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230

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Editorial note

This issue has an item by Mike Kilburn about birding Okinawa, a destination that seems exotic, but isn't really so far away. Mike didn't have many photos, but fortunately, Abdel Bizid - on a different trip - was more successful with his camera.

Another year has flown by, with four more bulletins, made memorable by our many and varied contributors, both writers and photographers. Many Thanks to you all again. 

John Holmes

Society News and Projects

Members

Affairs

The Eleventh Annual General Meeting 2013

The 11th AGM was held in the evening of 23 October at the Breakthrough Centre. A total of 49 members attended.



2013 AGM



Let's vote !



Our staff



Snapshots

Society News and Projects ~ (cont.)

2014 Membership Renewal

Membership stood at around 2002 in early December, including 369 new members who joined us between Nov 2012 and Oct 2013. Membership renewal under the new membership criteria is in progress. Renewal letters will be posted about two months before membership expiry dates.

2014 Membership Card

New membership cards for 2014 will feature images of Mugimaki flycatchers. This new card was sent to all "5-year" members at the end of November. Many thanks to the following volunteers for their design work and photos:

Designer: Puk Yuk Yin

Photo & photographers:

Mugimaki flycatcher (Male) : L-Mike

Mugimaki flycatcher (Female) : Thomas Chan

HKBWS Little Little Bird Race ~ Hong Kong Island



Our first mini bird race, the "Little Little Bird Race" was held on 15th September. 6 teams participated. "B.B.Bird" won overall champion and team winner with their score of 40 species. The individual winner was Apache Lau, our Chairman, who recorded 31 species. Similar mini bird races will be organized in the future to provide different bird race options.



15th Elementary Bird Watching Course for Beginners

The 15th course was completed in mid December. The 36 participants were taught basic birding skills.

2013 Outing Leader Training Program



*Leaders-to-be
observing forest birds
in the rain*

The first leader training program was held between September and December. The ten trainees will undergo more practical training on different types of bird watching activities in the next few months.

Crested Bulbul Club

Early Morning Bird Watchers

No. of participants in Hong Kong Park
from Mar to Oct 2013: 634

No. of participants in Kowloon Park
from Mar to Oct 2013: 854

Bird watching interpretation in Hong Kong Wetland Park

A total of 106 participants
from Mar to Apr 2013.

Bird watching services and activities

Nov 2012 – Mar 2013
over 140 elderly from 6 elderly centres
join the bird watching talks and tour
free of charge during this period

16 & 30 Mar 2013
providing bird watching guided tour
to the HK Museum of Coastal Defence



2012-2015

Nature Conservation Management for Long Valley



The 4th Long Valley Eco-guide Training Course was completed in mid-November. Altogether 33 eco-guides were trained and passed the assessment. They are going to bring students and the general public to Long Valley and pass on the message of wetland ecology and conservation.



Hong Kong Fishpond Conservation Scheme

Handicrafts tailor-made by around 20 artisans are being displayed and sold in our office including animal key chains, bird phone straps, felted wool decorations, bird photo frames and tote bags. Each handmade item is unique. Part of the income will also return to this project for conservation purposes. A series of products have also been designed by bird-loving volunteers for this project. Please visit our office or the website for more details.

Another important item of this project is to set up an Education Kiosk in Nam Sang Wai to promote fishpond and wetland conservation. We have set up exhibition boards, fishing equipment, photos, telescope and mini games next to Mr. Fok's fishpond. You are welcome to visit.



Society News and Projects ~ (cont.)

Historic Images of the Deep Bay Area

The society would like to thank Field Marshal Sir John Chapple for his contribution to this appeal, including the two images reproduced below, a 1954 watercolour by Keith MacDougall of the view from Lok Ma Chau observation post, and a 1959 photo of the British Army's Norwegian Farm Camp, San Tin, and surrounding countryside. The camp later became Cassino Lines and is now occupied by the PLA as Tam Mei Camp.

Pictures and photos are still welcome.



Society News and Projects ~ (cont.)



Conservation News

Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

The Hong Kong Government has started to formulate a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/conservation/con_bsap/con_bsap.html) as part of the global Convention on Biodiversity (www.cbd.int). The BSAP being developed should systematically identify existing government policies and practices for the conservation of biodiversity in Hong Kong, and identify any additional work needed to be undertaken in accordance with the Strategic Plan. The Society will actively participate in four focus groups: the Status and Trend Red List focus group to update the conservation statuses on birds, the Marine Habitat focus group for important areas for seabirds, the Terrestrial Impact Assessment focus group so that impacts on birds will be assessed properly and the Terrestrial Habitat focus group for managing important bird habitats.

Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area Planning

The Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area Planning and Engineering Study continued with its second stage of community engagement proposing major land uses within its boundary. HKBWS voiced concerns about the San Sang San Tsuen Egretty. Although the egretty has been zoned as Green Belt, the surrounding housing developments could bring great disturbances to these ardeids.

Save Our Country Parks

HKBWS has joined the "Save Our Country Parks" campaign, an alliance made up of over 20 environmental non-profit organizations in the hope of protecting the Country Park enclaves in Hong Kong. Suggestions to increase the size of the Conservation Area and reduce the size of the village zone in the draft Outline Zoning Plans for Hoi Ha, Pak Lap and So Lo Pun have been made, but ultimately these enclaves, especially those in secluded locations like Pak Lap and So Lo Pun should be incorporated into the surrounding Country Parks.

