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229

Autumn 2013 ~ 秋





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The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

Bulletin **229**

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Editor's Note

Birdlife International's World Congress took place in Canada this summer. Regional work on Black-faced Spoonbill was recognized with a "Conservation Achievement Award". Congratulations are due to the Mai Po Management Committee, WWF HK, and everyone else involved in local conservation and monitoring of Black-faced Spoonbill.

Congratulations, also, to the Crested Bulbul Club on their Tenth Anniversary.



John Holmes

Society News and Projects

Members

Affairs

2013 Membership Renewal

Membership stood at around 1865 as at early September, including 296 new members who joined us in 2013. Membership renewal under the new membership criteria is in progress. Renewal letters will be posted about two months before your membership expiry date.

Senior Conservation Officer

After a ten month search, we have appointed Ms. Jocelyn Ho to be in charge of our conservation efforts. She joins us in early October as our Senior Conservation Officer. There is much work to be done in this important field, and your continued support is vital.

We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to Mr. C Y Lam who has donated HK\$100,000 to the Society to support the continuation of this specialist role.

2013 Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at 7pm on Wednesday, 23 October, 2013 at the Hall, Basement, Breakthrough Centre, 191 -197 Woo Sung Street, Jordan, Kowloon. All members are welcome.

15th Elementary Bird Watching Course for Beginners

Since spring 2006 when the 1st course was launched, over 500 birders have been trained and equipped with basic knowledge in birding. The 15th course will commence in mid-November and limited spaces are available. Please download registration from our Discussion Forum

"Welcome to the Birds" - Mai Po Outing on October 20, 2013

In order to increase public awareness of migratory birds, their habitats and conservation, BirdLife International has created a worldwide campaign of "Welcome to the Birds". The Society has organized a "Welcome to the Birds" Mai Po Outing on 20 October, 2013 in support of this campaign. For details and registration on a first-come-first-served basis, please refer to the outing schedule elsewhere in this bulletin and the HKBWS website.

Society News and Projects ~ (cont.)

55th Anniversary Souvenirs and Sales Items ~ On Sale

55th Anniversary Souvenirs and Sales Items have proved very popular. In order to clear the very last stock, further discounts are now offered.

Item	Color	Size	Original Price (Member/Non Mem) HK\$	Discounted Price (Member/Non Mem) HK\$
Swinhoe's Egret Polo Shirt	Grey	S/M/L	\$100 / \$125	\$80 / \$100
55th Anniversary Logo Windbreaker	Grey	M / L	\$200 / \$250	\$180 / \$225
Swinhoe's Egret Embroidered Towel	Brown	---	\$20 / \$25	\$16 / \$20
Red-whiskered Bulbul Umbrella	Green	---	\$50 / \$60	\$40 / \$48
Others :				
HKBWS "Birds & People in harmony; Nature Forever" First Day Cover	---	---	\$200 / \$250	\$150 / \$200

10th Anniversary of The Crested Bulbul Club

In 2003, a group of well-trained senior citizens became leading birders, promoting this beautiful aspect of Hong Kong to their peer group. In the years that followed, the Crested Bulbul Club became a core element of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society for promoting birding. Various activities organized by the Crested Bulbul Club have lead thousands of citizens to learn more about birding. It has not been an easy job, but with enthusiasm, hard work and good "people skills", the Club has become a leading advertisement for the HKBWS. We thank CBC members for their love of the birds of Hong Kong, and hope that they may continue for many years in the future. Please also see the CBC 10th Anniversary brochure and the article posted in our website forum by our Honorary President, Lam Chiu Ying.



1st International Borneo Bird Race

The first International Borneo Bird Race was held between May 31 and June 9 in the jungles of Brunei and Sabah. Ms. Helen Fong, Ms. Bonnie Chan and Mr. Johnson Chung joined as The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Team. They wished to learn from the race and draw inspiration for birding activities nearer home.

The Bird Race was co-organized by the Sandakan Borneo Bird Club, the Sabah Tourism Board and Brunei Tourism. It was aimed at promoting eco-tourism in Borneo, raising public awareness of nature conservation and strengthening the network among bird clubs and societies in Asia. There were twenty-four participants in eight teams from seven regions, together with more than twenty support staff. The teams competed at four birding sites in two countries. Prizes were awarded to the best three teams in the race, as well as the winners of the Brunei Leg and the Sabah Leg.



Borneo Bird Race @ Brunei

The Bird Race was very meaningful to Brunei where bird watching is only at its early development stage. The tourism board intends to establish bird watching as a focus of eco-tourism in Brunei through the international bird race, which was also a key section of the first Brunei Darussalam Nature Festival. The Brunei Leg was conducted at the lowland rainforests at Tasek Merimbun (ASEAN Heritage Park) and Ulu Temburong National Park. The Birds Taiwan Team won the Brunei Leg with 81 species recorded.

Borneo Bird Race @ Sabah, Malaysia

The Sabah leg was conducted at the montane forest of Kinabalu Park and the lowland rainforest of the Rainforest Discovery Centre in Sepilok where there are sophisticated eco-tourist facilities. Various types of habitat and bird species enriched the birding experience. The Wild Bird Club of the Philippines won the Sabah Leg and also became the champion of the Borneo Bird Race with 148 species recorded in the two countries.



