

THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1967



Published by

THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

Price: Four Dollars

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Records Compiled by
M. A. WEBSTER

CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
Introduction	2
Report on the Birds, 1967	4
Systematic List, 1967	6
Gulls of the South China Coast	31
The Asiatic Dowitcher	34
Bird Watching in Hong Kong, 1947-57	40
Early Days	44
Pacific Crossing	46
Photography	50
Birds of Aberdeen	53
Storks	56
Conservation	59
"Shorter Notes" Birds of a Feather	64
Another Sea Eagle's Nest	64
Cousin Island	65
Recording	69
Sight-records of Rare Birds	70
Application Form and Objects of the H.K.B.W.S.	71
Map at the back

Edited by

R. E. Hale

Published in 1968

by the

HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

c/o The Chartered Bank, Hong Kong.

(A registered Society under the Hong Kong Societies Ordinance)

INTRODUCTION

We have now passed our tenth anniversary, the Society having been inaugurated on 7th August 1957. Two articles have been written in connection with this and will be found on later pages. The Society has gone from strength to strength during its ten years, and our membership remains at a very high level. Although many members, both past and present, have been instrumental in making the Society what it is today, a large amount of credit must go to our Chairman, Commander Webb, for providing constant enthusiasm, "chivvying" and innumerable cups of tea and biscuits at meetings of the Committee.

We were saddened by the news of the death in England of Cyril Dale who had been secretary of the Society for some time prior to his departure from Hong Kong in 1966. Mrs. Dale, to whom all our sympathies go out, has been very kind and presented our library with two books in Cyril's memory. These are:—The Birds of Hong Kong (New Edition).

A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain & Europe (Revised Edition)

Outings during the year were as follows:—

2nd January	Pak Tam
22nd January	Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau
9th February	Long Valley/Tai Po Kau
26th February	Sek Kong Woods/Lam Tsuen Valley
12th March	Ho Chung Valley
27th March	Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau
16th April	Castle Peak Monastery/Ping Shan
30th April	Mai Po (Evening outing)
28th May	Sha Tau Kok Egrettry

30th August	Mai Po
18th September	Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau
1st October	Mai Po/Lam Tsuen Valley
16th October	Ping Shan/Luen Tak
29th October	Mai Po
13th November	Tai Po Kau/Lam Tsuen Valley
10th December	Ho Chung Valley
26th December	Ping Shan/Mong Tseng

The disturbances in the late spring and early summer only caused us to cancel one outing due to be held on 15th May, although fewer people than usual turned up at the Sha Tau Kok Egrettry two weeks later.

We had a number of overseas visitors during the year and were able to show most of them some of the bird life of the Colony. Amongst these were Mr. & Mrs. Brooke from the U.S.A., and Dr. & Mrs. Herklots.

Mr. Hechtel unfortunately had to give up his ringing programme, for personal reasons, but continued to put in a lot of hard work on the Provisional Council for the Use and Conservation of the Countryside. Later in this report an article on conservation, or lack of it, in the Colony appears, and we hope that by the time the next report is published to be able to show some progress in this field.

Trapping and shooting continued unabated throughout the year, partly because the forces of law and order had other graver matters to occupy them. Several instances were seen over the Christmas period. Any member or non-member who is interested in helping to prevent this is encouraged to apply, either through the Society or direct to the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, to become an Honorary Game Warden.

The sales of the new edition of the Check List have been going well, but a number of copies are still available from the Society at a cost of HK\$10, Stg. 15/- or US\$1.75.

Captain Rowe kindly gave the Society six books on birds and these are now in the library.

The Hon. Recorder comments on the birds seen during the year in the next article, but I would like to conclude this introduction by wishing everyone an even better year than last for bird watching.

R. E. H.

REPORT ON THE BIRDS

There have rarely been more than a handful of active bird-watchers in Hong Kong, and each annual report reflects the particular interests of those "in residence". This year is no exception, although for once the outstanding feature of the year was in evidence more on Hong Kong Island than in the New Territories. I refer to the irruption of White-Headed Black Bulbuls, whose mewing call became familiar to all of us in February and March. The irruption is treated in more detail than is usual in this report.

Two new species have been added to the Colony List, the Asiatic Dowitcher and the Emerald Dove. The former is of considerable rarity anywhere, and records outside the breeding area are few and far between. The admission of the Emerald Dove to the list is more controversial (to say the least!), and it is therefore treated in a special addendum to the report.

The cold weather in the early part of the year brought unusually large numbers of Gulls, but the rarities were surprisingly few. A White Stork, a Crested Kingfisher, and a Pheasant-Tailed Jacana provided the more spectacular sightings, but clearer evidence of the harshness of the winter is found in the records of the rarer thrushes; at least 9 Dusky Thrushes, in 7 different localities, compare with two in 1956, and 21 in 6 localities in 1960, the only years in which this species has previously been recorded; 13 separable White's Thrushes compare with a total of 18 between 1953 and 1966.

After the special attention paid to the Deep Bay Marshes by Major A. M. Macfarlane during the breeding season of 1966, it was disappointing that the political unrest prevented more regular visits last year. However, it appears that the Little Grebe, Moorhen, and Watercock again bred.

The Asiatic Dowitcher at the end of August was the prelude to an unusually good autumn and winter. Black Storks, White Ibises, and Lesser Spoonbills wintered on the Shum Chun River; Shelduck were there in record numbers, and the Pelicans arrived early and in larger numbers than usual. Among the waders, the rarest were Caspian Plovers, a Long-Toed Stint, Black-Winged Stilts, and Avocets. There were a good number of

Flycatchers in autumn, and a Hoopoe and a Chinese Pitta among the more exotic species.

A total of 224 species were recorded, compared with 239 the previous year. With reference to last year's report, I would like to refer again to the problem of Eagle identification. After considerable correspondence with AMM, I am convinced that the juvenile seen by him between January 9th and March 6th, 1966, was *not* a Spotted Eagle. I am still not convinced that it was a Steppe Eagle, though I admit that I have no alternative to offer. After spending some hours with FOPH identifying a captive Imperial Eagle, I am even less ready to accept field records of Eagles than I was before, except in the very limited number of sightings of birds with unmistakable characteristics (e.g. Imperial Eagles with white scapulars).

M. A. W.

BIRD REPORT 1967

2. Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Up to 15 in Deep Bay until March 5th. One off Sha Tau Kok on March 25th (MAW). First winter record December 24th (REH).

4. Little Grebe *Podiceps ruficollis*

Seen throughout the year in various parts of the New Territories. At least two pairs thought to have bred on the Deep Bay marshes. One in Hong Kong Harbour on December 12th (MAW).

7. Spotted-Billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*

Up to 48 in the early part of the year, last seen on March 5th. 7 off Mong Tseng on April 21st (A.T. & P.M. Marshall per FOPH). First winter record December 3rd, with a maximum of 70 on December 26th. All records from Deep Bay.

8. Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Seen frequently in Deep Bay up to March 5th, and from November 19th to end of year. One off Little Sai Wan on September 24th (MPR). Four in Silvermine Bay, and 30-40 off Hay Ling Chau on December 28th (DGR).

12. Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*

One at Mai Po on January 1st (EDW). Common on the Deep Bay marshes from April 21st to October 29th. One ringed on March 31st (FOPH).

13. Chestnut Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*

Single birds at Mai Po on August 30th (DGR), and September 7th (DJG).

15. Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One at Mai Po on February 15th (DJG).

16. Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

A flock of at least 80 at Luen Tak on December 26th (EDW, MAW, FOPH, AH, RAIW).

17. Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*

Common on the Deep Bay marshes and near Sha Tau Kok, where it bred, with a few records elsewhere in the New Territories. One in Hong Kong Harbour on October 2nd (AH).

18. Cattle Egret *Ardeola ibis*

Five at Lo Wu on February 9th (MPR, MEMB). From April 13th to September 9th, seen on the Deep Bay marshes and at Sha Tau Kok egrettry, where about 50 pairs nested. Three at Mai Po on November 5th (MPR).

19. Little Green Heron *Butorides striatus*

One near Tai Lam Chung on January 8th (REH) and January 26th (R de la M). One or two seen frequently on the Deep Bay marshes between August 20th and October 16th.

20. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Common throughout the year on the Deep Bay marshes. About 50 pairs nested at the Sha Tau Kok egrettry.

22. Swinhoe's Egret *Egretta eulophotes*

Up to six at Sha Tau Kok egrettry between April 25th and July 2nd. At least one pair nested.

23. Reef Egret *Egretta sacra*

One at Big Wave Bay on July 22nd (REH). Two at Shek O on July 23rd (REH).

24. Great Egret *Egretta alba*

Common throughout the year on the Deep Bay marshes, but particularly in winter.

25. Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Up to 150 on the Deep Bay marshes until April 25th, and from August 30th to the end of the year.

26. Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

One at Mai Po on March 25th (FOPH). Up to 4 on the Deep Bay marshes between August 30th and December 3rd (MAW, EDW, RAIW, AH, REH).

27. White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

One at Ping Shan, and again over Mai Po on February 5th (REH), and on the Shum Chun River on February 19th (MAW). This is the second colony record.

28. Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Three over the Shum Chun River on February 19th (MAW). Ten in the same area on November 19th, two on December 17th, and fifteen on December 31st (MAW).

29. White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Five at Mai Po on October 8th (MAW), and two there on December 3rd (REH). One at Ping Shan on December 26th (MAW, FOPH). Two at Mai Po on December 31st (TPG).

31. Lesser Spoonbill *Platalea minor*

The following records are all from the Mai Po Marshes: February 5th, one (REH); February 9th, three (MAW, EDW); February 12th, one (MAW); February 19th, two (MAW); November 26th, one (MAW, REH); December 31st, one (MAW, TPG).

32. **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*
Two at Mai Po on April 30th (MAW).
33. **Yellow-Nib Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha*
Up to 100 over the Deep Bay marshes from August 30th to end of year (EDW, AH, MAW, REH).
36. **Teal** *Anas crecca*
Up to 100 on the Shum Chun River between February 9th and 19th (MAW, EDW). Up to 8 over the Deep Bay marshes from September 18th to end of year (REH, MAW, DGR). Four near Shing Mun Reservoir on October 8th (DJG).
39. **Wigeon** *Anas penelope*
32 at Mai Po on December 31st (TPG).
40. **Pintail** *Anas acuta*
Five at Mai Po on December 29th (DGR). 57 at Mai Po on December 31st (MAW, TPG).
47. **Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*
Nine at the mouth of the Shum Chun River on February 9th, and two there on February 12th (MAW). Up to 55 in the same place from December 17th to end of year (DGR, MAW).
52. **Black-Eared Kite** *Milvus migrans*
Common and widespread.
54. **Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*
Common in winter; last spring date April 21st; first autumn date October 16th.
56. **Sparrow-Hawk** *Accipiter nisus*
One at Mai Po on February 5th (REH). One at Tai Mong Tsai on February 19th (MPR). One at Mai Po on March 29th (FOPH). Fairly frequent records of single birds in the latter part of the year from October 16th onwards.
58. **Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*
Two at Pokfulam on March 24th (REH), and one there on March 25th (EDW).
60. **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*
One at Mai Po on February 2nd (EDW). Two immatures over Ping Shan on March 16th (FOPH). An adult at Sha Tau Kok on August 20th (MPR).
61. **Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*
An immature female was taken by a dealer to Hong Kong University, where it was identified from measurements, ringed on April 9th, and released a few days later. (FOPH, MAW).

63. **Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*
Two immatures at Mai Po on February 9th and 19th (MAW). Another, probably a first-winter bird, at the same place on March 27th (MAW). One over Ping Shan on March 13th (FOPH). Two over Mai Po on March 29th (FOPH).
64. **Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraaetus fasciatus*
A juvenile at Ho Chung on March 12th (FOPH). Two at Jubilee Reservoir on May 5th (DJG). One over Shouson Hill on June 19th (MPR) and July 31st (MAW). Two over Ho Chung fishponds on December 10th (MAW, AH, DGR).
66. **White-Bellied Sea-Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Up to three commonly seen throughout the year off Hong Kong Island, and occasionally off the coast of the New Territories.
68. **Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela*
One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on January 22nd and March 26th (EDW, MEMB). This species is commonly to be seen in the bird-shops, and it is possible that all records refer to escaped birds.
69. **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*
Up to three over the Deep Bay marshes commonly, up to April 24th, and from September 18th to the end of the year.
- 70-72 **Harriers** *Circus spp.*
Frequent winter records of females/immatures up to April 18th, and from October 29th to end of year.
74. **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*
Common over Deep Bay in winter. Last spring date, April 23rd; first autumn date, October 5th. One at Hebe Haven on January 8th (FOPH). One at Big Wave Bay on September 4th (TPG).
77. **Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*
Single birds seen fairly commonly over Victoria and Kowloon throughout the year. One at Repulse Bay on January 28th (MAW). One at Mong Tseng on February 6th (DJG) and December 3rd (AH). One at Mai Po on March 25th (FOPH).
81. **Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*
Seen commonly in the winter months. Last spring date, February 19th; first autumn date, September 25th.
82. **Chinese Francolin** *Francolinus pintadeanus*
Heard frequently on Hong Kong Island, mainly from May to July. Only three records from the New Territories.

83. **Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*
One at Mai Po on October 8th (REH). Three at Ping Shan on December 26th (RAIW, EDW, AH).
88. **Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*
One at Mai Po on March 23rd and April 23rd (MAW).
89. **Banded Rail** *Rallus striatus*
One at Yuen Long on January 15th (REH). One at Mai Po on February 5th (REH) and April 18th (FOPH). Up to three at Mai Po from August 12th to end of year (REH, EDW, MAW).
91. **Ruddy Crake** *Porzana fusca*
One at Mai Po on September 18th (REH, MAW).
93. **White-Breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*
Fairly common in marshy areas of the New Territories, with one record from Hong Kong Island.
94. **Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*
One at Tai Lam Chung on January 26th (R de la M). At least seven, including a juvenile, at Mai Po between August 12th and October 29th. One at Sekkong on November 13th (MAW, AH).
95. **Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea*
Three at Mai Po on August 30th (MAW, REH).
96. **Coot** *Fulica atra*
Five near Yuen Long on January 28th (REH). Several records from the Deep Bay Marshes between November 26th and December 24th, with a maximum of 33 birds on December 3rd (REH, MAW, AH, EDW).
97. **Pheasant-Tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*
One at Mai Po on January 22nd (MEMB, MPR, REH, EDW).
100. **Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*
Three at Lo Wu on January 14th (R de la M). One at Ping Shan, and 12 at Yuen Long on January 15th (REH). Eight at Mai Po on December 24th (MAW, EDW). One of these was shot by a hunter, and on December 31st, only six remained (MAW).
103. **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*
Up to 12 on the Deep Bay Marshes in the early part of the year, last seen on March 27th. Much commoner in autumn, from August 30th onwards.