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BirdLife International signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China Ornithological Society (COS)

On 8th November, 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by BirdLife's Chief Executive Dr. Marco Lambertini, and Professor Liu Naifa, President of the China Ornithological Society (COS) during the opening ceremony of the 12th Congress of the COS, which was convened in Hangzhou City, Zhejiang. The ceremony was witnessed by 500 ornithologists and representatives of bird watching organizations, including HKBWS chairman Apache Lau. The signing of the MoU signifies that a new era of formal cooperation between BirdLife International and China has begun.



Professor Liu Naifa (left), president of the China Ornithological Society and Dr. Marco Lambertini (center), Chief Executive of BirdLife International signed the MoU at the 12th Congress of COS. Simba Chan is on the right.
(© Vivian Fu)

Conservation of Jankowski's Bunting

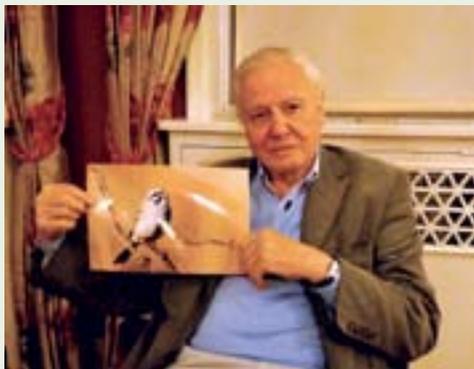
The year 2013 brought a new survey strategy for this species. Support for the survey came from many sources, including HKBWS, BirdLife International, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Oriental Bird Club (OBC), as well as the "Species Champion" of Jankowski's Bunting, the blog "Birding Beijing" (<http://birdingbeijing.com>).

During this breeding season the survey team led by Beijing Bird Watching Society recorded a total of at least 70 Jankowski's Buntings from six sites (three were previously unknown) in the Xing'an League area of Inner Mongolia. This is the largest count record by far in recent years.

To proceed with more effective conservation work for this critically endangered species, a second round-table meeting was held in Ulanhot, the capital city of Xing'an League on 1st November, with directors and senior officers of the League's government, forestry department as well as staffs from several nature reserves with records of Jankowski's Bunting. Evaluation of the previous work plan (See Bulletin 225 for details) was made and most of the goals found

to have been achieved. New tasks were discussed, including recording the locations of Siberian apricot habitat for future surveys, promotion work on the bunting during the Spring 2014 provincial "Love Bird Week". Training of nature reserve staff and volunteers in surveying techniques and education activities will also take place. We are optimistic that, with modest resources and the continued support of the local people, we can save this bird from extinction.

If you are interested to support this project, BirdLife International has set up a JustGiving page to encourage donations for conservation work on Jankowski's Bunting: <https://www.justgiving.com/Jankowskis-Bunting> 



Britain's best-known natural history film-maker, Sir David Attenborough also supports conservation of Jankowski's Bunting (© Terry Townshend)

Mai Po Update

~ John Allcock

► Enhancement of boardwalk to southern floating hide

One of the main projects at Mai Po during the course of this summer has been the enhancement of the boardwalk leading to the southernmost floating hide. You may remember that the old boardwalk was starting to rot as a result of periodic inundation during very high tides. The



"Boardwalk to southern floating hide after enhancement works in Summer 2013"
(Credit: John Allcock / WWF-Hong Kong)

boardwalk was also narrow, making it difficult to pass people coming the other way. Thanks to funding received during the annual Big Bird Race (BBR), we have been able to upgrade this facility. The new boardwalk follows the same route as the previous one but the design has been modified to match that of the other fixed boardwalks in the FCA mangroves. All wood used was from sustainable sources certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Although the boardwalk was closed to visitors for a prolonged period during the summer, this has now been reopened to the public. Thank you for your patience during the period of closure.

► Damage to floating hides from Typhoon Usagi

The close approach of Typhoon Usagi in September 2013 led to a very high storm surge in Deep Bay, coupled with strong westerly winds. This combination of factors caused all floating hides to break loose from their supports and to wash into their supporting posts, causing significant damage to all four hides. All hides were closed immediately after the typhoon while essential repairs were carried out for visitor safety, and to allow the hides to be floated back into position on the following high tides. This delayed the reopening of the southern floating hide (still closed after the summer works) by a further two weeks. We apologise for the inconvenience of hide closures such as this, and we shall also try to keep such closures to a minimum.

► Completion of enhancement works at Pond #9

I am pleased to report that the enhancement works in Pond #9 have finally been completed. You may remember that this work was originally scheduled for 2012 (reported in Bulletin 224) but was delayed due to a lack of resources. We were able to secure funding for this in 2013, and the work was completed in September. Visitors to the tower hide will notice that the pond is currently more open than previously, but we expect the reeds to grow back in the coming months so that there should be wet reedbed in much of the area by next summer. Hopefully this will start attracting reedbed birds in 2014.

► High counts of Collared Crow in 2013

Collared Crow is recognised by BirdLife International to be globally near-threatened. Hong Kong, and especially the Deep Bay area, seems to be a major stronghold for this species, which has declined in most of its range. The largest congregation in Hong Kong (possibly in the world) involves birds gathering to roost in the mangroves in the Frontier Closed Area at Mai Po. WWF Hong Kong has been carrying out counts of the number of birds in this roost for several years, and the number has been increasing. This summer has again been very good, with a further increase in numbers noted and a high count of 167 individuals in July 2013. This is the highest count on record in Hong Kong, and possibly the largest count in the world. This is great news for a species that seems to be in trouble elsewhere. 

Great Revelation from Lesser Flamingo

~ Photo/text Samson So

Lesser Flamingoes feeding



Through bird watching, we learn about the inter-relationships of different animals in our surroundings. And if we compare our observations from different seasons and periods, it will also enhance our awareness towards the changes in our environment.