Visiting the Bird Festival and Conservation Projects

Apart from the exciting Bird Race, team members have visited the first Brunei Darussalam Nature Festival as well as the Borneo Bird Festival 2013. As a result, team members learned more about ecology, eco-tourism and conservation work in the two countries. The organizers also arranged visits to the Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre and the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (not open to public yet) in Sandakan. Both the Orangutan and Sun Bear are seriously affected by habitat loss. Establishment of education centres can increase public understanding of the two species and their conservation needs.

Behind the Scenes

It was a great experience for the team to visit the third largest island in the world, and to observe more than a hundred species in various habitats during a bird race. The Bird Race was a fine initiative to strengthen the links among different bird clubs and conservation organizations in Asia. In the same way, a regional bird race in Hong Kong could really showcase the beauty of nature and birds here to overseas nature lovers and bird watchers.

2012-2015 Nature Conservation Management for Long Valley

Rainfall this year has been especially high. In July, the schedule of paddy rice harvest was affected by the continuous unstable weather. Due to lack of manpower and harvesting stoppage during sudden thunderstorms, the harvest was much reduced. Moreover, some of the grain, whether harvested or not, germinated due to the humid weather. Despite these practical difficulties, the second round of paddy rice planting was finished in August. In the process, the project team and volunteers discovered some of the difficulties that farmers face all the time.

This autumn (Sep-Nov), the annual “Big Bunting” competition will restart, with the total number of Long Valley bunting species to be tallied. At the same time, there is sad news that Yellow-breasted Bunting is going to up-listed from IUCN’s Vulnerable to Endangered status. Therefore, we are going to hold a “Look for Rice Bird” activity on 2nd and 3rd November to survey the number of Yellow-breasted Buntings in Hong Kong (mainly North and North West New Territories). This activity also echoes the “Welcome to the birds” campaign held by BirdLife International. For more details, please visit the HKBWS BBS: <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/BBS/forumdisplay.php?fid=38&page=1>



Rice grains germinated on the stalk



Yellow-breasted Bunting - uplisted to Endangered.
©Allen Chan

Hong Kong Fishpond Conservation Scheme

The second round of Fishpond Eco-tour Guide Training started in this hot summer. 41 volunteers were trained in aspects of bird watching, interpretation skills, fishery history, fishpond operation, and so on. Fishpond areas in the NW NT were visited. Trainees are required to provide guided tours to the general public starting from September to promote the conservation importance of fishponds and birds.



A handicraft-selling programme was started in July and handcraft products have been collected. More details are available on the HKBWS website forum. Please feel free to contact our staff Ms. Helen Fong or Ms. Walkman Wong if you need further information.

Society News and Projects ~ (cont.)

News from

China Programme

The 2013 BirdLife International World Congress in Ottawa, Canada

The 2013 BirdLife World Congress was held between 19th and 22nd June in Ottawa, Canada. As Partner Designate of BirdLife International, our society had Yu Yat Tung representing us and Vivian Fu represented the joint China Programme to participate in this big event, which is held every 4 to 5 years. Over 500 partners, conservationists, politicians and business people from more than 120 countries took part.



HH Princess Takamado, Honorary President of BirdLife International, visited our booth during the Partnership Fair of the World Congress. (Credit: Vivian Fu)

This year, the congress theme was "Partnerships for Nature & People" and the new 2020 conservation strategy was launched. BirdLife International also presented the new logo, positioning itself as "The Global Partnership for Nature and People". The 2013 BirdLife International World Congress also marked two major anniversaries: the 90th anniversary of the organization from which BirdLife evolved, and the 20th anniversary of the BirdLife Partnership.

Some highlights of the World Congress were from Hong Kong and mainland China. BirdLife's Global Council picked a consortium of government and municipal agencies in Taiwan as well as the Mai Po Management Committee (Hong Kong) and WWF Hong Kong to receive Conservation Achievement Awards for their work in conserving Black-faced Spoonbill. During the congress, a 12-year-old girl from Fujian Bird Watching Society, Tina Lin, who attended our education workshops in Fuzhou two years ago, amazed everybody by her speech sharing her experiences of bird watching and how she helps in conservation. In addition, an animated short film coordinated by HKBWS's China Programme which involved 500 children from 8 countries to help promote the conservation of Spoon-billed Sandpiper had its world premiere showed during the congress with lots of positive feedback received.



Tina Lin, the 12-year-old girl from Fujian Bird Watching Society, giving a speech during the plenary session of the World Congress. (Credit: Simba Chan).

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Restoration Project of Chinese Crested Tern breeding colony in Zhejiang Province - update

The first year of the restoration project of Chinese Crested Tern was broadly successful. Over 2600 Greater Crested Terns and up to 19 Chinese Crested Terns were attracted to the project site. Some late-season breeding has taken place, but is not identified to species yet.

The restoration work of Chinese Crested Tern started soon after the workshop held earlier in March. The preparation work was done in May when Dr. Don Lyons and Stefanie Collar, experts from Oregon State University, came to help setting up the audio playback system and decoys on the project islet of Jiushan Islands, Zhejiang (See Bulletin 228 – Ed.). Stefanie even stayed on the island for more than one month to help monitor the project site. However, for the first two months, there were only a few sightings of Greater Crested Tern, with eight terns as the highest single count which just stayed for only a half-day.