104. **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*
Numerous on the Deep Bay Marshes up to April 25th, and from September 18th onwards.
- 105-106. **Sand-Plovers** *Charadrius leschenaultii/mongolus*
Common on the Deep Bay Marshes up to May 7th, and from August 13th onwards. On April 21st, FOPH arrested a hunter who was carrying two recently-shot specimens of *leschenaultii*, and two of *mongolus*.
107. **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus*
Three near Tai Yuen Fishery Gardens on September 6th (DGR).
108. **Grey Plover** *Charadrius squatarola*
Up to 30 at Mai Po until April 25th, and similar numbers from October 29th to the end of the year.
109. **Asiatic Golden Plover** *Charadrius dominicus*
Three at Mai Po on April 23rd (MAW). Up to 10 on the Deep Bay Marshes between September 18th and December 3rd (EDW, AH, MAW, REH, RAIW).
110. **Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*
One at Mai Po from April 21st to 30th (FOPH, EDW, DJG).
- 111-113. **Snipe** *Gallinago spp.*
Common in marshy areas throughout the New Territories and near Aberdeen up to April 20th, and from September 17th to end of year.
116. **Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*
Records of single birds at Ho Chung on March 12th (MPR), Sek Kong on October 22nd (REH) and November 13th (MAW, AH, EDW), and Jubilee Reservoir on November 18th (REH).
117. **Curlew** *Numenius arquata*
Up to 10 on the Deep Bay Marshes until May 7th, and up to 32 there from September 10th onwards.
119. **Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*
Up to 13 at Mai Po between April 19th and May 7th, and up to 40 there between August 12th and October 29th.
121. **Black-Tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*
12 at Mai Po on April 25th (DJG, FOPH), four there on September 2nd (MAW, RAIW), four on October 10th (MAW), one on December 24th (MAW, EDW). This species appears to be becoming much more frequent—colony records can be summarized as follows:— 1954 (one record), 1956 (one), 1957 (one or more; birds were seen over a period of 22 days), 1958 (one), 1964 (one), 1965 (one), 1966 (three), 1967 (four).

122. **Bar-Tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*
One on October 8th at Mai Po (REH).
- 122 x. **Asiatic Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus*
One at Mai Po on August 30th (MAW, REH, EDW, RAIW) and September 2nd (MAW, RAIW). This is the first colony record.
123. **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*
Up to five in various parts of the New Territories until April 25th. First autumn record October 8th, and fairly common thereafter, with a maximum of 10 at Mai Po on December 24th (MAW).
124. **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*
Six at Mai Po on February 9th (EDW). Up to 15 on the Deep Bay marshes between April 16th & 30th (MAW, EDW). First autumn record August 20th, and up to 100 thereafter on the Deep Bay marshes until October 22nd. About 20 in same place on December 24th and 25th (EDW, MAW). About three near Aberdeen between September 21st and October 4th (RAIW, EDW).
125. **Common Sandpiper** *Tringa hypoleucos*
Common on the Deep Bay marshes and near streams throughout the Colony.
126. **Redshank** *Tringa totanus*
Up to 150 at Mai Po between February 5th and May 7th. Up to thirty in the same area between August 12 and October 8th, with 10 on November 26th, and one on December 7th.
127. **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*
Up to 40 at Mai Po until March 25th. Two at Sha Tau Kok on June 11th (AH). Up to 100 at Mai Po from October 8th to end of year.
128. **Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
Up to 30 at Mai Po between February 5th and March 25th. Six there on April 30th, and at least 20 on May 7th. Up to 30 in the same area from August 30th to end of year.
129. **Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
Up to 3 at Mai Po from April 21st to May 7th (EDW, DJG). Up to 20 there between August 30th and October 29th (REH, EDW, AH, RAIW, MAW), and two on December 3rd (REH, AH).
130. **Grey-Rumped Sandpiper** *Tringa brevipes*
One at Mai Po on April 25th (DJG, FOPH), and 7 on May 7th (EDW). Two at Mai Po between August 12 and September 18th (REH, MAW, EDW, RAIW). Two at Shatin Inlet on October 7th (REH).

131. **Terek Sandpiper** *Tringa terek*
Up to 20 at Mai Po between April 25th and May 7th (EDW, DJG, MAW).
134. **Eastern Little Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*
Up to 100 at Mai Po between February 9th and April 30th. Up to 40 there from September 2nd to October 8th. Three at Shatin Inlet on October 7th (REH). Up to 30 at Mai Po and Yuen Long throughout December (MAW, DGR).
135. **Long-Toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta*
One at Mai Po on December 24th (MAW, EDW).
136. **Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*
One at Mai Po on January 1st (EDW), three at Ping Shan on January 8th (EDW), and 11 at Mai Po on January 28th (REH). About 40 at Mai Po on December 24th and 25th (MAW, EDW).
138. **Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*
Up to 120 at Mai Po up to March 25th. Up to 40 in the same area from September 18th to end of year.
139. **Curlew-Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*
About 20 at Mai Po on April 30th (EDW, MAW). One at Mai Po on September 2nd, four on September 18th, and two on October 8th (MAW).
140. **Sanderling** *Crocethia alba*
5 or 6 at Mai Po on April 21st (EDW), and two there on April 30th (MAW).
142. **Broad-Billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus*
Up to 40 at Mai Po on April 21st and 30th (EDW, MAW). About 10 on September 18th (REH), 10 on October 8th (MAW), and one on December 3rd (MAW).
144. **Red-Necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*
Several reports from Cheung Chau area and Port Shelter in early April (per FOPH). Two at Mai Po on October 8th (AH).
145. **Black-Winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*
Up to three at Mai Po from September 3rd to 17th (MAW, FOPH, EDW). One in Castle Peak Bay on September 24th (per REH).
146. **Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*
Six at Mai Po on December 2nd (REH), two on December 3rd (REH, EDW, MAW, AH), three on December 7th (DJG), and one on December 31st (MAW).
147. **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*
22 at Mai Po on August 13th (MAW, REH).

- 148. Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*
Up to 400 in Hong Kong Harbour in January, with a few remaining until March 22nd. Several records from Deep Bay, the latest being of three birds on April 15th (DJG). First autumn record, November 19th at Deep Bay, and also near Lantau. About 120 in the Harbour on November 25th, some of which remained to the end of the year. (AH, MAW, REH, EDW, MPR, DGR, MEMB, DJG, TPG).
- 152. Black-Headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*
Up to 100 in Hong Kong harbour in January, and up to February 12th with one recorded on March 12th. Numbers in Deep Bay reached 400 on February 5th, and some stayed until March 5th. First seen in autumn on November 19th, near Lantau and in Deep Bay. From this date, the species was frequently recorded from Deep Bay, Hong Kong Harbour, and Castle Peak Bay until the end of the year.
- 156. Gull-Billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica*
One found dead at Mai Po on April 30th (MAW).
- 157. Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*
30-40 in Hong Kong Harbour on January 1st (MDIG). One at Mai Po on April 30th (MAW), and two there on May 7th (EDW). One at Mai Po on November 26th (REH).
- 160. Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*
One at Mai Po on April 30th (EDW). 4 or 5 in Hong Kong Harbour on August 22nd (DGR). Four at Mai Po on October 22nd (REH).
- 164. Rufous Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*
One at Pokfulam on January 23rd (R de la M). One at King's Park on February 4th (RJB). One at Mong Tseng on February 27th (FOPH). Several records in the latter part of the year, from October 25th onwards, from Government House, Sek Kong, Lo Wu, and Stanley.
- 165. Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*
Common and widespread.
- 166. Red Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica*
Single birds at Mong Tseng on February 26th (FOPH), and King's Park on October 5th (RJB).
- 167. Rose-Ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*
Up to 4 recorded from the area surrounding Government house, throughout the year. One at Stubbs Road, above Happy Valley, on June 26th (REH). Up to 7 at Mong Tseng throughout the year.

- 170. Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*
One heard at Shouson Hill on May 18th and 22nd (MPR).
- 172. Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus*
Fairly common throughout the Colony between March 18th and August 12th.
- 174. Drongo-Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris*
Two near the University in early January (MP).
- 175. Koel** *Eudynamis scolopacea*
Recorded frequently from the woods between Deepwater Bay and Aberdeen, Sha Tau Kok, and Tai Po Kau, with one record from the Lam Tsuen Valley, and one (of c. 10 birds calling) from Jubilee Reservoir.
- 176. Crow-Pheasant** *Centropus sinensis*
Common and widespread.
- 177. Lesser Crow-Pheasant** *Centropus bengalensis*
Quite common throughout the Colony, but much less so than 176.
- 180. Collared Scops Owl** *Otus bakkamoena*
Three on the Peak on March 10th (REH). One at Mong Tseng on March 14th and 15th (FOPH). One on Pokfulam Reservoir Road on September 20th (Per REH).
- 186. Savannah Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis*
Heard on the Mong Tseng peninsula between February 26th and March 18th (FOPH).
- 187. Large White-Rumped Swift** *Apus pacificus*
Fairly common and widespread, though no large parties were recorded.
- 188. House Swift** *Apus affinis*
Common and widespread.
- 189. Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*
One or two birds present on the Deep Bay marshes from 18th September to the end of the year, but only one earlier record, from Lau Fau Shan on March 5th (DJG).
- 190. Crested Kingfisher** *Ceryle lugubris*
One at Pak Tam on January 2nd (REH, EDW, MEMB, MPR) and January 8th (FOPH). Probably the same bird at Tai Mong Tsai on January 19th (R de la M).
- 191. Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*
Common near fresh water, particularly on the Deep Bay marshes. No records between April 26th and August 13th.

192. **White-Breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*
Fairly common throughout the year in suitable areas.
193. **Black-Capped Kingfisher** *Halcyon pileata*
Up to 4 on the Deep Bay marshes, with a few records elsewhere, from January to April, and September to December. Summer records as follows:- Shouson Hill/Deepwater Bay woods, single birds on four occasions between May 15th and July 25th (MPR, MAW); Dragon's Back, one on July 1st (MPR); Route TWSK, near Sekkong, two on June 23rd (FOPH, DJG).
195. **Broad-Billed Roller** *Eurystomus orientalis*
Up to four near Pokfulam between October 15th and November 1st (EDW, FOPH, MAW).
196. **Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*
One on Fanling Golf Course on September 28th (MPR).
197. **Great Barbet** *Megalaima virens*
Recorded from the Lam Tsuen Valley, and Tai Po Kau, and once, on March 12th, from Ho Chung (EDW).
200. **Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*
Fairly common in the New Territories in winter; last spring date March 28th, first autumn date October 16th — at Pokfulam (DGR).
201. **Chinese Pitta** *Pitta nympha*
One in the Deepwater Bay woods from July 22nd to 24th (MPR, MAW, REH).
202. **Small Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*
One at Tai Mong Tsai on February 19th (MPR).
203. **Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
Records in every month of the year except December, most records being from March to October.
208. **Rufous-Backed Shrike** *Lanius schach*
Common throughout the Colony.
209. **Bull-Headed Shrike** *Lanius bucephalus*
One at Ping Shan on December 22nd (AH).
210. **Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*
Common up to April 22nd and from September 2nd to end of year. One at King's Park on August 8th provides the earliest autumn date on record (RJB).
211. **Black-Naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis*
Reported from many areas between April 16th and August 19th. One at Po Shan on December 24th (TPG).

212. **Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus*
Fairly common in the woods between Deepwater Bay and Aberdeen (probably four pairs) between February 4th and October 26th (MAW, MPR). Recorded also in summer from Pokfulam and many parts of the New Territories, extreme dates being February 4th and December 16th. An unusual gathering of about 15 at Ping Shan on October 16th (EDW, AH, REH).
- 213(a) **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus salangensis*
One at Pokfulam from January 1st to April 14th (FOPH, MEMB, REH, EDW, MAW, MPR), and another on November 11th (MAW). One at Stanley Cemetery from December 17th to end of year (DGR, MAW, RAIW).
- 213(b) **White-Cheeked Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus leucogenis*
One at Pokfulam on October 15th (REH). One at Magazine Gap between October 20th and November 3rd (per REH). One at Stanley Cemetery from December 17th to end of year (DGR, MAW, RAIW).
214. **Hair-Crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus*
Reported from many areas throughout the Colony between April 15th and October 16th. Evidence of breeding on the Peak (REH).
215. **Chinese Starling** *Sturnus sinensis*
About 10 at Mai Po on January 22nd (MEMB). Seen regularly at King's Park from April 20th to October 15th (RJB), at Fanling between July and September (MDIG, AH). One at Sekkong on June 22nd (FOPH). About 15 at Ping Shan on October 16th (REH, EDW, RAIW, AH).
216. **Silky Starling** *Sturnus sericeus*
Recorded up to February 26th from many areas in the North-west of the New Territories, and from Pak Tam. Back in the same district from December 1st onwards. Three at Stanley Cemetery on December 17th (DGR), and two there on December 30th (RAIW).
217. **Grey Starling** *Sturnus cineraceus*
A few at Mong Tseng in December (RAIW, AH, EDW).
218. **Black-Necked Starling** *Sturnus nigricollis*
Common throughout the year on the Mong Tseng peninsula, with a few records from other parts of the New Territories.
219. **Common Mynah** *Acridotheres tristis*
Up to 9 on the Mong Tseng peninsula throughout the year. One at Happy Valley on August 29th, and three there on September 5th (RAIW).
220. **Crested Mynah** *Acridotheres cristatellus*
Common and widespread.