Work brought me to Kenya, East Africa for the first time in 2001. One of the stops was at Lake Nakuru, Great Rift Valley, to conduct cooperative studies with local researchers on birds and the water quality there.



Lesser Flamingo flocks

At Lake Nakuru, work began before dawn and we drove to the observation site when it was still dark. Upon arrival, we got off the car and walked along the shore towards the lake. Out there against the cool twilight, we could clearly divide the lake into two areas: light and dark. And as it got brighter with sunrise, the lighter area began to show its true color: it was all pink. From where we stood looking as far as we could, the pink area was in fact made up of Lesser Flamingoes, thousands and thousands of them. The Lesser Flamingoes revealed themselves in various postures and movements, transforming the lake into a sea of pink feathers in front of our eyes. In the joy of their company, I saw a most boisterous sunrise. In the golden light of a new day, I witnessed a miracle of nature.

Big quantity is beautiful. Seeing tens of thousands wild animals gathering in harmony created a stunning visual impact at that moment, but what stayed with me was the awe that moved the heart. Xu Zimou (famous early 20th century Chinese poet) once wrote “Big quantity is Beauty”, I could totally relate to the emotion contained in that praiseful expression. Everything I saw and heard that day, and the excitement I felt at that moment, made Kenya a special place that I would remember even in my dreams. I could only take out the slides taken there and look at them at times when I started missing Kenya again.

In 2012, I went to Lake Nakuru three times that year as an instructor.

Both road and bird conditions were different from those in 2001, now cars can drive all the way along the shore of the lake and the distance between man and birds is almost at arm's length. Pelicans, wild ducks, herons, cormorants, storks, raptors and all kinds of waders can be seen nearby, but where are the Lesser Flamingoes? Is this the same place I visited back then? Did they build new roads?



Photo taking tourists

Seeing my concern, the local guide hastily pointed out that all these changes were due to the change in the lake's water level, a higher water level had brought changes to the shoreline. I couldn't tell how much change there had been in terms of landscape, but looking at the species of birds and their quantities, the environment had clearly changed: compared to 11 years before, there were fewer flamingos but more shore birds of other species. The uncharacteristic long rainy seasons might have caused the lake's water level to rise and heavy rainfall had created freshwater marshes which became favorable feeding grounds for many wetland birds. Lesser Flamingoes feed on algae that grow in alkaline water, following the change in water level and food supply, the Lesser Flamingoes also moved to other areas. Thanks to homework done before departure, our teams were able to find the pink miracle that I have been missing day and night for years.



Lesser flamingoes under the rainbow



Sea of flamingoes in Kenya's alkaline lake

I made three more trips with my trip participants to Lake Nakuru in 2013. With 2012's experience I paid more attention to the road condition and water level change. I went to the same location twice in two weeks, I noticed that the water level went up instead of down, but in some newly formed shallow water areas, scattered groups of Lesser Flamingoes were seen. In time, perhaps we may be able to see the stunning scene again in some areas. Nature has its own wonderful way of adjustment, what lies ahead for the ecological balance at Lake Nakuru is going to be a long term study that draws concern from ecologists and environmentalists.



Forest and land along Lake Nakuru drowned

Purely from the perspective of a bird watcher and photographer, the changes at Lake Nakuru brought about by the rising water level and change in water quality actually provided better opportunities for bird observation and photo taking. The change in water quality attracted some wading birds previously not seen here, and high water levels means that birds are feeding closer to shore; apart from the stunning flamingo sea, nothing seems to be missing. However, when I begin to analyze this condition from the angle of an ecologist and environmentalist, things became more complex than they appear to be. The change in quantity and species of birds is a reflection of change in climate, and the change is fast and dramatic.

Water level rises at the lakes of the Great Rift Valley represent a massive change in ecological environment, one of the reasons might be a drastic increase in rainfall. The term 'Global warming' is often used when discussing environmental changes. Numerous data have shown that the average temperature over the world is increasing at a much higher pace than it used to, 'warming' is very obvious. In recent years, there is another frequently used term, 'Climate change', a more inclusive term which shows that extreme weather is happening more often including different regions.

Birds have a much longer history on earth than human; they survived through huge changes and evolved into today's species. No one knows for sure how much further climate change is going to impact on to the environment and wild animals. Looking at the pink reflections on the water, I can only wish that these historic and unique creatures, the Lesser Flamingoes, can continue to find an accommodating corner under the horizon.

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Introduction to the “Chinese Bird Names Committee”

1. Formal establishment – a rationale

Increased conservation awareness and technological advancement has led to further in-depth understanding of birds and their relationships. New species are continually being identified, either as new discoveries, or as “splits” from existing species. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society currently adopts the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) World List for species taxonomy. Regrettably, only English and Latin names are available, so it is up to us to produce a Chinese version of the IOC list. Dr. HF Cheung together with several like-minded bird watchers, namely Mr CC Wong, Ms Christine Choy and Mr CF Lo, held a Bird Chinese Naming Discussion Seminar in June 2010 of which has paved the way for the inception of the Chinese Bird Names Committee.

A group of passionate and committed bird watchers, including Ms Cherry Wong, Mr Samuel Ma, Ms Vincy Chan and Ms Serene Wong, have joined the Birds’ Chinese Naming Discussion, and invited Honorary President Mr CY Lam and Dr. KC Lee to be Advisors with the following objectives set out:

- Short Term : Assign bird species found in Hong Kong with an appropriate Chinese name
- Mid Term : Create a systematic bird species naming rule in Chinese Birding Societies
- Long Term : Aim to align bird watchers from the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong to work on a unified Chinese language bird list.