On 17th July, Prof. Dan Roby from Oregon State University, Simba Chan from BirdLife International, researchers from Zhejiang Wild Bird Society, staff of Jiushan Islands National Nature Reserve and Vivian Fu went to visit the project site. We found that the audio

playback system had broken down. To our surprise, two Greater Crested Terns flew above us just one to two minutes after we repaired the audio playback device again.

Between 20th and 22nd July, we attended a meeting on Chinese Crested Tern conservation in Matsuo, Taiwan, the other breeding site of Chinese Crested Tern, rediscovered in 2000. The meeting was held by Lianjiang County Government and organized by the Wild Bird Society of Taipei. During the meeting, we shared information of tern monitoring and discussed ways to improve information exchange between Matsuo, Minjiang Estuary and Zhejiang. On the last day of the meeting, we received good news from Jiushan that more Crested Terns had come to the project site.

We decided to visit the project site again on the following day. At least 1000 Greater Crested Terns and 5 Chinese Crested Terns were found roosting on the islet. Monitoring went on until all terns left the project site. This result marks the first successful case of restoration of a seabird in mainland China.



Crested Terns attracted to the project islet, Jiushan Islands National Nature Reserve, Zhejiang. (Credit: Ding Pang)

Mai Po Update

~ John Allcock

Mixed fortunes for breeding wetland birds at Mai Po

The breeding Black-winged Stilts have been a popular attraction over the summer at Mai Po since they first bred on the reserve in 2003. Numbers have been slowly increasing over the years and we thought the population was well established. So it came as a surprise that no birds remained to breed in Deep Bay in 2013, despite some promising signs of nest building in the spring. I'm not really sure about the reason for this; possible reasons include disturbance from dogs (which led to nest abandonment in 2012) or Black Kites (which have bred nearby and were hunting over the scrape in April/May), or the fact that this spring was unusually wet. We hope that the birds will return in future years.

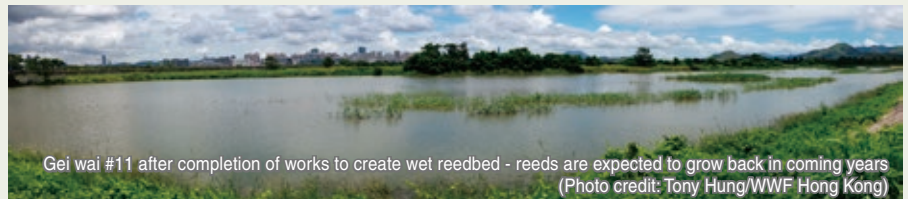
Despite the lack of breeding stilts, we have had some success with breeding birds this summer, with a confirmed nest of Purple Herons on the reserve. Although breeding has previously been suspected, this is the first time this species has been confirmed breeding in Hong Kong. The breeding pair have successfully raised three chicks in 2013. Although up to six birds have been regularly seen over the summer, news has been kept quiet to avoid any disturbance which could lead to failure of the breeding attempt. Hopefully the birds will return next year and, with luck, will be joined by others to establish a population.



Three Purple Heron juveniles after leaving the nest (Photo credit: Neil Fifer)

Enhancement works in Gei wai #11

Purple Herons are one of the species that benefit from the provision of large areas of wet reedbed, in fact the wet reedbed at Gei wai #8b may be one factor that has encouraged them to stay this year. In Bulletin



Gei wai #11 after completion of works to create wet reedbed - reeds are expected to grow back in coming years (Photo credit: Tony Hung/WWF Hong Kong)

227, I reported on the work that WWF was carrying out this summer for reedbed enhancement in Gei wai #11. This work has been completed ahead of schedule during July 2013. Although we had some setbacks to the work (particularly because of a number of hidden bunds in the area we wanted to lower), we have still managed to lower the floor in an area of around 2.3ha. Reeds should rapidly recolonize this area to create a large wet reedbed, which we hope will attract, among others, Purple Herons, Eurasian and Yellow Bitterns, crakes, rails and a diversity of migrant passerines. This reedbed restoration work was funded by WWF's annual Big Bird Race (BBR).

While we have been carrying out this work at the seaward end, we have also tried to remove some of the vegetation encroaching into the roosting area at the landward end of the gei wai, which is popular with godwits, curlews and spoonbills. This work should reduce the spread of vegetation into this roosting area in the long-term, although there may be a short-term increase in grasses after the prolonged drain-down of the gei wai (which we hope will be under control by this winter).

Hide shutter safety measures

It is a priority for us at Mai Po to ensure the safety of visitors. During a recent review of site safety, it was highlighted that the shutters on the hides may pose a risk if these were to drop rapidly and trap visitors' fingers. In response, we have decided to undertake measures to reduce this risk. An initial trial of measures to improve safety has already been implemented in the Tower Hide and will be extended to other hides in the near future. Shutters are being replaced with a lighter material to reduce weight, hinges are being replaced and stoppers are provided at the sides of the shutter to slow the shutter from slamming shut. We would welcome any comments that visitors to the reserve may have about this new shutter design and other safety considerations around the reserve (please send any comments to me at jallcock@wwf.org.hk).



