

香港觀鳥會 Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



bulletin 203
會員通訊 Spring 2007 - 春



週年紀念
50th Anniversary
1957-2007
香港觀鳥會 The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



影羽飛揚——香港野生雀鳥攝影大賽

公開組季軍 作品名稱：黑翅長腳鷸 / 作者：任國勳 / 鳥種：黑翅長腳鷸

Coburn on Wings - Hong Kong Wild Birds Photo Contest 2006
Open Group 2nd Runner-up Title: Black-winged Stilt / Author: Fook Ng / Species: Black-winged Stilt



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited

(Approved Charitable Institution of a Public Character)

Bulletin 203

Contents

Chairman's Word – Cheung Ho Fai	02
Society News – Lo Wai Yan	03
HKBWS Projects – Lo Wai Yan	03
Nature Conservation in Hong Kong: Review of the 2004 Nature Conservation Policy and a Proposed Way Forward – Mike Kilburn	08
Cuckoos – John Holmes	15
Mai Po Update – Lew Young	16
50th Anniversary:	
Letter from Mr. Frank Walker - Frank Walker	16
Notes on Mr. Frank Walker - C Y Lam	17
Starting letter	18
Inaugural meeting minutes	19
First annual general meeting minutes	21
Hong Kong Bird News – Richard Lewthwaite	22
Coming Activities	24
Code of Conduct for Birdwatching and Bird Photography	24

HKBWS Bulletin is published quarterly by The HKBWS Ltd.

Postal address :

G.P.O. Box 12460, Hong Kong

Project Office :

1612 Beverley Commercial Centre,
87-105 Chatham Road South,
Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Telephone : (852) 2377 4387

Facsimile : (852) 2314 3687

Birdline :

(852) 2465 6690 (Chinese)
(852) 2667 4537 (English)

Website :

www.hkbws.org.hk



Co-ordinator :

Ronley Lee (bulletin@hkbws.org.hk)

Editor :

John Holmes

Contributors to this issue :

Cheung Ho Fai, Lo Wai Yan, Vicky Yeung,
Captain Wong, Alan Chan, Kite Research Group,
Mike Kilburn, Lew Young, Frank Walker, C Y Lam,
Richard Lewthwaite, John Holmes

Photo :

Lee Hok Fai, Felix Ng, Carmen Or, Lee Wai Shan,
Pippen Ho, Kwok Jai, Wallace, Swing,
Owen Chiang, Allen Chan, Henry Lui

Front cover :

Colours on Wings - Hong Kong Wild Birds Photo Contest 2006: Open Group Champion
Title Whimbrel in landing / Author: Daniel Chan / Species: Whimbrel

Design :

Ky Design

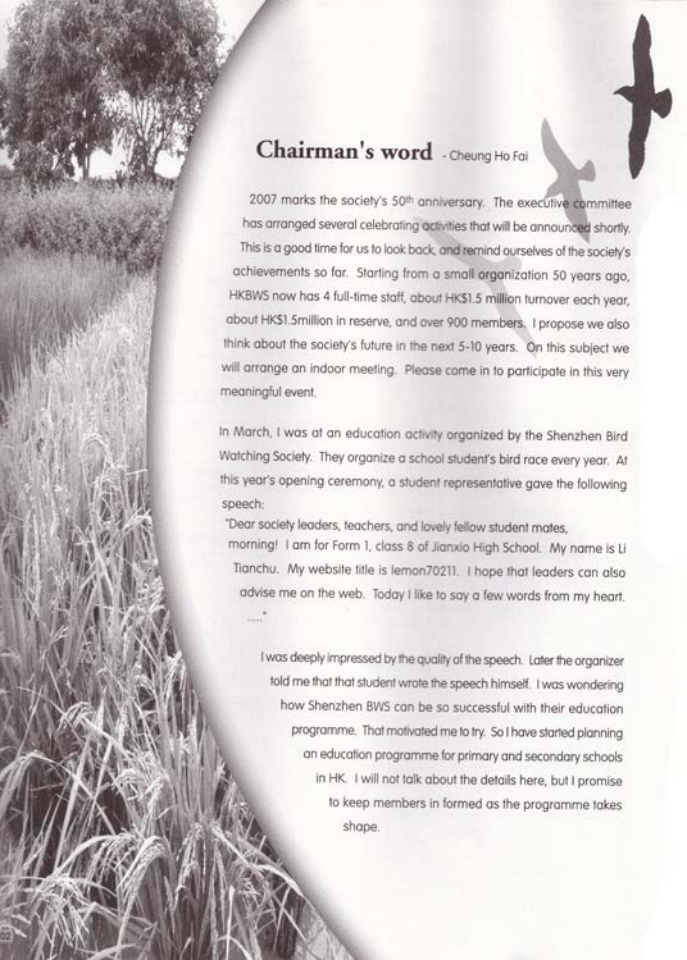
Printing :

Contemporary Development Company

Copyright reserved. No part of the contents and texts may be reproduced without prior approval.

Printed on recycled paper

Honorary President	Mr. Lam Chu Ying
Executive Committee	
Chairman	Dr. Cheung Ho Fai
Vice-Chairman	Dr. Ng Cho Nam Mr. Mike Kilburn
Hon Secretary	Mr. Chan Hing Lun, Alan
Hon Treasurer	Ms. Chow Chee Leung, Ada
Hon Recorder	Mr. Richard Lewthwaite
Committee members	Mr. Fong Kin Wa, Forrest Ms. Lee Wai Chu, Ronley Ms. Au Chun Yan, Joanne Dr. Llewellyn Young Mr. Lau Wai Man, Apache Mr. So Ngai Hung, Samson Mr. Leung Kwok Wa – Crested Bulbul Club's Chairman
Representative in UK	
Mr. Richard Stott	email@hkbwsuk@aol.com
Hon. Auditor	
John Wu & Co	
Membership Affairs Committee	
Chairman	Ms. Lee Wai Chu, Ronley
Committee members	Ms. Chow Chee Leung, Ada Ms. Chen Yuk Ming, Jimmy Mr. Chan Hing Lun, Alan Mr. Yip Tai Wai
Records Committee	
Chairman	Mr. Geoff Carey
Committee members	Mr. Paul Leader Dr. Cheung Ho Fai Dr. Mike Leven Mr. Richard Lewthwaite Mr. Yu Yat Tung
Conservation Committee	
Chairman	Mr. Mike Kilburn
Committee members	Dr. Ng Cho Nam Mr. John Holmes Mr. Fong Kin Wa, Forrest Dr. Yip Chi Lap, Beta
Education and Publicity Committee	
Chairman	Mr. Lau Wai Man, Apache
Committee members	Mr. Lui Tak Heng, Henry Mr. Hung Wai Ming Ms. Au Chun Yan, Joanne Ms. Chan Ming Ming Mr. Chan Chi Po Mr. Fung Po Kai, Robin Mr. Jacob Lo Mr. Dominic Chan Ms. Miranda Chan Mr. Yam Wing Yu Mr. Dickson Wong
Crested Bulbul Club	
Chairman	Mr. Leung Kwok Wa
Vice-Chairman	Mr. Wong Chiu Shu
Secretary	Mr. Cheng Kam Yuen
Member	Mr. Choi Chung Pak Mr. Chen Chi Po
HKBWS China Conservation Fund Committee	
Chairman	Dr. Cheung Ho Fai
Committee members	Mr. Richard Lewthwaite Dr. Llewellyn Young Mr. Yu Yat Tung
Webmaster	
Mr. Lee Kwok Shing	
Annual Report Editor	
Ms. Ma Ka Wai, Carrie Mr. Michael Turnbull	
Staff	
China Project Officer	Ms. Cheung Ka Wing
China Project Officer (Tuner)	Ms. Dong Jiang Tian
Manager (Projects and Communication)	Mr. Lo Wai Yan
Project Officer	Ms. Young Lee Ki



Chairman's word - Cheung Ho Fai

2007 marks the society's 50th anniversary. The executive committee has arranged several celebrating activities that will be announced shortly. This is a good time for us to look back, and remind ourselves of the society's achievements so far. Starting from a small organization 50 years ago, HKBWS now has 4 full-time staff, about HK\$1.5 million turnover each year, about HK\$1.5million in reserve, and over 900 members. I propose we also think about the society's future in the next 5-10 years. On this subject we will arrange an indoor meeting. Please come in to participate in this very meaningful event.

In March, I was at an education activity organized by the Shenzhen Bird Watching Society. They organize a school student's bird race every year. At this year's opening ceremony, a student representative gave the following speech:

"Dear society leaders, teachers, and lovely fellow student mates, morning! I am for Form 1, class 8 of Jianxio High School. My name is Li Tianchu. My website title is lemon70211. I hope that leaders can also advise me on the web. Today I like to say a few words from my heart.

....."

I was deeply impressed by the quality of the speech. Later the organizer told me that that student wrote the speech himself. I was wondering how Shenzhen BWS can be so successful with their education programme. That motivated me to try. So I have started planning an education programme for primary and secondary schools in HK. I will not talk about the details here, but I promise to keep members in formed as the programme takes shape.

2007 Membership renewal

Dear members, please remember to renew your subscription. Thank you for your continuous support. 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 pay-in slip and the completed subscription form to the society. (Remark: cheque payment is highly recommended.)

.....

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary

50th Anniversary Special

A booklet would be published to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Society. In addition to writing from veteran members, it is also hoped that interested members would provide articles of 300 words about their most unforgettable, most interesting or most painful bird-watching experience. Contributions can be sent through email (hkbs@hkbs.org.hk) or by post. Call the office for any enquiries.

Members are also welcome to write about the Society's history or special occasions, or to provide memorable photos complete with stories. Use of the materials would be at the discretion of the editors.

"Bird Watch 50" and Golden Jubilee Dinner

What could be better to celebrate the 50th anniversary than having a bird-watching day? We could find out how the birds have changed in the last 50 years, and recollect our history over dinner. Detailed arrangements will be announced in a coming notice and also on the web.

Date: Sunday, 28 October 2007

.....

Strategic Development Workshop for HKBWS

When we look back, the past 50 years suddenly seem a short while for the Society. From a small interest group to a conservation NGO, from a community of expatriates to a majority of local residents, from a list of 219 to 480+ species - where shall we go from here? How should we develop? What should be our main focus? Please come to the Society's Strategic Development Workshop to give your views and help establish plans for the future.

Date: Saturday, 21 July 2007 Time: 2:15 p.m.
Venue: City Top, 9/F, Amenities Building, City University of Hong Kong, Kowloon Tong

Registration: Please send your name, contact phone no., email address and membership no. to HKBWS Office (email: hkbs@hkbs.org.hk Fax: 2314 3687 Postal Address: Room 1612 Beverley Commercial Centre, 87-105 Chatham Road South, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong)

Green Orienteering in Hong Kong Park

This event was almost cancelled due to the bird flu. With the support of the schools, activity could be organised on 3 to 4 Feb. Co-organised with Leisure and Culture Services Department, 15 teams of about 80 primary 4 to 6 students attended the half-day training and half-day competition. Participants were required to record wild birds as well as answer some questions on the flora and fauna in the park. We would like to thank Monica Wong and about 30 Crested Bulbul Club members to help this activity.



Students are busy looking for birds



Double champions of the bird hat design contest

Keeping Asia's Spoonbills Airborne



The proceeding of the "Keeping Asia's Spoonbills Airborne: International Symposium on Research and Conservation of the Black-faced Spoonbill" has been published. Interested members could get a free copy by sending a returned envelop to our office. Size of the envelop must be equal to or larger than 9x12 inches. Postage of the book is HK\$8.2.

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

- Vicky Yeung

The management project has stepped to the second year. Your continuous support and participation are most welcome.

Shallow Water Habitat:

In January, two farmlands have been added to the project. This further extends the total area of shallow water habitat to 127,200 sq. ft. On the other hand, we have implemented two separate tests on farmlands to examine the effect on bird species and number. However, no significant changes are recorded on those farmlands. We will try more practices to increase the bird species and number.



Fruitful results



Flower of Chinese Arrow-head

Wet Agricultural Land:

We have organized a Water Chestnut Harvesting activity in March. Over 80 members and general public participated the activity. Participants experienced the happiness of harvest and enjoyed the activity. We have also planted Chinese Arrow-head in December 2006. They grew well and start flowering in April. Water Chestnut corms remained in soil germinated and grew again. Moreover, we have planted a new crop of Paddy Rice.



Adults and children worked together to search for Water Chestnut.

Dry Agricultural Land:

Flowering Chinese Cabbage (Choi Sum) planted in December 2006 has flowered in January and produced seed in February. While the other crop of Choi Sum was planted in April and produced seed in May in order to provide food for spring migrants.



Farmland was covered with Water Hyacinth which shall be cleared by hand.

Other Activities:

Besides water chestnut harvesting activity, we have also arranged a Water Hyacinth Clearance Activity and joined Mikania Removal Activity organized by The Conservancy Association. Both of the activities were to remove invasive species from Long Valley in order to prevent deterioration of farmlands. Once again, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers.

Crested Bulbul Club

1. Guiding services in Maipo Nature Reserve

From Mar to Apr 2007, members have provided bird watching service for more than 700 special-need children and youngster.

2. Early Morning Bird Watchers at Kowloon Park & HK Park

Form mid January to February, activity was temporary suspended due to the bird flu.

No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from Jan to Apr 2007: 48 (activity was suspended due to the bird flu)

No. of participants in Kowloon Park from Jan to Mar 2007: 39

3. Bird watching interpretation in Hong Kong Wetland Park

A total of 150 person-time have been participated in this service from Jan to Mar 2007.

4. Exchange with Futien Elderly Photographic Association

Forty three members from the Club visited the Association on 24 Jan 2007 to exchange the experience in nature photographing. They also introduce the work and activities of both parties to all participants,

The International Black-faced Spoonbill Census January 2007

This year's International Black-faced Spoonbill Census was completed between January 19 and 21. The following is a summary:

- Census conducting including the following area: Republic of Korea, Japan, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Fujian, Guangdong, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Hainan, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines.
- The census was carried out at more than 60 sites by over 100 volunteers. The bird was reported at 43 sites.
- The total count amounts to 1695 individuals, 16 or 1% more than last year's 1679.
- The largest wintering flock of 790 birds remained in Taiwan. Although there was a slight decline from last year (826), Taiwan sites still accounted for 47% of the census total.
- There was a significant increase in numbers along coastal areas in China, from 206 last year to 247, which represents 15% of the total count.
- 356 birds were recorded in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, more or less the same the 346 found last year.

Overall there is a steady increasing trend, and a five- to six-fold increase from the 200 to 300 birds in the 1990s. This is mainly due to improving conservation measures in the area over the last 10 years, particularly strengthening cooperation and studies among different regions. In addition, important support also came from the general public, who now have a better sense of environmental protection thanks to green groups' effort in making the bird an icon of avian and wetland conservation. Another factor is probably a higher rate of breeding success, which have benefited from the lack of human disturbance at the main breeding sites at the demilitarized zone between the Koreas along the 38th parallel.

The rate of increase, however, is lower than that of previous years. This could have arisen from a drop in breeding success due to some unknown cause, which could be poor weather or environmental degradation at the breeding site. Higher adult mortality in the past year could also be another factor.

The increase along the east and south coast of China probably reflects improved attention and protection to habitats in the region. This also indicates an increase in range and distribution of the species through population growth.

The wintering population in Hong Kong remained relatively steady. Black-faced Spoonbills have spread from Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay to the outer parts of Deep Bay and the estuary at Nam Shan Wai. As the worldwide population increases, the lack of growth in Hong Kong could be an indication that the carrying capacity (size of habitat and food source) at the inner Deep Bay area has been reached. Another possibility is that the birds were attracted to other sites where the environment has improved, e.g. coastal areas to the east and south of China mentioned above. Some birds could also have chosen to stay in the north taking advantage of the effects of global warming.

Results in other locations:

Place	2007 Number	2006 Number	Trend
South Korea	20 (1%)	21 (1%)	Steady
Japan	189 (11%)	155 (9%)	Increase
China mainland, including Jiangsu: 6; Shanghai: 9; Fujian: 86; Guangdong: 72; Hainan: 74	247 (15%)	206 (12%)	Increase
Taiwan	790 (47%)	826 (49%)	Decrease
Hong Kong and Shenzhen	356 (21%)	346 (21%)	Steady
Macao	48 (3%)	51 (3%)	Steady
Vietnam	45 (3%)	74 (4%)	Decrease
Other countries such as Thailand, the Philippines	0	0	-
Total:	1695	1679	Increase

Colours on Wings - Hong Kong Wild Birds Photo Contest 2006

Sponsored by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and organised by the Hong Kong Bird Watching, the final results of the "Colours on Wings - Hong Kong Wild Birds Photo Contest 2006" is opened now.

For the contest, we have received 220 photos for the Open Group, 45 for the Senior Student Group and 36 Junior Student Group. To encourage more involvement from general public, we also set up the "Online Public Election" to invite people voting their favourite photo from 24 outstanding photos. Finally, we have collected 10,295 votes and 17,106 hit rate from the webpage. The photo with highest votes is a Japanese White-eye taken by Mr Law Kam Man.

Results of the Contest

Open Group	Author	Title	Species
Champion	Daniel Chan	Whimbrel in landing	Whimbrel
1st Runner-up	Lee Hok Fei	Thundering attack	Great Egret
2nd Runner-up	Felix Ng	Black-winged Stilt	Black-winged Stilt
Outstanding	Cheng Siu Man	The beauty of Black-capped Kingfisher	Black-capped Kingfisher
Outstanding	Marcus Ho	Roseate Tern	Roseate Tern
Outstanding	Pippen Ho	Catch Fly	Barn Swallow
Outstanding	Felix Ng	Black-faced Spoonbill	Black-faced Spoonbill
Outstanding	Wong Man Wah	Common Kingfisher	Common Kingfisher
Senior Student Group	Author	Title	Species
Champion	Carmen Or	The Shrike's summer song	Long-tailed Shrike
1st Runner-up	Chan Hin Wah		Red-whiskered Bulbul
2nd Runner-up	Ng Shing Him		Black-collared Staring
Outstanding	Carmen Or	Waiting	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Outstanding	Carmen Or	Fishing	Common Kingfisher
Outstanding	Wong Siu Ying		Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Junior Student Group	Author	Species	
Champion	Lee Wai Shan	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	
1st Runner-up	Mak Chun Wai	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	
2nd Runner-up	Lee Man Cherk	Spotted Dove	
Outstanding	Ho Chin Hei	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	
Outstanding	Lau Nin	Spotted Dove	
Outstanding	Leung Tze Lam	Rock Dove	

The Society would like to express our gratitude to The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for their continue support of the Society's programme. Hong Kong Wetland Park has also kindly provided their venue for displaying our photo exhibition. We also thank the hardworking of our adjudicators for taking up the toughest work of the contest. In particular Mr K K Hui (FRPS), not only participated in all the judging work, he also provided many precious suggestions to the organising of the contest. Mr Forrest Fong has also participated in the adjudicating work. For the talks and practices held during the contest, Mr Henry Lui, Mr Owen Chiang, Mr Dominic Chan, Mr Marcus Ho and Mr Kenny Lee have kindly shown their support as volunteer tutor. We would like to express our appreciation to people who have participated in this programme. Finally, we would like to thank all photographers who participate this contest and hope to see your masterpiece in the next contest.

Bird watching services and activities

- 1-2/07 Bird watching activities for elderly centres, a total of 3 times
- 27/1/07 Booth game in the World Wetlands Day 2007 Hong Kong Celebration Ceremony
- 28/1/07 Organised the first ever bird watching tour for the visitors of Museum of Coastal Defence. More than 30 people attended this tour. Activity took up by Crested Bulbul Club
- 3/2/07 Booth game in the opening ceremony of a elderly school in Junk Bay by CBC



仁濟成立書位：在將軍澳舉辦書位遊戲

Research Group Update

Egret Research Group - Captain Wong

The Egret Count 2006 report was submitted in late 2006. The Guizhou nest survey report is still being drafted. Hope it could be completed in early 2007.

Terns Research Group - Alan Chan

The tern breeding season has quietly returned. The Tern Research Group will continue the regular survey and monitor disturbances at the colonies, including those at Mirs Bay and east of Sai Kung. Two more visits will also be made to southeastern waters in mid June and mid July respectively.

In addition, road shows on terns will be organized on Saturdays and Sundays at either Tap Mun or Sai Kung Public Pier, depending on how well the birds can be seen at these sites. Your help is most welcome.

There appears to be little improvement at breeding colonies in Mirs Bay - the number of Bridleds remains below 100, much less than the over 300 found 2 years ago. There is a slight increase in Black-naped (around 20) over last year (less than 10). In contrast, the situation is much better at another Tern Island to the east of Sai Kung, where a total of over 100 birds of all three breeding species (Bridled, Black-naped and Roseate) were found.

The outlook for successful breeding at the site is good, provided there is reasonable weather and no disturbance.

Migrating Whiskered Terns at Sai Kung Pier became an attraction for photographers last September. Coupled with the White-bellied Sea Eagles nearby, the site remained a hot spot for bird photography for weeks. Things began to warm up again this year with the appearance of Black-naped from May. Many enthusiasts spend their weekends waiting beside telephoto lens, trying to capture the graceful flying and diving terns with their cameras.

Photographers' interest in terns can be a good development - it can draw public attention and support conservation to some extent. However, too much attention could threaten the colonies. Disturbance has been caused last year by photographers landing on Tern Island, and talks about another landing this year are already in the air. To highlight the need for conservation in tern photography, some HKBWS members and photographers have produced a "No Landing" stamp. By showing the stamp on a photo, one can:

1. declare that the work was taken without setting foot on the island
2. reminder people against landing on tern colonies
3. demonstrates that high quality pictures can be taken off the island

The campaign received very good response at the Society's Forum. Over 10 photographers showed their support by putting the stamp on their stunning tern photos. You are also welcome to download the file http://www.hkbws.org.hk/phpBB2/portal.php?topic_id=2481 and apply it to your work.

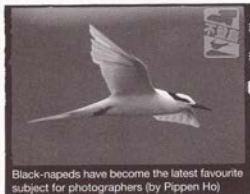
Kite Research Group

The monthly count results are as follows:

	Stonecutters Island	Magazine Gap
Jan	181	646
Feb	105	175
Mar	38	48
Apr	69	53
May	54	30

On 2007-04-15 the Kite Research Group carried out their annual Stonecutters Island Black Kite breeding survey. It was a hot day. Members Vicky Yeung and Beta Yip surveyed the island completely on foot, and found two kite nests with chicks, and two other active kite nests.

The group members have conducted 2 breeding surveys in May in Aberdeen Country Park. There are 3 active nests found. Two chicks are found in one of them and parents still sitting on the nests for the rest 2 newly located nests.



Black-naped have become the latest favourite subject for photographers (by Phippen Ho)





Review of the 2004 Nature Conservation Policy and a Proposed Way Forward

Hong Kong's transition - from trading outpost to manufacturing centre providing jobs for hundreds of thousands of refugees, to the regional financial and logistics hub we inhabit today, has been relentless and, at times, extremely destructive of the natural environment. However the growing sense of belonging, as onetime refugees and their children started to consider Hong Kong as their home, has also increasingly fed a strong sense of ownership and value for the cultural and natural heritage we still have.

This sense of value has been demonstrated in a number of key events, beginning with the establishment of the Country Parks in 1976, and the designation of the Mai Po Marshes first as a Nature Reserve in 1984, and then a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention in 1995. More recently, campaigns by environmental groups have played a significant part in preventing the destruction of ecological hotspots at Sha Lo Tung (1992) and Long Valley (2000).

Despite this, Hong Kong had no nature conservation policy until 2004, and relied on a mixture of other laws and administrative measures to protect its biodiversity.

The key tools for safeguarding Hong Kong's natural heritage come from legislation controlling land use planning (Town Planning Ordinance (TPO)) and housing and infrastructure development (Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO)). The TPO protects important habitats with a variety of conservation zonings, and setting conditions that limit the scope of permitted development. The EIAO requires project proponents to conduct surveys to identify ecologically sensitive sites, which should then be avoided. Where avoidance is not practicable, the proponent must show how any negative impacts will be mitigated or compensated.

The 2004 Nature Conservation Policy

In 2004 the Administration released Hong Kong's first Nature Conservation Policy. This document turned out to be a disappointment, principally as it provided no framework for a comprehensive conservation strategy and avoided any commitment of new resources. It also offered no further protection for key flora or fauna, ignored many international conservation agreements and made no effort to address the sustainability issues of Hong Kong's ecological footprint.

However, the policy correctly identified the protection of sites of high ecological value located on private land as the key issue in safeguarding Hong Kong's biodiversity. Two measures were proposed: First, it created a scoring system to identify the sites of greatest value. The twelve sites identified cover a total area of about 1,000 hectares. Second, the sites identified would qualify for one of two types of protection:

- **Management Agreements** leave ownership of key sites unchanged, but provide environmental NGOs with funds (from the existing Environment and Conservation Fund) to manage the sites for the benefit of wildlife.
- **Private Public Partnerships (PPP)** provide a mechanism whereby developers owning ecologically valuable sites could, in return for enhancing the ecological value of the majority of the site, develop the less sensitive areas. In exceptional circumstances the development could be located elsewhere in order to better protect key species and habitats.

Where we are today?

There has been progress, but it has been limited. Of the twelve sites identified, portions of just two (Long Valley and Fung Yuen) are being actively managed to enhance their biodiversity.

Management Agreement Mini Case Study: Long Valley

Long Valley is an area of wet agricultural land, marsh and ponds where the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) cooperates with farmers and landowners to enhance the ecological value of about one hectare of the 26-hectare site. After one year of a two-year, HK\$1.5 million project, HKBWS has attracted twice as many waterbirds (the key consideration at Long Valley) by providing more shallow water habitats. However, since HKBWS does not own the land the landlord could legally evict HKBWS and conduct other activities that would be detrimental to the wildlife in Long Valley. With no security any ecological benefits can only be regarded as temporary and highly vulnerable.

Private Public Partnerships

The PPP model has been less successful. Proposals covering a number of sites have been put to the Administration, but so far no response has been announced to the public.

There are other problems. One project, at Tai Ho on Lantau, proposes transferring development to an alternative site in order to avoid impacting the ecologically sensitive site. This would be a much better solution in ecological terms, but has run into difficulties as the Lands Department has, so far, refused to approve the proposal. Deadlock.

The Administration is also concerned that developers will exert undue control over the site-specific trusts they create to manage the remaining habitat, and have proposed taking a controlling stake in each trust. However, since Government will not commit assets to the trusts, this proposal is, unsurprisingly, opposed by the developers. Deadlock.

As a result the Nature Conservation Policy stands on the brink. Our most threatened and important biodiversity enjoys no more legal protection than it did prior to the creation of the policy, and less than 1% of the total area is being managed to enhance its ecological value. In fact everything that has been achieved could equally have been done without the Policy - even the funding for the management agreements came from the existing Environment & Conservation Fund!

A solution based on the example of the National Trusts?

However, all may not be lost. The Nature Conservation Policy raised the possibility of creating a single conservation trust that would replace the individual site-specific trusts, Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden has been working to develop a trust for Hong Kong based on global best practice - that of the National Trust for England and Wales (NT).

The concept has four major benefits:

1. It provides a secure legal entity to hold and manage the "crown jewels" of Hong Kong's natural heritage.
2. Developer influence would be diluted if a single trust held a number of properties under an independent and respected board of directors.
3. A single trust offers economies of scale and avoids duplication (multiple boards, managers, overheads etc.) that would be unavoidable in multiple smaller trusts.
4. An independent "national" trust would facilitate raising funds from the public.

In order for these benefits to be fully realised, five core characteristics are essential. These are based on the structure of the National Trust, and many other trusts worldwide.

1. **The ability to hold and manage ecologically or culturally valuable land in perpetuity for the benefit of the community.** Managing land that is not owned by the trust carries the risk that the landowner may decide to use his land differently, and the benefit of many years of protection and ecological management could be lost immediately.
2. **Independence from the Administration, developers, and other vested interests.**

This would remove the Administration's concerns about the independence of the site-specific trusts. Independence from Government protects the Trust and sites from the diverse and conflicting interests the Government is duty bound to address. In the past the environment has generally come off second best where other interests are taken into account. It also frees the trust to raise money from the public.

3. **The Trust should be established by legislation.** This would give it a much more solid legal footing than either family-controlled foundations or the environmental NGOs. A strong legal framework is essential since the trust will hold both land and substantial financial assets. It is essential for a Government bureau to carry such legislation through LegCo and ExCo.
4. **The Trust should participate in advocacy and education for natural heritage.**

It is only logical that building awareness of the objectives of the Trust, should be a key responsibility of any body that holds assets on behalf of the community.

5. **The Trust should be a membership-based organisation** This is a critical link in connecting the Trust with the general public, who would play a role in electing the Board and thus have some degree of influence in the activities of the Trust. Members are also important fund-raisers in many countries.

Could it work?

A criticism often levelled at ideas from overseas is that they do not take Hong Kong's unique circumstances into account. However an examination of some of the key issues gives a strong case for optimism.

1. The Legal Framework

In this case Hong Kong's uniqueness - its English law-based legal system - provides a distinct advantage. Our town planning law, land law, companies law, and charities law were all derived from Westminster, which means that drafting a legal framework based on the NT example is straightforward. It is true that in the UK land ownership is generally freehold, while in Hong Kong all land is leased from the Government, but legal experts suggest that this presents few problems for establishing such a trust.

In Hong Kong, the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden Corporation Ordinance (under which Kadoorie Farm was established) provides a clear precedent for creating a legal entity for similar purposes to those of the Trust. Elsewhere, the successful establishment and operation of numerous trusts worldwide also bears witness to the potential for a successful outcome.

2. Where would the money come from?

There is a widely held misconception that if you leave nature alone it will take care of itself. In the case of the forests that have re-grown to cloak the hills of Hong Kong's country parks, "leave and let grow" has worked fine. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the wetlands that comprise many of the twelve sites. Left

alone, wetlands become forests. This is not beneficial for wetland-dependent species such as the endemic Hong Kong Paradise Fish, or the dragonflies of Sha Lo Tung that the Nature Conservation Policy was intended to protect. In short, wetlands require management, and management requires money. Money that Hong Kong's environmental NGOs simply do not have.

In the UK, the NT refuses to accept new properties unless they also receive the funding necessary for their upkeep. A calculation - the Chorley Formula - is used to determine the appropriate sum. In the UK sources of funding range from a tax on gravel extraction, directly allocated Government budget, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and raising funds from the public as donations or bequests, all of which could be drawn on to meet the terms of the endowment.

In Hong Kong several developers have expressed interest in funding the trust, and private bodies have also expressed interest in donating to a fully independent Trust.

Regrettably the Administration currently offers few channels for funding natural heritage. This is somewhat frustrating, given the resources available. It has been suggested that a percentage of the Capital Works Reserve Fund (which carries a float of about HK\$30 billion, and disburses a similar annual budget) could be allocated. This seems fitting, considering that this Fund is generally used to pay for the public infrastructure that has caused such a huge negative impact on Hong Kong's environment. It would also greatly improve the overall sustainability of the Fund.

An Idea Whose Time has Come?

It is not unreasonable to conclude that the stimulus for a Nature Conservation Policy rose principally from community demands to protect Hong Kong's natural heritage. This continues through a strong and growing consensus among stakeholders that support the Conservation Trust concept. These include the Heung Yee Kuk, environmental NGOs, developers, LegCo and those parts of the Administration responsible for protection of our environment.

However, the principal obstruction remains the fear of what it might cost the Administration to support the Trust, and the fear of who would carry the responsibility if the Trust were to fail.

It is hoped that an increasing understanding of the legal framework, governance and core principles of long-established, respected institutions such as the National Trusts will serve to alleviate some of these fears, and pave the way to securing Hong Kong's natural heritage through the creation of a Conservation Trust for Hong Kong.

Note: this article first appeared in print in the March 2007 issue of Britain in Hong Kong. It was prepared by Mike Kilburn in his position as Public Policy Analyst for Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden.





1

- 何樂怡 Pippin Ho

鷹鵲 Large Hawk Cuckoo



2

- 國仔 Kwok Jai



3

- 楊加強 Swing



四聲杜鵑
Indian Cuckoo

4

- 謝鑑超 Wallace



— 深藍 Owen Chiang



— Allen Chan

八聲杜鵑
Plaintive Cuckoo



紅翅鳳頭鵙 Chestnut-winged Cuckoo

Cuckoos 1

- John Holmes

The centre-page photo spread is of some of our "true" cuckoos. Many are passage migrants but some remain to breed here.

Cuckoos deposit their eggs in the nests of other birds, leaving the work of raising the young to the host species. It appears that cuckoos habitually parasitize the same host species, for example

Plaintive Cuckoo parasitizes Common Tailorbird
Red-winged Crested Cuckoo parasitizes Greater-necklaced Laughingthrush
Indian Cuckoo parasitizes Black Drongo

Cuckoos feed entirely on insects, with a preference for caterpillars. With their loud, distinctive calls they are far more often heard than seen. Herklots (1954) noted that the call of Indian Cuckoo (usually April and May) had become part of Cantonese folklore, interpreted as the young wife's lament "Ko poh da ngoh!" - "My mother-in-law beats me!". He also noted that among expats the same call was heard as "One more bottle!"

The call of Large Hawk Cuckoo has been noted getting earlier, as early as March 4th in Hong Kong in the last couple of years. (see HKBWS website <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=1779&highlight=cuckoo>)

A similar trend with the Common Cuckoo in Europe has been blamed on "Global Warming".

1

Species : Large Hawk Cuckoo Adult
Photographer : Pippen Ho
Location : Kam Tin
Date : 27/4/2007
Equipment detail : DSLR Camera, 500mm f4 lens + 2x teleconverter, 1/100s, f/8, ISO 400, -0.67 ev

2

Species : Large Hawk Cuckoo Juvenile
Photographer : Kwok Jai
Location : On Po Chun
Date : 15/8/2006
Equipment detail : DSLR Camera, 400mm f5.6 lens, 1/500s, ISO 320

3

Species : Indian Cuckoo (flying) Adult
Photographer : Swing
Location : Po Toi
Date : 25/4/2007
Equipment detail : DSLR Camera, 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 lens, 1/3200s, f/5.6, ISO 800

4

Species : Indian Cuckoo Juvenile
Photographer : Wallace
Location : Mai Po
Date : 2/9/2006
Equipment detail : DSLR Camera, 300mm f4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter, 1/60s, f/7.1, ISO 400

5

Species : Plaintive Cuckoo Adult male
Photographer : Owen Chiang
Location : Po Toi
Date : 7/4/2007
Equipment detail : DSLR Camera, 600mm lens, 1/500s, f/5.6, ISO 800

6

Species : Plaintive Cuckoo Juvenile
Photographer : Allen Chan
Location : Long Valley
Date : 20/10/2006
Equipment detail : DSLR Camera, 400mm lens, 1/250s, f/5.6, ISO 800

7

Species : Chestnut-winged Cuckoo Adult
Photographer : Felix Ng
Location : Mai Po
Date : 9/4/2007
Equipment detail : DSLR Camera, 500mm f4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter, 1/640s, f/5.6, ISO 400

Photo: Henry Lui





Reed planting in *gei wai* 8

After the de-silting work in the reedbeds in front of the Tower Hide (*gei wai* 8) last Autumn, the reeds in the newly de-silted area are now growing back slowly. As a result, the water level in the *gei wai* will be lowered in March so that reeds can be replanted back into the pond.

The de-silting work was necessary because over the years, silt had built up on the floor of the reedbed so that it was getting higher and the reedbed was becoming invaded by unwanted plants.

Further information about the project can be found in previous issues of the Bulletin.

Update on the new Boardwalk extension and Floating Hide

Permission for building the boardwalk extension and new floating hide have almost all been obtained from the Hong Kong Government and we have started ordering the materials for the work. If everything goes to plan, we will start the works this summer and have the new facilities finished by the October, before the arrival of the coming winter's waterbirds.

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 (young@wwf.org.hk).

50th Anniversary

Mr F J Walker 202
The New Tower Palace Hotel
Tower Road
Sliema GLM 12
Malta

28 Nov 2006

Mr Charles de Sa
The Chairman
The Hong Kong Wetland Society Ltd
c/o New World Centre

Dear Sir,

I was interested to see the obituary in *Guardian* 2001. Written by John Hutton, with reference to the founding of the Hong Kong Wetland Society in 1987.

It was in fact a discussion between Mr Arthur St George Walker and myself that brought the Society into being. Arthur and I discussed the basic aims of the Society, a letter was drafted and signed by Arthur's first wife, and the resultant letter was circulated by Arthur St G Walker on the island of Hong Kong, which I undertook to deliver the letter to known interested bird watchers in London and the Alder Territories. Dick Bird, Bob Jaeger, Sidney Sergeant, Toby Woods, Roland de Montagu are a few names that come to mind over the

decades.

With a satisfactory response, an inaugural General Meeting was called in the British Council Offices, and a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Arthur St George Walker. I attended the meeting, but could not participate further in the Society's activities due to the re-orientation of my job and a half year tour of duty in PNG, Sudan and Kuwait.

There were no formal or written constitutions (other than written notes taken) and the Society flourished under Dr St G Walker's leadership. The result of the labours of many ornithologists and bird watchers was the premier ornithological society in the Far East, admired there and the ornithological world.

Please pass on my warm regards and congratulations to a magnificent Society.

I am, yours sincerely

F. J. Walker
Father J Walker

Letter from Mr. Frank Walker

Mr F J Walker
Malta
28 Nov 2006

Mr. Cheung Ho Fai
The Chairman
The Hong Kong Birdwatching Society Ltd
GPO Box 12460, Hong Kong



Dear Sir,

I was interested to note the observations in Bulletin 200, Editorial by John Holmes, with reference to the founding of the Hong Kong Birdwatching Society in 1957.

It was in fact a discussion between Mr. Arthur St George Walton and myself that brought the Society into being. Arthur and I discussed the broad aims of the Society, a letter was drafted and typed by Arthur's first wife, and the resultant letter was circulated by Arthur St G. Walton on the island of Hong Kong, whilst I undertook to deliver the letter to known interested bird watchers in Kowloon and the New Territories. Dicky Bird, Rev Jansen, Jeremy Sergeant, Toby Woods, Roland de Monssaye are a few names that come to mind over the decades.

With a satisfactory response, an inaugural General Meeting was called in the British Council Offices, and a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Arthur St George Walton. I attended the meeting, but could not participate further in the societies activities due to the termination of my two and a half year tour of duty at Ping Shan and Mount Davis.

There were no funds or written constitution (Clive Viney wrote them much later) and the Society thrived under A. St G. Walton's leadership. The result of the labours of many ornithologists and bird watches was the premier ornithological society in the Far East, admired thro out the Ornithological World.

Please pass on my warm regards and congratulations on a magnificent Society.

I am, yours sincerely,
Frank J Walker

Notes on *Frank Walker*

- by CY Lam

Known as Sergeant F.J. Walker in old HKBWS records, Frank is the first Honorary Life Member of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. He was an active field observer and was a founding member of the Society. He worked for the Royal Air Force while in Hong Kong.

One thing of historical interest is that he produced the first Hong Kong check-list of birds immediately after the formation of the Society in 1957. It was done before he left Hong Kong in October 1957 and the list was issued in typewritten form in early 1958. This was the forerunner of the annotated check-lists which the Society produced in later years.

When the Society celebrated its 10th anniversary, he contributed an article on the early days of the Society, which appeared in the "Hong Kong Bird Report 1968". It is really nice to hear from him again after so many years, telling us the story of the formation of the Society half a century ago.

Starting letter - Jun. 1957

2
June, 1957.

Dear

There has been for some time a growing need for the formation of a competent ornithological society in the Colony of Hong Kong.

Some of the functions which such a society might be able to perform are tabulated below:-

- (a) To facilitate and encourage the study of the birds of Hong Kong.
- (b) To provide information and assistance to all persons, either visitors to the Colony or residents, who are interested in birds.
- (c) To assist in the enforcement of the law relating to the protection of birds. (The Wild Birds and Wild Mammals Protection Ordinance, No. 8 of 1954.)
- (d) To correlate and publish from time to time the field records of all bird watchers in the Colony.
- (e) To publish an up-to-date check list of the birds of Hong Kong. (It is known that many birds not described in Dr. Herklots's 'Hong Kong Birds' have been seen by various bird watchers in the last few years.)
- (f) To form a small lending library of books on birds.
- (g) To exchange information among members and with ornithological societies in other countries.

If you are interested in the formation of such a society, would you please fill in the attached form and send it to one of the following:-

Mr. A. St. G. Walton,
403B, Severn Road, The Peak, Hong Kong.

Lieut. J. H. Sergeant,
Officers' Mess, H.Q. 48th Brigade,
Sek Kong. B.F.P.O.I.

Sergeant Walker, F.J.
Royal Air Force, Sek Kong.
B.F.P.O.I.

Yours faithfully,

Inaugural meeting minutes - 7th Aug. 1957

MINUTES of a meeting held in the British Council Reading Room at 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 7th August, 1957, to consider the formation of an Ornithological Society.

The following were presents:-

- Cpl. D. Ballard.
- Cpl. F.W.Beaney.
- Lt.Col.C.B.Bennett.
- Mrs. C.B.Bennett.
- Tpr. P.R.Donkin.
- Sig. G.Guest.
- Mr. Ip Wing Hong.
- Rev.E.G.Jansen.
- Lt.J.H.Sergeant.
- Sgt. F.J.Walker.
- Mr.A.St.G.Walton - (in the Chair)
- Mrs.A.St.G.Walton.
- Cdr.E.D.Webb, R.N.(retd.)
- Sgt.E.Woodhams.
- Capt.I.Young.

1. The Chairman informed those present that the Chairman of the Biological Circle had suggested that the proposed Ornithological Society should be a section of the Biological Circle rather than a separate Society. After this proposal had been considered and discussed it was unanimously agreed that there would be a better chance of success if a separate Society were formed.

Name of the Society.

2. Two names were suggested:-

- (a) The Hong Kong Ornithological Society.
- (b) The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society.

After some discussion, the matter was put to the vote and the great majority were in favour of the name "The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society".

Objects.

3. It was agreed unanimously that the objects of the Society should be as set out in the letter circulated before the meeting, as follows:-

- (a) To facilitate and encourage the study of the birds of Hong Kong.
- (b) To provide information and assistance to all persons, either visitors to the Colony or residents, who are interested in birds.
- (c) To assist in the enforcement of the law relating to the protection of birds. (The Wild Birds and Wild Mammals Protection Ordinance, No.8 of 1954).
- (d) To correlate and publish from time to time the field records of all bird watchers in the Colony.
- (e) To publish an up-to-date check list of the birds of Hong Kong.
- (f) To form a small lending library of books on birds.
- (g) To exchange information among members and with ornithological societies in other countries.

Inaugural meeting minutes - 7th Aug. 1957

-2-



Election of Officers

The following were elected unanimously:-

- Chairman - Mr. A.St.G.Walton.
- Secretary - Lt.J.H.Bergeant.
- Treasurer - Sgt. E. Woodhams.

It was agreed that these officers should co-opt two other members to form a committee.

Constitution

The question of a constitution for the Society was discussed and the following points decided:-

- (a) That the Committee should consist of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and two other members.
- (b) That the annual general meeting should be held in November each year at which the Committee for the following year would be elected.

Subscription

It was suggested that the subscription should be \$10 a year. Some of those present were in favour also of an entrance fee of \$10. After some discussion it was agreed that the matter should be decided at the first annual general meeting in November.

Registration

The Chairman stated that the Society could not be properly constituted until it had been registered with the Registrar of Societies under the Societies' Ordinance. He would arrange for this to be done.

Future Activities

It was suggested:-

- (a) that information bulletins or pamphlets should be circulated to members, perhaps every 2 months. These might mention interesting birds seen by members in the previous two months and birds to look out for in the following two months. They might also include hints on how to recognise particular birds or how to distinguish between similar species of the same family.
- (b) that an important part of the Society's activities should be to assist the beginner in bird recognition. In addition to the bulletins and pamphlets which might be issued, this could probably best be done if informal walks were arranged by the more experienced members. As the weather was still rather too hot for all day walks in the New Territories, Sgt.Walker agreed to take members on short evening walks on the Island.

First annual general meeting minutes

THE HONG KONG BIRD-WATCHING SOCIETY

Minutes of the First Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 13th November at 5.45 p.m.

1. The following were present:-

Mr. A. StG. Walton (Chairman)
Lt. M.C.N. Bird
Mr. R.H. Hughes
Cdr. J.N. Humphreys, R.N.
The Rev. E.G. Jansen
Mr. H.J. Pearce

Lt. J.H. Sergeant (Secretary)
Mrs. A. StG. Walton
Cdr. E.D. Webb, R.N. ret'd.
Sgt. E. Woodhams
Capt. I.W. Young

2. Election of Treasurer and Committee Members

Cdr. Webb was unanimously elected Hon. Treasurer and an ex officio member of the Committee. The following were elected as additional members of the Committee:-

Miss M. Benham
Cdr. J.N. Humphreys

The Rev. E.G. Jansen
Capt. I.W. Young

3. Election of Honorary Life Member

It was also unanimously agreed that Sgt. P.J. Walker should be elected as an Honorary Life Member of the Society.

4. Subscriptions

It was unanimously agreed that the subscription should be \$10 a year, payable annually on 15th November for the succeeding 12 months. Anyone joining after the 15th day would pay \$5 for the period ending on 15th November in the same year.

5. Check List of the Birds of Hong Kong

The Chairman circulated to members a List compiled by Sgt. Walker of all species of birds believed to have been seen in Hong Kong. It was agreed that the Committee should find out the cost of printing or stencilling this list for distribution to members.

6. Wild Birds and Wild Game Protection Ordinance

The Chairman agreed to prepare some notes on this Ordinance for distribution to members.

7. Committee Meetings

It was agreed that a Committee meeting should be held on Wednesday, 11th December at 5.30 p.m. in the Chairman's office.

Members who have not yet paid their subscriptions are requested to send \$10 to the Hon. Treasurer, Cdr. E.D. Webb, Government House Flat, Hong Kong.

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

November 06

Without doubt the highlight of the month was the discovery of two Lesser White-fronted Geese at the managed KCRC ponds at Lok Ma Chau on 6th (YHK). The two remained in the Deep Bay area until at least the end of January, favouring Lok Ma Chau and occasionally visiting Mai Po. A Pallas's Reed Bunting, the second of the autumn, was present at Lok Ma Chau on 7th-8th.

The first week of November also featured a fine series of sightings from Po Toi in the form of a Brown Booby, an Imperial Eagle, a Bull-headed Shrike and a Brambling (GW). In what turned out to be an exceptional autumn and winter for Bull-headed Shrikes, further individuals were found in this month at Mai Po on 1st-2nd, Ng Tung Chai on 22nd-23rd and Fung Yuen (two) on 30th (JA, GT, GHO), and there were further Brambling sightings at Mai Po on 14th and Po Toi again during 26th-29th.

The Sulphur-breasted Warbler found at Tai Po Kau at the end of October continued to be reported, as were the White-throated Fantail and up to five Lesser Shortwings at Ng Tung Chai (EMSK) and the Lesser Tree Duck at Mai Po.

Elsewhere, an Oriental Scops Owl was found at Cloudy Hill on 1st (GT) and a flock of 33 Black-crowned Night Herons turned up at Cheung Chau, a very rare record from the island (MDW).

Reports in mid-month included a Daurian Jackdaw and Black-winged Kite at Mai Po (BS, PA) and a Water

Rail, a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler and a Rustic Bunting, all at Long Valley.

On 20th, a Ruddy Sparrow was found at Ma Tso Lung and the next day two Eurasian Siskins were present at Po Toi, where the Orange-breasted Pigeon continued to be intermittently sighted (GW).

In the final week of the month, a male Fujian Niltava was sighted at Ng Tung Chai and a Spectacled Warbler, tentatively identified as Plain-tailed, was briefly seen at Tai Po Kau (MT).

December 06

This was a very good month, with a first record of the *korejewski* taxon of Water Rail (a potential split), sightings of a Smew, a White-bellied Green Pigeon and two woodpeckers, record numbers of Tufted Ducks and Silky Starlings, and an influx of thrushes.

The *korejewski* Water Rail was found on the edge of a reedbed at Mai Po on 2nd (JA) and then seen up to 9th. It's a poorly-known taxon in East China with a small number of old records. La Touche, who called it the "Turkestan Water Rail", listed records from Shanghai, the Yangtze Valley and the coast of Fujian. Photos of the Mai Po bird have been posted on the HKBWS web-site together with a discussion of identification features separating it from *indicus*, the much commoner taxon of Water Rail in East China.

The first week also brought reports of the Lesser Tree Duck, a Eurasian Sparrowhawk, a Ruddy Crake, a Carrion Crow and the Daurian Jackdaw at Mai Po, the two Lesser

White-fronted Geese at Lok Ma Chau, a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler at Nam Sang Wai (EMSK), a Bull-headed Shrike at High Island Reservoir (CC), a Bay Woodpecker at Tai Po Kau and two Red-breasted Mergansers in the East Lamma Channel (GW). A visit to the Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 3rd turned up eight Asian Stubtails, three Mountain Tailorbirds, a Two-barred Greenish Warbler and no fewer than nine Grey-headed Flycatchers (DAD).

In the second week of the month, up to two Mountain Bulbuls were noted at Ng Tung Chai and Tai Po Kau and 366 Black-faced Spoonbills were present at Mai Po, the highest ever count. Yet another Bull-headed Shrike was found on 10th, this time in the orchard at Tai Po Kau where it remained throughout the month and into January.

In the week leading up to Christmas, the Speckled Piculet first found at Ng Tung Chai back in September reappeared, and a Japanese Robin and Siberian Thrush were also seen there (EMSK). The monthly waterbird count revealed a big increase in Tufted Duck numbers, with at least 3000 present in Deep Bay and a Ferruginous Duck was found at Mai Po. During an influx of thrushes which occurred at this time, Grey-backed and Japanese were commoner than usual, Pale was fairly widespread in small numbers, a few Eyebrowed were reported and there were Dusky Thrushes at Kam Tin and Sek Kong.

On days with a high tide in late afternoon or early evening, many thousands of ducks and Avocets came on to the Mai Po marshes to roost, attracting eagles and harriers whose relentless attacks put up huge



flocks, providing a wonderful spectacle. One memorable picture on the HKBWS website shows a juvenile Imperial Eagle pursuing one of the two over-wintering Lesser White-fronted Geese. Fortunately, the goose got away.

Birds found on 24th included a Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher at Po Toi (GW) and a Smew, only the second for Hong Kong, at Mai Po (CHF). In the course of the day, the latter moved from the scrape to Pond 20. There was no sign of it the next day, and Imperial Eagles were suspected of being involved in its sudden disappearance.

In late afternoon on 25th, a total of 11,260 Silky Starlings flew past Pond 20 (GJC), eclipsing the previous peak count by a factor of three or four.

The month ended with the discovery of a female White-bellied Green Pigeon at Airfield Road, Sek Kong (FC) from where it was regularly reported over the next ten days. Though elusive at times, it kept returning to the same grove to feed in a shrub, identified as *Bridelia tomentosa* (K&RB), which was fruiting copiously.