2. Activity to date

The Chinese Bird Names Committee and the Records Committee have been working closely together in the past two years to assign appropriate Chinese names for newly found bird species in Hong Kong. The Committee has communicated on this subject with people from the PRC and Taiwan. Some individual Committee members have published articles on the topics of “The Issue of Cantonese pronunciation on some bird names” and “Bird Taxonomy in interesting Chinese translation –Bird names you can speak but without a Chinese character” stirring up members’ interests and concerns.

3. Future work and direction of the Committee

The establishment of a Chinese Bird Names Committee helps to strengthen the authoritative status of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. The Committee shall be dedicated to enhancing communication with other bird naming groups in the PRC and Taiwan in the coming years. Doing so will also enhance extensive scientific and cultural exchanges on bird related issues in the region. The Committee shall share the details of exchanges and results on the HKBWS website as well as the in the HKBWS Bulletin for those interested.

4. Name and Passion

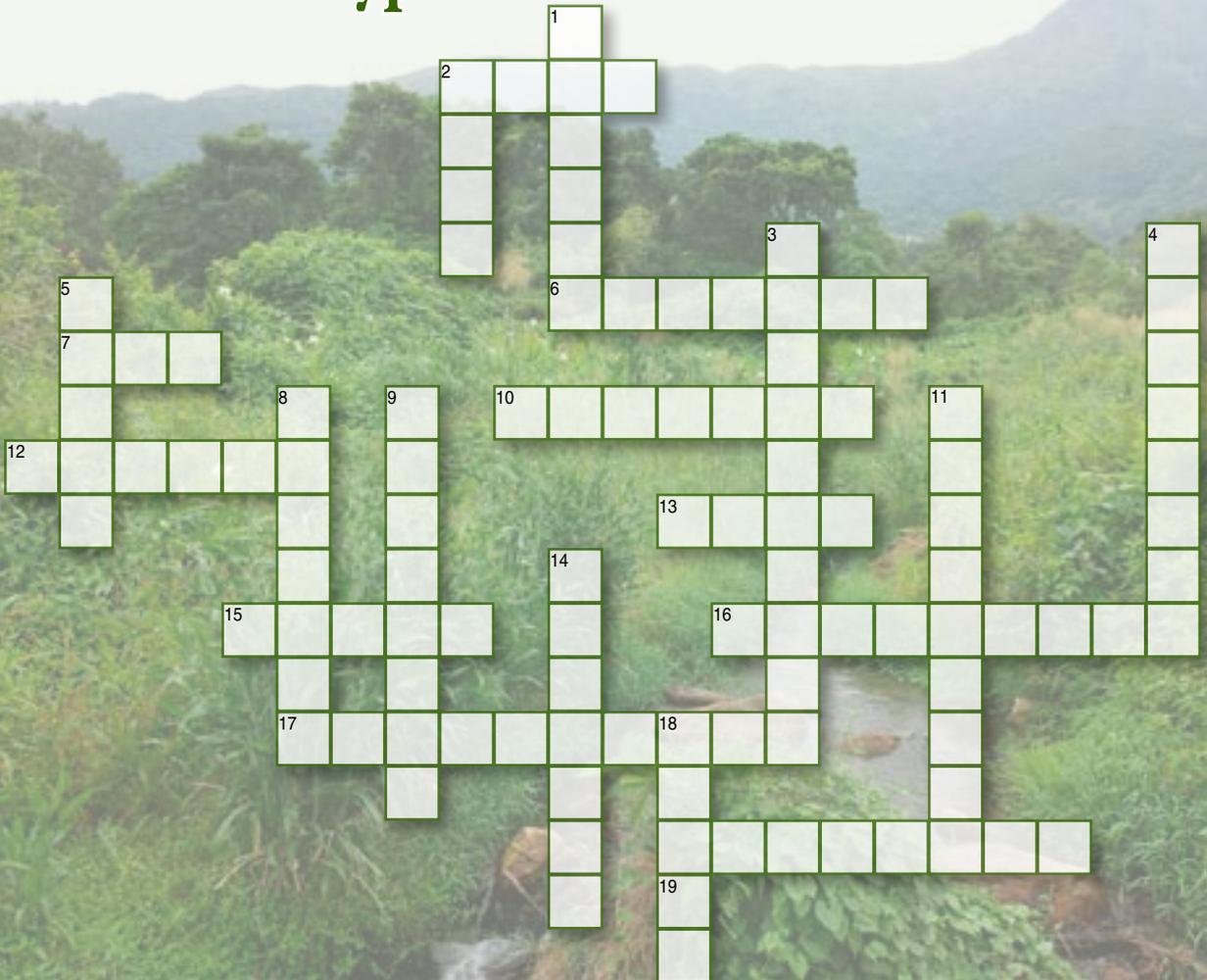
“Things in the world are named, due to human caring and leadership.....a name-giver is a great pioneer, one who rectifies names is a careful custodian, and one who asks the names is a person who has deep passion towards all creatures.” An abstract cited from an article “Asking the Names ” by the writer Ms Xiaofeng Zhang.

Our Chinese Bird Names Committee cannot be healthily developed without the support of and comments by the members of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. All in all, the HKBWS today realizes the dreams that were found among the society’s founders fifty five years ago. Today’s members are keen to continue a tradition of caring, passion and concern for birds and their environment in Hong Kong.



