

香港觀鳥會 Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



bulletin

會員通訊



202

Winter 2006 - 冬



## 黑枕王鷓

Black-naped Monarch

Felix Ng 伍昌齡

Mai Po 米埔, 21/10/2006

DSLR camera 500mm/f4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter, f/5.6, 1/250s, ISO400



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## Chairman's word - Cheung Ho Fai

Economic progress in China does not necessarily mean one-way destruction of the environment. In fact, this is also a great chance to improve the environment. A prime example is bird protection in China. In the past, information on birds is sparse, and so public awareness is low. These can be changed in the wave of economic development. The rise in popularity of bird watching in China is going to make great changes in China.

Bird watching in China has undergone rapid changes in recent years. Now there are 18 bird watching societies and several annual national activities for bird watchers in China. A National Bird Race has taken place in Dongting for four years already. The Annual Bird Photographers Meeting has been organized in Dongzhai for several years. The China Bird Festival is organized for the first time this year, and the China Coastal Waterbird Survey has taken place monthly in about 10 coastal sites simultaneously. The major bird watching publications in China include the China Bird Report that is published annually, and China Birdwatch, - a bulletin for all the bird watching societies in China. Regional bird watching societies are also very active. Some have weekly activities all through the year.

Birdlife International has been working with HKBWS in promoting bird watching activities in China. Through funding from the Darwin Initiative, the China Programme is behind many of the changes in the bird watching community there. At present, Fion Cheung is the China Programme Officer in HKBWS. Through her work, and supervision from the steering committee, progress in China has been rapid.

Already, we are seeing many important bird records that are the result of the efforts of bird watchers in China. As information is gathered, and the degree of awareness increases, I can see a bright future for bird conservation in China.

## CY Lam Elected as Honorary President

As we all know, ex-chairman CY Lam has done a great deal of work for the Society during his term. Under his leadership, the Society has grown significantly to the current level and become a registered charitable institution. People in Hong Kong now have better understanding of birds and their conservation while birdwatching is becoming more and more popular. In recognition of his invaluable contribution, the Board of Directors unanimously elected CY to be the Honorary President of the Society.

## 2007 Membership Renewal

Members are required to renew their subscription to the Society at the end of 2006. Notices have been sent by post in December last year. The renewal form is also available for download from the Society's new Portal ([www.hkbws.org.hk/phpBB2/dload.php](http://www.hkbws.org.hk/phpBB2/dload.php)). To save the trouble of having to renew every year, members may now choose to do it for 5 years in a row at 2007 rates. You may send the completed subscription form with crossed cheque to the society. Alternatively, you may directly credit 'The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited' account (HSBC account no. 534-361423-838) and return the payment slip and the completed subscription form to the society. (Remark: cheque payment is highly recommended.)

## 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.

### Acknowledgments:

1. Schmidt Marketing (H.K.) Ltd
2. Swarovski Hong Kong Ltd

# HKBWS Projects

— Lo Wai Yan

## Birds and Humans in Harmony - A Sustainable Management Scheme in Long Valley

(2005-2007)

— Yeung Lee Ki



The area of managed farmland remains unchanged. We focused on farmland management in order to provide stable and suitable habitat for birds.

### Shallow Water Habitat:

Weather of winter increased the drop of water level in farmlands, the frequency of water pumping increased to once everyday so as to maintain suitable water level.



### Wet Agricultural Land:

Since rice grains attract lots of munias, not much remained for harvest. On the other hand, Water Chestnut has wilted, we hope we can have the 1st harvest at the beginning of next year.

### Wet Agricultural Land (during bird migration period):

During September to November, we cut the crops for several times in order to control the crop height so that to attract birds to feed on and rest.

## Bird Monitoring Programme:

During September to November, bird survey was conducted twice per week in order to provide more data on autumn passage migrants of Long Valley. Autumn migrants and winter visitors brought Long Valley several new records. They are Intermediate Egret, Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Great Bittern and Avocet. Members are welcome to post their bird reports onto the BBS after birding in Long Valley.

## Eco-tour guide training and Eco-tours at Long Valley:

We have arranged 11 eco-tours to Long Valley in October and November. There were altogether 594 participants who were mainly primary and secondary school students, teachers and the public. They all showed interest in bird watching and conservation of Long Valley.



## Visit the wetlands of Taiwan

- Yeung Lee Ki

Guanten Pheasant-tailed Jacana Restoration Site in Tainan and Chouchai Wetland Park in Kaohsiung are both set up for Jacana conservation. The former one is compensation wetland of railway construction while the latter was originally designated for park building but then strived to conserve as wetland park by green groups. Lands and infrastructures of both wetlands are provided by the Government but habitat creation, management, operation and fund raising are in charged by the managing organization.



Ponds in Guanten Pheasant-tailed Jacana Restoration Site are planted with different kinds of water plants.

Guanten Pheasant-tailed Jacana Restoration Site focuses mainly on conservation. Only part of the Site is open for public and the rest are important foraging and breeding sites for Jacana. The Site has been operated for about 7 years, breeding nests found has increased from 4 to the highest count 60 which shows the success of the restoration programme.

On the other hand, Chouchai Wetland Park focuses on environmental education. Besides arranging eco-tours for schools and organizations, the park is open for public with limited number.

In the case of Long Valley Management Agreement Project, although fund is provided by the Government, land ownership problem is yet to be solved. For habitat management, the project is habitat and multiple-species targeted, we may try increasing water plant diversity and creating deep water ponds so that to form a complex and mixed habitats.



Only 80 people are allowed to visit Chouchai Wetland Park each day.



Pheasant-tailed Jacana loves to build nest and feed on Water Caltrop fields.

## Bird Watching Class for Intermediate Level

We are sorry to those who are not accepted to the class as it was full in a short time. We will announce the information of the next class once it is decided. An elementary class will be organised probably in September 2007.



## Crested Bulbul Club

### 1. The 5th Bird Watching Interpreter Training Workshop for Elderly

The 5th training workshop in November was completed smoothly. A total of 31 elderly completed the course of 4 lecture and 4 outing. They are now become the 1st group of the club and has started to serve the community in the parks to promote birdwatching. They were also welcome in the annual dinner of the Club on 30 November.

Special thanks to Mr David Choi, coordinator of the training, and the speakers, including Ms. Carrie Ma and Mr. Apache Lau, and the team members of the Club.



### 2. Early Morning Bird Watchers for overseas tourists

A TV show on the theme "Eco-tourism in Hong Kong" shot by RTHK was released on 25 Dec 2007. This is one of the trial activities in promoting eco-tourism mentioned by Tourism Board. You can recall this show by visiting the website of RTHK. However, there was only one tour of five persons for oversea visitors in Nov 2006. To supplement this event, more overseas visitors attend the bird watching activity but not through Tourism Board. So, overseas visitors is a bit more than the mentioned number.

### 3. Bird watching interpretation in Hong Kong Wetland Park

A total of 143 man-days have been devoted to in this service in Nov and Dec 2006.

### 4. Early Morning Bird Watchers at Kin Park & HK Park

No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from Nov to Dec 2006: 123

No. of participants in Kowloon Park from Nov to Dec 2006: 302

### 5. Issue 14 of Crested Bulbul Club Bulletin

The latest edition was published. You can visit our website for the full version of the bulletin (only Chinese version available).

