd included 257 Garganey,

a Relict Gull, a Great Black-headed Gull and a Common Gull of the taxon *heinei* (YYT).




Following a White-vented Needletail at Po Toi on 19th, a sure sign of the approach of spring, news started to come through suggesting an unusually strong passage of flycatchers for the time of year. From 22nd, there were reports of single Ferruginous at Hong Kong University, Tai Po Kau, Ng Tung Chai and Kowloon Hills Catchwater, up to two Narcissus at Tai Lam Chung, Po Toi, Lamma and Ng Tung Chai, up to two Blue-and-whites at Tai Po Kau, Ng Tung Chai and Po Toi, a Mugimaki at Tai Po Kau Headland and a Hainan Blue at Ng Tung Chai.

This late March passage culminated on 30th with the discovery of a male Owston's Flycatcher at Po Toi (PW, MK, GT), a potential first record for Hong Kong (and probably also mainland China). Also known as Olive-backed Flycatcher, *owstoni* is a poorly known taxon, which breeds on the Nansei Shoto (Ryukyu Islands), Japan. An essential reference which enabled the Po Toi bird to be confidently identified is Nial Moores's ground-breaking paper on unusual Narcissus flycatchers posted on the Birds Korea web-site: www.birdskorea.org/narcissustypes.asp.

Also noted during the same period were up to three Ashy Minivets at Po Toi, whilst there were further reports of the Chinese Song Thrush there until 24th.

Passage of Oriental Pratincoles continued to be fairly strong with up to 165 counted at fish ponds beside the Mai Po access road, whilst up to 15 White-vented Needletails were reported at Kam Tin, Tung Chung and Mui Wo. Elsewhere, a Baillon's Crake at Long Valley on 29th (KJ) was by nearly three weeks the earliest ever spring report, a flock of 400 Chinese Bulbuls, behaving as migrants, was noted on the same day at Sham Chung (MDW), a Relict Gull was again seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 30th, whilst on 31st a possible Grey-Crowned Warbler was seen at Hong Kong University and the first Slaty-legged Crake of the spring heard at Clearwater Bay. 

Coming Activities

Date	Leader / Speaker	Activity / Details	Time	Difficulty
7 Oct (Sat)	WONG S.C. LAW S.M.	Tung Chung - Tai O ** 08:30 Tung Chung Fire Station ** Crested Bulbul Club Activity	08:30 - 13:00	XX
18 Oct (Wed)	CHEUNG Ho Fai	ID of Birds (4): Warbler Room 1107, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon; (HKS10 member, HKS30 non-member)	19:00 - 20:30	
22 Oct (Sun)	Mike TURNBULL YAM Wing Yiu	Boat Trip: Po Toi, Lamma Channel 08:00 Aberdeen Public Pier (near Ocean Court) 16:00 back to Aberdeen Public Pier (Member \$150, Non-member \$200) Note: this will be a long trip on open waters. The ride could be quite rough and some people may get seasick.  	08:00 - 16:00	XXX
1 Nov (Wed)	CHOI Chung Pak	The 5th Training Course ** CBC and Lo Recruit new members and provide training for them ** Crested Bulbul Club Activity		
11 Nov (Sat)	HON S. WONG C.S.	Aberdeen Reservoir ** 08:00 Central MTR Station Exit B Hang Seng Bank ** Crested Bulbul Club Activity	08:00 - 13:00	XX
12 Nov (Sun)	LI Wai Ki WONG Ondy	Tai Po Au 07:15 Tai Po KCR station Taxi station	07:30 - 12:00	XXX
	CHOI Chung Pak	Bird watching tour for public in HK Museum of Coastal Defence ** CBC HK Museum of Coastal Defence Tour for public ** Crested Bulbul Club Activity	15:00 - 17:00	
15 Nov (Wed)	FONG Forrest	China & Oversea Bird Watching Trip Reports Room 1107, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon; (HKS10 member, HKS30 non-member)	19:00 - 20:30	
19 Oct (Sun)	WONG Hok Sze CHEUNG Yung	Kadoorie Farm 07:30 Tai Wo KCR station Taxi   station	07:30 - 12:00	X
3 Dec (Sun)	CHEUNG Jose Alberto OR Wai Hung	Ng Tung Chai 07:00 Tai Wo KCR station Taxi station	07:15 - 11:00	XXX
10 Dec (Sun)	CHAN Yin Fong, Helen	Shing Mun 08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Station Hang Seng Bank	08:00 - 12:00	XX
20 Dec (Wed)	YEUNG Vicky	HK Birding Site (1) Long Valley Room 902, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon; (HKS10 member, HKS30 non-member)	19:00 - 20:30	

** Crested Bulbul Club Activity: These activities are lead by elderly nature interpreters, members are welcome to join with elderly members of the family.

Further details or change(s) of outings/indoor meetings will be announced in the HKBWS Website

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 AFCD 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!



Transportation arrangement



Please fill in the booking slip and return

Activity Booking Slip

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

- * 17 Sept (Sun) : Po Toi and Lamma Channel (member, non-members)
- 22 Oct (Sun) : Po Toi and Lamma Channel (member, non-members)

Any early-bird reservation (two weeks before the boat trip outing) will entitle a 20% discount on the boat fare.

We will confirm the participants about 2 weeks before the outing whether their reservation application is accepted or not. Once the reservation is confirmed, we will not accept any withdrawal. All the registered participants are required to pay the prescribed fare, no matter they can attend the outing or not. If we cancel the outing due to inclement weather or special reason, the paid fare will be refunded to the participants.

Please complete the attached form with all the participants' names, Membership Nos. & the required information.

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

Group 4 Leaf Warblers –

Yellow-browed Warbler, Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler, Pallas's Leaf Warbler and Chinese Leaf Warbler

The original Yellow-browed Warbler group was split into Yellow-browed Warbler and Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler. The Pallas's Leaf Warbler complex was split into Pallas's Leaf Warbler, Chinese Leaf Warbler and several others that have not been recorded in Hong Kong yet. All members in this group have clear pale-edge to tertials.

The key to this group is the crown stripe and the bill colour. The call is also very useful but only Yellow-browed Warbler is sufficiently vocal in winter.

Features	Yellow-browed	Hume's Yellow-browed	Pallas's Leaf	Chinese Leaf
Size	small	small	very small	very small
Crown Stripe	not noticeable	not noticeable	very clear	weak and on the hind crown
Call	"Sweet"	more sparrow-like	soft "weeet"	?
Song	high-pitched "zee-zee-zee"	?	complex string of notes	quickly repeated "chick-ket-dee"
Leg	orange	dark	dark	orange
Supercilium	white, sometimes yellow	white	bright yellow	white
Lower mandible	orange with dark tip (half pink, half grey)	completely dark	completely dark	orange with a small dark tip in May 

四川柳鶯 Chinese Leaf Warbler

- 江明亮 Ming-Liang Chiang
- 四川 Sichuan
- 05/2003



黃腰柳鶯 Pallas's Leaf Warbler 2

- 張浩輝 Ho Fai Cheung
- 嘉道理農場 Kadoorie Farm
- 09/12/2000



黃眉柳鶯 Yellow-browed Warbler

- 張浩輝 Ho Fai Cheung
- 米埔 Mai Po
- 1 - 23/11/2003, 2 - 18/11/2000





鵟 (魚鷹) (米埔) – 陳志光

Osprey (Mai Po) – Daniel Chan

- 2006.4.17
- DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x Teleconverter
f/7.1, 1/1250s, ISO 200