Cryptic Birdwords No.2

~ Norm de Plume



Across

2. Chess piece
6. Will inform the authorities
7. Good for a hungry baby
10. This bird is king
12. Idiot (Aust. slang)
13. Child's flying toy
15. Lays golden eggs
16. Earth mover
17. Regal angler
19. Diet of honey makers ?

Down

1. The intelligence of a deity
2. Shakespearean collar
3. One who nabs a zipper
4. Glass container used after sunset
5. Brings home the babies
8. Shocking tome
9. I'm not a _____ plucker
11. Rocky conversation
14. "It's beak holds more than its belly can"
18. For most, birding is a _____



Island Endemics on Okinawa – by Mike Kilburn 13–17 July 2013

(with some photos by Abdel Bizid from a separate trip)

In mid-July I squeezed a few days in Okinawa into a longer trip to Japan. Carrie and I flew return from Kansai (Osaka) for less than HK\$1,000 each, a real bargain compared with typical travel costs in Japan. The main attraction for birders is the endemic species and races that inhabit the well-forested northern part of the island -Yanbaru. The best way to get there and get around the habitat is to hire a car (which we did easily in Naha from OTS). The drive north takes about 2.5 hours. In less than 48 hours in Yanbaru I saw all but one of the endemics (Ryukyu Minivet) within a few kilometers of the hotel. Many birders stay at the simple and friendly Minshuku Miyagi in Oku, a small seaside village. Oku itself is in a nice valley, with a variety of birds that can be seen along the road to the Benoki Dam. For those seeking more comfort (i.e. non-birding wife-friendly accommodation), the Ada Garden Hotel is even closer to the core area around Benoki Dam.

Naha, the capital of Okinawa has limited birding opportunities, but a trip to the Shiro-Jo castle, the spectacular historic seat of the kings of the Ryukyu Islands, produced the local oorti race of Chinese Bulbul, a Bright-capped Cisticola, stimpsoni Oriental Turtle Dove, and a host of Blue Rock Thrushes, including a singing male. On our penultimate night in Naha we stayed in a hotel near the conference centre that offered views of an sea dotted with 40-odd Roseate Terns. The garden also held a pair of Pacific Swallows, several Brown-eared Bulebuls and more Blue Rock Thrushes. The next day we visited the Peace Park at the southernmost tip of the island where three or four Pacific Reef Egrets hunted on the exposed wave-cut platform below the cliffs.

We finally headed north on Monday 15th. At Cape Hedo, the northernmost point of Okinawa, four sea turtle sp. (possibly Loggerheads?) were hanging about a few metres offshore and diving into the gullies between the submerged rocks. A couple of Black-naped Terns also passed offshore. A few minutes south of Oku a medium-sized bird with dark brown wings zipped across a well-forested section of the road. Walking hopefully back I was delighted to get wonderful close views of a female Pryer's Woodpecker, an Okinawan endemic, and the one I least expected to connect with! A rustling in the bushes right next to the woodpecker turned out to be a Ryukyu Flying Fox - a large endemic bat with a fine golden brown collar.

Moving on we found seven magnificent Okinawa Rails poking about on the roadside in the low evening light. Large, awkward and somewhat gawky with their big red feet, stocky upright bodies and the merest stub of a tail, they looked every inch the vulnerable island endemic. Despite their awkward jizz they are handsome birds, with a long coral-red bill, a broad white eyestripe behind a black bandit's mask, and fine white bars across predominantly black underparts. Finding three birds in a small lay-by we pulled over and watched delighted as they picked among the roadside vegetation and waddled across the road, apparently indifferent to the presence of the car.

Tuesday 16th started excellently with another Pryer's Woodpecker showing well on a dead snag before I headed up into the forest as dawn broke. I was surprised not to come across any more Okinawa Rails, but I twice heard the distinctive descending trill of a Ruddy Kingfisher in places I couldn't stop, and had three more Pryer's Woodpeckers close to the road. I overshot the road to Benoki Dam and continued a downhill until I was certain I'd gone too far. Just as I was looking to turn round I drove under a Ryukyu Green Pigeon perched on an overhead wire! I stopped for a few seconds and greedily absorbed all the salient features, especially the large size and white-edged undertail coverts that the bird on Po Toi this spring showed so well.

A turn-off to the south then delivered my first Ryukyu Robin – a female that popped up from the edge of the road and sat helpfully still once I got onto it. In the branches above it three or four Varied Tits (of the endemic Ryukyu race *amamii*) responded nicely to my pishing. A bit further I explored a promising-looking side trail finding only the rotund backside of an Okinawa Rail disappearing into the undergrowth. I did find a number of pipe traps, which I believe were laid to catch introduced mongooses (I saw several vans wearing the logo of the Yanburu Mongoose Busters team).



Heading round the corner to find a viewpoint I poked a look into a wooded watercourse and was amazed to find a rufous-coloured scops owl with tall thin ear tufts and an orange yellow eyes staring back at me – Japanese Scops Owl of the Ryukyu race *pryeri*. After a few seconds it dropped deeper into cover and out of sight. A great bonus bird! Further distraction then emerged in the form of a Ruddy Kingfisher calling from cover just above the road. The race that occurs here – *bangsi* – is another Ryukyu endemic subspecies. Unlike the birds that occur elsewhere in its range, it is resident. I tried for it from a few angles, but before I struck lucky it lost patience and took off directly over my head, showing a pale throat and buffy underparts, and shrieking its disdain at my ineptitude.