## Taipei International Birdwatching Fair 2006

The 8<sup>th</sup> Taipei International Birdwatching Fair was organized by Wild Bird Society of Taipei in Guandu Nature Park on 11 & 12 November 2006. Our Project Officer Vicky Yeung and the Chairman of Crested Bulbul Club, Mr KW Leung and member Dominic Yip represented us to attend this event. Besides introducing HKBWS and communicate to friends from overseas and local community, Vicky also visited the Tainan Quanten Pheasant-tailed Jacana Restoration Zone and the Kaohsiung Chouchai Wetland Park (please visit our website for more details about these two projects). Mr. Leung and Mr Yip also met the representatives of the Chinese Bulbul Club and exchanging experience in promoting bird watching by elderly.



## The 7th Inter-school Bird Race

As in previous years, the Society provided assistance to the Inter-school Bird Race organized by AFCD's Wetland Park in December last year. The event was staged at the Wetland Park and Tsim Bei Tsui, with teams from some 40 schools. 20 members participated in the volunteer work, which included 2 outdoor practice sessions, monitoring at checkpoints during the race as well as adjudication. About 60 species were recorded by each of the 6 winning teams.



Flower, Bird, Insect and  
Fish Festival

## Bird watching services and activities

1. 10-11/06 Organised an elementary bird watching course for the students of Liberal Studies of HKU. Robin Fung was a speaker, Henry Lui, Ronley Lee and Ronnie Sham assisted the practice work.
2. 11-12/06 Bird watching activities for elderly centres and schools, a total of 9 times
3. 11/11/06 Bird Watching Fun Day in Kowloon Park, co-ordinated by Crested Bulbul Club
4. 12/11/06 Organised the first ever bird watching tour for the visitors of Museum of Coastal Defence. More than 30 people attended this tour. Activity co-ordinated by Crested Bulbul Club
5. 18/11/06 Bird watching tour for students and teachers of Chinese University of HK. Thanks to Hung Wai Ming.
6. 10/12/06 The second tour of Museum of Coastal Defence, about 20 participants
7. 22-27/06 Exhibition and booth games in the Flower, Bird, Insect and Fish Festival from 22 to 27 Dec, mainly held by Crested Bulbul Club.
8. 29-31/06 An exhibition and games booth in the 95th Anniversary of Hong Kong Scouting in West Kowloon Cultural & Entertainment Zone

## Colours on Wings

### - Hong Kong Wild Birds Photo Contest 2006

Sponsor: The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust

"My Favourite Bird Photo" online public election has been launched till 28 February 2006. You are encouraged to vote for your favourite bird photo immediately. Please visit the following website: [www.hkbws.org.hk](http://www.hkbws.org.hk). Prize presentation and exhibition will be held in March.





## Research Group Update

### Egret Research Group - Captain Wong

#### (1) Guizhou Egret nesting colony survey

After the joint survey in May with Prof Liang Wei of Hainan Normal University, a report is being drafted and will be submitted to the HKBWS.

#### (2) 2006 Hong Kong Egret count

The 2006 count was completed after the summer. A total of 1017 nests in 21 colonies were counted. Two new colonies at Sham Po near Ngau Hom Shek and Yeung Chau, Plover Cove were found. Again, the Chinese Pond Heron and Little Egret were the two dominant species. Compared with 333 nests in the Deep Bay area and 1030 nests in Hong Kong in 2005, there is a 22% increase in the Deep Bay area but a 1.0% decrease throughout Hong Kong.

### Kite Research Group Report - Karin Chin

The annual coordinated count was conducted in December. Lamma Island, an additional site, was newly introduced in this count. On top of that, we also conducted counts in Aberdeen Reservoir, Stonecutters Island and Sai Kung.

We will continue our Black Kite Breeding Survey in the coming spring. Would any members who would like to share any information about the location of Black Kite nests, please contact Karin Chin at [yankarin@graduate.hku.hk](mailto:yankarin@graduate.hku.hk).

## China Update

### Membership application to the China Ornithological Society

China Ornithological Society (COS) is a leading NGO working on ornithology and bird conservation in China. The aims of COS are to develop ornithology in China, set up a nation-wide network and promote international cooperation in research and conservation actions for the threatened species of birds living in the country. You are welcomed to join the society as member. Annual membership subscription is RMB20. Application form has now been uploaded in our website (HKBWS BBS/Forum/Bird Conservation/China/Overseas/COS Application form).

Note: As all applications required the recommendation from a COS director, HKBWS can provide assistance but cannot guarantee the result. Please send your application form and annual fee to our office first for further action. (Please make cheque payable to: The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited. You are strongly recommend to pay the subscription fee for the coming five years at one time. The exchange rate is 1:1. An additional of HK\$20 is charged as handling fee to HKBWS, that means a total of HK\$120)

### "China Bird Report 2005"

"China Bird Report 2005" has just been published by The China Ornithological Society. Records for the 2005 report were mainly from "Database of China Bird Report", recorded from overseas bird watchers from correspondence or records via e-mail and letters. The preparation time has been lasted for over a half-year, important and valuable bird watching records were selected and compiled, forming the main content of this report. Information for the "China Bird Report 2005" sourced from 23 provinces, five autonomous regions, four cities and one special administrative region (exclusive Hong Kong and Taiwan). Contribution of records come from birders, ornithologists and birdwatcher societies from 24 province including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, reports also received from birders and organizations from six foreign countries. This is the first time that the annual report contains records from each of the provinces, this reflects the wide range of coverage and participation.

Members who wish to obtain a copy of the China Bird Report 2005 could make a donation of HK\$100 or more to China Ornithological Society (via HKBWS); (Note: plus local postage HK\$20) For those who wish to made donation in Euro or British Pounds could get in touch with HKBWS UK representative at [hkbwsuk@aol.com](mailto:hkbwsuk@aol.com). You can visit the following website for further description of the report: [www.chinabirdnet.org](http://www.chinabirdnet.org).



## Wind Farm Plans Threaten

### Hong Kong's White-bellied Sea Eagles

#### **Wind farms** - in Hong Kong and worldwide

Hong Kong's White-bellied Sea-Eagles are under threat from the proposed development of two large-scale wind farms.

The 90 planned turbines are huge - the blades are 90m in diameter and will rotate around a hub on a 70m tower. This gives a maximum height for the spinning blades of 115m above sea level. These wind farms are proposed for an area east and south of the Ninepins, close to Sai Kung and Clearwater Bay, and another for either the same area, or the West Lamma Channel, close to Lamma Power Station.

There has been growing interest worldwide and in Hong Kong in the issue of greenhouse gases and global warming, and how both might be reduced by replacing fossil fuel-burning power stations with renewable energy sources. In order that Hong Kong is seen to be doing its bit, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has required both

the local power companies to install experimental wind turbines - one is already in place on Lamma and another, set to be located at Hei Ling Chau, is going through the EIA process. EPD is also encouraging the introduction of commercial scale wind turbines in Hong Kong by guaranteeing the power companies a higher rate of return for electricity generated from renewable sources. Each field is projected to generate approximately 1% of Hong Kong's energy needs.