My Bird Watching Diary

~ Text and Illustrations: Wendy Yu


Black Baza (*Aviceda leuphotes*)

1st September 2012

Black Baza has a unique aspect and the crest adds a dash of personality.

The wings comprise an attractive blend of black, white and brown.

When I first saw one at Nanling (Guangdong Province), I was excited.

The darker tone is more difficult to reproduce than the lighter plumage tones, where I needed more color to depict the layers. At the same time, I needed to maintain the feeling of lightness of the plumage. 



藍翅希鵲
房遠榮
大埔滘

Blue-winged Minla
Fong Yuen Wing
Tai Po Kau

5/5/2013
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens





白腹鳳鵒
蘇志偉
大埔滘

White-bellied Erpornis
So Chi Wai
Tai Po Kau

13/12/2012
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter

紅嘴相思鳥
Vivian Cheung
大埔滘

Red-billed Leiothrix
Vivian Cheung
Tai Po Kau

22/12/2012
DSLR Camera, 400mm f/5.6 lens



灰眶雀鵲
李啓康
大埔滘

Grey-cheeked Fulvetta
oLDcaR Lee
Tai Po Kau

17/2/2013
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



A Tropical Rainforest within a Concrete Jungle

~ Samson So

Does the term “Four Asian Tigers” ring a bell? With phenomenal economic growth in the 1970’s, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore established themselves as key players in the Asia Pacific region. Although the term “Four Asian Tigers” has faded out in recent years, these regions remain in the minds of nature lovers as having their own special interest – apart from their outstanding economic and urban development.

Amongst the Four Tigers, the Republic of Singapore is smallest in area. Since its independence in 1965, Singapore has been reclaiming land, but to this day the total area only stands at 700 square kilometres, smaller than Hong Kong by about one third. In the 1980s and 1990s, varieties of “Singapore-Malaysia-Thailand Crossing Tours” were extremely popular with HK tourists. In those days, Singapore was often just a quick transit with a few sightseeing stops. Even people who stayed in Singapore for longer due to work rarely ventured out of the built-up areas.

Mangrove and tourist facilities at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve



A graveyard, overgrown, quiet and a home to wild animals

Birding Anecdotes

Over the years, I have made working visits to Singapore many times with the aim of studying the local ecology. Singapore and Hong Kong are similar in having mangroves, forest and large urban parks, and in both places the city and countryside are close together. The major difference is, being closer to the equator, Singapore has a year-round tropical climate and some well-preserved primary forest.



Pink-necked Green Pigeons resting on a tree



Black-naped Oriole



Long-tailed Nightjar seen at night in the woods



Olive-backed Sunbird

Inside the forest, I have felt so small and insignificant surrounded by vast trees such as camphor, common elaeocarpus, and banyan. Around their canopies, movement of birds can be detected. Some species look familiar yet are distinctly different to ours: Straw-headed Bulbul, Pink-necked Green Pigeon, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, and various species of barbets and woodpeckers. Brightly-coloured kingfishers and sunbirds complete the picture. Every call, every shimmer from the flick of feathers, every feeding movement contributes to the rhythm of the primary tropical forest.


Pausing from looking above and listening carefully, the mangrove and intertidal mudflats present spectacles such as Giant Mudskippers as big as thirty centimetres and Water Monitors measuring over a meter, recalling a prehistoric world. Tropical insects and reptiles in the forest and streams serve as displays of the richness in tropical regions of a complex food chain and a wealth of biodiversity. Clambering through thick buttress roots and trunks in Singapore's tropical mangrove areas like this has always heightened my admiration for early explorers and ecologists.



Common Flameback

Years of urban development have destroyed much of Singapore's primary environment. Luckily, though surrounded on all sides by concrete, there still remain areas such as big catchments around reservoirs, primary forests conserved within national parks, and wetland reserves within mangrove areas.

For people who wish to watch tropical birds and animals in South-east Asia, but who are not ready to venture deep into the primal forest for a longer journey, Singapore is a good place to start. I have always managed to get a peek of the tropical forest in the shadows of the bustling city. I have never carried any heavy camera equipment on those trips because my work required only observation records of species. This focused effort allowed me to see many different animals, both diurnal and nocturnal.

At the end of each trip, I have sat silently on the plane and looked down on the patchwork of forest, mangrove and urban sprawl, hoping that the animals which have had their roots here since before civilization will continue to survive, living reminders of the unbroken tropical forests that once covered the tip of the Malay Peninsula. 



Lesser Whistling-duck



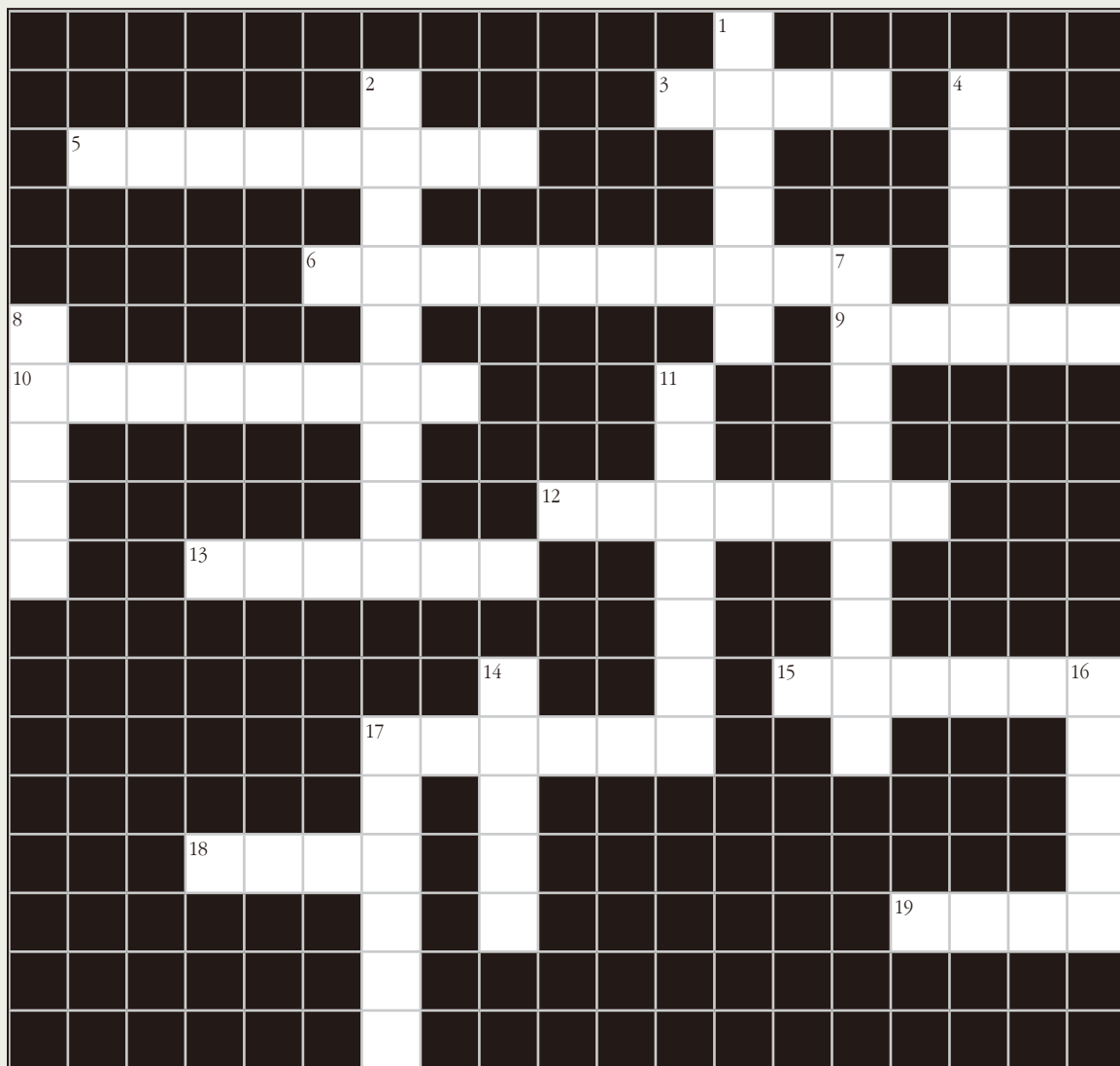
Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker



Observing in the woods

Cryptic Birdwords No. 1

~ Norm de Plume



Across

3. done just for fun
5. Communist beginning
6. cowardly limbs
9. sounds like Greek bread
10. timber rooster
12. hung up for US election campaigns
13. found in Swiss timepieces
15. admires 16th letter of the alphabet
17. wager made in a pub
18. person who is easily fooled
19. lake, famous with classical dancers

Down

1. a German hunter
2. aqueous rooster
4. you need two to walk tall
7. utensil check
8. speedy bird
11. diminutive animal doctor
14. building-site lifter
16. Batman's sidekick
17. sounds like two male cows

~ Richard Lewthwaite

*(This is an unofficial account of the seasonal highlights.
Observers are still encouraged to submit formal records of their sightings – Ed.)*

April

- ▶ Especially in the first 10-15 days, this was a good month for flycatchers, Pale-legged/Kamchatka Leaf Warblers, Buntings and Bramblings, but no major rarities were found.
- ▶ With rainy conditions prevailing in the first ten days of the month, a good variety of landbirds were found at offshore islands and other sites. Po Toi attracted eight species of flycatcher in the first week alone (**Asian Brown, Ferruginous, Narcissus, Mugimaki, Red-breasted, Blue-and-white, Hainan Blue** and **Japanese Paradise**) and also up to 18 **Grey-faced Buzzards**, a **Northern Boobook**, record numbers of **Bramblings** with a peak of eight on 2nd, and six species of bunting, including up to three **Yellow-throated** on 1st-3rd and one Rustic on 9th (GW, PW, MK et al).
- ▶ Many of the above flycatcher species were at Dong Ping Chau on 6th and in the Fan Lau area of southwest Lantau on 7th, with singing **Pale-legged Leaf Warblers** noted on both days (JAA). Other notable birds found on these visits included three **Oriental Dollarbirds**, the first of the year, two **Black-naped Monarchs** and four species of thrush (**Brown-headed, Pale, Eyebrowed** and **Japanese**) at Dong Ping Chau and a Northern Boobook, two Siberian Blue Robins and a **Brambling** in the Fan Lau area (JAA).

Cheung Chau also hosted a variety of flycatchers, warblers and buntings during this period, including a **Japanese Yellow Bunting** on 10th and up to four **Pale-legged/Kamchatka Leaf Warblers** between 6th and 10th (MDW).
- ▶ Away from the islands, various flycatchers were reported from Tai Po Kau and Shing Mun at this time (KPK, SLT), the rarest being a **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** at Tai Po Kau on 6th (KPK). Spring flocks of bulbuls were again noted at Tai Po Kau Headland, including 130 **Black Bulbuls** on 2nd (RB) and there were reports of a **Grey Nightjar** at Hok Tau on 6th (HKBWS), a **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo** still at Pak Sha O on 6th (GJC) and a **Northern Boobook** at Kwun Tong on 8th (KC). Landbirds found in the Deep Bay area included two **Yellow-browed Buntings** and five **Bramblings** at Mai Po on 3rd (JAA) and a **Chestnut-eared Bunting** at Long Valley on 7th (HKBWS).
- ▶ Flycatchers continued to be widespread until about 15th, after which passage of landbirds generally became very light, an exception being on 23rd when reports included 40 **Chinese Sparrowhawks**, four **Grey-faced Buzzards**, two **Northern Boobooks**, three **Ferruginous Flycatchers** and four **Arctic Warblers** at Po Toi (GW), nine **Chinese Sparrowhawks** and 12 **Hair-crested Drongos** at Lamma (JS), a **Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo** at Lung Fu Shan (LH) and 30 **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters** and a **Pechora Pipit** at Mai Po (JAA).



▶ Following a **Grey-streaked Flycatcher** at Mai Po on 12th (JAA), the first of the spring, notable reports of landbirds from 11th to the end of the month included four **Pale-legged/Kamchatka Leaf Warblers** at Cheung Chau on 12th, a **Brambling** there on 13th (MDW), a rather tatty-looking **White-bellied Green Pigeon** near Sha Tin railway station on 14th (LH), a **Daurian Starling** at Sha Tin the next day (LH), one or two **Rustic Buntings** at Po Toi from 15th to 20th (WD, GW), the latest ever in spring, a female **Green-backed/Ryukyu Flycatcher** at Po Toi on 16th (GW), a male **Black-headed Bunting** at Ho Man Tin (web) the same day, one or two **Japanese Yellow Buntings** beside the Mai Po access road (CYT) and at Lut Chau (MH) on 16th and 19th, two **Black Bazas** at Ho Chung on 21st (MT), a **Himalayan Swiftlet** at Long Valley on 26th (DAD), three **Eurasian Hobbies** there the next day (KJ) and a late **Two-barred Warbler** at Mai Po also on 27th (MDW).

▶ Mai Po and the Deep Bay area were well covered throughout the month, but shorebird numbers were overall rather low (YYT), except for **Black-tailed Godwits** which occurred in record numbers, with 2400 on 4th (RWL). **Gull-billed Terns** also came through in record numbers, with 939 counted on 19th (RWL). **Spoon-billed Sandpipers** were noted in front of the Mai Po boardwalk as follows: one on 9th (CT), two on 10th (YYT), two on 12th (YYT, MH), one on 14th (PW, MK) and one on 18th (YHK). Among other notable reports of waterbirds at Mai Po NR or the Mai Po boardwalk were up to three **Little Stints** between 1st and 23rd (YYT), 22 **Nordmann's Greenshank** on 1st and 4th (RWL), a **Eurasian Oystercatcher** on 5th (JAA), only the fifth record for Hong Kong, up to three **Oriental Plovers** from 7th to 15th (HKBWS), one or two **Little Curlews** on 11th, 17th and 23rd (AB, JAA), 157 **Bar-tailed Godwits** on 12th (YHK), thought to be a record spring count, and a summer-plumaged **Long-billed Dowitcher**, the only one of the spring, on 30th (RWL). In addition, there were reports of single **Swinhoe's Egrets** at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6th (HKBWS) and Mai Po on 15th (KB, RB), an **Eastern Water Rail** at Mai Po on 7th (HKBWS) and an adult-summer **Brown-headed Gull** on 21st and 23rd (PW, MK, YYT). The only notable shorebird reported away from Deep Bay was an **Oriental Plover** at Pui O, Lantau on 13th-14th (KJ, MDW).

▶ In a desperately poor month for seawatching, there were sightings of a **Streaked Shearwater**, a **Greater Crested Tern** and an **Ancient Murrelet** off Po Toi on 4th (GW), three **Short-tailed Shearwaters** off Po Toi on 23rd (GW) and one **Short-tailed Shearwater** near Sha Chau on 24th (KJ).

May

▶ The month featured two unusual weather events. An intense late surge of the northeast monsoon on 2nd brought temperatures down to 16.7 C, the lowest in May since 1917, whilst torrential rain and intense thunderstorms caused the Black Rainstorm Warning to be issued on 22nd. For birdwatchers, it was very much a month of two halves, the first half being full of interest and possibility, and the second half pretty dead.

▶ The highlight of the month for many was a pair of **Cotton Pygmy Geese** at Mai Po on 12th (KL), the first ever spring record of this rarity.



▶ The month opened strongly with a very late **Yellow-browed Bunting** at Long Valley (JL), three **White-throated Needletails** at Tai O (EMSK), a **Black Baza** at Mai Po (DAD) and 26 **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters** at Pak Tam Chung (CC), all on 1st, a **Northern Boobook**, a female **Green-backed/Ryukyu Flycatcher**, 46 **Brown Shrikes** and 25 **Pechora Pipits** at Po Toi on 2nd and 4th (GW, PW, MK), 61 **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters** at Mai Po on 3rd (PW, MK), a record spring count, and a **Black Baza**, 13 **Chinese Sparrowhawks**, a late **Swinhoe's Minivet**, 12 **Arctic Warblers** and 44 **Grey-streaked Flycatchers**, one of the highest counts on record, in the Tai O-Fan Lau area of southwest Lantau on 4th (EMSK). The same day brought reports of two **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoos** at Hok Tau (DT) and 20 **Chinese Sparrowhawks** at Mai Po (WWF).

▶ Reports from 5th to 12th included a **Malayan Night Heron** at Pui O on 5th and 9th (EMSK), a **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**, seven **White-throated Needletails** and a **Two-barred Warbler** at Mai Po on 6th (WWF), the latter passing the previous latest spring date, a **Von Schrenck's Bittern** at Long Valley the same day (IT), two **Japanese Sparrowhawks** at Pui O on 9th (EMSK), the latest ever in spring, two **Baillon's Crakes** at Mai Po on 10th (JAA) and a **Chestnut-eared Bunting** there on 10th and 12th (JAA), also the latest ever spring dates. A **Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo** heard calling at Lam Tsuen on 10th (DT) is the first report of this species vocalising in Hong Kong. It was subsequently heard there until at least 16th.

▶ A **Japanese Leaf Warbler** at Mai Po on 13th (JAA), potentially only the third confirmed record, was followed by a **Pallas's Leaf Warbler** at Po Toi the next day (HL), the latest ever in spring, and a **Two-barred Warbler** at Cheung Chau on 15th (MDW), also a latest ever spring date. The only significant report at the end of the month concerned a **Himalayan Swiftlet** at Mai Po on 31st (DAD).

▶ **Greater Painted Snipe** again bred successfully at Mai Po and one or two **Oriental Pratincoles** were occasionally noted there throughout the month, including a juvenile on 17th (web), though this was not necessarily locally bred. For unknown reasons, **Black-winged Stilts** did not lay eggs this year and temporarily departed the reserve (JAA). Larger shorebird counts at Mai Po included 73 **Asian Dowitchers** on 4th, 180 **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** on 9th, 115 **Greater Sand Plovers**, 216 **Terek Sandpipers** and 174 **Grey-tailed Tattlers** on 21st (WWF).

▶ Seawatching efforts off Po Toi (GW) confirmed that it was a poor spring, the best birds being a **Short-tailed Shearwater** on 8th, 250 **Aleutian/Common Terns** on 14th and four **Short-tailed Shearwaters**, a **Parasitic Jaeger**, seven **Greater Crested**, 20 **Aleutian** and 50 **White-winged Terns** on 15th. Potentially breeding terns were likewise found in only moderate numbers (up to 70 **Bridled** and 50 **Black-naped**) during boat trips to southern waters on 4th and 12th (HKBWS).




June

▶ In a very quiet month, except for a **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo** at Lam Tsuen on 13th and 20th (DT), all reports of note were from Mai Po (WWF HK), namely five **Black-faced Spoonbills** and a **Little Tern** on 4th, 13 **Red-billed Starlings** on 6th, five **Gull-billed** and four **Caspian Terns** on 10th, a **Garganey**, two **Tufted Duck** and six **Purple Herons** on 11th, the latter possibly a record summer count, 170 **Eastern Cattle Egrets** on 19th, two **Western Ospreys** on 20th and 90 **White-cheeked Starlings**, a record summer count, on 28th.

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours Oct 2013 - Mar 2014

Outings

Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
5/10/2013 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Nam Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 V Cuisine Restaurant, Exit G2, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	☆☆	Waterbirds
6/10/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Long Valley (08:00 Pavilion beside public toilet at Yin Kong Village)	☆☆	Farmland and water birds
13/10/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (Ferry pier to Po Toi Island)) Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, so participants may decide their own returning time.	☆☆	Migrants
20/10/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve ("Welcome to the Birds" MP Outing) (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road / F Exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	☆☆	Waterbirds
2/11/2013 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tai Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Bus stop in front of Café de Coral near Hang Heung Cake Shop, Yuen Long)	☆☆	Waterbirds
3/11/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road / F Exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	☆☆	Waterbirds
10/11/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (Ferry pier to Po Toi Island)) Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, participants can decide their own returning time.	☆☆	Migrants
17/11/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆☆	Forest birds
24/11/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on 22 Nov on Discussion Forum)		
7/12/2013 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tsim Bei Tsui (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tin Chak Estate Shopping Centre, Exit near Tin Yat Light Rail Station, Tin Shui Wai)	☆☆	Waterbirds
14/12/2013 (Sat)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on 12 Dec on Discussion Forum)		
22/12/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Pui O (08:00 Exit B, Tung Chung MTR Station)	☆☆	Wintering forest & farmland birds
29/12/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆☆	Forest birds
1/1/2014 (Wed)	0800 - 1200	Long Valley (08:00 Pavilion beside public toilet at Yin Kong Village)	☆☆	Farmland birds & waterbirds

 Member: Free of Charge
 Member: Free of Charge
 Member: HK\$60 (Student Member: HK\$30)

Non-member: Free of Charge
 Non-member: HK\$30 (HK\$10 for age under 19 student)
 Non-member: HK\$120

(registration not required)
 (registration not required)
 (registration required)

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours Oct 2013 - Mar 2014

Outings

Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
4/1/2014 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tsim Bei Tsui (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tin Chak Estate Shopping Centre Exit, near Tin Yat Light Rail Station, Tin Shui Wai)	☆☆	Waterbirds
12/1/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (Mai Po Marshes Area Only) (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	☆☆	Waterbirds
19/1/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆☆	Forest birds
26/1/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shek Kong (08:00 Exit C, Kam Sheung Road West Rail Station)	☆☆	Forest & farmland birds
1/2/2014 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Nam Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 V Cuisine Restaurant, Exit G2, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	☆☆	Waterbirds
3/2/2014 (Mon)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road Exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	☆☆	Waterbirds
16/2/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shing Mun (08:00 Kiosk at Pineapple Dam, Shing Mun Reservoir)	☆☆	Forest birds
23/2/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Nam Chung and Luk Keng (08:00 Pavilion at junction of Nam Chung Rd & Luk Keng Rd)	☆☆	Forest birds
1/3/2014 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tai Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Bus Stop outside Café de Coral near Hang Heung Cake Shop, Yuen Long)	☆☆	Waterbirds
9/3/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆☆	Forest birds
16/3/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (Ferry Pier to Po Toi Island)) Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, participants can decide their own returning time.	☆☆	Migrants
22-23/3/2014 (Sat-Sun)	24 hrs	Records-Hong Kong Bird Watching Competition 2013 (Details will be announced later)		
30/3/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	☆☆	Waterbirds

Member: Free of Charge
 Member: Free of Charge
 Member: HK\$60 (Student Member: HK\$30)

Non-member: Free of Charge
 Non-member: HK\$30 (HK\$10 for age under 19 student)
 Non-member: HK\$120

(registration not required)
 (registration not required)
 (registration required)

Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Outing Booking Slip

Mai Po Outing Fee	Meeting Point at Mai Po	Meeting Point at Kowloon Tong
Member	HK\$30-	HK\$60-
Student Member	HK\$15-	HK\$30-
Non-Member	HK\$120-	

Participants below age of 12yrs will not be accepted for Mai Po Outing visiting floating boardwalks.

According to the requirement of the Hong Kong Police and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, participants entering Mai Po should provide their full name and Hong Kong ID Number (passport number for oversea visitors) that day in order to access to the Frontier Closed Area and Mai Po Marshes.

**** We will confirm participants whether their application is accepted or not about 5 days before the outing. Once confirmed, no refund will be made no matter they can attend the outing or not. Refund will be made only if the outing is cancelled officially due to inclement weather or special reason.**

I would like to register the following HKBWS outings:

Information of Participant(s)

Date	Outing	Name (First one will be considered contact person)	Membership No.	Mobile Phone	Outing Fee*	Mai Po Outing Meeting Place Kln Tong MTR or MP

* Activity payment are processed individually, please use separate cheques for different outings.

Enclosed please find a Cheque of HK\$_____ Contact person's email : _____

(Payable to The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society)

Applicant : _____ Date : _____ Signature : _____

Please send this slip together with a crossed cheque to: 7C, V Ga Building, 532 Castle Peak Road, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon

Notes :

- HKBWS members have a high priority to join four weeks before the activity. Thereafter, registration will be made on first come first serve basis.
- Any changes of the activities will be announced in our website: (<http://www.hkbws.org.hk/BBS>).
- Arrangement during bad weather: When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No.3 or above or Rainstorm Warnings Red or Black are hoisted by the Hong Kong Observatory at 7:00 am on the event day, the activity will be cancelled. If Thunderstorm Warning is announced during the activity, Team Leader will decide if the activity should be continued or cancelled. You can call the team leader at 9457 3196 during the event day if you have any query about the weather.

Disclaimer

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society ("the HKBWS") assumes no responsibility, liability or obligations, whether financial or otherwise, for losses, injuries, death, damages, whether to the person or property, arising or occurring in the course or as a result from the activities, outings or training courses ("the Activities") organized by the HKBWS. Persons who participate in the Activities must ensure that they are medically fit to do so. If in doubt, they should consult qualified medical practitioners before participating. Participants are recommended to purchase relevant insurance for their own protection. By participating in the Activities, the participants impliedly agree that they will not hold the HKBWS, its Executive Committee members, other committee members, its officers, employees, volunteers, agents or subcontractors responsible or liable for any losses, injuries, death damages arising or occurring in the course or as a result from the Activities.

黑喉噪鵲
陳建綱
大埔滘

Black-throated Laughingthrush
Frankie Chan
Tai Po Kau

24/3/2013
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens



畫眉
陳土飛
大埔滘

Chinese Hwamei
Thomas Chan
Tai Po Kau

6/3/2013
DSLR Camera, 350mm lens + 1.4x teleconverter +
1.4x teleconverter



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