Finally getting back to the job in hand, after a couple of scans I picked out a big dark pigeon perched in some bare branches about 300 metres away. Japanese Wood Pigeon – my second excellent pigeon tick in just over an hour! Heading back to the car another one started calling very close-by, giving me wonderful views and a fine opportunity to enjoy the extraordinary call. It starts with a low rippling cooing (like a pigeon trying to copy a woodpecker's drumming), followed by a pause and a deep sonorous woooooo, and after a second pause a sound like a sanding machine just starting to rev up. I was amazed that all three noises could emanate from one species, let alone a single individual. There's a recording by Des Allen on *Xeno-canto*.



The afternoon was spent at the wonderful Okinawa aquarium. The highlights were a pair of American Manatees (if you haven't seen courting manatees then you haven't lived!) and a giant tank containing three Whale Sharks. On the journey there we took a back-road through the forest and were rewarded with a male Ryukyu Robin that flipped up from the road flashing its rufous wings, then perched to check us out and display its black breast and throat. A little further on we braked hard to avoid a Ryukyu Fire-bellied Newt plodding determinedly across the road. On the way back from the aquarium seven Ryukyu Scops Owls called in the forest, and two Ryukyu Odd-toothed Snakes – a non-venomous species that apparently eats the venomous ones – were on the road.

Wednesday 17th July started with a few groups of the smallest Large-billed Crows I've seen (race *connectens*) lurking along the road. They must make a good living out of roadkill to be so common here. Apart from a Ryukyu Robin it was fairly quiet until I came to a clearing where a Pryer's Woodpecker showed well while making sure it was not photographed. A "tacking" in the undergrowth caught my attention – the resident race of Japanese Bush Warbler, *restricta* (confusingly listed as *restictus* in the IOC 3.4 checklist), may be a good species. It showed after fifteen minutes of cat-and-mouse, in which time it also sang – flatter in tone and a less explosive than birds I'd heard on Honshu a few days earlier.



Moving on, five Okinawa Rails were at the roadside just after the Benoki Dam turnoff. Another Ruddy Kingfisher again tantalized me by singing nearby, but out of view. I had brief but clear views of that shocking red bill, rufous upperparts and small azure rump patch as it took off across the valley towards its mate. Better views, but still not as good as I was hoping for. My second Ryukyu Green Pigeon was perched unobtrusively in a tree in the same area.

Three hundred metres further on another Ryukyu Robin came up off the road in a well-shaded dell. A scraggly-looking male that had obviously just finished bathing also appeared. The



other good bird here was a young, and still streaky, Ryukyu Flycatcher (which is still, at least for the time-being, lumped with Narcissus Flycatcher) that came right in to my pishing, but failed to bring a parent with it. This was disappointing as I would have liked to look at some females to help me better understand the birds I'd seen in Hong Kong in the spring.

The road along the southern edge of the reservoir delivered my first accipiter of the trip. This was a compact and square-tailed female Japanese Sparrowhawk being harassed by a Large-billed Crow. They apparently breed on Iriomote at the western end of the Ryukyus, but not on Okinawa.

More Ruddy Kingfishers were calling down here. Finally I heard one calling in flight and was thrilled to watch it come over the canopy and land in a tree some 50 metres away. It was initially obscured, but by shifting my position I was able scope this fantastic kingfisher – a vibrant, orange-red bird glowing against the more muted shades of the forest – my bird of the trip.

With time running out before check-out I negotiated a steeper road with lots of fallen branches, adding just one more Ryukyu Robin and a Brown-eared Bulbul I hoped would be the Okinawan race *pryeri*. When I finally tracked it down it disappointingly showed no sign of an extensive dark chestnut belly and appeared simply to be *amaurotis*, the race that is common throughout Japan. That was pretty much it for Yanbaru and Okinawa.

We returned to Naha, caught the flight back to Osaka and spent the rest of the day traveling up to Nara for the final few days of our trip. 

