

bulletin
會員通訊

244

Summer 2017 ~ 夏



HKBWS

香港觀鳥會
The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society





鷓鴣姬鵲
陳兆源
何文田

Mugimaki Flycatcher
Chan Siu Yuen
Ho Man Tin

13/11/2016

DSLR Camera, 800mm f/5.6 lens + 1.25x teleconverter



烏鵲
韓德明
塋原

Dark-sided Flycatcher
Derek Hon
Long Valley

30/09/2016

DSLR Camera, 150-600mm f/5-6.3 lens

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The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

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Discover Hong Kong Urban Nature cum City Sparrow Census

A series of activities has been organised to raise the awareness and knowledge of students and general public on the urban ecology, biodiversity and nature conservation issues of Hong Kong. This project started in Sept 2015 funded by the Environment and Conservation Fund and Environment Campaign Committee.

Hong Kong Sparrow Census 2017

Hong Kong Sparrow Census is a "Citizen Science" activity where a large number of members of the public are recruited to conduct scientific research. The Society's first-ever Sparrow Census was conducted in May 2016 in which more than 420 citizens took part. A 1-km transect line was randomly placed in different habitats over 18 districts, such as residential housing, urban parks, commercial and industrial areas. The survey lasted for an hour from 9am to 10am. After analysing the data collected from all surveyors, we estimated that there are around 320,000 Eurasian Tree Sparrows across the territory.



The counting starts now



Pilot Census Training



Looking for Tree Sparrows



Pilot Census Workshop

In order to increase the accuracy of the census, a total of 2 census days will be conducted this year, on 7 May and 2 July. The number of transect routes will also be adjusted from 87 to 77. We hope to recruit around 600 to 700 citizens to participate.

Urban Eco-ambassador Programme

Around 100 secondary school students were recruited as Urban Ambassadors during the period 2015-16, while 90 more students were recruited this year. After training, students were required to conduct ecological surveys in their community, to provide a guided visit to other students to promote urban wildlife, and hopefully become young conservationists and researchers in future. We hope that more people would be influenced by their efforts after the programme. A "Bird Nestbox Competition" was organised this year to attract more participants, with an experienced carpenter invited to teach the students the basic carpentry skills to make nestboxes.



Eco tour for Primary students at Kowloon Walled City Park



Conducting ecological survey in the community



Field Study at Long Valley



Training workshop



Using recycled pallets for making bird nest boxes

The 2nd Sparrow Carnival (30th Apr, 2017)

To further raise the awareness of urban wildlife and biodiversity among the general public, the 2nd Sparrow Carnival was organised in Kowloon Park on 30 April. With “Urban · Nature · Sparrow” as the theme of the carnival, we used one of the most common birds - the Sparrow - to promote a simple message where “nature” is always around us. During the carnival, a series of creative and interesting activities were launched, such as games related to Sparrow’s daily life, urban nature drawing, animals-and-plants handicraft, story-telling, guided tours and mini census tour and so on. Besides, “Nature Play” and “Get Set Parents” have shown their support by developing parent-child explorative activities to encourage parents and children to observe and discover our urban nature. At the end, more than 8000 citizens were attracted to join the carnival. We would like to express our gratitude to all guests, organisations and volunteers who have given their support.



Guests of Opening Ceremony

(left to right) Arch leong In Leng, Yvonne, Mr. Lau Sin Pang, Mr. Kwok Chi Tai, Mr. Lam Chiu Ying, Mr. Chan Wing Hong, Mr. Hui Yung Chung, BBS, JP, Dr. Law Winnie Wai Yi, Dr. Hau Chi Hang, Billy, Dr. Sung Yik Hei, Dr Cheung Siu Gin, Ms Law Lai Sheung, Alice



Identify the fruit



Which bird lost its feather?



Where is the Tree Sparrow?



Looking for the missing words in the Park



Drawing urban nature



Children pay attention in listening story



Count the rings and guess the age

Competitions for kindergarten, primary and secondary school students

A School Radio Drama Contest with the theme “Nature in the Urban Area” was organised this year for primary school students. To encourage more participants, a workshop hosted by Mr. Ip Sai-Hung, former Head of Radio Drama Section, RTHK, was arranged and 120 teachers and students took part.

A total of 30 teams and 200 students participated in the contest, but only 13 teams were screened into the final live competition in the City University of Hong Kong on 1 April. The performance of the students was highly appreciated by all adjudicators including Mr. Ip Sai-Hung, Mr. Leung Ka-Wing, former Acting Head of Chinese Programme Services of RTHK and Ms. Joyce Choi, Director of Community Outreach, Bring me a book (HK).



Champion of Primary Radio Drama :
Precious Blood Primary School



All participating students



Adjudicators of Primary Radio Drama
Adjudicators and guests of Primary Radio Drama (left to right) Mr. Apache Lau, Mr. Leung Ka Wing, Mr. Ip Sai Hung, Mrs. Joyce Choi, Ms. Kwok Yee Shan, Mr. Lo Wai Yan



Hui Sze Wai, champion of the poster designing contest for the senior secondary school student



Wong Yan Ka, champion of the poster designing contest for the senior secondary school student



Chan Chi Long, champion of the Kindergarten colouring contest

A kindergarten colouring competition was held with the same theme of "Nature in the Urban Area". The response was very positive and more than 6,000 colouring sheets were received.

For the Secondary Schools Poster competition, 350 posters were received.

Acknowledgements

Sponsor: Environment and Conservation Fund, Environmental Campaign Committee

Co-organisers: School of Biological Sciences, HKU, Department of Biology, HK Baptist University, Department of Biology and Chemistry, City University of HK, HK Professional Teachers' Union, HKWildlife.Net Forum

The 2nd Sparrow Carnival

Supporting organisations:

The Conservancy Association, Grateful Green Group, Nature Play, Get Set Parents, HK Parents Club, Lei Yue Mun Methodist Kindergarten, Lam Pei Sugar Ink Studio, Hong Kong St. John Ambulance

Guest of Honour:

Mr. Hui Yung Chung, BBS, JP, Vice Chairman of Environmental Campaign Committee

Other Guests:

Mr. Lam Chiu Ying, Honorary President of HKBWS
 Dr. Law Winnie Wai Yi, Member of Environmental Campaign Committee
 Arch Ieong In Leng, Yvonne, Member of Environmental Campaign Committee
 Mr. Kwok Chi Tai, Member of Environmental Campaign Committee
 Mr. Chan Wing Hong, Member of Environment and Conservation Fund Committee
 Dr. Hau Chi Hang, Billy, Principal Lecturer, School of Biological Science, HKU
 Dr. Cheung Siu Gin, Associate Professor, Dept of Biology and Chemistry, City University of HK
 Dr. Sung Yik Hei, Lecturer, Dept of Biology, HK Baptist University
 Mr. Lau Sin Pang, Representative, HKWildlife.Net Forum
 Ms Law Lai Sheung, Alice, President of Environmental Group, HK Professional Teachers' Union
 Chan Maydoy, Green Illustrator
 Mr. Forrest Fong, Executive Committee members of HKBWS
 Mr. Wong Yat Ming, Carl Zeiss Far East Co. Ltd

Gift Sponsors:

Canon Hong Kong Limited, Carl Zeiss Far East Co Ltd, Swarovski Hong Kong Limited, The Conservancy Association

Urban Eco-ambassadors Programme

Guest Speakers of Training Workshop

Dr. Ma Kwan Ki, Education Director, Outdoor Wildlife Learning Hong Kong
 Dr. Edward Lau, Research Director, Outdoor Wildlife Learning Hong Kong
 Mr. Shum Ting Wing Bond, Conservation Director, Outdoor Wildlife Learning Hong Kong
 Mr. Lau Sin Pang, Representative, HKWildlife.Net Forum
 Mr. Chan To, Vice-President, Hong Kong Entomological Society

Mentors:

Leung Hei Kan, Lee Ching Yi, Law Yuen Sang, Fung Yu, Yan Chu, Lui Hang Lui, Chung Hiu Man, Lee Hoi Kiu, Choi Man Wai, Tan Kenneth, Chung Nga Lai, Mak Hoi Ching, Franco Leung Ka Wah, Fan Hiu Ching, Lam Po Yan

Competitions for kindergarten, primary and secondary school student

Adjudicators of Kindergarten Colouring Competition:

Mr. Kwok Chi Tai, Ms. Yu Sau Ling, Wendy, Ms. Janet Chan

Adjudicators of Primary School Radio Drama Contest:

Mr. Ip Sai Hung, Mr. Leung Ka Wing, Ms. Joyce Choi

Adjudicators of Secondary School Poster Competition:

Ms. Yu Sau Ling, Wendy, Ms. Chan Maydoy, Dr. Sung Yik Hei, Ms. Janet Chan

A thousand thanks to all Volunteers - all these events would not have been so successful without your support!

Hong Kong Fishpond Conservation Scheme

Signing contracts with fishpond operators

The Hong Kong Fishpond Conservation Scheme which is funded by Environment and Conservation Fund will work together with operators to manage fishponds in NW New Territories for conservation purposes. The new scheme was launched in March 2017 and a contract signing ceremony was held at Yuen Long Theatre on 15 Mar 2017. Results of the scheme in the past 2 years were outlined to over 120 pond operators. A total of 600 fishponds over 600 ha will be covered in this scheme.

Study of local movement of waterbirds in the Deep Bay area

In order to deepen our understanding on the use of fishponds and wetlands by waterbirds in the Deep Bay area, a study of the local movement of waterbirds using a tagging and tracking approach will be conducted.



Secondary School Projects

Designing thematic studies related to fishponds and wetlands for certain secondary school subjects, such as Geography, Biology and Chemistry. By organising field trips, experiments and interviews, students can understand more about the ecology and culture of fishponds.



Eco-fish Promotion Scheme

We intend to cooperate with individual fishpond operators to culture their ponds of fish in an eco-friendly manner, and then promote and sell to the general public. We hope that the development of eco-certification can expand the market, and the industry can be operated in a more sustainable way so that the ecological value of fishponds can also be maintained.



Fishpond Art Festival

Co-operate with artists and art organisations to promote fishpond conservation in a creative way. Art events using fishponds as the subject will be held for general public and students.

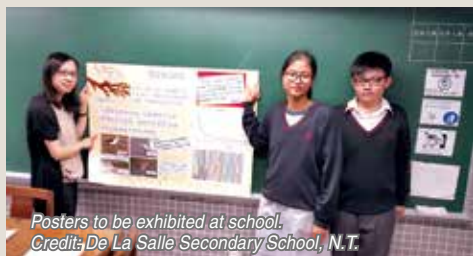


2015-2017 Nature Conservation Management for Long Valley

“Citizen science for secondary school students – Study of birds in Long Valley” was held from March to April this year. Six schools with about 30 students have participated. This activity included a two-day training and a half-day census at Long Valley. Besides bird identification skills, students also learned different bird survey methods. A synchronised census was conducted on 8 Apr to record bird species, abundance and habitat types. After the survey, students analysed the data collected and made a poster which will be exhibited at their schools afterwards. Altogether 213 individuals of 36 species were recorded that day. Many thanks to De La Salle Secondary School, N.T. for providing a venue for data analysis and hosting the certificate awarding ceremony.



Students are conducting data analysis



*Posters to be exhibited at school.
Credit: De La Salle Secondary School, N.T.*



*Students learn to identify bird species and survey method
Credit: St. Louis School*

The International Black-faced Spoonbill Census 2017



*The main diet of Black-faced Spoonbills comprises fish, shrimp and aquatic invertebrates.
(photo by LOK Ching Wa)*

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society has been coordinating the International Census since 2003. International co-operation has brought a rewarding result in that the number of the Black-faced Spoonbills (*Platalea minor*) reached a new high in 2017. During the 2017 International Black-faced Spoonbill Census, 3,941 spoonbills were recorded, which was 585 birds more than the record of 3,356 birds in 2016 (+17.4%). The 2017 Census took place on 13-15 January. More than 100 researchers, conservationists, nature reserve staff and volunteers joined this census and surveyed over 70 sites in East Asia, including South Korea, Japan, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi,

Results of different locations in 2017 Census

Place	No. in 2015 (% to total)	No. in 2016 (% to total)	No. in 2017 (% to total)	Trend (against 2016)
Taiwan	2,034 (62.4%)	2,060 (61.4%)	2,601 (66.0%)	+ 541 (+26.3%)
Hong Kong & Shenzhen (Deep Bay)	411 (12.6%)	371 (11.1%)	375 (9.5%)	+4 (1.1%)
Mainland China (Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Shanghai, Jiangsu)	330 (10.1%)	434 (12.9%)	397 (10.1%)	-37 (-8.5%)
Japan	371 (11.4%)	383 (11.4%)	433 (11.0%)	+50 (+13.1%)
Vietnam	40 (1.2%)	9 (0.3%)	62 (1.6%)	+53 (589%)
Macao	55 (1.7%)	61 (1.8%)	44 (1.1%)	-17 (-27.9%)
South Korea	31 (0.9%)	38 (1.1%)	29 (0.7%)	-9 (-23.7%)
The Philippines	0* (0.0%)	1* (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	No change
Thailand	2* (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2* (0.0%)	No change
Cambodia	1* (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	No change
Total	3,272	3,356	3,941	+ 585 (+17.4 %)

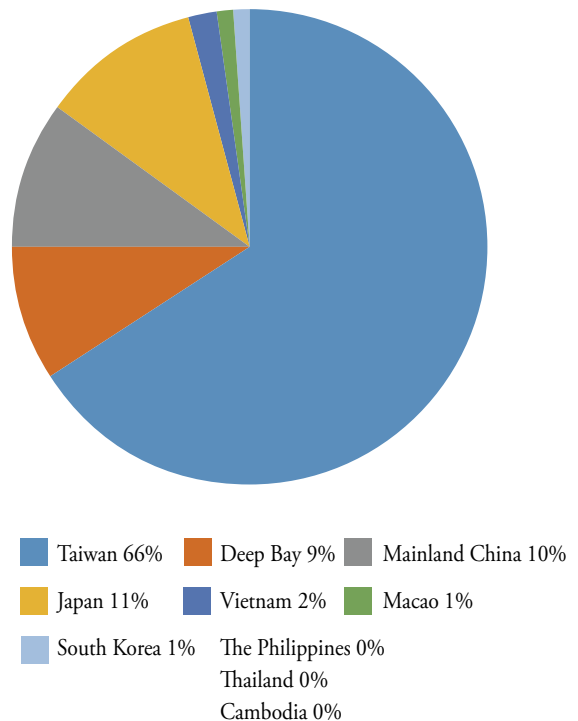
Note: * Not included in the total as the toll was not taken on the survey date.

Hainan, Jiangsu, Taiwan, Hong Kong & Shenzhen, Macau, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand and Cambodia.

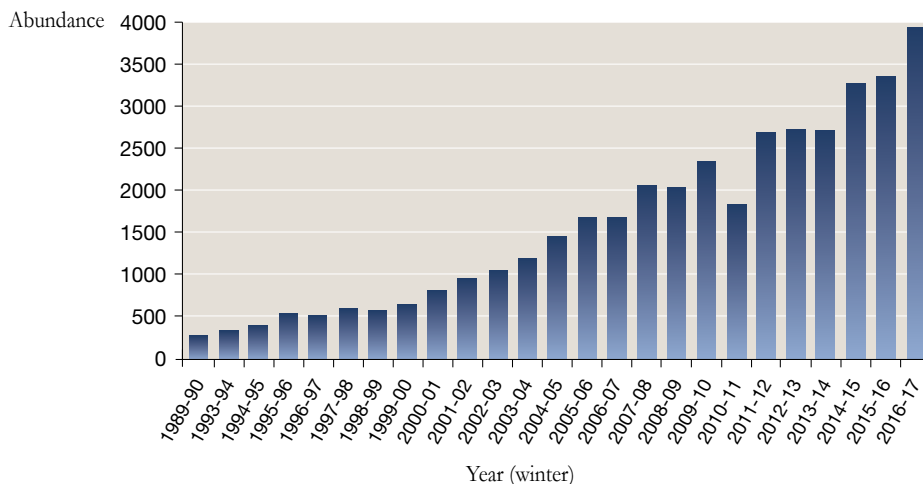
The largest wintering ground was still the Zengwun Estuary near Tainan (Taiwan), where a total of 1,810 spoonbills were recorded. Together with other big flocks found at Chiayi and Kaohsiung, and small flocks in other areas, Taiwan had a total of 2,601 spoonbills recorded during the census, comprising 66% of the global population. The trend of the Deep Bay area (Hong Kong and Shenzhen) is apparently decreasing after the peak of 462 spoonbills recorded in 2010. There was only a total of 375 individuals recorded this year, which was still 87 spoonbills less than the peak number. There was also a decrease of 9% in number in coastal areas on mainland China (including Hainan) this year. After the high number recorded last year, further monitoring is needed to confirm the trend. Careful investigation is necessary to inspect if the opposite trends at different sites can be attributed to differences in wetland management or due to climate change.

To understand the selection criteria of wintering sites of Black-faced Spoonbills, The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society collaborated with Dr. Sung Yik-hei, lecturer of Department of Biology, The Hong Kong Baptist University, to analyse the data collected from this international census throughout the decades. Human disturbance was found to be an important factor. An annual increase of 8% in global population was found, from 535

Proportion of wintering Black-faced Spoonbill at different locations to the global total in 2017 International Census



International Black-faced Spoonbill Census 1989-2017



spoonbills in 1997 to 2,726 in 2014, and there was a remarkable increase of 17% in 2017. The populations in protected sites and sites with little human disturbance obviously had more pronounced increases. The future of the Black-faced Spoonbill is not yet secure despite the increases in numbers in recent years. Since most spoonbills congregate in only two sites, southern Taiwan and Deep Bay, therefore any outbreak of epidemic or poisoning incident could wipe out a large proportion of the population. To enhance site management, more scientific research including satellite-tracking and environmental monitoring are also needed to better

understand their home range, habitat preference in wintering site, and if the birds change wintering sites across the years. These results were recently published in an international peer-reviewed Journal Bird Conservation International.

The Society would like to take this opportunity to thank all regional organisations and volunteers for their participation in the census, contributing to the smooth conduct of this census throughout all years and therefore better conservation of Black-faced Spoonbill in the region.

Society News & Projects | Membership Affairs



The Secondary Leader Training Programme Graduates

The Secondary Leader Training Programme 2015-2017

The Secondary Leader Training Programme has been completed after 18 months. A total of 13 trainees were granted their certificates during the Sparrow Carnival on the 30th of April. They are namely KK Hung, Siulan Li, Alfred Lam, Tom Li, Sam Chang, Alvin Hui, Andy Yeung, Fion Au, Carmen Cheung, David Chan, Philip Lai, Evans Leung and George Jor.

Hong Kong Bird Watching Day 2017 Cum Bird Race Fundraising Event

This key annual event was held from 1st to 2nd April. Eleven teams participated in the Open category and 12 schools or 16 teams in the Secondary School category. In order to enhance their birdwatching technique and knowledge of the race location, we provided 2 full days of training which included lectures about bird identification and outings to the race location before the actual bird race.

A total of HK\$16,450- in donations was received and will be allocated to support promotion of 'Nature Education' to the public. The society would like to express gratitude to all race teams and donors for their generous support to this event.

2017 Hong Kong Bird Watching Day Cum Bird Race Fundraising Event

Donation

Open Category & Supporter	Sundae	\$1,000-
	Happyhabit	\$4,300-
Secondary School Category & Supporter	Freedom Observer, The Chinese Foundation Secondary School	\$650-
	Wetland Pioneers, SKH Chan Young Secondary School	\$1,100-
	Blobfish, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians Siu Ming Catholic Secondary School	\$3,600-
	Charlie Brown, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians Siu Ming Catholic Secondary School	\$4,000-
Individual	Anonymous	\$400-
	高榮燴	\$200-
Total Donation		\$16,450-

Special thanks are due for support from the following organisations and government departments which helped to make the event a success:

- Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
- WWF – HK
- Mr. Lee Kwok Shing (Online bird record system)
- Miss Janice Lo (Bird Race TEE design)
- Mr. Richard Lewthwaite (Adjudicator)
- Crested Bulbul Club (Secondary School Category race day field coordinators)

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks and appreciation to the following prize sponsors (in random order):

- Shriro (HK) Ltd (Sponsor of Winner's prize for "Secondary School Category")
- Schmidt Marketing Asia Ltd (Sponsor of Winner's prize for "Open Category")
- Carl Zeiss Far East Co Ltd (Sponsor of Best Record prize for "Secondary School Team", souvenirs & lucky draw prizes for prizes presentation ceremony)
- Apache Lau (Sponsor of Winner's, 1st & 2nd Runner-up's prize for "Secondary School Category")



Sponsored prizes & souvenirs

Race Teams: Open Category



1. Gyps (Cheung Ka Chun, Shum Ting Wing, Tse Wai Lun, Mui Ka Wai, Fong Hoi Ning)



2. Bird Guys : Chan Jun Siu, Lau Hong Kiu, Lam Chiu, Kong Pak Yung



3. Agent Scott : Katherine Leung, Henry Lui, Nga Yee Lai, Lai Tsz Kwan



4. The Lark : Li Wai Ki, Chan Ming Ming, Lam Chiu Ying, Ng Cho Nam, Anthony Tse

Race Teams: Open Category



5. Sundae : Nelson Wan,
Cindy Yuen, Fei Chau,
Laura Chan



6. Collared Scops Owl :
Ng Chi Keung, Lau Kwok
Chung Francis, Cheung Wai
Leung William, Ho Man
Hin Peter



7. Rookie Chic 2 : Yip Kam
Yiu, Yip Shun Hang Luke,
Li Kar Man Carmen



8. Happyhabit : Hung Kwok
Kee, Philip Lai, Jessica
Choi, Kwong Siu Fung
Wendy, Ng Tat Ming



9. Psyduck Laughing : Du
Zhennan, Hau Cheuk Yu,
Chan Tsz Him, Lam Pui
Yin



10. Fledge : Chan Ka Ho,
Chiu Ming Ho, Ip Tsz
Ying, Kong Chun Yan, Kei
Lik Wai



11. DKnKids : Dickson Wong,
John Wong, Karin Chin,
Lachlan Chin

Race Teams: Secondary School Category



1. Grey-chinned Minivet,
S.K.H Tsoi Kung Po
Secondary School : Hui
Tsz Fung, Cheng Tsz Yin,
Luk Chi Fung, Chen Shu
(Instructor: Chow Kwok
Pun)



2. Blobfish, Daughters of Mary
Help of Christians Siu Ming
Catholic Secondary School:
Wong Cheuk Tung, Lo Ka
Sin, Chow Tsz Chin, Chung
Tin Ching, Wong Wing Lam
(Instructor: Tsai Lin Fung)



3. Charlie Brown, Daughters
of Mary Help of Christians
Siu Ming Catholic Secondary
School: Hui Lok Yiu, So
Tsz Yin, Lee Hiu Lam, Lam
Ka Ching, Leung Cho Yi
(Instructor: Ng Siu Han)



4. Wetland Pioneers, SKH Chan
Young Secondary School:
Sham Wang Yin, So Hoi Yee,
Wong Wang Bun, Cheung
Chung Yin, Chow Wai Lok
(Instructor: Hon Tak Ming)



5. Forest Explorer, SKH Chan
Young Secondary School:
Tam Chun Him, Lam Man
Hin, Lai Wai Yui, Tsui
Man Ching, Chan King Yu
(Instructor: Chui Yung Shing)



6. Crested Serpent Eagle,
CUHKFAA Chan Chun Ha
Secondary School: Bonnie
Ching, Lui Yuk Yi, Chan Ka
Him, Cheng Hiu Ying, Wong
Hiu Nam (Instructor: Er Sing
Seng)



7. Kingfisher, CUHKFAA Chan
Chun Ha Secondary School:
Zhuang Ho Yin, Chan Ka
Wing, Wu Chun Hei, Chan
Yat Hang, Chui Wang Kit
(Instructor: Lo Wing Shing)



8. CTSHKPCC (Team A),
Confucian Tai Shing Ho Kwok
Pui Chun College: Chui Man
Chun, Yip Chi Hung, Leung
Tsz Hei, Tsui Cheuk Yi, Choi
Hoi Lam Suze (Instructor: Li
Chi Keung)

Race Teams: Secondary School Category



9. CTSHKPCC (Team B) ,
Confucian Tai Shing Ho Kwok
Pui Chun College: Chan Nga
Man Cherry, Yau Man Ho,
Lam Cheuk Fung, Tang Chun
Nok, Ng Kai Leung Adrian
(Instructor: Cheng Sheung Hon)



10.LPLSS TEAM A, GCCITKD
Lau Pak Lok Secondary
School: Pun Choi Kong,
Yeung Ho Yin, Hon Man
Lung, Chan Chak Chuen
Charles (instructor: Poon Sing
Yu)



11.LPLSS TEAM 1, GCCITKD
Lau Pak Lok Secondary
School: Leung Ka Chun,
Ching Wing Yiu, Fung Lok Yi
(instructor: So Wing Man)



12.Freedom Observer, The
Chinese Foundation
Secondary School: Law
Chung Hin Henry, Lin Lok
Hei Alex, Chan Chun Ming,
Lin Lok Lam (instructor: Ho
Tik Shun)



13.聖 LU 仔, St. Louis School:
Leung Cheuk Hei, Lai Wai
Chung, Tsang Hin Shek
Rocky, Chung Wing Fung
Jess, Chu Kin Cheung Cyrus
(instructor: Chan Chun Ket)



14.Dumbledore, Cheung Chuk
Shan College: Jian Xiaoyu,
Cheung Pak Long, Leung Pak
Ho, Lam 'Tsun Hei (instructor:
Tong Ling Poon Andrew)



15.SLCS x KTMC, Shun Lee
Catholic Secondary School
& Kwun Tong Maryknoll
College: Wong Mei Ling,
Wong Chin Nga Ida, Chan
Chun Wing, Seow Cheuk Hin
(Instructor: Wu Lok Wai)



16.Maltese, St. Catharine's
School for Girls: Kwong Hoi
Ying, Hung Ka Wing, Lo Wai
Hing, Lee Ka Yi (instructor:
Mak Kwan Ko)

Race results:

Prizes	Open Category	Secondary School Category
Winner	Gyps (159)	Grey-chinned Minivet, S.K.H Tsoi Kung Po Secondary School (65)
1st Runner-up	Bird Guys(142)	Blobfish, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians Siu Ming Catholic Secondary School (64)
2nd Runner-up	Agent Scott (135)	Wetland Pioneers, SKH Chan Young Secondary School (63)
Best Record Award	Narcissus Flycatcher (Agent Scott)	Pacific Golden Plover Forest Explorer, SKH Chan Young Secondary School
Highest Amount of Donation	Happyhabit	Charlie Brown, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians Siu Ming Catholic Secondary School
Top Team-Waterbirds	The Lark	-
Top Team- Landbirds	Sundae	-
Top Team-Woodland	Collared Scops Owl	-
Top Team-Urban	Rookie Chic 2	-

Winner of Open
Category: Gyps



Winner of Secondary
School Category: Grey-
chinned Minivet, S.K.H
Tsoi Kung Po Secondary
School



Nature conservation is only an excuse for more development?

HKBWS's response to Hong Kong 2030+



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) agrees with the need for strategic planning and supports environmentally sustainable development. However, Hong Kong 2030+ did not equally consider the environmental, social and economic needs of Hong Kong for a truly sustainable development of the city. The proposed strategic planning is still heavily development and economy driven with a lack of commitment in nature conservation, as it is now. Even though terms like “sustainable” and “green” were frequently mentioned in the consultation document, the proposed developments and conservation actions seems far from what these terms actually mean. There is a lack of measures designed with the primary and specific intent of protecting Hong Kong’s biodiversity and quality of life, no changes in the currently flawed system which allows ongoing ecological destruction of habitats, no recognition and protection of buffer zones, and no comprehensive policies to allow conservation and agriculture to be sustainable.

Moreover, we consider that the Government has simplified various social issues in Hong Kong, claiming that the main reason is the shortage of land supply. Apart from unaffordable housing, there are other social issues, such as disparity between the rich and the poor, environmental pollution, distrust of the government, injustice in the current system, which has torn our society into pieces. Without identifying and facing the real causes of all these social issues, problems will not be solved; but instead would intensify the unnecessary dilemma between social needs and nature conservation, damaging both the public interest and the natural environment. The sustainable and green vision that the Government has for 2030 and beyond would not be reached.

The HKBWS considers that the Hong Kong 2030+ is a golden opportunity for Hong Kong to restore the harmony within the society and to integrate environmental and ecological sustainability into the city’s long-term planning and development process in order to tackle the on-going social and environmental problems that we have been facing. Below is a summary of our comments on the consultation document, primarily focusing on the conservation and protection of Hong Kong’s natural assets.

1. Conservation measures are not purely for conservation

Nature conservation is not only important to our environment, but it is also vital for better health and well-being, increase in quality of life and thus generating economic benefits. Although there are areas of well-recognised conservation importance, the long-awaited designation of country/marine parks only occurred when there is a development need (e.g. the designation of Southwest Lantau Marine Park and the Sokos Island Marine Park seems to make way for the Hong Kong Airport Three Runway System). Some conservation measures are in fact mitigation measures of development projects (e.g. Brothers Marine Park is designated for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge development). We are concerned the so-called “environmental capacity” created would only be an excuse for more development elsewhere.

2. Lack of commitment in nature conservation

Protection and enhancement of our environment requires a commitment to nature conservation. However, the proposed development framework failed to avoid ecologically sensitive areas (e.g. reclamation at Lung Kwu Tan affects the habitats of horseshoe crab and Chinese White Dolphins). We consider that biodiversity conservation is still far from full scale integration into Hong Kong 2030+. It is also uncertain if BSAP will expand beyond the first five years and if a nature conservation trust will be set up as part of the long-term conservation measures.



Permitted dumping at wetlands in Pui O (Photo: Alan Lam)

3. Conservation cannot be achieved with currently flawed systems and legislation

Loopholes in existing legislation have allowed the ongoing ecological destruction of natural habitats. We constantly come across no enforcement power from Planning Department for areas without Development Permission Area (DPA), damaged wetland habitats were not reinstated back to original condition, dumping of construction wastes on private wetlands are permitted with the consent of the land owner, and the current Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system failed to effectively avoid or minimise adverse impacts. Changes in current policies and legislation is necessary to plug the loopholes for effective protection of Hong Kong’s natural assets.

4. Buffer zones are neglected and their values are not recognized

Buffer zones (e.g. Wetland Buffer Area, Green Belt, Agriculture zones, etc.) may not all be of high ecological and conservation value, yet, they have an important role in protecting and enhancing the conservation value of the core areas, i.e. preventing undesirable disturbances and developments, reduce the edge effect. We consider that the Government should not use these buffer zones for development, to avoid today's conservation areas in becoming tomorrow's buffer zone.

5. Threats to agricultural lands

The multiple importance of fallow agricultural land is neglected in the document (including its ecological, landscape, recreation and buffering value) and is not considered as a green asset of Hong Kong. Currently there is an enormous gap in between the land value of agricultural land for development and that for cultivation, which has led to the destruction and loss of arable farmland. Without a comprehensive policy on agricultural land and loopholes in existing legislation not plugged, we are concerned that the proposed "Agricultural Priority Areas" will only initiate more destruction than protection.

6. Generalization of our natural assets to green and blue

Terrestrial, aquatic and marine habitats from urban to countryside are all included in the green-blue assets. However, it is important to distinguish between habitats in urban and in rural areas as they have different ecological sensitivity and management strategies for maximising their unique functions in the city. We consider that the proposed blue-green strategies are only suitable for enhancement of the urban environment but not for strengthening the protection of our countryside. We are concerned that the generalisation of our natural assets to green and blue will eventually lead to a loss in our natural environment.



7. Concerns on East Lantau Metropolis (ELM)

We object to the ELM as the large scale reclamation and the transportation connection to Mui Wo would lead to significant adverse ecological impacts to the marine environment and to the unprotected South Lantau Coast. The human activities of such a large population (i.e. 400,000 to 700,000) on ELM will also inevitably

lead to undesirable disturbance to the neighbouring islands of conservation concern (e.g. Sunshine Island and Hei Ling Chau). A comprehensive ecological assessment should be conducted to assess if the area is suitable for development before proposing any development projects.



Ponds and wetlands next to the proposed Man Kam To Logistic corridor are already threatened by illegal dumping activity (photo taken in April 2017).

8. Concerns on New Territories North Development (NTN)

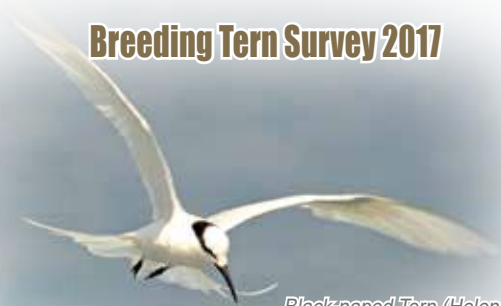
The San Tin/Lok Ma Chau development node encroaches into the Deep Bay Wetland Buffer Area, and together with the proposed Lok Ma Chau Loop development, would further fragment the Deep Bay ecosystem and affect the flight lines of birds. The Man Kam To Logistic corridor would intensify urban sprawl and lead to more destruction and disturbance to adjacent agricultural land, wetlands and fishponds of conservation concern. As hobby/leisure farms are currently loosely regulated, we are concerned that the promotion of Eco/Agro-tourism in NTN would actually lead to more destruction for recreational uses on paved areas and less area for cultivation, thus more arable agricultural land will be lost.

9. Unclear consultation timeline and no review mechanism

The timeline for Hong Kong 2030+ seems to indicate that there will be just one stage of public engagement, which cannot generate any meaningful dialogue between the Government and the public, and would lead to high level of public disappointment. The findings of all technical studies and assessment should not be used to polish up the proposed planning framework, but should be provided as the basis of the public engagement discussion. There should be indicators for monitoring and reviewing Hong Kong 2030+ such that the city can be adaptive to future changes and to avoid over-exploitation of natural resources.

*The Society's detailed response: <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/BBS/viewthread.php?tid=26393>

Breeding Tern Survey 2017



Black-naped Tern (Helen Fong)

After the migration season, summer arrives silently. Our resident birds have started breeding already. We can hear birdsong and see the courtship behaviour of birds in different habitats. On the offshore islands, our summer visitors have already arrived and our breeding tern survey has started as well. The Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department commissioned our Society to conduct the breeding tern surveys. We visit the Southeast and Northeast waters to conduct the survey every weekend. We have recorded the number of each tern species, including number of nests and juveniles. Please do not land on tern breeding islands in the breeding season, creating disturbance to these breeding colonies. Thank you very much.

Study of Feeding Habitats and Foraging Flight Lines of Ardeids Colonies

Summer comes and all the egrettries in Hong Kong have become noisy. Commissioned by AFCD your Society is studying the feeding habitats and foraging flight lines of ardeid colonies in summer. Most ardeid species in Hong Kong nest in trees, where the nesting site is called an “egretry”. Our surveyors will visit various egrettries and climb up to vantage points to conduct the surveys. The flightline study aims to study the feeding habitat utilization and flight paths taken by the breeding egrets and herons. Some egrettries are close to built-up areas, where we hope the birds are not disturbed by people.



*Chinese Pond Heron in breeding plumage.
(Chung Yun Tak)*

Society News & Projects | China Programme

Protecting Spoon-billed Sandpiper's home from invasive spartina grass in Leizhou

Every Spring, activities to promote nature appreciation and protection are held all over China during the officially-led “Birds Loving Week”. With this opportunity, different activities were held at our project sites. For example, on 24th March, a series of promotional and education activities were held in An’pu in Leizhou where invasive cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) is threatening intertidal mudflats. It grows very fast and can cover a large piece of intertidal mudflat within a few years. Therefore, on 26th March, we co-organised a spartina clearing activity with Zhanjiang Mangrove National Nature Reserve and Zhanjaing Bird Watching Society in Fucheng, Leizhou, Guangdong. A total of 38 volunteers joined the activity. It is impossible to remove all the invasive spartina at once, but at least this activity has raised the awareness of local government and the Nature Reserve. We will follow up with the local government authorities about this matter.



*It is not an easy task to clear the cordgrass in the soft mud
(Photo credit: Ye Zhi-ying)*



*Although the volunteers got muddy, they all feel contented
(Photo credit: Ye Zhi-ying)*



白腹隼鵰
陳巨輝
米埔

Bonelli's Eagle
Sam Chan
Mai Po

01/04/2017
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens

普通鵟
何錦榮
米埔

Eastern Buzzard
Ho Kam Wing
Mai Po

07/01/2017
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



遊隼
何建業
米埔

Peregrine Falcon
Kinni Ho Kin Yip
Mai Po

27/12/2016
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter

白肩鵬
余伯全
米埔

Eastern Imperial Eagle
Ractis John
Mai Po

04/12/2016

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





鰓
駱正華
米埔

Western Osprey
Lok Ching Wa Kevin
Mai Po

13/02/2016
DSLR Camera, 400mm f/2.8 lens + 2x teleconverter

Recollections of Michael Webster

In the last Bulletin we reported the sad news of the death of Michael Webster, our former Chairman (1974 – 81), Honorary Recorder (1966 – 73) and Honorary Treasurer (1972 -1981). From the mid nineteen-sixties until nineteen-ninety, Mike Webster's name was synonymous with birdwatching in Hong Kong. He was an outspoken critic of the Hong Kong Government's lack of environmental awareness and today we have much to thank him for. Mike was a great communicator and gave regular lectures on birdwatching, published many articles and co-authored Hong Kong's first modern format field guide to birds. After leaving Hong Kong in 1991, for his outstanding services to the Society, Michael was elected an Honorary Life Member.



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We asked four of Michael's contemporaries to provide a remembrance of Michael.

Clive Viney wrote:

When I arrived in Hong Kong in 1967 Michael Webster was the Honorary Recorder of the Society. In that capacity he did much to set the high standards of recording that are followed today. His real skill was communication. He never tired of promoting birdwatching and wrote a stimulating series of articles in the South China Morning Post, which awakened my interest in birdwatching. Mike also gave a series of evening lectures, which I attended and thoroughly enjoyed. He did much to develop the Society from a small group of expatriates and was especially keen to encourage local membership and environmental education. Under his guidance, bilingual bird charts were published by the Society and presented to schools. In 1975 the Society published Mike Webster's scholarly An annotated checklist of the birds of Hong Kong. With Karen Phillipps he published, early in 1976, Hong Kong's first modern field guide A new guide to the birds of Hong Kong. Under Mike Webster's chairmanship the Society went from strength to strength and he was always ready to challenge Government decisions that looked to have an unfavourable environmental impact.

Mike had a presence that commanded respect and he always knew what he was talking about. His enthusiasm for birdwatching was boundless and infectious. On the first Society outing to Mai Po that I attended, Mike was the authoritative leader. A garrulous lady would not be quiet and we were all surprised when Mike turned round and said "Madam will you not stop talking even for spoonbills". Spoonbills were rare then and a flock had just flown over. When, as a novice birdwatcher, I called him to say that I had seen a bizarre bird in Tai Po Kau, which I thought was a Black Baza his excitement was electric. A short while later he called back and said that to his surprise La Touche had reported the bird in China and he believed that I was right. I could not wait to try and see the bird again.

I last saw Mike at his Hong Kong farewell dinner in 1991 before he flew away to a new life in Thailand.

Richard Lewthwaite wrote:

Mike Webster's A new guide to the Birds of Hong Kong with illustrations by Karen Phillippo was in my backpack when I arrived in Hong Kong in the mid 1980s. So, I was very pleasantly surprised to find myself working with Mike when I took up a teaching post at the British Council. Mike was a senior manager, assigning duties to fifty or more teachers. Nicknamed 'The Captain', he was held in very high esteem by the teaching staff. He did everything with good humour and in an apparently effortless manner. He occasionally invited staff members to dinner at his Mid-Levels apartment, which he shared with his partner Andre.

He was extremely helpful to me in improving my birdwatching skills and showing me the key sites in the New Territories. He was a member of the China Resources team in the WWF HK Big Bird Races of the late 1980s, when other team members included Francis Batson, Richard Hale, Mike Turnbull and myself. We won in 1989, but rapid ticking of species was not Mike's thing and as I recall he didn't take part after 1990.

A thoroughly decent man!

David Melville wrote:

Arriving in Hong Kong in early 1974 to work on bird problems at Kai Tak airport I naturally contacted the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society – against the advice of my then employer, the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. HKBWS had been causing the department considerable embarrassment and trouble through various activities highlighting the wild animal trade through Hong Kong – in particular two members, Mike Webster and Fred Hechtel, had assisted Patricia Penn in the recording of a BBC radio programme 'Who is killing the China animals?' In those days hundreds of thousands of birds from the mainland were traded through the territory annually, and tens of thousands brought in for food including many birds of prey – not infrequently with their beaks broken off so they could not peck people – animal welfare was not on the agenda.

On first meeting Mike Webster I found a well-informed, caring man with a great knowledge of Hong Kong's birds, a strong commitment to animal welfare and a dedicated conservationist.

Mike was Chairman of HKBWS from 1974 to 1981 and his annual reports in the Hong Kong Bird Report give a

Lam Chiu Ying wrote:

I attended Mike's extramural course on Birds of Hong Kong and became a member of the Society in 1976. It was a 10-lecture course in which Mike systematically covered the bird families of Hong Kong. But the last lecture was spent talking about conservation issues in Hong Kong, especially the problems at Mai Po Marshes.

Mike was extremely keen to introduce birdwatching to the local population, believing that it would help build local awareness of the importance to protect the natural environment. He motivated me and Albert Cheung (classmate at the extramural course) to start organising Chinese-speaking outings and to produce a Chinese version of the Bulletin. He even asked me to join the Society committee when I was just a novice, for which I am forever grateful.

Mike was the voice of the Society and was instrumental in eventually prompting the government to greatly reduce the scale of the Fairview Park building project (which would otherwise have destroyed Mai Po Marshes completely) and to make what was left of the habitat a protected area. In this connection he had the 'honour' of being called to Government House, to see the Governor personally and to be sternly told not to create any more trouble.

Mike was my inspiration for conservation. I hope that what I have been doing in conservation did not disappoint him.



flavour of activities at the time – both the trade in birds and the conservation of the Mai Po Marshes featured strongly. Mike also played important roles in the Conservancy Association and the HKSPCA.

Mike ran extramural introductory birdwatching courses at the University of Hong Kong, which were always well attended but usually by expatriates. Following one such course, where a number of Hong Kong Chinese participated (including the Society's Honorary President), HKBWS initiated Chinese-speaking outings in 1977. At that time, I think it is fair to say that no one, including Mike or Lam Chiu Ying, could have foreseen the dramatic growth in birdwatching among the local population that has subsequently taken place – a great credit to all involved.

Mike's 1976 A new guide to the Birds of Hong Kong was ground breaking, being the first real 'field guide' to Hong Kong birds. However, due to limited funds many of the illustrations were in black and white and this book was soon overtaken by A colour guide to Hong Kong birds by Clive Viney, illustrated by Karen Phillipps – now in its eighth edition (2005).

After Mike moved to Thailand he continued to take an active interest in birds and I have a fond memory of meeting him in Chiang Mai in the early 1990s – a lot of chat about birds and conservation, together with great food and beer. Mike also wrote the Photographic Guide to the birds of Thailand (originally published 1997, reissued 2016 as the Pocket Photo Guide Birds of Thailand), illustrated with photos by Chew Yen Fook.

In recent years Mike and I had communicated by email – news of his walks with the dogs and the birds he had seen – or not, as the case may be, and the challenges of running a small store in a rural community.

Mike made important contributions to promoting birdwatching and conservation in both Hong Kong and Thailand – he will be missed.

" Looking back..."

By Mike Webster

(A version of this account was originally published in Bulletin 206 [winter 2007] -Ed.)

Mai Po

I first went to Mai Po on May 30, 1965... and was rewarded by a sighting of a Spoon-billed Sandpiper (not new to me, as I had the first sighting for Singapore a year or two before). Fred Hechtel was delighted; I was not yet a member of the Society, and he wanted me to take over as Recorder from Maura Benham. The Society in those days was tiny, about 30-40 members, of whom only a few were active birders. The Society was, almost literally, held together by Cdr. Edgar Webb, who was Chairman, Treasurer, and Bulletin Editor, convenor of outings, and almost everything else. (I do not have my papers and notes with me, so this article has to be from memory, and I cannot guarantee the dates, (except that first Mai Po visit.)

In the mid-sixties, we were mainly "simple birdwatchers", as Edgar Webb liked to describe himself. We were still finding out what was there, and many of the rarer species which are now seen every year were first recorded during this period. I can

remember the first Asian Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher and Nordmann's Greenshank, the first Yellow-bellied Tit and Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush and several others. Identification was a problem; for the Yellow-bellied Tit I actually carried my copy of La Touche's Handbook of the Birds of Eastern China to Tai Po Kau, and sat down to compare it feather by feather!

In 1966, the Cultural Revolution erupted in China; we did not know what was going to happen to Hong Kong, and understandably Government was preoccupied with relations with our giant neighbour. Conservation was not forgotten, though it had nothing like the priority which it has nowadays, and in 1968, Fred Hechtel produced the first detailed report on the Mai Po Marshes for a Government committee. From this early date, Fred, Dave Robertson and I, together with our fellow committee members of the HKBWS, already realised that Mai Po could only be conserved if we could get a lot of Chinese people involved, and if it could be presented as an educational facility. Clive Briffett developed this theme enthusiastically, initiating a number of schemes aimed at schools, but he was, as far as I remember, not in Hong Kong for very long. The first attempt to provide Chinese names for each species was made by Lawrence Tam, after discussion with me, in the 1972 edition of the Checklist.

It so happened that the South China Morning Post asked me to write a weekly article on birds, and this appeared regularly for almost four years. At the same time, I was Executive Secretary of the Conservancy Association. I lost no opportunity of publicising Mai Po and other conservation concerns in the papers and on radio, making me well-known (or notorious?) among expatriates... but not amongst the Chinese.

I also gave a series of lecture courses on birdwatching at the Hong Kong University Extra-Mural Department, which attracted the first Chinese birders, one being C.Y.Lam. The Fairview Park project, which sliced off a large area of excellent birding marshland (where Pheasant-tailed Jacanas bred), was probably, in hindsight, a blessing in disguise. It enabled us to make vigorous protests, and to gain much-needed publicity. About this time General John Chapple (now Field Marshal Sir John Chapple) became Commander British Forces, and was able to push for conservation of the marshes at a very high level. David Melville, in the Agricultural and Fisheries Department, was doing what he could to help.

In the late seventies, I became less active, and the development of Mai Po as an educational facility was carried through by WWF (HK), with Clive Viney and David Melville. The number of Chinese birders gradually increased, largely because of CY, Albert Cheung and the Conservancy Association.

Parallel with this development was the increasingly scientific approach to identification, aided by good field guides illustrated in colour, and later by ringing schemes. My version of the Checklist was further improved by Mike Chalmers in about 1984, and again by the recent much more extensive Avifauna of Hong Kong by Geoff Carey and others. I would hardly recognise the Society as it is now, nor would I recognise many of the species added to the Hong Kong list in the last 15-20 years! It is interesting to see the shift in emphasis towards ringing data and photography in recent reports. A living Society will continue to change, as it should, and in another fifty years it will be quite different from what it is now. This is how it should be.

The regular Reports and bulletins indicate that there are far more birds, and far more species, on the Mai Po Marshes than there were in the sixties and seventies. This has been brought about by the management of the core area by Worldwide Fund For Nature (HK)... and probably even more by the destruction of alternative habitats in China. This suggests that Mai Po is even more important now than when we started working for its conservation in the late sixties and early seventies.

Satellite tracking of Mai Po's Black-tailed Godwit 2017

An exciting project will be carried out at Mai Po on the globally Near Threatened Black-tailed Godwit.

WWF-HK is honoured to cooperate with the Research Center for Eco-environmental Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences on a satellite tracking project of Black-tailed Godwit, one of the twelve species of globally threatened shorebird recorded at Mai Po.

The wintering population of Black-tailed Godwit arrives Mai Po in August and leaves around April in the following year; and the spring passage population passes through Mai Po in breeding plumage from late March to early May. Based on re-sightings of the individuals carrying Hong Kong leg flags, we know that our wintering population sometimes use the fishponds and mudflat at the Shenzhen side of Deep Bay, when they migrate to their breeding ground, they will stopover at Bohai Bay, China. However, we know not much about where the two populations breed or where the spring population spends their winter.



Black-tailed Godwit wintering at Mai Po (Credit: Neil Fifer)



Black-tailed Godwit stopover at Mai Po in spring (Credit: John and Jemi Holmes)



The 4.5g satellite transmitter (Credit: WWF-HK)

Five satellite transmitters will be deployed on Black-tailed Godwits this year. The transmitters record GPS locations every few days and automatically send the signal to the satellite system. By downloading the data from the satellite website, we can follow the Godwits' migration. Each transmitter only weighs 4.5 grams, which is equivalent to around 3% of the bird's body weight, and is designed to track the bird for a year before it drops off.

This project will enable us to understand the movement of Black-tailed Godwit in the Deep Bay area, their migration route, migration timing and breeding ground location. All this information is vital for the long-term conservation of this species along the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.

Priority Seats in Floating Hides for Surveyors

Since 1990s, AFCD has carried out the "Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site Waterbird Monitoring Programme". The data gathered by this programme is vital for the long-term conservation and management of the Mai Po and Inner Deep Ramsar Site. Owing to the importance of the monitoring programme, WWF now reserves "priority seats" for the waterbird surveyors. Notices have been placed on those seats specifying the date of the survey. Please kindly reserve those seats for the waterbird surveyors so that the monitoring programme can be carried out successfully and accurately. We rely on your support to the long-term conservation of Mai Po and waterbirds, thank you!



African raptor spectacle I

Text/Photo: Samson So



Yellow-billed Kite

Africa is a huge continent, its varied natural environments include coasts to high mountains, savanna to woodlands, lakes and rivers.

Apart from abundant species of mammals, birds living on this continent also tell the same story of versatility. There are around ten thousand species of bird in the world, of which some three hundred of them belong to the order Falconiformes, the diurnal raptors. They are high rank consumers of the food chain, living as hunters, predators and scavengers. Their abundance and diversity are good indicators of environmental integrity and healthiness.

Open savanna is a very typical habitat in Africa. Besides endless savanna, there are microhabitats such as bushes, tree canopies, river banks, puddles and drylands here and there to provide habitat and foraging places for all living creatures. These microhabitats are



Bateleur

also foraging and breeding grounds for raptors. To choose a representative one, the Secretary Bird is the only member in the Family Sagittariidae and is endemic to Africa. During foraging, the Secretary Bird marches with its' long legs and searches through the grassland for small mammals, snakes or large insects. The Secretary Bird builds a platform-like nest on tree with a flat canopy. This precious and properly made nest will be re-used year after year. Just like the other raptors, the availability of prey is not the only limiting factor to the population. Availability of nesting places also plays an important role.



Secretary Bird



Yellow-billed Kite is drinking



Flying Bateleur can be identified by its especially short tail



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When the land is heated up during the day large raptors make use of the thermals and soar over the plain. Bateleur is the only member of Genus Terathopius. Its unique short tail and lengthy wings are remarkably easy to identify while soaring. Like other kites in the world, the Yellow-billed Kite of Africa possesses a forked tail. It is also a scavenger.

It is not just Bateleur and Yellow-billed Kite that soar above the savanna. True eagles, or members of *Aquila* spp., are really the important representatives among numerous raptors. There are 13 species of *Aquila* in the world and some are found in Africa, including Verreaux's Eagle, Steppe Eagle, and Tawny Eagle. Steppe Eagle and Tawny Eagle were once regarded as different subspecies of the same type. Taxonomists later divided them into species level. Members of *Aquila* spp. are not only able to seize large-sized prey, they are also opportunists which may act as scavengers while at the same time performing kleptoparasitism and stealing prey from other raptors. Some may even feast on swarms of termites that appear when the rainy season comes. To see the eagles, birdwatchers should pay particular attention to movement in the sky as well as looking for large perching birds on tree tops.



Tawny Eagle



Verreaux's Eagle in the rain



Adult African Fish Eagle



Adolescent African Fish Eagle

There are eight members of Genus *Haliaeetus* in the world (including the White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* which is well-known among birdwatchers in Hong Kong). African Fish Eagle is endemic to Africa and is a star among African birds. The national bird of Zimbabwe, it is also one of the most widespread raptors in Africa and can be found in almost all feasible habitats south of the Sahara desert. The ideal places to observe them are fresh water lakes, rivers and swamps. The African Fish Eagle nests on big trees near lakes and will defend territory. Even though it is called "Fish Eagle" in English, it will also prey on birds and mammals, including plundering the prey from other birds.




African Crowned Eagle

Two of the largest raptors in Africa are the Martial Eagle - living in savanna, - and the African Crowned Eagle of woodland habitats. Martial Eagle can catch sizeable prey such as antelope and Rock Hyrax. It is one of the apex predators in savanna. Another mega-size African raptor is the African Crowned Eagle, specialised to prey on forest primates. As they need to move around to forage in dense forest, their wings are shorter relative to their bodies. But 'shorter' is only a relative term. The wingspan of African Crowned Eagle can reach 180 centimeters! The survival of African Crowned Eagle largely depends on mature forest and the abundance of prey. Their presence is therefore a sign of a healthy ecosystem.



Martial Eagle

Raptors are important indicators in an ecosystem. The joy of seeing them in the wild and the challenges in identifying species make raptors a favourite target among lots of nature lovers. I spend some three months a year in African countries and there are many interesting sightings from my works. I sincerely hope you enjoy my sharing and the in forthcoming bird anecdotes I will share some more about raptors in Africa. 

For more pictures and texts from Samson So, please browse "Samson So Photography" and "Eco Institute" on Facebook.



Birding in Taiwan Daxueshan National Forest Recreation Area

Text/photo: Cheng Kwok Seung

Plumbeous Redstart



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We started from Taichung Railway Station, took the National Highway towards Dongshi District, and arrived at the entrance of Daxueshan Forest, after about two hours. From there, our car climbed along the winding road towards higher altitudes and finally reached Daxueshan National Forest Recreation Area. The entry of the forest trail is marked by a signpost.

At the entrance, there is a wide bridge over a small stream. Under the left side of the bridge, the stream makes a vertical fall of about five meters. The stream continues to flow to the right and head downhill. This is the favourite spot for Plumbeous Redstart, which Taiwan birders refer to as Dark Grey Water Thrush.

After a few minutes, a bird darted out from the undergrowth like a bullet, and landed on a rock in the stream. The bird's dark grey body moved about actively, and quickly dipped into the water. When it surfaced again, it treated us to the sight of fanning open its rufous-chestnut tail and flicking vigorously on the water surface, creating chains of splashes.

It perched upright on a rock, its body straight, and the rufous tail flicked open, moving left and right, up and down, full of energy and looking so lovely. I was mesmerised by the moves and turns of the redstart, its flight in circles so smooth and beautiful that I found myself dancing in joy.

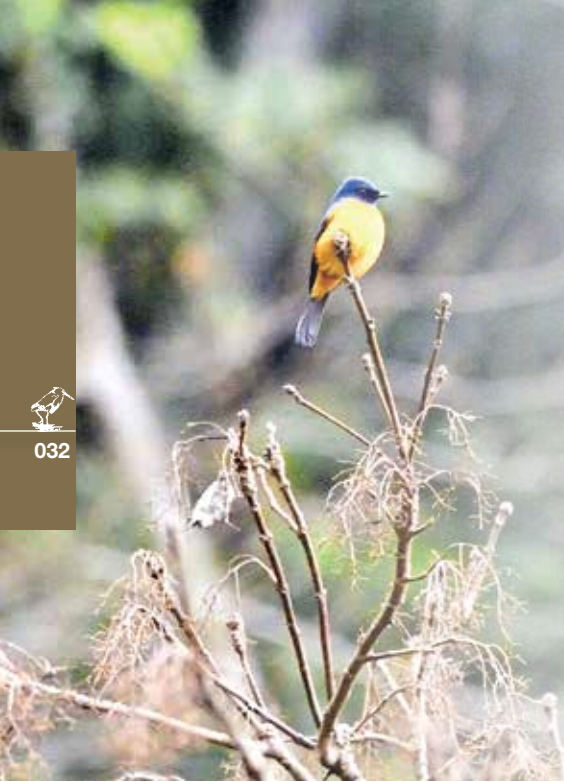
"Red-tailed" (Chinese name) Redstart and Dark Grey Water Thrush, the two names put together totally summed up the bird's appearance, habits, and habitat. Bird watching is to embrace differences, and broaden one's view.

We continued to walk upwards and arrived at the 23km birding platform and saw a *Idesia polycarpa* tree on the slope below us. The tree was over ten meters tall, its branches that extended in all directions were already greyish brown, the pointy heart-shaped leaves were dry. What caught the eye though, were the clusters of fruit, hanging all over the tree, like stringed beads. The fruits are round berries ranging from orange to scarlet red growing in clusters, looking so bright and juicy under the clear blue sky. This was like a painting by a genius, splattering drops of purple and red on a light blue canvas, drops of every size, on different spots and corners, in chaotic harmony. A picture composed by nature.

An Island Thrush was attracted to the feast on the *Idesia* tree. It landed on a greyish brown stem with dry leaves. The thrush's characteristic dark body, snowy white head and throat, and bright yellow bill contrasted with the clusters of scarlet red fruits around it to create a delightfully beautiful picture. The colours of nature, were in balance and harmony. I felt at one with the earth, with all creatures.



Island Thrush



Vivid Niltava

Leaving the birding platform, we continued our way up and just turning a corner, we found ourselves in a broadleaf and coniferous mixed forest. I saw a bird hidden in the thick bush, revealing only some hints of blue and orange-yellow. An elderly couple beside me quickly jumped into action, while the lady was still adjusting the position of her telescope, the gentleman was already firing shots at high speed.

I searched along the branch and saw a fearless-looking male Vivid Niltava. Known as a “liu li” (glazed tile) in Taiwan instead of a “xian weng” (fairy flycatcher) as in mainland China. The blue and orange plumage created a balance, giving an impression of glamorous colors jammed with a crystal bright aura. The Vivid Niltava is like a precious gem, a piece of sapphire that flies under the sun reminiscent of the beauty of a glazed tile. I stood quietly admiring it, enjoying the gift given to me by nature.

Back at the bird watching platform we found a female Swinhoe’s Pheasant feeding on a slope about three meters below us. With red legs and facial skin, her brown back was covered with golden coloured arrow-shaped streaks extending all the way to the belly, and out towards the tail. Thus even the female bird exuded a graceful elegance.

Four or five female pheasants had appeared but moved aside as the male bird took centre stage. The long awaited star had everyone’s attention the minute it appeared. The male Swinhoe’s Pheasant is even more spectacular than its female counterpart. Upperparts of cobalt blue, bright red, and chrome green, but entirely white on the mantle; the scarlet facial skin around both eyes highlighted the white feathers on the crown. The male pheasant radiated colour, outshining the female’s golden sheen. Such a fascinating world of birds.

Swinhoe’s Pheasant, feeds on young sprouts, berries, and earthworms, at early morning and dusk, it is extremely shy, and highly alert, but after years of effort by Taiwanese birders, the pheasants can now feed openly at ease on the slope below the 23km birding platform at Daxueshan National Forest Recreation Area, sharing the space with humans. Maintaining a balance and treating all creatures with respect is the way for us to share nature in peace.



Swinhoe's Pheasant female



Swinhoe's Pheasant male



(Readers are reminded that this Bulletin Bird News account is not part of the Society's official record, and reports and/or URFs may need to be submitted regarding some species – URFs for those species highlighted in yellow on the list downloadable from the BWS website – Ed.)

January

- ▶ With a mean monthly temperature of 18.5 C, this was ranked the warmest January on record by the Hong Kong Observatory. Three rarities were found - a **Japanese Tit** at Lung Fu Shan on 19th (LL), a **Lesser Whitethroat** of the subspecies *blythi* on the scrubby cliff beside the Marine Police station at Tsim Bei Tsui from 23rd to the end of the month (MK, KH, et al.), both potential 2nd records for Hong Kong, and a **Baikal Bush Warbler** at Kowloon Bay from 19th and into March (KH).
- ▶ The latter was about the 9th for Hong Kong and the first to be seen by multiple observers, all previous records involving trapped birds at Mai Po. A small patch of urban greenery on the 3rd floor podium of the Telford Garden estate, above a shopping mall and MTR station, held this bird for at least 5 weeks. A **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** was also found there on 20th (KH).
- ▶ Of the key birds from earlier in the winter, the **Siberian Crane** remained at Mai Po throughout the month, hardly ever straying from Pond 16/17, the **Greater White-fronted Geese** were occasionally seen at Mai Po or San Tin to the end of the month, whilst the **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** and **Booted Warbler** at San Tin were only seen on the first day or two of the month and not afterwards.
- ▶ The series of late records of **Amur Falcon** continued from December, with further singles at Mai Po on 12th (DAD) and Shui Hau Wan, Lantau on 17th (YM), the first ever January records. Before the present winter, the latest autumn/winter date was 25 November.
- ▶ Another species recorded for the first time in January was **Arctic Warbler**, with singles at Ho Man Tin on 3rd (KPC), Kai Tak on 9th (MK) and Stanley on 25th (JAA).
- ▶ Presumably as a result of the warm weather, a number of passerines, especially Pallas's Leaf Warblers and also thrushes, bluetails, flycatchers, pipits and buntings generally, were found in much smaller numbers than expected during winter atlas work (JAA, RWL, YYT).
- ▶ Overall waterbird numbers were also again rather low, but among birds of interest found in Deep Bay were a **Pallas's Gull** and a **Gull-billed Tern**, the latter rare in winter, on 3rd (DAD), a **Nordmann's Greenshank** and five **Vega-type Gulls** on 14th (RWL), and 12 **Terek Sandpipers**, quite a large number for the time of year, on 31st (JAA).
- ▶ In addition, there were reports of a **Northern Lapwing** at San Tin on 2nd (TJW) and a **Common Ringed Plover** at Nam Sang Wai on 22nd (per JAA).
- ▶ Among other waterbirds found were a **Black Stork** over Shing Mun Reservoir (AP) on 1st and a **Mandarin Duck** at Siu Lek Yuen on 6th (SY).
- ▶ Notable birds reported from forest/shrubland areas included a **Brown Wood Owl** at Ng Tung Chai on 11th (JAA), a male **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** at Clearwater Bay CP on 12th (JAA), single **Chestnut-flanked White-eyes** at Kadoorie FBG, Shek Kong Catchwater and Tai O between 20th and 23rd (LS, RWL, JAA), a male **Fujian Niltava** at Tai Po Kau on 25th an **Ashy Drongo** of the subspecies *hopwoodi* at Shek Kong Catchwater from 25th (JC), and 15 **Asian House Martins** there on 31st (EMSK).
- ▶ Long Valley was dry and unusually poor for birds throughout the month, but Ping Yeung held a **Black-headed Bunting** on 15th (JAA).

February

- ▶ In a mild and sunny month, two potential additions to the Hong Kong list were reported - a **Great Egret** of the large subspecies *alba* at Shuen Wan on 7th (JAA) and a **Black Swan** at Mai Po from 25th (SY), the latter very likely to be adjudged of ex-captive origins.





- ▶ Other rarities found were a **Red-headed Bunting** at San Tin on 4th (JAA), the 7th for Hong Kong, and a very elusive male **Chinese Blue Flycatcher** found at Shek Kong Catchwater on 20th (MK) and then intermittently seen into March, about the 8th record for Hong Kong.
- ▶ The **Siberian Crane** remained at Mai Po throughout the month, and the **Baikal Bush Warbler** was seen at Telford Garden up to 24th.
- ▶ The mild weather conditions resulted in three earliest ever spring records - a **Brown Booby** at Sha Chau on 3rd (SH), the earliest by 62 days, a singing **Large Hawk Cuckoo** at Lam Tsuen on 4th (JAMC), the earliest by 4 days, and a **Eurasian Hobby** at Tai Shang Wai on 25th (MK), the earliest by 26 days.
- ▶ In addition, a **Blue Whistling Thrush** was seen with two young at Aberdeen on 25th (GW), a very early date for young, and there were reports of an **Eastern Crowned Warbler** at Tai Po Kau on 4th (YL) and four Whiskered Terns at San Tin on 13th (DAD), both rare species in winter, and a **Russet Sparrow** at Long Valley on 25th (MRL).
- ▶ Among other birds reported in Deep Bay were two **Vega Gulls** and a **Gull-billed Tern** on 17th (DAD), a **Paddyfield Warbler** the same day (JAA), a **Manchurian Bush Warbler** on 19th (MK) and a **Common Chiffchaff** on 23rd (DJS), the latter the second of the winter.
- ▶ Elsewhere there were reports of a **Brown Wood Owl** at Tai Po Kau on 4th (YL), a male **Mandarin Duck** at Tsing Tam Reservoir, Shek Kong Catchwater the same day (EMSK), and a **Brown Fish Owl** there on 5th (CM).
- ▶ Two **Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrushes** were at Kadoorie FBG on 19th (SY), and a female **Small Niltava** at Shek Kong Catchwater on 21st (P&MW).

March

- ▶ Over the past 10 years, March has overtaken April as the top month in spring for Hong Kong first records. This year March was warmer and drier than usual and produced four potential firsts - an adult **Thayer's Gull** in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 4th-5th (KFC, YM), a **La Touche's Leaf Warbler** (aka Claudia's Leaf Warbler) at Ng Tung Chai on 5th (JAA, JM), an **Ogilvie-Grant's Leaf Warbler** (aka Kloss's Leaf Warbler) at Tai Po Kau on 16th (JM), both in song, and a male **Maroon Oriole** at Po Toi from 30th into early April (P&MW).
- ▶ Two other rarities were found - a **Hill Blue Flycatcher** at King's Park from 3rd to 9th (per GT, P&MW), about the 9th Hong Kong record, and an **Emei Leaf Warbler** in song at Pak Sha O on 15th (GJC), the 3rd for Hong Kong, whilst the long-staying **Siberian Crane** remained at Mai Po throughout the month and the **Chinese Blue Flycatcher** found at Shek Kong Catchwater in February was still present on 5th (CFL).
- ▶ A count of five **Pallas's Gulls** in Deep Bay on 8th (FD) is the highest on record. Two other species were present in unusually large numbers - 147 **Caspian Terns** in Deep Bay on 27th (JAA) and up to 100 **Silver-backed Needletails** at Shek Kong Catchment on 16th-17th (JC).
- ▶ A leg-flagged **Saunders's Gull**, "EA", photographed in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 12th (KCWL) was flagged at Yangcheng on the Jiangsu coast on 7 July 2010 and had been seen in Deep Bay in a previous winter (per JAA).
- ▶ A **Grey-faced Buzzard** at Po Toi on 15th (GW) and a **Chestnut-crowned Warbler** at Chai Wan the same day (CFL) were followed by sightings of other migrants, including a **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** at Cheung Chau on 16th (MDW), a late **Russet Sparrow** at Sha Tin on 17th (FD), an **Oriental Plover** at Mai Po on 22nd (DAD), a **Narcissus Flycatcher** at Nam Sang Wai on 23rd (MLT), two **Swinhoe's Minivets** at Po Toi on 25th (P&MW), a **Siberian Thrush** at Shing Mun the same day (TJW), an **Ashy Minivet** at Mai Po (JAA) and a **Brambling** at Lamma (GM), both on 27th, a singing **Eastern Crowned Warbler** at Pak Sha O on 28th (GJC) and a **Brown-headed Thrush** at Po Toi on 31st (P&MW).
- ▶ Also heard singing were **Rufous-tailed Robins** at Shek Kong Catchwater on 20th (JC), **Asian Stubtails** at Lion Rock CP on 21st (MDW) and a **Chinese Grosbeak** at Cheung Chau on 25th (MDW).



Outings

Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties(1...3)	Target species
2/9/2017 (Sat)	0900 - 1300	Luk Keng (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (09:00 Pavilion at junction of Nam Chung Rd & Luk Keng Rd)	★	Forest birds & Waterbirds
10/9/2017 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (Public Ferry Pier to Po Toi Island)) <i>Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, so participants may decide their own returning time.</i>	★★	Migrants
16/9/2017 (Sat)	TBC	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on Sep 14 on Discussion Forum)		
24/9/2017 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (12yrs old & above only / Registration Required) (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
7/10/2017 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Long Valley (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Outside Maxim's MX, Sheng Shui Rail Station)	★★	Farmland and water birds
15/10/2017 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (Public Ferry Pier to Po Toi Island)) <i>Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, so participants may decide their own returning time.</i>	★★	Migrants
22/10/2017 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (12yrs old & above only / Registration Required) (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
29/10/2017 (Sun)	TBC	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on Oct 27 on Discussion Forum)		
4/11/2017 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Nam Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 V Cuisine Restaurant, near Exit G2, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	★	Waterbirds
5/11/2017 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Long Valley (08:00 Pavilion beside public toilet at Yin Kong Village)	★★	Farmland and water birds
12/11/2017 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Ferry Pier (Ferry pier to Po Toi Island)) <i>Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, participants can decide their own returning time.</i>	★★	Migrants
18/11/2017 (Sat)	0800 - 1400	Mai Po Nature Reserve (12yrs old & above only / Registration Required) (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
26/11/2017 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	★★★	Forest birds
2/12/2017 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tai Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 V Cuisine Restaurant, near Exit G2, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	★	Waterbirds
10/12/2017 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Pui O (08:00 Exit B, Tung Chung MTR Station)	★	Wintering forest & farmland birds
17/12/2017 (Sun)	TBC	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on Dec 15 on Discussion Forum)		
31/12/2017 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	★★★	Forest birds

Outing Type	Outing Fee for HKBWS Member	Outing Fee for Non-Member	Registration
	Free of Charge	Free of Charge	Not required
	Free of Charge	HK\$30 (\$10 for student 18yrs old or below)	Not required
	HK\$60 (Student Member: HK\$30)	HK\$120	Registration required

Outing Booking Slip

I would like to register the following HKBWS outings:

** HKBWS will re-confirm with contact person of their attendance 1 week 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*	Required information for Mai Po Outing only	
						Meeting Point (Kln Tong/MP)	Age Group (✓ where appropriate)
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs

** 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 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 Yellow, Red or Black is hoisted (or is expected to be hoisted) by the Hong Kong Observatory 1 hour before outing, 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.





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