221. **Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*
Four near Jubilee Reservoir on January 14th (DJG). Two at Tai Mong Tsai on February 5th (MAW).
222. **Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*
Common and widespread, especially on Hong Kong Island.
223. **Magpie** *Pica pica*
Common and widespread.
224. **Treepie** *Crypsirina formosae*
One at Ho Chung on February 25th (EDW). One at Lo Wu on March 19th and 20th (FOPH). One at Pokfulam on April 9th (REH).
226. **Jungle Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*
Fairly common and widespread.
227. **Collared Crow** *Corvus torquatus*
Nearly all records are from the Deep Bay area where up to 5 were seen on many occasions throughout the year. Two near Pak Tam on January 2nd (SO).
228. **Black-Winged Cuckoo-Shrike** *Coracina melaschistos*
One at Ho Chung on January 7th (REH). One at Mai Po on January 22nd (REH). One seen near the University from early January to February 19th (MP). This may be the same as the bird which was at Pokfulam on January 25th (R de la M) and February 26th (MEMB). One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on October 29th (REH).
231. **Ashy Minivet** *Pericrocotus divaricatus*
One at Pokfulam on April 2nd (FOPH), and 4 there on April 7th (EDW). c15 at Shouson Hill on April 5th (MPR). 5 at Castle Peak Monastery on April 16th (MAW). Up to 3 at King's Park on September 25th and 29th (RJB). c15 near Tsimshatsui Police Station on December 4th (MAW).
233. **Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*
Two females in the Lam Tsuen Valley on January 1st (EDW).
234. **Chestnut Bulbul** *Hypsipetes flavala*
One on the Dragon's Back on January 7th, and three on February 4th (MPR). One heard in the Little Hong Kong Woods on February 12th (MPR). c6 at Ho Chung on March 12th (EDW). Three at Lau Fau Shan on March 23rd (DJG). One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on March 26th (EDW).
235. **White-Headed Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*
The early part of the year produced what was probably the biggest irruption of this species in Hong Kong ever recorded.

It is difficult to estimate the total numbers of birds involved, but the records suggest a figure not far short of 5,000 for the whole colony. Details are as follows:-

1) Hong Kong Island

- (a) Dragon's Back. 5 on January 7th, 7 on February 4th (MPR). c90 on February 25th (REH).
- (b) Tregunter Path/May Road. c30 on February 1st (FOPH). Subsequently recorded daily; though flocks tended to break up into smaller groups, probably at least 60 birds in the area covered throughout February and early March. Last seen on March 25th (FOPH).
- (c) Barker Road. 7 or 8 on February 4th; numbers increased to c50 towards the end of February; last seen on March 26th (MDIG). First report on February 2nd unconfirmed (per MEMB).
- (d) Other areas on the Peak. T. Thomson (per FOPH) estimated "several hundreds" in the Peak area on February 4th. Small parties in several areas up to March 22nd (REH). Over 50 on Chatham Path on March 15th (RJB).
- (e) Deepwater Bay/Little Hong Kong woods. c15 on February 11th (MPR). Recorded thereafter almost daily up to February 25th with a maximum of c20 on February 18th (MPR, MAW).
- (f) Pokulam. 3 on February 8th (EDW). 2 on February 11th (MAW). A few on March 11th (AH).
- (g) Upper Aberdeen Reservoir. c10 on February 22nd (EDW). 3 on March 7th (EDW).
- (h) Tytam Catchment Area. 7 on February 18th (FOPH).

2) New Territories

- (a) Tai Po Kau. Probably c20 during first three weeks of February (RRM, FOPH, MAW).
- (b) Pak Tam. One on February 19th (MPR).
- (c) Tai Long Waan. 12 + on March 13th (REH).
- (d) Mong Tseng. 2 on February 11th, 3 on March 5th (DJG). On March 17th, at 9.45 a.m., c130 flew northwards (FOPH). At least two other flocks of c20 each on the same morning (FOPH).
- (e) Rocky Harbour, Clearwater Bay Road. c5 on February 6th (per MEMB).
- (f) Plover Cove. c30 on March 5th (MEMB, EDW).
- (g) Lam Tsuen Valley. c20 on February 12th (EDW). Probably a similar number on March 26th (EDW).

Summary:— First seen, January 7th. Last seen, March 26th. The main arrival seems to have been during the first week of February (the apparent concentration on Hong Kong Island probably reflects more a lack of observers in the New Territories than a concentration in Hong Kong only). The big flocks quickly broke up into smaller parties, and were generally less in evidence thereafter. We have visual evidence of northward migration on March 17th, at Mong Tseng where few birds had been recorded previously, although the area was well covered.

- 236. Crested Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*
Common and widespread.
- 237. Chinese Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis*
Common and widespread.
- 238. Red-Vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus aurigaster*
Common and widespread.
- 243. Black-Faced Laughing-Thrush** *Garrulax perspicillatus*
Common and widespread.
- 244. Black-Throated Laughing-Thrush** *Garrulax chinensis*
Heard, and occasionally seen, on the Peak in May (FOPH), and in the Deepwater Bay area from May to July (MPR, MAW), Two ringed on the Peak on June 17th (FOPH). Two seen near Aberdeen Reservoir on December 23rd (REH).
- 245. Hwamei** *Garrulax canorus*
Frequent on Hong Kong Island. From April 15th to July 5th, at least one at King's Park (RJB). One at Lower Shing Mun Reservoir on January 5th (DJG). One at Pak Tam on November 9th (MPR).
- 251. Ince's Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi*
One at Tai Po Kau on April 13th (FOPH). A female at Tai Lam Chung on October 8th (REH).
- 252. Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone atrocaudata*
Adult male at Pokfulam on 8th April (MAW).
- 253. Grey-Headed Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*
One at Pokfulam from January 1st to 24th (FOPH, ELH, MEMB, R de la M).
- 254. Black-Naped Monarch Flycatcher** *Hypothymis azurea*
All records are of females (or immature males). One at Ho Chung on January 7th (REH). One at Sek Kong, and two in the Lam Tsuen Valley on February 26th (REH, MPR). One at Ho Chung on March 12th (FOPH). One at Sek Kong on October 29th, and December 26th (REH).

- 255. Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa latirostris*
Quite common in the winter months. Last spring date, April 12th. First autumn date, September 7th.
- 257. Ferruginous Flycatcher** *Muscicapa ferruginea*
One at Pokfulam on March 26th (MAW).
- 258. Verditer Flycatcher** *Muscicapa thalassina*
Two at Jubilee Reservoir between January 7th and 21st (DJG). One at Ho Chung on January 7th (REH). One at Sek Kong on February 26th (REH). Two at Conduit Road on October 29th (REH). One at Victoria Barracks from December 1st to 10th (AH).
- 259. Red-Breasted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa parva*
One at Ting Kau on January 3rd (DJG). One at Government House on January 20th (EDW). One at Lau Fau Shan on October 13th (DJG). One at May Road on October 15th (FOPH). One on the Peak on December 2nd (AH). One at Stanley on December 22nd (DGR).
- 260. Robin Flycatcher** *Muscicapa mugimaki*
One at Tai Lam Chung on January 26th (R de la M). Two at Tai Po Kau on November 13th (REH, AH, MAW).
- 261. Narcissus Flycatcher** *Muscicapa narcissina*
One at Pokfulam on April 8th and 9th (MAW, REH).
- 263. Hainan Blue Flycatcher** *Niltava hainana*
A singing male at Tai Po Kau on April 13th and 16th (FOPH).
- 264. Blue and White Flycatcher** *Cyanoptila cyanomelana*
Three at Pokfulam between March 24th and April 2nd (REH, FOPH, MPR). Two there on October 15th and 21st (FOPH, MAW, REH).
- 265. Chinese Bush Warbler** *Cettia diphone*
Four ringed at Lowu, the last on March 20th (FOPH). Single birds at Pokfulam on January 24th (FOPH), December 16th (AH) and 30th (MAW). Two ringed at Mong Tseng in February (FOPH).
- 267. Short-Tailed Bush Warbler** *Cettia squameiceps*
Single birds reported from Pokfulam on March 24th (REH) and 26th (MAW), December 16th (DGR) and 30th (FOPH).
- 268. Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella certhiola*
The only definite identifications were one ringed at Mai Po on March 30th (FOPH), and one seen near Tai Yuen Fishery Gardens on December 31st (MAW).

269. **Styan's Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella (Ochotensis) pleskei*
Two ringed at Mai Po on April 19th (FOPH).
270. **Von Schrenck's Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*
One ringed at Mai Po on March 31st (FOPH).
271. **Great Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*
Present at Mai Po from March 29th to April 25th, and from September 2nd to November 25th.
273. **Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*
Widespread up to March 31st, and from September 18th to end of year.
274. **Yellow-Browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*
Widespread up to April 16th, and from October 15th to end of year.
275. **Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*
One ringed on the Peak on January 19th, and two at Mong Tseng on March 14th (FOPH).
276. **Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*
Two at Mai Po on March 5th (MAW). One ringed there on September 4th (FOPH), and another seen on September 18th (EDW). One at Sha Kong on December 26th (EDW).
282. **Long-Tailed Tailor-Bird** *Orthotomus sutorius*
Common and Widespread.
285. **Brown Wren-Warbler** *Prinia subflava*
Common on the Deep Bay Marshes.
286. **Yellow-Bellied Wren-Warbler** *Prinia flaviventris*
Common and Widespread.
287. **Fantail Warbler** *Cisticola juncidis*
Common on the Deep Bay Marshes.
288. **Japanese Robin** *Luscinia akahiga*
An immature at Pokfulam on February 26th (MEMB). What was almost certainly the same bird was seen in the same place on March 25th (EDW). Plumage differences between the two descriptions indicate that moult into adult plumage took place during March, but was not complete at the date of the second report.
289. **Red-Tailed Robin** *Luscinia sibilans*
Two ringed at May Road in January (FOPH), and one seen there on February 5th (MEMB). Two at Pokfulam from December 2nd to 30th (EDW, AH, MAW, DGR, FOPH).

290. **Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*
At Mai Po from March 25th to April 25th; nine ringed during this period (FOPH).
291. **Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*
Common up to April 19th, though again sight records were few. 32 were ringed during this period, mainly at Mong Tseng (FOPH). One at Sek Kong on December 26th (REH).
292. **Red-Flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*
Common up to March 27th. The only later records are one at Lau Fau Shan on December 1st (DJG), and two at Ho Chung on December 10th (EDW, RAIW, REH).
293. **Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis*
Common and widespread.
294. **Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus auroreus*
Common up to March 23rd. Scarce in the latter part of the year, with only six reported from November 25th to end of year.
295. **Plumbeous Water-Redstart** *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*
A female at the P.G. Farm, Shouson Hill, from January 8th to February 18th (MPR). Up to 3 at Tai Lam Chung in January (REH, R de la M). One at Ho Chung on February 7th (R de la M).
296. **Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*
Common in the New Territories up to April 25th, and from September 18th to end of year. One near Aberdeen from October 1st to 15th (RAIW, REH).
297. **Grey Bushchat** *Saxicola ferrea*
Four at Pak Tam from January 2nd — 19th (REH, MPR, MEMB, FOPH, R de la M), and one on January 28th (RJB). One at Sek Kong on January 8th (REH). One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on February 5th (REH). One at Ho Chung on February 7th (R de la M). A female with a ring at Mong Tseng on February 27th (FOPH); only one has ever been ringed in Hong Kong — at Mong Tseng on November 24th, 1966. One at Chek Kang on March 13th. Two in the Lam Tsuen Valley on December 26th (REH).
- 298(a). **Blue Rock-Thrush** *Monticola solitaria pandoo*
One at Pak Tam on January 2nd (SO), and again on January 19th (R de la M). One at Ting Kau on January 3rd (DJG). One at Chung Hom Kok on April 8th (AH). One near the University on April 9th (REH). One on Mt. Nicholson on September 29th (EDW). One at King's Park on November 5th and 11th (RJB).

- 298(b). **Red-Bellied Rock-Thrush** *Monticola solitaria philippensis*
Single birds recorded from many areas up to April 9th, and from October 12th to end of year.
300. **Violet Whistling Thrush** *Myiophonus caeruleus*
Common near running water, particularly on Hong Kong Island.
301. **Pale Thrush** *Turdus pallidus*
In the early part of the year, at least 5 at Pokfulam, 3 at May Road, 2 in Government House Garden, 1 at Ho Chung, 2 at Sek Kong, 1 at Lo Wu, and 7 at Mong Tseng (FOPH, MPR, EDW, REH, MEMB). Latest date, April 10th. Up to 2 at Pokfulam from December 2nd to end of year (FOPH, REH, EDW, AH, MAW). One at Aberdeen on December 19th (RAIW).
302. **Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus*
One in Barker Road on March 9th (MDIG).
303. **Brown Thrush** *Turdus chrysolaus*
One at Mong Tseng on January 30th and 31st and February 1st (FOPH). One on the Peak on December 2nd (AH).
304. **Grey-Backed Thrush** *Turdus hortulorum*
Common up to March 26th, and from October 12th to end of year.
305. **Dusky Thrush** *Turdus naumanni*
One at Lo Wu on January 14th (R de la M) and 15th (FOPH). At least 4 at Mong Tseng between January 29th and March 23rd (FOPH, EDW, DJG). One at King's Park from January 21st to February 12th (RJB). One on Tai Mo Shan on February 5th (MPR). One at Government House from February 5th to March 24th (EDW). One at Sek Kong on February 26th (REH).
306. **Blackbird** *Turdus merula*
At least 8 separable birds in the early part of the year, the latest being on March 19th. Two at Sek Kong on December 26th (REH). One at Victoria Barracks on November 28th (AH).
307. **Grey Thrush** *Turdus cardis*
Common up to April 12th, and from November 19th to end of year.
309. **Orange-Headed Ground-Thrush** *Turdus citrinus*
One adult male and two immatures at Pokfulam from October 19th to 22nd (MAW, EDW, REH).

310. **White's Thrush** *Turdus dauma*
One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on January 1st (EDW). One at Jubilee Reservoir on January 14th (DJG). One at Ho Chung on January 15th (EDW). One at Tai Mong Tsai on January 19th, and one at Tai Lam Chung on January 26th (R de la M). One in Government House Garden from January 26th to March 31st (EDW). One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on February 5th (REH). One at Mong Tseng on February 21st (FOPH). One at Lo Wu on March 18th (FOPH). One at King's Park from April 12th to 15th (RJB). One at Tai Po Kau on April 13th, and two on April 16th (FOPH). One above Repulse Bay Road on November 20th (REH). A total of 13 birds, compared with a total of only 18 recorded in previous years.
313. **Great Tit** *Parus major*
Common and widespread.
315. **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*
Common up to April 25th, and from October 8th to end of year.
316. **Indian Tree-Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*
Common up to April 7th, and from October 16th to end of year.
317. **Red-Throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*
Five at Pak Wai on January 15th (REH). 2 or 3 at Mai Po on March 27th (EDW). One at Mai Po South on December 9th (DGR).
321. **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*
Common up to April 25th, and from October 5th to end of year.
322. **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*
Quite common up to April 15th and from August 18th to end of year.
323. **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*
Common up to April 30th, with a peak of at least 300 at Mai Po in mid-April. First autumn record, August 30th, and small numbers thereafter, but over 200 at Mai Po on October 22nd. Most records are from the Deep Bay area.
324. **Fork-Tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga christinae*
All records, of up to 3 birds, are from Tai Po Kau.
325. **White-Eye** *Zosterops japonica*
Common and widespread.

326. **Scarlet-Backed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum cruentatum*
Up to 5 at Tai Po Kau from September 8th to November 13th (MPR, MAW, EDW, AH). One at Ho Chung on December 10th (EDW, REH, RAIW). One in Government House Garden on December 17th (EDW).
327. **Fire-Breasted Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus*
3 at Tai Po Kau on November 13th (EDW, RAIW, AH, MAW). A male at May Road from December 17th to 27th (FOPH).
328. **Black-Tailed Hawfinch** *Eophona migratoria*
6 near May Road on January 18th (FOPH). Up to 5 at Mong Tseng between January 31st and March 15th (FOPH). 17 at Sek Kong on February 26th (REH, MPR). 5 or 6 at Lau Fau Shan on March 3rd (DJG). 2 at Lo Wu on March 20th (FOPH). One at Tai Po Kau on April 8th (RJB). One at Sek Kong on November 26th (MAW).
329. **Chinese Greenfinch** *Chloris sinica*
Fairly widespread in the winter months, with unusually large flocks of 21 at Lau Fau Shan on October 5th (DJG), and 50 + at Ting Kau on October 12th (DJG). The only summer records are one at Fanling on June 20th (FOPH). 3 or 4 on the Dragon's Back on June 25th and July 1st (MPR), and two, just fledged, in Government House Garden on July 26th (MDIG).
331. **Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*
Two at Sek Kong on February 26th (MPR, REH). 13 in the Lam Tsuen Valley on the same day (REH). Two at Mong Tseng on February 28th, and one there on March 14th and 16th (FOPH).
332. **Masked Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala*
Common and widespread in winter, up to April 19th, and from October 29th to end of year.
335. **Tristram's Bunting** *Emberiza tristrami*
One at Tai Po Kau on February 2nd (FOPH).
337. **Yellow-Breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola*
One at Lau Fau Shan on October 13th (DJG), and three at Mai Po on October 22nd (REH).
338. **Grey-Headed Bunting** *Emberiza fucata*
c30 at Tai Mong Tsai on January 19th, and 2 at Lo Wu on January 14th (R de la M). One at Mong Tseng on February 1st and 21st (FOPH, DJG). One ringed at Mai Po on March 29th (FOPH).

339. **Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*
One at Mai Po on November 25th (MAW) and December 25th (EDW). Two at Sek Kong on November 26th (MAW). One at Ho Chung on December 12th (MAW, AH, DGR).
340. **Crested Bunting** *Melophus lathami*
Fairly frequent winter records in the New Territories, but none between March 14th and November 26th.
341. **Tree-Sparrow** *Passer montanus*
Abundant.
343. **Red Avadavat** *Estrilda amandava*
Up to 22 on the Deep Bay marshes from August 31st to end of year.
344. **Java Sparrow** *Padda oryzivora*
Apart from several records of one or two birds, flocks of c150 at Sek Kong (REH, MPR) on February 26th, and of 38 near Aberdeen (REH) on October 15th. These are much bigger than any flocks previously recorded.
- 345(a). **Three-Coloured Munia** *Lonchura malacca malacca*
Five in the Lam Tsuen Valley on February 26th (REH, MPR).
- 345(b). **Chestnut Munia** *Lonchura malacca atricapilla*
Two at Mai Po on April 18th and 25th (FOPH, DJG), and six there on August 31st (DJG), and October 29th (DGR). 15 + at Pak Hap Chau on September 2nd (FOPH).
346. **Spotted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata*
Common and widespread.
347. **White-Backed Munia** *Lonchura striata*
Five in the Lam Tsuen Valley on January 22nd (EDW, MEMB). 7 in Government House Garden on May 20th (EDW). Two at Pokfulam on August 31st (DGR), five on December 16th (AH), nine on December 25th (TPG). Five at Plantation Road on December 16th (REH). One at Tai Po Kau on December 19th (TPG). Seven at May Road on December 27th (FOPH).
348. **White-Headed Munia** *Lonchura maja*
One at Pak Hap Chau on September 2nd (FOPH).

APPENDIX

Emerald Dove

Chalcophaps indica indica

Records of this species have always been regarded in the past as escapes, but, as I suggested in last year's report, it is possible that some at least are genuinely wild birds. There were two records in 1967 (plus an unconfirmed report of 3 birds at Tai Po Kau in Spring):—

4.10.67. to 10.12.67. One at Deepwater Bay — very tame, and often feeding in the open. Almost certainly an escape (MPR, MAW).

28.12.67. One flew into a window near Clearwater Bay Road at night. This was handed to FOPH, and examined by him and MAW. Both considered that the bird was wild; plumage was extremely fresh, and there was no evidence at all that the bird had been caged. Plumage coloration was good and bright (similar to wild Emerald Doves ringed by MAW in Malaya). The bird died about 10 days later, and the skin was preserved.

I have tried to recheck previous records, but, although the species has been seen in most years, I can only find original records of the following:—

1960. March 9th to April 30th. University Area. Behaviour suggests wild bird, though considered an escape at the time.

1963. June 23rd. Kowloon Reservoir. Thought to be an escape as many doves were released that month by Buddhists as a prayer for rain.

1966. September 20th. Tai Po Kau. Behaviour suggests wild bird.

1968. February 18th. Tai Po Kau (MAW, AH). Behaviour typical of wild bird.

I consider that the bird on 28.12.67 was definitely wild, and that the species is probably of annual occurrence in a wild state.

This raises the whole question of escapes, which bedevils all record keeping in Hong Kong. The trade in birds is so large that *millions* of dollars' profit are made every year by the dealers. The majority of the birds exported come from China.

As a result, the following species on our Checklist must be regarded as suspect, although a proportion of the records are certainly genuine:—

34. Gadwall
37. Baikal Teal
42. Mandarin
51. Bean Goose
53. Brahminy Kite
55. Rough-Legged Buzzard
67. Grey-Faced Buzzard Eagle
68. Serpent Eagle
75. White-Legged Falconet
78. Shangar Falcon
80. Red-Footed Falcon
163. Bar-Tailed Cuckoo-Dove
167. Rose-Ringed Parakeet
181. Long-Eared Owl
183. Brown Hawk-Owl
239. Orange-Bellied Chloropsis
242. Vinous-Throated Parrotbill
246. White-Cheeked Laughing-Thrush
248. Pekin Robin
342. Ruddy Sparrow
343. Red Avadavat
344. Java Sparrow
- 345.(a) Three-Coloured Munia
348. White-Headed Munia
- Emerald Dove

To give an idea of the scope of the trade — the following (and this list is not exhaustive) have been seen in pet-shops in urban areas, and in the big wholesalers:—

7, 12, 16, 17, 20, 25, 32-48 (especially 37 & 42), 51, 52-64, 67, 68, 73, 76-83, 85-87, some Rallidae, a few of the Charadriiformes, 163-167, 178-184 (and other Owls), various Alaudidae, 215-220 (and other Sturnidae), 221, 236, 237, 239 (and other Leafbirds), 244-246 (and other Laughing-Thrushes), 248 (in hundreds of thousands), 251-264 (mostly males, and particularly 262-264), 289-291, 293, 295 (males), 315, 316, 325, 328-348 (and other species of Buntings and Munias).

This gives a total of over 120 species, compared with 350 species now on the Colony list. Certainly a large proportion are imported from China, but such a lucrative trade could hardly fail to encourage a fair amount of trapping locally.

M. A. W.

LIST OF OBSERVERS

Dr. R.J. Barnes	Miss M.E.M. Benham
D.J. Galloway	T.P. Garland
Hon. M.D. Irving Gass	R.E. Hale
F.O.P. Hechtel	Mrs. E.L. Hechtel
A. Hibi	R.R. Mason
R. de la Moussaye	M. Peaker
Mrs. S.J. Peaker	M.P. Rice
D.G. Robertson	Cdr. E.D. Webb
M.A. Webster	R.A.I. Wilson

The initials S.O. for Society Outing have rarely been used, as the Recorder feels that the initials of observers present will be of more use if and when a further revision of the Checklist is made. The initials listed in such instances, however, are only those of members who included the record concerned among their own records submitted to the Recorder.

PROBABLE ESCAPES

Rose-Breasted Parakeet

One associating with Rose-Ringed Parakeets in the Ping Shan/Mong Tseng area on October 15th (REH), October 16th, and December 3rd (AH).

Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo

At least six in the area of Victoria Barracks (AH).

Grackles Spp.

Three on Leighton Hill from September 19th to December 6th (J. D. Romer per FOPH). Three at Victoria Barracks on October 14th and November 1st (AH). One in Government House Garden on October 24th (EDW), and two nearby on December 6th (EDW). Three in the Stanley Area during the second half December (DGR).

GULLS OF THE SOUTH CHINA COAST

1. The Herring Gull group

LARUS ARGENTATUS (Herring Gull). A common winter visitor to Hong Kong, particularly in the Harbour area. Two subspecies are said to occur:—

(a) *L.a. vegae*. A large gull with grey mantle, black primaries with white tips, and white underparts. Bill yellow with a red spot at the angle. Legs vary from fleshy-pink to yellow (Vaurie). Eye-ring yellow. Immature dark brown, though there is considerable variation.

(b) *L.a. mongolicus*. Adult is much darker above than *L.a. vegae*, though not as dark as the British Lesser Black-backed Gull. Legs fleshy-pink or bluish, though said to be always yellow in the population from Lake Baikal. Alexander calls this subspecies *L. cachinnans* (the Yellow-legged Gull), and says that it is distinguishable from *L. schistisagus* by the colour of the legs and feet (this conflicts with Vaurie).

LARUS SCHISTISAGUS (Slaty-backed Gull). Very similar to *L.a. mongolicus*, though darker. Feet pinkish-flesh. Adult is doubtfully distinguishable in the field from *L.a. mongolicus*, but the immature is much paler. Legs pink, eye-ring red.

(Prof. Portenko considers *L. schistisagus* to be conspecific with *L. argentatus*, because he found apparent intermediates between *schistisagus* and *L.a. vegae* in Koryakland. He also proposes a new subspecies *L.a. ochotensis*, which is much darker than *schistisagus*. Vaurie does not accept that the two species are conspecific, but does not comment on *L.a. ochotensis*).

Of the Hong Kong records, one is based on the dark mantle combined with pink leg-colour. The other two records concern birds seen at a height of about 250 ft.; the observer also mentions a white edge "all round the wings". This latter observation (of a character which occurs in neither species) suggests a reflection produced by tricky light conditions (common enough in Hong Kong!) and throws doubt on the possibility of observing exact shades of grey/slate. In view of the above comments, and of the apparent general confusion which surrounds the *argentatus/schistisagus* group, I feel we must consider the occurrence of *schistisagus* in Hong Kong as "non proven" until a specimen is

obtained, although the species is known to wander as far South as Hainan.

2. The Glaucous Gull group

Again, two very similar species are concerned.

LARUS HYPERBOREUS (Glaucous Gull). A very large gull with a very pale grey mantle and wingtips and remainder of plumage white. Immatures range from pale brown to almost pure white. Known to range South to the North China Sea.

LARUS GLAUDESCENS (Glaucous-winged Gull). Similar to hyperboreus, but slightly smaller. Mantle darker but still much paler than Herring Gull. Primaries dark grey with white tips. Known to range south to south-eastern China. Immatures are much darker than hyperboreus, and are more likely to be confused with the Herring Gull.

In view of the known range of the two species, it must remain open to doubt as to whether the two Hong Kong records were really hyperboreus and not glaucescens. I regard the 1908 record as extremely doubtful; the 1936 record concerns birds seen at a height of 150 ft., and again the possibility of tricky light conditions must be taken into account. We will probably have to wait for a specimen, or a sight record of an adult *on approximately the same level* as the observer before either of these species can be confirmed.

3. The Black-tailed Gull

LARUS CRASSIROSTRIS. Medium size (half-way between Herring and Black-headed Gulls), dark slate mantle, and black subterminal band on the white tail make the adult easily distinguishable. The immature is darker than the Common Gull, which is about the same size. However, it probably needs a very experienced observer to distinguish immatures with certainty.

There have been frequent records in Hong Kong from January to March, although this is the southern limit of the species' known range.

4. The Common Gull

LARUS CANUS. Not yet recorded from Hong Kong, although known to winter South to the Gulf of Tonkin. Similar in size to the Black-tailed Gull; plumage similar to the Herring

Gull (*L.a. vegae*), from which adults can be distinguished by much smaller size, greenish-yellow bill (yellow in Herring Gull), and more extensive white on wing-tips. Immatures can be distinguished from immature Herring mainly by size, but there remains a risk of confusion with immature Black-tailed Gulls.

5. Gulls with black heads in summer plumage

LARUS RIDIBUNDUS (Black-headed Gull). Small size, red bill, and white leading edge to wings, combined with much more buoyant flight, distinguish this easily from all other Gulls (bill is yellowish in immature). Common in Deep Bay, and sometimes in the Harbour area and elsewhere in winter.

LARUS SAUNDERSI (Chinese Black-headed Gull). Similar to the Black-headed Gull, but lacks white leading edge to wings; outer primaries are largely white; bill is black in adults and immatures. Ranges south to Hainan.

M. A. W.

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THE ASIATIC DOWITCHER

(*Limnodromus semipalmatus*)

Range:—Breeds in small isolated colonies in various parts of Siberia, Manchuria, and probably Mongolia. Winters mainly in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaya, and Singapore. First recorded in Hong Kong on 30th August, 1967.

Description:— Slightly smaller than the Bar-Tailed Godwit, with shorter legs, and a long snipe-like bill, broadened at the tip. Bill and legs black. 13".

(a) summer. Above, rufous marked with black; below, bright rufous, barred with black on flanks, and lighter on abdomen.

(b) winter. Above, sepia, with pale edges to feathers of wings and mantle; white superciliary stripe; tips of secondaries, rump, and tail grey (in the hand the rump and tail are closely barred grey and brown, but the barring is not normally visible in the field). Underparts generally buff, with varying amounts of black streaking; vent and under tail-coverts white.

Habitat:— Marshy fields in summer, coastal mudflats in winter and on migration.

Flight pattern:— Pale tips of secondaries show as a pale patch on the trailing edge of the wing. Rump and tail grey, the grey extending in a "V" up the back (cf. the white on a Greenshank). *No white on upperparts.*

Habits:— Associates freely with parties of other waders. Easily recognisable by its feeding habits. It raises its neck and holds its bill vertically over the mud; this is followed by a quick downward stab, usually submerging the whole bill. It prefers to feed on worms of various kinds, some several inches long. In such a case, the bird pulls the worm right out of the mud, throws its head back, and swallows the worm with a convulsive gulp. Often its feet leave the ground as it pulls at the worm. All these actions appear wooden and almost mechanical.

Call:— A plaintive "yow", rather like a cat, but lower in pitch. Usually uttered from the ground, but sometimes in flight.



Photo: A. Hill

Egrets and Pond Heron



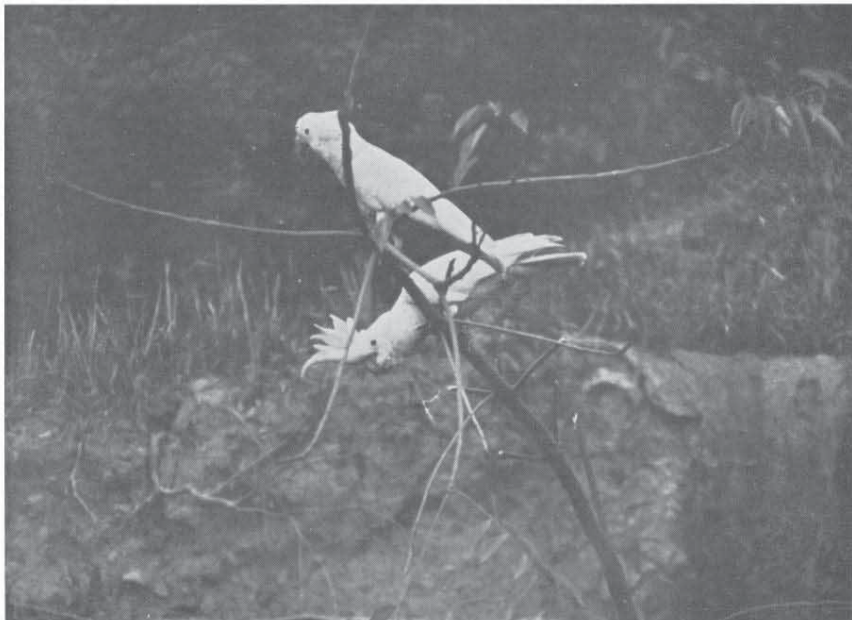
Young Egret

Photo: A. Hill



Pied Kingfisher

Photo: W. G. Metson



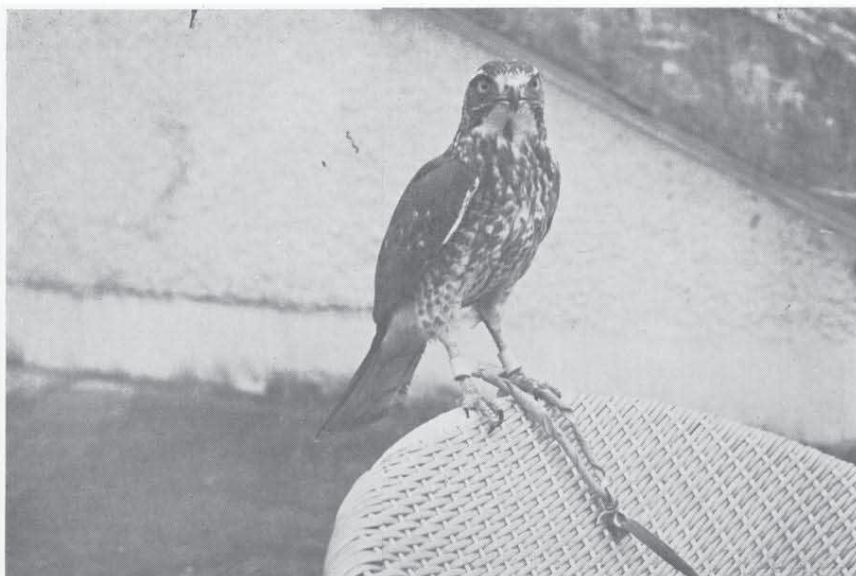
Sulphur Crested Cockatoos

Photo: Major Rose



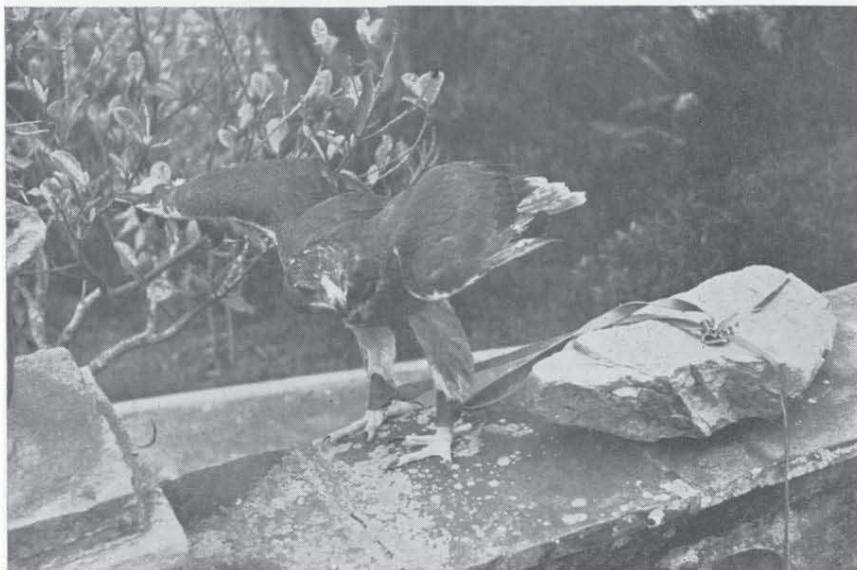
Avocet

Photo: R. Barnes



Grey Faced Buzzard Eagle

Photo: R. E. Hale



Juvenile Bonelli's Eagle

Photo: R. E. Hale

The terminal third of the upper mandible flexes upward as this call is uttered — this is very noticeable, and, as far as I know, unique to this species.

Distinctions from other species:—

- 1) Long-Billed and Short-Billed Dowitchers (*L. griseus* & *L. scolopaceus*) both have white back and rump.
- 2) Black-Tailed Godwit is much larger, has prominent white wing-bar.
- 3) Bar-Tailed Godwit has much shorter bill, white upper tail-coverts.

Specific status:—Still puzzles the experts! Called variously *Limnodromus semipalmatus*, *Limnodromus griseus semipalmatus*, *Limosa semipalmatus*, *Macrorhamphus semipalmatus*, *Pseudoscolopax semipalmatus*, and in English everything from Asiatic Dowitcher and Red-Breasted Snipe to Snipe-Billed Godwit!

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The above have been extensively supplemented by my own field notes on several specimens seen in Singapore in 1963-64, many of these observations being confirmed by the behaviour of the Hong Kong bird.

M. A. W.

BIRD-WATCHING IN HONG KONG 1947-1957

The publication of Herklots' 'Field Note Book' in November 1946 was the foundation stone of bird-watching in Hong Kong. It then became possible for the first time for anyone interested in birds to start identifying them with the aid of a book giving field descriptions. Articles and pictures in the pre-war numbers of *The Hong Kong Naturalist* (edited by G.A.C. Herklots and G.S.P. Heywood) were a help but the number of species described was very small. Even after the publication of the 'Field Note Book' there was still no way of finding other bird-watchers with whom to exchange notes and from whom to learn in the field. Herklots had unfortunately left Hong Kong soon after the publication of his book and it was not until late in 1954 that I met another bird-watcher. This was J.C.E. Britt, an experienced ornithologist, who had been in Hong Kong, unknown to me, since 1945. I finally met him through J.D. Romer who had founded the Hong Kong Biological Circle about 1950.

The next event of any note was the publication of 'Field Notes on Local Birds' by the Biological Circle in February 1953. These notes were by Dove and Goodhart who later published a much fuller version in 'Ibis'. In April of that year came the publication of Herklots' 'Hong Kong Birds' which gave more details of the best bird-watching areas.

Britt's departure for Vancouver early in 1955 was a great loss, not made good until the arrival of F.J. Walker and J.H. Sergeant whom I met in 1956 through membership of the Biological Circle. After several walks in the New Territories with them Frank Walker proposed that we should start a bird-watching society of which he would be the Secretary. It was through his enthusiasm and determination that a meeting was called in August 1957. This was held in the British Council Library in Gloucester Building and the 15 persons present decided then and there to start a society. There had, however, been a serious setback to our plans as shortly before the meeting Walker was told by the R.A.F. that he was to be posted to Singapore. J.H. Sergeant was therefore elected in his place. Soon afterwards the Army moved him, and it was not until Jim Humphreys arrived that the Society really got going.

These are the bare bones of the years before the Society was started. My own recollections of bird-watching in the field during that period may perhaps help to put some flesh on the

skeleton and will, I hope, be of some interest to members who were not in Hong Kong before 1957.

By the end of 1946, with no book to help, I had identified a total of only 22 species. I was on leave for most of 1947 but from 1948 onwards my wife and I spent nearly all our Sundays in the New Territories, and by the end of 1953 our total of species identified was up to 82, which was not very rapid progress. The list did, however, include some rarities or semi-rarities such as the Green Woodpecker, Osprey, Wren, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Peregrine, Ashy Minivet, Asiatic Cuckoo, Forest Wagtail, and Roller.

By the start of 1954 we had become a bit more expert and in the course of that year added 38 new species to our list. There were also several rather inadequate descriptions of birds we could not identify. The new birds of that exciting year included the Pied Kingfisher, Pied Harrier, a Grey Starling at Mong Tseng, and two Black-tailed Godwits on Deep Bay marshes (the first ever recorded, I think). There were also a group of eight Great Crested Grebes in Starling Inlet, a flock of about 20 Chestnut Bulbuls near Sha Lo Tung, a Bull-headed Shrike perched on a roadside wire (another first) between Fan Ling and Lok Ma Chau, and 5 or 6 female Scarlet Minivets in a wood on the south side of the entrance to the Lam Tsuen Valley. No road existed there in those days. We saw a Verditer Flycatcher by the edge of what used to be the best wood in the same valley, on the way to Tai On Shan Village, and other birds seen in or near it included the Roller and Serpent Eagle.

1955 began splendidly with a walk on the 2nd January with J.C.E. Britt during which 5 species new to me were identified. These included four Red-necked Grebes in Starling Inlet. Then I went on leave and saw exciting birds in Kashmir.

By 1956 I had met Frank Walker and went with him to the newly discovered egretty west of Yuen Long where Pond Herons, Cattle Egrets, Little Egrets, and Swinhoe's Egrets were all breeding. We suspected some of being Lesser Egrets but this was never proved. Walker also introduced me to the shallow mud pans beyond the Mai Po police post where many waders new to me were seen. In all there were 31 new species added that year.

The first five months of 1957 produced 24 more, many of which were on walks with Frank Walker. The first was a

party of Rose Finches as we were eating our lunch near the entrance to the Lam Tsuen Valley on New Year's Day—a very good start to the year. Ferruginous Flycatcher, White-headed Black Bulbul, Red Turtle Dove and White-cheeked Drongo were others seen by the end of April. May saw my introduction to eight new species of Wader, and to the Caspian and White-winged Black Tern.

To conclude, it might be of some interest to mention the birds seen from the top floor of the Albany Flats (just above the Botanical Gardens) in 1954-56, and from a house in Severn Road, 403, The Peak, in 1956-59, though some of the latter period is outside that covered by this article. The Albany Flats had a large flower-pot nursery immediately below which added variety to the habitat. 47 species seen from the verandah included the Hair-crested Drongo, Barbet, Oriole and Rose-ringed Parakeet. All of these were often seen on the mid-levels in those days. I remember an Oriole, sitting in a tree within twenty feet of a desk in the old Secretariat Building. Unusual species in this area, even for those days, included the White-breasted Kingfisher, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Pond Heron, Ashy Minivet, Sparrow-hawk, Red-throated Pipit, Grey Thrush and Chinese Starling. Two young Peregrines were seen in July 1954 doing aerobatics over the harbour.

Severn Road was a very good place for Thrushes though they were often difficult to find except by the sound of their scratching among the leaves in dark scrub woodland. The eight species seen were Blackbird, Orange-headed Ground Thrush, White's, Grey, Eye-browed, Pale, Grey-backed and Violet Whistling Thrush. The White's Thrush (formerly known as the Golden Mountain Thrush, a more exciting name) seemed to prefer well-kept lawns where one was able to watch it at close quarters and in a good light for long periods. The Orange-headed Ground Thrush was seen on four occasions between 29th November 1956 and 14th April 1957. White's was seen nearly every day from 9th January to 14th February 1960.

Warblers included the Arctic, Yellow-browed and Pale-legged. The most disturbing bird was the Large Hawk-Cuckoo which made its piercing call for 7 nights running from 9th to 15th April 1957. The greatest rarity was a Frigate Bird seen over the harbour on 25th September 1956.

The total number of species at Severn Road was 53 against 47 at the Albany. Many were common to both but there were

interesting differences. Birds seen only at Severn Road (1200 feet) were seven species of Thrush, three species of Warbler, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Robin Flycatcher, White-backed Munia, Tree Pipit, Fire-breasted Flower-pecker, the two species of Crow Pheasant, House Swift, Rufous-backed Shrike, Roller, Large Hawk-Cuckoo and Frigate Bird. Birds on the Albany list only were Philippine Brown Shrike, Chinese Starling, Java Sparrow, Greenfinch, Red-throated Pipit, Koel, Kestrel, Sparrow-hawk, Spotted Dove, Rufous Turtle-Dove, Pond Heron, Parakeet, White-faced Wagtail and Yellow Wagtail. The differences in the lists were probably due more to the differences in the habitats than to the differences in height above sea-level. Both houses had extensive views over the harbour.

The founding of the Society in 1957 made my last three years the most interesting of all. Bird-watching then became an activity shared with other enthusiasts and I have many happy memories of society outings in the New Territories. It also acquired a more definite purpose and scientific value. In the last 20 years I have watched birds in many parts of Europe, Morocco and India but never have I found any places with quite the same fascination as the Ping Shan—Mai Po marshes with their hilly fringes, and the fung shui woods behind the villages in the New Territories.

Since I left Hong Kong at the end of 1960 it has been a great pleasure to read the Annual Reports which seem to me to get better and better. Then there have been the second edition of the Check List and the start of scientific ringing. I should like therefore to conclude by congratulating most warmly all those who have contributed to this noteworthy progress. Without doubt they have done a job of permanent value.

A. St. G. Walton

EARLY DAYS

My posting to Hong Kong in 1955 was my first real overseas tour. I had a fair amount of experience of U.K. birds and, after purchasing a copy of Herklots' "Birds of Hong Kong", felt fit to do battle with the fauna of the area.

Once at Sek Kong, in June, I ventured forth with notebook in hand, glasses strung round my neck and plunged literally into the surrounding padi to try my luck. It was a great awakening—I knew nothing about birds! Bulbuls were fairly easy; small warblers falling off their tails difficult, and the minute birds flitting about in the canopy of the "fung shui" woods impossible. In the autumn a typhoon left a debris of birds on the Ping Shan marshes, but numbers and variety confused me. I decided I needed help.

My initial introduction to J.D. Romer opened to me the beginning of a wonderful period of bird watching. I made several trips with him whilst he collected snakes and various reptiles, and after a while he introduced me to Miss Maura Benham. Later that autumn I met Jeremy Sergeant, and we teamed up to cover the Mong Tseng peninsula and the Mai Po marshes. We started discovering birds that Herklots had not mentioned, nor Dove and Goodhart for that matter, but group expeditions with Maura Benham, Toby Woodhams and others started to pay off, and with the arrival of Roland de la Mousse, we all began to understand just how much could be done to improve ornithology in the Colony.

Many pleasant days were spent together in the Mai Po marshes and Lam Tsuen valley and slowly I began to identify birds with the help of the resident bird watchers. Mutual interest between the bird watchers of the Colony began to take a firmer shape, and in the steaming quiet of parts of the New Territories it was agreed that the time had come to co-ordinate all our activities and publish annual reports—in short to form a bird watching society.

After further discussion, a letter was drafted and despatched to all known interested parties in Hong Kong, and a meeting called. It was a most pleasant surprise to see the numbers

who turned up at the inaugural meeting, and after preliminary introductions, we got down to business, with Mr. Walton in the chair. I nervously suggested "Hong Kong Ornithological Society" as the title for the proposed society, but after further discussion we settled for the "Hong Kong Bird Watching Society" and then we were in business.

No individual can really claim credit for the formation of the Society. It was an amalgamation of ideas, many of which had been simmering in the minds of bird watchers of Hong Kong for years. The final result was the joint hard work and co-operation of many people. In my time, 1955 to 1957, many names come to mind—Maura Benham, Roland de la Mousse, Jeremy Sergeant, Arthur Walton, Edgar Webb and Toby Woodhams are but a few. The results of their hard work, and the efforts of the members who followed have shown the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society to be a serious, hard-working ornithological organisation that can claim parity with many such societies overseas.

On this tenth anniversary may I thank friends and members of the Society for their unstinting help and guidance during my short visits to the Colony and express my best wishes for the future.

F. Walker

PACIFIC CROSSING

In the 1966 Bird Report the Editor's footnote and Mr. and Mrs. Dale's most interesting account of their shipboard bird watching during their journey home to England via Suez, ask for someone to complete the record from the point of view of a passage east about across the Pacific.

I am a little surprised. Not only was the 1966 Editor our much respected President but he also happens to carry after his name the mystic letters "R.N." which surely presupposes he must have sailed in these waters himself in the course of duty. Perhaps, however, in true nautical fashion he is waiting for a "nil return" from one or other of his flock who may have chanced the more prosaic crossing direct from Yokohama and far from the exciting ports in Canada or the Hawaiian Islands, let alone the Galapagos to which, in May 1968, Mr. Guy Mountford of my Sussex village was to lead a party in the cruise ship "Navarino". I omit, of course, the Horn; though those of us who had the pleasure of their weekly ration of the Chichester cables will remember one or two memorable excursions into ornithology whilst he was in those waters.

However, because of one memorable day off the coast of Central America I will take up his challenge and leave a description of the other fifty odd to a future contributor with, perhaps, better sight, more books (which certainly would not be difficult, for I had none) and (again not difficult) a wider knowledge of the subject.

In passing I should just mention the brace of swallows, black and white terns and two American "doves" of the nautical variety that came down to ship level to enquire our name, destination and cargo, that we saw on the passage to Japan. If I had had the benefit of Herklots or your recent check list — plus its compiler — I could probably have told you the name of a charming little visitor with orange brown head and back, black cheeks, speckled white breast and long black pointed beak that literally flew into my arms the third day out from Hong Kong. He remained with us until we berthed in Kobe but in spite of the fact that I fed him regularly and saw he had his evening drink he never disclosed his identity.

In Japan we were mostly in overcrowded industrial ports and, except, for the wonder of the blossom in the parks, saw little to interest or appeal.

Thirteen days after our departure from Hong Kong we steamed out of Tokyo bay, took our last sight of the East from Taleyama and altered course to 92°. Then for eleven days we saw nothing: no ships, no fish, no birds and not even a quartermaster at the wheel for our course remained unaltered and the automatic pilot kept us in the right direction.

By the time we reached San Pedro, port of Los Angeles, a sparrow would have been good value to a recorder though our eyes were startlingly opened to the wonders of the ocean through which we had been sailing by a visit to the incredible oceanarium at Marineland, Palos Verdes. Here we watched sea lions and whales performing the most amazing tricks, porpoises playing baseball and a diver clad only in bathing trunks walking in the immense Fishbowl that is said to hold 3,000 fish and gently stroking the flanks of sting ray and brown moray whilst followed by a couple of blue and thresher sharks who seemed equally anxious to engage his attention. Many of the 100 odd varieties now on show in Marineland are caught in the waters off the Californian coast so for the next few days our eyes were mostly directed downwards into the clear blue water where it was not difficult to see and identify the small whales, dolphins, barracuda, shark and many other types.

But I digress too much for the Bird Report and return, apologetically, to the afternoon of our 35th day at sea which found us abeam of the island of Coiba and not more than another eight hours steaming from the entrance to the Panama Canal.

That same morning I had been watching the antics of what I hope I am correct in calling Auklets. Smallish black and white sea birds with sharply pointed wings which skimmed the top of the waves made by our wash in a never-ceasing quest for whatever it is that Auklets prefer for lunch. I watched them for a good two hours and never once did I see one touch the crest of a wave with even so much as a single pointed wing tip. There were scores of them below us, generally astern, and they followed the ship all the morning. Then, shortly after lunch, occurred the spectacle which has prompted me to answer the Editor's "cri de coeur".

If ever you feel inclined to study the movements of a Booby, right from the beginning of the dive to the moment of truth beneath the water when the fish is taken, I recommend the boat deck of a cargo ship steaming not too quickly through the blue

waters of the eastern Pacific. I am certain no truer picture of the whole fantastic performance could ever be obtained elsewhere. They flew over us in clouds the whole of the afternoon and continued their fishing until darkness fell and we altered course again and prepared to take our turn into the Canal outside Balboa. I reckon we must have been about 70 ft. from the water on the boat deck and, obligingly, each Booby started his dive from little more than ten feet above us and right by the side of the ship. With binoculars it was possible to follow every movement: arrival on target, the quick turn, the acceleration of the dive and that miraculous moment when, just above the water, the bird seems to close tail and body into one smooth cigar-shaped projectile and enters the water without so much as a ripple. Down they went below the surface to possibly as much as three or four feet, their bodies magnified by the clearness of the sea, never missing a strike and emerging seconds later with some miserable fish vainly struggling in their beaks. The larger catches were taken away to be eaten at leisure but for the little tiddlers they never bothered to go far away from the ship's side, gulping them down as fast as possible and then returning to their place in the queue above us ready for the next dive.

Finally, replete with food and obviously a little weary from their exertions they would fly off to the nearest turtle and sink gratefully upon its back. If you ever want to see a really comical sight I suggest that the view of a Booby, as seen from the deck of a ship, standing perfectly erect and being gently propelled through the water on the back of a turtle needs a lot of beating. To begin with one gets the impression that they are literally walking on the water until the occasional glimpse of a polished brown back, just awash, betrays the true nature of the miracle.

The Pacific really repaid us that afternoon for the days of grey sea and skies and the endless monotony we had passed in its passage for, outside the entrance to the Canal—by the Pearl Islands—the Panamanian fishermen were hard at work drawing in their nets at the close of the day's fishing. Each boat was surrounded by hundreds of ugly squawking pelicans that seemed to be removing far more of the fish in the nets than the owner was hauling into his boat. I focussed my glasses on these wretched toilers of the deep but they were accepting the situation as all in the day's work and I could detect no sign of Panamanian profanity on their lips.

Finally, just before dark, when we were anchored to await our call for the Canal, four large Frigate Birds sailed majestically down from the sky and slowly circled the ship, motionless on wing and completely oblivious of our presence on board. I could see every part of their long black bodies and wings and their graceful presence crowned our day.

This, I fear, is not the sort of survey the Editor is hoping for so, in anticipation of his comment "Could do better", I sign myself

Your ex-Librarian.

F. Clive Robinson

Footnote

On a voyage from Yokohama to New York in the Spring of 1964, I was fortunate to have Kobayashi's "Birds of Japan" with me, but *not* Alexander's "Birds of the Ocean". We were also lucky enough to be accompanied by a number of large birds most of the way to Los Angeles. They sailed and swooped round the stern all day and many idle hours were spent in watching them and in vain attempts at photography. I had no idea what they were but eventually placed them in Kobayashi (Plate 42!) as Laysian and Black-footed Albatrosses. Wheeling in flight they were hard to reconcile with the static pose of the plate, and anyway I always thought of Albatrosses as vast white birds which skimmed the waves in the southern oceans, as I had seen them off the Cape while in the Navy.

Apart from this we saw only smallish birds, so far away they could only be hopefully classed as "Shearwater species" and "Petrel species". Two days away from Los Angeles we were greeted by a host of gulls.

But we really saw nothing to compare with Clive Robinson's Boobies riding on turtles.

E. D. W.

PHOTOGRAPHY

During the past year several members of the Society, myself included, have become interested in photographing birds in addition to watching them. So far this has only entailed taking a camera and telephoto lens on bird watching outings and then photographing anything within range and a good deal more which is in fact out of range but which one hopes will, by some miracle, turn out all right.

I have found it to be a fascinating but frustrating hobby. After each outing I think that I have some good shots and wait impatiently for the film to come back from being processed. A quick look at the slides makes me wonder if I pointed the camera in the right direction, as usually a minute dot in the middle distance is the only sign of bird life.

There is no doubt that bird photography should be done on one's own, if possible, as one's bird watching friends have their patience sorely tried by being told to stay still. The photographer always wants to go on in front to get the best results and this usually means that everybody else has to stay well back so as not to frighten the birds. The fact that they usually fly away before he has got within range is neither here nor there, as he always promises to be more careful next time.

Another reason for not taking cameras on outings with other people is that the best birds are usually seen when one does not. There have been exceptions to this rule, notably the time Dr. Barnes saw his Avocet and Black Storks, but on most occasions when I have been really close to birds I have not had my camera and telephoto lens with me.

Although one should know the basic principles of photography, the actual taking of the photograph is only a small part of the battle. Getting close to the birds without disturbing them is the major difficulty, and to do this not only must one make the minimum of noise, but also use every bit of cover available. In woodland or scrub the cover is normally no problem, but often the birds fly away while one is behind it, and so after several minutes of painful progress one finds the particular branch or piece of ground devoid of any form of bird life whatever. The next fifteen minutes are spent removing thorns

and pieces of spider's web, dealing with mosquito bites and generally cleaning up. It is therefore no wonder that bird photography needs a lot of time and an even greater supply of patience and good temper.

Up to the present most of my own attempts have been on the Mai Po marshes, where cover is at a minimum. One hot, sunny mid-day in spring I spent over half an hour flat on my stomach crawling along a bund and trying not to be seen behind the eighteen inch high wall of mud which had recently been built on one side of it. The distance I had to travel was only fifty yards or so, but when one can only move forward six inches at a time one begins to appreciate the tortoise's feelings during his race with the hare. The ground tasted unpleasant, sweat poured into my eyes, elbows and knees became raw, and when I finally raised my head over the low wall there were the two birds but right "up-sun", and it was only as they flew off that I knew by the black "armpits" that they were not the rarities I had hoped, but just Grey Plover.

Sometimes it is possible to get very close just by walking slowly and I have found Golden Plover to be very obliging in this way. No birds in Hong Kong have yet been as tame as two young Cormorants which allowed me to get to within three feet on the beach near Eureka, California or the five Dotterel on Exmoor, Devon which refused to fly away at all. These would run ahead for five yards, stop, and then look back waiting for me to catch up. Last summer at Big Wave Bay I wished I had had my camera with me while swimming. It was a flat calm day and so I swam slowly round the rocks to the north of the Bay. Just out of sight of the beach I came round a corner face to face with a Reef Egret, apparently eating hors d'oeuvres which were hiding in crannies in the rocks at the water's edge. It was not in the least worried by a disembodied head floating on the water and we moved slowly along the water line with him at the water's edge and myself about three yards offshore. I was able to admire his lemon yellow legs, the chrome-yellow soles of his feet, and his eye ring, and think how well these contrasted with his grey plumage, before I finally decided I had swum far enough and turned back, leaving him to have the rest of his meal in peace. All this may seem to have little to do with the subject of this article, but it is put in to show that one should *always* have a camera with one.

I have found that it is comparatively easy to approach birds in a car and then to photograph them out of the window. Of course this presupposes that they are at the side of a road or on it, but I have found it a useful approach for wagtails, Kentish Plover, and Common Sandpipers. The best photograph I have taken was, however, not from the car at all. It is of the Grey Faced Buzzard Eagle, which is rare in Hong Kong. I was able to get really close to him one afternoon at Pokfulam, but this was not his fault as he had been trapped in China, sold to a friend of mine, and was recuperating before being released.

R. E. H.

BIRDS OF ABERDEEN

The neighbourhood of Aberdeen and Brick Hill, and to a lesser extent Shouson Hill, seems to have escaped the attention of regular bird-watchers in the more recent past, so a few comments on its residents and visitors may not be out of place. One would hardly expect the grounds of the Police Training School with its practice ranges and tramp of heavy boots obeying the raucous words of command on the square to be a suitable habitat for the shy birds. Nevertheless a surprising variety do visit the area. They seem unaffected by the bustle of activity, and sing in vain rivalry of the Police Band.

When I first became acquainted with this part of the Island in 1963, things were a little quieter. For one thing, the huge low-cost housing complex between Brick Hill and Aberdeen was no more than a blueprint, and the vast concrete structure which Staunton Creek has become was merely a reeking little stream emptying itself into the sea amongst the water-people's sampans. However, between the new nullah and Wong Chuk Hang Road the stream still flows sluggishly, overhung at intervals with bamboo and collecting all the refuse dumped in it by the vegetable gardeners and pig and duck-keepers who live along its banks. It is rank and evil smelling, but it attracts insects and the insects attract the birds.

On 6th April, 1965, a comparative new-comer to Hong Kong, I was inspecting this stream with some distaste when a largish bird rose from the undergrowth, flapped a little way down the stream and landed again. Having never seen this bird before I made a careful description of it both then and when it appeared again on 7th and 13th. It proved to be a Chestnut Bittern. This was the only visit paid to the area by this species as far as one can judge, for it has never appeared since. The same week up to four White-breasted Water-hens were to be seen on the stream on various occasions, and more in January 1966. Of course the usual wagtails and kingfishers associated with this kind of habitat appeared in season, and this year a single Snipe has made a home beside it. This bird appears to have an injured leg, so perhaps the rough and tumble of the Deep Bay marshes are too much for its limited powers of survival. Every year a solitary Pond Heron turns up in the spring, looking perhaps for a mate, but surely not thinking of breeding anywhere near, for

the closest heronry is near the Border at Sha Tau Kok. Once a number of Little Egrets sought refuge after a severe storm, and strutted about the Police Training School football field for several days before moving on to more fruitful feeding grounds. Mention of the football field calls to mind the visit of three Pratincoles, which remained there for a week in April 1965; they were very tame and one could walk within five or six yards of them before they took off, circled the field and alighted again a little farther on. They looked delightfully sleek and well groomed and showed no ill effects from the recent storm which they must have encountered. In March the following year there was again one of them at the same spot (could it have been one of the identical birds from the previous year?) but it stayed only a day.

That year a Crested Mynah nested in one of the old buildings on Brick Hill, and I was able to inspect the nest. The site, materials and eggs could not have been distinguished from that of my boyhood friend, the English Starling. I never saw any young birds from this nest so I presume the rats got them.

The area has a large population of the beautiful Spotted Doves, which must also nest there, but I have only found one nest, which was robbed, probably by magpies. The early mornings see the Doves feeding busily on the lawns, and occasionally they are joined in the winter by one or two of the Eastern Red Turtle Doves, easily distinguished when the two species are seen side by side.

Nearly every year a solitary Java Sparrow appears, apparently quite at home amongst the hoards of tree sparrows which infest the buildings and breed in every cranny, it seems for much of the year. It seems likely that this odd bird is an "escape", but the large flocks of this species recently seen in the Colony indicate that it is very much a bird of Hong Kong and most probably breeds.

I was able to observe the nest-building activities of the Spotted Munia in 1965. This was a strange performance, for the object was clearly not the raising of a brood of young. The nest, about 15 ft. off the ground in the dense branches of a small tree, was a large untidy affair of grasses, and was frequented throughout the summer by up to six birds, sometimes adding

new material, sometimes apparently merely resting inside. Short flights were made to obtain long blades of grass, which were then carried, streaming behind the bird, to the nest, where they were carefully woven in. Another nest was built in a different tree in the summer of 1967, but on this occasion only two birds appeared to be active, and again no eggs were laid. It appears that this species indulges in compulsive nest-building activities, many of which are never used to rear a brood. Breeding does take place in the vicinity, however, for I have seen numbers of young birds with their parents swaying through the long grasses and quartering the banks on the ground.

Sadly one has to record that the bird population in this part of the island is on the wane. Hardly ever is the cascade of falling notes of the White Breasted Kingfisher to be heard nowadays; the Francolin's familiar call no longer resounds from the upper slopes of Brick Hill, and where formerly not one, but almost a colony of Crow Pheasants would welcome the return of the sunshine after the rain, at the most a pair seem to be left. A pair of White-Bellied Sea Eagles regularly pays us a call, wheeling far above and no doubt inspecting us carefully with their remarkable eyes. Even the Rufous-Backed Shrike seems to call only occasionally, whereas once one could map out the territory of three or four, and his small brown cousin came too. A possible pointer to the root of the trouble was observed very recently. A Rufous-Backed Shrike feeding one—just one—yearling. On the ground below a Crested Mynah looking after one—just one—juvenile. Does this point to a largely infertile egg clutch, resulting from the insecticide poisons now being used on the vegetable farm lands? One very evident use of these chemicals is the virtual extinction of the frog population in the paddy. One has only to visit the New Territories in the frog breeding season to remark how silent it has all suddenly become, where once the croaking was almost deafening. Widespread use of insecticides has proved highly lethal to the bird population in other parts of the world, and it looks as if our own, already threatened by many other inimical factors, will have to contend with this menace also.

A sad note on which to end.

R. A. I. W.

STORKS

5.2.67—7 p.m. Hon. Sec. telephones Hon. Rec. in great excitement—a White Stork at Ping Shan! The second Colony record! Hon. Rec. pretends to be convinced-cannot understand how it could be misidentified, but.....! Keeps quiet and is very polite.

19.2.67—1 p.m. Hon. Rec. convinced at last (having seen the bird himself less than 100 yards away).

7 p.m. Hon. Rec. telephones Hon. Sec. "I saw the White Stork today-wonderful view, bla, bla, bla..... By the way, there were also 3 Black Storks circling over the mountains on the Chinese side". Hon. Sec., having never seen Black Storks, wonders whether they could be identified at that distance, but keeps quiet and is *very* polite.

(Interval for swimming, riots, Asiatic Dowitcher, and other diversions).

19.11.67—1 p.m. Hon. Rec., having seen very little on the marshes during the morning, sits down to lunch in the appointed place facing Mai Po Wood. No birds, and sandwiches uninteresting. Glances to the right towards the end of the small range of hills. Leaps up, and stands for a moment with sheer disbelief on his face (not observed). Flings sandwiches aside, grabs binoculars, and sprints to the end of the hill overlooking the marsh. Ten Black Storks circling over the nearby village!

7 p.m. Hon. Rec. telephones Hon. Sec.
Hon. Sec. very polite.

17.12.67—2 p.m. Hon. Rec. sees two Black Storks flying over the marsh.

2.30 p.m. Hon. Rec. meets Hon. Sec., tells him.
Hon. Sec. not so polite.

31.12.67—4 p.m. Hon. Rec., having by now adopted the hill overlooking the marsh as a lookout post, sees 15 Black Storks over the far side of the Bay.

1.1.68—Hon. Rec. meets Hon. Sec. on Society Outing to Tai Mong Tsai, tells him of the Black Storks. Hon. Sec. not polite, does not believe it, and says so.

7.1.68—Hon. Sec. and Hon. Rec. go to the marsh together. No Black Storks. Hon. Sec. not surprised. Says so.

14.1.68—1.30 p.m. Hon. Rec. sees two Black Storks. Hon. Sec. on another part of the marsh. They meet later. Hon. Rec. reports sighting. Hon. Sec. laughs.

21.1.68.—12.0 noon Hon. Rec. in triumph points out 5 Black Storks to A. Hibi—now at least one other bird-watcher knows they exist!

1.0 p.m. Hon. Rec. meets Hon. Sec. Reports Storks.
Hon. Sec. forced to believe it.

12-15.2.68—Hon. Sec. spends four days holiday at Mai Po, but all efforts in vain. No Black Storks.

18.2.68—Society Outing to Long Valley. Hon. Rec. present. Hon. Sec. misses Outing in first time for months. After Long Valley, party moves to Mai Po Hill for lunch. Eight Black Storks seen on the ground. Dr. Barnes photographs them.

19.2.68—9.30 a.m. Hon. Rec. telephones Hon. Sec.
Hon. Sec. becomes abusive.

22.2.68—Hon. Rec. sends Hon. Sec. a "genuine antique" print of a Black Stork.

25.2.68—1.0 p.m. Hon. Rec. and A. Hibi having lunch on Mai Po Hill, watching 5 Black Storks feeding on the far side of the river.

1.10 p.m. Hon. Sec. arrives at bottom of hill. Hon. Rec. to A. Hibi, "The Storks will now disappear behind those tall clumps of grass".

1.11 p.m. The Storks disappear behind the tall clumps of grass.

1.12 p.m. Hon. Sec. reaches top of hill. Greeted with much laughter. Does not see the joke.

4.0 p.m. Hon. Sec. leaves hill. Storks have not put in further appearance.

3.3.68—Society Outing. Hon. Rec. and Hon. Sec. present. Prospects of Black Storks not considered good.

1.0 p.m. Society has lunch on Mai Po Hill. Hon. Rec. looks for Black Storks. Hon. Sec. goes away from main party for own purposes. Hon. Rec. finds two Black Storks, shows them to everybody. Hon. Sec. returns, is told of Black Storks. Black Storks, not having been given sufficient warning, still visible. Hon. Sec. sees back half of one as it disappears behind a bush.

10.3.68—1 p.m. Hon. Sec. and Hon. Rec. still on speaking terms. Lunch together on Mai Po Hill. Three Black Storks seen very well by both. Hon. Sec., having spent miserable winter, now happy at last.

(Black Storks not seen again).

Hon. Rec.
(Supervised by Hon. Sec.)

CONSERVATION

Wild life in Hong Kong is becoming scarcer and scarcer with every year that passes. Unless positive action to preserve it is taken within the near future there will be little or nothing left to preserve. Already various mammals are extinct in the Colony and numerous species of birds which formerly were often seen can now be considered rarities. Government, by its inaction and apathy, is giving an example of short-sightedness and refusal to face reality which is hard to beat. The responsibility for taking the necessary measures to enforce the protection ordinances, such as they are, lies with them and not with those public spirited individuals who act as Honorary Game Wardens, as does the education of the public as a whole. Both the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society and the Hong Kong Natural History Society, as well as interested individuals, can assist in many ways but their willingness to do so is blunted by an apparent total lack of interest on the part of Government.

There are, of course, no species of bird or mammal unique to Hong Kong, and it can therefore be said that the conservation problem has not the same vital urgency as in some countries. It should, however, be remembered that residents of the free world can only observe certain species here. Apart from Macao, which has few or no areas suitable for wild life, Hong Kong is the only place on the mainland of Asia between Korea in the North and Vietnam in the South which is open to westerners, and as such is a vital link in the world wide study and ringing of migratory birds.

At present there are two full time Game Wardens to cover the whole of the Colony, and their task is obviously impossible. Recently 47 members of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department have been gazetted as Game Wardens but these are engaged full time on other activities and so their use is minimal. It was with this serious situation in mind, and in view of the trapping and shooting which is carried on with impunity throughout the Colony that the Society passed the following resolution at the Annual General Meeting.

"The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society supports the Hong Kong Natural History Society in recognising the excellent laws designed to protect the wild life of Hong Kong but notes with

regret that, due to lack of enforcement, these laws afford virtually no protection to the Colony's remaining wild life. The Society also appreciates Government's action in establishing the Provisional Council for the Use and Conservation of the Countryside in March 1967. This Council has already been at work for almost a year and it is becoming increasingly apparent that, due to the complexity and magnitude of the task, at least several years will elapse before any effective conservation measures result. Due to the tremendous pressure of urbanization in recent years, and to extensive illegal hunting in various forms, the survival of much of the Colony's interesting wild life is now seriously threatened. The question of improvement of the Game Warden service has been raised repeatedly since as long ago as June, 1965.

RESOLVED that the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society recommend that the Hong Kong Government take immediate interim measures to protect the remaining wild life of the Colony, by bringing the numbers of Game Wardens engaged full-time on wild life protection duties throughout the Colony up to at least 16, as a minimum requirement, and by providing all Game Wardens with adequate transport facilities".

To this the following reply was received from Government:-

"1. While the Resolution correctly recognises that the conservation of the countryside and of the indigenous wild life is a particularly difficult and complex task in Hong Kong's circumstances, it is felt that it places too much stress on the role which law enforcement can play. Other equally important factors, in the Government's view, are the destruction and change of habitats through the inevitable spread of urban development and changes in farming practices, the devastation caused annually by grass and woodland fires and the apparent lack of public interest in conservation.

2. The adequacy or otherwise of the present establishment of full-time Game Wardens must be looked at in the context of all available Game Wardens. In recent months, forty-seven members of the Agriculture & Fisheries Department have been gazetted as Game Wardens since their outdoor normal duties are such as to enable them to assist in enforcing the provisions of the Wild Birds and Wild Animals Protection Ordinance. In

addition there are, as you know, nearly thirty Honorary Game Wardens who undertake enforcement duties in their spare time.

3. I should also mention that, apart from the studies being undertaken by the Provisional Council for the Preservation of the Countryside, the Government's forest policy is currently being reviewed with a view to extending the activities of the Forestry Division of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department beyond the present Fire Protection Area thus placing greater emphasis on the conservation of the countryside generally.

4. I hope from what I have said that you will feel reassured that Government appreciates the importance of the task of preserving our indigenous wild life, but the extent to which this can be achieved by simply increasing the number of full-time Game Wardens employed is open to considerable doubt".

Subsequently the Society replied in the following terms, and the next instalments of this correspondence will be published in the next Report.

"It has already been agreed that conservation of wild life is hindered by the inevitable spread of urban development, changes in farming practice, the devastation caused annually by grass and woodland fires, and the apparent lack of interest in conservation by the general public, but it is also impaired by the lack of full time game wardens available to enforce the provisions of the relevant ordinances. This strengthens the case for preserving wild life in those areas in which it is still found. We emphasised that the appointment of extra full time game wardens would be an interim measure until the general public become sufficiently aware of the need to preserve their own heritage.

This Society will be happy to co-operate with Government, to the best of its ability, in the education of the public and will be interested to hear of Government's plans to introduce the subject of conservation both in schools and in teacher training colleges. Members of this Society already help the University of Hong Kong by giving Extra Mural lectures and will be glad to help Government in similar ways as far as time permits.

This Society notes with regret that no interest whatever has been shown in the reasons why the number 16 was chosen for full time game wardens, and feel far from reassured that

Government appreciates the importance of preserving our indigenous wild life. We feel that the appointment of 47 officers of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department as game wardens will have little effect as their main duties will come first. We should like to know what training they have been given in their duties as game wardens, whether or not Government is satisfied that they can differentiate between birds which may, in season, legally be shot and those which may not, and what results have so far been achieved by these officers.

It appears that the refusal to appoint further full time game wardens has been made purely on economic grounds. The cost of the full time game wardens per year, together with adequate transport facilities and a properly qualified supervisory officer would be less than ten cents per head of population per year and this does not seem excessive.

The fact that there are approximately thirty honorary game wardens cannot be used as an excuse for not appointing full time ones. Whilst honorary game wardens will always have a part to play in any scheme of conservation, they are private individuals with limited time at their disposal.

We are glad to learn that the Provisional Council for the Preservation of the Countryside is about to submit its preliminary report and look forward to its publication. We shall be grateful if you will advise us of the outcome of the review of Government's forest policy.

We feel that if Government is truly interested in conservation and the preservation of wild life for future generations in Hong Kong a definite Policy Statement is required, and a time-table for the implementation of this policy laid down.

It is already too late to save some species, particularly of mammals, and others will soon become extinct in the Colony unless immediate conservation measures are taken. It is our earnest hope that the progressive spirit which has made Hong Kong such a prosperous community will not be stifled in Government's consideration of conservation measures, although it has been little enough in evidence since the publication of the Wild Bird & Wild Mammals Protection Ordinance in 1954. Further delay will be interpreted as evidence of lack of interest on Government's part.

Although the number of persons actively interested in conservation may be small, we wish to emphasize that any conservation proposals are motivated by a concern for the interests of the public at large. The fact that the public at large is not aware at the moment of the problem strengthens, rather than weakens, the case for immediate conservation measures. We have made what we believe to be a workable proposal, on an interim basis; we await either its immediate implementation, or an alternative measure for the same ends".

Apart from establishing Nature Reserves in selected areas, such as the Mai Po Marshes, the Sai Kung Peninsula and parts of Lantau, there is a desperate need for a programme of public education and for publicity for the plight of wild life in the Colony. The appointment of further full time Game Wardens and the imposition of higher penalties on those persons caught contravening the Protection Ordinances are also vital in the conservation of wild life until such time as the Public conscience has been awakened.

In the long term any attempt to conserve wild life without the co-operation of the inhabitants of the New Territories and of the city dwellers who visit the countryside is, of course, as short-sighted as allowing it to be exterminated. For this reason a concerted effort must be made through publicity and education, both by local individuals and groups, with support from international organisations, to enlist the support of the people primarily concerned. A sense of pride in the Colony's wild life must be instilled, and proof given that in Hong Kong money making is not the be-all and end-all of existence.

The education of the general public is, of necessity, a long term programme and can best be carried out in schools, youth clubs, and on television, by means of films, posters and lectures. There is a need for finance to be allocated by Government for an educational programme of this nature, and for a course on conservation and wild life appreciation to be included in the official syllabus not only in schools but at the various teacher training colleges. One cannot expect school children to become interested in wild life when their teachers have no knowledge of, or interest in it.

R. E. H.

"SHORTER NOTES"

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

When a variety of Waders are feeding or resting on the shallow ponds or mudflats of Mai Po, they tend to keep a little aloof, and stick to their own species like the clumps at a cocktail party. And when they do mix, for example Stint with Dunlin, and groups of assorted sandpipers, they generally take off by species, which of course is a great help towards identification.

However, I have several times seen Marsh Sandpiper led by a Greenshank in flight, or Greenshank led by a Marsh Sandpiper. Here the notable difference in size makes things easier, but I wonder why these two species, so alike in colouration, adopt this habit.

E. D. W.

ANOTHER SEA EAGLE'S NEST

On the evening of 11th February, I was returning from one of the outlying islands. By a lucky chance the ferry passed unusually close to another island that is not half so outlying; it is also small and uninhabited.

Thrusting out of the coarse grass on the rounded hillside is a pillar of rock like a horse's tooth, and on the crown I could see the makings of a large untidy nest. Binoculars were fortunately round my neck and these disclosed a big black-and-white object which looked like a sea eagle. At that moment it obligingly took off and was unmistakably an adult White-bellied Sea Eagle, flying over the hill and out of sight. Another look at the nest and, well I never, there was *still* a big black and white object on top, which was almost certainly another adult sea eagle. So it seems that the ferry was passing by at the precise moment when the two adult birds were changing duties on the nest; as if deeply moved by the sight, she was vibrating from stern to stern and it was impossible to detect through binoculars whether there were any eaglets in the nest. According to the diary of another nest in 1964, there certainly *should* have been.

For several weeks after this episode, we tried vainly to get water transport for a voyage of verification and photography.

E. D. W.

COUSIN ISLAND—A NATURE RESERVE

(Reprinted from I.C.B.P. British Section Annual Report 1967)

Cousin, a tiny tropical island which forms part of the Seychelles group, offers a unique opportunity for the preservation of disappearing species. The whole group of islands are of great importance to conservationists because owing to their broken character they have provided an opening for a series of specialized endemic land birds, each perhaps originally restricted to a very limited habitat of different type, and in a considerable number of cases now being very rare.

The disappearance and restriction in range of the Seychelles endemics appears to be due to a combination of factors, particularly the felling of endemic vegetation and the introduction of rodents and cats by man. Cousin Island which is still well stocked with endemic species provides an ideal site and it is therefore with the greatest gratification that the British Section International Council for Bird Preservation, after six years of effort and setbacks, has successfully negotiated the purchase of this island to maintain it as a nature reserve.

Cousin Island is the only place in the world where the Brush Warbler or Petit Merles des Isles (*Nesillas sechellensis*), now reduced to under 50 pairs, is found; it is one of the three remaining refuges of the Fody or Toq Toq (*Foudia sechellarum*) and the only breeding place in the Indian Ocean of the rare Lesser Noddy (*Anous tenuirostris*) which otherwise breed only on a small island group off Australia. Apart from these rare species there are large nesting colonies of Fairy Terns, Shearwaters and Tropic Birds.

Though the birds are of prime interest to the British Section, the island is also the home of a form of Giant Tortoise.

In 1955 the Hon. H. E. Ridley and Lord Richard Percy visited the Seychelles officially and made certain recommendations concerning the conservation of sea-bird colonies to ensure the continuance of the supply of eggs for the food market. They further recommended improvement to the existing wild bird protection legislation, making special reference to the rare land birds and the rare Lesser Noddy. Five years later Dr. J. H. Crook, at that time working in the Department of Zoology,

Cambridge, with Dr. W. H. Thorpe, also visited the Seychelles and found no apparent change in legislation. At the request of the Director of Agriculture in the Seychelles, Dr. Crook submitted a memorandum on the status of certain birds of the Seychelles and recommendations for their conservation, which included the creation of nature sanctuaries.

Early in 1961 the owner of Cousin died and the British Section, fully aware of its importance, at once began negotiations through the Colonial Office to endeavour to obtain this island for a nature reserve. The project was most sympathetically received by the Colonial Office and the Governor, and in 1962 the British Section put forward a project to the World Wildlife Fund for the necessary funds to purchase Cousin Island and maintain it as a reserve.

After this promising start there were a series of difficulties and set backs. To begin with the ownership of the island was disputed which involved prolonged litigation regarding the inheritance. When this was eventually settled complications arose over the fact that the owner leased the island to a friend and was reluctant to sell.

In 1964/65 five zoologists from Bristol University, assisted financially by grants from the World Wildlife Fund, made an expedition to the Seychelles to carry out a status survey of endangered species. The expedition was led by Malcolm Penny and was under the supervision of Dr. J. H. Crook. The party visited Cousin Island three times, in January, June and August 1965. They reported that on their last visit they were seriously disturbed at the deterioration which had taken place with the advent of the new tenant since their previous visits, and considerable areas of undergrowth had been cleared and a large number of pigs and chickens had been introduced. They stated that this might lead to the extinction of the Brush Warbler which feeds and breeds in the scrub, and also endanger the Lesser Noddy and the Seychelles Fody and concluded by stating that the island was in grave danger of losing its natural beauty and interest. This information was sent by the leader of the expedition to the Governor of the Seychelles and the British ICBP made representations to the Colonial Office regarding the urgent need for protective measures on the island. It was therefore most encouraging when in April 1966 Cousin Island, together

with a number of other islands in the Seychelles, was by Ordinance declared a nature reserve and the regulations concerning the protection of birds were strengthened.

Negotiations for the purchase of Cousin Island were continued and in August 1966 Lord Ridley and Lord Richard Percy made another official visit to the Seychelles and reported on the situation. In 1967 information was received that the lease of Cousin Island had been terminated, that the owner was willing to sell, and that Power of Attorney had been granted to a representative in the United Kingdom. It was therefore possible to discuss the whole matter at first hand, and after a meeting at which the terms were agreed a firm acceptance of an offer to buy the island was received.

The ICBP and the World Wildlife Fund are therefore making a joint appeal to purchase the island to maintain it as a nature reserve and to establish a scientific study centre. The Birmingham Branch of the WWF British National Appeal, which has for some years been specially interested in the preservation of Cousin, is launching a special fund-raising campaign and is being joined in this effort by the Eastbourne Branch.

It is most fortunate that the present Governor of the Seychelles, Sir Hugh Norman-Walker, is giving every support to the project and with his permission Monsieur Philippe Loustau-Lalanne, of the Department of Agriculture, who is an ornithologist, will be the representative of the ICBP in the Seychelles and take full control of the island in order to safeguard the wildlife immediately the purchase is completed.

Donations are urgently required in order that the opportunity of acquiring this important island is not lost, and may be sent either to the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society for onward transmission, or direct to The Secretary, The International Council for Bird Preservation, c/o British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London S.W.7, England.

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RECORDING

1. Records should be sent to the Hon. Recorder half-yearly, in early July and early January. Anyone leaving the Colony is asked to send in his records before departure if possible; notes have a nasty habit of getting mislaid "en voyage".

2. Use a separate sheet of paper (6" by 4" used horizontally for each species.

3. Head each sheet and complete it as follows:—

YEAR	SPECIES	CHECK LIST NO.
Date	Place	Observer's Initials
Numbers, age, sex, etc.		
e.g. 1965	CROW PHEASANT	170
(1st half)		A.B.C.
3rd Jan.	Tai Mo Shan	1 seen calling from small bush near summit
10th May	Lam Tsuen valley	Several heard, 1 juvenile seen

4. Please do NOT use diary form.

5. Whenever possible, obtain confirmation of a rarity by getting someone else to see it. At least take full notes on the spot and send them in with your records. Do NOT guess or imagine details afterwards. Please read the extract from the British Birds editorial on the following page. It is important that our standards in Hong Kong should be as high as possible. Nevertheless, it is hoped that members will send in reports of rarities even when they are doubtful whether they have enough supporting evidence to make identity certain. Subsequent events sometimes support a report of this kind, or it may tie in with those of other observers.

6. Remember that your records will be kept for future reference. Please type or write them neatly and legibly.

7. The following information about the Colony's birds is particularly needed:-

- (a) Positive breeding records for all species in all areas.
- (b) Nesting data, such as breeding period, clutch, size, incubation and fledging periods.
- (c) Arrival and departure dates of summer and winter visitors.
- (d) Reports from the New Territories *East* of the Kowloon-Canton railway.

(a) and (b) are best recorded on nesting cards which may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. Full instructions are printed on them. When completed they should be sent to the Hon. Recorder.

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SIGHT-RECORDS OF RARE BIRDS

(Extracted from the editorial in "British Birds",
Vol. XLV, No. 1, January 1952)

Accurate sight-records of rare birds are important because they add to knowledge without causing the destruction involved in the alternative method of collecting specimens. However, sight-records are of very little use if not above suspicion.

Do not record a rare bird as seen for certain unless you have taken down on the spot its characteristics before consulting a work on ornithology. It is entirely unsatisfactory to view a bird in the field, taking insufficient notes, and then, finding its supposed portrait or description in a book, even a short time afterwards, to proceed to work out an Account or sketch of what was seen.

Ideally field-notes of a rarity should cover the following points:-

1. Distance of bird from you, whether you were using glasses or not, and nature and direction of light.
2. Nature of ground it was on and what other birds (if any) it was associating with.
3. Whether you saw it from different angles; whether at rest or in flight; whether from above or below. (The more varied the conditions of observation the better).
4. What were its actions and what was the character of its flight compared with other birds.
5. Its general form as compared with other birds, and how it differed from other birds at all like it which are known to you.
6. Particular points in structure as compared with other birds, such as size and shape of bill, length of legs, shape of wing, length of tail.
7. Colour of bill, legs and feet; any distinctive white or coloured patches or markings and their exact position. A rough sketch or diagram is a great help. (Some general anatomy should be learnt so that you can give the colour of wing coverts, under tail-coverts, nape, throat, chin or other parts of the plumage accurately).
8. So far as possible, an exact description of the whole plumage of the bird, not only the parts which you think may help in identifying it.
9. Any calls or notes, indicating especially the quality of the sound (harsh, rattling, shrill, hoarse, liquid, etc.), and comparison with notes of other species if this assists the description.

HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

(To be sent to the Hon. Secretary, c/o The Chartered Bank, Des Voeux Road C., Hong Kong)

Introduced by.....
(If Applicable)

I/we support the objects of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (as given overleaf) and wish to become (a) member(s). I/we enclose \$20.00 (\$30.00 for husband and wife combination), or half these fees if joining after 30th June, as my/our subscription for the current year. (Children aged from 7 to 16, and one of whose parents is already a member need pay no subscription. Otherwise children in this age group may become members on payment of \$5.00 per annum provided that they are accompanied on society outings by a responsible adult, and that one or other of the parents signs below absolving the society from any responsibility in case of accident or mishap on outings).

Date..... Signature.....

Name & Address.....

Telephone No.....(Home)(Office)

The objects of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society are:—

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

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Chairman: Commander E. D. Webb, R.N.,
Government House Lodge, Hong Kong.

Hon. Recorder: Mr. M.A. Webster,
c/o United Precision Instruments Ltd.,
1133 Star House, Salisbury Road,
Kowloon.

Hon. Secretary: Mr. R. E. Hale, c/o The Hongkong and
Shanghai Banking Corporation,
1, Queen's Road, C., Hong Kong.

Hon. Treasurer: Commander E. D. Webb, R.N.
(Address as above).