My Bird Watching Diary

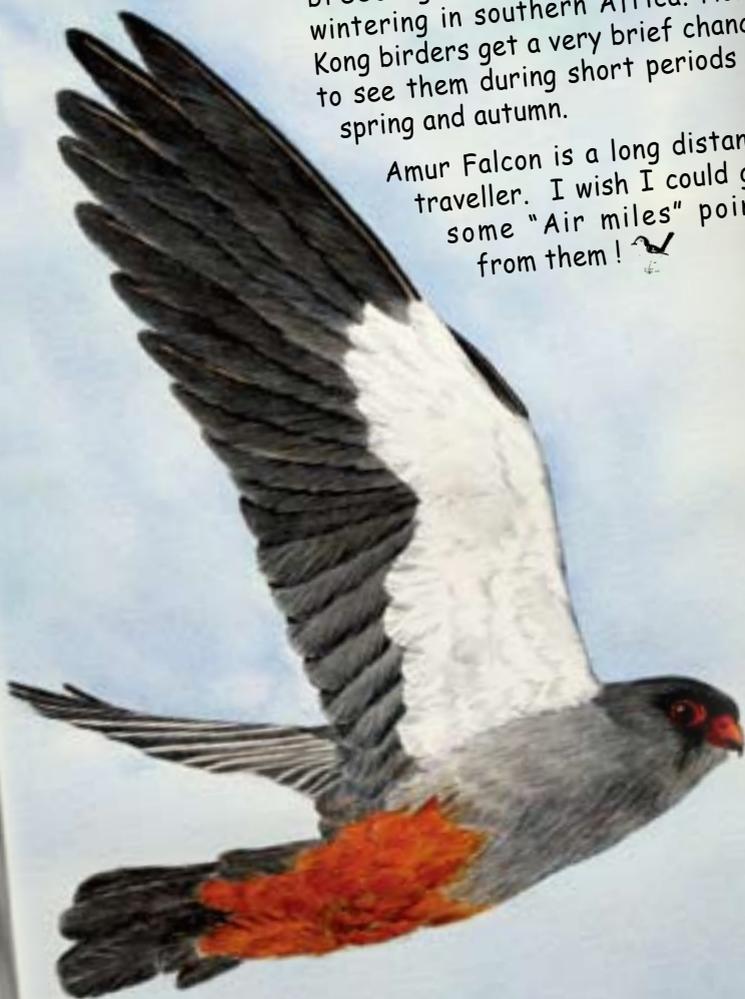
~ Text and Illustrations: Wendy Yu

Amur Falcon

13th October, 2013

Amur Falcon is a mid-sized falcon, breeding in northern Asia, and wintering in southern Africa. Hong Kong birders get a very brief chance to see them during short periods in spring and autumn.

Amur Falcon is a long distance traveller. I wish I could get some "Air miles" points from them! 



~ Richard Lewthwaite

(These are not formal records and observers are still invited to submit records in the usual ways – Ed.)

July

- ▶ In a very hot month, the highlight was the first confirmed breeding record of **Purple Heron**, with a nest found at Mai Po in the first week of the month and three well-grown young seen in the nest on 24th (JAA). These are believed to have fledged successfully at a later date (JAA).
- ▶ Among other reports of interest at Mai Po in the first ten days of the month were 170 **Cattle Egrets**, 172 **Greater Sand Plovers**, a **Gull-billed Tern**, a **White-winged Tern** and a **Bridled Tern**, all on 3rd (DAD), two **Chinese Grosbeaks** on 5th, a juvenile **Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** on 8th and an *atrifrons* **Lesser Sand Plover** on 10th (JAA, WWF). The **Bridled Tern** is the first for Mai Po and the count of **Greater Sand Plovers**, all of which were thought to be first-summerers or non-breeding adults, is possibly the highest on record involving over-summering birds.
- ▶ Following sightings of a **Black Bittern** at Long Valley on 11th (JGH), two **Greater Crested Terns** in North Lantau waters on 12th (KJ) and three **Little Terns** from the Mai Po boardwalk on 14th, an influx of **Greater Sand Plovers** occurred at Mai Po, with 284 including juveniles on 18th (WWF). On the same day 167 **Collared Crows** were counted at Mai Po (WWF), the highest number on record.
- ▶ A boat trip into eastern waters on 20th led to sightings of **Bridled**, **Roseate** and **Black-naped Tern**, as expected, and also a **Gull-billed Tern**. On the same day a **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** was found at Tai Po Kau.
- ▶ Autumn passage of shorebirds was underway in the last week of the month, with 52 **Black-tailed Godwit**, 44 **Eurasian Curlews**, 593 **Common Redshanks** and 126 **Common Greenshanks** at Mai Po on 24th (JAA). A **Little Tern** was also noted (JAA).
- ▶ The month closed with reports of a **Hair-crested Drongo** at Mai Po on 30th (WWF) and a juvenile **Black-winged Kite** at Tsim Bei Tsui on 31st (AQ).

August

- ▶ This was another hot month. Best birds in a quiet first ten days of the month were a **Lesser Frigatebird** at Sai Kung on 3rd (KH) and a juvenile **Orange-headed Thrush** at Tai Po Kau Headland on 10th (KB, RB). A family party of **Orange-headed Thrushes** were subsequently seen at the same place on 20th (KB).
- ▶ The main event of the middle part of the month was Typhoon Utor, which made landfall to the west of Hong Kong and brought reports of two **Streaked Shearwaters**, a probable **Long-tailed Skua**, 50 **White-winged Terns** and 20 **Bridled Terns** at Cape d'Aguilar on 14th (GT, CC) and 22 **Common Terns** and a **Whiskered Tern** at Mai Po the same day (JAA).



- ▶ Among other birds reported from Mai Po at this time were 76 **White-shouldered Starlings** on 17th (WWF), a **Grey-headed Lapwing** on 18th (IT), eight **Purple Herons** and a **Collared Scops Owl** on 19th (WWF), and 21 **Asian Dowitchers** and a **Stejneger's Stonechat** on 20th (JAA). The latter bird and another individual at KFBG on the same day (per GW) are the earliest autumn records for Hong Kong by 5 days. A **Eurasian Curlew** at Long Valley on 20th (IT) was apparently the first at this well-watched site.
- ▶ In the final third of the month, there were reports of a **Watercock** at Mai Po on 22nd (WWF), a **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** at Tai Po Kau on 25th (PW, MK) and two **Himalayan Swiftlets** at Tai O on 31st (EMSK).
- ▶ With Po Toi no longer receiving the same high levels of coverage following Geoff Welch's decision to cut back on time spent there, other sites accounted for first sightings of regularly occurring migrants this autumn. Earliest reports included a **Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** at Chek Lap Kok on 21st (EMSK), a **Forest Wagtail** at Tai Po Kau Headland on the same day (KB), an **Asian Paradise Flycatcher** at Lam Tsuen on 22nd (DT), a **Eurasian Hoopoe**, two **Grey Wagtails**, 99 **Yellow Wagtails** and a **Brown Shrike** at Nim Wan on 23rd (DS), two **Arctic Warblers** and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** at Sha Chau on 28th (KJ) and an **Asian Brown Flycatcher** at Tai O on 31st (EMSK)
- ▶ Reports of shorebirds in this period included 77 Pacific Golden Plovers in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 21st (JAA) and an *atrifrons* **Lesser Sand Plover**, a **Far Eastern Curlew**, two **Long-toed Stint** and a **Temminck's Stint** on the Mai Po scrape on 22nd (RWL), the latter the earliest autumn record by 5 days. Four early individuals were also present at Nim Wan on 23rd (DS).