January 07

Most of the key birds noted in the previous month remained into this month - the White-bellied Green Pigeon at Airfield Road, Sek Kong (up to 7th), the two Lesser White-fronted Geese, the Lesser Tree Duck, Ferruginous Duck and Carrion Crow at Lok Ma Chau and Mai Po, the Speckled Piculet at Ng Tung Chai and the Bay Woodpecker at Tai Po Kau. Thrushes continued to be common and widespread, and large

flocks of ducks and Avocets were again swirling over the Mai Po marshes whilst eagles and harriers hunted.

These apart, highlights of the first week of the month were an Eastern Water Rail (i.e. of the usual taxon *indicus*) and a Ruddy Crane at Long Valley from 1st, a Eurasian Siskin at Airfield Road, Sek Kong and a Dusky Thrush at Pak Sha O, both also on 1st, a Common Rosefinch at Ng Tung Chai on 4th, a mystery flycatcher photographed at Kadoorie FBG on 5th and a Bull-headed Shrike at Hok Tau on 7th, the seventh in an unprecedented series since late October.

A mystery thrush photographed at Sai Kung on 9th (AH) created considerable interest, but the bird was eventually identified as a washed out first-winter Pale Thrush (MRL). On 10th, an Ancient Murrelet was seen near Po Toi (GW).

Two small passerines were noted on unusual dates - a Yellow-rumped Flycatcher at Mai Po during 10th-13th (KL) and a Radde's Warbler at Ng Tung Chai on 13th, whilst a Hainan Blue Flycatcher at Cheung Chau on 14th was a rare report from that island (MDW).

Amongst reports in mid-month were a Baikal Teal at Mai Po, five Falcated Duck at Tsim Bei Tsui (peak count of a once fairly numerous winter visitor), a Himalayan Swiftlet at the Mai Po access road (KJ), two Ruddy Crakes at Long Valley, an Orange-headed Thrush at Clearwater Bay (CW) and a Temminck's Cormorant (only the second HK record) at Po Toi (GW). Also seen at Po Toi in mid-month were a Spotted Eagle, a Common

Moorhen, the Orange-breasted Green Pigeon again and a Common Rosefinch (GW).

In addition to their respective woodpeckers, Tai Po Kau and Ng Tung Chai hosted a fine array of woodland birds throughout the month including White-bellied Rock Thrush and Mrs Gould's Sunbird at the former (P&MW, MRL) and Chestnut-crowned Warbler, dull "Blyth's Leaf Warbler-type", Sulphur-breasted Warbler, Two-barred Greenish Warbler, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher and the over-wintering White-throated Fantail at the latter (EMSK et al).

In the second half of the month, the tree-lined drainage channel and adjacent farmland at Airfield Road attracted a wide variety of thrushes including a Dusky and a Brown-headed.

A pair of full-winged and shy Mandarin Ducks at Kam Tin from 20th (JA) seemed likely to be wild until photographs showed plastic rings around the drake's leg.

As the month drew to its end, thrushes were still unusually common and widespread. A visit to Dong Ping Chau on 28th produced a list of 33 Grey-backed, 10 Pale, seven Japanese, two White's, four Chinese Blackbirds and 50 unidentified thrushes (JA), and an Orange-headed Thrush was present at Mui Wo on the same day (PA). Red-flanked Bluetails, however, were found only in small numbers.

On 30th, another Ruddy Crane was found, this time at Sha Po.

HKBWS Coming Activities

Date / Time	Activity / Details	Leader	Difficulty
4 Aug (Sat) 08:00 - 13:00	Shing Mun Country Park ** 08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Hang Seng Bank	Bill Man Wong Shui Chi	★★
5 Aug (Sun) 08:00 - 13:00	Tai Mo Shan 08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Station Hang Seng Bank		★★★
22 Aug (Wed) 19:00 - 20:30	Monthly Gathering - China & Oversea Bird Watching Trip Reports Room 1101, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Rd, Kowloon HK\$10 member, HK\$30 non-member		
1 Sep (Sat) 08:00 - 13:00	Nam Sun Wai ** 08:00 Hang Heung Cake Shop	Wong Lai Yee Chan Chi Keung	★★
6 Oct (Sat) 08:00 - 13:00	Aberdeen Reservoir ** 08:00 Central MTR Exit B Hang Seng Bank	Wong Chiu Shu Ho Pak Sum	★★
3 Nov (Sat) 08:00 - 13:00	Tsim Bei Tsui ** 08:00 Tin Shui Wai ,Tin Chak Estate Shopping Centre	Chen Chi Po Ng Yan Nar	★★
1 Dec (Sat) 08:00 - 13:00	Tai Sun Wai ** 08:00 Hang Heung Cake Shop	Law Sam Mui Tang Wing Shing	★★

**Crested Bulbul Club's Activities



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>).

▶▶▶ 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.

Code of Conduct for Birdwatching and Bird Photography

The objective of HKBWS is to promote the study, appreciation and conservation of birds in Hong Kong. In addition, the Society also facilitates the exchange of experience and information related to birdwatching. In recent years, more and more people in Hong Kong become interested in birdwatching and bird photography. Since birds are sensitive to disturbance, special care is required to avoid bringing disturbance to their lives. In order to provide a model for good practices in birdwatching and bird photography, the Society's Executive Committee has drawn up the following code. It is intended to be a reference and guide to both HKBWS members and the general public.

1. The Welfare of Birds Comes First

Birdwatching and bird photography should be carried out with minimum interference to the birds. Disturbance must be avoided as far as possible.

- Stop if the birds appear disturbed, begin to move away or exhibit other abnormal reaction
- Exercise additional precautions when the activity is undertaken with a large group of people
- Do not attempt to influence the behaviour of birds, e.g. by flushing, chasing or baiting
- Use flash only sparingly
- Do not damage the natural environment

2. Protect Sensitive Sites

Sites such as nests, seabird colonies and the roost of rarities are particularly vulnerable. Take extra care to minimize disturbance.

- Keep a suitable distance to avoid stressing the birds
- Do not land on islands with breeding colonies
- Do not disturb nests and their surrounding vegetation, or the nest could be abandoned or become exposed to predators
- Share information about the sites with discretion and do not reveal it casually in public. Explain clearly to those who may not understand the Code, to avoid bringing disturbance to the site
- Beware that your actions may attract unwanted attention and hence disturbance to the site

3. Report Disturbances

If you find people disturbing or causing harm to birds, advise against the act when it is safe to do so. If they cannot be stopped, take photos and report to the AFCD as soon as possible. Post a report at the Society's online Forum.

4. Respect Others

- Share the fun - avoid disturbing other birdwatchers or photographers on site.
- Take care not to damage facilities or crops at the site.



彩羽飛揚－香港野生雀鳥攝影大賽
Colours on Wings -
Hong Kong Wild Birds Photo Contest 2006

◀ 學生高級組冠軍

作品名稱：伯勞頌夏

作者：柯嘉敏

鳥種：棕背伯勞

Senior Student Group Champion

Title: The Shrike's summer song

Author: Carmen Or

Species: Long-tailed Shrike

▼ 學生初級組冠軍

作品名稱：威風凜凜的小麻雀

作者：李蔚璋

鳥種：樹麻雀

Junior Student Group Champion

Author: Lee Wai Shan

Species: Eurasian Tree Sparrow





彩羽飛揚—香港野生禽鳥攝影大賽
公開組亞軍 作品名稱：出擊 / 作者：李錫泉 / 鳥種：大白鵞

Colours on Wings - Hong Kong Wild Birds Photo Contest 2006
Open Group 1st Runner-up Title: Thundering attack / Author: Lam Hoi Fai / Species: Great Egyptian