This all sounds great. Unfortunately it is not that simple. There is a growing concern and a strong body of credible evidence from around the world that wind farms are causing the deaths of many birds, especially eagles. Information is available on the web from as far afield as Japan, California, Spain, the UK and Norway of a significant numbers of eagles being struck and killed by rotating blades on wind turbines. A variety of information is available on the Internet. Some are listed below:

Wind farms & eagles worldwide: <http://www.birdforum.net/showthread.php?t=27198>

Wind farm cancelled in Scotland: <http://www.birdforum.net/showthread.php?t=69139>

White-tailed Eagles decimated in Norway: <http://www1.nrk.no/nett-tv/klipp/193197>

Bird genocide at wind farms: <http://www.iberica2000.org/Es/Articulo.asp?id=1188>

Assessment of mortality reports: <http://www.iberica2000.org/Es/Articulo.asp?id=1223>

Wind farms and greenhouse gases: <http://www.iberica2000.org/Es/Articulo.asp?id=1186>

## Wind farms and eagles in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's White-bellied Sea Eagle population of about 10 pairs is the most important in China. Elsewhere, adult birds are shot and their nests are raided for their eggs - usually by fishermen. In Hong Kong all birds and their eggs are protected, both by the law, and by the fact that even with the fishing industry in crisis our fishermen do not need to shoot eagles to survive!

Unfortunately, the proposed locations for the wind farms are close to areas that are traditional strongholds of the eagles - Sai Kung (specifically, to the east of the Ninepins) and southern waters of Hong Kong (West Lamma Channel). These sites have been selected because they supposedly offer the potential for commercially-viable winds in areas that do not interfere with shipping lanes, aircraft flight paths or existing infrastructure (such as undersea cables and pipelines).

The upcoming Environmental Impact Assessments are intended to establish whether the proposed wind farms are likely to cause any environmental or ecological impacts. Unfortunately no mention is made of the need to study the potential impacts on White-bellied Sea Eagles in either the project profiles submitted by the project proponents, or in the study briefs (which determine what information the EIA should include) issued by the Environmental Protection Department. These documents can be found online at the EPD website at:



Photo: Henry Lui

### **Southeastern Waters (near Ninepins in Sai Kung) - 50 turbines of up to 3MW capacity**

Project profile : <http://www.epd.gov.hk/eia/register/profile/latest/esb-146.htm>

Study brief : <http://www.epd.gov.hk/eia/register/study/latest/esb-146.htm>

### **West Lamma Channel or East Ninepins (Sai Kung) - 40 turbines of 2.5MW capacity**

Project profile : <http://www.epd.gov.hk/eia/register/profile/latest/esb-151.htm>

Study brief : <http://www.epd.gov.hk/eia/register/study/latest/esb-151.htm>

## How can HKBWS make use of the EIA to protect White-bellied Sea Eagles?

The next section quotes the detailed requirements of the ecological assessments as stated in the study briefs for the two projects. In this section we will include some of the issues we consider to be relevant (*in italics*) and raise them below the specific point laid out in the study brief. The intention is to outline key considerations in relation to White-bellied Sea Eagles and suggest the information that we believe is necessary to assess the potential impact on this species from these projects.

### **2. Objectives of the EIA study**

- (iv) to identify and quantify any potential loss or damage and other potential impacts to ecology and fisheries resources, flora, fauna and natural habitats and to propose measures to mitigate these impacts;
  - *How have wind farms (especially coastal wind farms) impacted eagle populations in other parts of the world?*
- (xiii) to design and specify environmental monitoring and audit requirements to ensure the effective implementation of the recommended environmental protection and pollution control measures.
  - *What solution is proposed to ensure that birds killed by rotor collision are effectively recorded in a marine environment?*



### 3.4.2 Ecological Assessment (Terrestrial and Marine)

3.4.2.4 The assessment shall include the following major tasks:

- (i) review the findings of relevant studies/surveys and collate the available information regarding the ecological characters of the assessment area;
  - *How many WBSE territories are there in Hong Kong?*
  - *How large are the territories of breeding pairs of WBSE in Hong Kong?*
  - *Is the foraging range the same size as the breeding territory?*
- (ii) evaluate information collected and identify any information gap relating to the assessment of potential ecological impact;
  - *How many breeding territories overlap with the proposed wind farm sites?*
  - *How often do adult birds wander outside these territories?*
  - *Where do juvenile and subadult birds go once forced out of their parents' breeding / foraging territories?*
  - *Is the KFBG radio tracking study of immature WBSE useful for determining the behaviour of subadult WBSE?*
- (iii) carry out ecological field surveys and investigations to fill in the information gaps identified in Sections 3.4.2.4 (i) above and fulfil the objectives of the EIA study. The field surveys shall include... avifauna, in particular migratory birds. ... and the avifauna surveys shall cover at least 9 months covering March to August.
  - *Why are resident species (which are of most concern) not emphasized by the brief?*
  - *What do WBSE (which is a resident species) do between August and March?*
  - *Why is this period excluded?*
  - *At what height do WBSE forage?*
- (iv) establish the general ecological profile of the Study Area based on data of relevant previous studies / surveys and results of the ecological field surveys, and taking into consideration the seasonal variations, and describe the characteristics of each habitat found; major information to be provided shall include:
  - (b) habitat maps of suitable scale showing the types and locations of habitats / species in the Study Area with special attention to those with conservation interests, including but not limited to the following:
    - ▶ avifauna, in particular migratory birds; and
      - *Why not resident White-bellied Sea Eagles?*
      - *How many WBSE breeding / foraging territories overlap with the proposed wind farm sites?*
      - *How many suitable breeding sites for WBSE occur within the study area?*
    - ▶ any other habitats / species identified as having special conservation interest by this EIA study.
  - *NB: the Hong Kong population of WBSE is the most important in China*
- (e) species found that are rare, endangered and/or listed under local legislation, international conventions for conservation of wildlife / habitats or red data books;
  - *NB: WBSE is a Class II protected species in China.*
- (f) investigation and description of the existing wildlife uses of the various habitats with special attention to those wildlife groups and habitats with conservation interests, including but not limited to... avifauna in the context of the proposal;
  - *What is the actual/potential utilization of the study area by WBSE?*
  - *NB: It seems highly unlikely that monthly transect surveys will generate sufficient data to provide a meaningful answer to this question.*

- (vi) using suitable methodology and considering also other works activities from other projects reasonably likely to occur at the same time, identify and quantify as far as possible of any direct, ... indirect (e.g. changes in flight path), on-site, off-site, primary, secondary and cumulative ecological impacts such as destruction of habitats, reduction of species abundance/diversity, loss of feeding grounds, reduction of ecological carrying capacity, habitat fragmentation, and in particular the following:
- ▶ impacts to ... avifauna during operational stage due to rotation of the wind turbines, noise produced by the wind turbines and the glare due to reflection of sunlight;
  - *What is the potential area of lost WBSE territory from this and similar installations (especially if both go ahead at the Ninepins)?*
  - *What other methods might be used to obtain more accurate data about the movements of both adult and juvenile birds outside established territories?*
  - *Are these methods consistent with global best practice?*
  - *What is the likelihood of rotor collisions on a) adults whose territories include one or more wind farms and b) wandering adults and sub-adult birds?*
  - *What would be the impact on the population of losing one or more birds per annum to collision-derived fatalities?*
- (vii) evaluation of ecological impact shall be based on the best and latest information available during the course of the EIA study, using quantitative approach as far as practicable and covering construction and operation phases of the Project as well as the subsequent management and maintenance requirement of the proposals;
- *What are the likely impacts to the Hong Kong populations of WBSE from one or more fatalities per year to a) adult and b) subadult birds?*
- (viii) evaluation of significance and acceptability of the ecological impacts identified using criteria in Annex 8 of the TM;
- *Are these impacts acceptable in the context of the protected status in China of WBSE and the importance in China of the Hong Kong population.*
- (xiii) review of the need for and recommendation for any ecological monitoring programme required.
- *What monitoring measures are proposed to assess the ongoing operational phase impacts of the wind farm on Hong Kong's WBSE population?*

Another important point to raise is one of the most important aspects of the process for assessing environmental risk - the Precautionary Principle. This principle states that if you do not know what the impact of your project will be on a given habitat or species, you should not proceed in order to avoid the risk of causing damage due to unforeseen circumstances. Bearing this principle in mind HKBWS will strongly challenge any EIA assessment for these wind farms that does not provide adequate answers to the questions raised above.



Photo: Henry Lui



## De-silting work in *gei wai* 8

De-silting works were carried out in *gei wai* 8 this Autumn because the reedbeds had badly silted up over the past 20 - 30 years and overseas research has shown that a dry reedbed is not as valuable for birds as a wet reedbed. The work involved taking off 19 cm of silt from a 2 hectare area of reedbeds in the central part of the pond and after a couple of weeks after the works had been completed, the reeds were already growing back up from the floor of the pond. Bird-ringers will now help us to monitor the use of this new wet reedbed by birds with the adjacent dry reedbed which has silted. (An expensive process, and an example of why WWF needs our continuing support - Ed.)

If the result of this work shows that the wet reedbed does indeed support a greater number and diversity of birds, then we will have to consider how best to remove the silt from the other reedbed in the reserve.

## Removing mangrove seedlings from the Deep Bay mudflats

As in previous autumns, the mangrove seedlings on the Deep Bay mudflats in front of the floating birdwatching hides have been removed. The work is getting more difficult because seedlings need to be removed over a larger area of mudflat each year. On top of this, is the problem of the rapid spread of the exotic mangrove species, *Sonneratia* spp. that were planted on the Shenzhen side of Deep Bay, into the mangroves on the Hong Kong side of the Bay.

The mangroves at the mouth of the mouth of the Shenzhen River is now made up of this exotic mangrove and much of the original, native mangrove (*Kandelia obovata*), has now disappeared.

Although AFCD arrange for contractors to remove the seedlings of these *Sonneratia* trees each year, the problem is immense and greater cooperation between Hong Kong and Shenzhen is needed in order to stop this threat.

If you have any questions about these works, then please don't hesitate to ask any of the WWF staff at Mai Po. You can contact us by telephone (2471-6306) or by e-mail ([yyoung@wwf.org.hk](mailto:yyoung@wwf.org.hk)).





## 紅褐鶉

Ferruginous Flycatcher

Chu Wing Yee 朱詠兒

Mai Po 米埔, 03/04/2004

SLR Camera, 800mm/f5.6 lens, ISO 400 film



## 鶉鶉

Mugimaki Flycatcher

Kwok Wui Cheong 郭匯昌

Tai Po 大埔, 28/01/2007

DSLR camera, 800mm/f5.6 lens, 1/80s



## 壽帶鳥

Asian Paradise Flycatcher

Cherry Wong 黃卓研

Mai Po 米埔, 10/09/2006

DSLR camera, 300mm/f4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



## 紫壽帶鳥

Japanese Paradise Flycatcher

Allen Chan 陳志雄

Po Tai 蒲台, 8/10/2006

DSLR camera, 400mm lens



## 方尾鶇

Grey-headed Flycatcher

Tse Kam Chiu 謝鑑超

Tai Po Kau 大埔滘, 18/11/2006

DSLR Camera, 300mm/f4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



## 白眉鶇

Yellow-rumped Flycatcher

Thomas Chan 陳土飛

Mai Po 米埔, 30/7/2006

DSLR Camera, 800mm lens, f5.6, 1/50s, ISO200



## The Swallows' Return:

*A foreigner's history of birdwatching, conservation and culture in Taiwan by Kate Rogers.*

Kate Rogers spent 2002 to 2005 in Taiwan. During that time she explored the natural areas of the island with her husband Derrick Wilby and also befriended a number of local Taiwanese birdwatchers. This collection of essays stems from her experiences during that period.

The first two pieces are personal reminiscences of her and her husband's birding experiences in the mountains of Wulai (Christmas 2002) and Anmashan (April 2004). In these opening essays Kate makes the sounds and smells of the mountain trails come alive to our senses, and she also accurately captures the adrenalin-rush that many of us will have experienced when encountering rare and sought-after species, most notably in this case Swinhoe's and Mikado Pheasants. However, amongst these vivid depictions of Taiwan's wild places, a more troubled note is sounded concerning the illegal trapping of wild birds as evinced by the number of birds that the author saw trammelled in the bamboo cages swinging in the icy wind at Wulai.

These concerns are explored in the essays that follow. The first of these is a history of bird conversation in Taiwan and focuses particularly on the work of John Wu, author of the Field Guide to the Birds of Taiwan, and the efforts he has made to curtail the worst excesses of the bird trade on the island.

The final two essays outline the efforts that have been made in Taiwan to protect the Black-faced Spoonbills that winter in the Chiku wetlands, the Fairy Pittas that arrive in spring to breed in Huben and the Pheasant-tailed Jacanas that are breeding residents at Kuan-tien. These conservation efforts have had positive results, but as elsewhere in Asia, and as is so clearly presented in this book, conservation is an ongoing uphill struggle.

In its modest way, this attractively produced book is a positive contribution to the conservation effort in Taiwan. This is a parallel text written in English with a Chinese translation by Alice Chen on the opposite page, and there are excellent photographs on nearly all of its 160 pages, including all of the Taiwanese endemic bird species.

Proceeds from the sale of the book in Taiwan will go back into conservation in Taiwan through the Endemic Species Research Institute. In Hong Kong the book is currently available directly from Kate ([marakate58@hotmail.com](mailto:marakate58@hotmail.com)) at a cost of HK\$90.

David Diskin  
July 2006



# PROTECTING THE "SPRING OF LIFE" AND FOLLOWING THE LAWS OF NATURE

- Lee Yuk Ying

I studied collaborative design technology in Xian this year. Collaborative design technology supports collaborative design mode to change barriers into opportunities. Designers are able to ignore spatial and temporal barriers and share, stimulate and innovate ideas in different global domains.

Echoing my collaborative design study, I believe there is a huge project that should be a great priority for global designers to work on, now and in the future. This is the design project with nature conservation. As the problems of global warming, desertification, air pollution, water pollution, and toxic rain become more serious, everything is threatened because the environment is turning bad. Humans have to take steps to protect nature and halt continuing damage to it.



Figure 1. The sand in the air in Xian

Referring to the first photo I have taken in Xian, the image is blurred (see figure 1). This is not due to poor focusing, the photo is actually focused on the sand in the air. Xian citizens told me that there was a sandstorm in Xian a few days before my visit and they also said that a sandstorm had never happened in Xian before. Desertification is aggravating not only the edges of the deserts but also areas far remote from the deserts. It is a global problem; the distress has no spatial and temporal boundary.

According to "Dao De Jing" (chapter 52 of **The Book of Dao and its Virtue**) by Lao Zi, the universe comes from an origin, which is the spring of everything. If you learn the origin of the universe, then you shall know everything. If you learn everything, then you have to protect the origin of the universe. It is not fatal to

do so (*original text*: 老子「道德經」:天下有始·以為天下母·既得其母·以知其子·既知其子·復守其母·沒身不殆·). As a birdwatcher, I notice that in Xian's Jiao Tong University, trees and birds\_ singing are in everywhere (see figure 2). I even could see a shy bird, Eurasian Blackbird, singing on a tree and flying to the grassland for feeding. Nowadays, birds and trees are not easily found anyplace else in the city. Surely, the phenomenon is not accidental or new, the university has been established for more than 50 years. The concept of greening the campus originated from the 1<sup>st</sup> principal of Xian Jiao Tong University (see figure 3), who had a long-term vision and a mission in protecting the origin and building a natural environment inside the campus.

As stated in "Dao De Jing" (chapter 25 of **The Book of Dao and its Virtue**), Lao Zi believed that all things should follow the laws of nature. He said that humans must follow the laws of the earth, the earth must follow the laws of heaven, heaven must follow the laws of truth, and truth must follow the laws of nature (*original text*: 老子「道德經」:人法地·地法天·天法道·道法自然·).





In future, protecting the origin of the universe and following the laws of nature should be the direction in collaborative design, which will lead from the current practice of "Customer-Centered Design" to the future development of "Nature-Centered Design".

Collaborative design is a kind of human wisdom, intended to break the limitations of human abilities and to share human intelligence around the globe without spatial and temporal constraints. Because of the powerfulness of collaborative design, humans can use it to achieve great things. Today, the urgent project in the world that needs the attention of global human intellect is nature conservation. As the natural environment deteriorates, its' protection becomes more necessary. Lao Zi wrote long ago that protecting the spring of life and following the laws of nature are essential to an understanding of life itself.

老子·道德經·楊克惠(編輯)·商務印書館·香港·2004.



Figure 3. The Portrait of the 1<sup>st</sup> Principal of Xian Jiao Tong University

## Xian Jiao Tong University

Figure 2. The Campus of the Xian Jiao Tong University



# A morning in Wulai, Taiwan

27 November, 2006

- Mike Kilburn



Over the last few years I have had a good deal of success in booking holidays to good birding areas with my non-birding girlfriends. Past successes have included Cat Tien Nature Reserve in southern Vietnam (where I converted one girlfriend to birding. Three days later she dumped me, but that's another story!) and Doi Chiang Dao in northern Thailand. This time my girlfriend Carrie and I spent two nights at the hot springs resort town of Wulai, just 25km south of Taipei, but in a deep river valley surrounded by lush forested hills.

We had agreed in advance that this was not a birding holiday so my only birding time was from 0700- 0930 in the morning. Fortunately the Wulai area is popular with Taiwanese birders and is featured in both the Chinese and English birding guides. And I was able to quickly find and bird an established birding trail - with great success!

Our hotel, which was perched about 100m uphill from the river giving wonderful views over the town and across the valley, was on the opposite side of the river from the start of the birding trail. On the way down to the river my first birds of the day were ten Brown-throated Martins perched on some overhead wires, and as I crossed the bridge I found a Little Egret and a White-breasted Waterhen perched along the banks, but no sign of the hoped-for Taiwan Whistling Thrush - one of my major target species.

The trail begins where the Tonghou River flows into the Nanshih River. I followed a road signposted for Siaoqi between a couple of hot springs hotels and a school. Passing the school I heard a loud call that sounded very similar to the familiar Red-billed Blue Magpie. Brilliant! It had to be Taiwan Blue Magpie, like the Whistling Thrush an endemic species found in forests throughout Taiwan, and my top target bird for the trip. Unfortunately the birds were out of sight up a steep, wooded slope, and I knew that unless I could find a way up there was no way I would see them. More by luck than judgement I happened to take some stairs that were on the birding route described in the book, and although I seemed to be no closer to the magpies, I started to see some very good birds.



First up was a Taiwan Barbet - a species proposed as a split from Black-browed Barbet of Malaysia and Vietnam, and Chinese Barbet (regularly seen by HKBWS members at Chebaling, Babao Shan and Wuyi Shan). It differs greatly in the colours of the head - showing lots of blue and yellow on the crown and throat, unlike Chinese Barbet, which shows a predominantly black and red crown. It was feeding in a fruiting camphor tree, giving me the occasional curious, but unhurried, glance.

As I was watching the Barbet and keeping an ear cocked for the magpies, four Black Bulbuls landed close-by, giving me wonderful views of their jet-black plumage, blood-red bills, and the grey edges to the wings and tail that are unique to the Taiwan subspecies. The Magpies began calling again and I eagerly climbed the last of the stairs and headed towards them. Before I had gone 20 yards a Grey Treepie swished into a nearby tree - its long tail initially raising my excitement, before I realised it was just not long enough to belong to a Magpie! However once I got onto it its identity was clear - and just to make sure I understood it gave its distinctive "gagada-gaek" call, which I know well from the birds that visit Ng Tung Chai every autumn.

However, arriving just behind it was a real Taiwan Blue Magpie - complete with the long, distinctive, white-tipped, droop-tipped, tail of its genus. A great bird, but not a great view, as it was partly hidden behind a branch, and silhouetted against the morning light, preventing me from enjoying the full glory of its purple-blue plumage.

Seeing that the road looped back on itself, I headed on, hoping to get on the right side of the light, but within 20 yards I was stopped short by a pair of Varied Tits (of the striking endemic subspecies *castaneoventris*) feeding together on the bare

branches of a dead tree just a few metres away. I was torn between drinking in the wonderful combination of chestnut, black and white of the Varied Tits and getting better views of the Magpie. Not a bad problem to have, you might think, but matters became much worse when a male Maroon Oriole flew around the clearing calling loudly, flashing a bright red tail - and passing another Taiwan Blue Magpie on the way!

I was still in shock when a woodpecker called, and a female Grey-capped Woodpecker flew in and perched prominently on a nearby branch! Thankfully this is a bird I know well, so after a quick look to confirm its identity, I was able to come back to the main problem of getting good views of the magpie. Fortunately a group of four or five was feeding around a stand of large trees, and I was able to enjoy the deep richness of their purple-blue underparts, wings and back set off against a black hood, white-tipped, pheasant-like tail, hot red bill and bright mischievous eyes. A truly wonderful bird!

Surrounded by this feast of new and beautiful birds a group of Olive backed Pipits and a solitary celtie Bush Warbler (either Manchurian, which is common in HK in the winter, or the very similar borealis race of Japanese Bush Warbler) got pretty short shrift, but Taiwan Scimitar Babbler - newly proposed as a split from Streak-throated Scimitar Babbler owing to its larger size and black rather than rufous-streaked breast, deserved more attention. At least it would have done if two different Chinese Bamboo Partridges had not started their distinctive "pee-ple pray, pee-ple pray!" song on both sides of the road. While they refused to show - a disappointment since they are almost certainly a Taiwan endemic - they distracted me long enough for the Scimitar Babbler to make their escape.



The final good bird in this incredible session was a pair of Bronzed Drongos that flew into another bare tree to check me out. They had the metallic sheen of Hair-crested Drongo, but the forked tail of Black Drongo (although not as deeply forked). They glittered magnificently in the morning sunshine as they made a couple of sweeping attacks on flying insects, before deciding that I was much too boring for birds as cool and glamorous as them, and disappeared!

All this happened in a whirlwind 40 minutes that I will never forget. It was followed by a long slog upriver during which I added Brown Dipper, Plumbeous Redstart, and 30-odd Grey-chinned Minivets, followed by a rush back to the hotel for breakfast.

However, more was to come ... as I was passing the school a Grey Tropicbird flew out of a fruiting camphor tree right by the roadside some 30 yards in front of me. Unlike the large mature trees on the slope above, this was a much smaller and denser tree. Although it was filled with movement I struggled to get good views of the birds, until first one Taiwan Blue Magpie, then a Grey Tropicbird, then a couple more Blue Magpies, and finally all fifteen remaining Blue Magpies left the tree and flew right past my head, giving me unforgettable grandstand views of a truly iconic bird!

Later that day I again saw what I suspect was the same flock as we walked up to the Wulai waterfall cable car station, but distantly on the far bank of the river, where I also added a Crested Goshawk. At the Dreamland resort, which we reached by a short but dramatic cable-car ride over the falls, I finally caught up with the lovely Taiwan Whistling Thrush. A fine bird in itself, but nothing like as good as the Magpie and the kaleidoscope of birds I'd enjoyed on that truly unforgettable morning!

That afternoon I tried showing a few birds to my girlfriend. She had no interest whatsoever. But at least she hasn't dumped me!

Thanks are due to Mark Wilkie, who helped with site information.

## Useful information

### *Birding Guidebooks:*

I took with me both the Chinese (台灣野外地圖 2001 ISBN 957-455-054-0) and English (Birdwatching in Taiwan 2005 ISBN 957-98751-9-7) guidebooks. While they were helpful in selecting Wulai over Beitou as a hot springs resort near Taipei, which offered a chance of some good birds, I found them difficult to use for planning my birding day. The main problems were that no distances are given on the maps, that area maps do not correspond closely with more detailed local maps, and the maps do not clearly mark the specific birding routes. Once I had my bearings they made much more sense.

One other book I was unable to find was the "Birdwatcher's Guide to the Taipei Region", ISBN 957-01-7797-7. According to Taiwan-based birder Mark Wilkie this shows distances of the trails, and provides good directions for seeing Tawny Fish Owl near Wulai (Mark writes regular birding updates on Huben, a major Fairy Pitta site in central Taiwan, on the BirdForum website [www.birdforum.net](http://www.birdforum.net)).

More positively, they gave a good idea of the birds you are likely to see and the newer English book illustrates all the endemic species and subspecies, many of which have distinctive, easily recognizable plumages. They also provide contact numbers for public transport companies and some recommended accommodation. HKBWS Library has copies of both which can be borrowed.

The Lonely Planet Guide to Taiwan (2004 edition) was also helpful in planning the trip.

### *Endemics and splits*

At present Taiwan has 15 recognized endemic species, and almost 60 others which are worthy of consideration as endemic subspecies or full species. There have been recent proposals to split some of these such as Taiwan Barbet and Taiwan Hwamei, while others await further research. A good place to follow developments is the Birding in Taiwan website ([www.birdingintaiwan.com](http://www.birdingintaiwan.com)), which posts news taxonomic studies of Taiwanese birds. This is an exciting time as several developments have occurred in the last year, and more are expected soon.

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

## August

The month opened with a typhoon and closed with Brown-chested Flycatcher at Mai Po and a Tiger Shrike at Kowloon Park, the first of a series of rarities in what turned out to be an excellent autumn.

As Typhoon Prapiroon tracked southwest of Hong Kong on 3<sup>rd</sup>, there were sightings of two all-dark shearwaters and three Bridled Terns at Cape d'Agular (GT) and a Lesser Frigatebird in Tolo Harbour (KJ).

Notable reports in the first half of the month included a Swinhoe's Egret, the over-summering flock of 11 Black-faced Spoonbills, 180 Greater Sand Plovers, six Asian Dowitchers, a Ruff and a Nordmann's Greenshank, all at Mai Po (BS, YTT), a Roseate Tern bearing a North Island (New Zealand) leg-flag at Sai Kung (HKBWS web-site photo), a Watercock at Long Valley, five Grey Wagtails at Shek Pik (PS) and three Red-rumped Swallows at Lok Ma Chau (YTT).

During the same period, large pre-roost gatherings of Collared Crows were counted at two sites: 103 individuals were present at Mai Po on 8<sup>th</sup> (BS), the highest count on record, and 77 were on top of cranes and scaffolding at a construction site near Shuen Wan on 15<sup>th</sup> (RWL). The latter flew off in near-darkness in the direction of Yim Tin Tsai and Ma Si Chau islands, where they were thought to be roosting.

Two Mountain Bulbuls were present at Tai Po Kau on 16<sup>th</sup> (YTT) suggesting that this species may now be over-summering in Hong Kong. Also noted at Tai Po Kau on the same date were an Eastern Crowned Warbler, the first of the autumn, and two Mountain Tailorbirds.

Early autumn dates were reported for the following species: Yellow-rumped Flycatcher at Long Valley on 14<sup>th</sup> (DAD), Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler at Long Valley on 23<sup>rd</sup> (PJL) and Dollarbird at Po Toi on 24<sup>th</sup> (GW). Compared to those given in *The Avifauna*, these are the earliest ever dates by three, four, and 12 days, respectively.

The last week of the month brought reports of a Brown Fish Owl at Tai Po Kau (Kwan), a Black Bittern at Long Valley (KJ) and a Brown-chested Flycatcher at Mai Po and a Tiger Shrike at Kowloon Park, the latter two birds both on 28<sup>th</sup> (HKBWS Web-site photos).

## September

This was an excellent month, comparable with September 1996, with the first *baicalensis* White Wagtail, a Speckled Piculet, a fine series of sightings of rare cuckoos, Tiger Shrikes and Brown-chested Flycatchers and a very good passage of flycatchers, warblers and Black-naped Orioles. Passage began steadily then intensified from the middle of the month.

On 2<sup>nd</sup>, the second Brown-chested Flycatcher of the autumn was found at Dong Ping Chau (YTT). This was followed by reports of singles at Route Twisk on 6<sup>th</sup> (GT) and Mai Po on 16<sup>th</sup> (DAD), bringing the total for the autumn to four.

On 3<sup>rd</sup>, ten Arctic Warblers and a "Blyth's Leaf Warbler"-type were present at Tai Po Kau (GC). The first Siberian Blue Robin of the autumn was found at Ng Tung Chai on 7<sup>th</sup> (EMSK). At least five others were reported in the month, at Tai Po Kau on 9<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mai Po on 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, Po Toi on 17<sup>th</sup> and Ng Tung Chai again on 25<sup>th</sup>.

Also on 7<sup>th</sup>, a Chestnut-winged Cuckoo was noted at Lamma (JA), a rare

autumn report which was followed by a further sighting of the species at Mai Po the next day (BS).

A flock of 102 Chinese Pond Herons, behaving as migrants, were noted at Shuen Wan on 11<sup>th</sup> (RWL) and the next day a Sooty Tern, a Himalayan Swiftlet and a Pechora Pipit were all reported from Po Toi (GW).

A Tiger Shrike, the second of the autumn, was present at Po Toi during 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> (GW). Three further individuals were found at Tai Po Kau, Mai Po and Lamma in the same period (JA, HKBWS web-site photos) and yet another, the sixth of the autumn, was photographed at Tsing Yi on 19<sup>th</sup> (HKBWS web-site photo). A cluster of records like this is unprecedented, there being just nine previous records, all during 1979-1996, with not more than one individual previously recorded in any single year.

Other reports in mid-month included an Asian Lesser Cuckoo, a Horsfield's Cuckoo (the northern breeder now split from the southern breeder, Oriental Cuckoo, for which there are Guangdong records but still none from Hong Kong), a Himalayan Swiftlet and a Blue-throated Bee-eater, all at Po Toi (GW, PJL, PW, MK), a Drongo Cuckoo and adult male Yellow-rumped Flycatcher at Tai Po Kau (JA), a Short-toed Lark at Pui O (PA), a potential 2nd record, a Ruddy Crane and Daurian Starling at Mai Po and a Water Rail at Long Valley (KJ), by two and a half months the earliest ever in autumn or winter.

On 19<sup>th</sup>, a Grey-headed Woodpecker was detected at Kap Lung (KHK) and the next day a Verditer Flycatcher, the earliest ever in autumn by 9 days, and 15 Black-naped Orioles were at Po Toi (GW). The latter species was now becoming widespread, and a count of 25 at Po Toi on 24<sup>th</sup> (PJL) was the largest single site count of the autumn





and one of the highest on record. Also seen at Po Toi on 24<sup>th</sup> were a White Wagtail of the subspecies *baicalensis*, the first Hong Kong record of this taxon, an Asian Lesser Cuckoo and a Horsfield's / Oriental Cuckoo (MT, P.J.L).

Noteable reports from Mai Po in the last ten days of the month included a Spoon-billed Sandpiper during 21<sup>st</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, two Lesser Tree Ducks, a Nordmann's Greenshank and up to 11 Black-naped Orioles (YYT, BS, GT et al.). Elsewhere in the Deep Bay area, there were reports of two Manchurian Reed Warblers at San Tin on 21<sup>st</sup> (J.A), 120 White-shouldered and six Daurian Starlings at Long Valley on 23<sup>rd</sup> (EMSK) and three Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, a Lanceolated Warbler and a juvenile Pallas's Reed Bunting, the earliest ever in autumn by a month, all at Lok Ma Chau on 28<sup>th</sup> (MRL, P.J.L).

An exciting month closed with a Speckled Piculet, only the third Hong Kong record, and an Orange-headed Thrush at Ng Tung Chai (EMSK, KB).

## October

This was another very good month with the first record of the *blythi* taxon of Lesser Whitethroat, a Sulphur-breasted Warbler and the first record of Cotton Pygmy Goose in 30 years.

The month opened with a surprise when an Orange-breasted Green Pigeon was found at Po Toi on 1<sup>st</sup> (P.J.L, G.J.C). The bird was thought likely to be the individual originally found in February returning to over-winter. Also present on the island were two Chestnut-cheeked Starlings. Elsewhere, there were sightings of a Siberian Robin at HiKJ (K&DW), a Horsfield's Cuckoo at Long Valley (K.J) and 105 Red Turtle Doves, the first ever three-figure count, and the first Bright-capped Cisticola of the winter at Mong Tseng (DAD).

On 3<sup>rd</sup>, an Orange-headed Thrush was found at Tai Po Kau Headland (KB), and a Ballon's Crane at Lok Ma Chau (P.J.L). Five Little Buntings at Po Toi on

4<sup>th</sup> (GW) were the earliest ever in autumn by 2 days. The second Water Rail of the autumn and 20 Siberian Stonechats were present at Lok Ma Chau on 5<sup>th</sup> (P.J.L) and on the same day another Manchurian Reed Warbler was found at Long Valley (K.J). Reports from Mai Po the next day included a Paddyfield Warbler and 115 Black Drongos (P.J.L, GT). Among other highlights at this time were a Burmese Shrike near Tai Po (G.J.C) and 18 Grey-headed Lapwings and a possible Blyth's Pipit at Kam Tin (J.A), all on 7<sup>th</sup>.

On 9<sup>th</sup>, there were reports of 30 Hair-crested Drongos at Tai Po Kau and 40 Pale Martins of the taxon *fobkinsiensis*, only recently identified in Hong Kong, over the fishponds beside the Mai Po access road (P.J.L). The next day three Mugimaki Flycatchers, the earliest ever in autumn by 8 days, were noted at Po Toi (GW) and a Swinhoe's Minivet was found at Tai Po Kau Headland (FB). An Oriental Scops Owl at Robin's Nest on 11<sup>th</sup> (J&JH) was the first of at least three in the autumn. On 12<sup>th</sup>, a total of 10 Pheasant-tailed Jacanas were found in the Deep Bay area, comprising five at Mai Po four at Lok Ma Chau and one at Nam Sang Wai. Also noted on the same date were a Grey Bushchat at Mai Po and a Lesser Tree Duck at Nam Sang Wai.

A Lesser Whitethroat of the taxon *blythi* trapped at Mai Po on 15<sup>th</sup> is potentially the first Hong Kong record of this taxon, following one of another taxon at Long Valley in October 2002.

Passage of raptors was quite varied, especially in the first half of the month. Following a Chinese Goshawk and two Grey-faced Buzzards at Po Toi on 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, both of which are rare species in autumn, there were sightings on 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> of up to nine Black Bazas (now becoming scarce in Hong Kong) near Fanling and a Common Buzzard there (JW, GT), the earliest ever in autumn by 4 days, and a Pied Harrier and two Amur Falcons at Mai Po (P.J.L). Single Japanese Sparrowhawks were noted

at Po Toi and Long Valley on 10<sup>th</sup> and three Crested Honey Buzzards and 20 Amur Falcons were seen passing near the Mai Po Education Centre in an amazing half-hour period in late afternoon on 11<sup>th</sup> (BS). Among other raptor sightings were a Eurasian Sparrowhawk at Lok Ma Chau on 13<sup>th</sup> (P.J.L), 10 Amur Falcons at Mai Po on 15<sup>th</sup> and a Besra and Greater Spotted Eagle at Mai Po 21<sup>st</sup>.

The first half of the month was also very good for Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, with up to 15 during 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, at least 38 and possibly as many as 63 on 9<sup>th</sup> (BS) and up to 44 on 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, all at or near Mai Po. There were also 12 at Long Valley on 9<sup>th</sup>. It is possible that a single sizeable flock remained in the area during 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, accounting for all reports.

Highlight of the third week of the month, which was somewhat quieter, included a Siberian Thrush at Ng Tung Chai on 16<sup>th</sup> (EMSK), a Savanna Nightjar at Po Toi on 17<sup>th</sup> (GW) and a Bay Woodpecker at Tai Po Kau on 21<sup>st</sup> (KB).

Ng Tung Chai briefly hosted a Black-headed Bunting on 25<sup>th</sup> and, for the third successive winter, a White-throated Fantail was found there, this year from from 27<sup>th</sup> (EMSK). Elsewhere, reports included a Tristram's Bunting at Po Toi on 25<sup>th</sup> (GW), the earliest ever in autumn by 3 days, 42 Red Turtle Doves at Lok Ma Chau on 27<sup>th</sup>, probably the largest gathering noted away from the Mong Tseng area, and single Common and Chestnut-cheeked Starlings at Kam Tin on 28<sup>th</sup> (J.A).

The month ended with the discovery of a Sulphur-breasted Warbler at Tai Po Kau (SLI) and two Cotton Pygmy Geese at Mai Po (FC, PW), both on 29<sup>th</sup>. The Cotton Pygmy Geese stayed just the one day and were hugely appreciated. The two previous records occurred 30 years ago, both involving single birds at Mai Po in the last ten days of October, the dates being 23 October 1974 and 31 October 1976. (Ahhhh... the Seventies! - Ed.)



# HKBWS Coming Activities - Forrest Fong

Date / Time	Activity / Details	Leader	Difficulty
18 Mar (Sun) 08:00 - 16:00	<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>		***
21 Mar (Wed) 19:00 - 20:30	<b>Monthly Gathering - China &amp; Oversea Bird Watching Trip Reports</b> Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (HK\$10 member, HK\$30 non-member)		
25 Mar (Sun) 08:00 - 16:30	<b>Tai Sang Wai to Mai Po</b> 08:00 Hang Heung Cake Shop (near LRT Tai Tong Rd Station, Yuen Long) Detail to be announced soon. For registration, please email to membership@hkbws.org.hk		**
1 Apr (Sun) 08:00 - 16:00	<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>		***
8 Apr (Sun) 08:00 - 16:00	<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.		**
14 Apr (Sat) 08:30 - 13:00	<b>Aberdeen Reservoir **</b> 08:30 Central MTR Exit B Hang Seng Bank	WONG Chiu Shu HON So	
18 Apr (Wed) 19:00 - 20:30	<b>Monthly Gathering - Brief update on recent development of bird watching activities in China</b> Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (HK\$10 member, HK\$30 non-member)		
22 Apr (Sun) 08:00 - 16:00	<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		**
5 May (Sat) 08:30 - 13:00	<b>Tai Po Kau **</b> 08:30 Car Park Garden, Chung Tsai Yuen	CHOI Chung Pak CHOW Hung Fai	***
6 May (Sun) 08:00 - 16:00	<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		**
16 May (Wed) 19:00 - 20:30	<b>Monthly Gathering - China &amp; Oversea Bird Watching Trip Reports</b> Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (HK\$10 member, HK\$30 non-member)		

# HKBWS Coming Activities (con't)

Date / Time	Activity / Details	Leader	Difficulty
20 May (Sun) 08:00 - 13:00	<b>Tai Mo Shan</b> 08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Station Hang Seng Bank		***
2 Jun (Sat) 08:30 - 13:00	<b>Pokfulam Reservoir **</b> 0830 Queen's Ferry, City Hall, Central	HUNG Lai Yung TANG Wing Shing	**
20 Jun (Wed) 19:00 - 20:30	<b>Monthly Gathering - Experience Sharing: Digital photography and post-processing workflow</b> Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon (HK\$10 member, HK\$30 non-member)		
7 Jul (Sat) 08:00 - 13:00	<b>Lamma Island **</b> 08:00 Pier No. 4, Central	WONG Chiu Shu Chen Chi Po	*
8 Jul (Sun) 08:15 - 15:00	<b>Boat Trip: Miro Bay / Tap Mun</b> 08:15 Ma Liu Shiu Pier; One hour at Tap Mun for lunch; 15:00 Finish at Sai Kung 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 get seasick. Those who want to leave at lunchtime may take the ferry (departing hourly) at Tap Mun for Wong Shek Pier. The fare is non-refundable irrespective</i>	 	**
18 Jul (Wed) 19:00 - 20:30	<b>Monthly Gathering - China &amp; Oversea Bird Watching Trip Reports</b> Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon HK\$10 member, HK\$30 non-member		
4 Aug (Sat) 08:00 - 13:00	<b>Shing Mun Country Park **</b> 08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Hang Seng Bank	Bill Man Wong Shui Chi	**
5 Aug (Sun) 08:00 - 13:00	<b>Tai Mo Shan</b> 08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Station Hang Seng Bank		***
22 Aug (Wed) 19:00 - 20:30	<b>Monthly Gathering - China &amp; Oversea Bird Watching Trip Reports</b> Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon HK\$10 member, HK\$30 non-member		



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



Transportation arrangement



Please fill in the booking slip and return

\* \* Crested Bulbul Club's Activities

## Bird Watching Tips

### Rules

- Be patient
- Learn to be quiet

### Tips

- Try to go with somebody more knowledgeable.
- Never point binoculars anywhere near the sun as this can cause immediate blindness.
- Always take a small notebook and one or two pencils. And the followings should be noted for:
  - Size and shape/General coloration
  - Conspicuous marks or patches
  - Size and shape of bill, legs, wings, tail and neck
  - Colour of bill, legs, feet and eyes
  - Characteristics of flight or actions
  - Distinctive call notes or song
  - Comparison with any other birds

### - Date, time, place and weather

- Habitat and general surroundings
- Angle of vision, condition flight and distance from observer
- Pocket tape-recorders are often useful, especially when visiting areas where a large number of unfamiliar birds is likely to be seen.
- Dress soberly and wear a sun hat.
- If you are out for a long day in summer in Hong Kong, plenty of water and suitable repellent should be prepared.

### Equipment

- Binoculars are essential. Buy the best you can afford as apart from providing a clearer view, eye strain will be kept a minimum.
- The best all-round magnification is X8 but in woodland and for general use X7 is acceptable.
- A telescope is an optional extra. It not only can help identify shorebirds on distant mudflats or duck far out to sea but often provide magnificent views of nearby birds. A good tripod is needed so as to balance the telescope.

**▶ Mai Po Trip**

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

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

8 Apr (Sun)  22 Apr (Sun)  6 May (Sun) Membership no.: \_\_\_\_\_

\* 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 Outing.*

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)

18 Mar (Sun) : Poi and Lamma Channel ( \_\_\_\_\_ member, \_\_\_\_\_ non-members)

1 Apr (Sun) : Poi and Lamma Channel ( \_\_\_\_\_ member, \_\_\_\_\_ non-members)

8 Jul (Sun) : Mirs Bay / Tap Mun ( \_\_\_\_\_ 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.*

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

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

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

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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.*

**▶▶▶ Booking Note ◀◀◀**

**Priority is given to members of the Society.** The \*★\*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!

# Reed Warblers

- Cheung Ho Fai


Small reed warblers are very difficult to separate in the field. Not only that, they are also highly skulking and clean views are often very difficult to get. Black-browed Reed Warbler is the most common species of small reed warblers in Hong Kong. The possible confusion species in Hong Kong are Manchurian Reed Warbler and Paddyfield Warbler.

All these reed warblers are pale brownish warblers with a pale supercilium, square tail, but no wing bar. The group of reed warblers that we consider here all have a black lateral crown stripe. Some of the key differences are shown in the following table.



	Black-browed Reed Warbler	Manchurian Reed Warbler	Paddyfield Warbler
Lateral crown stripe	very strong	weaker and diffuse	very weak
Supercilium	thicker in the rear part	thinner in the rear part	thinner in the rear part
Bill		large	small





今日睇真D:  
Take a closer look

## 遠東葦鶯

Manchurian Reed Warbler

Cheung Ho Fai 張浩輝, Mai Po 米埔, 03/05/2003

## 黑眉葦鶯

Black-browed Reed Warbler

Cheung Ho Fai 張浩輝, Mai Po 米埔, 21/10/2000







## 銅藍鶇

Verditer Flycatcher

Chan Yin Fong 陳燕芳

Tai Po 大埔, 2/11/2006

DSLR Camera + teleconverter



## 白腹鶇 (幼鳥)

Blue and White Flycatcher (Juvenile)

Lee Kai Hong 李啟康

Po Toi 蒲台, 7/10/2006

DSLR Camera, 300mm lens + 1.7x teleconverter