September

- ▶ Despite the excitement of a **Fairy Pitta** at Po Toi on 26th (GW), this was a rather unexciting month, with the commoner migrants of the season coming through in generally low numbers. One exception to this was **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler**, which was found in close to record numbers at Mai Po in the first week of the month, with 25 on 2nd and 50 on 6th (PJL).
- ▶ Other notable reports of migrants during the month included one or two **Manchurian Reed Warblers** on 2nd and 6th (PJL), three **Black Bazas** at Hang Tau on 7th (JGH), a **Styan's Grasshopper Warbler** at Mai Po on 10th (JM), a white-phase **Asian Paradise Flycatcher** at Po Toi on 15th (CT), the first of this colour since 1988, and single **Orange-headed Thrushes** at Tai Mo Shan on 15th and Wu Kau Tang on 20th (JAA).
- ▶ With regard to resident species, a **Speckled Piculet** was found at Pak Sha O on 8th (GJC) and record numbers were noted of **Azure-winged Magpie** (86 at Mai Po on 3rd, WWF), **Red-whiskered Bulbul** (530 emerging from a roost at Lam Tsuen in early morning on 16th, DT) and **Black-collared Starling** (353 flying into a roost in late afternoon at Tai Po Waterfront Park on 17th, RWL). 

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours Jan - Jun 2014

Outings

Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
1/1/2014 (Wed)	0800 - 1200	Long Valley (08:00 Pavilion beside public toilet at Yin Kong Village)	☆☆	Farmland birds & waterbirds
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
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
22/3/2014 (Sat)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on Mar 20 on Discussion Forum)		
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
5/4/2014 (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

Member: Free of Charge

Member: Free of Charge

Member: HK\$60 (Student Member: HK\$30)

Member: HK\$160 (TBC)

Non-member: Free of Charge

Non-member: HK\$30 (HK\$10 for student aged under 19)

Non-member: HK\$120

Non-member: HK\$200 (TBC)

(registration not required)

(registration not required)

(registration required)

(registration required)

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours Jan - Jun 2014

Outings				
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
12-13/4/2014 (Sat-Sun)	24 hrs	Records-Hong Kong Bird Watching Competition 2014 (Details will be announced later)		
21/4/2014 (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
27/4/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Mo Shan (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Tsuen Wan MTR Station)	☆☆☆	Grassland birds
3/5/2014 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Aberdeen Reservoir (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Hang Seng Bank near Exit B, Central MTR Station)	☆	Forest birds
4/5/2014 (Sat)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi and HK South Waters (08:00 Aberdeen public pier, near Ocean Court) Note: This will be a long trip on open waters. The ride could be quite rough and some people may be seasick.	☆☆☆	Seabirds and migrants
11/5/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on May 9 on Discussion Forum)		
17/5/2014 (Sat)	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
25/5/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on May 23 on Discussion Forum)		
7/6/2014 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Shing Mun (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Kiosk at Pineapple Dam, Shing Mun Reservoir)	☆	Forest birds
8/6/2014 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Nam Chung and Luk Keng (08:00 Pavilion at junction of Nam Chung Rd & Luk Keng Rd)	☆☆	Forest birds & Waterbirds

Member: Free of Charge

Member: Free of Charge

Member: HK\$60 (Student Member: HK\$30)

Member: HK\$160

Non-member: Free of Charge

Non-member: HK\$30 (HK\$10 for student aged under 19)

Non-member: HK\$120

Non-member: HK\$200

(registration not required)

(registration not required)

(registration required)

(registration required)

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Indoor Meetings Jan - Jun 2014

Indoor Meetings				
Date	Time	Topic	Speakers	Venue
11/2/2014 (Tue)	1915-2115	Bird Watching @ Remote Corner of the World (Cantonese with Chinese powerpoint)	Ms. Christina Chan	HKBWS LCK office 7C, V Ga Building, 532 Castle Peak Road, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon

Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Outing Booking Slip

I would like to register the following HKBWS outings:

** 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.

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 or MP

* Activities are processed individually, please use separate cheque.

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 for Mai Po Outing:

- Participants below age of 12 yrs 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.

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-	

Other 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 on our Discussion Forum: <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 7:00am on the event day, the activity will be cancelled. If Thunderstorm Warning is announced during the activity, Team Leader will decide whether the activity should be continued or cancelled. You can contact the outing 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.

黃頭鵲鶯
何建業
塋原

Citrine Wagtail
Ho Kin Yip, Kinni
Long Valley

06/10/2013
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



藍歌鵲
李逸明
蒲台

Siberian Blue Robin
Lee Yat Ming
Po Toi

28/09/2013
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens





Nikon D700 + EDG 單筒望遠鏡 - FSA-L2
© Maurizio Bachis

數碼觀測攝獵完美動靜

尼康 EDG 單筒望遠鏡系列，除讓你進行一般觀察外，更能接連數碼相機作數碼觀測，完美捕捉遠距影像。嶄新尖端的光學技術，配以設計精巧的鏡筒及無瑕對焦準確度，締造每個絲毫畢現的銳利畫面。如此絕倫，唯有尼康，唯獨 EDG。

數碼單鏡反光相機連接器
FSA-L2



EDG

THE CUTTING EDGE IN SPORT OPTICS



蟻鴛
沈冠宇
米埔

Eurasian Wryneck
K Y Shum
Mai Po

09/11/2012
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens