

# HONG KONG BIRD REPORT

1991

## 香港鳥類報告



# 一九九一年香港鳥類報告

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## 一九九一年鳥類紀錄

一九九一年又是特出的一年，無論錄得鳥類品種的總數和新增品種的數目都超過一九九〇年的。錄得的 A 類品種數目高達324，加上 D 類的9種，收獲實在是史無前例的。這正好反映了經驗豐富的觀鳥者愈來愈多，他們也努力不懈，創造佳績。當然，環志方面的貢獻亦功不可抹。

在一九九一年，香港鳥類名錄 A 類新增了好幾個品種：八個是新紀錄，一個來自一九九〇年的紀錄；此外，根據一九九一年的再一次紀錄，有一個 D 類品種獲提升至 A 類。另一方面，經過多番複核舊紀錄後，兩個品種由 A 類降為 D 類。結果，A 類淨增加8種，達到420種。有關的轉變簡介如下（新品種按時間順序排列，品種的定義則在文末介紹）：

新增 A 類品種：

1. 大鵯：一九九〇年十二月，有一隻在大嶼山石壁。
  2. 白眼潛鴨：一九九一年二月，有一隻在米埔。
  3. 雲雀：一九九一年二月及三月，有六隻在米埔東面的堆填區內。
  4. 鈍翅稻田葦鶯：一九九一年四月，在米埔看到一隻，其後網獲。
  5. 白眉田雞：一九九一年四月，有一隻在米埔。
  6. 藍喉蜂虎：一九九一年九月，米埔有兩羣，共十隻之多。
  7. 紅頸葦鶯：一九九一年十一月，有一隻在米埔東面的堆填區。
  8. 黃頭扇尾鶯：一九九一年十一月，至少有四隻在坪洋，其後，多處都有紀錄，直至年底。
  9. 葦鶯：一九九一年十二月，在米埔東面的堆填區看到一隻，其後網獲。
  10. 草鶯：一九九一年十二月，在馬鞍山錄得，所以由 D 類升至 A 類。
- 由 A 類降為 D 類的品種：

1. 翠金鵲：自一九七八年首次錄得後，一直無新發現。所以，不能不懷疑，這種無理由出現的品種是逃脫的或是被放走的籠養鳥。
2. 大鵲鵒：一九六二年一次已發表的紀錄和一九七八年本報告刊登的第二次紀錄都有可能是逃脫的籠養鳥。

此外，D 類還添了三個新品種，另加一個由 E 類升上來；四個品種自 D 類降到 E 類；一個品種從 D 類轉至 B 類，詳情如下：

新增 D 類品種：

1. 小太平鳥：一九九一年四月，有一羣在林村谷，共七隻。
2. 純藍鵲：一九九一年四月，大埔滘有一隻雄性的在唱歌。
3. 歌百靈：一九九一年十一月，有一隻在蠔涌。
4. 北朱雀：經覆核後，由 E 類升上來。

由 D 類降到 E 類的品種：

1. 白鵲：因為不斷有買賣，所有的紀錄都值得懷疑。
2. 緋胸鸚鵡：經常有買賣。
3. 紅梅花雀：以前在沙埔和米埔有攜帶築巢物料的紀錄，不過，亦只

屬於可能繁殖類，而非確實有繁殖。既然還沒有在野外繁殖的經常紀錄，為慎重起見，（雖然一九七五年曾被 Webster 放在 C 類）還是歸入 E 類較妥當。

4. 灰眉岩鵲：從紀錄到的體羽分析，牠們屬於較西面的品種，不可能在中國出現。所以，應該懷疑是逃脫的籠養鳥。
  5. 角百靈：一九八五年五月，錄得該鳥時，適值有其他鳥類（包括北鵲和紅尾伯勞等）經港；但是，角百靈大抵只在中國北部生活、繁殖和渡冬，所以，野生的在本港出現是不大可能的。
- 由 D 類轉到 B 類的品種：

1. 小鵲鵒：最後的紀錄在五十年前。

一九九一年首次錄得的藍翅葉鵲、金眼鵲雀和白腰朱頂雀都列到 E 類。

紀錄委員會的工作不斷增加，Paul Leader 當上秘書後，可分擔工作的壓力。由於更多雀鳥的辨別標準和情況已較為明確，因此，需要呈交詳細觀察紀錄的品種數目已有所刪減。如往年一樣，有關的名單，刊於本報告最後數頁。

Phil Round 關於 *Bradypterus* 短翅鶯與及 Paul Leader 和 Peter Kennerley 關於 *Acrocephalus* 葦鶯的兩篇文章都有極大意義。Phil Round 的分析有助複核本港的 *Bradypterus* 短翅鶯。不過，由於觀察到的野外特徵尚有矛盾，希望網捕後能盡釋疑團。黑灰背鵲、暗綠柳鶯和軍艦鳥幼鳥的辨認都有進展。尚有疑難的包括小型 *Accipiter* 鷹類、有淺色初級飛羽的可能是混合種的大型鵲類、雨燕和大型的鵲。

鳥類的名稱實在需要作根本和廣泛的審議修訂。這方面，有賴儘快達成一些國際協議才能成事。雖然如此，在下一版香港鳥類名錄出版前，我們還是修訂了一些較少爭議的俗名和學名，詳情如下：

香港沿用名稱	修訂後名稱
ORIGINAL HONG KONG NAME	REVISED NAME
Von Schrenck's Little Bittern	Schrenck's Bittern
Horsfield's Goshawk	Chinese Goshawk
Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle	Grey-faced Buzzard
Mongolian Sand Plover	Lesser Sand Plover
Grey-rumped Sandpiper	Grey-tailed Tattler
Large White-rumped Swift	Pacific Swift
Brown Wren-warbler <i>Prinia subflava</i>	Plain Prinia <i>Prinia inornata</i>
Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler	Yellow-bellied Prinia
Von Schrenck's Reed Warbler	Black-browed Reed Warbler
Robin Flycatcher	Mugimaki Flycatcher
Tricolour Flycatcher	Yellow-rumped Flycatcher
Collared Siva	Striated Yuhina
Masked Bunting	Black-faced Bunting



以上十三個名稱全跟 Lekagul 和 Round (1991, 大致上根據 King, 1975) 一致。其中十一個也是跟 Sibley 和 Monroe (1990) 一致的；例外之一的白腰雨燕 (Pacific Swift) 跟從了 British Ornithologists' Club Records Committee 的一個決定；蒙古沙鵲 (Lesser Sand Plover) 則跟從了 Cramp 和 Simmons (1983)；褐頭鷓鴣則連學名也改了，因為原用的 *Prinia subflava* 已用在非洲的褐脇鷓鴣 (Tawny-flanked Prinia)，所以採用了純色鷓鴣 (Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*) 這個新名稱。

如往年一樣，緊隨本介紹之後是每月簡報和分類總覽。在這裏我應該多謝 Michael Turnbull 過去在整理這些東西的努力，可惜，由於工作和家庭關係，他需要放下這些負擔。現時，Paul Leader 負責處理各項觀鳥紀錄，Mike Leven 負責編輯分類總覽，而關於涉禽的簡報則由 Geoff Carey 負責。

David Melville 擔任紀錄委員會成員已有十五年之久，基於工作關係，年底時不得不退出。我們非常感激他過去的貢獻和寶貴的意見，更高興他願意當個顧問，解答有關分類上的疑難等等。他的空缺已由 Geoff Carey 補上。Carey 有豐富的中國經驗，對北戴河的情況，尤為熟識。委員會的其他四位成員不變，仍然是 Michael Chalmers, Peter Kennerley, Paul Leader 和 Clive Viney。

本報告的內容包括下列觀鳥者提交的紀錄，謹致謝意（譯按：請參考英文原文）！

#### 品種的定義：

- A 類：過去五十年內，在香港紀錄到野生的鳥類品種。
- B 類：五十年前，在香港曾紀錄到野生的鳥類品種。
- C 類：起初由人從外地引入，但已能夠在野外持續繁殖至保持一定種羣數量的鳥類品種。
- D 類：具野生狀態，但不能排除是飼養期間逃脫或被放走的鳥類品種。
- E 類：所有已發表的紀錄均有可能是屬於飼養期間逃脫或被放走的鳥類品種。
- F 類：由於存在錯誤辨認的可能性，所有已發表的紀錄都屬於有可疑，不能確定的鳥類品種。

## THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1991

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ISSN 1017-1118  
Published in 1992 by the  
**HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY**  
GPO Box 12460, Hong Kong

(A registered society under the Hong Kong Societies Ordinance)

Records compiled by M.L. Chalmers, P.J. Leader, M. Turnbull,  
M.R. Leven and G.J. Carey  
Report edited by V.B. Picken

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(1991)

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Front cover: Asiatic Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*  
Tsim Bei Tsui, October 1987 (Ray Tipper)

## EDITORIAL NOTE

No-one will have failed to notice the new front cover on this Report. It was felt a more modern design was needed to reflect the high standard of papers detailing new and interesting aspects of birdwatching. In addition, the inside back cover now sports a map showing most of the birdwatching sites in Hong Kong; this should help readers locate apparently obscure villages mentioned in the Report and be of even greater benefit to overseas visitors.

Although Hong Kong's first Paddyfield Warbler was actually recorded a few hours into 1992, we have nevertheless included the paper on the sighting in this (the 1991) Report. The main reason for this is that the record adds considerably to the major paper on small East Asian *Acrocephalus* warbler identification. Moreover, the bird had almost certainly arrived in Hong Kong in 1991, having been heard at the end of December.

For reasons of economy of space the tables listing the species seen during the Big Bird Race and the Christmas Count are not included this year. A short article giving the overall picture and highlighting any unusual sightings or statistics is retained for both surveys, and a code appears in the Systematic List beside the relevant entry if a species was recorded.

I am grateful to Shiro Hong Kong Ltd (the Nikon distributor), Carl Zeiss Far East Ltd, RobertLamColor and Wood's Photo Supplies for their much-needed sponsorship. Without their support it would have been impossible to include the large number of colour photographs reproduced this year.

The editorial board, Mike Chalmers, Peter Kennerley and David Melville, have given their usual generous support and advice while Chan Ming Ming kindly provided the Chinese translations and Liz Leven the map of birdwatching sites. Several Society members donated slides, nearly all of which we are able to reproduce in colour due to Geoff Carey's efforts in raising sponsorship. I thank all those who have helped.

VERITY B. PICKEN

## REPORT ON THE BIRDS 1991

*Michael L. Chalmers*

1991 was another outstanding year for high numbers of species and new records, with totals surpassing those of 1990 in both instances. The total number of Category A species reported was 324, with a further nine species in Category D. These represent the highest numbers ever recorded and reflect the continued high level of field activity by a growing number of experienced observers, as well as further major contributions from the Ringing Group.

In 1991 eight new species seen during the year were accepted to Category A of the Hong Kong List. In addition, one new species from 1990 was accepted and one species was upgraded from Category D to A based on a further record in 1991. On the other hand, the continuing review of old records resulted in two species being downgraded from A to D. The net effect of all these changes was an increase of eight species in Category A to bring the total up to 420. The changes are summarised below, the new records being given in chronological order, while definitions of the categories used in Hong Kong are given at the end of this introduction.

### CATEGORY A NEW SPECIES

1. Upland Buzzard. A single bird at Shek Pik, Lantau in December 1990.
2. Ferruginous Duck. One at Mai Po in February 1991.
3. Northern Skylark. Up to six on the landfill area east of Mai Po in February and March 1991.
4. Blunt-winged Warbler. One seen and subsequently trapped at Mai Po in April 1991.
5. White-browed Crake. One at Mai Po in April 1991.
6. Blue-throated Bee-eater. Two flocks comprising at least ten birds at Mai Po in September 1991.
7. Japanese Reed Bunting. One on the landfill area east of Mai Po in November 1991.
8. Bright-capped Cisticola. At least four at Ping Yeung in November 1991, followed by widespread reports from other areas before the year end.
9. Pallas's Reed Bunting. One seen and trapped on the landfill area east of Mai Po in December 1991.
10. Grass Owl. Upgraded from Category D following a further record at Ma On Shan in December 1991.

### SPECIES RELEGATED FROM CATEGORY A TO D

1. Emerald Cuckoo. No further records since the first in 1978. The possibility of escape or release cannot be satisfactorily ignored for this extralimital species.
2. Greater Cuckoo Shrike. The possibility of escape cannot be eliminated for the single previous published record in 1962 or the second accepted record in 1978 published in this Report.

In addition three new species were added to Category D, one was upgraded from Category E, four were downgraded from Category D to E, and one was transferred from Category D to B as follows:

### CATEGORY D NEW SPECIES

1. Japanese Waxwing. A flock of seven in the Lam Tsuen Valley in April 1991.
2. Pale Blue Flycatcher. A singing male in Tai Po Kau in April 1991.
3. Singing Bushlark. One at Ho Chung in November 1991.
4. Pallas's Rosefinch. Upgraded from Category E after review.

### SPECIES RELEGATED FROM CATEGORY D TO E

1. Silver Pheasant. Because of on-going trade, all records are suspect.
2. Red-breasted Parakeet. Regularly traded.
3. Red Avadavat. The old records at Sha Po and Mai Po refer to the carrying of nesting material. This only qualifies for probable breeding, not confirmed — hence the cautious placement in Category E (not C where it was placed by Webster [1975]) as regular feral breeding has not been confirmed.
4. Rock Bunting. The plumage of the birds previously recorded indicates that they belonged to the western race which is unlikely to occur in China; escapes are suspected.
5. Shore Lark. Although the bird recorded in May 1985 arrived during a period of passage which also included Pechora Pipit, Brown Shrike etc., the species is considered largely resident, breeding and wintering in northern China, and therefore its natural occurrence in Hong Kong is unlikely.

### SPECIES TRANSFERRED FROM CATEGORY D TO B

1. Pygmy Wren Babbler. Previous records are now over 50 years old.

First records in 1991 of Blue-winged Leafbird, Yellow-eyed Babbler and Common Redpoll were also added to Category E.

Within the Records Committee Paul Leader took up the post of Secretary to help handle the ever-increasing workload. It was decided to



reduce the list of species for which written descriptions are required due to identification criteria and status now being better known. The latest list is, as usual, printed at the back of this publication.

This Report contains milestone papers on *Bradypterus* warblers by Phil Round, and *Acrocephalus* warblers by Paul Leader and Peter Kennerley. In the wake of Phil Round's paper, Hong Kong's *Bradypterus* warblers remain under review because of conflicting field characters which it is hoped will be resolved by further trapping. Advances in identification have been made with Slaty-backed Gull, Two-barred Greenish Warbler and immature frigatebirds but problems still remain with small accipiters, possible hybrid large gulls with pale primaries, swiftlets and large pipits.

In advance of the publication of the next *Annotated Checklist*, it has been decided to make limited changes to update vernacular and scientific names in the least controversial cases. It is recognised that a more fundamental and widespread change is required but it has been decided to defer this in the hope that some measure of international agreement will be reached soon. The interim changes made now are as follows:

ORIGINAL HONG KONG NAME	REVISED NAME
Von Schrenck's Little Bittern	Schrenck's Bittern
Horsfield's Goshawk	Chinese Goshawk
Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle	Grey-faced Buzzard
Mongolian Sand Plover	Lesser Sand Plover
Grey-rumped Sandpiper	Grey-tailed Tattler
Large White-rumped Swift	Pacific Swift
Brown Wren-warbler <i>Prinia subflava</i>	Plain Prinia <i>Prinia inornata</i>
Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler	Yellow-bellied Prinia
Von Schrenck's Reed Warbler	Black-browed Reed Warbler
Robin Flycatcher	Mugimaki Flycatcher
Tricolour Flycatcher	Yellow-rumped Flycatcher
Collared Siva	Striated Yuhina
Masked Bunting	Black-faced Bunting

Eleven of the thirteen new names accord with Sibley and Monroe (1990) and all accord with Lekagul and Round (1991) which is based largely on King *et al.* (1975). Of the exceptions to Sibley and Monroe the choice of Pacific Swift is based on a decision by the British Ornithologists' Club Records Committee while that of Lesser Sand Plover follows Cramp and Simmons (1983). The amendment to Brown Wren-warbler also involves a change of scientific name: as Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* is now used for the separate African species, the name of Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* has been adopted.

As in last year's report, this introduction is followed by monthly summaries and a full systematic list of all species seen in Hong Kong during the year. Due to work and family commitments Michael Turnbull has had to stand down as Recent Reports Editor and compiler of the

Systematic List and his place has been taken by Paul Leader on Recent Reports and Mike Leven as Systematic List compiler. As before, Geoff Carey has produced the wader accounts.

After over 15 years as a member of the Records Committee, David Melville stepped down at the end of the year due to pressure of work. His professional advice has been invaluable and much appreciated, and we are very pleased that he will remain as a consultant on taxonomics and other special issues. His place has been filled by Geoff Carey, who brings to the Committee extensive experience of China, especially Beidaihe. The other four members of the Committee remain: Michael Chalmers, Peter Kennerley, Paul Leader and Clive Viney.

Thanks are also due to the following observers who submitted records for inclusion in this Report:

H.G. Ackford, T. Adams, T.J. Ades, P. Adhemar, D.R. Bradshaw, A. Brown, W. Bufford, J.E. Burton, G.J. Carey, D.P. Carthy, M.L. Chalmers, M.M. Chan, S. Chan, G.C.H. Cooper, D.A. Diskin, J.S.R. Edge, A.C. Galsworthy, N.S. Grimshaw, M. Hale, J.G. Holmes, P.R. Kennerley, C.Y. Lam, A.R. Lamont, P.J. Leader, P. Leonard, E.P. Leven, M.R. Leven, R.W. Lewthwaite, K. Lo, T. Luijendijk, D.S. Melville, R.C. Nicoll, P. Ng, S. O'Brien, J.N. Pearse, K. Phillips, V.B. Picken, B. Rogers, P.D. Round, K.C. Searle, S.E. Shaum, S. Smith, S.P. Smith, P.A.M. Stevens, P.R. Stevens, R.D.E. Stott, D. Thomas, R. Tindall, M. Turnbull, I. Tytzer, C.A. Viney, A. Walker, G.A. Walthew, M.D. Williams, F. Wong, T. Woodward, A.G. Young, L. Young, W.L. Young, Y.T. Yu.

#### CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

- CATEGORY A. Species which have been recorded in an apparently wild state in Hong Kong within the last fifty years.
- CATEGORY B. Species which have been recorded in an apparently wild state in Hong Kong, but not within the last fifty years.
- CATEGORY C. Species which, although originally introduced by man, have now established a regular feral breeding stock which may or may not be self-supporting.
- CATEGORY D. Species which have occurred in an apparently wild state but for which the possibility of escape or release from captivity cannot be satisfactorily excluded.
- CATEGORY E. Species for which all published records are suspected of being birds which have escaped or have been released from captivity.
- CATEGORY F. Species for which all published records must be regarded as doubtful because of the possibility of mistaken identification.

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## MONTHLY SUMMARIES

Paul J. Leader and Michael Turnbull

### January

The Orange-headed Ground Thrush first seen in the Aberdeen Country Park in December was seen again on 2nd, together with a Tristram's Bunting. The following day in Tai Po Kau four species of flycatcher were seen in the same tree at the same time — a Brown, a Grey-headed, a Black-naped Monarch and, most interesting of all, a *niltava* sp. At Mai Po, also on 3rd, ten Lesser Sand Plovers and two Broad-billed Sandpipers were seen. On 5th there was an even bigger count of 60 Lesser Sand Plovers. There was also one Greater Sand Plover, one Great Knot and 11 Knot. Up to 13 of the latter, seen regularly from the boardwalk hide into February, represented the first known wintering of this species in Hong Kong. Similar numbers of Great Knot were also noted throughout the month. Around 100 Saunders' Gulls were also regularly counted.

On 6th Hong Kong's second Yellow-browed Warbler of the Central Asian race *humei* was discovered at She Shan. It was still present the following day. Two or three Yellow-bellied Tits were also reported from the Lam Tsuen Valley around this time while a Woodcock and a Plumbeous Water Redstart were seen at Shek Kong Woods on 9th. The following day off Lau Fau Shan there were 32 Red-breasted Mergansers, 60 Tufted Duck, 15 Scaup and a Pochard, and a Hoopoe was reported from Mong Tseng. Amongst birds caught at Mai Po on 12th were a Styan's Grasshopper Warbler and three Black-browed Reed Warblers. The following day at the same location two Pochard were seen while a Baer's Pochard was noted at Tsim Bei Tsui.

One of the two White-throated Rock Thrushes found in Tai Po Kau in December was seen again on 14th and until 23rd. On 19th two Black-tailed Gulls were seen from the Mai Po boardwalk and five Caspian Terns were also present. A Turnstone, also on 19th, was another unusual wintering wader at Mai Po. On 20th a Swinhoe's Snipe was amongst the Fantail and Pintail Snipe trapped at Lok Ma Chau, a Baer's Pochard was noted at Mai Po, and a Verditer Flycatcher, seven Yellow-bellied Tits and 60 Black-tailed Hawfinches were seen in the Lam Tsuen Valley. A male Baikal Teal was also found that day and was still present on 27th, when two Two-barred Greenish Warblers were reported in the Lam Tsuen Valley.

### February

On 1st a Plain Flowerpecker was found at Mount Davis. A first-winter Common Gull seen off the boardwalk on the same day was still present on 2nd. On 3rd a first for Hong Kong was at Mai Po in the form of a male Ferruginous Duck while at Lok Ma Chau a Swinhoe's Snipe was seen and a Painted Snipe trapped. On 11th two second-winter Common Gulls were reported from the boardwalk.

A Baer's Pochard was again noted at Mai Po on 14th and 17th. On the former date a record count of 57 Black-faced Spoonbills was made there and Penduline Tits were again reported around this time. A Brown-headed Gull was seen at Starling Inlet on 15th and another was reported from the boardwalk, together with a Black-tailed Gull, on 16th. Also on 16th a flock of skylarks was found on a landfill site near Mai Po. Two Japanese Quails were also present.

On 19th both Blyth's Leaf and Sulphur-breasted Warblers were noted at Bride's Pool as well as a Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher. On 23rd the skylark flock on the landfill site near Mai Po was now found to contain not only Oriental Skylarks but several Northern Skylarks — the first time the identification of that species had been confirmed in Hong Kong. There was also a Brown-breasted Bulbul in the Police Post trees. The following day the larks were still present while a second-winter Common Gull and a first-winter Slaty-backed Gull were seen from the boardwalk; a first-winter Common Gull was there on 28th.



1. Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus*  
Mai Po, 24 February 1991

(Peter R. Kennerley)

### March

The first report of the year of a Hainan Blue Flycatcher came from Tai Po Kau on 1st and on 2nd a Verditer Flycatcher was found there. Two hundred Silky Starlings were at Mai Po that day. The following day a Brown-headed Gull, a Black-tailed Gull and 86 Lesser Sand Plovers were noted from the boardwalk. A White Wagtail showing characters of the race *lugens*, commonly referred to as Black-backed Wagtail, was also seen on the Marsh. A Dusky Thrush on Cheung Chau on 6th was unusual, while the same day at Mai Po the first Oriental Pratincoles of



the year were seen, three being present. By 7th 57 were at Tsim Bei Tsui.

A pair of Collared Scops Owls which bred at the Chinese University had fledged three young by 9th. Also on 9th a young female Japanese Sparrowhawk and a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler were amongst the birds trapped at Mai Po. These also included several Little Buntings which were present in greater numbers than previously and a Great Reed Warbler. At the boardwalk a Great Black-headed Gull, a Common Gull and a first-winter Black-tailed Gull were recorded. On 10th a second-winter Common Gull was again seen from the boardwalk as well as three adult Brown-headed Gulls and a first-winter Black-tailed Gull. A Grey-faced Buzzard was seen over Victoria Park on the same day.

On 13th two Velvet-fronted Nuthatches were seen on Coombe Road near the Peak, apparently exchanging a food item. Also around this time two male Hainan Blue Flycatchers, five Grey-headed Flycatchers, ten Yellow-bellied Tits, seven Yellow-cheeked Tits and a Red-headed Tit were reported in Tai Po Kau. On 16th a Besra was noted in Tai Po Kau and about 50 Little Buntings were found at Mai Po. Several Yellow-breasted Buntings were also seen, and one was at Tsim Bei Tsui the following day. Also on 17th a large owl, probably an Eagle Owl, was located at Chau Tau.

The following day three hundred Curlew Sandpipers and a handful of Broad-billed Sandpipers were noted. A Painted Snipe was seen at Lok Ma Chau on 26th.

A Ringed Plover, Hong Kong's second record, was amongst the Kentish and Lesser Sand Plovers at the boardwalk on 29th. The first Japanese Yellow Bunting and the first Nordmann's Greenshank of the year were also reported from Mai Po. Twenty-three Red-breasted Mergansers off the boardwalk, and up to 600 Black-tailed and three Bar-tailed Godwits, were also seen on 29th and the first report of the year of Red-necked Phalaropes was received when four were seen near Tap Mun. A ringed bird was amongst the Caspian Terns at Mai Po. On the same day at least 58 Grey-faced Buzzards passed over the Marsh in three flocks, including one of 36, with a further 25 being seen the following day. Nine were reported from Tap Mun, also on 29th, and five from Shek Kong on 30th. A Little Tern, two Asiatic Dowitchers, two Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and several Asian House Martins and Red-rumped Swallows were also seen that day at Mai Po while about 20 White-vented Needletails were recorded at Shek Kong Catchment. A Sooty Flycatcher was noted in Tai Po Kau on 31st.

#### April

Another Japanese Yellow Bunting was found at Mai Po on 1st when a Ruddy Sparrow was in the Police Post trees and the lone remaining Dalmatian Pelican was last seen (ten had wintered in Deep Bay). A



2. Asiatic Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*  
Mai Po, 25 April 1991

(Paul J. Leader)

Grey-faced Buzzard and a Nordmann's Greenshank were also noted. In the early part of the month several reports of small flocks of Red-necked Phalaropes, seen mainly from the Outlying Islands ferries, were received and a Chinese Greenfinch was at Mount Nicholson. A further report of a Grey-faced Buzzard came from the Aberdeen Country Park on 3rd and at Mai Po the distinctive immature Black-tailed Gull was reported. A considerable influx of Japanese Yellow Buntings, presumably the result of strong northeasterly winds around 2nd to 4th, involved four at Lok Ma Chau and two at Tsim Bei Tsui, all on 5th. A Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler, a Short-tailed Bush Warbler and a Treepie were noted near Hong Kong University on 4th. The same day at Mai Po five Little Terns and a Gull-billed Tern were seen from the boardwalk and the first Spoon-billed Sandpipers, three at Tsim Bei Tsui, were reported. There were also two Crested Buntings at Nam Chung and 80 Herring Gulls in the western part of Hong Kong Harbour.

The Big Bird Race of 5th/6th inevitably produced several interesting records and happily coincided with a marked increase in the momentum of migration. In addition to some of the birds already referred to, reports included a Narcissus Flycatcher at Mai Po, a Japanese Paradise Flycatcher, a Blue and White Flycatcher and at least two Ferruginous Flycatchers in Tai Po Kau, and first records for Hong Kong in the form of a Pale Blue Flycatcher in Tai Po Kau and Japanese Waxwings, a flock of seven being found in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 5th and still present on 6th. About 100 Black-tailed Hawfinches were in the same locality with lesser numbers elsewhere. On 5th a Hobby and a Wryneck were seen at Mai Po and a Chinese Greenfinch was noted in the Lam Tsuen Valley. A



Common Tern was seen at Mai Po and a Sooty Flycatcher was at Lok Ma Chau Police Post on 6th. Visitors to Cheung Chau reported up to 15 Grey Thrushes, one Pale and one Dusky, and at least one Blackbird on 6th.

Interesting reports on 7th involved an Eastern Crowned Warbler and a Red-winged Crested Cuckoo in Tai Po Kau and a male Daurian Redstart at Mai Po. On 8th a Brown Shrike was noted on Lamma while on 10th another Narcissus Flycatcher was seen in Tai Po Kau. At Mai Po on 11th the number of Nordmann's Greenshanks reached a new record (at least 46). On 12th a pitta sp., either Chinese or Blue-winged, was seen in Tai Po Kau. A Ruddy Crake at Mai Po on 13th was in almost exactly the same spot as a bird seen last December. The first reports of Black Bazas also came on 13th with two at Tsim Bei Tsui and three at Luk Keng.

On 15th a male Japanese Sparrowhawk was seen on Lamma and an Oriental Plover was at Mai Po on 17th. A male Siberian Blue Robin was at the Royal Observatory, Kowloon on 17th and 18th and visits to Tai Long Wan on these dates produced sightings of 15 and 12 Black Bazas respectively. On 19th a Little Stint was found at Mai Po and was still there on 21st when a Black-shouldered Kite was also seen. On 20th a Pectoral Sandpiper was recorded there.

The arrival of just a little of the usual April weather at this time in fact resulted in several other exciting discoveries. These included not only a Thick-billed Warbler and five Blue-tailed Bee-eaters at Mai Po but also Hong Kong's first Blunt-winged Warbler — seen on 20th and trapped on 21st — and, most unexpectedly, also on 20th, Hong Kong and China's first White-browed Crake. This bird gave excellent views until at least 28th. Waders seen at Tai Long Wan on 20th included two Sanderlings. Other interesting birds were a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler and a Grey-headed Bunting. At least one Japanese Yellow Bunting was present at Mai Po on 21st. Also that day a significant movement of Chinese Goshawks took place: up to about 50 moved northeast at Mai Po and an estimated 400 accipiter sp., presumably this species, were seen heading in the same direction within a short period in mid-morning over Tai Tam. On 22nd there were four Swinhoe's Egrets at Mai Po. On 27th six Blue-tailed Bee-eaters were there and two Black-naped Terns were seen near Tap Mun. A Red-breasted Parakeet was seen on a couple of occasions around this time at Lok Ma Chau Police Post where a small group of Black-tailed Hawfinches was reported on 26th.

## May

On 1st 20 White-winged Black Terns were seen at Mai Po and two Blue-tailed Bee-eaters at Lok Ma Chau while on 2nd, after a period of almost a month with no sightings, the arrival of wet weather brought three Spoon-billed Sandpipers to the Marsh. A Pectoral Sandpiper was also found. On 3rd a flock of up to 40 needletails, at least two of which

were White-throated, and three Blue-tailed Bee-eaters were noted. Also at Mai Po a Pechora Pipit was seen on 4th as well as six species of tern, including up to 30 White-winged Black, about ten Whiskered and eight Common, plus at least 40 Sand Martins and a Purple Gallinule.

Interesting breeding records received at this time were of Velvet-fronted Nuthatch and White-bellied Yuhina in Tai Po Kau. Four Spoon-billed Sandpipers were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5th when Brown Shrikes and Grey-streaked Flycatchers were present at widespread locations in much greater numbers than had previously been the case. Also on 5th a Japanese Quail was seen near Lau Fau Shan. Large numbers of Yellow Wagtails, apparently of the race *simillima*, were noted, particularly in northward flight over Mai Po, between 2nd and 5th. On the latter date five Black Bazas were recorded near Sha Tau Kok while other reports of this species included singles at Shuen Wan on 10th and at Tai Long Wan on 11th and at least two at Plover Cove on 12th.

A visit to Tai Long Wan on 6th produced several interesting records including a male Schrenck's Bittern, a Watercock, an Oriental Cuckoo, ten Black-naped Terns and six Common Terns. At Mai Po the same day nine more Blue-tailed Bee-eaters were seen and two Bonelli's Eagles were also noted. Twelve Black-naped Terns were seen in the Tolo Channel on 7th. Four species of wild duck — Mandarin, Garganey, Falcated Teal and Baer's Pochard — were amongst the captive birds at Mai Po on 8th and yet another Blue-tailed Bee-eater was seen in the Lam Tsuen Valley.

Whiskered and White-winged Black Terns continued to be regularly reported from Mai Po and 120 of the latter were seen around Tap Mun on 11th. At Tai Mo Shan two White-vented Needletails were reported and at Mai Po a Spoon-billed Sandpiper and a Chinese Goshawk were noted. There were also two Nordmann's Greenshanks. This species was, in fact, present in small numbers until 30th. A pair of Upland Pipits was seen carrying food near the summit of Tai Mo Shan on 12th. On 19th Hong Kong's second Long-tailed Skua was seen, in flight over the beach on the seaward side of High Island Reservoir Dam. The continued presence of at least one Black-naped Oriole at the Chinese University suggested possible breeding. At Lok Ma Chau a Hobby was seen on 27th and a single Bonelli's Eagle on 31st.

## June

On 15th two Grey Wagtails were noted at Mai Po and a Black Baza was seen from the highway near Tai Po. Also that day single free-flying male Baer's Pochard and Garganey were present in the Waterfowl Collection. A Barred Owlet was seen in Tai Po Kau on 16th, two Red-winged Crested Cuckoos were reported from Shek Kong on 22nd and a juvenile Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike was observed in Sassoon Road, Pok Fu Lam on 25th. On 30th two Black-naped Terns were seen in Mirs Bay but there was no evidence of breeding at the sites where this had occurred in the past.



## July

A Black Baza was seen near Ting Kok on 1st when three Grey Herons were present amongst the Great Egrets at Plover Cove. Other reports of Black Bazas involved one in Tai Po Kau on 5th, a party of three at Tai Mei Tuk on 10th and one at Luk Keng on 21st. An Osprey was regularly seen in the Shuen Wan/Plover Cove area at this time while a Hobby was reported near Lok Ma Chau on 12th.

## August

On 3rd three female/immature Watercocks were present in the paddies at Tai Long Wan while on 8th a Hoopoe gave one observer a surprise when it put in an appearance at Chater Garden in Central. Wader passage appeared to gather momentum around this time and by 9th 510 Redshanks were counted at Mai Po, together with 123 Greenshanks and 36 Curlews. Six Asiatic Dowitchers, three Grey-tailed Tattlers and a Terek Sandpiper were also present. A Red-necked Phalarope was seen at sea off Tai Long Wan on 9th. An immature Buzzard and a Blue Rock Thrush were reported from Bluff Head, Sai Kung on 11th when eight Common Terns were seen in Mirs Bay. Also on 11th a white-phase Reef Egret was found at Shuen Wan. On 15th, with Typhoon Fred close to Hong Kong, a total of 88 Common Terns was seen off Cheung Chau and an Australian Curlew and five Redshanks were also noted there. A boat trip near Po Toi on 17th produced a further 45 Common Terns as well as 18 White-winged Black, two Black-naped and a Roseate while on 18th a further three Red-necked Phalaropes were noted, again off Tai Long Wan.

The first report of an Asian Paradise Flycatcher came from Cheung Chau on 21st. By 24th the total number of waders at Mai Po had grown to approximately 1,700 birds of 24 species, including one Knot and five Swinhoe's Snipe; a male Chestnut Bittern was also seen. Amongst birds trapped on the Marsh on 27th were singles of the latter two species and also a Long-toed Stint. At Tin Shui Wai on 28th approximately 800 waders were present, including five Great Knot and a Sanderling. On 31st no fewer than four juvenile Yellow-rumped Flycatchers and one Brown Flycatcher were trapped at Mai Po whilst there were single Asian Paradise, Hainan Blue and Yellow-rumped Flycatchers as well as an Arctic Warbler in Tai Po Kau.

## September

A Grey-faced Buzzard was seen over the Aberdeen Country Park on 2nd. The first report of a Forest Wagtail was one at Ho Chung on 5th and 6th. An Asian Paradise Flycatcher at Chuk Yeung, also on 6th, was, rather unusually, seen flycatching from long grass. A Yellow-breasted Bunting was another migrant at Ho Chung on 7th and the first Stonechat of the autumn was noted at Luk Keng that day. There was also a Black-winged Stilt at the unusual location of Hebe Haven. At Lok Ma Chau on 8th a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler was seen, with at least one Swinhoe's Snipe also present, while an Oriental Pratincole and a Wryneck were

reported at Mai Po.

A Yellow-rumped Flycatcher was seen in Tai Po Kau on 11th. On 14th three Yellow-rumped, one Blue and White and two Asian Paradise Flycatchers were found there as well as a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler. Arctic Warbler passage seemed to be at its heaviest at this time and for the following fortnight. Also on 14th a Hoopoe was seen on Stubbs Road and six Common Terns were seen in Mirs Bay, with two there the next day, as well as 26 Red-necked Phalaropes.

On 15th came the surprising discovery of an estimated 55 Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers at Luk Keng swamp. A juvenile Watercock and all three regularly occurring species of snipe were also present, with a Brown Shrike and a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler nearby, while a report of a Lanceolated Warbler was received from Shek Kong. At least two Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers were still present at Luk Keng on 16th when a Chinese Pitta was seen in Tai Po Kau. Also there that day were an Asian Paradise Flycatcher and an Eastern Crowned Warbler while a flock of 12 Black Bazas was seen over Sha Tau Kok Road. Meanwhile at Mai Po a Black Bittern and a White-winged Black Tern were seen. On 19th a Forest Wagtail was noted at Mai Po and another two were reported in the Lam Tsuen Valley.

On 20th 97 Bar-tailed Godwits, two Marsh Harriers and a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler were seen at Mai Po. There were also two Pale-legged Leaf Warblers in Tai Po Kau that day as well as a Forest Wagtail. The following day Temminck's, Long-toed and Red-necked Stints were all present in small numbers at Tin Shui Wai. Also on 21st a Sooty Flycatcher and an Asian Paradise Flycatcher were seen in Tai Po Kau, with a Forest Wagtail again being noted, while at Mai Po the same day birds trapped included another Forest Wagtail, a Brown Shrike, a Yellow-rumped Flycatcher, two Wrynecks, two Dusky Warblers, several Arctic Warblers and about 70 Great Reed Warblers. A Hobby, an Imperial Eagle, eight Swinhoe's Snipe, an Oriental Cuckoo, a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler and 15 Chinese Starlings were also seen at Mai Po, and two Broad-billed Rollers were noted at Ho Chung.

Twelve Pale-legged Leaf Warblers, three Eastern Crowned Warblers and three Yellow-browed Warblers were found in Tai Po Kau on 22nd as well as at least seven Arctic Warblers. Also noted were two Yellow-rumped Flycatchers, a small accipiter and at least five Velvet-fronted Nuthatches. A foray into Luk Keng swamp on 23rd produced an adult male and a female/immature Schrenck's Bittern, one Swinhoe's Snipe and one Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, with four Pale-legged Leaf Warblers, two Broad-billed Rollers and a Wryneck nearby.

A juvenile Slaty-legged Crake, unfortunately dead, was nonetheless an interesting find at Parkview, Tai Tam Country Park on 24th. Also reported that day, and for the first time in Hong Kong, was a Blue-winged Leafbird (Category E), seen in the company of two Black-winged



Cuckoo Shrikes and a Black-naped Oriole at Mount Davis. Another first for Hong Kong was reported the next day when at least ten Blue-throated Bee-eaters were seen in the casuarinas at Mai Po. The birds appeared to pass through quickly but were seen well and photographed. Also on 25th a Forest Wagtail was seen in Tai Po Kau.

In Tai Po Kau on 27th four Pale-legged Leaf Warblers and a Sooty Flycatcher were present. At Tai Long Wan the next day at least 50 Red-necked Phalaropes, one Chestnut Bittern, one Schrenck's Bittern and one Swinhoe's Snipe were seen. On 29th came reports of an immature male Siberian Blue Robin at Chek Lap Kok and another Hoopoe, this time at the Chinese University. Up to three Blue Rock Thrushes noted in the Tai Mei Tuk area around this time included one red-bellied bird.

### October

A visit to Lantau on 1st produced several interesting finds, in the form of a Japanese Paradise Flycatcher at Ngong Ping, a Plain Flowerpecker in song on the mountainside above Tung Chung and, in the paddy there, a Banded Rail. The next day a Besra was seen well at Mount Nicholson. On 4th flocks of 14 Black Bazas and 11 Grey-faced Buzzards were noted at Wu Kau Tang and Hebe Haven respectively, with a further four Black Bazas at the latter location, while at Mai Po the following day four Blue-tailed Bee-eaters were present. Pale-legged Leaf Warblers continued to be reported at this time from widespread locations, including Sai Kung Country Park where Japanese Paradise Flycatchers were seen at separate locations on 8th and 10th.

On 12th a Crested Honey Buzzard was seen at Tsim Bei Tsui, with a Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike and three Red-rumped Swallows also present. At the Chinese University the same day a Grey-headed Lapwing was observed in flight over Chung Chi Lake and later at rest on one of the playing fields. On 12th an exciting ringing session at Mai Po included the capture of a Two-barred Greenish Warbler. Another local rarity trapped was a Thick-billed Warbler, and a further individual of this species was caught at the University of Hong Kong Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre the same day. Other birds caught in the nets at Mai Po were single immature Japanese Sparrowhawks of both sexes and a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler as well as Arctic, Dusky and Great Reed Warblers, the latter two in considerable numbers. Meanwhile, the nets at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre produced a Blue and White Flycatcher, a Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher and a Wryneck. Also on 12th another Two-barred Greenish Warbler was reported at Tai Long Wan. On 12th and 13th two Grey-streaked Flycatchers were seen at Mount Nicholson and on 15th two Hobbies were seen at Marina Cove, Sai Kung, with another at Tai Mei Tuk.

A Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler and a Chestnut Bittern were seen in the paddy at Tai Long Wan on 16th and a rather early Rubythroat was also noted in the area. Three Hobbies were seen at Chek Keng on the

same day and, during a break in the heavy rain which occurred around this time, an unprecedented six Lanceolated Warblers were sighted in the swamp there. On 19th a Long-billed/Short-billed Dowitcher was found at Mai Po and another Thick-billed Warbler was trapped, with at least one other seen. A Chestnut Bittern was also reported there. On Lamma a Brown Shrike, a Broad-billed Roller and a Red-breasted Flycatcher were noted. The following day at Mount Nicholson two Two-barred Greenish Warblers were present.

On 21st a Verditer Flycatcher was seen at Wong Chuk Yeung, Sai Kung while Mai Po produced a Woodcock on 22nd and a Common Tern on 25th. On 26th another Thick-billed Warbler was trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre where 21 Chestnut Buntings were also seen. The following day at Mai Po a first-winter Styan's Grasshopper Warbler was trapped and a large influx of Dusky Warblers and Black-faced Buntings was noted, several Chestnut Buntings and an Asian Paradise Flycatcher also being present. At the boardwalk a Saunders' Gull, a Caspian Tern, 57 Knot and 40 Great Knot were seen and at least 12 Purple Herons were reported around the Reserve.

Also on 26th an Ashy Drongo was seen in the Aberdeen Country Park where two Velvet-fronted Nuthatches were again present while at Shing Mun a Hobby and a Woodcock were reported. A Radde's Warbler was trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 30th.

### November

A Bull-headed Shrike was seen at Ho Chung on 1st when a Red-tailed Robin was noted in the Aberdeen Country Park. The following day a Lanceolated Warbler was trapped at Mai Po and a further two were seen, while other interesting records included 41 Sand Martins, two Northern Skylarks, four Chestnut Buntings, and a Red-breasted Flycatcher. In addition, 80 Rufous Turtle Doves, 60 Black-faced Buntings and 20 Olive-backed Pipits were present and the first Silky Starlings and Black-tailed Hawfinches of the winter were reported. Eleven Tufted Duck were also seen. A Verditer Flycatcher and a Daurian Redstart were noted at Ho Chung.

At Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 3rd a Radde's Warbler and a Yellow-legged Button Quail were trapped. Other birds of note reported there that day were a Lanceolated Warbler, a Common Rosefinch, a Mugimaki Flycatcher, a Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher, an Eyebrowed Thrush, a Grey Thrush, a Red-flanked Bluetail, a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler and 15 Chestnut Buntings. Two Japanese Reed Buntings, the first for Hong Kong, were found on the same day on the landfill area near Mai Po. The following day a search of the landfill area produced four Grey-headed Buntings. Three Scaup were seen from the boardwalk at Mai Po on 4th.

A Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was seen in Tai Po Kau on 5th.



On 9th another Two-barred Greenish Warbler was trapped at Mai Po and 20 Chestnut Buntings were seen, and on this occasion the nearby landfill area held six Oriental Skylarks and two Lanceolated Warblers, with two Grey-headed Buntings again present. A Chestnut-flanked White-eye and a Red-tailed Robin were present in Tai Po Kau the same day, with at least two of the latter species being regularly recorded there subsequently. Another interesting ringing session on 10th at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre produced further records of several of the species recorded there on 3rd, including another Common Rosefinch, and there were also reports of a Grey-faced Buzzard, a Daurian Redstart, a Wryneck and four Red-tailed Robins. Also on 10th a Red-headed Tit was seen in Tai Po Kau. An immature male Pied Bushchat (Category E) was reported by several observers from Lok Ma Chau around this time while another Radde's Warbler was seen near Sha Lo Tung on 12th. The highlight of another ringing session at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 13th was an Oriental Scops Owl (grey phase). A male Japanese Sparrowhawk and yet another Common Rosefinch were amongst the other birds captured, which once again included small numbers of Eye-browed Thrushes, Mugimaki Flycatchers and Red-tailed Robins. On 14th a Lapwing was seen at Mai Po.

On 16th there was a Yellow-eyed Babbler (Category E) in Tai Po Kau village and a Singing Bushlark at Ho Chung, the first for Hong Kong. The bushlark was still present the next day when a Yellow-browed Bunting was also present. Also on 17th three Mountain Bush Warblers were amongst the birds trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre while another visit to Ho Chung on 19th produced two Crested Buntings. At Cheung Chau on 21st a Chestnut-crowned Warbler was seen and a Hoopoe was reported in Hong Kong Park the same day.

On 23rd came the first report of White Storks returning to Mai Po, with ten birds involved, and the following day at least 250 Penduline Tits were present there. Birds of note in the Ping Yeung area at this time were two Grey-headed Buntings, a Hoopoe, a Wryneck and a Bluethroat but it was three streaked warblers which aroused particular interest, both on 23rd and the following day when they were identified as Bright-capped Cisticolas — a first record for Hong Kong. On 30th three were netted and a further two believed to be present. During the ringing operation two Black-shouldered Kites flew over. Earlier that day two Mountain Bush Warblers were trapped at Mai Po.

## December

At least four Bright-capped Cisticolas were still present at Ping Yeung on 1st and another bird was trapped there. At Wu Kau Tang on 4th four Mountain Bush Warblers were noted while a Ruddy Shelduck was reported from Mai Po on 5th. A visit to Lantau on 6th proved particularly interesting: two Grey Bushchats were seen — an adult male at Ngong Ping and an immature/female near Tung Chung. At least three Bright-capped Cisticolas were still present at Ping Yeung on 7th. On 8th

a Pallas's Reed Bunting was seen on the landfill site at Mai Po — yet another new species for Hong Kong. On the same date a male Baikal Teal was at Mai Po and a Sulphur-breasted Warbler in Tai Po Kau.



3. Grass Owl *Tyto capensis*  
Ma On Shan, 12 December 1991

(David G. Coffey)

A Grass Owl at Ma On Shan on 12th was found entangled in kite strings but was released unharmed. A White Ibis was seen at Mai Po on 13th. The following day a Blyth's Reed Warbler was seen and then trapped there. A Styan's Grasshopper Warbler was also noted on 14th in exactly the same spot as the Blyth's Reed. Later in the day at the nearby landfill area the Pallas's Reed Bunting, having narrowly avoided capture when it was initially discovered, was this time successfully trapped, and a Black Vulture passed overhead. A Common Redpoll (Category E) was also seen at Mai Po but was in poor condition and considered to be an escape from captivity. A female Plumbeous Water Redstart was noted at Ho Chung and a pair of these birds was present on a stream in north Tai Po throughout most of the month. Again on 14th another Chestnut-crowned Warbler was reported, on this occasion from Tai Po Kau. Meanwhile a visit to Lantau that day produced a female Bull-headed Shrike at Ngong Ping. Also noted were a Woodcock and two Common Rosefinches while four Bright-capped Cisticolas were found at Tung Chung. On 15th, perhaps rather predictably by this stage, another group of four Bright-capped Cisticolas was found during an outing to Sha Lo Tung, while at Luk Keng eight Grey-headed Buntings were present, two of them being trapped. Several observers were able to see the Pallas's Reed Bunting at Mai Po where a Hoopoe and about six Japanese Quail were regularly noted around this time. On 20th yet another Chestnut-crowned Warbler was seen, this time near Bowen Road on Hong Kong Island and the following day a Chestnut-flanked White-eye was seen in

Tai Po Kau. On 22nd a Ringed Plover was reported from the boardwalk, the second record of the year but only the third for Hong Kong. A Styan's Grasshopper Warbler was trapped at Mai Po on 26th while at the boardwalk a first-winter Slaty-backed Gull was present. Also on 26th a Chestnut-crowned Warbler was in Tai Po Kau and a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was there on 29th. A Lesser Frigatebird roosted on the Peak from 27th into 1992.



4. Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*  
Aberdeen Country Park, 10 March 1992

(Wendy Young)

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

Michael R. Leven and Geoff J. Carey

In the interests of brevity, species which are generally common and widespread throughout the year in suitable habitat are listed in name only without notes. The codes 'BBR' and 'CC' at the end of the species entry indicate that the bird was recorded during the Big Bird Race on 5 and 6 April and/or the Christmas Count on 29 December respectively.

CATEGORY A. SPECIES WHICH HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN AN APPARENTLY WILD STATE IN HONG KONG WITHIN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.

### 1 Little Grebe

*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Eighty-four were recorded in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count on 13 January. Breeding was proved at Mai Po, and four adults and two juveniles at Tai Mei Tuk on 18 October suggests breeding locally. BBR,CC

### 2 Great Crested Grebe

*Podiceps cristatus*

One hundred and forty were recorded in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. The latest record in spring was on 16 March. The first and highest count in the second winter period was four at Mai Po on 13 December. CC

### 6 Cormorant

*Phalacrocorax carbo*

At least 1,000 at Discovery Bay, Lantau on 12 January was an exceptional count for the location, and 500 were seen at Tung Chung, Lantau on 6 February. A count of 2,035 was made during the mid-January Waterfowl Count and 1,800 were still present at Tsim Bei Tsui on 24 March with 400 in the roost at the Mai Po Waterfowl Collection on 31 March. At least ten were still at Mai Po on 4 May. The first autumn report was of one off Lantau on 29 September. Two hundred had returned to the Waterfowl Collection roost on 22 October with 1,125 counted in the Deep Bay area on 15 December. BBR,CC

### 7 Dalmatian Pelican

*Pelecanus crispus*

Ten, including two immatures, remained in Deep Bay until 7 March with one staying on until 1 April. None returned in the latter part of the year (though three were seen in early 1992). Sadly, it would appear that the predicted disappearance of this species as a regular winter visitor is now imminent.

### 9 Lesser Frigatebird

*Fregata ariel*

A first-stage bird roosted on the Peak from 27 December into 1992 (VBP *et al.*). CC

1990: a first-stage bird was seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 10 February (JGH).



- 10 Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*  
Singles were reported at Mai Po on 13 January, 14 February, 22 March, 10 April, 30 November and 7, 14 and 15 December with three together there on 16 December.
- 11 Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*  
Singles were noted at Mai Po in January, February and March, up to two were seen in April and four in May. Very scarce at Mai Po during the summer months this year with apparently only a few pairs breeding (PRK); the highest count was of 20 on 11 August. Elsewhere, several were flushed at Luk Keng on 18 May and the species was also reported from Tai Long Wan in late spring. One was seen on Lamma on 21 September. The latest record was one at Mai Po on 23 November.  
BBR
- 12 Schrenck's Bittern** *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*  
A male was at Tai Long Wan on 6 May (RWL). In autumn there was an adult male and a female or immature at Luk Keng on 23 September (PJL) and an immature male at Tai Long Wan on 28 September (RWL). Previously there was only one substantiated autumn record (on 29 September 1990).
- 13 Chestnut Bittern** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*  
Singles at Tai Long Wan on 17 April and Tung Chung, Lantau on 29 May were the only spring records. A juvenile was noted at Ham Tin swamp, Tai Long Wan on both 17 August and 28 September, and a male was there on 16 October. The only other autumn reports came from Mai Po where singles were seen on 24 August and 19 October whilst a juvenile was trapped there on 27 August.
- 14 Black Bittern** *Ixobrychus flavicollis*  
A male at Mai Po on 16 September (ARL) was the only report. Whilst this species has been recorded as late as 10 October most recent records have been in late spring.
- 16 Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*  
Forty at the Tai Po KCR Station colony on 26 February, 50 pairs at Shuen Wan and breeding at Starling Inlet/Yim Tso Ha were the only comments on breeding status. There were 63 at Starling Inlet and 195 in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. An influx of up to 600 birds was noted at Mai Po on 6 February. Two to three juveniles were at Wong Nai Chung Reservoir during September.  
BBR,CC
- 17 Little Green Heron** *Butorides striatus*  
Present at Mai Po from 12 April until 8 September with five pairs counted on 13 May. One to two were at Hebe Haven in January, April, May, June, July and November, three were reported at Tai Ho Wan, Lantau on 22 January and singles were noted at She Shan on 6 January and Tai Po Kau on 30 September.  
BBR,CC

- 18 Chinese Pond Heron** *Ardeola bacchus*  
Up to 50 pairs at Shuen Wan and presence at Starling Inlet/Yim Tso Ha egretries were the only breeding season reports. Five hundred and eighty-three were recorded in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. A flock of 13 which spent two hours at HMS Tamar Basin, Central on 8 October was unusual.  
BBR,CC
- 19 Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*  
Breeding in the mixed egretty at Shuen Wan (150-300 pairs of this species, Little and Great Egrets) and breeding at Starling Inlet were the only comments on breeding status. Seventy-two were recorded in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count.  
BBR,CC
- 20 Swinhoe's Egret** *Egretta eulophotes*  
Four seen at Mai Po on 22 April (GJC), one on 28 April (RWL), one on 3 May (RWL), two or three on 4 May (PRK,RWL) and one on 8 May (RWL).
- 21 Reef Egret** *Egretta sacra*  
Widely reported from the islands with maximum counts of five on the Ninepins on 3 February and six on Lamma on 31 March. One white-phase bird was at Shuen Wan on 11 August (RWL) and two of this phase were seen on northeast Lantau on 29 September (JEB).  
CC
- 22 Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*  
Recorded in the Mai Po egretty from 7 March; also bred at Shuen Wan and Starling Inlet, but no counts were received. A total of 1,506 was seen in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. One grey-phase bird was seen at Mai Po on 19 October (CAV,ARL).  
BBR,CC
- 23 Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia*  
Up to six at Mai Po/Tsim Bei Tsui in January and February, up to five in March and 12 on 20 April. No reports from the summer months but up to four seen at Mai Po/Tsim Bei Tsui in September and from November. One feeding in a flooded field near She Shan on 24 November was unusual.  
BBR,CC
- 24 Great Egret** *Egretta alba*  
Bred at Starling Inlet and Shuen Wan but no counts were received. Six hundred and ninety-four were counted in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count with a further 63 at Starling Inlet.  
BBR,CC
- 25 Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*  
Eight hundred and twenty were counted at Mai Po on 5 January and 730 on 29 December, with a Deep Bay total of 1,188 recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. Three at Plover Cove on 1 July and seven at Mai Po on 28 July were presumably summering individuals.  
BBR,CC



- 26 Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*  
Three were seen at Mai Po on 12 January, seven were recorded in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count and up to two were regularly noted at Mai Po in February and March with five on 30 March. One or two were at Mai Po during the summer with an autumn peak of 12 on 27 October and up to two recorded until 24 November. The only reports away from Deep Bay were singles at Shuen Wan on 14 October and Luk Keng on 16 October. BBR
- 27 Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*  
One immature remained at Mai Po from 1990 until 16 March (PRK,PJL *et al.*). Another immature was seen flying over the Marsh on 16 November (PRK,PJL).
- 28 Oriental White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia boyciana*  
The flock which arrived at Mai Po on 27 November 1990 remained in Deep Bay into 1991 with a maximum of 121 counted during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. Eighty-three were still present on 3 March but the only later report was seven on 8 March (SC,RWL *et al.*). Ten returned on 23 November and remained into 1992 (SC *et al.*). Whilst the small number returning was a disappointment after the events of the previous winter they represent only the sixth record for Hong Kong. CC
- 30 White Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus*  
An immature was at Mai Po from 13 to 21 December (RWL,SC).
- 31 European Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*  
One was at Mai Po until 9 February (RWL,PRK *et al.*). Present in the latter part of the year from 2 November with a maximum of four on 6 December (CAV,SC *et al.*). CC
- 32 Black-faced Spoonbill** *Platalea minor*  
Forty-one were counted in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count and the wintering flock reached a record total of 57 on 14 February (PA). There were 40 on 22 March, 13 on 22 April, and ten were still present on 28 May. In contrast to 1990, apparently none over-summered. The first bird returned on 19 October and the number increased from two on 25 October to 14 on 3 November and 30 on 8 December. BBR,CC
- 36 Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*  
A female or immature at Mai Po on 5 December (SC).
- 37 Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*  
Twelve hundred were counted in Deep Bay on 5 January. This represents 30% of the peak winter count in 1988 but is a considerable improvement on the total of 458 recorded during the 1990 mid-January Waterfowl Count. In comparison, 929 were counted during the 1991 mid-January Waterfowl Count. The latest record was one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 24 March. CC

- 39 Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*  
Two free-flying females were noted irregularly in the Mai Po Waterfowl Collection between 13 January and 13 April and a single female was seen on 4, 5 and 8 May, 28 November and 29 December (RWL,WLY *et al.*). BBR,CC
- 40 Wigeon** *Anas penelope*  
A total of 1,111 in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count was a new high count for Hong Kong. The latest spring record was five at Mai Po on 21 April. BBR,CC
- 41 Falcated Teal** *Anas falcata*  
The maximum number in the early part of the year was 237 in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. The latest spring record was one in the Waterfowl Collection at Mai Po on 8 May. The first four in autumn were recorded at Mai Po on 19 October with 140 counted there on 29 December. BBR,CC
- 42 Gadwall** *Anas strepera*  
Recorded in Deep Bay between 1 January and 9 February with nine counted in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count and nine at Tsim Bei Tsui on 1 February. One was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 22 November, one was at Mai Po on 7 December and two were there on 29 December. CC
- 43 Baikal Teal** *Anas formosa*  
Single males at Mai Po on 26 and 27 January (PJL *et al.*), 8 December (PRK,PJL) and 29 December (SC). CC
- 44 Teal** *Anas crecca*  
A total of 3,095 in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count was a new high count for Hong Kong. Twenty-five were still at Mai Po on 30 March and the latest single was seen on 22 April. A pair at Aberdeen Lower Reservoir on 9 January was unusual at that locality. CC
- 45 Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*  
Thirty-three were recorded in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count with up to seven at Mai Po in January and February and two on 3 March. In the latter part of the year there were up to three at Mai Po from 18 October. BBR,CC
- 46 Yellow-nib Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha*  
The total of 511 in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count was a new high count for Hong Kong. BBR,CC
- 47 Pintail** *Anas acuta*  
The count of 5,631 in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count was more than twice the previous (1989) record total in Hong Kong. The latest in spring was on 4 May and the first in autumn on



19 October. The leucistic male first seen in December 1990 was reported from Tsim Bei Tsui on 3 February (JEB). BBR,CC

**48 Garganey** *Anas querquedula*  
At least seven wintered at Mai Po, spending much of their time in the Waterfowl Collection, with a spring peak there of 36 on 4 April. A free-flying male was noted in the Waterfowl Collection on 15 June. In autumn 26 were seen on the sea at Double Haven on 22 September, 15 in Tolo Harbour on 28 September, 430 (a record count for Hong Kong) at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 October (MRL) and 50 at Mai Po on 16 October. BBR

**49 Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*  
The mid-January Waterfowl Count total of 4,534 in Deep Bay was a new high for Hong Kong, the previous peak being 3,158 in 1987. The latest spring record was on 18 April and the first autumn record on 23 September, both at Mai Po. BBR,CC

**50 Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*  
One was seen at Lau Fau Shan on 10 January (WLY). All other records came from Mai Po where there was a pair on 13 January, a female on 18 January (ARL,RWL), one on 6 April (ARL), three males and a female on 8 April (NSG) and a female on 8, 16 and 29 December (PJL,SC). BBR,CC

**51 Baer's Pochard** *Aythya baeri*  
A male was at Mai Po from 5 January until at least 9 March (CAV *et al.*). The same, or another, male, noted on 6 April (ARL), 5 May (RWL), 8 May (per PJL) and 15 June (PJL), spent much of its time in the Waterfowl Collection. A female or immature was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 January (PRK) and a male and female were at Mai Po on 27 and 29 December (SC). BBR,CC

**51.1 Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*  
An adult male at Mai Po on 3 February (PRK,PJL) was the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

**52 Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*  
Sixty were seen at Lau Fau Shan on 10 January, 117 were recorded in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count and up to 22 were at Mai Po in February with 11 on 2 March and one female on 4 May. The first three in autumn were seen on 30 October and the highest count was 11 on 2 November. BBR

**53 Scaup** *Aythya marila*  
Fifteen were reported from Lau Fau Shan on 10 January (WLY) and, presumably the same 15, from Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. Three females or immatures seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 4 November (MH) was the only other record.

**56 Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*  
Thirty-two were at Lau Fau Shan on 10 January and the same number, presumably the same individuals, was reported from Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. Eleven were at Lau Fau Shan on 20 January, one was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 27 January and 24 were there on 29 March.

**57 Black Baza** *Aviceda leucophotes*  
Two at Tsim Bei Tsui and three at Luk Keng on 13 April, five at Lau Fau Shan on 14 April, three at Nam Chung on 15 April, 15 at Tai Long Wan on 17 April and 12 there the next day were the first records. Thereafter up to five were reported from Tai Po, Tai Po Kau, Tai Long Wan, Shuen Wan, Shek Kong Catchment, Route Twisk, Ting Kok, Tai Mei Tuk, Plover Cove, Bride's Pool and Luk Keng until 28 July. There were seven at Shek Kong Catchment on 18 and 24 August and 25 there on 29 September, two at Hebe Haven on 7 September, 12 at Sha Tau Kok on 16 September, and 14 at Wu Kau Tang and four at Hebe Haven on 4 October.

**58 Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*  
One was seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 October (MH).

**59 Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*  
One was seen at Mai Po on 21 April (PJL) and two were seen at Ping Yeung on 30 November (MLC,PJL).

**60 Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*  
Ninety were considered to be present in Deep Bay on 13 January. BBR,CC

**61 White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*  
Four pairs appeared to be present during the breeding season with at least one pair successfully rearing one young. One at Mai Po on 25 October was the only record away from its regular sites. BBR,CC

**62 Black Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*  
One was seen over the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 14 December (PRK,PJL).

**63 Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela*  
Breeding season reports came from Tai Po Kau, She Shan, Shek Kong Catchment and Tai Long Wan. Five adults together near Tai Po Kau on 2 September was unusual. BBR,CC

**64 Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*  
The highest count at Mai Po in the early part of the year was five on 27 January but more birds undoubtedly passed through. Adult males were seen on 27 January and 1 April and the last record was on 5 May. Seen in autumn from 21 September with a peak of four on 19 October. BBR,CC



**68 Japanese Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter gularis*  
A female trapped at Mai Po on 9 March (PRK,PJL) and a male seen on Lamma on 15 April (JNP) were the only spring records. In autumn singles were trapped at Mai Po on 12 October (PRK,PJL) and 19 October (PJL) and one was seen there on 27 October (PRK). All other confirmed reports came from Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre where singles were trapped on 26 October (PRK,PJL), 13 November (PJL), 16 November (DPC) and 23 November (PJL).

**68.1 Besra** *Accipiter virgatus*  
Males were seen in Tai Po Kau on 16 March (RDES,MH) and at Mount Nicholson on 2 October (CAV). Singles were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 5 October and 7 December (DPC) and at Shek O on 17 December (ACG).

The identification of accipiters and, in particular, the separation of Japanese Sparrowhawk *A. gularis*, Sparrowhawk *A. nisus* and Besra remains controversial. Small accipiters, belonging to one of these three species were reported as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
4	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	3	5	14	4	35

The July record relates to a probable Besra at Tai Tam Country Park on 31st (IT) whilst a possible Sparrowhawk was seen at Ping Yeung on 16 November (CAV) and 1 December (PJL). Of the remaining records many or most were thought to be Japanese Sparrowhawks, especially those in late autumn.

**70 Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus*  
Breeding season reports came from Lok Ma Chau, Shek Kong Catchment, Chuk Yeung, Tap Mun and Tai Po Kau, with display observed at the last two sites. BBR,CC

**71 Chinese Goshawk** *Accipiter soloensis*  
A significant movement occurred on 21 April when at least eight passed through Mai Po and an adult male was trapped (PJL *et al.*) and at least eight were seen at Tai Tam Bay (JEB). Also on 21 April a group of 25 accipiters at Mai Po and a distant group of 400 accipiters at Tai Tam Bay were probably this species. Singles were seen in Tai Po Kau on 23 April and 2 May (RWL), on Cheung Chau on 24 and 25 April and 21 May (MDW), Shuen Wan on 10 May and at Mai Po on 11 May (CAV).

**72 Grey-faced Buzzard** *Butastur indicus*  
One at Victoria Park, Hong Kong Island on 10 March; strong passage on 29 March when 58 passed over Mai Po, nine were seen over Tap Mun, and one was seen near Tin Shui Wai. Five were seen at Shek Kong and at least 25 passed over Mai Po on 30 March, with two at Mai Po on 31 March and one on 1 April when 20 were seen moving north-

east near Lok Ma Chau and two were over Tai Po Kau. The latest in spring were one over Aberdeen Country Park on 3 April, one at Fanling Golf Course on 4 April and one seen during the Bird Race on 6 April. In autumn one was seen over Aberdeen Country Park on 2 September, there were 11 at Hebe Haven on 4 October, three over Mai Po on 20 October and one over Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 10 November. BBR

**73 Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*  
One was noted irregularly at Mai Po from 1 January until mid-March; also reported in January and February from Hong Kong Island and Tai Po Kau. The latest record was of three at Mai Po on 13 March. In the autumn the first was recorded at Bluff Head, Sai Kung on 11 August, followed by one at Hebe Haven on 24 September and 1 October. Up to four were at Mai Po from 19 October and one in Tai Po Kau on 30 December. CC

**73.1 Upland Buzzard** *Buteo hemilasius*  
1989: one at Shek Pik on Lantau (GAW) was the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

**74 Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*  
A maximum of four in the Deep Bay area in the early part of the year with the last seen on 5 April. Up to four were again present there from 25 October until the year end. CC

**75 Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*  
Up to ten in the Deep Bay area until 6 April. In autumn the first was seen on 21 September, one month earlier than the previous earliest autumn record. Thereafter a maximum of six was seen in the Deep Bay area until the end of the year. Single birds were noted at Shek Kong Catchment on 2 November and Sha Lo Tung on 12 December. BBR,CC

**76 Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraaetus fasciatus*  
Pairs appeared to be present in at least six localities with breeding strongly suspected at two of these. All records came from the northern and eastern New Territories and Lamma Island. BBR

**77 Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*  
Eleven were present in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. Three were recorded at Tai Long Wan on 20 April and one summered in the Luk Keng/Plover Cove area. Up to three at Mai Po in the second winter period. BBR,CC

**79 Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*  
Singles reported from Lamma, Town and Bluff Islands, Shek Kong and especially Mai Po in the early part of the year until 3 March. The first bird of the autumn was seen at Mai Po on 29 September and singles were regularly seen there until the year end. Singles were also noted from Hung Hom, the Chinese University, Tai Po, Kadoorie



**82 Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

Apart from an unseasonal report from Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count, the first was at Mai Po on 5 April. Two were at Mai Po on 16 April with singles there on 20 April and also at Chau Tau on 20 and 24 April. One seen near Lok Ma Chau on 27 May and 12 July and three together, including a juvenile, at Chek Keng on 16 October indicate possible breeding — interestingly, Cheng (1987) states that this species is resident in Guangdong Province. Other reports in the latter half of the year were of singles at Mai Po on 10 August, 21, 23 and 30 September and 19 October, Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 6 October, Tai Mei Tuk and Braemar Hill on 15 October, Sai Kung on 16 October and Shing Mun on 26 October.

**83 Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

Widely reported throughout the year especially from Deep Bay and Hong Kong Island. A pair was noted roosting together on an island site on 23 September. BBR,CC

**84 Chinese Francolin** *Francolinus pintadeanus*

Widespread in the New Territories but no reports from Hong Kong Island this year. Recorded from Tap Mun on 29 March, Kat O Chau on 30 June and 22 September and Basalt Island on 25 July. BBR

**85 Japanese Quail** *Coturnix japonica*

Up to five were seen on the landfill site to the east of Mai Po until 12 April and up to six were there from 8 December. Elsewhere there was one at Lau Fau Shan on 5 May, two on Tai Mo Shan on 26 October and two at Ping Yeung on 7 December. BBR,CC

**86 Yellow-legged Button Quail** *Turnix tanki*

One trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 3 November (PRK,PJL) was the first since 1986. A button quail, *Turnix* sp., was seen at Luk Keng on 16 October (MRL).



5. Yellow-legged Button Quail *Turnix tanki*  
KARC, 3 November 1991

(Paul J. Leader)

**88 Slaty-legged Crake** *Rallina eurizonoides*

An immature bird was found freshly dead near Tai Tam Reservoir on 24 September (IT).

**90 Banded Rail** *Rallus striatus*

Regularly recorded in the Deep Bay area and at Luk Keng with the only other reports from Lantau: singles at San Tau on 6 February and Tung Chung on 1 October. BBR,CC

**90.1 White-browed Crake** *Porzana cinerea*

One at Mai Po from 20 until 28 April (PRK,PJL,MLC *et al.*) was the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

**92 Ruddy Crake** *Porzana fusca*

One at Mai Po on 13 April (PRK).

**95 White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

BBR,CC

**96 Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

One hundred and twenty-seven were reported from Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. BBR,CC

**96.1 Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio porphyrio*

One at Mai Po on 24 January (LY), 5 April (CAV) and 4 May (PRK) was presumably the individual first seen in 1988.



- 97 Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea*  
One was seen at Mai Po on 25 January and a male was found dead there on 21 October. At Tai Long Wan a male was seen on 6 and 10 May and three females or immatures were flushed on 3 August. There was a barely fledged juvenile at Luk Keng on 15 September, a female or immature there on 16 October and one at the Fence on 18 October.
- 98 Coot** *Fulica atra*  
A total of 1,750 was recorded in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. A single individual summered at Mai Po.  
BBR,CC
- 101 Painted Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*  
A single male was trapped at Lok Ma Chau on 3 February and a single was present there on 26 March.
- 103 Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*  
Two hundred and fifty-seven were present during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. The highest spring count was 127 at Mai Po on 28 March and the final spring record occurred there on 13 May. Recorded in autumn from 24 August with the highest count being 250 on 27 September. At the end of the year 142 were present at Mai Po. BBR
- 104 Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*  
During the mid-January Waterfowl Count 450 were recorded with only slightly lower numbers remaining until 9 March. The latest spring record was a single at Mai Po on 18 May. Recorded in autumn from 16 November with numbers reaching 450 on 16 December. BBR,CC
- 105 Oriental Pratincole** *Glareola maldivarum*  
Recorded on six dates in March, ten in April and three in May, between 5 March and 30 May. Fifty-seven were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 March and 60 at Mai Po on 15 March. The one autumn record was a single at Mai Po on 8 September. BBR
- 106 Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*  
One hundred and fifty-six were recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. The highest spring count was 20 at Tin Shui Wai on 17 March. Four pairs were noted at Cheung Shu Tan on 30 May, one pair apparently incubating. The highest autumn count was 80 at Mai Po on 20 October and 60 were present there on 27 December. BBR,CC
- 107 Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*  
An adult showing characters of the subspecies *C. h. tundrae* was at Mai Po on 29 March (MRL,IT) and a first-winter bird was seen there on 22 December (PRK,MT).  
These are the second and third records for Hong Kong.

- 108 Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*  
A count of 2,500 was made at Mai Po on 5 January and 1,300 were still present there on 17 March. The final spring record was a single at Mai Po on 29 May. Noted in autumn from 21 September with 1,000 present at Mai Po on 5 October, 2,000 there on 21 November and 3,500 there on 22 December. BBR,CC

- 109 Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*  
Seventy were recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. In spring recorded until 30 May with numbers generally 50 or less, though 210 were present at Mai Po on 17 March and 500 were there on 14 April, the latter constituting the highest ever count in Hong Kong. Recorded in autumn from 24 August, the highest count being 200 on 12 October. A reasonable year for this species with relatively high numbers recorded throughout the year. BBR



6. Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*  
Mai Po, April 1991

(Ray Tipper)

- 110 Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii*  
A single was recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count but there were no further records until 17 March. Thereafter, spring numbers peaked at 1,000 on 14 April at Mai Po with 350 still there on 4 May. Fifteen were at Tai Long Wan on 15 April and the final spring record occurred on 19 May. In autumn recorded from 24 August to 9 November with three birds at Mai Po on 27 December and four on 29 December. The highest autumn count was 180 on 3 October. BBR,CC
- 111 Oriental Plover** *Charadrius veredus*  
A single bird, probably a female, was at Mai Po on 17 April (PRS,ARL).



- 112 Asiatic Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*  
Forty at Mai Po on 27 January was the first sizeable number recorded, presumably marking the beginning of spring passage. The highest spring count was 300 at Mai Po on 16 March, the largest ever count in Hong Kong, and the final spring record was a single there on 25 May. In autumn noted from 24 August with 120 at Mai Po on 11 October and 139 at the same location on 23 November being the two highest counts. Sixty-one were present at Mai Po on 27 December. BBR
- 113 Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*  
The mid-January Waterfowl Count total of 521 was the highest ever in Hong Kong. There were about 400 in February and 300 were still present on 16 March. Numbers declined gradually from 60 at the beginning of April and the final spring record was a single at Mai Po on 25 May. In autumn recorded from 24 August but numbers remained at 30 or less until at least 18 November. Four hundred were present at Mai Po by the middle of December. BBR,CC
- 114 Grey-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus cinereus*  
A total of eleven was present in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. Subsequently recorded on eleven dates during the year, four of these being during the period 17 March to 16 April. Peaks were ten at Tsim Bei Tsui on 10 March, 6 April and 29 December. BBR,CC
- 115 Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*  
Two birds were present at Mai Po from 2 November until 15 December. The very cold weather at the end of the year brought the following very notable influx on 29 December: at Tsim Bei Tsui flocks of 25 and 64 flying west or southwest plus a single on the ground in the morning and 19 in flight during the afternoon; at Mai Po a flock of 24 on the ground. This day total of 133 is the highest on record, surpassing even the flocks of up to 40 which were recorded in the New Territories until 1976. CC
- 116 Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris*  
The highest count of the first winter period was 13 on 1 and 3 February. Spring passage was noted from 29 March to 30 May with 130 at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 April being the highest count. Noted in autumn from 24 August, most birds passing during October and November with the highest count being 91 on 22 October. BBR,CC
- 117 Knot** *Calidris canutus*  
Fifteen were present during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. The spring migration proved quite strong for this species and included 70 on 25 March, 126 on 22 April and 190 on 5 May. In autumn noted from 24 August with the bulk of birds passing during October, the highest count being 93 on 7th. Thirty birds were present on 16 December. All records were from Mai Po. BBR,CC

- 118 Sanderling** *Calidris alba*  
Recorded on seven dates during the year: 15 and 20 April, with two at Tai Long Wan and one at Mai Po on the latter date; four on 25 and two on 28 April; two on 11 May; one on 28 August; and two juveniles on 19 October. Most records came from Mai Po.
- 119 Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*  
Two were seen at Mai Po in January and early February with eight there on 16 February. Spring passage was noted from 16 March until 19 May with the highest count being 500 at Tin Shui Wai on 8 May. Noted in the autumn from 24 August and thereafter recorded on eleven dates to the end of the year, the highest count being 20 at Tin Shui Wai on 28 August. BBR,CC
- 119.1 Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*  
Singles were recorded at Mai Po on 19 April (RWL), 21 April (MT) and 22 April (GJC), possibly involving the same individual.  
**1990:** the entry in last year's report should read: 'Seven or eight individuals were recorded at Mai Po from 31 March to 18 April. These were: one on 31 March (PRK) and this or another individual seen from 7 to 9 April (WLY,MB); one on 13 April, two on 15 April, one on 16 April and two on 17 April, all different individuals (GJC). One of the latter two remained until 18 April.'
- 120 Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*  
Twenty-five were present during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. Spring passage was noted from 9 March with the highest count being 25 at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui combined on 5 April. There was one at Mai Po on 20 April but no more until the last single in spring there on 18 May. Noted in autumn from 23 August with the highest count being 130 on 20 October, the highest ever recorded in Hong Kong. BBR,CC
- 121 Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta*  
Up to three birds were recorded on four dates during the first winter period. Spring passage was noted from 5 April until 16 May, the highest count being 19 at Mai Po on 12 April. Noted in autumn from 27 August and subsequently recorded on two dates in September, five in October, one in November and two in December. The highest count was 12 at Mai Po on 14 and 20 October. BBR
- 121.1 Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*  
Singles seen at Mai Po on 20 April (RWL) and on 2 May (MRL) may have been the same bird.  
This is the fourth record for Hong Kong.
- 122 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata*  
The first record of the year was two at Mai Po on 30 March. Subsequently recorded in spring until 19 May, the highest count being 70 at Mai Po on 5 May. In autumn recorded on two dates each in August,



October and November, the latter involving four singles, the first two each involving two birds. BBR

**123 Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

A single at Mai Po on 30 January and 17 February. Spring passage was first noted on 1 March with numbers building up to 800 by the end of the month. The highest spring count was 2,500 on 5 May, rather later than the highest counts in most years. Last noted on 19 May. In autumn recorded from 11 August until 21 November with the highest count being 50 at Tin Shui Wai on 21 September. Thirty seen at Mai Po on 16 December were probably late passage birds. BBR

**124 Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

During the first winter period the highest count was 3,000 at Mai Po. Numbers were still as high as 2,000 on 3 March but thereafter dropped sharply to only one on 23rd. Singles were recorded on seven dates in April and two in May, including the final record on 11th. In autumn noted at Mai Po from 8 September, numbers reaching 800 by mid-October and 3,600 on 18 November, the latter being a new high count for Hong Kong. BBR,CC

**125 Spoon-billed Sandpiper** *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*

Recorded in spring between 4 April and 12 May with numbers somewhat lower than in 1990. The maximum count was four on 3 and 5 May.

4 April: 3 Tsim Bei Tsui	2 May: 3 Mai Po
5 April: 1 Mai Po	3 May: 4 Tsim Bei Tsui
6 April: 1 Mai Po	5 May: 4 Tsim Bei Tsui
7 April: 1 Mai Po	11 May: 1 Mai Po
9 April: 1 Mai Po	12 May: 1 Mai Po
11 April: 1 Mai Po	

BBR

**126 Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus*

Two were present in Deep Bay until mid-February after which numbers increased gradually, reaching 15 by the end of March. The main spring passage occurred during the first half of April with the maximum count of 60 on 6th. The last spring record was on 18 May. Noted in autumn from 24 August, numbers reaching 100 on 20 October. Two were present at Mai Po on 27 December. BBR

**127 Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

Singles were noted at Mai Po on a number of dates until 8 April and two were there on 8 February, possibly only three or four individuals being involved. Noted on three dates in autumn: a juvenile (trapped) on 14 August, plus singles on 26 September and 9 October.

**129 Fantail Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

One hundred and thirty-one were recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count, a similar number to the previous year. The last spring

record was two at Luk Keng on 9 May. In autumn numbers reached 40 at Lok Ma Chau on 29 October. BBR,CC

**130 Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*

Fifteen were recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count, the same number as in the previous year. In spring recorded on one date in March and two each in April and May, the latest record being two at Lok Ma Chau on 5 May. The earliest autumn record was seven at Mai Po on 9 September with five there on 21st. BBR,CC

**131 Swinhoe's Snipe** *Gallinago megala*

Singles recorded at Lok Ma Chau on four dates in the first three months of the year included one trapped on 20 January. Noted on four dates during April and May, including eight at Lok Ma Chau on 8 April. Autumn passage, from 24 August to 20 October, included eight at Mai Po on 21 September and ten at Luk Keng on 16 October. Four were reported at Tai Long Wan on 28 September. BBR

**134 Asiatic Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus*

Recorded in spring between 30 March and 30 May. Numbers built up to a first peak of 150 on 6 April and then a second of 241 on 22nd. Subsequently the highest count was 200 on 5 May. Rather a weak autumn passage ensued consisting of records on five dates between 9 and 26 August. The highest count was 20 on 24 August and the count of 16 on 10th comprised 13 juveniles and three adults. All records came from Mai Po. BBR

[ **Dowitcher** *Limnodromus* sp.]

A single bird, either a Long-billed or a Short-billed Dowitcher (*L. scolopaceus* or *L. griseus*) was present at Mai Po on 19 October (CAV).]

**135 Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Singles were noted on twelve dates during the year, one in January, two in February, one in March, one in April, four in October, two in November and two in December. Most records came from Shek Kong. In addition, feathers belonging to this species were found at Lok Ma Chau on 20 January.

**136 Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

One hundred and sixty were recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count and this remained the highest count until 23 March when 210 were at Mai Po. Subsequently numbers reached 1,200 on 6 April but declined quite sharply thereafter until the final record of 20 on 25 May. In autumn noted from 9 August with main passage occurring during October, numbers reaching 120 on 22 October. Ninety-two were present at the end of the year. All records came from Mai Po. BBR,CC

**137 Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*

Except for five on 19 January, ones or twos were recorded at Mai



Po up to mid-March. Spring passage was rather strong with 60 noted at Mai Po on 6 April and 30 still present on 1 May. The final spring record was ten at Mai Po on 19 May. Autumn passage, noted between 26 August and 21 November, proved to be as strong as in spring with 97 at Mai Po on 20 September and 90 on 21 November. BBR

**139 Whimbrel**

*Numenius phaeopus*

Noted in spring between 4 April and 19 May, reaching a maximum of 49 at Mai Po on 23 April. In autumn recorded between 10 August and 19 November with a further record of four at Mai Po on 16 December. The bulk of passage occurred during September and the first half of October, the highest count in this period being 93 at Mai Po on 24 September. In addition, however, 300 were recorded there on 24 August, a new high count for Hong Kong. BBR

**140 Curlew**

*Numenius arquata*

Five hundred and seventy-two were recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count, a new high count for Hong Kong. Two hundred and thirty-three were still present on 9 March and 50 on 1 April. Subsequently the highest spring count was 20 on three dates in April and the final record was ten on 18 May. Noted in autumn from 9 August with a reasonably strong passage ensuing, the highest count being 132 on 5 October. BBR,CC

**141 Australian Curlew**

*Numenius madagascariensis*

A single bird was noted at Mai Po on a number of dates until the end of March. Eight were at Mai Po on 6 April, and the highest count (and final spring record) was nine on 19 May. In autumn one was seen in flight off Cheung Chau on 15 August during a typhoon; subsequently recorded between 21 September and 26 November, all records involving ones or twos except for three on 3 November. BBR

**142 Spotted Redshank**

*Tringa erythropus*

Four hundred and seventy-two were recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. The highest spring count was 1,000 on 6 April and the final record was three on 19 May. Noted in autumn from 11 August, numbers building up to 200 on 19 October and 900 on 18 November and 8 December. A bird seen on 9 March had the bill broken close to the base and was presumably the same individual first seen on 12 December 1988 and again in the following winter. All records came from Mai Po. BBR,CC

**143 Redshank**

*Tringa totanus*

The highest count of the first winter period was 150 on 2 February at Mai Po. Passage was first noted on 23 March when 325 were recorded there. The highest April count was 350 on 4th and the peak in May was 360, also on 4th, both at Mai Po. In autumn first noted on 9 August when 510 were at Mai Po. The highest count of the year was 809 at Mai Po on 24 August. BBR

**144 Marsh Sandpiper**

*Tringa stagnatilis*

The highest count of the first winter period was 500 on 26 January. Six hundred on 23 March probably denoted an influx of migrants; numbers built up to a high of 850 on 4 April but declined quite rapidly after 8th. The last record in spring was on 25 May. Noted in autumn from 11 August with numbers reaching a high of 650 on 26 September. Two hundred were present on 2 November but numbers declined rapidly thereafter and stood at ten on 25 November. All the above records were from Mai Po. BBR,CC

**145 Greenshank**

*Tringa nebularia*

Three hundred and fifty on 26 January was the highest count of the first winter period. The rather weak spring passage reached a maximum of 130 on 6 April and the final record was on 25 May. Noted in autumn from 10 August with 507 birds present on 24 August. Numbers declined towards the end of September but climbed again in October, reaching a maximum of 385 on 4th. Numbers fell again after early November and 20 were present on 16 December. All records were from Mai Po. BBR,CC

**146 Nordmann's Greenshank**

*Tringa guttifer*

First noted on 29 March. The early part of April saw quite a strong passage with 46 being recorded at Mai Po on 8 April, a new high for Hong Kong. After 10th numbers for the rest of the month remained at three or less, except for 30th when five were noted, marking the beginning of a small influx which reached ten on 8 May. The final record in spring was on 30 May. All records, except for two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April, were from Mai Po. BBR

**147 Green Sandpiper**

*Tringa ochropus*

Fifty-seven were recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count, a slight increase on the previous year. The highest count received in spring was eight at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 April. Recorded in autumn from 24 August. BBR,CC

**148 Wood Sandpiper**

*Tringa glareola*

One hundred and twenty-three were recorded during the mid-January Waterfowl Count, slightly up on the previous year. The highest spring count was 120 at Lok Ma Chau on 31 March. Noted in autumn from 4 August, the highest count of 50 being recorded on three dates: 3 September at Tin Shui Wai, and 6 September and 14 October, both at Mai Po. Two hundred were at Mai Po on 16 December. BBR,CC

**149 Terek Sandpiper**

*Xenus cinereus*

Spring passage was noted from 22 March to 19 May with numbers reaching 150 on 8 April and then 350 on 27 and 28 April. The latter count equals the previous highest ever. In autumn recorded from 9 August to the rather late date of 26 November, the highest count being 30 on 26 August. All records came from Mai Po. BBR



TABLE 1. Numbers of selected wader species at Mai Po during 4-28 April 1991

Species	April																								
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Lesser Sand Plover	-	20	6	20	20	10	20	-	-	-	500	20	-	-	-	-	30	8	12	14	-	12	3	50	50
Greater Sand Plover	20	50	600	100	70	200	250	-	-	100	1000	150	-	-	-	-	350	15	25	41	-	12	20	40	160
Great Knot	46	90	300	25	100	50	40	-	-	5	5	20	-	-	-	-	60	-	19	-	-	7	-	5	6
Red-necked Stint	100	300	160	150	300	160	300	-	-	20	15	15	-	6	-	-	150	120	140	100	50	20	10	20	60
Curlew Sandpiper	400	50	600	200	350	400	500	-	-	50	500	500	-	-	-	-	2000	✓	✓	✓	✓	50	100	100	800
Asiatic Dowitcher	8	20	150	30	75	-	47	-	20	-	30	35	20	-	-	-	80	240	241	-	-	100	5	145	1
Black-tailed Godwit	517	260	1200	500	500	70	10	-	-	200	100	100	300	-	-	-	380	-	-	-	-	-	100	130	-
Spotted Redshank	450	-	1000	500	500	300	10	-	-	-	150	150	-	-	-	-	850	✓	✓	✓	✓	50	30	200	90
Redshank	350	-	130	50	50	50	50	-	-	-	200	250	-	-	-	-	150	-	-	-	-	30	30	5	130
Marsh Sandpiper	850	-	80	500	500	200	150	-	-	-	150	100	-	-	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	10	5	70
Greenshank	50	-	130	50	50	120	50	-	-	-	50	50	-	-	-	-	130	120	-	-	-	30	50	30	80
Nordmann's Greenshank	17	11	25	3	46	1	30	-	-	1	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	-	-	1	1
Terek Sandpiper	-	25	30	30	150	100	20	-	-	5	45	45	-	-	-	-	60	20	30	147	-	10	60	350	350

✓ = present but not counted  
 - = not recorded

**150 Common Sandpiper***Actitis hypoleucos*

Fifty-seven were noted during the mid-January Waterfowl Count. The highest spring count was 23 at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui on 20 April; the highest in autumn was 11 at both Mai Po and Cheung Shu Tan on 2 November. BBR,CC

**151 Grey-tailed Tattler***Heteroscelus brevipes*

Noted in spring from 13 April until 29 May with the highest count being 20 at Tsim Bei Tsui and Mai Po on 20 April. Recorded on four dates in autumn, all at Mai Po, from 9 August to 8 September, the highest count being four on 24 August. Both spring and autumn numbers were rather low. BBR

**152 Turnstone***Arenia interpres*

A single bird present in Deep Bay during the first three months of the year was unusual. Spring passage, noted from 1 April to 19 May, was quite heavy with 41 recorded at Tsim Bei Tsui and Mai Po on 20 April and 120, a new high for Hong Kong, at Mai Po on 27th. In autumn a single was at Mai Po on 11 August and three were at Tin Shui Wai on 3 September. Seen on five dates in November, including 40 at Mai Po on 26th. A single was noted at Mai Po on 13 December. BBR

**153 Red-necked Phalarope***Phalaropus lobatus*

In spring noted on eight dates from 29 March to 16 May, the highest count being four at Tap Mun on the earliest of these dates. In autumn noted on eight dates from 3 August (a new early date for Hong Kong) until 29 September, the highest count by far being at least 50 in Tolo Harbour on 28 September. Most records came from the Tolo Harbour area. BBR

**155 Long-tailed Skua***Stercorarius longicaudus*

An adult flew past the seaward side of High Island Reservoir on 19 May (ARL).

This constitutes the second record for Hong Kong, the first being on 9 May 1976.

**156 Great Black-headed Gull***Larus ichthyæetus*

One immature was seen at Mai Po on 9 March (PJL,PRK,CAV).

**157 Saunders' Gull***Larus saundersi*

One hundred and two were recorded in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count; 163 at Mai Po on 9 February (PRK) was a new high count for Hong Kong — the peak the previous winter, which was itself a record, was 143. Seventy were still present on 4 March with ten on 9 March and the last two on 10 April. In the latter part of the year the first was seen on 27 October and numbers had reached 48 by 29 December (SC). CC



- 158 Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*  
A count of 17,235 in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count was the second highest ever, the maximum being 18,190 in 1986. Eleven at Mai Po on 10 April were the latest in spring and 15 in the West Lamma Channel on 29 September were the first in autumn. Eight thousand were estimated to be at Mai Po on 24 November. BBR,CC
- 159 Brown-headed Gull** *Larus brunnicephalus*  
In the first winter period single adults were seen at Mai Po on 27 January, 16 February, 3 and 24 March with three adults being noted on 10 March (PRK,PJL,DSM *et al.*); one adult was at Starling Inlet on 15 February (PRK). The only report in the second winter period was of one at Mai Po on 24 November (PRK,PJL).
- 160 Black-tailed Gull** *Larus crassirostris*  
Two first-winter birds were at Mai Po on 19 January and single first-winter birds were noted irregularly there until 7 May with an adult seen on 2 February. An adult was also seen at Starling Inlet from 18 until 23 February. In the latter part of the year there was one first-winter bird at Mai Po on 24 November and 13 December with three there on 22 December.
- 161 Common Gull** *Larus canus*  
At least three seen from the Mai Po boardwalk as follows: one first-winter bird on 1 and 2 February (RWL,MDW,PRK *et al.*) two first-winter birds on 11 February (MH), one second-winter bird on 24 February (MLC,PRK,RWL), one first-winter bird on 28 February (PJL) and one second-winter bird on 9 and 10 March (CAV,PJL,DSM *et al.*).
- 162 Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*  
The count of 608 in Deep Bay during the mid-January Waterfowl Count was the highest since 1986 (when 753 were recorded). Northward passage of 70 in half an hour off Cheung Chau on 3 March was unusual. The latest in spring were 80 in the Western Harbour on 4 April and five at Mai Po on 10 April. Twenty had returned to Mai Po by 24 November. The pattern of occurrence of races/species of large 'Herring Gulls' in Hong Kong appears to be more complex than is suggested by Chalmers (1986) but more detailed observations are required. BBR,CC
- 163 Slaty-backed Gull** *Larus schistisagus*  
A first-winter bird was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 24 February (PRK) and another first-winter bird was there on 26 December (PRK).  
**1987:** two first-winter birds seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 3 February (PRK), and one first-summer bird in the Tolo Channel on 7 and 8 March (ARL).  
**1990:** one first-winter bird seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 25 February (PRK).

- 167 Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica*  
Reported at Mai Po from 1 April until 16 May with peaks of 31 on 12 April and 30 on 3 May. Also noted at Tsim Bei Tsui where one was seen on 5 April and 20 on 6 April. The only autumn report was of one at Mai Po on 5 November. BBR
- 168 Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*  
Up to six were seen in Deep Bay in January and February; spring passage noted from 29 March when 16 were seen, the highest count being 47 at Mai Po on 4 April. Not reported after 4 May and the only reports in the latter part of the year were of one at Mai Po on 27 October and two on 9 November. BBR
- 170 Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana*  
Up to six were seen in Tolo Harbour and around Tap Mun between 27 April and 30 June but with no indications of breeding behaviour (MT,ARL *et al.*). On 21 May 13 were seen on Tai A Chau, Soko Islands and breeding was reported to have occurred there later (JEB). Two were noted off Po Toi on 17 August (PJL,MRL,IT).
- 171 Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii*  
One adult seen off Po Toi in the wake of Typhoon Fred on 17 August (PJL). This is the first confirmed record since the breeding colony in Mirs Bay was deserted.
- 172 Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*  
One was seen in Deep Bay on 6 April and two at Tai A Chau on 23 April. Eight were noted off the boardwalk at Mai Po on 4 May, seven being of the black-billed and grey-bellied race *longipennis* and one of another form with red bill and legs and no darkening of the underparts (PRK); two were seen there the next day and six were seen at Tai Long Wan on 6 May. In autumn eight were seen in Mirs Bay on 11 August. Typhoon Fred brought 88 past Cheung Chau on 15 August and 45 were seen off Po Toi in its wake on 17 August. Six were in Mirs Bay on 14 September and one on 15 September and a late bird was at Mai Po on 25 October. BBR
- 175 Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*  
One was at Mai Po on 30 March, five there on 4 April, 13 at Tsim Bei Tui on 5 April and 80, a new high count for Hong Kong, at Mai Po on 6 April (PRK). Twenty-four were at Mai Po on 8 April, up to 49 there from 22 until 28 April, 19 on 5 May with the last ten in spring on 9 May. In autumn there was one at Mai Po on 9 November, and at least one the next day. BBR
- 176 Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*  
In spring recorded at Mai Po between 25 April and 12 May with a peak of 30 on 3 May. In the latter part of the year there were 12 at Mai Po on 8 December and up to ten between 22 and 29 December.



- 177 White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*  
In spring the first record was 20 at Mai Po on 1 May. Peak counts were 30 on 3 May, 50 on 4 May and over 300 (the latest there) on 13 May. Elsewhere there were 120 at Luk Keng on 9 May and 70 on 18 May, and 145 in the Tolo Channel on 11 May. In autumn there were five off Lantau on 16 August, 18 near Po Toi on 17 August, six at Mai Po on 16 September and a single there on 20 October.
- 179 Red Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica*  
Present in the Tsim Bei Tsui area until 9 May with maxima of 35 on 13 January and 40 on 16 April; also one at Ho Chung on 6 May. In autumn up to four were reported from Mai Po between 6 September and 19 October with ten flying over there on 5 October. Elsewhere there were 30 at Tin Shui Wai on 21 September, five at the Fence on 16 November and 40 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 December. BBR
- 180 Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*  
The highest count was 150 at Mai Po on 5 January. A flock of 50 at Tin Shui Wai on 8 May was rather late for such a large number. At least 60 were at Mai Po on 2 November. BBR,CC
- 181 Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*  
BBR,CC
- 183 Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica*  
Regularly reported throughout the year from Tai Po Kau and Shek Kong Catchment. At Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre one was trapped in March, five in October and one in November. Also reported from Lion Rock and Shing Mun Country Parks in March and San Tau, Lantau on 11 May. BBR
- 185 Red-winged Crested Cuckoo** *Clamator coromandus*  
First heard at Hebe Haven and She Shan on 4 April; thereafter recorded from Tai Tam Country Park, Mount Austin, Mid-Levels, the Chinese University, Tai Po Kau, Chek Keng, Shuen Wan, Chuen Lung, Shek Kong Catchment, Wu Kau Tang, Hebe Haven and Tai Long Wan, with the last report on 22 June. BBR
- 187 Large Hawk Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx sparveroides*  
First reported from Ho Chung on 9 March and latest heard at Hebe Haven on 15 July. BBR
- 189 Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus*  
The earliest report was of one heard at Hebe Haven on 28 March and the latest was of one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 11 December. BBR
- 190 Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*  
The first was heard on 7 April. A recently fledged juvenile, presumed to be this species, was watched being fed and attended by a

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* at Shuen Wan between 31 July and 9 August. BBR

- 192 Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*  
Single birds were seen at Chek Keng on 17 April, Tai Long Wan on 6 May and Mai Po on 21 September.
- 193 Koel** *Eudynamis scolopacea*  
BBR,CC
- 194 Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis*  
BBR,CC
- 195 Lesser Coucal** *Centropus benghalensis*  
BBR,CC
- 195.1 Grass Owl** *Tyto capensis*  
One found tangled in kite strings on Ma On Shan on 12 December was photographed before being released (per CAV). On the basis of this and a review of previous records this species has been upgraded to Category A (formerly 702 in Category D).
- 196 Collared Scops Owl** *Otus bakkamoena*  
A pair at the Chinese University fledged three young by 9 March and a pair in Tai Po Kau fledged at least one young in mid-May. BBR
- 197 Oriental Scops Owl** *Otus sunia*  
One was trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 13 November (PJL).  
This is the eighth record for Hong Kong.





7. Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia*  
KARC, 13 November 1991

(Paul J. Leader)

[ **Owl** *Bubo/Ketupa* sp.  
A large owl seen at Chau Tau on 17 March (WLY *et al.*) was probably either an Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* or a Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*.]

**200 Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides*  
Two young fell from a nest eight metres up in a banyan tree at Ta Kwu Ling on 15 May. One died, the other was taken into care and released at the same spot in mid-July. One or two seen or heard at Shek Kong Catchment in February, April, September, October and December. Single birds were seen or heard at Hebe Haven all year, Tai Po Kau on 2 February, 1 and 9 April and 16 June and Ping Yeung on 1 December.  
BBR

**205 Savannah Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis*  
Present on Lamma all year, probably two pairs. Up to two seen or heard at Chau Tau between 3 February and 7 May, one heard near the

Chinese University between 28 March and 27 April and singles seen at Plover Cove on 18 October and 27 and 31 December.  
BBR

**206 White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus*  
Six were seen over Tai Po Kau on 10 April (ARL); there were at least two (in a flock of 40 to 50 needletails) at Mai Po on 3 May (RWL) and two there on 5 May (SC); also one on Peng Chau on 8 May (GAW).

**207 White-vented Needletail** *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*  
Twenty were seen at Shek Kong Catchment on 30 March (RDES), two were seen at Mai Po on 17 April and 6 on 19 April (RWL), and there were two or three at the summit of Tai Mo Shan on 11 May (JSRE,CAV).

**208 Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus*  
One was seen at Mai Po on 16 February, 40 on 23 March, 80 on 24 March and several hundred on 30 March.  
BBR

**209 House Swift** *Apus affinis*  
As with the preceding species the main movement recorded was on 30 March when several thousand were seen at Mai Po.  
BBR,CC

**210 White-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*  
BBR,CC

**211 Black-capped Kingfisher** *Halcyon pileata*  
BBR,CC

**212 Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*  
BBR,CC

**213 Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*  
One at Yi O, Lantau on 29 June and one in Tai Po Kau village on 6 October were the only reports away from Deep Bay and Starling Inlet.  
BBR,CC

**215 Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops philippensis*  
Five were at Mai Po from 20 to 21 April, six on 27 April, eight on 2 May, three on 3 May and nine on 6 May. There were also two near Lok Ma Chau on 1 May and one in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 8 May. In autumn four were seen at Mai Po on 5 October and a party of 12 was there on 19 October. An excellent year for this species, including only the second and third autumn records.

**215.1 Blue-throated Bee-eater** *Merops viridis*  
At least ten seen at Mai Po on 25 September (JH) (see separate paper in this Report).  
This is the first record of this long hoped-for addition to the Hong Kong List.



**216 Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus orientalis*  
In spring one was reported from Tai Long Wan on 14 April and two on 20 April and singles were seen at Tai Tam on 21 April, Shek Kong Catchment on 3 May and Yi O, Lantau on 29 June. In autumn there were reports of two at Chuen Lung on 20 September, one at Shek Kong Catchment and two at Ho Chung on 21 September, two at Luk Keng on 23 September, one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 3 October and one on Lamma on 19 October.

**217 Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*  
Singles at Mong Tseng on 2 and 10 January, Shek Kong on 2 February, on Stonecutters Island on 11 March and at Mai Po on 22 April were the only reports for the early part of the year. In autumn one was seen in the Chater Garden, ZBG and Hong Kong Park area between 8 August and 27 December with two together in Hong Kong Park on 19 December. Singles were seen at the Chinese University on 30 September and at Ping Yeung on 24 November, one was on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po from 8 December until at least 22 December and one was seen flying over the Fence at Mai Po on 29 December. CC

**218 Great Barbet** *Megalaima virens*  
BBR,CC

**219 Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*  
In the early part of the year one was seen on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 16 February, four were seen or trapped at Mai Po between 23 March and 6 April and one was noted on Peng Chau on 14 April. In autumn five were seen or trapped at Mai Po between 8 September and 3 November, one was reported near Luk Keng on 23 September, singles were located at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 October and 8 December, three were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre between 12 October and 13 November, one was seen at Ping Yeung on 23 November and one trapped there on 30 November and one was recorded at Tung Chung, Lantau on 6 December. BBR

**222.1 Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** *Picoides hyperythrus*  
The individual first seen on 13 November 1990 in Tai Po Kau remained until at least 26 January (MT). (Lewthwaite (1991) states that this bird was last seen on 17 April but no sightings later than that on 26 January have been confirmed.)

**223 Chinese Pitta** *Pitta nympha*  
One was seen in Tai Po Kau on 16 September (RWL) and a pitta in the same location two days earlier (SES) was probably the same bird. This is the fourth record for Hong Kong and the first since 1979. A pitta in Tai Po Kau on 12 April (SS) was either this species or Blue-winged Pitta *Pitta moluccensis*. (Chinese Pitta is listed as *P. brachyura* by Chalmers (1986); this scientific name is now obsolete since it predates the 'splitting' of Blue-winged and Chinese (Fairy) Pittas as distinct species.)

**225 Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*  
At least two were seen on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 23 and 24 February (PJL,PRK,MLC) and four were noted at Kai Tak on 19 April (AB). Six were seen, again on the landfill area near Mai Po, on 9 November with four there on 8 December (PRK,PJL).

**225.1 Northern Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*  
Up to six found on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 23 and 24 February (PJL,PRK,MLC) remained until 2 March. Two were seen over Mai Po on 2 November (PJL).

These are the first and second records for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report). A skylark on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 8 December (PRK,PJL) was probably also this species.

**226 Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*  
Two were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 January and up to six were recorded there or at Mai Po between 30 March and 14 April. One was at Mai Po on 3 May, 30 on 4 May and one on 5 May, two at Tin Shui Wai on 6 May and one on Peng Chau on 8 May. Forty-one were at Mai Po on 2 November with several also seen there the next day. BBR

**227 Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
Heavy passage was noted at Mai Po at the end of March with 300 on 23 March, 500 on 30 March and 2,000-3,000 on 31 March. Several hundreds were again noted passing through Mai Po on 4 and 5 May. A pair at Cheung Shu Tan was feeding well-grown young before the end of February. BBR,CC

**228 Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*  
Spring passage migrants noted from 23 March until 21 April in the Deep Bay area with a maximum count of 30 on 31 March. Seen in autumn between 23 September and 12 December with a maximum of 25 on 23 November. BBR

**229 Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus*  
One was at Hebe Haven on 28 March, two at Mai Po on 30 March, 15 there on 31 March and ten on 1 April, two at the Fence on 31 March and seven in Tai Po Kau on 1 April. Later in the year there was one at Ping Yeung on 21 November, 25 at Mai Po on 25 November and six at Shek Kong Catchment on 3 December.

**230 Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*  
Migrants observed in mid-April included a pre-roost gathering of 40 on the Mai Po scrape on 13 April and ten at Tim Bei Tsui on 20 April, two of which were not of the common migrant race *A. n. richardi*. The highest autumn passage count was of 50 on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 9 November. A bird on the landfill between the Tolo Highway and Cheung Shu Tan on 30 May behaved as if breeding. BBR,CC



- 231 Upland Pipit** *Anthus sylvanus*  
There were at least three singing birds on Tai Mo Shan on 12 April and a pair carrying food near the summit on 12 May.
- 232 Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*  
Twenty at Mai Po on 2 November was the only significant comment. BBR,CC
- 233 Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi*  
One seen at Mai Po on 4 May (PRK).  
**1985:** one seen at Ha Tsuen on 27 October (MLC) was the fourth recorded in Hong Kong and remains the only autumn report.
- 234 Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*  
The highest count in spring was 50 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 April and that in autumn was 30 over Mai Po on 19 October. BBR,CC
- 236 Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus*  
One was at Ho Chung on 5 and 6 September, two were seen in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 19 September, one was at Mai Po on 19 September, one was trapped there on 21 September, singles were in Tai Po Kau on 20, 21 and 25 September and 5 October and one was at Jubilee Reservoir on 8 October.
- 237 Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*  
In the early part of the year the highest wintering count was 30 at Lok Ma Chau on 20 January. Passage counts included 50 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 April, 600 in a pre-roost flock on the scrape at Mai Po on 13 April, 100 at Mai Po on 23 April and several hundred of the race *simillima* at Mai Po from 2 to 5 May. One hundred of the race *simillima* were also counted at Lok Ma Chau on 3 May and there were 250 there on 9 May. The first in autumn was noted at Mai Po on 24 August, 25 were seen there on 19 September and there were 25 on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 8 December. BBR,CC
- 238 Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*  
A male was seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 April (RDES *et al.*).  
This is the fifth record for Hong Kong. BBR
- 239 Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*  
Two at Mai Po on 15 June (PJL) were a fortnight later than the previous latest in spring (31 May) and a month earlier than the earliest in autumn (16 July). BBR,CC
- 240 White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*  
The highest counts were 150 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 17 March and 350 on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 8 December. Two were seen at Tai Po Market on 27 June.  
A male of the race *lugens* was seen at Mai Po on 3 March (PRK,PJL) and a female of this race was at Plover Cove dam from 19 December into 1992 (RWL). BBR,CC

- 242 Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike** *Coracina melaschistos*  
In the first winter period singles were seen in Tai Po Kau on three dates in January and two dates in March with two there on 5 April. A single was also noted on 6 April. A juvenile was seen at Sassoon Road, Pok Fu Lam on 25 June; summer records are very rare but there is one proved breeding record — in 1936! In autumn two were at Mount Davis on 24 September, two were seen in Tai Po Kau on 6 October and 29 December and singles were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 October, Happy Valley on 16 October, Magazine Gap on 12 November, Ping Yeung on 24 November and in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 29 December. BBR,CC
- 244 Ashy Minivet** *Pericrocotus divaricatus*  
In spring 17 were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 and 6 April and one was in Tai Po Kau on 7 April. One in the minivet flock in Tai Po Kau on 11 October and two trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 16 October were the only reports in autumn. BBR
- 245 Grey-throated Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris*  
Present throughout the year in Tai Po Kau. Most of a party of 80 minivets there on 22 December were of this species. Twenty were at Shing Mun on 15 November; also seen at Kap Lung on 7 December. BBR,CC
- 246 Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*  
Present throughout the year in Tai Po Kau. Three were in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 9 February; also seen at Kap Lung on 7 December and at Shing Mun on 21 December when two were noted. BBR,CC
- 247 Crested Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*  
BBR,CC
- 248 Chinese Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis*  
BBR,CC
- 249 Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus aurigaster*  
BBR,CC
- 250 Chestnut Bulbul** *Hypsipetes castanonotus*  
Present throughout the year in Tai Po Kau. Also seen in spring and autumn at Kap Lung and at Kam Tam Tso on 30 November. BBR,CC
- 251.1 Orange-bellied Leafbird** *Chloropsis hardwickii*  
Up to four were seen in Tai Po Kau between 3 and 9 April and a maximum of five were there between 7 December and the year end. BBR,CC
- 255 Red-tailed Robin** *Luscinia sibilans*  
Two seen at Chuk Yeung on 11 February and two singing in Tai Po Kau on 6 April. The first one in autumn was seen in the Aberdeen



Country Park on 1 November and 15 were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre between 2 November and 1 December. CC

**256 Rubythroat**

*Luscinia calliope*

Up to five were heard at Mai Po from January to March, eight were there on 21 March and seven were trapped on 13 April. One was heard at Tai Long Wan on 20 April and the last in spring were three trapped at Mai Po on 27 April. In autumn the first was seen at Tai Long Wan on 16 October, one was trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 23 October and six were heard at Mai Po on 27 October. Up to ten were noted at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre and up to eleven at Mai Po in November and December. BBR,CC

**257 Bluethroat**

*Luscinia svecica*

One or two were noted at Mai Po until the last record on 21 April. Also reported in the early part of the year from Tsim Bei Tsui, Lok Ma Chau and Ha Tsuen where there were three on 3 February. The first in autumn were singles trapped at Mai Po and seen at Ping Yeung on 24 November. BBR

**258 Siberian Blue Robin**

*Luscinia cyane*

An adult male was seen at the Royal Observatory in Tsim Sha Tsui on 17 and 18 April (CYL), a first-winter male in Tai Po Kau on 15 and 17 September (RWL) and an immature male at Chek Lap Kok on 29 September (MDW). September appears to be the best month to see this attractive but secretive chat.

**259 Red-flanked Bluetail**

*Tarsiger cyanurus*

The highest count in the early part of the year was five in Tai Po Kau on 27 January. One trapped at Mai Po on 12 January was unusual at this location. The latest in spring was trapped on the Peak on 4 May. First noted in autumn at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 2 November, the main arrival there occurring from 24 November when six were caught; nine were trapped there on 30 November, eight on 1 December and seven on 15 December with smaller numbers to the end of the year. CC

**260 Daurian Redstart**

*Phoenicurus auroreus*

Three to five were on Lamma in January and one was at Tung Chung, Lantau on 11 January. The only other report in spring was of one at Mai Po on 7 April. In autumn the first was seen at Ho Chung on 2 November, one was trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre and one was seen at Ping Yeung on 10 November and thereafter about 15 were seen at various localities in the northern and eastern New Territories until the end of the year with a maximum of four at Tai Long Wan on 16 November. CC

**261 Plumbeous Water Redstart**

*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*

Females were seen at Shek Kong between 5 and 18 January, Bride's Pool from 16 November until the end of the year and at Ho

Chung on 14 and 23 December, whilst a pair was on the Lam Tsuen River near Tai Po throughout December. CC

**262 Magpie Robin**

*Copsychus saularis*  
BBR,CC

**263 Stonechat**

*Saxicola torquata*  
BBR,CC

Recorded until 7 April and from 7 September.

**264 Grey Bushchat**

*Saxicola ferrea*

A male was seen at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 17 November and 6 and 24 December (GAW,RWL,WLY). Another male was at Mui Wo, Lantau on 22 November (GAW) and a female was at Tung Chung, Lantau on 6 December (RWL,WLY). A further bird was noted at Tung Chung on 29 December (DT). CC

**265.1 White-throated Rock Thrush**

*Monticola gularis*

A female or immature (the second bird of 1990) was seen in Tai Po Kau until 23 January (MH,ARL,PJL).

**267 Blue Rock Thrush**

*Monticola solitarius*

The last in spring were singles at High Island on 20 April, on Lamma on 24 April and two on Tai Mo Shan, also on 24 April. In autumn one in the Tolo Channel on 11 August was early; the next was at Double Haven on 15 September. Three at Tai Mei Tuk on 30 September included one red-bellied bird, presumably of the race *philippensis*. At least six were on the Plover Cove dam wall on 19 December. BBR,CC

**268 Violet Whistling Thrush**

*Myiophonus caeruleus*  
BBR,CC

**269 Orange-headed Ground Thrush**

*Zoothera citrina*

One was seen in the Aberdeen Country Park on 2 January (SO'B) and a male was in Tai Po Kau from at least 19 January until 9 February (ARL *et al.*).

**270 White's Thrush**

*Zoothera dauma*

Up to three were seen in Tai Po Kau until 4 April. Elsewhere in the early part of the year singles reported from Lantau, Mount Nicholson (also until 4 April), Pok Fu Lam, Shek O, Tai Tam, Lam Tsuen Valley, Chuk Yeung, Fanling Golf Course, Lok Ma Chau, Pak Nai and Shek Kong with the latest at Tai Om on 5 April. In the second winter period the first report was from Tai Po Kau where three were seen on 2 November. Also seen at Mount Nicholson on 10 December and She Shan on 29 December. CC

**272 Grey Thrush**

*Turdus cardis*

One was seen on Lamma on 16 January, two at Shek Kong on 18 January and one in Tai Po Kau on 22 January, but thereafter there were no reports until presumed passage birds appeared in spring with one



trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 24 March, up to two at both Shek Kong and Tai Po Kau between 1 and 5 April, one trapped on the Peak on 2 April and 15 on Cheung Chau on 6 April; also recorded during the Bird Race on the same day. In autumn 11 were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre between 2 and 17 November, including three on the latter date, and one was trapped on 1 December. The only other reports were of singles in Tai Po Kau on 16 November and 13 December and one at She Shan on 29 December.  
BBR,CC

**273 Blackbird** *Turdus merula*  
The largest groups in the early part of the year were 20 at Shek Kong on 5 January and 10 February, and 15 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 January with the last one in spring at So Kon Po on 5 May. In autumn the first 12 were at Mai Po on 20 October after which small numbers were widely reported with flocks of 36 at Hebe Haven from 29 October until 2 November, 50 at Ho Chung on 19 November and 70 at Tai Wai on 1 December.  
BBR,CC

**275 Grey-backed Thrush** *Turdus hortulorum*  
Widespread in small numbers in the early part of the year with the highest count being 20 in Tai Po Kau on 3 February. The last in spring were one in the Lam Tsuen Valley and three on Cheung Chau on 6 April. Present again from 10 November when seen at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre, the largest number trapped there being five on 17 November. Nine trapped at Mai Po on 7 December were doubtless new arrivals.  
BBR,CC

**276 Pale Thrush** *Turdus pallidus*  
In the first part of the year singles were recorded near the Chinese University on 15 and 18 January, in Tai Po Kau and at Chek Lap Kok on 22 January, dead in an illegal mist net in Mai Po village on 28 January, trapped at Mai Po on 23 February, seen at Mount Nicholson on 23 March, in Tai Po Kau on 1 April and on Cheung Chau on 6 April. In the second winter period there was one on Hong Kong Island and one at Castle Peak on 29 December and two in Tai Po Kau on 30 December.  
CC

**277 Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus*  
One was in Tai Po Kau on 1 April, three were seen at Chek Keng on 20 April, six were in Tai Po Kau on 2 May and two were there on 7 May. In autumn, at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre, one was trapped (and others were seen) on 3 November and 12 were trapped between 9 and 17 November. Elsewhere singles were seen in Tai Po Kau on 13 and 16 November and 29 December, ten were at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 18 December and two were at Luk Keng on 29 December.  
CC

**278 Dusky Thrush** *Turdus naumanni*  
One, of the race *eunomus*, on Cheung Chau on 6 March (MDW) and 6 April (WB,PL) was the only record.

**280 Short-tailed Bush Warbler** *Cettia squameiceps*  
Present in Tai Po Kau until 5 April with six recorded on 27 January. The only other localities in the first part of the year were Shek Kong Catchment, where one was seen on 5 January, and Hong Kong University with one on 4 April. In autumn singles were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 13 and 30 October and three were seen there on 13 November. In Tai Po Kau three were seen on 13 November and four in December.  
CC

**281 Chinese Bush Warbler** *Cettia diphone*  
Widespread in the early part of the year with the highest counts being seven on 9 March and six on 30 March, both at Mai Po. The last recorded in spring were at the Fence, Mai Po and in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 6 April. First recorded in autumn on 2 November when there were eight at Mai Po and one at Shek Kong Catchment. Counts included 25 at Mai Po on 16 and 30 November, ten at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre and Luk Keng on 15 December and eight at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 18 December.  
BBR,CC

**282 Mountain Bush Warbler** *Cettia fortipes*  
Singles were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 2 and 24 February (DPC,ACG), the latter bird having previously been caught there on 31 December 1990. One was seen at Plover Cove on 28 February (PJJ), one was seen and three were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 17 November (PRK,PJJ) and singles were netted there on 15 and 19 December (DPC), two were trapped at Mai Po on 30 November (PJJ), four were seen at Wu Kau Tang on 4 December (PRK,PJJ), one was seen at Bride's Pool on 5 December (RWL), and four were at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 6 December (RWL). A bush warbler at Ngong Ping on 17 November (GAW) was probably also this species.

[ **Bush Warbler** *Bradypterus* sp.  
A bush warbler giving the *zee-bit* call was heard at Wu Kau Tang on 30 November (JSRE), and one was seen and up to four were heard there on 4 December (PRK). These birds may have been Russet Bush Warblers *B. seebohmi* but the evidence is still inconclusive.]

**283 Fantail Warbler** *Cisticola juncidis*  
Maxima at individual locations were 40 at Lok Ma Chau on 3 February, 30 at Luk Keng on 16 October and 60 on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 15 December.  
BBR,CC

**283.1 Bright-capped Cisticola** *Cisticola exilis*  
At Ping Yeung three were seen on 23 November (CAV), two on 24 November (MLC,RWL), three were trapped and two others seen on 30 November (PJJ), four (including another trapped) on 1 December (PRK) and three were noted nearby on 7 December (CAV). Four were seen at Tung Chung, Lantau on 14 December (CAV), four at Sha Lo Tung on 15 December (MT) and one at She Shan on 29 December (VBP).



The widespread records of this species, which had never previously been recorded in Hong Kong, must rank as one of the major surprises of 1991 (see separate paper in this Report). CC

**284 Plain Prinia**

*Prinia inornata*

Presence on Lamma all year with a maximum of 12 in December was the only significant report. BBR,CC

**285 Yellow-bellied Prinia**

*Prinia flaviventris*

BBR,CC

**286 Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler**

*Locustella certhiola*

One was trapped at Mai Po on 9 March (PRK,PJL), the second recorded in spring. One was at Lok Ma Chau on 8 September, at least 55 at Luk Keng on 15 September (EPL,MRL,RWL), two were there the next day and one there on 23 September. Elsewhere singles were at Mai Po on 21 September and Tai Long Wan on 12 and 16 October. The concentration at Luk Keng on 15 September was astonishing — the previous high count for Hong Kong was four.

**287 Styan's Grasshopper Warbler**

*Locustella pleskei*

Single birds were trapped at Mai Po on 12 January, 9 February, 7 April, 27 October and 26 December (ACG,PRK,PJL) and one was seen there on 14 December (PJL).

**288 Lanceolated Warbler**

*Locustella lanceolata*

One was at Shek Kong on 15 September (NSG), a new early date. Six, a new peak count, were seen at Luk Keng on 16 October (MRL,PJL,RWL). One was trapped at Mai Po on 2 November (PJL,PRK) and two others were seen there on the same day (PRK). One was seen at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 3 November (PJL) and two were flushed on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 9 November (PRK). As with Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, an exceptional series of sightings in 1991.

**288.1 Blunt-winged Warbler**

*Acrocephalus concinens*

One was seen at Mai Po on 20 April at Mai Po and trapped the next day (PJL,PRK *et al.*).

This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

**1990:** an *Acrocephalus* warbler killed in a mist net by a Rufous-backed Shrike *Lanius schach* on 27 January (PJL) was either this species or Paddyfield Warbler *A. agricola*.

**289 Black-browed Reed Warbler**

*Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

One was at the Fence on 9 January, three were trapped at Mai Po on 12 January and one was trapped there on 2 February — winter records of this species are unusual. Next recorded at Mai Po on 23 March but peak passage there was not until late April and early May, with a maximum of nine trapped on 27 April and 5 and 9 May and 40 on 5 May. The latest in spring were three trapped there on 12 May. Recorded

in autumn from 5 October with a maximum at Mai Po of 12 on 12 October. After October the only records were singles at Mai Po on 2, 3 and 16 November and 7 December. BBR

**289.1 Blyth's Reed Warbler**

*Acrocephalus dumetorum*

One, the third record for Hong Kong, was seen and subsequently trapped at Mai Po on 14 December (PRK,PJL).

**290 Great Reed Warbler**

*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

First recorded on 9 March when several birds were singing at Mai Po. The main spring passage occurred between 13 April and 12 May, maxima being 40 at Mai Po on 13 April, 50 there on 21 and 27 April and 5 May and 30 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 20 April. One trapped at Mai Po on 21 April had been ringed in Japan. One at Mount Nicholson on 5 May was unusual for the locality. The latest in spring was trapped at Mai Po on 1 June. In autumn the first record was of one netted at Mai Po on 24 August, and passage was heavy from 31 August. Peaks at Mai Po included 62 trapped on 15 September, 150 (including 76 trapped) on 21 September, 40 (including 28 trapped) on 29 September, 80 (including 45 trapped) on 12 October and 60 on 19 October after which numbers declined to ten on 27 October, four on 9 November, four on 30 November, two trapped on 7 December and one trapped on 26 December. BBR

**291 Thick-billed Warbler**

*Acrocephalus aedon*

One was seen at Mai Po on 20 April (JNP) and singles were trapped there on 12 and 19 October (PRK,PJL). A second bird was present on 19 October (ARL). Singles were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 12, 19 and 26 October and 7 November (DPC,PJL). These eight records more than equal the previous total of six records (seven birds) for Hong Kong. This species has now been recorded as follows (number of birds): one in February, one in April, three in September, nine in October and one in November.

**292 Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler**

*Seicercus burkii*

One was seen in Tai Po Kau on 15 and 19 January (RWL,JSRE), two on 15 February (SES) and one on 5 November (WLY) and 29 December (PRK). Elsewhere one was seen at Hong Kong University on 4 April (VBP), one was trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 5 October (ACG) and one was seen at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 17 November (GAW). CC

**293 Chestnut-crowned Warbler**

*Seicercus castaneiceps*

One was seen on Cheung Chau on 21 November (MDW), one in Tai Po Kau on 14 and 26 December (DAD,SES) and one at Bowen Drive, Hong Kong Island on 20 December (MMC).

These are the fifth to seventh Hong Kong records.

**295 Large Grass Warbler**

*Graminicola bengalensis*

Three were seen on Tai Mo Shan on 27 April and at least four were there on 4 August.



**296 Long-tailed Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius*  
BBR,CC

**297 Sulphur-breasted Warbler** *Phylloscopus ricketti*  
One was at Bride's Pool on 19 February (RWL) and singles were seen in Tai Po Kau on 5 November and from 8 to 10 December (RWL,PRK,PJL).

**298 Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides*  
Up to two were regularly seen in Tai Po Kau until 10 March and from 5 November (GJC,RWL *et al.*). Elsewhere three were in Tai Tam Country Park on 19 January (SES), one at Bride's Pool on 19 February (per PJL) and one at Shek Kong Catchment on 7 December (ARL,CAV).  
CC

**299 Eastern Crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus coronatus*  
One in Tai Po Kau on 7 April (PJL,MRL) was the only spring record. In autumn one was trapped on the Peak on 11 September (ACG), one seen in Tai Po Kau on 16 September, three on 22 and 28 September and one on 5 October (NSG,PJL,MRL) and one at Jubilee Reservoir on 8 October (PN).  
CC

**300 Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes*  
One seen in winter in Tai Po Kau on 8 January (RWL) and recorded in spring in Tai Po Kau on 6 April (RWL) and at Chek Keng on 20 April (JSRE). First seen in autumn on 2 September and widespread from mid-September until mid-October with a maximum of 12 in Tai Po Kau on 22 September. The latest was one trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 17 November.

**300.2 Two-barred Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*  
Two were seen in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 27 January (RWL) with one there until 17 February (WLY,PJL,MDW *et al.*), one near Chek Keng on 15 April (CAV), singles trapped at Mai Po on 12 October and 9 November (PRK,PJL), one seen at Tai Long Wan on 13 October (VBP), two at Mount Nicholson on 20 October (CAV) and one in Tai Po Kau on 30 October (GJC).

Greater observer experience has largely dispelled the clouds which previously surrounded records of this species; the pattern of records since 1987, when the species was first positively identified in Hong Kong, is as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2	1	0	2	1	3	2	1	12

**301 Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*  
Small numbers, with a maximum of three at any one site, were recorded between 4 April and 16 May. Recorded in autumn from 31 August with an influx on 15 September when 22 were trapped and another ten seen at Mai Po. Thereafter up to ten were seen at widespread localities until 12 October with late birds in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 16 November and on Cheung Chau on 30 November.  
BBR

**302 Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*  
Widespread in the early part of the year with maximum counts of 30 in Tai Po Kau on 20 and 27 January, and the latest at Pak Nai on 24 March. In autumn the first were recorded from Magazine Gap and Mai Po on 12 November; widespread immediately thereafter with at least 30 in Tai Po Kau in December.  
CC

**303 Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*  
Highest counts at the beginning of the year were 45 at Pak Nai on 13 January and 40 in Tai Po Kau on 3 February. The last two were at Mai Po on 13 April. In autumn the first three were in Tai Po Kau on 22 September; counts included 25 at Mai Po on 24 November and 65 in Tai Po Kau on 8 December.  
BBR,CC

A bird of the race *humei*, commonly known as Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler, was seen at She Shan on 6 and 7 January (PRK,PJL,VBP). This is the second record of this very distinct race in Hong Kong, the first being in winter 1989/90.

**304 Radde's Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi*  
Singles were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 30 October (DPC) and 3 November (PRK,PJL) and one was seen at Sha Lo Tung on 12 November (RWL).

**305 Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*  
Up to 30 counted at Mai Po in the early part of the year with the latest in spring being two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 20 April. In autumn one was trapped at Mai Po on 15 September; numbers there increased during October with a peak of 30 trapped on 12th and 40 seen on 27 October and 2 November. Twenty-five at Luk Keng on 16 October was the highest count elsewhere.  
BBR,CC

[ **Niltava** *Niltava* sp.  
A male niltava in Tai Po Kau on 3 January (MO'B *et al.*) could not be ascribed as to species.]

**307 Hainan Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis hainana*  
Up to three males were singing in Tai Po Kau between 1 March and 9 April, a female was seen there on 7 April and a male on 31 August. The only other reports were of one at Hong Kong University on 3 May, one trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 23 October and a male at Wu Kau Tang on 4 December.  
BBR

**308 Blue and White Flycatcher** *Muscicapa cyanomelana*  
Noted during the Bird Race on 6 April. A male was seen in Tai Po Kau on 7 April (PJL,MRL,IT), one was there on 14 September (per PRK) and one was trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 12 October (ACG).  
BBR

**309 Verditer Flycatcher** *Muscicapa thalassina*  
In the first part of the year singles were noted in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 20 January and 9 February and in Tai Po Kau on 2 and 3



March and 2 April. In autumn and winter singles were seen in Tai Po Kau on 16 October, 2 and 13 November and 26 December, Sai Kung on 21 October, Ho Chung on 2 November, Shek Kong Catchment on 3 November and the Lam Tsuen Valley on 29 December. CC

**310 Ferruginous Flycatcher** *Muscicapa rufilata*  
Two were in Tai Po Kau on 6 April with one there on 9 April (IT *et al.*). BBR

**311 Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica*  
Spring singles, which are unusual, were seen in Tai Po Kau on 31 March (IT) and at Lok Ma Chau on 6 April (CAV). In autumn singles were seen in Tai Po Kau on 8 September (DAD), 21, 27 and 28 September (IT,PJL,RWL) and 9 October (GJC) and at Chek Keng on 28 September (RWL). BBR

**312 Grey-streaked Flycatcher** *Muscicapa griseisticta*  
The first was at Mai Po on 22 April. A concentrated passage was noted in late spring with two at Mai Po and one at Hong Kong University on 3 May, increasing to 12 on 5 May when there were five at Mount Nicholson and two at Hok Tau. The latest were on Tai Mo Shan and at Tai Long Wan on 11 May. The only reports in autumn were of two on Mount Nicholson on 12 and 13 October and two in Tai Po Kau on 16 October.

**313 Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa latirostris*  
Widespread in both winter and spring in small numbers with the last at Tai Long Wan on 20 April. In autumn the first was at Mai Po on 31 August, only two days later than the previous earliest. Seven were at Mai Po on 29 September and 12 on 12 October. BBR,CC

**314 Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*  
In the first part of the year wintering singles were seen at Shek Kong between 5 January and 10 February, Pat Heung between 7 January and 28 February and Mai Po on 27 January with a late bird at Mai Po on 13 April. In autumn one was trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 28 September, three were seen there on 6 October, two were at Tai Long Wan on 12 October, one was at Shek Kong on 16 October, singles were trapped at Mai Po on 19 October and 2 November, one was on Lamma on 19 October, one was seen at Shek Kong Catchment on 2 November and one was in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 29 December. CC

**315 Mugimaki Flycatcher** *Ficedula mugimaki*  
Singles were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 3, 10, 23 and 30 November with two trapped there on 13 November. Up to four were seen in Tai Po Kau between 10 and 17 November.

**316 Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** *Ficedula zanthopygia*  
Five, including four trapped, were at Mai Po on 31 August and 11 were trapped there between 8 and 21 September. The only other

reports were from Tai Po Kau where there was one on 31 August, 8 and 11 September, three on 14th and two on 22 September and Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre where three were trapped on 14th and one was trapped on 22 September.

**317 Narcissus Flycatcher** *Ficedula narcissina*  
Single males were at Mai Po on 6 April (EPL), and in Tai Po Kau on 10 April (MH) and the new late date of 2 May (ARL). BBR

**318 Grey-headed Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*  
Present in Tai Po Kau until at least 13 March with seven on 3 February. Elsewhere one at Hebe Haven on 6 January, three on Cheung Chau on 3 March and one at Shek Kong on 5 April. Scarce in the second winter period with up to two in Tai Po Kau from 10 November, one at Cheung Shu Tan on 16 December and one on Hong Kong Island on 29 December. CC

**319 Asian Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi*  
In spring two were seen in Tai Po Kau on 6 and 9 April. In autumn singles were seen on Cheung Chau on 21 August, in Tai Po Kau on 31 August and 16, 21 and 28 September and 13 October with two there on 14 September. One was at Chuk Yeung on 6 September and singles were trapped at Mai Po on 13 September and 27 October. BBR

**320 Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone atrocaudata*  
A male in Tai Po Kau on 6, 7 and 9 April (IT,GCHC *et al.*) was the only spring record. In autumn one was at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 1 October (MDW), different singles were seen in the Sai Kung area on 8 and 10 October (MH) and singles were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 16 and 23 October (ACG). BBR

**321 Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher** *Hypothymis azurea*  
Singles were seen in Tai Po Kau on 3 January, Tai Lam Country Park and Shek Kong Catchment on 19 January, the Lam Tsuen Valley on 27 January, Bride's Pool on 19 February, Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 12 October (trapped) and 3, 10 and 30 November (trapped), Tai Po Kau on 19 October, Shouson Hill on 11 December and Tai Mei Tuk Catchment on 15 December.

**322 Chinese Babax** *Babax lanceolatus*  
Up to two were reported from Tai Mo Shan between 7 April and 11 May.

**323 Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush** *Garrulax pectoralis*  
Up to ten seen in Tai Po Kau throughout the year and regularly reported from Kap Lung and Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre. Elsewhere up to four were seen in Tai Lam Country Park between 12 January and 12 April, a maximum of 17 at Chuk Yeung in February, six in the Aberdeen Country Park on 16 February and 14 at Shan Mei Yu on 30 November. BBR,CC



- 324 Black-throated Laughing Thrush** *Garrulax chinensis*  
The only reports away from its usual haunts on Hong Kong Island were of three at Ho Chung on 17 June, one singing in Tai Po Kau on 25 May and up to two at Shing Mun on 13 and 21 December. BBR,CC
- 325 Hwamei** *Garrulax canorus*  
BBR,CC
- 326 White-cheeked Laughing Thrush** *Garrulax sannio*  
Reported as having almost disappeared on Mount Davis (where it was quite common five years ago) but present as usual in the ZBG. At least two pairs resident on Lamma. One seen in Tai Lam Country Park on 12 January, four at Lin Ma Hang and a small party at Wu Kau Tang, both on 15 February, and one on Peng Chau on 7 May. BBR,CC
- 327 Black-faced Laughing Thrush** *Garrulax perspicillatus*  
BBR,CC
- 328 Pekin Robin** *Leiothrix lutea*  
Regularly seen in Tai Po Kau in the early part of the year and a family party seen there on 4 May; also two on Tai Mo Shan on 27 April. A party of three including a dependent juvenile at Lead Mine Pass on 12 October suggested breeding locally. At least three seen in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 15 December. Several records of up to eight birds, some clearly released, came from urban parts of Hong Kong Island. BBR,CC
- 330 White-bellied Yuhina** *Yuhina zantholeuca*  
Reported from Tai Po Kau in small numbers up to April, when breeding was reported (WLY), and from September. One at Shing Mun on 15 November was the only other report. BBR,CC
- 331 Red-headed Tit** *Aegithalos concinnus*  
In the first winter period eight were seen in Tai Po Kau on 4 January (MMC) while single birds were seen at Tai Tam on 12 January (JEB), Tai Po Kau on 3 February and 13 March (PIL), and in the Aberdeen Country Park on 9 March (VBP). In the second winter period there was one at Mai Po on 10 November (MT), one in Tai Po Kau on the same day (MMC) and three at Shing Mun on 13 December (GAW).
- 332 Yellow-bellied Tit** *Parus venustus*  
Birds remaining from the influx in late 1990 were widely recorded in the early part of the year. The highest counts were 12 at Pak Nai on 13 January, ten in Tai Po Kau around 13 March and 12 at Hong Kong University on 24 March. The latest two were at Beas River on 7 April. None was recorded during the second winter period. BBR
- 333 Great Tit** *Parus major*  
BBR,CC
- 333.1 Yellow-cheeked Tit** *Parus spilonotus*  
Regularly recorded in Tai Po Kau throughout the year with a

maximum count of seven on 13 March. Single birds were recorded from Wanchai Gap on 5 March (MT), the Peak on 10 March (TW) and (trapped) on 4 May (ACG); two were at Shing Mun on 15 November (GAW) and one was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 December (GAW). BBR

- 334 Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*  
Regularly recorded at Mai Po between 3 February and 13 April with at least 15 seen on 14 February. Also one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 April. In autumn recorded between 3 November and 19 December and an estimated 250 passed over Mai Po on 24 November (PRK). The previous highest count was 26 on 28 January 1990. One hundred and twenty-nine have now been trapped at Mai Po since 17 December 1989 and none has been retrapped, indicating either a very fast turnover of migrants and/or a large population. BBR
- 335 Fork-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga christinae*  
BBC,CC
- [ **Sunbird** *Aethopyga* sp.  
It is perhaps worth noting that a largely red sunbird which was certainly not Fork-tailed Sunbird was seen at Wu Kau Tang on 29 March (DSM).]
- 336 Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus*  
One singing at Uk Tau in Sai Kung Country Park on 17 August suggests that breeding, or at least summering, may have occurred. BBR,CC
- 337 Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum cruentatum*  
BBR,CC
- 337.1 Plain Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum concolor*  
One seen at Mount Davis on 1 February (WLY) and 23 February (VBP), one at the Chinese University on 6 April (RWL) and one seen on Lantau Peak on 1 October (MDW).  
These are the the third to fifth Hong Kong records; the two previous records were in 1988. BBR
- 338 Chestnut-flanked White-eye** *Zosterops erythroleura*  
In the first winter period singles were noted in the Aberdeen Country Park on 9 January (MMC), Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre (trapped) on 17 March (ACG) and Tai Po Kau on 1 April (EPL,PIL). This last is the latest date for Hong Kong. In the latter part of the year singles were seen in Tai Po Kau on 9 November (WLY,AGY), 21 December (SES) and 29 December (WLY). CC
- 339 White-eye** *Zosterops japonica*  
BBR,CC
- 340 Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis*  
One at Tai Long Wan on 23 April and at the Chinese University in late May were the only reports in spring. In autumn there were



widespread records between 15 September and 19 October with five at Mai Po on this last date being the highest count. BBR

**341.1 Bull-headed Shrike** *Lanius bucephalus*  
Females were seen at Ho Chung on 1 November (MH) and Ngong Ping, Lantau on 14 December (CAV).

These were the fifth and sixth Hong Kong records.

**342 Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*

The earliest report was of one on Lamma on 8 April but the main passage occurred around 5 May when there were at least ten at Mai Po and 23 on Lamma. There were 16 at Tai Long Wan on 6 May and the last in spring was one near the Chinese University on 16 May. All reports were of the race *lucionensis*. The only records in autumn were singles at Luk Keng on 15 September, Mai Po on 21 and 30 September and Lamma on 19 October.

**343 Rufous-backed Shrike** *Lanius schach*  
BBR,CC

**345 Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus*

The largest, presumably migrant, flocks were of ten at Tai Long Wan on 20 April and ten at Luk Keng on 23 September. BBR,CC

**346 Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

Singles seen regularly in Tai Po Kau until 6 April, on 17 October and from 26 December. Elsewhere singles were reported from the Aberdeen Country Park on 26 October and Shing Mun on 15 November with two there on 21 December. BBR,CC

**347 Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus*

Eleven in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 24 December was the largest flock reported. BBR,CC

**348 Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Up to four seen at Shek Kong Catchment until 10 May and again from 12 October. Two were present at Lok Ma Chau throughout the year and one was at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 18 December. BBR

**349 Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*  
BBR,CC

**350 Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae*

In the first part of the year one was seen in Tai Po Kau on 19 January and two were at Lin Ma Hang on 15 February. Singles were reported from Shek Kong Catchment and near Hong Kong University on 4 April and at Lai Chi Wo on 12 April. There were no midsummer reports but several were on the Peak on 25 August and one at Tai Wai in early September. One was seen in Tai Po Kau on 22 September and two were there on 10 November, two were at Shek Kong Catchment on 30 November, one was at Pok Fu Lam Country Park on 30 November and one was at Kam Yuen on 7 December.

**351 Magpie** *Pica pica*  
BBR,CC

**352 Jungle Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*

A flock of 90 was seen at Wong Nai Chung Gap on Hong Kong Island on 6 January. BBR,CC

**353 Collared Crow** *Corvus torquatus*  
BBR,CC

**354 Silky Starling** *Sturnus sericeus*

Widespread in the early part of the year with maxima of 450 at Nam Chung and 250 at Shuen Wan on 6 January and 200 at Mai Po on 2 March. The last in spring was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 April. In the latter part of the year the first 12 were at Mai Po on 2 November and the highest count was 300 there on 12 November. One at Mai Po on 29 December had lost both tarsi but was apparently healthy despite its disability and could feed on the ground (SC). BBR,CC

**357 Chinese Starling** *Sturnus sinensis*

The earliest spring record and highest count was 15 at Mai Po on 23 March; subsequently small numbers were seen in the Deep Bay area until 6 May when there was also one at Tai Long Wan. Autumn records were again restricted to the Deep Bay area between 26 August and 9 November with peak counts of 30 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 3 and 6 September and 15 at Mai Po on 21 September. The only report elsewhere was of one at Luk Keng on 15 September. BBR

**360 Grey Starling** *Sturnus cineraceus*

Rather scarce early in the year with most records from the Deep Bay area: maxima were 25 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 2 February and 25 at Mai Po on 17 March. Elsewhere four were seen in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 9 February. The last in spring was at Mai Po on 10 April. Seven at Mai Po on 30 November and one in Yuen Long on 29 December were the only reports during the latter half of the year. BBR,CC

**361 Black-necked Starling** *Sturnus nigricollis*  
BBR,CC

**362 Crested Mynah** *Acridotheres cristatellus*  
Eighty at Mai Po on 20 October was the largest flock reported. BBR,CC

**363 Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*  
BBR,CC

**364 White-backed Munia** *Lonchura striata*  
BBR,CC

**365 Spotted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata*  
BBR,CC



**367 Chinese Greenfinch***Carduelis sinica*

Four were at Mai Po on 3 March, two at Pak Nai on 24 March, one at Mount Nicholson on 1 April, one in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 5 April, one at Tai Long Wan on 13 April, 18 on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 3 November and three at Tsim Bei Tsui on 29 December. CC

**368 Siskin***Carduelis spinus*

Forty were seen near Tai Po Kau on 1 January (PRK), eight at Mai Po also on 1 January (MRL) and 20-30 at the Chinese University on 9 January (RWL). Three were at Mai Po on 23 March (one trapped) and one was there on 24 March (PRK,PJL).

**369 Common Rosefinch***Carpodacus erythrurus*

Not recorded in the first winter period. In the second part of the year nine were trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre between 19 October and 11 December (ACG,PRK,PJL), three were at Ping Yeung on 30 November, seven were there on 1 December (PJL) and two were seen at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 14 December (JSRE,CAV).

**370 Black-tailed Hawfinch***Coccothraustes migratorius*

In the early part of the year the largest flocks were of 40 at Shek Kong on 5 January, 60 in the Lam Tsuen Valley and 40 at Lok Ma Chau on 20 January and 65 at Island House on 17 March. A flock of 100 in the Lam Tsuen Valley from 5 to 7 April were presumably passage migrants. These were the last in spring except for a small group reported from Lok Ma Chau on 26 April. In the second winter period three flew over Mai Po on 2 November, one was there on 3 November and six flew south on 9 November. Elsewhere six were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 18 November, up to 15 at Ping Yeung between 30 November and 14 December and up to 25 at Shek Kong Catchment from 3 December.

BBR,CC

**371 Black-faced Bunting***Emberiza spodocephala*

Widespread early in the year with passage peaking in mid to late March. Fifty-nine were trapped and 150 were seen at Mai Po on 16 March and 41 were trapped on 24 March. The last two in spring were seen there on 5 May. In autumn the first was at Mai Po on 25 October with a big influx on 27 October. Large numbers passed through Mai Po in November: 60 were seen on 2nd, 70 flew south on 3rd, 25 were trapped on 16th and 13 were trapped on 24th.

BBR,CC

**372 Japanese Yellow Bunting***Emberiza sulphurata*

Singles were seen at Mai Po on 29 March (MRL,IT), 1 April (MT) and 4 April (GJC). At least two were noted at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 and 6 April (CAV *et al.*), four at Lok Ma Chau on 5th and two on 6 April (PRK,MT *et al.*). One was trapped at Mai Po on 7 April (ACG) and one was seen there on 21 April (MRL).

BBR

**373 Grey-headed Bunting***Emberiza fucata*

One was at Tai Ho Wan, Lantau on 21 January (GAW) and one at Tai Long Wan on 20 April (JSRE). Five were on the landfill area to

the east of Mai Po on 4 November and two were there on 9 November, one was at Ping Yeung on 21 November with two from 23 to 24 November, two were at Luk Keng on 30 November, eight (including two trapped) were there on 15 December and two on 29 December. CC

**373.2 Yellow-browed Bunting***Emberiza chrysophrys*

One was seen at Ping Yeung on 10 November (TW) and one was at Ho Chung on 17 November (MH).

These were the sixth and seventh Hong Kong records.

**374 Tristram's Bunting***Emberiza tristrami*

Seen in Tai Po Kau until 6 April with at least ten on 27 January. Elsewhere one seen in the Aberdeen Country Park on 2 January and 1 February, seven at Kap Lung on 5 January, six at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 2 February, five trapped at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre between 2 February and 2 March and two at Bride's Pool on 9 March. In the second winter period recorded at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre from 17 November, ten near Repulse Bay on 23 November, common at Kap Lung on 7 December and up to five in Tai Po Kau from 16 December.

BBR,CC

**376 Little Bunting***Emberiza pusilla*

Small numbers early in the year except for a flock of 75 in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 6 January. Larger numbers on spring passage with peaks of 50 (18 trapped) at Mai Po on 16 March and 45 at Shek Kong on 17 March. Two on the Peak on 12 May (JSRE) were, by one day, the latest ever in spring. Recorded in autumn from 2 November with 20 in the Ho Chung valley on 19 November being the highest count.

BBR,CC

**377 Chestnut Bunting***Emberiza rutila*

Very scarce in spring with a single male at Lok Ma Chau on 21 April, two at Hong Kong University on 3 May and a male at Mount Nicholson on 5 May being the only reports. In autumn 21 were at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre on 26 October and up to 20 were recorded there until 15 December. There was a maximum of 20 at Mai Po between 27 October and 30 November, up to 12 in Tai Po Kau between 30 October and 17 November, six at Sha Lo Tung on 12 November and two at Ho Chung on 16 November and 30 on 19 November.

**378 Yellow-breasted Bunting***Emberiza aureola*

One at Mai Po on 26 January was the only winter record. Recorded in spring between 16 March and 5 May in the Deep Bay area, 30 at Mai Po on 29 March being the largest number seen. In autumn one at Ho Chung on 7 September was an early record. Two on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 3 November was the only other report.

BBR

**379.1 Pallas's Reed Bunting***Emberiza pallasi*

One was seen on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 8 December and again from 14 December into 1992 (PJL,PRK *et al.*).



This is the first record of this species for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

**379.2 Japanese Reed Bunting** *Emberiza yessoensis*

Two were seen on the landfill area to the east of Mai Po on 3 November (MRL,EPL).

This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

**380 Crested Bunting** *Melophus lathami*

One was seen at Ho Chung on 15 January (MH), three at She Shan on 4 April (GCHC), two at Nam Chung on 4 April (PRS), one on Tai Mo Shan on 10 September (GCHC) and two at Ho Chung on 19 November (PRK,PJL).

CATEGORY C. SPECIES WHICH, ALTHOUGH ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED BY MAN, HAVE NOW ESTABLISHED A REGULAR FERAL BREEDING STOCK WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT BE SELF-SUPPORTING.

**601 Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*  
BBR,CC

**602 Rainbow Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus*  
Eight seen at Shouson Hill on 16 November; also recorded elsewhere on the south side of Hong Kong Island on 29 December.  
CC

**603 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** *Cacatua sulphurea*  
BBR,CC

**604 Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*  
The highest count was 32 at Mai Po on 4 September. BBR,CC

**605 Common Mynah** *Acridotheres tristis*  
Recorded from the Shek Kong area all year with 25-30 there on 24 September. Elsewhere two seen at Pat Heung on 31 August and 1 December. BBR

**606 Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyana*  
The largest number seen in the ZBG was only three on 4 April; this suggests that numbers have declined significantly in recent years. BBR

CATEGORY D. SPECIES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN AN APPARENTLY WILD STATE BUT FOR WHICH THE POSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE OR RELEASE FROM CAPTIVITY CANNOT BE SATISFACTORILY EXCLUDED.

**704.2 Singing Bushlark** *Mirafra javanica*  
One seen in the Ho Chung valley, Sai Kung on 16 and 17 November (CAV,MT).

This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

**704.3 Greater Cuckoo Shrike** *Coracina novaehollandiae*  
1978: one at Fanling Golf Course on 29 April (HGA) was only the second record for Hong Kong.

**705.1 Brown-breasted Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous*  
One seen at Mai Po on 23 February (EPL,MRL). Two at Luk Keng on 22 and 29 March (RWL,DSM,GCHC) and one on 6 April (GJC,PRK) were presumably the same birds as those first seen on 24 January 1991. BBR

**706.1 Japanese Waxwing** *Bombicilla japonica*  
Seven (four males and three females) seen in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 5 and 6 April (JNP,MDW *et al.*).  
This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report). BBR

**706.5 Pale Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis unicolor*  
One seen in Tai Po Kau on 6 April (PDR,KP *et al.*).  
This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report). BBR

**707 Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*  
Heard at Mount Nicholson on 1 April and 29 December (CAV), singles seen at Wong Nai Chung on 29 June (IT) and in the Aberdeen Country Park on 15 December (JEB) and seven seen near Wu Kwai Sha on 18 December (JEB). BBR,CC

**709 Rufous-capped Babbler** *Stachyris ruficeps*  
One seen with a flock of Pekin Robins *Leiothrix lutea* at Shing Mun on 31 December (GAW).

**710 Vinous-throated Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis webbianus*  
Two seen on Tai Mo Shan on 24 April and 10 May and three there on 10 November (MRL,WLY).

**712.1 Ruddy Sparrow** *Passer rutilans*  
A male seen at Mai Po on 1 April (PRK,MT).



CATEGORY E. SPECIES FOR WHICH ALL PUBLISHED RECORDS ARE SUSPECTED OF BEING BIRDS WHICH HAVE ESCAPED OR HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY.

805.1	Red-breasted Parakeet BBR	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>
808	Budgerigar	<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>
812	Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>
812.5	Blue-winged Leafbird*	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>
813	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>
814.2	Yellow-eyed Babbler*	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
816	Silver-eared Mesia BBR	<i>Leothrix argentea</i>
816.08	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
816.2	Green Jay	<i>Cyanocorax yncas</i>
817	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
821	White-vented Mynah	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
822	Indian Grackle BBR	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
825	Golden Bishop	<i>Euplectes afer</i>
828.1	Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>
830	Java Sparrow	<i>Padda oryzivora</i>
831	Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>
833.07	Common Redpoll*	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>

Velvet-fronted Nuthatches were reported from Tai Po Kau throughout the year with up to five being seen. Reports of this species also came from the Aberdeen Country Park, Magazine Gap and Coombe Road on Hong Kong Island.

\* First recorded in 1991

THE FOLLOWING RECORDS WERE SUBMITTED BUT NOT ACCEPTED BY THE RECORDS COMMITTEE

**Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Mai Po, 27 January; Hong Lok Yuen, 27 January; Tai Mo Shan, 11 May; Tsim Bei Tsui, 18 October  
**Pied Harrier** *Circus melanoleucus* Mai Po, 3 November  
**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* Shek Kong Catchment, 30 November  
**Chinese Goshawk** *Accipiter soloensis* Twenty-five, Mai Po, 21 April  
**Upland Buzzard** *Buteo hemilasius* Ping Yeung, 23 November  
**Mountain Hawk Eagle** *Spizaetus nipalensis* Tai Po Kau, 22 April  
**Ruddy Crane** *Porzana fusca* Mai Po, 13 April  
**Relict Gull** *Larus relictus* Mai Po, 23 February and 9 March  
**Common Gull** *Larus canus* Mai Po, 22 February  
**Slaty-backed Gull** *Larus schistisagus* Two, Hong Kong Harbour, 4 April

**Bridled/Sooty Tern** *Sternus anaethetus/fuscata* Tolo Harbour, 6 May  
**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* Tin Shui Wai, 29 March  
**Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo* Chau Tau, 17 March  
**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Five, Pok Fu Lam, 1 February; Mai Po, 2 November  
**Northern Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* Mai Po, 8 December  
**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica* Mai Po, 30 March  
**Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi* Tung Chung, Lantau, 1 October  
**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba lugens* Mai Po, 3 March  
**Grey Bushchat** *Saxicola ferrea* Ngong Ping, Lantau, 14 December  
**White-throated Rock Thrush** *Monticola gularis* Tai Po Kau, 2 April  
**Brown Thrush** *Turdus chrysolaus* Tai Lam Country Park, 12 January  
**Mountain Bush Warbler** *Cettia fortipes* Lam Tsuen Valley, 2 November; Ngong Ping, Lantau, 14 December  
**Russet Bush Warbler** *Bradypterus seebohmii* Hok Tau, 26 January; Ngong Ping, Lantau, 14 December  
**Bright-capped Cisticola** *Cisticola exilis* Five, Tung Chung, Lantau, 6 December  
**Two-barred Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* Mount Davis, 1 February; Lam Tsuen Valley, 7, 13, 15 and 21 February and 21 December; Tai Po Kau, 2 November; Aberdeen Country Park, 12 November; Shing Mun, 21 December  
**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus humei* Lung Mei Tsuen, 16 January  
**Radde's Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi* Tai Po Kau, 2 November  
**Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica* Tai Po Kau, 6 April; Nam Fung Road, 15 September  
**Chinese Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius sphenocercus* Mai Po, 18 August  
**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus* Four, Tsim Bei Tsui, 2 February  
**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus* Mai Po, 27 January  
**Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* Braemar Hill, 21 July  
**Pale Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis unicolor* Tai Po Kau, 12 March  
**White-browed Shrike Babbler** *Pteruthius flaviscapis* Two, Tai Po Kau, 9 April  
**Common Redpoll** *Acanthis flammea* Mai Po, 14 December  
**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* Kowloon Park, 17 April

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Cheng, T.H. 1987. *A Synopsis of the Avifauna of China*. Science Press, Beijing  
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# HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL WATERFOWL COUNT 1991

*Michael L. Chalmers*

The twelfth annual co-ordinated count of wintering waterfowl organised by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society was held on 13 January 1991. In accordance with guidelines from the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB) and the Asian Wetland Bureau (AWB) other counts, if higher, were included for the period one week either side of the mid-January date i.e. from 5 to 20 January 1991. As in previous years, results have been forwarded to IWRB/AWB for inclusion in the annual Asian Waterfowl Census.

All the Deep Bay sites covered in recent counts, including Fu Tien National Nature Reserve, China, were again well covered and, in addition, the Starling Inlet/Yim Tso Ha area was included for the first time as it is our only other significant wetland area registered in the Asian Wetlands Directory (Scott 1989).

The results of the count are summarised in Table 1 and given in full in Table 2. In the Deep Bay area a total of 48,784 birds of 76 species was recorded. This is the first time the count has exceeded 40,000 and represents a 29% increase over last year. The species count is also the highest ever, the previous maximum having been 73 species last year. In addition, 383 birds of 15 species were recorded in Starling Inlet on 19 January 1991. Subtotals by major groups of species are as follows:

**TABLE 1. Waterfowl Count subtotals by group and location**

Group	Deep Bay		Starling Inlet	
	Number	Species	Number	Species
Cormorants	2,035	1	0	
Hérons, egrets etc.	4,417	14	269	5
Duck	15,818	16	7	2
Rails, Coot, Moorhen etc.	2,180	7	49	4
Waders	6,382	33	11	3
Gulls and terns	17,952	5	47	1
Total	48,784	76	383	15

In Deep Bay duck numbers soared to the highest total ever recorded due to the very high counts of Pintail, Shoveler and Wigeon. The duck total was nearly three times higher than last year's and 35% more than the previous maximum in 1988. Numbers in the intervening two years have been much lower, possibly due to disturbance from construction works at Tin Shui Wai (which have since been discontinued) and fixed fish nets, which have generally disappeared from the Hong Kong side of

the Bay although they still occasionally present a problem. However, disturbance from mudskipper fishermen continues and this is of major concern for the Dalmatian Pelicans. After a short-term peak of 16 in late December, the number of wintering birds declined to only ten (seven on the day of the count), a repeat of last year's low figures. If this trend continues it will only be a few more years before the pelicans are lost as winter visitors to the area.

On the other hand the highlight of this winter was the arrival of a flock of over 100 Oriental White Storks in November. The combined count on 13 January 1991 was 121, the highest confirmed total. This event is especially noteworthy as prior to the winter of 1990/91 there had only been three records of this species in Hong Kong with a previous maximum of two birds. It is possible that the storks have wintered further south than usual due to loss of habitat or other pressures in the normal Changjiang (Yangtze) River marshes wintering grounds (Chan 1991).

All the other groups were well represented with many totals ranking as second to the previous maximum counts. It was pleasing to note that the regular wintering flock of endangered Black-faced Spoonbills totalled 41, almost the same as last year when 42 were recorded on the count.

Other records of interest in Deep Bay were new high counts for Great Crested Grebe (140), Great Egret (694), Wigeon (1,111), Teal (3,095), Yellow-nib Duck (511), Pintail (5,361), Shoveler (4,354), Scaup (15), Black-winged Stilt (257), Avocet (450), Lesser Sand Plover (70), Grey Plover (521), Great Knot (8), Dunlin (1,596), Black-tailed Godwit (160), Curlew (572), Knot (15), Greenshank (286) and Saunders' Gull (102). The previous trend for small numbers of passage migrant waders to overwinter continued with Lesser and Greater Sand Plover, Knot and Great Knot, Red-necked Stint, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Turnstone, Swinhoe's Snipe (confirmed by trapping), Whimbrel, Australian Curlew and Bar-tailed Godwit being recorded.

On the negative side, loss of wetland habitat continues in all areas other than Mai Po and Deep Bay itself. Furthermore, hunting on a widespread scale is blatant within the Fu Tien Reserve with much shooting at weekends, many spent cartridges and a virtual absence of duck.

This year for the first time birds of prey were also recorded. A conservative total for the Deep Bay area on 13 January 1991 is as follows: Black Kite (90), Marsh Harrier (4), Japanese Sparrowhawk (1), Buzzard (2), Spotted Eagle (4), Imperial Eagle (10), Bonelli's Eagle (1), Osprey (11), Kestrel (2), Hobby (1) and Peregrine Falcon (1).

The co-operation of the Guangdong Forestry Reserve is gratefully acknowledged for facilitating access to Fu Tien. The following observers participated in the count: J.E. Burton, G.J. Carey, M.W. Cha,

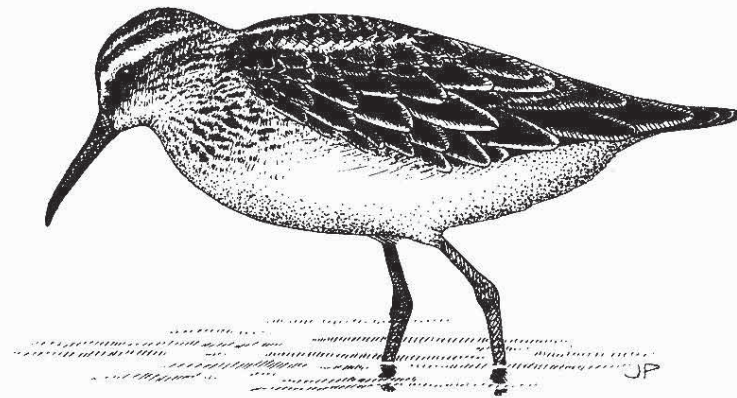


M.L. Chalmers, S. Chan, N.J.G. Croft, J. Ede, J.S.R. Edge, J. Holmes, P.R. Kennerley, A.R. Lamont, P.J. Leader, M. Lau, R.W. Lewthwaite, V.B. Picken, R.D.E. and J. Stott, M.D. Williams, F.K.O. Wong, C.A. Viney, A. and W. Young, L. Young.

一月十三日在后海灣進行的一九九一年國際水禽調查錄得鳥類76種，共48,784頭。雀鳥數目首次超越了40,000之數，比去年增加了29%。品種的數目也是歷來最高的，比去年多了三種。同時，沙頭角海方面有15種，共383頭。

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Chan, S. 1991. The historical and current status of the Oriental White Stork. *Hong Kong Bird Report* 1990:128-148  
Scott, D.A. 1989. *A Directory of Asian Wetlands*. IUCN, Gland



Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

(Jeremy N. Pearse)

TABLE 2. Summary of Waterfowl Count 1991

Species	Yim Tso Ha Starling Inlet	Fu Tien	Deep Bay Area						Total
			Ma Tso Lung Lo Wu	San Tin Lok Ma Chau	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Ha Tsuen Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan Lau Fau Shan	
Little Grebe	5	1	9	3	65	116	6		84
Great Crested Grebe		19						5	140
Cormorant		4	111	15	928	967	10		2,035
Dalmatian Pelican						7			7
Bittern					1				1
Yellow Bittern					1	1			2
Night Heron	63	42			125	28			195
Chinese Pond Heron	8	92	63	75	185	81	43	44	583
Cattle Egret			19	36	10	7			72
Little Egret	79	102	44	165	356	787	18	34	1,506
Intermediate Egret					3	2			5
Great Egret	63	47	6	12	340	252	32	5	694
Grey Heron	56	15	80	14	690	389			1,188
Purple Heron		2			5				7
Black Stork							1		1
White Stork		*			65	*	56		121
European Spoonbill		*			1				1
Black-faced Spoonbill					41				41
Shelduck		120			809				929
Mandarin					2				2
Wigeon					110	1,001			1,111

Continued ...



TABLE 2 continued

		Deep Bay Area							
Species	Yim Tso Ha Starling Inlet	Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung Lo Wu	San Tin Lok Ma Chau	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Ha Tsuen Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan Lau Fau Shan	Total
Falcated Teal	2				237				237
Gadwall					*	9			9
Teal	5		114	1	1,047	1,884	49		3,095
Mallard						32	1		33
Yellow-nib Duck					249	255	7		511
Pintail		440			66	4,855			5,361
Garganey					7				7
Shoveler		6	2		114	4,207	25		4,354
Common Pochard					2				2
Baer's Pochard					2	1			3
Tufted Duck					4	113			117
Scaup						15			15
Red-breasted Merganser						32			32
Banded Rail					2	5			7
White-Breasted Waterhen	1	1	3	18	25	10	5	3	65
Moorhen	7		24	9	69	19	6		127
Coot	36		50	58	425	1,217			1,750
Black-winged Stilt					257				257
Avocet						450			450
Little Ringed Plover		31	25		39	39	24	29	187
Kentish Plover		529				305		83	917

Continued ...

TABLE 2 continued

Deep Bay Area									
Species	Yim Tso Ha Starling Inlet	Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung Lo Wu	San Tin Lok Ma Chau	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Ha Tsuen Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan Lau Fau Shan	Total
Lesser Sand Plover						70			70
Greater Sand Plover						1			1
Asiatic Golden Plover	1	*			2				2
Grey Plover		*			*	521		*	521
Grey-headed Lapwing						11			11
Great Knot						8			8
Knot						15			15
Red-necked Stint			2						2
Temminck's Stint		47	2			22		1	72
Long-toed Stint				1					1
Dunlin		350				1,246			1,596
Broad-billed Sandpiper						1			1
Ruff					1				1
Fantail Snipe		18	1	120	3		7		149
Pintail Snipe				15					15
Swinhoe's Snipe				1					1
Black-tailed Godwit		*			160				160
Bar-tailed Godwit						1			1
Whimbrel		1							1
Curlew		*			572	*			572
Australian Curlew					1				1

Continued ...



TABLE 2 continued

Species	Yim Tso Ha Starling Inlet	Deep Bay Area								Total
		Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung Lo Wu	San Tin Lo Ma Chau	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Ha Tsuen Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan Lau Fau Shan		
Spotted Redshank		60	12		274	121	65		532	
Redshank		3	2		65	9			79	
Marsh Sandpiper		1			229	1			231	
Greenshank		64			9	185	3	25	286	
Green Sandpiper	2	2	11	2	17	7	14	4	57	
Wood Sandpiper		1	30	63	23		6	1	124	
Common Sandpiper	8	11	10	7	9	5	6	12	60	
Turnstone						1			1	
Saunders' Gull		3				99			102	
Black-headed Gull	47	2,000	2,882	2,500	2,500	6,800	18	535	17,235	
Black-tailed Gull						2			2	
Herring Gull		2	2			604			608	
Caspian Tern						5			5	

\* indicates total deleted to avoid possible double count

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## SUMMARY OF THE 1991 BIG BIRD RACE

J.S.R. Edge

The eighth annual Big Bird Race, held to raise funds for the Mai Po Marshes project of the World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong, took place on 5 and 6 April 1991. As in 1990, the Race was spread over 24 hours, from 1800h on 5 April to 1800h on 6 April, and as usual the Race was timed to take advantage of the optimum mix of late-staying winter visitors, spring migrants and early summer visitors. A midday high tide on 6 April gave teams some flexibility in planning their race, so that overcrowding in the Mai Po hides was generally avoided, as did the fact that 5 April was a public holiday, thus enabling teams to reach their starting points at their leisure. As in 1990, fifteen teams took part. The weather was mixed, with the evening of 5 April heavily overcast and rain for a time on the morning of 6 April.

The total number of species recorded by all teams this year was 214, slightly down on the 1990 total of 218 but considerably down on the 1989 total of 232. The relatively low aggregate must have been due, in part at least, to another dry and mild winter which resulted in winter visitors departing early. The average number of species seen by each team was 143, very similar to the 1990 average. New species recorded this year, bringing the aggregate in all eight Races to 287\*, were Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Citrine Wagtail, Sooty and Pale Blue Flycatchers, Plain Flowerpecker, Japanese Waxwing and Silver-eared Mesia. The Pale Blue Flycatcher was adjudged to be the best bird recorded during the Race.

Groups of species recorded were as follows, with figures for 1990 in brackets: ducks 13 (15), raptors 11 (12), waders 41 (43), flycatchers 8 (3) and thrushes and their allies 9 (13). These figures are generally consistent with the slightly lower overall total for 1991 compared with 1990, but we were perhaps fortunate that the relatively high number of flycatchers helped to boost this year's total. The number of waterbirds recorded in 1991 was slightly down on earlier years. Dalmatian Pelican, for example, has not been recorded since 1988 and Shelduck was missed this year, for the first time in a Race. Perhaps significantly, none of the new species recorded this year were waterbirds.

Of the 287 species recorded in all eight Races (1984-1991), 114 have been recorded every year, whereas 30 have been recorded only once.

All species seen during the 1991 Race are indicated by the code 'BBR' in the individual species accounts in the Systematic List

\* A 1990 record for Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* was subsequently submitted to the Records Committee as pipit sp.

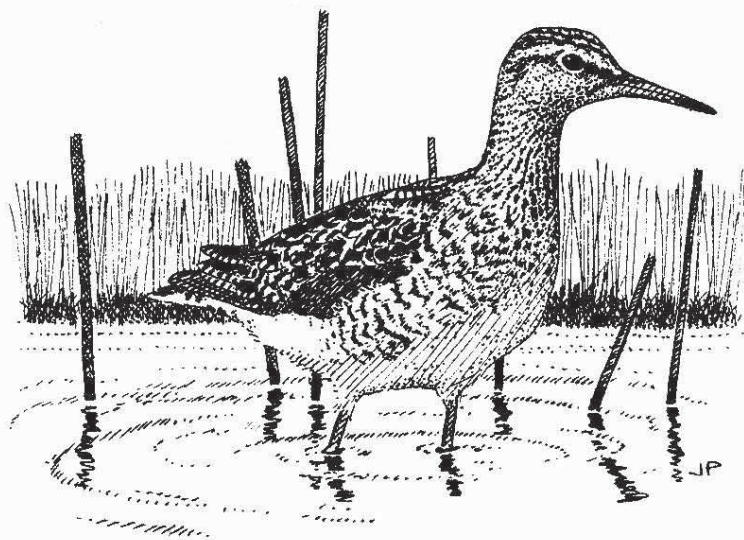


(elsewhere in this Report) except for the following species which were included in the Bird Race total but were not adequately supported for inclusion in the Systematic List: Gadwall, Mallard, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Oriental Skylark, Pallas's Warbler and Chestnut Bunting.

本文是一九九一年四月五日至六日第八屆觀鳥大賽的簡報。各隊總共錄得214種，主要為：鴨13種、猛禽11種、涉禽41種、鷗8種、鵝和其他9種。

J.S.R. Edge

*Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, GPO Box 12460, Hong Kong*



Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

(Jeremy N. Pearse)

## BREEDING BIRDS SURVEY TAI PO KAU, HONG KONG, 1991

*Michael Turnbull*

The third survey of breeding birds in Tai Po Kau Forest Reserve took place on 25 May 1991. A description of the reserve and an outline of the objectives of these surveys is given by Viney (1989).

### METHOD

Ten observers, divided into three groups, took part in the survey, which was carried out between 0600h and approximately 1230h. The greater part of the major trails (Red, Blue, Yellow and Brown Walks) and the forestry road were covered. Compared to past surveys the degree of coverage was adequate.

### WEATHER

Clear and sunny. Light winds. Very warm (up to 32°C), with a relative humidity of 75%.

### RESULTS

The results are tabulated below (Table 1). For abundance the 'order of magnitude' method has again been used, as follows:

Number	'Order'
1 — 9	1
10 — 99	2
100 — 999	3

Breeding status is indicated by the use of the following codes in accordance with the recommendations of the European Ornithological Atlas Committee (Sharrock 1976) and also used by Chalmers (1986):

- A — present
- B — possible breeding
- C — probable breeding
- D — confirmed breeding

### DISCUSSION

The survey managed to confirm the presence of almost all the expected breeding species. Not recorded during this count, though noted during both the previous surveys, were Greater Coucal, Arctic Warbler, White-bellied Yuhina and Crested Mynah. Arctic Warbler is of course a migrant in Hong Kong, and way to the south of its known breeding range, while neither Greater Coucal nor Crested Mynah is truly a forest species and both are unlikely to breed within the reserve proper. White-



**TABLE 1. Results of the Tai Po Kau Breeding Birds Survey 1991**

Species	'Order'	Breeding status	Remarks
Chinese Pond Heron	1	A	2 birds
Serpent Eagle	1	B	2-3 birds
Crested Goshawk	1	B	1 bird
Chinese Francolin	1	B	
Spotted Dove	2	C	
Emerald Dove	1	B	1 bird
Red-winged Crested Cuckoo	1	B	1 calling
Large Hawk Cuckoo	1	B	5 calling
Koel	1	B	
Lesser Coucal	1	B	1 calling
Collared Scops Owl	1	D	juvenile
House Swift	1	A	
Great Barbet	2	C	
Swallow	2	A	
Grey-throated Minivet	2	D	
Scarlet Minivet	1	C	
Crested Bulbul	2	D	
Chinese Bulbul	3	D	
Chestnut Bulbul	2	C	
Orange-bellied Leafbird	1	C	
Magpie Robin	1	D	
Violet Whistling Thrush	1	B	
Yellow-bellied Prinia	2	C	
Long-tailed Tailorbird	2	D	
Hainan Blue Flycatcher	1	C	pair singing
Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush	2	B	
Hwamei	2	C	
Black-throated Laughing Thrush	1	C	2 heard
Black-faced Laughing Thrush	1	B	
Pekin Robin	1	C	
Great Tit	2	D	
Yellow-cheeked Tit	1	B	1 heard
Fork-tailed Sunbird	2	D	
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	1	C	2-3 pairs
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	1	C	
White-eye	2	D	
Black Drongo	1	B	
Hair-crested Drongo	1	B	
Blue Magpie	1	C	
Treepie	1	C	pair
Magpie	1	B	
Jungle Crow	1	B	
Tree Sparrow	1	C	
White-backed Munia	1	D	
Silver-eared Mesia	1	C	
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	1	C	

bellied Yuhina continued to be noted in Tai Po Kau in small numbers throughout 1991 so the absence of summer records probably reflects an almost total absence of observers there during that season. It is, however, a very recent colonist so annual breeding cannot be automatically assumed. Species reported for the first time during one of these surveys were Black-throated Laughing Thrush and Fire-breasted Flowerpecker. While the latter species has in the past been considered possibly to breed in Tai Po Kau (Chalmers 1986), the former species has previously hardly ever been noted away from its stronghold on Hong Kong Island. The origins of the birds in Tai Po Kau are thus even more open to conjecture than those of the main population in the Territory, colonisation from within or outside Hong Kong and captive origin all being possible.

**TABLE 2. Comparison with previous surveys**

	1988	1989	1991
Totals: Present	5	5	3
Possible breeding	15	11	16
Probable breeding	25	14	17
Confirmed breeding	12	16	10
Total number of species	57	46	46

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the nine members who took part in the survey, namely J.E.Burton, T.R. Costin, J.S.R. Edge, M. Elliot, J. and F. Poon, R.D.E. Stott, N.G. Townsend and C.A. Viney. Further thanks are due to C.A. Viney for commenting on a draft of this report, and to M.R. Leven for supplying additional data.

本文是一九九一年五月二十五日大埔滘繁殖鳥類調查的報告。是日錄得雀鳥共46種，可分為下列幾個類別：証實有繁殖的10種、似在繁殖的17種、有可能在繁殖的16種、其他3種。文內亦有是次調查與前兩次同類調查的比較。

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## HONG KONG CHRISTMAS COUNT 1991

C.Y. Lam

### INTRODUCTION

The seventh Christmas count to survey the occurrence of bird species in Hong Kong took place on 29 December 1991. It was organised along established lines (see Lam 1990). Returns from members were analysed to give total numbers in eight regions, the boundaries of which are as defined in Viney (1987).

### COVERAGE

Some fifty people contributed to the 1991 count. Owing to bad weather conditions Lantau Island was visited one day late. The specific locations visited are described below:

*Hong Kong Island* — the west side of the island from Mount Davis to the Aberdeen Country Park, coastal locations from Deep Water Bay to Big Wave Bay, the Peak, Black's Link, Happy Valley, Braemar Hill, Quarry Bay Country Park, Tai Tam Country Park

*Kowloon* — Kowloon Park, King's Park, Stonecutters Island

*Offshore Islands* — Cheung Chau, Lamma, Po Toi

*Lantau* — Mui Wo, Tung Chung

*Central NT* — Lam Tsuen Valley, Tai Po Kau, Shing Mun

*Eastern NT* — Clear Water Bay, Ho Chung, Sai Kung, Sai Kung East and West Country Parks, Tai Long, Kei Ling Ha, Wu Kai Sha, Tolo Harbour

*Western NT* — Tai Mo Shan to Shek Kong, Tsim Bei Tsui, Mong Tseng, Wang Chau (Yuen Long), route from Nim Wan through Lau Fau Shan and Ha Tsuen to Siu Lam and Kadoorie Beach

*Northern NT* — Mai Po, San Tin, Lok Ma Chau, Starling Inlet, Luk Keng, Plover Cove, Sha Lo Tung, vicinity of Tai Po Industrial Estate

### WEATHER

It was an exceptionally cold day with icy conditions on Tai Mo Shan. The minimum temperature at the Royal Observatory was 5.2°C. However, in the New Territories the minimum was 2°C and down to -4.7°C on Tai Mo Shan. It was cloudy at times and there was some light rain. A total of 1.3mm of rainfall was recorded at the Royal Observatory. The mean relative humidity was 94%.

### RESULTS

Counting only Category A-D species (as defined in Chalmers 1986), a total of 169 species was recorded in the 1991 count. Breakdown figures

for the individual regions are given in Table 1. For the sake of uniformity, the published figures for 1985 and 1986 have been adjusted to exclude Category E species (escapes).

TABLE 1. Number of species recorded in the various regions in the seven Christmas counts

Region	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
1 Hong Kong Island	61	36	69	60	53	56	71
2 Kowloon	35	23	59	64	42	47	54
3 Offshore Islands	34	43	58	48	44	52	54
4 Lantau	75	63	66	51	53	62	33
5 Central NT	74	74	64	67	74	62	79
6 Eastern NT	68	55	55	43	54	55	61
7 Western NT	109	117	122	90	94	109	101
8 Northern NT	125	104	98	123	104	116	109
All	183	175	173	163	170	166	169

Although most observers reported a quiet day in terms of the number of birds seen, the total number of species recorded turned out to be higher than that in 1990. The forceful southward push of cold air across southern China probably displaced a considerable number of species south of their usual range. Seven species were recorded for the first time in a Christmas count. They were Baikal Teal, Lapwing, Knot, Chestnut-flanked White-eye, Grey-headed Bunting, Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler and Bright-capped Cisticola. The last species was also new for Hong Kong in 1991. The cumulative total of species for all seven Christmas counts to date stands at 240.

All regions except Lantau Island, Western and Northern New Territories recorded a gain over 1990. The drop in species total on Lantau might be due partly to the destruction of habitat near villages and partly to the smaller number of sites visited this year. In the case of the New Territories, it might be attributed to the continued decline in the quality and diversity of habitats reported by observers conducting counts there. Container depots, wrecked car dumps and building materials are still encroaching on the vegetation cover while construction work, pollution and human disturbance continue to degrade the Deep Bay coastline. If the trend is not checked there will come a time when preserving the Mai Po Marshes alone might become a rather meaningless exercise.

All species recorded during the survey are indicated by the code 'CC' in the individual species accounts in the Systematic List (elsewhere in this Report). Observations of particular interest are also detailed there. The table giving the estimated number of birds recorded by species and by region which was published in previous reports of Christmas counts



is not reproduced here for the sake of economy. Those interested in the detailed information may write to the author.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the following observers who all took part in the count:

Trevor and June Adams, Edward Allen, Anne and Ralph Barber, John Burton, Mike Chalmers, Simba Chan, Chan Ming Ming, Monica Chong, Bob Cockburn, Cheung Ho Fai, David C. Cook, Paul Crow, Mark Elliott, Martin Hale, Richard Illingsworth, Peter Kennerley, John Kier, C.Y. Lam, Li Wai Ki, Alan and Mark Loynd, Roger and Margaret Lygoe, David Melville, Ng Cho Nam, Pages Ng, Bob Nicoll, Carolyn Ord, John Owen, Jeremy Pearse, Verity Picken, Scott Shaum, Stewart Smith, Marion Star, Peter and Peggy Stevens, Richard Stott, Dylan Thomas, Nick Townsend, Mike Turnbull, Ian and Marlyn Tyzzer, Clive Viney, Martin Williams, Wong Chah Cheong, Lew Young, Wendy and Andrew Young, Yu Yat Tung.

第七屆香港聖誕雀鳥普查於一九九一年十二月二十九日舉行，當日天氣嚴寒，卻仍錄得169種，比前一年稍多。累積七屆合共錄得240種。首次在普查中錄得的品種有花臉鴨、鳳頭麥雞、紅腹鵡、紅脇綉眼鳥、赤胸鵡和黃頭扇尾鶯。

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## REPORT ON BIRD RINGING IN HONG KONG IN 1991

David S. Melville and A.C. Galsworthy

1991 was another successful year with 5,399 birds of 154 species being ringed — our highest totals yet. Species totals are given in Table 1, together with those from previous years. Activities in Hong Kong under the Migratory Animals Pathological Survey were summarised by McClure and Leelavit (1972), and the most recent report on ringing in the Territory is by Melville (1991a).

As in previous years most ringing was conducted at the WWF Hong Kong Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, with regular trapping at the University of Hong Kong Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre at Shek Kong during the autumn and winter. Limited ringing was also undertaken on Victoria Peak and at several sites in the New Territories.

Although no species were added to the Hong Kong List as a direct result of netting activities, three 'firsts' located in the field were subsequently trapped: a Blunt-winged Warbler at Mai Po (Leader 1992a), four Bright-capped Cisticolas at Ping Yeung (Viney and Chalmers 1992), and a Pallas's Reed Bunting near Mai Po (Leader 1992b).

There were a number of other notable captures. Three Besras illustrated the complexities of accipiter identification (even in the hand) although the identification of an adult male Chinese Goshawk was more straightforward. A Lanceolated Warbler and two Radde's Warblers were the first ringed in Hong Kong, and no fewer than five Thick-billed Warblers were trapped. The Blyth's Reed Warbler was the third record for Hong Kong and, apparently, China (Melville 1987, Chalmers *et al.* 1991).

During the year 17 Pale-legged Leaf Warblers were trapped, more than twice the previous total. With increased familiarity with the variation in this species, it is now recognised that the bird ringed in 1987 and listed as Ijima Leaf Warbler? was a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler and the totals have been adjusted accordingly.

The two White-vented Mynahs caught in December at Mai Po appeared to be genuinely wild birds. The status of this species in Hong Kong is still uncertain, it being classed as a suspected escape by Chalmers (1986). The regular occurrence of the species in winter, however, and its apparent absence from the Territory at other times, suggests that it may be a winter visitor. Cheng (1987) records the Jungle Mynah (which he identifies as *Acridotheres (fuscus) grandis*) from

[The WWF Hong Kong Bird Ringing project is sponsored by The Rotary Club of Hong Kong South]



Yunnan and Guangxi Provinces. Sibley and Monroe (1990) consider that *grandis* is more closely related to, and possibly conspecific with, *javanicus* rather than *fuscus*.

The ringing list continues to expand with a number of 'obvious' escapes ringed e.g. Budgerigar and Yellow-fronted Canary. The changing fortunes of 'feral' populations of various species are little understood locally and ringing may help to provide information as to why some species become established whilst others die out.

The total number of waders caught was lower than in recent years and this was reflected in the somewhat lower number of overseas movements recorded during 1991. The Curlew Sandpiper records followed the pattern of previous movements but catching three Australian-ringed birds in one night was unprecedented. The bird ringed on 23 March 1990 at Port Hedland, Western Australia is of interest since a Hong Kong-ringed Curlew Sandpiper was caught at the same location on 25 March 1990 (Melville 1991a).

The Whimbrel is our first recovery from Russia. The species does not breed on Sakhalin and presumably was on passage when shot. The Great Reed Warbler is the second Japanese-ringed bird to be caught in Hong Kong and there are three previous records of Hong Kong-ringed Great Reed Warblers being found in Japan (Melville 1988, 1990).

In addition to captures/recoveries of ringed birds there was once again a small, but interesting, series of sightings of colour-marked birds during the year.

An Asiatic Golden Plover was reported with a red/orange colour ring but apparently no other rings. It is possible that this was a bird with a metal ring which had become 'golden', this being quite commonly recorded in locally ringed waders which spend time at Mai Po.

There was one record of a 'flagged' Red-necked Stint on 16 May. This was the only 'flagged' bird from Victoria, Australia recorded during the year despite increasing numbers of birds carrying such marks in the flyway system (Minton 1991, Barter and Rush 1992).

A young Black Kite, which had been colour-ringed on Stonecutters Island on 19 May 1991, was seen at Mai Po on 24 November 1991. This is the second furthest recorded movement of a Black Kite in Hong Kong, the furthest being a bird which was seen near Mai Po after being marked with patagial tags near Stanley on the south side of Hong Kong Island (Melville 1980).

Our bank of recapture data continues to increase and Tables 3 and 4 summarise the more interesting records for migrant and 'resident' species respectively.

We have continued to co-operate with Dr R. Corlett of the Botany Department, University of Hong Kong in studies of seed dispersal by birds, the preliminary results being given by Corlett (in press). G. Reels of the Zoology Department, University of Hong Kong has been assessing the diets of some insectivorous birds at Mai Po. Some Dunlin blood samples were sent to H-U. Rösner, WWF Germany for DNA studies.

A number of birds at Mai Po have 'scaly legs' and 'poxy feet', the former being particularly common in Great Reed Warblers and Tree Sparrows, the latter being found in Black-faced Buntings and several other species. The causes of these afflictions are still uncertain but single specimens of Great Reed Warbler and Tree Sparrow with 'scaly legs' examined during the year suffered from mite infestations in the epidermis. Studies are being continued in conjunction with Dr S. Mainka.

During the year a ringing training course was held at Mai Po for Chinese scientists and a revised ringing training manual was completed (Melville 1991b).

We wish to thank the Ringing Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology for permission to use their rings in Hong Kong. Trapping of birds is carried out under permits issued by the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries. We are grateful to fellow ringers David Carthy, Peter Kennerley, Paul Leader, Michael Lau, Fox Wong and Lew Young. Many others have helped with ringing activities during the year and we thank them all especially Simba Chan, Jan Galsworthy, Mary Ketterer and Vicky Melville. Sue Mainka offered valuable veterinary advice.

Bird ringing in Hong Kong is a WWF Hong Kong project funded by the Rotary Club of Hong Kong South. We are most grateful for their support.



一九九一年，香港共環志了154種，共5,399頭雀鳥。涉及境外活動的包括一隻在日本環志的大葦鶯 *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*，而一隻在香港環志的中杓鵒 *Numenius phaeopus* 則在俄羅斯的庫頁島被射擊；三隻在澳洲環志的彎咀鵒 *Calidris ferruginea* 在香港重新捕獲，而一隻在本港環志的則在澳洲被尋獲。



TABLE 1. Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1991

Species	MAPS*	1975-1990	1991	Total
Little Grebe		1		1
Cormorant		1		1
Bittern		1		1
Yellow Bittern				
Schrenk's Bittern	15	57	4	76
Chestnut Bittern		1	1	2
Night Heron	1	2		3
Little Green Heron		3	1	4
Chinese Pond Heron		2		2
Cattle Egret		83	1	84
Little Egret		1	1	2
Falcated Teal		3	1	4
Teal		1		1
Yellow-nib Duck		19		19
Pintail		2	1	3
Garganey			1	1
Black Kite		4		4
Japanese Sparrowhawk		37	2	39
Besra	1	5	9	15
Chinese Goshawk			3	3
Imperial Eagle	1**		1	1
Bonelli's Eagle		1		1
Kestrel	4**	1		5
Peregrine Falcon		1**		1
Chinese Francolin	7**			7
				Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1990	1991	Total
Japanese Quail	1**			1
Yellow-legged Button Quail			1	1
Barred Button Quail	1**			2
Baillon's Crane	1	1		2
White-breasted Waterhen				
Moorhen	1	9	7	17
Coot		2		2
Painted Snipe		1	1	2
Black-winged Stilt		2	1	3
Avocet		1		1
Oriental Pratincole		2	1	3
Little Ringed Plover		3		3
Kenish Plover		3		3
Lesser Sand Plover		22		22
Greater Sand Plover		41	5	46
Asiatic Golden Plover		189	37	226
Grey Plover		58	8	66
Great Knot		43	13	56
Knot		47	28	75
Red-necked Stint		30	45	75
Temminck's Stint	6	189	6	201
Long-toed Stint		1		1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		25	6	31
Pectoral Sandpiper		38	3	41
Curlew Sandpiper	1	1		1
		541	114	656
				Continued ...



TABLE 1 continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1990	1991	Total
Dunlin		350	4	354
Spoon-billed Sandpiper		3		3
Broad-billed Sandpiper		92	5	97
Ruff		1	1	2
Fantail Snipe	1	81	11	93
Pintail Snipe		4	5	9
Swinhoe's Snipe		8	2	10
Asiatic Dowitcher		18	2	20
Black-tailed Godwit		21	2	23
Bar-tailed Godwit		58	16	74
Whimbrel		304	63	367
Curllew		15	4	19
Australian Curlew		1		1
Spotted Redshank		7		7
Redshank		938	91	1029
Marsh Sandpiper		42	13	55
Greenshank		18	1	19
Green Sandpiper		1		1
Wood Sandpiper		147	10	157
Terek Sandpiper		407	52	459
Common Sandpiper	4	86	21	111
Grey-tailed Tattler		61	3	64
Turnstone		21	1	22
Red-necked Phalarope		7	2	9
Rufous Turtle Dove		22	6	28

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1990	1991	Total
Spotted Dove	2	73	54	129
Emerald Dove		2	7	9
Rose-ringed Parakeet	1			1
Budgerigar			3	3
Plaintive Cuckoo		1	2	3
Oriental Cuckoo		1		1
Koel		2		2
Greater Coucal		11	1	12
Lesser Coucal	2	1	3	3
Oriental Scops Owl	2		1	3
Barred Owllet			2**	2
Short-eared Owl	2**	1		3
House Swift		1		1
White-breasted Kingfisher	24	25	9	58
Black-capped Kingfisher	5	20	6	31
Common Kingfisher	104	562	169	835
Pied Kingfisher		5		5
Wryneck	21	14	7	42
Sand Martin	1			1
Swallow	11	139	15	165
Richard's Pipit	13		1	14
Olive-backed Pipit	86	34	6	126
Pechora Pipit		2		2
Forest Wagtail		1	1	2
Yellow Wagtail		1		1

Continued ...



TABLE 1 continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1990	1991	Total
Grey Wagtail	6	3		9
White Wagtail	18	16	5	39
Ashy Minivet			2	2
Crested Bulbul	80	228	379	687
Chinese Bulbul	895	953	533	2,381
Red-vented Bulbul	95	10	5	110
Chestnut Bulbul	2			2
Black Bulbul	1			1
White-tailed Robin				1
Red-tailed Robin		1		1
Rubythroat	6	14	14	34
Bluethroat	95	80	51	226
Red-flanked Bluetail	9	17	4	30
Daurian Redstart	30	79	48	157
Magpie Robin	16	2	5	23
Stonechat	2	34	11	47
Grey Bushchat	48	54	18	120
White-throated Rock Thrush	1			1
Violet Whistling Thrush		1		1
Grey's Thrush	11	8	2	21
White's Thrush	2		3	5
Blackbird	53	6	12	71
Brown Thrush	1	8		9
Grey-backed Thrush	1			1
Pale Thrush	209	48	62	319
	15	1		16

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1990	1991	Total
Eye-browed Thrush		1	12	13
Dusky Thrush	3			3
Short-tailed Bush Warbler	1	4	5	10
Chinese Bush Warbler	19	160	56	235
Mountain Bush Warbler		3	7	10
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler		1		1
Pale-footed Bush Warbler		2		2
Fantail Warbler		7		7
Bright-capped Cisticola			3	3
Plain Prinia	12		4	4
Yellow-bellied Prinia				
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	39	362	119	493
Styan's Grasshopper Warbler	5	606	257	902
Lanceolated Warbler	8	3	1	9
Black-browed Reed Warbler		11	5	24
Blunt-winged Warbler	21	213	1	1
Great Reed Warbler			44	278
Blyth's Reed Warbler	251	1,180	1	1
Thick-billed Warbler				
Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler				
Long-tailed Tailorbird	11	88	55	154
Eastern Crowned Warbler				
Pale-legged Leaf Warbler		3	1	4
Arctic Warbler	12	8	17	25
Pallas's Warbler	5	52	64	128
		6	17	28

Continued ...



TABLE 1 continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1990	1991	Total
Yellow-browed Warbler	19	62	59	140
Radde's Warbler			2	2
Dusky Warbler	104	751	197	1,052
Chiffchaff		2		2
Two-banded Greenish Warbler		1	2	3
Hainan Blue Flycatcher			1	1
Blue and White Flycatcher			1	1
Grey-streaked Flycatcher			1	1
Brown Flycatcher	6	13	8	27
Red-breasted Flycatcher	1	6	3	10
Mugimaki Flycatcher		1	6	7
Yellow-rumped Flycatcher	2	9	18	29
Narcissus Flycatcher		1		1
Grey-headed Flycatcher	1			1
Asian Paradise Flycatcher		1	2	3
Japanese Paradise Flycatcher			2	2
Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher	1	2	2	5
Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush		1	11	12
Black-throated Laughing Thrush	2			2
Hwamei	7**	20	15	42
Black-faced Laughing Thrush	18	8	8	34
Pekin Robin	9**	14	21	44
Silver-eared Mesia			6	6
Vinous-throated Parrotbill		1		1
Yellow-checked Tit			1	1

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1990	1991	Total
Great Tit	34	35	17	86
Penduline Tit		69	24	93
Fork-tailed Sunbird	1	4	11	16
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker		1	2	3
Chestnut-flanked White-eye		7	1	8
White-eye	217	2,018	951	3,186
Black-naped Oriole			2	2
(Bull-headed Shrike)**	1			1
Brown Shrike	6	6	10	22
Rufous-backed Shrike	39	27	12	78
Black Drongo		6	1	7
Hair-crested Drongo	1	1	1	3
Jay		1		1
Blue Magpie	4	3		7
Magpie	2**	1	1	4
Silky Starling		6	5	11
Chinese Starling	2	5	1	8
Black-necked Starling			12	12
Crested Mynah	2	4	7	13
White-vented Mynah			2	2
Ruddy Sparrow		1		1
Tree Sparrow	92**	197	245	534
Baya Weaver		4		4
White-backed Munia		9	11	20
Spotted Munia	34	393	232	659

Continued ...



TABLE 1 continued

Species	MAPS*	1975-1990	1991	Total
Chestnut Munia	1	5		6
White-headed Munia		1		1
Red Avadavat	5	4	3	12
Yellow-fronted Canary		1	7	8
Chinese Greenfinch	1			1
Siskin			1	1
Goldfinch		1		1
Common Rosefinch	12	1	8	21
Black-tailed Hawfinch	9			9
Black-faced Bunting	219	522	234	975
Japanese Yellow Bunting			1	1
Grey-headed Bunting	1	1	2	4
Yellow-browed Bunting				1
Tristram's Bunting	4	3	13	20
Little Bunting	2	103	43	148
Chestnut Bunting		13	31	44
Yellow-breasted Bunting	28	8	10	46
Reed Bunting		1		1
Pallas's Reed Bunting			1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,190</b>	<b>13,718</b>	<b>5,399</b>	<b>22,307</b>

\* The Migratory Animals Pathological Survey (MAPS) programme ran from 1964-1971. Ringing was done in Hong Kong between 1965 and 1968. Details of MAPS birds are from McClure and Leelavit (1972) and from F.O.P. Hechtel's personal records. In the few cases where there is a discrepancy the higher figure has been taken.

\*\* Some or all of these birds released from captivity by the ringer.

\*\*\* The identification of all pre-1986 records of Bull-headed Shrike *Lanius bucephalus* has been questioned by Chalmers (1986).

TABLE 2. Overseas movements of ringed birds during 1991

<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b>	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
O41-25257 ringed	18 January 1987 Werribee, Victoria, Australia
controlled	10 April 1991 Mai Po, Hong Kong
(distance	7,432 km NW)
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b>	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
O41-46645 ringed	9 April 1988 Port Hedland, Western Australia
controlled	10 April 1991 Mai Po, Hong Kong
(distance	4,777 km N)
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b>	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
O41-62931 ringed	23 March 1990 Port Hedland, Western Australia
controlled	10 April 1991 Mai Po, Hong Kong
(distance	4,777 km N)
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b>	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
NV52467 ringed	25 August 1990 Mai Po, Hong Kong
controlled	30 December 1990 Werribee, Victoria, Australia
controlled	25 February 1991 Werribee, Victoria, Australia
(distance	7,432 km SE)
<b>Whimbrel</b>	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
EP67556 ringed	12 September 1988 Mai Po, Hong Kong
shot	18 August 1990 Piltu Bay, Okhinsky Region, Sakhalin, Russia
(distance	4,209 km NE)
<b>Great Reed Warbler</b>	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
O31-05422 ringed	9 July 1988 Hibiki, Kitakyushu, Fukuoka, Japan
controlled	21 April 1991 Mai Po, Hong Kong
(distance	c2,065 km ENE)



**TABLE 3. Selected recaptures of known migrants in 1991. All records refer to Mai Po unless indicated otherwise.**

<b>Knot</b>	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
Two interesting records of juveniles possibly overwintering:	
XR81224	ringed 9 September 1991 weight 192g/recaptured 23 November 1991 weight 155g
XR81235	ringed 13 September 1991 weight 180g/recaptured 23 November 1991 weight 126g
When first caught both birds were very heavy, XR81224 being the heaviest Knot yet caught in Hong Kong, and only 2 grammes lighter than the heaviest bird caught in Victoria, Australia prior to migration in the second half of March (Barter <i>et al.</i> 1988b). The November weights are higher than mean November weights for first-winter birds in Victoria (114.8g) and northwest Australia (100.5g) (Barter <i>et al.</i> 1988b).	
It is possible that both birds suffered slight wing strain when originally caught and thus did not continue their journey southwards, although apparently ready to do so judging from their weights. It is noteworthy, however, that 30-50 Knots remained at Mai Po during the 1991/92 winter until late February (S. McChesney pers. comm.) — such behaviour being exceptional in a bird which is usually regarded as a passage migrant (Chalmers 1986). Wing lengths of Hong Kong Knots (unpublished data) indicate that they are of the race <i>rogersi</i> (Barter <i>et al.</i> 1988a), the main wintering grounds of which are in Australasia, there being only a few exceptional records throughout southeast Asia (e.g. Dickinson <i>et al.</i> 1991, White and Bruce 1986).	
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b>	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
NV52413	ringed 4 May 1990/recaptured 25 April 1991
<b>Fantail Snipe</b>	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
3 birds ringed at Lok Ma Chau on 27 October 1990 were recaptured there on 20 January 1991 (2 birds) and 3 February 1991 (1 bird).	
<b>Redshank</b>	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
DK21343	ringed 8 April 1990/recaptured 13 April 1991
DK46583	ringed 13 April 1991/recaptured 27 August 1991
<b>Common Sandpiper</b>	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
NV58681	ringed 1 May 1991/recaptured 27 August 1991
<b>Olive-backed Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>
F145254	ringed 29 March 1990/recaptured 24 November 1990, 16 March 1991
F145195	ringed 17 March 1990/recaptured 24 March 1991
HO43116	ringed 24 November 1990/recaptured 24 November 1991

Continued ...

**TABLE 3 continued**

<b>Rubythroat</b>	<i>Luscinia calliope</i>
There were 7 recaptures with wintering birds clearly using the same areas in successive winters at both Mai Po and, as shown by the following bird, Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre (KARC):	
VH60964	ringed 11 November 1990/recaptured 25 November, 4 December 1990, 10 and 24 February, 13 April, 14 and 19 December 1991
<b>Grey-backed Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus hortulorum</i>
RSO4138	ringed 25 November 1990/recaptured 4 December 1990, 16 and 23 November 1991 (KARC)
RV61762	ringed 4 February 1990/recaptured 17 March, 30 November 1991
<b>Chinese Bush Warbler</b>	<i>Cettia diphone</i>
There were 14 recaptures. Wintering birds clearly established regular territories as shown by three birds at Mai Po which returned to the same net sites in up to three successive winters.	
<b>Black-browed Reed Warbler</b>	<i>Acrocephalus bistrigiceps</i>
There were 14 recaptures, the oldest being:	
EO51324	ringed 28 November 1989/recaptured 29 September 1990, 5 October 1991
<b>Great Reed Warbler</b>	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
There were 25 recaptures. Small numbers are regularly recorded overwintering.	
<b>Pallas's Warbler</b>	<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>
8T4175	ringed 27 November 1990/recaptured 30 November 1991 (KARC)
<b>Yellow-browed Warbler</b>	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>
4V4369	ringed 24 December 1989/recaptured 12 January 1991
<b>Dusky Warbler</b>	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>
There were 21 recaptures, the oldest being:	
1K2994	ringed 30 April 1986/recaptured 5 May 1986, 26 November 1988, 7 January 1990, 14 February 1991 (58 months). The oldest bird recorded by McClure (1984) was recaptured after 35 months.

Continued ...

TABLE 3 continued

<b>Black-faced Bunting</b> <i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>		
There were 24 recaptures, the two oldest being:		
C405052	ringed	23 November 1985/recaptured 7 December 1991 (73 months)
C405069	ringed	9 March 1986/recaptured 24 March 1990, 2 February 1991 (59 months)

TABLE 4. Longevity records for 'resident' species\*

<b>Chinese Bulbul</b> <i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>		
RX79269	ringed	30 April 1986/recaptured 5 October 1991 (65 months, c.f. 26 months McClure, 45 months Melville)**
<b>Plain Prinia</b> <i>Prinia inornata</i>		
1K2827	ringed	30 September 1985/recaptured 7 April 1991 (66 months, c.f. 12 months McClure, 60 months Melville)
<b>Yellow-bellied Prinia</b> <i>Prinia flaviventris</i>		
1K2736	ringed	30 January 1985/recaptured 7 December 1991 (82 months, c.f. 61 months McClure, 57 months Melville)

\* These species are generally regarded as being 'resident' in Hong Kong (see Chalmers 1986), but there may be some movement.

\*\* 1991 Hong Kong records are compared with the longest surviving bird (in months) recorded by the MAPS programme (McClure 1984) and the 1990 Hong Kong data (Melville 1991a).

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## BIRDS NEW TO HONG KONG

### FERRUGINOUS DUCK AT MAI PO THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Peter R. Kennerley

While birding at Mai Po on 3 February 1991 I noticed a rather unusual duck asleep on the outer ponds between the Rocky Outcrop and the boardwalk. Although some 100m distant, the deep rufous-mahogany colour of its breast was quite different from that of the other duck present including Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Teal *A. crecca*, Shoveler *A. clypeata* and Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* amongst others. I drew the attention of Paul Leader to the bird and at the same time set my telescope onto the duck. As I did this, it turned side-on revealing sharply defined white undertail coverts and the distinctive hump-backed appearance of an *Aythya* duck. Finally, it raised its head and it became apparent that it could only be a Ferruginous Duck *A. nyroca*, while its bright plumage and white iris indicated it was a male bird.

The following details were noted:

**Plumage** The head was a rich reddish-mahogany brown colour and quite uniform. The breast and foreflanks were of a similar colour while the rear flanks were slightly duller. There was no white patch on the foreflanks as in Baer's Pochard *A. baeri*. The mantle was brown, darker than the head but still a rather warm colour. The undertail coverts were gleaming white and sharply demarcated from the rear flanks and tail. The belly was not seen.

**Bare Parts** The bill was greyish, unmarked apart from a black nail, and the iris was white. The legs were not seen.

**Structure** The bird showed the very distinctive shape which characterises Ferruginous Duck. The bill was long and sloped upwards into the rather high forehead. The head, although quite rounded, was less bulbous and more peaked than that of Baer's Pochard, with the peak being slightly further forward than on Baer's.

The identification of this bird was quite straightforward. I had seen Ferruginous Duck on several previous occasions, most recently in Assam, India in February 1988. Baer's Pochard was readily eliminated by its bottle-green head, pale foreflank patch and overall duller appearance. The possibility of an exotic escape or hybrid was also considered. Reference to Madge and Burn (1988) indicated that Hardhead *A. australis* of Australia was the only other species likely to cause confusion. During a visit to Australia in October 1990 I had seen numerous Hardheads and found them quite different from Ferruginous Duck, being darker and browner with a more rounded head and a conspicuous white patch near the tip of the bill.

## RANGE AND STATUS

Ferruginous Duck breeds from western Europe to western Siberia, south to the northern Caucasus and, from there, eastwards through southern Transcausia, western Afghanistan, Kashmir and Ladakh to northwest China (Vaurie 1965). Within China it breeds in the Xinjiang Uygur, Nei Mongol and Xizang Autonomous Regions (Cheng 1987). I have also seen it during the breeding season at Qinghai Hu (Koko Nur), Qinghai Province in June 1985.

It winters to the south of its breeding range from southern and western Europe into Africa south to Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda and eastwards through Iraq, Iran and into India, Burma and China (Vaurie 1965). Within China it has been recorded from Shandong, Hubei, Hunan and Guizhou Provinces (Cheng 1987) and has recently been seen at Cao Hai, Guizhou Province (R.W. Lewthwaite pers. comm.). Closer to Hong Kong, a female was purchased in the Shenzhen bird market, Guangdong Province in the winter of 1990/91 and now resides in the captive Waterfowl Collection at Mai Po but its origin remains unknown. Elsewhere in the region, there is a single record from Japan dating back to December 1959 (Brazil 1991).

Although its occurrence in Hong Kong was unexpected at the time, its distribution, combined with the large increase in the numbers of duck spending the winter at Mai Po and within Deep Bay, makes it surprising that it had not been considered as a potential vagrant previously.

在一九九一年二月三日，一隻白眼潛鴨 *Aythya nyroca* 在米埔被發現，這是本港首次紀錄。本文描述該鳥的情況和分佈範圍。

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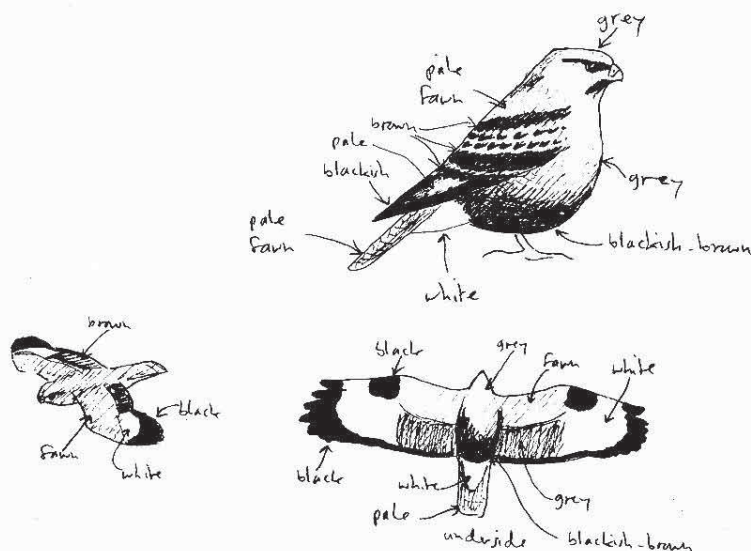
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# UPLAND BUZZARD ON LANTAU A FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

George Walthew

During a walk on 20 December 1989 from Shek Pik to Shui Hau on Lantau Island I spotted what appeared to be a Buzzard *Buteo buteo* perched in bright sunshine on the top of a wooden electricity pole in the small valley of Tung Wan. The bird was only about 45m away and its unusual plumage caused me to spend some time studying it. After sketching it and making notes I resumed my walk only to come across what I presumed to be the same bird soaring with eight Black Kites *Milvus migrans* near Lo Kei Wan about an hour later.



Field sketch of Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*  
Lantau, 20 December 1989

(George Walthew)

Although I suspected that the bird may have been an Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*, it was not until I returned to the United Kingdom in late January 1990 that I was able to consult any books other than Viney and Phillipps (1988) and identify it satisfactorily.

The perched bird had a pale grey head which became pale fawn on the nape and mantle. There was a well-marked black eye stripe and moustachial stripe. On the underside the pale grey breast darkened to become blackish-brown on the flanks and belly, contrasting strongly with white undertail coverts.

The closed wings were marked by two dark brown bands on the coverts separated by a broad band of pale brown which had two rows of dark spots. The lower dark bar was separated from a third by a thin pale bar which was presumably formed by the pale tips of the dark feathers above. Below these the blackish primaries projected with a pale wedge extending into the black. Projecting beyond the wings, the tail was pale fawn and crossed by narrow black bars.

In flight the bird appeared slightly smaller than the Black Kites. From below, the tail and head were noticeably pale, contrasting with the blackish-brown lower belly region. The tips and trailing edge of the wing were black, as was the prominent carpal patch, and these were separated by a large white patch on the primaries. The secondaries were grey — darker than the underwing coverts which were pale fawn. The upperwing was light fawn with darker brown secondaries and greater coverts. The primaries were black at the tips with white bases forming a large patch.

Separation from Buzzard relies on the prominent white bases to the primaries on the upper surface of the wing which Inskipp and Inskipp (1991) consider diagnostic, and the dark 'V' on the lower underparts and legs. The overall paleness also strongly points to Upland Buzzard. This can be reminiscent of Rough-legged Buzzard *B. lagopus*, but without that species' broad black terminal tail band. Separation from the extralimital but closely related Long-legged Buzzard *B. rufinus* is much more difficult but adults of that species have uniform pale tails without the faint barring noted above.

The range of this species is given by Cheng (1987) and de Schauensee (1984) as north and central China and Tibet. It mainly winters north of the Changjiang (Yangtze) River but occasionally as far south as Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces.

在一九八九年十二月十日，在大嶼山石壁附近錄得本港的第一隻大鵟 *Buteo hemilasius*。本文描述了該鳥並解釋如何與鵟 *B. buteo*、毛腳鵟 *B. lagopus* 和棕尾鵟 *B. rufinus* 區分。

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# WHITE-BROWED CRAKE AT MAI PO THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG AND CHINA

Peter R. Kennerley

Having already had an excellent day's birding at Mai Po on 20 April 1991 I was leaving the Marsh in the early evening with Mike Chalmers and Paul Leader. Although the light was poor, we decided to have a look for the Ruddy Crake *Porzana fusca* which had been present the previous week in the tidal creek beside the Police Post. Almost immediately I noticed a crake which very quickly disappeared from view. Although the views were brief, the impression gained started alarm bells ringing. After a short wait the bird reappeared, again only briefly, but this time I was able to confirm that the bird showed the distinctive head pattern of White-browed Crake *P. cinereus*.

As we waited, several other birders joined us until some 20 people gathered in the rapidly failing light. At 1915h the bird walked into the open, giving prolonged views, although by this time the light conditions were appalling. Nevertheless, all observers present agreed with the identification.

The bird was subsequently seen over a period of eight days and the following description results from observations made on 20, 21, 27 and 28 April, the date of the last sighting.

**Plumage** The head was marked with a white supercilium which extended from the base of the bill to just behind the eye. Below this was a dark eye stripe which extended beyond the rear of the supercilium. Below the eye stripe was a further white line of similar length to the supercilium. The ear coverts and breast were pale grey and lacked any markings. The belly was slightly paler than the breast while the throat and chin were white with a greyish cast. Above, the crown and nape were brown and apparently unmarked while the mantle and scapulars were of a similar colour but with darker fringes which produced a rather streaked effect similar to that of Baillon's Crake *P. pusilla*.

**Bare Parts** The bill was deep yellow, very bright and conspicuous, while the legs were dull green.

The bird was not particularly wary and often spent prolonged periods walking on short vegetation, frequently dashing around and darting into cover but not remaining hidden for long. This behaviour is typical of the species elsewhere within its range (pers. obs.).

The appearance on the same day at Mai Po of Hong Kong's first Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens* (Leader 1992) as well as the White-browed Crake ensured a big turn-out the following day. Fortunately, the crake was still present and performed well for its large and

appreciative audience. Some observers with previous experience of White-browed Crake considered this bird to be brighter than those seen elsewhere within its range but, apart from this, the bird was in every way typical of the species.

## STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION

White-browed Crake is not included in Cheng (1987) and therefore this record appears to represent the first record for the Chinese mainland. Elsewhere, it is a vagrant to Taiwan with only three records (Wang *et al.* 1991) and is extinct in Japan where it was formerly resident on Iwo-jima and Minami-iwo-jima (Brazil 1991). To the south of Hong Kong, it is resident in central and peninsular Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and through the Greater and Lesser Sundas to northern Australia and the southwest Pacific islands including Samoa and Fiji (King *et al.* 1975, Vaurie 1965)

一九九一年四月二十日，一隻白眉田雞 *Porzana cinereus* 在米埔被發現後，一直在該處逗留了好幾個星期，這是本港和中國大陸的首個紀錄。本文介紹這種雀鳥的各方面情況和分佈情形。

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## BLUE-THROATED BEE-EATER AT MAI PO A NEW SPECIES FOR HONG KONG

John Holmes

On 25 September 1991 at 0930h I was outside the Nature Wardens' Office at Mai Po Marshes when I noticed the distinctive shape of a bee-eater *Merops* sp. fly into a low bare tree about 30m along the bund in the direction of the border fence. I approached to within 20m and through binoculars saw a small, bulbul-sized bee-eater facing me. A light turquoise-blue throat turned to light green on the breast and belly. There was no gorget and the upperparts were a dark green apart from a pale blue lower back and tail, which was square-ended. The bird was one of a party of at least six (my view of the tree was partly obscured). Being familiar with this species from Guangdong Province and Malaysia I realised that I was looking at a juvenile Blue-throated Bee-eater *Merops viridis*, a first record for Hong Kong.



8. Blue-throated Bee-eater *Merops viridis*  
Mai Po, 25 September 1991

(John Holmes)

I took a number of photographs in the next twenty minutes. Closer observation showed that two of the party of six birds had some chestnut-brown feathering on the head, nape and mantle and slightly elongated central tail feathers. These were either adults or juveniles moulting to first-winter.

After about twenty minutes the flock flew away westwards towards the border security fence. Halfway down the casuarinas I saw another group of at least four other individuals of the same species. These also flew off in the same direction.

Within China the Blue-throated Bee-eater breeds in Yunnan, Hunan, Jiangxi, Guangdong and Fujian Provinces and is recorded as resident all year only on Hainan Island (Cheng 1987). He describes it as 'fairly common' although La Touche (1925-34) describes it as 'localised' in Fujian and Jiangxi. Two young birds were collected near Hainan in September 1891 (La Touche 1925-34).

Although the Blue-throated Bee-eater is distributed through south China, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Sumatra, Java, Borneo and the Philippines, it is only the mainland populations that are 'substantially migratory'. The birds that comprise the influx of Blue-throated Bee-eaters to peninsular Malaysia in September and October are presumed to come from Thailand and China (Fry 1984). Although the migration routes of this species are largely unknown, the birds which breed to the north and west of Hong Kong in Guangdong, Jiangxi and Fujian must pass fairly close to the Territory on passage. The Blue-tailed Bee-eater *M. philippinus* also breeds in south China and is regularly recorded (almost annually) during migration, mainly in the spring (Chalmers 1986).

The morning of 25 September was clear and sunny with a northerly breeze. Although Typhoon Signal No.1 was hoisted due to the proximity of Tropical Storm Nat, weather conditions were not dramatic. However, it was the third day in a row that the prevailing wind came from the north (Anon. 1991) and this may have been a factor in the bee-eaters' occurrence.

在一九九一年九月二十五日，在米埔的木麻黃上發現兩小羣，共十隻藍喉蜂虎 *Merops viridis*。雖然，牠們的出現早在預料中，但畢竟是香港首次紀錄。文章描述了牠們的情況與及分佈的範圍。

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# NORTHERN SKYLARK THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Michael L. Chalmers

Although there were several occasions during previous winters when larks considered to be possibly Northern Skylarks *Alauda arvensis* were heard and seen flying over the Deep Bay area, the only lark species in Category A of the Hong Kong List prior to 1991 were Oriental Skylark *A. gulgula*, which is a resident and winter visitor, and Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cinerea*, a vagrant with only one record (Chalmers 1986).

On 16 February 1991 Fox Wong reported skylarks on the landfill area (formerly fish ponds) to the immediate east of the Mai Po Marshes. A subsequent check by Paul Leader and Peter Kennerley on 23 February 1991 found at least two Oriental and six Northern Skylarks present. Up to four Northerns continued to be seen in the area until 2 March 1991, often at close range on the ground and in the company of Oriental Skylarks.

The following description was taken by MLC on 24 February:

'Typical skylark size and posture, not small. Crown and forehead strongly streaked black on a pale whitish-brown base. This streaking ended sharply across rear crown at tip of crest, which was only raised when bird was alarmed; raised crest typical of Northern Skylark, not as prominent as on Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* but larger than typical Oriental Skylark. Well-defined supercilium from bill over eye onto nape. Lores white with a few fine dark streaks. White eye ring connected to supercilium. Ear coverts brown with very fine short dark streaks only visible under closest views. Whitish sides of neck with black streaks, the white separating and underlining ear coverts. Hindneck and nape pale grey with fine pale streaks, contrasting with much stronger crown and mantle markings.

Mantle strongly marked showing black centred feathers with pale brown edges to upper back, and pale grey-brown edges to lower back, rump and uppertail coverts. Closed wing had pale whitish or greyish fringes to all coverts and most flight feathers. Lesser coverts very pale grey with whitish tips and edges to give relatively uniform pale appearance. Median coverts with large black centres and pale grey edges to tips and sides producing prominent dark band across closed wing with six conspicuous dark centres visible. Greater coverts dark grey-brown with pale greyish tips and edges; relatively long and extended over much of closed wing. Tertiaries faded, very worn and blackish with thin pale edges still visible in parts. Primaries and secondaries blackish with thin whitish edges except for a group of secondaries with browner, but not rich brown, edges. Primary coverts black with pale grey edges. Three primary tips projected beyond three visible tertiaries. Primary tips crossed over about one-third length of tail from base, just beyond tips of uppertail coverts. In flight, white trailing edge to wing noted. Tail blackish with white outer feathers noted in flight, and notched end visible at rest.



9. Upperparts of Northern Skylark *Alauda arvensis* (right) and Oriental Skylark *A. gulgula* (left)  
Lake Poyang, Jiangxi, China, December 1989

(Michael L. Chalmers)



10. Underparts of Northern Skylark *Alauda arvensis* (right) and Oriental Skylark *A. gulgula* (left)  
Lake Poyang, Jiangxi, China, December 1989

(Michael L. Chalmers)



Chin and throat white with moustachial streaks on each side separating ear coverts. Breast white with fine black streaks forming clear gorget and extending onto sides of neck. Lower breast, flanks, belly and undertail coverts whitish with patches of strong buff on upper flanks, under bend of wing and, on one bird, amongst streaking on lower breast.

Iris dark. Bill decurved on grey upper mandible and relatively straight on paler lower mandible, which appeared yellowish when bird gaped. Inside of mouth orange. Legs and feet pale pink.

Flight call identical to that of Northern Skylark in Europe, Japan and China: a subdued *chirrup* repeated several times; not high-pitched.'

The following features, based on Shirihai (1986) and personal observations, were used to separate the two skylark species in the field:

- a) Northern is larger and noticeably longer-tailed in flight.
- b) Northern has contrasting paler or whitish edges to the feathers of the upperparts and sides of the head compared to the richer brown of Oriental, and lacks the rufous fringes to the primaries and secondaries.
- c) Northern has a longer, more pointed wing with obvious primary projection beyond the tertials (Shirihai quotes an average of 16mm for Northern as opposed to an average of only 3mm and a maximum of only 8mm for Oriental).
- d) Northern shows white on both the trailing edge of the wing and the outer tail feathers compared to the sandy or rusty colour shown in Oriental.
- e) The lesser coverts on Northern are a more uniform pale grey and contrast with the dark-centred medians. In addition, all wing coverts on Northern also have whitish edges forming more distinct wing bars.
- f) Northern has a distinctive slurred *chirrup* flight call whereas Oriental has an equally distinctive but strident monosyllabic nasal call described by Lekagul and Round (1991) as a dry twanging *chizz*, by Shirihai as a staccato *baz, baz* and by Sharrock in Shirihai (1986) as 'a very distinctive soft buzz'.

These differences in size and plumage features are well illustrated in plates 9 and 10 which show dead birds of both species found by PJJ and MLC at Lake Poyang, Jiangxi Province, China in December 1989. The photographs also show the whitish underwing of Northern compared to the grey-buff of Oriental, and Northern's lack of buff around the vent.

The range of Northern Skylark extends from Europe east through Transbaikalia to Korea and Japan. Birds winter as far south as Egypt, Iran and northwest India. Cheng (1987) gives six separate races occurring in China with *dulcivox* breeding in the northwest and *kiborti* and *intermedia* breeding in the northeast. The winter range extends diagonally across China from the north central region to the southeast at the Pearl River delta. Specimen records indicate *pekinensis* winters near Beijing while *kiborti*, *intermedia*, *japonica* and *lonnbergi* winter in the Yangtze valley,

the first two also extending south to Guangdong Province. De Schauensee (1984) also considered the first two races to reach Fujian Province.

Northern Skylark has been accepted to Category A of the Hong Kong List based on the above sight records of up to six birds and the fact that Hong Kong is just within the southern limit of the species' published winter range. Although these sightings are considered to be the first authenticated records for Hong Kong, La Touche (1925-30) and Vaughan and Jones (1913) referred to claims of occasional winter records at Kowloon as well as Macau and Samshui. However, these were inadequately documented and were not included in the Hong Kong checklists.

四隻雲雀 *Alauda arvensis* 在米埔附近的一個堆填區出現，最初的兩隻在一九九一年二月二十三日發現，牠們一直逗留至三月二日。雖然，以前也有報告，這次是首次正式接納的紀錄。本文列舉了雲雀和小雲雀 *A. gulgula* 的分別，並詳細描述了該類雀鳥和牠們的分佈情況。

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# **BRIGHT-CAPPED CISTICOLA THE FIRST RECORDS FOR HONG KONG**

*Clive A. Viney and Michael L. Chalmers*

On Saturday 23 November 1991 CAV and Charlie Moores, a visitor from the UK, were birdwatching in the Ping Yeung area of the northern New Territories. Whilst sitting on a small grassy knoll CAV's attention was drawn by CM to three long-tailed 'streaked prinias' on a bush top about 25m away. The birds had long tails and were generally rich chestnut in colour, heavily streaked above with contrastingly bland heads. Immediate impressions were 'long-tailed' Fantail Warblers *Cisticola juncidis* but because of their mewing calls, not unlike Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris*, thoughts of unusual prinias came more to mind. CM said that he knew Bright-capped Cisticolas *Cisticola exilis* from Thailand and these birds were not like those but they did remind him of cisticolas he had recently seen in Africa. All in all CAV thought a prinia more likely and considered David's Hill Warbler (Brown Prinia) *Prinia polychroa* a possibility, but these birds were nothing like the one illustrated in Viney and Phillips (1988). The body bulk was too small and the birds were too bright. Fantail Warblers in the area were noted to be smaller, have shorter tails with obvious white spots on the upperside of the tail, clear streaking on the crown and a distinctly marked facial pattern.

The next morning several observers arrived to search. No unusual prinias were reported but MLC found a single bird which resembled a Fantail Warbler except for its much longer dark tail without white tips and black subterminal marks, a plainer face due to a dull supercilium which was the same colour as the nape, and an unusual penetrating monosyllabic nasal call. He then met Richard Lewthwaite and they went together to look at a separate similar bird that RWL had found; the rump on this individual was unstreaked dull buff, not as bright as that on Fantail Warbler.

On consulting references at home MLC concluded that the birds were Bright-capped Cisticolas in winter plumage and informed the others. CAV agreed but to remove any existing doubt MLC returned on 30 November with Tony Galsworthy, Paul Leader, Anthony Roberts and Fox Wong to trap at least one bird. PJL quickly located a single bird by its nasal call and it was trapped, ringed, photographed and measured. Shortly afterwards a second and third bird were also trapped in the same net and duly ringed. All three were very similar. Two further birds were seen but not trapped.

The following detailed description was taken of the birds in the hand:

'Forehead and crown dark grey, fringed paler grey at base and tipped grey-brown. Crown feathers raised in alarm. Supercilium indistinct, gingery-buff. Eye ring pale buffish-grey. Ear coverts and lores mottled grey. Nape and sides of neck gingery-buff with only the slightest suggestion of indistinct streaking. Mantle, scapulars and tertials broadly streaked black



11. Bright-capped Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*  
Ping Yeung, 30 November 1991

*(Peter R. Kennerley)*



12. Fantail Warbler *Cisticola juncidis*  
Near Mai Po, 8 December 1991

*(Paul J. Leader)*

with dull brown edges. No whitish edges to scapulars. Primaries, secondaries and upperwing coverts dark brown, edged paler. Rump dull brown with indistinct streaking. Uppertail coverts broadly streaked black with dull brown edges. Tail long and graduated, dark brown with blackish near shaft, thin rufous-grey edges and broad pale buff tips.

Chin, throat, belly and vent white. Breast dull buff, greyer at sides. Flanks, feathers around base of legs and undertail coverts rufous-buff. Underside of tail dull grey with prominent subterminal blackish spots and pale buffish-grey tips.

Bill relatively fine and short. Upper mandible dark brown with greyish-pink cutting edge. Lower mandible dull pink. Palate yellow. Iris brown. Legs and feet pink.

Measurements and wing formulae were also taken by P.J.L. Tail lengths of 52, 53 and 54mm confirmed identification as Bright-capped Cisticola. La Touche (1925-30) gives the tail length of Fantail Warbler in winter as 41-48mm for males and 41-44mm for females.

#### Measurements (in mm)

Date	30.11.91			1.12.91
Ring no.	7F0604	7F0605	7F0606	7F0614
wing (maximum chord)	48	44	43	42
tail	54	52	53	48
bill (to skull)	11.8	11.4	-	11.6
tarsus	19.4	18	19	17.8
weight	7.3g	-	6.4g	6 g
fat score (after Anon 1984)	2	2	3	2

#### Wing formulae

7F0604	PC+9	-6	-1	WP		-1	-3	-5	-6	-7	
7F0605	-	-6	-2	-0.5	WP	-0.5	-2.5	-4.5	-5	-	
7F0606	PC+7.5	-6.5	-1	WP		-0.5	-3	-4.5	-5	-6	
7F0614	PC+7	-8	-2.5	-1	WP	-1	-2	-4	-5.5	-7	
Primary		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

PC = longest primary covert

WP = wing point i.e. longest primary

P.J.L. returned the next day with Peter Kennerley and trapped a further unringed bird, showing that at least four were present. Up to seven were subsequently considered to be there on 1 December. Following these records at Ping Yeung, other areas of similar rank grass were examined during the winter of 1991/92 and Bright-capped Cisticolas were found at Tung Chung, Sha Lo Tung, Ho Chung and in the Lam Tsuen Valley.

These records indicate that either there was an irruption of the species into Hong Kong at the end of 1991 or, more likely, that because of its prinia-like call and appearance in winter, the species had been overlooked in the past. One reason for this is the marked difference between winter and breeding plumages including the loss of the bright cap and the lengthening of the tail by about 25mm to give an overall body size of about 125mm. The race *courtoisi* also has an ashy, not golden, cap in breeding plumage and a duller head in winter than its nearest southern ally, the race *tytleri*, which extends from India to Yunnan Province in southwest China (La Touche 1925-30).

Cheng (1987) indicates that *courtoisi* is resident across south and east China south of the Yangtze Valley with separate races in the extreme southwest and in Taiwan. Specimen records exist for Fujian and Hunan Provinces and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region but not for Guangdong Province.

The species' range extends from India to south China, south through Indochina to Java as well as the Philippines and Australia; it is also found in Taiwan (King *et al.* 1975).

一九九一年冬季湧現了從未在香港紀錄得到的黃頭扇尾鶯 *Cisticola exilis*。十一月二十三日，第一個紀錄在坪洋，後網捕到四隻。本文詳細介紹了牠們，包括各項量度結果和羽翼方程式、如何和棕扇尾鶯 *C. juncidis* 區分、鳴聲和分佈情況。

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# BLUNT-WINGED WARBLER A NEW SPECIES FOR HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader

On 20 April 1991 at about 1500h, whilst birdwatching near the WWF Hong Kong Wildlife Education Centre at Mai Po, my attention was drawn to the song of an *Acrocephalus* warbler nearby. The song, whilst typical of the family, was more melodious than that of Black-browed Reed Warbler *A. bistrigiceps*. I 'pished' and the bird briefly appeared about five metres away, and to my amazement was a Blunt-winged Warbler *A. concinens*.

Peter Kennerley arrived almost immediately and about five minutes later the bird reappeared at about the same distance, again giving excellent views as it sang in the reeds. The bird continued to show well for about the next half hour and was also seen by several other observers.

The following description in the field was noted:

'A small, rather plain *Acrocephalus* warbler, roughly the same size as Black-browed Reed Warbler. Supercilium off-white, well marked in front of and above the eye but very indistinct behind resulting in a markedly short supercilium. Eye stripe indistinct behind the eye. No black or darker border above the supercilium. Lores pale. Crown brown with a rufous tinge. Upperparts rufous-brown, brightest on the rump. Tertiaries mid-brown with quite broad rufous fringes. Primaries and secondaries with thin rufous fringes to outer web. Tail brown, darker than rump. Throat white, breast and flanks buffy. Eye dark. Bill striking, being very long and broad based; upper mandible dark, lower grey-pink. Bright orange insides of mouth when singing. Legs grey. Structure very distinctive: very short rounded wings with short primary projection; tail very long and well rounded.'

The following morning the bird was still singing, and in view of the difficulties involved in *Acrocephalus* warbler identification, it was decided an attempt should be made to trap it. Tony Galsworthy, PRK and I achieved this by recording its song and playing it back under a net erected in the reedbed.

The bird was examined in detail, ringed, photographed (see pp. 169 and 171) and released.

Bare part coloration in the hand: iris hazel-brown; upper mandible grey-brown with horn-coloured cutting edge, lower grey-pink with darker tip; tarsus, feet and claws grey-pink, soles yellowish.

## Measurements

wing (maximum chord)	54 mm
tail	55 mm
bill (to skull)	15.5 mm
bill (to feathering)	10.5 mm
bill width	3.3 mm
tarsus	22.3 mm
hind claw	6.7 mm
weight	8.8 g
fat score (after Anon 1984)	2
emarginated primaries	3, 4, 5, 6
notch on 2nd primary	13.5 mm from tip
notch on 3rd primary	12.8 mm from tip

## Wing formula

	PC+6	-6.5	-2		WP		-1	-3	-4	-5.5	-7	-9
Primary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	SS	

PC = longest primary covert

WP = wing point (i.e. longest primary)

SS = secondaries

Seven species of small *Acrocephalus* warblers have been recorded from Hong Kong and eastern China viz. Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus*, Black-browed Reed Warbler, Streaked Reed Warbler *A. sorgophilus*, Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum*, Paddyfield Warbler *A. agricola*, Manchurian Reed Warbler *A. tangorum* and Blunt-winged Warbler (Kennerley and Leader 1992). In this case, the combination of the short supercilium not extending beyond the eye, the lack of any dark border above the supercilium, the strong rufous tones to the upperparts, the large bill, the short primary projection and the wing and tail proportions eliminate all but Blunt-winged Warbler. This was confirmed by measurements and wing formula (Williamson 1976). For a detailed review of *Acrocephalus* warbler identification and separation see Kennerley and Leader (1992) elsewhere in this Report.

Cheng (1987), who considers Blunt-winged Warbler a race of Paddyfield Warbler (c.f. Alström *et al.* 1991), gives the breeding range as Hebei, Shaanxi, Hubei and Jiangxi Provinces and Guangxi Autonomous Region. There is also a record in June 1988 of a singing bird trapped in suitable breeding habitat on Ba Bao Shan, Guangdong Province (Chalmers 1988). Cheng (1987) states that it is known as a migrant and winter visitor throughout eastern China west to Yunnan. Williamson (1976) and Alström *et al.* (1991) also include eastern China within the wintering range of Blunt-winged Warbler but apart from a November record from Guangdong Province there appear to be no published records from China during the winter months. Its wintering range apparently lies further west; in Thailand for example it is known as an uncommon winter visitor (Lekagul and Round 1991).



Chalmers (1986) stated that several records of small unstreaked reed warblers in Hong Kong may refer to Blunt-winged Warbler. However, recent records of three Blyth's Reed Warblers (Melville 1987, Chalmers *et al.* 1991, 1992) and a Paddyfield Warbler (Kennerley 1992) indicate that Blunt-winged Warbler is not the only species to consider.

一九九一年四月二十日，米埔錄得香港的第一隻鈍翅稻田葦鶯 *Acrocephalus concinens*，第二天成功網捕。文章介紹該鳥的野外特徵、羽翼方程式、各項量度數據和分佈情況。讀者可參考本報告內 Kennerley 和 Leader 關於 *Acrocephalus* 葦鶯的其他文章。

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## PADDYFIELD WARBLER AT MAI PO THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

*Peter R. Kennerley*

While ringing birds at the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve on 1 January 1992 I extracted a Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* from a net in the reedbed on gei-wai 14. The bird was taken to the ringing hut where it was examined by David Melville and myself. Mike Chalmers was telephoned and was also able to view the bird before it was photographed (see p. 165) and released.

The following details were noted in the hand:

'Supercilium pale creamy-buff, broadest and most conspicuous over and in front of the eye but extending behind the eye to the centre-rear of the ear coverts; buffy tips to the supercilium made it less conspicuous behind the eye. Indistinct darker brown line at the sides of the crown bordering the upper edge of the supercilium, extending almost to the rear of the supercilium and forward toward, but not reaching, the bill. Lores dark, similar to the rufous-brown crown but rather diffuse where the supercilium over the lores dipped down in front of the eye. Ear coverts as crown with pale shaft streaks producing a slightly mottled effect.

Mantle and nape similar in colour to the crown but with a pale buffy area extending across the sides of the neck towards the nape but not onto it. Tertiaries dark brown with broad brownish-rufous fringes as mantle colour. Secondaries similar with narrower brownish-rufous fringes. Primaries similar, each with a pale tip to the outer web. Greater, median and lesser coverts similar to the tertiaries. Alula dark brown with only a very narrow and indistinct fringe to the outer web — this therefore appeared as the darkest part of the wing. Rump slightly warmer and paler than the mantle. Uppertail coverts as mantle but very long, extending well down the tail, well past the tips of the primaries. Tail darker, similar in colour to the tertiaries with a blackish shaft and pale buff tips to all feathers.

Below, chin and throat white. Breast strongly washed buffy-brown at the centre and towards the bend of the wing, paler on the flanks and undertail coverts. Belly white. Underwing coverts silvery-white.

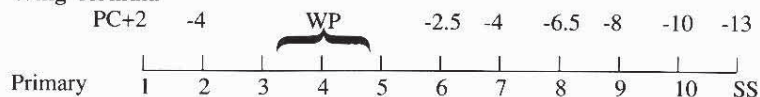
Bare parts: iris grey-brown; upper mandible black with narrow pink cutting edge towards the base, lower mandible pink at the base but dark grey at the sides towards the tip; legs dark pinky-brown, feet slightly paler, soles dull buff, claws darker than the feet.'



## Measurements

wing (maximum chord)	59 mm
tail	57 mm
difference longest/shortest rectrices	10 mm
bill (to skull)	14.2 mm
bill (to feathering)	10.9 mm
bill (width at base of nostrils)	4.2 mm
tarsus	22 mm
hind claw	6.2 mm
weight	10 g
fat score (after Anon 1984)	3
emarginated primaries	3, 4, 5
notch on 2nd primary	13 mm from tip
notch on 3rd primary	9 mm from tip

## Wing formula



PC = longest primary covert

WP = wing point (i.e. longest primary)

SS = secondaries

## DISCUSSION

Although the bird was clearly an *Acrocephalus* warbler, the decision as to which species the bird belonged to still remained. A combination of characters including the dark sides to the crown above the fairly conspicuous supercilium, the darker distal portion of the bill and the wing formula and length served to eliminate Black-browed Reed Warbler *A. bistrigiceps*, Blunt-winged Warbler *A. concinens* and Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum* — the possible confusion species previously recorded from Hong Kong. The choice therefore lay between Paddyfield Warbler which normally winters in the Indian subcontinent and Manchurian Reed Warbler *A. tangorum* which, although very rare, is known to migrate through northeast China and winters in Thailand (Round in prep.) and thus could be considered to be the more likely species to occur in Hong Kong.

The best way to separate these two species when both are in fresh plumage lies in the shape, structure and colour of the bill. Typically, Paddyfield has a small, rather delicate bill with a dark distal portion and a pinkish base to the lower mandible. Manchurian Reed, on the other hand, has a much larger bill and the lower mandible is typically pink or pinkish-yellow with only indistinct darkening towards the tip though this may not always be present. Since the bill of this bird was rather short and delicate and became distinctly darker towards the tip it indicated that the bird was a Paddyfield Warbler. A further feature by which this individual differed from Manchurian Reed Warbler lay in the colour of the legs. The legs of

all the Manchurian Reed Warblers previously seen were plumbeous or dark brownish-red while the leg colour of the Mai Po bird was pinky-brown rather than plumbeous.

Measurements are of little help in separating these species. Alström *et al.* (1991) indicate that although Manchurian Reed has slightly but significantly shorter wings and tail than Paddyfield Warbler, the overall proportions of the two species when expressed as a tail/wing ratio appear identical. At 59mm, the wing of the Mai Po bird was just outside the range quoted for Manchurian Reed by Williamson (1976) but was within the range of Paddyfield, while the tail length fell within the theoretical range of both species.

Comparison of photographs of the two species does, however, demonstrate the delicate structure of the bill of the Mai Po bird which appears similar to the bill structure of Paddyfield Warbler photographed elsewhere in its range (see Kennerley and Leader 1992). Fortunately, we had all previously seen and handled Manchurian Reed Warbler recently in China and were satisfied that the bird differed from that species and was much closer to Paddyfield Warbler. After he had seen photographs of the bird, this viewpoint was also supported by Paul Leader who had recently studied specimens of both Paddyfield and Manchurian Reed at the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, England.

A brief summary of the range and distribution of Paddyfield Warbler as well as a discussion of its taxonomic relationship with Manchurian Reed Warbler can be found in Kennerley and Leader (1992) elsewhere in this Report.

Although the normal wintering range of Paddyfield Warbler lies in India (Ripley 1982) and Cheng (1987) states that it is unknown in China away from the breeding range, its presence in Hong Kong may be viewed in the light of the occurrence of sympatric species which typically winter in India but which have in recent years been found in Hong Kong. Since 1986 these have included three Blyth's Reed Warblers (Melville 1987, Chalmers *et al.* 1991, 1992), three Chiffchaffs *Phylloscopus collybita* of the race *tristis* (Melville 1987, Chalmers and Kennerley 1989, Chalmers *et al.* 1991), two Yellow-browed Warblers *P. inornatus* of the race *humei* (Leader 1990, Chalmers *et al.* 1992) and a Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchananni* (Turnbull 1991).

However, the occurrence of both Blyth's Reed Warbler and Paddyfield Warbler within three weeks of each other in Hong Kong is remarkable. It is also possible the Paddyfield Warbler had been present for some time prior to its capture. On 14 December 1991, the day on which Hong Kong's third Blyth's Reed Warbler was trapped, I noted an *Acrocephalus*-type song coming from the reedbed in gei-wai 14 close to the ringing hut. On 22 December I again heard what I considered to be the same song. Mike Turnbull who was with me was able to make a sound recording and later compared it with the songs of Blyth's Reed and Paddyfield Warbler in



Mild (1987). Although the quality of the recording was poor, MT was of the opinion that the song was closest to Paddyfield Warbler. I again heard the same song on the morning of 1 January 1992 in the reedbed on gei-wai 14 while erecting the net there. The bird was subsequently retrapped at the same site on 29 February 1992 by Paul Leader and Tony Galsworthy.

As well as being the first record for Hong Kong, this occurrence represents the first published account of Paddyfield Warbler away from the breeding areas in China and the first record of the species wintering in China.

一九九一年一月一日，在米埔網捕得一隻稻田葦鶯 *Acrocephalus agricola*，這是香港的首次紀錄。本文有該鳥的描述、各項量度數據和羽翼方程式，並解釋了如何辨認該鳥及其與其他在東南亞錄得的小型 *Acrocephalus* 葦鶯的分別。

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#### PALLAS'S REED BUNTING A NEW SPECIES FOR HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader

At approximately 1415h on 8 December 1991, while birdwatching with Peter Kennerley on a landfill area of reclaimed fish ponds to the east of Mai Po, I noted an unusual bunting *Emberiza* sp. perched in a small bush about 20-30m away. I quickly brought the bird to PRK's attention who confirmed my suspicions that it was a Pallas's Reed Bunting *E. pallasi*.

After giving good but brief views perched out in the open and in flight the bird disappeared for about an hour. I then relocated it, again perched in the open, about 100m away from the initial site. An attempt was made to trap it but unfortunately the bird escaped through a hole in the net and flew up onto some overhead telegraph wires. It then joined two other unidentified buntings flying overhead and disappeared towards Mai Po.

On 14 December 1991 PRK and I returned to the site and were somewhat surprised to find the bird still there. We again attempted to trap it, this time successfully. The bird was ringed, measured, photographed and released.

The following description in the field was noted:

A small, long-tailed bunting, generally rather pale in colour, lacking any trace of chestnut in the plumage.

**Head** Long, broad, pale sandy-brown supercilium, reaching to the rear of the ear coverts, same width along its length. Ear coverts pale brown with distinct dark brown border to base. Crown warm brown, this colour extending onto the upper nape.

**Upperparts** Mantle very well marked with 4-5 'tramlines', alternately very pale sandy-brown and very dark brown. Rump very pale sandy-brown, and unstreaked. Tertiaries very dark (black?) with well-defined thin pale brown fringes. Greater and median coverts broadly edged sandy-buff forming two well-marked wing bars. Primaries and secondaries fringed pale buff producing a pale panel in the closed wing. Central two rectrices entirely pale sandy-brown, remaining rectrices very dark with well-defined pale sandy-brown fringes to outer webs; in flight outer tail feathers white.

**Underparts** Pale, off-white, with short dark streaking on the sides of the upper breast and upper flanks. Strong black moustachial stripes, not reaching the base of the bill, thin nearest the bill but broadening at the base. Submoustachial stripes off-white.





13. First-year female Pallas's Reed Bunting *Emberiza pallasi*  
Near Mai Po, 14 December 1991 (Paul J. Leader)

**Bare parts** Eye dark. Bill quite small; upper mandible darkish (grey?), lower mandible paler. Legs dark, feet slightly paler.

**Structure** Similar in size to Little Bunting *E. pusilla*. Large-headed and short-necked, with a slightly bulky body giving a rather sparrow-like appearance. Very noticeably long-tailed, especially when seen perched on telegraph wires overhead. Deeply notched tail.

Examination of the bird in the hand added little to the field description except that the lesser coverts were dull brown, the rump had a small amount of indistinct streaking and the streaking on the underparts was more conspicuous and extended across the breast. The upper mandible was dark grey, the lower grey-pink while the legs and feet were pink-grey with dark horn claws. It was aged as a first-winter bird on the basis of the pointed rectrices and sexed as a female due to the lack of any male-type plumage on the head (Svensson 1984).

[The cost of reproduction of plate 13 in colour has been subsidised by Wood's Photo Supplies]

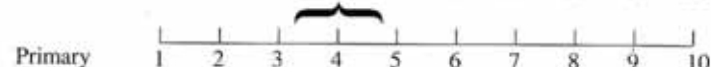
The plumage was found to be reasonably fresh, with some abrasion, typical of other buntings trapped at about the same time.

#### Measurements

wing (maximum chord)	70 mm
tail	59 mm
bill (to skull)	12.5 mm
bill (to feathering)	8.7 mm
tarsus	18.1 mm
hind claw	7.4 mm
weight	13.5 g
fat score (after Anon 1984)	2 mm
emarginated primaries	3, 4, 5, 6

#### Wing formula

=PC-7.5 -4 WP -2 -5.5 -8.5 -11 -13



PC = longest primary covert  
WP = wing point (i.e. longest primary)

#### IDENTIFICATION

The bird was clearly one of the three 'reed' buntings: Reed Bunting *E. schoeniclus*, Japanese Reed Bunting *E. yessoensis* or Pallas's Reed Bunting. Male 'reed' buntings, even first-winter birds, are relatively straightforward to identify but females, as this individual was, are more difficult.

Reed Bunting is the largest of the three, closer in size to Black-faced Bunting *E. spodocephala*. Females are usually more heavily streaked below than female Pallas's and more rufous above, lacking the strikingly pale rump and 'tramlined' mantle of Pallas's. The bill is generally rather bulky (especially in some eastern races) with a grey lower mandible, as opposed to pinkish in female Pallas's (Lewington *et al.* 1991). The wing bars are more rufous and therefore less distinct than those of female Pallas's. The lesser coverts are rufous (Svensson 1984).

Japanese Reed Bunting and Pallas's Reed Bunting are both smaller than Reed Bunting, being closer to Little Bunting in size. Japanese Reed is the brightest of the three reed buntings, never appearing as cold-looking as Pallas's. The crown and ear coverts are much darker, often blackish, even in females. The nape is a warm sandy-brown often producing a distinct collar. The rump is a warm peachy colour and the underparts are warmer, often pale peachy, especially on the flanks, and lack streaking (pers. obs., Leven 1992).

Much has been written about the supposedly diagnostic lesser coverts of Pallas's Reed Bunting (e.g. Svensson 1984, Lewington *et al.* 1991, Broad and Oddie 1980). It is stated that the lesser coverts are bluish-grey in males and brownish in juveniles and females compared to the rufous lesser coverts of Reed Bunting. However, the lesser coverts of Japanese Reed Bunting are virtually identical to those of Pallas's Reed bunting i.e. grey in males and brownish in females. In addition, detecting the colour of the lesser coverts of Pallas's and Japanese Reed Buntings in the field is in most cases very difficult, these only being really obvious in spring males (pers. obs.) and presumably summer males.

Structurally, Pallas's Reed Bunting is quite different from the other two reed buntings. The long tail and sparrow-like appearance noted in the Hong Kong bird is unlike the more typical bunting structure of Japanese Reed and Reed Buntings and is a very useful field character.

#### RANGE

Pallas's Reed Bunting breeds mainly in central and eastern Siberia and Mongolia. In China it breeds in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and probably Heilongjiang and Hebei Provinces and winters in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Fujian Provinces (de Schauensee 1984). Cheng (1987) notes it as a fairly common migrant and winter visitor to eastern China especially along the coast. However, records from Poyang Lake, Jiangxi Province (Kennerley 1987, pers. obs.) show that the winter range extends beyond its published limits.

一九九一年十二月八日，在米埔錄得葦鵯 *Emberiza pallasi*，是香港首次紀錄。十二月十四日，該鳥被網獲。本文有該鳥的各方面描述，並解釋辨別的方法及其與蘆鵯 *E. schoeniclus* 和紅頸葦鵯 *E. yessoensis* 的分別，並有牠們的分佈情況。

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## JAPANESE REED BUNTING A NEW SPECIES FOR HONG KONG

Michael R. Leven

At approximately 1230h on 3 November 1991 I was birdwatching with Elizabeth Leven on a landfill area to the east of Mai Po. Passerine migration was in full swing and there was obvious passage of pipits *Anthus* sp., Chinese Greenfinches *Carduelis sinica* and buntings *Emberiza* sp. flying overhead from the north. We were not surprised, therefore, to flush two buntings from a patch of long grass into a bush approximately 15m away. The initial impression gained was of small buntings, heavily streaked on the upperparts. Their jizz was similar to that of Little Bunting *E. pusilla* and in marked contrast to two Yellow-breasted Buntings *E. aureola* which we had been watching a few minutes earlier and which seemed bulkier and bigger-headed.

On obtaining good views of the two birds, we noted that one bird had a black throat patch whilst both had a very obvious black cheek spot. These features, together with a very heavily streaked mantle ('tramlines'), stood out strongly on what were otherwise very warm fawn-coloured birds. One bird was preening actively, exposing an unstreaked peach-coloured rump.

As the birds were of a species unfamiliar to me I took the following detailed description and, after subsequent reference to the literature, identified them as Japanese Reed Buntings *E. yessoensis*.

**Structure** Small and rather slender, reminiscent of Little Bunting in size and structure but no other birds were present for direct comparison. Small conical bills and high crowns gave the birds an 'alert' appearance, again reminiscent of Little Bunting.

**Head** Crown warm fawn brown, no crown stripe. Rather indeterminate buff supercilium above a faint dark brown or blackish eye stripe. No obvious eye ring. Front of cheek buffy, cleanly separated from whitish submoustachial stripe in one bird (presumed female), less contrasting in other bird (presumed male). Very obvious well-defined black spot at rear of cheek in both birds. The female had a clearly defined black malar stripe which did not quite reach the bill and was broadest on the lower throat where it terminated abruptly. The male had a blackish throat patch, solid on the margins and paler in the centre under the chin, no malar stripe and the submoustachial was slightly more buff than in the female.

**Upperparts** The mantle and back were heavily streaked with solid 'tramlines' of black and chestnut with buff fringes. The entire wings were earth-brown with paler fringes and there were no obvious wing bars or panel on the secondaries; the lesser coverts were not visible. The rump was warm peach, very similar in colour to that of a female 'Siberian' Stonechat



*Saxicola torquata* and was very obvious in flight when the tail appeared earth-brown with conspicuous white outer tail feathers.

**Underparts** The male was warm pale buff on the breast and belly and white on the undertail coverts while the plumage tones of the female were slightly less warm especially on the breast; both birds were wholly unstreaked.

**Bare Parts** The bill was short, conical and dark horn; the eye was dark; the leg colour was not noted.

After about five minutes both birds flew up to a nearby overhead power line, perched briefly and then dropped into cover. At this point we attempted to find other birdwatchers but were unsuccessful. On our return the birds could not be refound and were not seen again.

#### IDENTIFICATION

Whilst watching the birds I realised that they were one of the three 'reed' buntings: Reed Bunting *E. schoeniclus*, Pallas's Reed Bunting *E. pallasii* and Japanese Reed Bunting *E. yessoensis*. Reed Bunting could quickly be eliminated on the basis of size (it is a larger bird than either Little or Yellow-breasted Buntings), bill and head shape (these birds had small conical bills and high crowns, again like Little Bunting, whereas Reed Bunting has a longer, less conical bill with, usually, a convex upper mandible and, perhaps as a consequence, a low-crowned appearance), absence of streaking on the underparts, presence of a cheek spot and an unstreaked rump.

This left a choice between Japanese and Pallas's Reed Buntings, neither of which I had seen previously. Whilst Pallas's Reed Bunting is relatively well described by Lewington *et al.* (1991) and Broad and Oddie (1980), these sources deal with the separation of Pallas's from Reed Bunting and do not consider Japanese Reed Bunting. The latter species is covered by Sonobe (1982) and de Schauensee (1984) and, whilst the descriptions in these sources were brief, it was clear that the unstreaked peach-coloured rump was diagnostic of Japanese Reed Bunting.

Subsequent to this observation I saw the Pallas's Reed Bunting which was found at the same locality on 8 December 1991 (Leader 1992) as well as a number of Pallas's Reed Buntings in South Korea in February 1992. As a result of this experience it is considered that separation of females or winter males of these species can be made on the basis of a number of features:

**Structure:** as described by Leader (1992), Pallas's Reed Bunting is distinctly long-tailed and large-headed giving it a sparrow-like appearance. In contrast Japanese Reed Bunting is neither particularly long-tailed nor large-headed and is a much more elegant bird, with a jizz more reminiscent of Little Bunting.



14. Japanese Reed Bunting *Emberiza yessoensis*  
Beidaihe, Hebei, China, 17 May 1991

(Paul J. Leader)



15. First-year female Pallas's Reed Bunting *Emberiza pallasii*  
Near Mai Po, 14 December 1991

(Paul J. Leader)

*Rump colour:* warm peach-colour in Japanese Reed Bunting, greyish or fawn in Pallas's Reed Bunting.

*Mantle colour:* both species show strong 'tramlines'; in Pallas's Reed Bunting these are black and pale buff and therefore more contrasting than in Japanese Reed Bunting where they are black and chestnut, albeit with paler fringes, at least in fresh plumage.

*Underparts:* warm buff and unstreaked in Japanese Reed Bunting, paler grey-white with darker streaking on the breast and flanks in Pallas's Reed Bunting.

Observers should be aware that the colour of the lesser coverts is not a particularly useful identification feature. In much of the literature it is implied that the coloration of the lesser coverts is a diagnostic feature of Pallas's Reed Bunting. However, this feature serves only to distinguish the species from Reed Bunting (which has chestnut or rufous lesser coverts); there is not known to be any species-specific difference in the lesser covert coloration of Pallas's Reed Bunting and Japanese Reed Bunting. Thus, Sonobe (1982) describes the lesser covert coloration of Reed Bunting as russet, of Pallas's Reed Bunting as pale slate and of Japanese Reed Bunting as greyish. Even this, however, is an oversimplification since the Pallas's Reed Bunting described by Leader (1992) was found in the hand to have dull brown lesser coverts whilst Lewington *et al.* (1991) state that the lesser covert coloration in this species varies from brownish in juveniles and females to bluish-grey in most males. Presumably, similar variation may occur in Japanese Reed Bunting.

Thus, whilst chestnut or rufous lesser coverts may be a diagnostic feature of Reed Bunting, a bird showing brown or grey lesser coverts may be either of the other two species. Since the lesser coverts are, in any case, extremely difficult to see in the field (they could not be seen on either of the birds described here) observers are recommended to concentrate on the other points described above.

There are two races of Japanese Reed Bunting: *E. y. yessoensis* which breeds and winters in Japan but with some southerly movement in winter (Sonobe 1982, Howard and Moore 1991) and *E. y. continentalis* which breeds in extreme eastern Russia (Flint *et al.* 1984), Heilongjiang and Jilin Provinces in China (de Schauensee 1984, Cheng 1987) and, by inference from Cheng, possibly also in Korea. This latter race is a relatively long-distance migrant and Cheng writes that it occurs on passage in Liaoning, Hebei and Shandong Provinces and winters in Jiangsu Province and, rarely, in Fujian Province. Its occurrence in Hong Kong is not, therefore, unexpected but this would appear to be the most southerly record to date.

[The cost of reproduction of plates 14 and 15 in colour has been subsidised by Wood's Photo Supplies]

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank Mike Chalmers, Peter Kennerley and Paul Leader for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.

一九九一年十一月三日，在米埔附近，有香港首次紅頸葦鷀 *Emberiza yessoensis* 的紀錄。本文詳細描述該鳥的情況及其與蘆鷀 *E. schoeni-clus* 和葦鷀 *E. pallasi* 的分別，並解釋如何將其定為 *continentalis* 亞種。

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## SINGING BUSHLARK AT HO CHUNG A FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Clive A. Viney

At about 1500h on 16 November 1991, whilst checking out an area of abandoned cultivation at about 50m asl in the southern arm of the Ho Chung valley, Bob Ferguson (RF) and I noticed a small nondescript brown bird in an unusual flight mode. We easily located the bird when it dropped to the ground and readily identified it as a species of lark. We flushed it several times and, when satisfied that we had all necessary information to facilitate identification, left the bird alone. Subsequent referral to de Schauensee (1984) indicated that the bird was a Singing Bushlark *Mirafra javanica*.

The following notes were made:

'A small lark, about  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " long (14cm), was flushed several times and observed on the ground (with difficulty) over a period of 30 minutes down to about 15m.

Flew a short distance each time with typical lark movements and an unusual flapping hovering flight before dropping onto open ground and running for cover. Looked generally plain brown with an obvious large conical yellowish bill.

In flight (well seen several times) showed characteristic broad-based wings and a very short tail. Looked very much browner and more rufous than either the Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* or Lesser Short-toed Lark *C. rufescens* of Europe, with which I am familiar. Showed very prominent white outer tail feathers but no white in wings, paler edges to wing coverts and rufous edging to flight feathers.

On the ground, the head seemed plain but with a slight bushy crest (like an agitated Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*). Dark staring eye with an eye ring and a hint of a supercilium and black lores which gave the face some character at close quarters. Rufous streaked crown; otherwise the upperparts were nondescript streaked brown (not well seen on the ground). Underparts creamy-buff with a necklace of dark streaks across the breast. Closed tail looked dark brown.'

At the time, all we could think of was some sort of oddly-behaving and unfamiliar Asian form of Short-toed Lark but within minutes of my arrival home RF telephoned to say that he had identified it as a Singing Bushlark. My researches confirmed this diagnosis and that, to my surprise, it was indeed a south China bird (de Schauensee 1984, Cheng 1987, Vaughan and Jones 1913). It is separated from the similar Rufous-winged Bushlark *M. assamica* by its slimmer build, white in the outer tail, a hindneck the same colour as the upperparts, fine breast streaking and a lack of dark margins to the ear coverts.

The bird was subsequently seen by others and the identification confirmed. The Records Committee understandably erred on the side of caution, as it does with most first-time passerines in view of the huge wild bird trade through Hong Kong, and placed the record in Category D — the half-way house for birds which may well be wild but for which the possibility of escape cannot be ruled out.

The species has a wide range including north India, Burma, Thailand, Indochina, Borneo, Java, Bali and Australia (de Schauensee 1984). Within China, Cheng (1987) quotes its range as breeding in Guangdong Province and Guangxi Zhunang Autonomous Region and describes its status as extremely rare while de Schauensee (1984) states that it breeds in Guizhou, south Guangxi and southeast Guangdong. I suspect that this is an easily overlooked species and that it breeds in south China in grasslands seldom visited by birdwatchers and occasionally wanders in winter.

一九九一年十一月十六日，在蠔涌發現了一隻歌百靈 *Mirafra javanica*，這是香港的首次紀錄。文章介紹了牠飛行和在地上的情況，及其分佈範圍。這紀錄已歸入香港鳥類名錄 D 類。

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## JAPANESE WAXWING IN THE LAM TSUEN VALLEY A NEW SPECIES FOR HONG KONG

Jeremy N. Pearse and Martin D. Williams

On 5 April 1991 Richard Lewthwaite, Fox Wong, JNP and MDW were birdwatching in the *fung shui* wood popularly known as the 'Golden Triangle' at Cheung Uk in the Lam Tsuen Valley when JNP announced he had found a small group of waxwings *Bombycilla* sp. feeding in a tree. They were associating with a flock of Chinese Bulbuls *Pycnonotus sinensis* and Crested Bulbuls *P. jocosus* but were later seen alone at the top of a bare tree about 15m distant.

The three birds we initially located were clearly waxwings: shaped rather like starlings *Sturnus* sp., crested, their plumage fawn with 'waxy' colours on the wings, a thick black eye stripe from the base of the bill to the rear of the head, and the secondaries and tail tipped red. They were obviously Japanese Waxwings *B. japonica*.



Japanese Waxwing *Bombycilla japonica*

(Jeremy N. Pearse)

Altogether there were seven birds — four males and three presumed females. During 15 minutes' observation on 5th and five minutes on 6 April when the birds were seen by a number of observers, the following features were noted.

### DESCRIPTION

A very soft-plumaged bird, the general colouring being warm grey-brown tinged darker red-brown on the head. This red-brown colouring was mainly restricted to the forehead, the area just below the eye and the sides of the throat. The black eye stripe extended from the base of the bill through and slightly over the eye to the back of the crest. There was a small white patch at the base of the bill and a thin white line bordering the black eye stripe just below and slightly behind the eye. The mantle and wing coverts appeared slightly browner than the underparts. On the males the greater coverts were edged with dull red, forming a wing bar, while the secondaries were grey, becoming darker towards the tips which were a wax-like red. The primaries were blackish, and edged white. The rump was pale bluish-grey and this colour extended onto the tail. There was a subterminal black band to the tail which was tipped with the same waxy-red colour as the secondary tips. The throat was black, the breast greyish-brown and the belly pale yellow. The undertail coverts were dull red-brown. The bill, which was short and stubby, was black as were the legs and feet.

The females were similar to the males but duller. The greater coverts lacked the dull red wing bar (or it was indistinct), the red on the secondary tips was indistinct and the white on the primaries was duller.

No call was heard.

The only likely confusion species is Bohemian Waxwing *B. garrulus* but this was ruled out for the following reasons: the crest on these birds seemed more erect than in Bohemian Waxwing; the black eye stripe extended to the back of the head (under the crest) and was thicker at the rear; the tail was tipped red rather than yellow; the greater coverts were tipped dull red, forming a distinct wing bar; and, although the primaries were edged white, unlike Bohemian Waxwing there were no white spots on the wings.

This is the first record of Japanese Waxwing for Hong Kong. The species breeds in eastern Russia, wintering to east and northeast China, North and South Korea, and Japan (Sonobe 1982, Cheng 1987).

The Bohemian Waxwing is irruptive, and nomadic in winter; the Japanese Waxwing probably behaves similarly. Maps in Cheng (1987) for the two species' distributions in eastern China are similar: both are mapped as wintering to a little south of the Changjiang (Yangtse) River, with records from Fujian Province and Taiwan. Hence the occurrence of the two species as vagrants to Hong Kong seems not unlikely — indeed, single



Bohemian Waxwings have been recorded on two occasions: 3 February 1987 and 3-11 December 1989 (Chalmers 1988, Chalmers and Turnbull 1990), and the species is in Category D of the Hong Kong List.

There is evidence, albeit sparse, to suggest that there was an irruption of Japanese Waxwings into China during the 1990/1991 winter: there was the first record for Qinghai in November 1990 (Hornskov 1991); from Sichuan, a province where the species is evidently rare (Cheng 1987), came reports from Omei Shan (M. Kilburn pers. comm.) and Wenchuan, north of Chengdu where two were recorded on 10 May 1991 (pers. obs.); and there were several recorded during spring 1991 at Beidaihe, Hebei Province where there had been only one previous spring record (Aston 1991, Williams 1985).

Furthermore, unusually high numbers were being traded in Hong Kong during April 1991 (P. Leader, M. Turnbull pers. comm.). Paul Leader noted that, of 20 captive birds examined, about half showed 'extreme signs' of cage damage, only one or two looked almost unscathed and the rest showed varying degrees of cage damage. The Lam Tsuen birds, by contrast, were in 'immaculate condition'. Nevertheless, the species has been placed in Category D, the halfway house for birds which might occur naturally but for which the possibility of escape cannot be ruled out.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Mike Turnbull for the use of his field notes.

一九九一年四月五日，在林村谷發現了七隻小太平鳥 *Bombycilla japonica*，是香港的首次紀錄。文章介紹了這些雀鳥及如何和太平鳥 *B. garrulus* 區分。這紀錄已歸入香港鳥類名錄 D 類。

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## PALE BLUE FLYCATCHER IN TAI PO KAU THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

*Philip D. Round*

While participating in the Big Bird Race on 6 April 1991, the Professionals Team was walking swiftly past the orange groves in the lower part of Tai Po Kau at approximately 1115h when Karen Phillippis drew my attention to an unusual flycatcher. The sharp contrast between the blackish lores and the iridescent turquoise-blue forecrown was very striking, as was the overall turquoise-blue coloration of the bird — reminiscent more of female Verditer Flycatcher *Muscicapa thalassina* than of Hainan Blue *Cyornis hainana*. I had little hesitation in identifying it as a Pale Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis unicolor*, a species with which I am familiar in Thailand. The bird was seen by all members of the Professionals and Chinese University teams. The following description was noted:

'A turquoise-blue flycatcher with prominent blackish patch on lores and iridescent turquoise-blue forecrown (iridescence confined to the forecrown). Upperparts turquoise-blue. Throat and upper breast pale turquoise-blue (possibly slightly brighter on the throat than on the breast); pale greyish lower breast and belly; gradation between turquoise-blue of upper breast and greyish of lower breast fairly sudden (in a more or less straight line) but not sharp. Undertail coverts plain whitish, unscalloped. Bill all black, long and strong with a noticeable hook at tip of culmen; leg colour not specifically noted, thought to be dark.

Overall size roughly that of Verditer or a little larger. Probably slightly larger than Hainan Blue. Proportions similar to Hainan Blue, appearing moderately long-tailed and shortish-winged.'

In behaviour the bird was typical of the genus, cocking the tail to the horizontal. It moved through the middle storey of trees along the roadside and for part of this time perched on one of the larger horizontal boughs. It sang while perched, the song being richer, more fluty and varied than that of Hainan Blue Flycatcher. The bird was in view for about three minutes (and was examined through a telescope) but was not followed when it flew off owing to the time constraints imposed by our participation in the Race.

I am very familiar both with Pale Blue Flycatcher and most possible confusion species. While the overall coloration most resembled a female Verditer Flycatcher, this could easily be ruled out by the actions and behaviour; by the long and strong bill (Verditer has a shorter bill); and by the lack of scalloping on the undertail coverts. In addition, male Verditer tends to be more strongly and uniformly turquoise, rather than turquoise-blue. While female Verditer is somewhat more reminiscent of male Pale Blue in coloration, the breast and belly colouring is more uniform, lacking the contrast between the turquoise-blue upper breast and the greyish lower breast and belly shown by Pale Blue. In addition, Verditer lacks the iridescence on the forecrown.



Hainan Blue Flycatcher, while resembling Pale Blue more in proportions, is a darker blue on the upperparts, throat and upper breast. The sides of the head (lores and ear coverts), while darker than the crown, do not contrast markedly with the throat. In addition, the song and subsong of Hainan Blue is weaker, more melancholy and somewhat reminiscent of European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* while the song of Pale Blue Flycatcher (and, incidentally, Verditer) is stronger, more cheerful. Blue and White Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* may be ruled out easily because of its very dark sides to the head and throat and bright white lower breast and belly.

I am not familiar with either the White-bellied Blue Flycatcher *C. palipes* of southern India or the Rueck's Blue Flycatcher *C. ruecki* of Sumatra though I understand that both of these are darker blue above and presumably much more like Hainan Blue than was our bird.

The song given by the Tai Po Kau bird, though similar in quality to the song of Pale Blue Flycatchers heard in Thailand and in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, China, differed slightly in being quieter, less ringing in tone. In addition, Thai birds give a quiet, harsh *chizzz* note at the end of each prolonged warbling phrase, which I did not hear from the Tai Po Kau bird. Such differences may perhaps be due to the bird giving subsong or some other song variant rather than the typical territorial song.

Pale Blue Flycatcher has a wide range, from northern India, across southern China to Guangdong and Hainan Provinces, and throughout Southeast Asia to the Greater Sundas. Within China, Cheng (1987) gives the range of the nominate race as breeding in Yunnan east to Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region with a separate race *diaoluensis* resident in Hainan. Its known range thus comes relatively close to Hong Kong, and forest birds with similar ranges have been found in recent years to have extended into Guangdong Province (HKBWS unpublished). Although the species is generally assumed to be a resident, one migrant individual has been recorded among a 'fall' of other migrant passerines off the coast of northern Vietnam in spring by Dr Derek Scott (Craig Robson pers. comm.). While the Tai Po Kau bird appeared to be in excellent condition and showed no signs of abnormal wear, the possibility of its having escaped or been released from captivity cannot be excluded; it has therefore been accepted to Category D of the Hong Kong List.

一九九一年四月六日，在大埔滘發現了一隻純藍鶲 *Cyornis unicolor*，是香港的首次紀錄。本文描述了該鳥的活動情況，並解釋如何和容易混淆的品種區分。這紀錄已歸入香港鳥類名錄 D 類。

#### REFERENCE

Cheng, T.H. 1987. *A Synopsis of the Avifauna of China*. Science Press, Beijing

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## THE IDENTIFICATION, STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF SMALL *ACROCEPHALUS* WARBLERS IN EASTERN CHINA

Peter R. Kennerley and Paul J. Leader  
Illustrated by Alan Harris

### INTRODUCTION

The warblers of the genus *Acrocephalus* are notoriously difficult to identify. They are relatively nondescript and, unless singing, satisfactory views can be frustratingly difficult to obtain. In recent years some of the identification problems have been overcome, particularly in Europe. However, little fieldwork has been undertaken in Asia to establish similar criteria by which the little-known East Asian *Acrocephalus* can be separated. Furthermore, the identification problems have been compounded by a lack of understanding of the species limits and to which species the various forms can be ascribed.

In this article we discuss the plumages and status of the small *Acrocephalus* which have been recorded from eastern China. This is not intended to be the final word on the identification of the group; rather it is hoped it will stimulate further research into this fascinating genus and result in the establishment of sound guidelines for their separation.

Seven small *Acrocephalus* species have been recorded from eastern China, of which only Black-browed Reed Warbler *A. bistrigiceps* is fairly common and widespread throughout the region. Blunt-winged Warbler *A. concinens* breeds regularly in eastern China while Manchurian Reed Warbler\* *A. tangorum* and Streaked Reed Warbler\* *A. sorgophilus* are known to breed only in northeastern China, presumably regularly, but are rare and localised so their true status remains uncertain. Of the remaining species, Paddyfield Warbler *A. agricola* and Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum* have been recorded as vagrants to Hong Kong while Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus* has been reported once from Jiangsu (Kiangsu) Province in October 1921 (Kolthoff 1932).

### STATUS IN HONG KONG

Prior to 1986, Black-browed Reed Warbler was the only small *Acrocephalus* recorded from Hong Kong, where it is a fairly common spring and autumn migrant with occasional winter records. Chalmers (1986) noted that there had been several sightings of small unstreaked *Acrocephalus* on autumn passage in recent years and considered it possible these referred to Blunt-winged Warbler. In March 1986 an unstreaked *Acrocephalus* was trapped at Mai Po and proved to be Blyth's Reed Warbler (Melville 1987). At the time this was somewhat unexpected since the species had not previously been recorded from China. Subsequently,

\* English names follow Sibley and Monroe (1990)



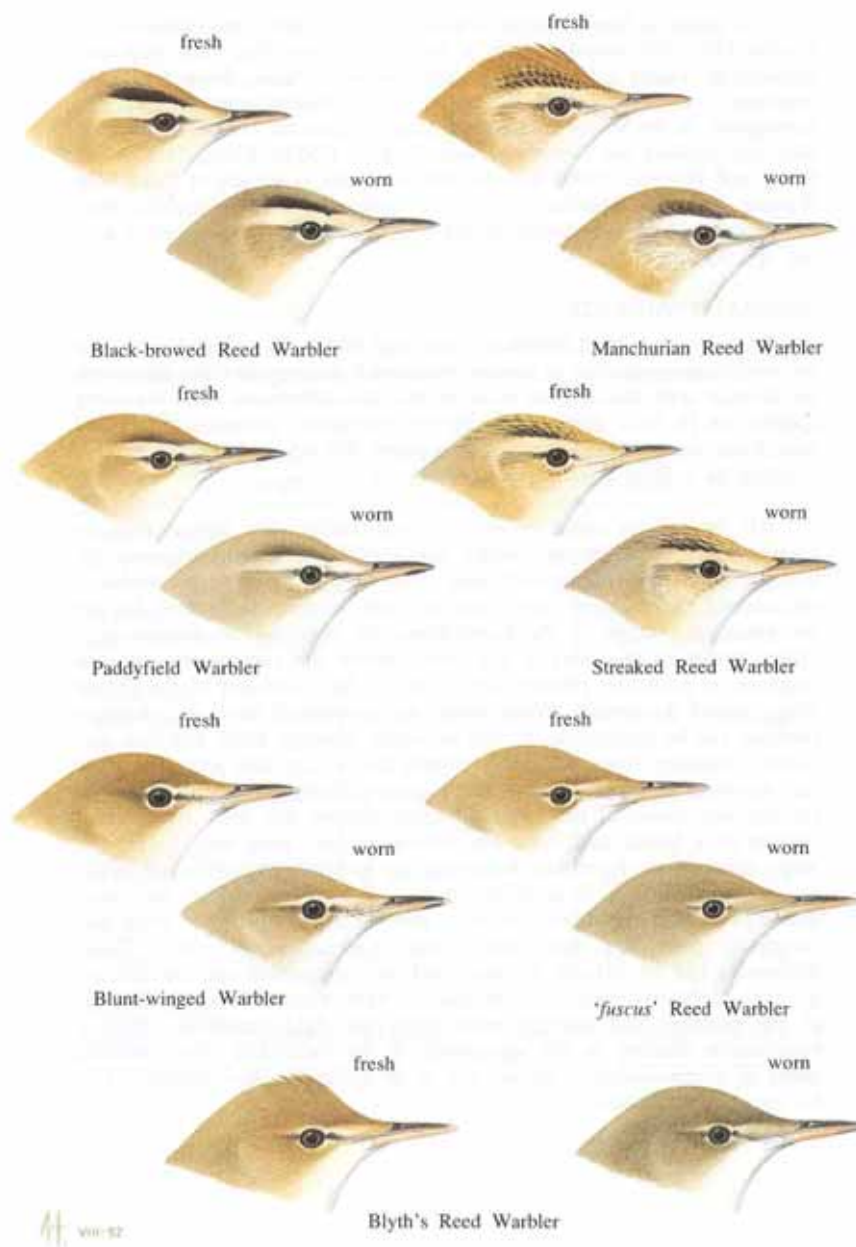
Blyth's Reed Warbler has been trapped at Mai Po in November 1990 and December 1991 (Chalmers *et al.* 1991, 1992), perhaps indicating the presence of a previously unsuspected small wintering population in south-east China. Blunt-winged Warbler, long suspected of occurring in Hong Kong, was finally found at Mai Po in April 1991 when a singing bird was discovered and subsequently trapped (Leader 1992). The most recent *Acrocephalus* to be added to the Hong Kong List was Paddyfield Warbler, one being caught in a mist net at Mai Po on 1 January 1992 (Kennerley 1992).

There still remain three species which have not yet been recorded in Hong Kong. Manchurian Reed Warbler and Streaked Reed Warbler both breed in northeastern China and winter to the south of Hong Kong so there remains a distinct likelihood that both will eventually be found in the Territory and observers should be aware of this possibility. Reed Warbler is a vagrant to eastern China and the chance of its occurring in Hong Kong is remote.

#### TAXONOMIC APPRAISAL

Although controversy still remains over the status of some of the species under discussion, it is now generally considered that Black-browed Reed, Blyth's Reed and Streaked Reed Warblers are monotypic. However, Williamson (1976) considered Manchurian Reed Warbler to be a race of Black-browed and even suggested that Streaked Reed Warbler may also be a form of that species. Two races of Reed Warbler have been described: the nominate, which breeds primarily in Europe; and the eastern race *fuscus*, which breeds in western Asia.

The taxonomic position of Manchurian Reed Warbler remains confused and disputed. La Touche (1925-30) considered it to be a full species, *A. tangorum*, while Vaurie (1959) included it as a race of Paddyfield Warbler, a viewpoint also followed by Cheng (1987). Like Williamson (1976), Howard and Moore (1991) included it with Black-browed but, as a result of playback experiments on the breeding grounds, Alström *et al.* (1991) concluded that it probably belongs with Paddyfield Warbler and definitely not with Black-browed. However, Sibley and Monroe (1990) have once again elevated it to specific status and it seems certain that we have not yet heard the last word regarding the status of this form. We have chosen to follow Sibley and Monroe and treat it as a full species and not include it with Paddyfield Warbler since it is morphologically quite distinct and separable on structural and plumage characters both in the field and in the hand. In addition to *tangorum*, Vaurie (1959) also included two further races under Paddyfield Warbler, the nominate rufous form *agricola* and the greyer *brevipennis*. However, Williamson (1976) believed *brevipennis* to be only a faded and abraded version of the nominate form and Alström *et al.* (1991) agreed with this conclusion.



Colour plate by Alan Harris

The status of Blunt-winged Warbler is only slightly less confused. La Touche (1925-30) included it as a full species and this view was also adopted by Vaurie (1959) who recognised three races, these being the nominate *concinens*, found in eastern Asia, *stevensi*, in Assam, and *harringtoni*, in the northwestern Himalayas. Williamson (1976) also agreed with this position but Dement'ev and Gladkov (1954), Cheng (1987) and Sibley and Monroe (1990) included Blunt-winged as a race of Paddyfield Warbler. However, Alström *et al.* (1991) concluded it to be separate from Paddyfield on both morphological and vocal differences and treated it as a full species.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

Black-browed Reed Warbler is the most numerous and widespread of the smaller *Acrocephalus* in eastern Asia and it is important that observers are familiar with this species in order that the differences from the other species can be fully appreciated. Where appropriate, comparison is made with Black-browed Reed Warbler throughout this article to enable readers to relate to a familiar reference species.

All the species under review are superficially very similar so it is important that those features which can be used to reliably separate the various species are concentrated upon when an unfamiliar *Acrocephalus* is encountered. Since initial views may be brief the features to look for are the extent and shape of the supercilium, the presence or absence of a darker border to the sides of the crown above the supercilium, and the structure, in particular primary projection i.e. the extension of the closed wing beyond the tertials. When better and prolonged views are obtained attention can be directed to the less important plumage tones and bare part colours. Plumage tones are quite variable due to age and extent of wear and observers may perceive the subtle tonal differences in different ways. Furthermore, moult of the loreal feathering darkens this area, creating the illusion of a broad, dark loreal line where, in fact, none may be present while moult of the forecrown feathering can influence the perceived length and depth of the bill. In addition, changes in bare part colour also occur with age and season; adults generally possess slightly browner irides and marginally paler legs than young birds (Karlsson *et al.* 1988). These differences can be difficult to detect and their perception may be affected by light conditions. Therefore, the time of year, extent of moult and wear of the plumage and perhaps most important, light conditions, have a considerable bearing on the appearance of any individual. This variation needs to be considered if the identity of an unfamiliar *Acrocephalus* is to be correctly established.

A summary of the most important field identification criteria is given in Appendix 1 and distribution maps of all seven species in Appendix 2. Detailed biometric data are presented in Appendix 3 and these measurements are summarised in Table 1.

**TABLE 1. Measurements (in mm) of wing length, tail length, tail difference, bill length and bill width (summary of Appendix 2)**

Species	Wing length	Tail length	Tail difference	Bill length (to skull)	Bill width (at base of nostrils)
Black-browed Reed Warbler	50.0-61.0	42.0-56.0	9.0-13.0	12.0-16.0	3.5-4.0
Streaked Reed Warbler	53.0-59.0	46.0-48.0	9.0	14.0-15.1	3.8
Manchurian Reed Warbler	51.5-57.5	45.0-59.0	8.5-14.5	14.0-16.5	4.0-4.6
Paddyfield Warbler	53.0-62.0	47.0-62.0	8.0-12.0	13.0-16.6	3.3-4.0
Blunt-winged Warbler	52.0-58.0	51.0-61.0	10.0-15.0	14.5-16.5	3.0-4.4
Reed Warbler	59.0-75.0	48.0-58.0	4.0-7.0	15.0-19.0	3.7-4.8
Blyth's Reed Warbler	58.0-65.0	47.0-58.0	4.0-8.5	15.3-19.0	3.5-4.0



## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

### BLACK-BROWED REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

#### Plumage

A typical *Acrocephalus* warbler with a very distinctive head pattern. The supercilium is broad and pale creamy-buff, often appearing creamy-white in worn birds. Above and behind the eye it flares slightly at the rear of the ear coverts where it terminates quite cleanly, giving a square-cut appearance. The supercilium is bordered above by a black line which extends from just in front of the eye to the rear of the supercilium. There is an indistinct eye stripe but this is very narrow, difficult to discern and barely contrasts with the unmarked ear coverts behind the eye. On the lores, the eye stripe is usually more conspicuous, typically appearing as a distinct spot in front of the eye and on some individuals as a complete dark line extending to the base of the bill. This feature can be exaggerated further on birds which are moulting the loreal feathers, a caveat which applies to all the *Acrocephalus* under review here.

The crown, nape and mantle are mid-brown, often tinged greyish while the rump is paler with a slight rufous cast. In the autumn some recently moulted birds may appear quite warm rufous-brown on the nape and mantle. The tertials are dark brown with warmer and paler fringes, especially in worn plumage. The edges to the visible secondaries and primaries are similar to those on the tertials while the greater and median coverts are browner and paler centred than the tertials but with broad, diffuse warm brown fringes. These fringes, when abraded, largely disappear and result in a more uniform appearance to the tertials and closed wing. The tail is mid-brown in colour, similar to the mantle. In fresh plumage the tail may have quite broad pale tips but these are lost quite rapidly, leaving a uniform appearance.

Below, the chin and throat are off-white. The flanks are washed pale buff but can occasionally be a very deep orange-buff on recently moulted birds. The breast and belly are white with a faint buffy wash, paler than on the flanks, while the undertail coverts are white.

#### Bare Part Coloration

There is a slight contrast between the dark iris and the pupil but this is not noticeable in the field. In the hand adults show a reddish-brown iris and first-year birds a greyer iris.

The upper mandible is dark grey with a pink cutting edge while the lower mandible is pale pink and unmarked.

The legs and feet are typically dark grey.



16. Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

A fairly typical individual

Mai Po, 5 May 1991

(Paul J. Leader)



17. Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

A typical individual but with an exceptionally white supercilium

Mai Po, 5 May 1991

(Paul J. Leader)

[The cost of reproduction of plates 16-21 in colour has been subsidised by Zeiss Far East Co Ltd]



18. Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*  
A recently moulted adult  
Mai Po, 5 October 1991

(Peter R. Kennerley)



20. Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*  
A rather rufous individual in fairly fresh plumage  
Mai Po, 27 April 1991

(Peter R. Kennerley)



19. Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*  
An exceptionally pale individual  
Mai Po, 25 November 1989

(Paul J. Leader)



21. Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*  
An exceptionally rufous bird with very indistinct supercilium  
Mai Po, 29 September 1989

(Paul J. Leader)



### Structure

A typical small, slim *Acrocephalus*. The bill is quite fine and conspicuously smaller than that of *tangorum* and the long sloping forehead tapers into it producing a long-headed appearance. When agitated, *bistrigiceps* raises its rear-crown feathers — unlike *tangorum* which habitually raises its forecrown feathers.

Of the species under consideration *bistrigiceps* and *sorgophilus* are the shortest-tailed and shortest-winged. The primary projection beyond the tertials is long with typically seven quite widely spaced primaries visible. The wing tip falls short of the longest uppertail covert.

### Moult

Adults undertake a post-breeding body moult on the breeding grounds, followed by a complete moult in the winter quarters before November, although some moult in September and October prior to migrating (Williamson 1976). A further body moult takes place in spring and some individuals may also replace the remiges and some or all of the rectrices at this time (pers. obs.). First-year birds presumably also undergo a complete moult in the winter quarters.

### Range and Status

Black-browed Reed Warbler breeds in China from the lower reaches of the Changjiang (Yangtze) River north through the coastal and northeast provinces to the Nei Mongol Autonomous Region (Cheng 1987). It also breeds in Japan from Kyushu northwards and is locally very common in central Honshu and Hokkaido (Brazil 1991). In Russia, it is found in southern Siberia and from southeast Transbaikalia to the lower Amur River, southern Sakhalin and the southern Kuril Islands (Flint *et al.* 1984).

As a migrant it occurs throughout eastern China and in winter is occasionally recorded in Guangdong Province and Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986, pers. obs.). However, its main wintering areas are in southeast Asia including Burma, Indochina and Thailand, where it is very common (Lekagul and Round 1991), and as far south as Malaysia and Singapore (Medway and Wells 1976). There is only one record from Sumatra and it is not recorded from Java (Marle and Voous 1988). To the west of its main wintering range, it has been recorded from Bengal, eastern Assam and Manipur (Ali and Ripley 1983), and as a vagrant from Nepal (Inskipp and Inskipp 1991).

[The cost of reproduction of this colour plate has been subsidised by Zeiss Far East Co Ltd]

### STREAKED REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus sorgophilus*

A distinctive, but poorly known, and probably very rare *Acrocephalus* superficially similar to *bistrigiceps* but from which it is readily separable by its streaked mantle and crown, rufous rump and tail and brighter appearance.



Streaked Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus sorgophilus*  
(based on a specimen of a spring migrant collected in 1913 at Qinhuangdao, Hebei, China by La Touche)  
(Alan Harris)

### Plumage

The supercilium is pale sandy-brown and similar in shape to that of *bistrigiceps* but is slightly more diffuse and lacks the crisp, square-cut appearance which most individuals of that species show. Above, the supercilium is bordered by a prominent dark brown or black line which is similar in extent to that of *tangorum* but, due to the extensive crown streaking, may appear less cleanly cut on the upper edge than in either *bistrigiceps* or *tangorum*. The eye stripe is restricted to a small spot on the lores immediately in front of the eye and a slightly more prominent pale brown line behind the eye. The ear coverts are paler than the crown and mantle, are tinged with a faint yellowish cast, and appear indistinctly mottled.

The crown and mantle vary between warm straw and sandy-brown, paler than in most *bistrigiceps*, and are finely streaked dark brown along the feather centres. By contrast, the nape is unstreaked sandy-buff and contrasts with both the mantle and crown. The streaking is of variable intensity; it may be almost entirely suppressed in juveniles and appear faint on adults in autumn (La Touche 1925-30), while on birds in spring it can appear as broad dark and light brown lines running the length of the

mantle. The rump and uppertail coverts are unstreaked warm rufous-brown, contrasting with the mantle and closed wings. The tertials are very dark brown centred, appearing almost black on some individuals, with sharply contrasting narrow straw-coloured fringes. The edges to the secondaries are also finely fringed pale straw, producing a conspicuous pale panel in the closed wing, while the centres to the greater and in particular the median coverts are also dark but with rather diffuse pale fringes. The alula can appear black on some individuals. Of the species considered here, *sorgophilus* displays the darkest centred tertials and the most contrasting wings. The tail is the same colour or slightly darker than the rump and uppertail coverts and, in fresh plumage, shows narrow pale tips.

The underparts are paler than in *bistrigiceps*, whitish on the chin and throat but becoming pale sandy-yellow on the breast, flanks and belly.

#### Bare Part Coloration

The iris is dark brown and lacks contrast with the pupil, as in *bistrigiceps*, although it is not known to what extent this varies with age.

The upper mandible is blackish with a narrow pale cutting edge while the lower mandible is yellowish-pink and lacks any darker shading towards the tip.

The legs and feet are dull lead grey, similar to or slightly darker than those of *bistrigiceps*.

#### Structure

Slightly longer- and finer-billed and more round-headed than *bistrigiceps* but with similar wing and tail proportions. There is considerable primary projection beyond the longest tertial with typically six widely spaced primaries visible, extending well down the uppertail coverts. The tail is similar in length to that of *bistrigiceps* and also well rounded.

#### Moult

Nothing is known of the timing of the moult but two individuals trapped on the wintering grounds in February were rather heavily worn (pers. obs.). The three specimens in the British Museum, collected in late May and early June, are in fairly fresh condition (pers. obs.) suggesting a moult in the late winter prior to the northward migration.

#### Range and Status

Streaked Reed Warbler was described by Swinhoe (1863) based on a specimen he obtained in May 1861 at Xiamen, Fujian Province (Amoy, Fokhien Province), China. The next record came in January 1902 when a bird was taken in the Babuyan island group in the northern Philippines. Subsequently, La Touche (1925-30) described it as being very common between 22 August and the end of the first week in September in the millet fields near Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province (Chinwangtao, Chihli

[The cost of reproduction of plates 22-26 in colour has been subsidised by Zeiss Far East Co Ltd]



22. Streaked Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus sorgophilus*

A moderately worn individual

Candaba, Philippines, 6 February 1992

(Peter R. Kennerley)



23. Streaked Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus sorgophilus*

A moderately worn individual

Candaba, Philippines, 6 February 1992

(Peter R. Kennerley)





24. Streaked Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus sorgophilus*  
A moderately worn individual  
Candaba, Philippines, 6 February 1992

(Peter R. Kennerley)



25. Streaked Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus sorgophilus*  
A recently moulted bird  
Candaba, Philippines, November 1984

(Urban Olsson)



26. Streaked Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus sorgophilus*  
Beidaihe, Hebei, China, 31 May 1985

(Martin D. Williams)

Province) and noted it also passed the same locality in May and June. Further specimens were taken in spring at Shaweishan off the Jiangsu coast on 2 June 1911, at Qinhuangdao on 7 June 1911 and several more at the same locality between 30 May and 10 June 1913 (La Touche 1914, 1920). Based on this meagre evidence, La Touche concluded correctly that Streaked Reed Warbler wintered in the Philippines, migrated along the coast of China and probably bred in Hebei Province (Chihli) and Manchuria.

Little was subsequently heard of the species in China for many years although Cai (1987) noted specimens were taken on spring migration near Beijing in late May 1962 and early June 1964. In the autumn Cai again recorded specimens taken from east Beijing on 25 September 1962 and 9 September 1964. Cheng (1987) gave limited additional information although he indicated that it bred in Liaoning and possibly Hebei Provinces. In recent years Streaked Reed has been observed on spring migration in late May 1985 at Beidaihe, Hebei Province (Williams 1986) and in early June 1985 at the Summer Palace, Beijing (pers. obs.). It was recorded again at Beidaihe in late May 1988, and in both late May and early June 1991 during a large fall of migrants which included many *Acrocephalus* warblers (Williams and Hsu 1992). In winter it is only known to occur in the Philippines. Du Pont (1971) recorded it as a winter visitor to Luzon where Candaba Marsh, Pampanga Province, near Manila, is a favoured locality, with several birds occurring there each winter (T. Fisher *in litt.*). Clarke (1983) also saw several birds at Lake Baao, southeast of Naga City, Luzon. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) noted that it has been recorded in winter from the islands of Negros and Bohol, as well as from Benguet, Pakil and Laguna in Luzon, and also that migrants have been recorded at Dalton Pass, Nueva Vizcaya Province, Luzon with extreme dates of 28 October and 16 June.

#### MANCHURIAN REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus tangorum*

Although the plumage of *tangorum* superficially resembles that of *bistrigiceps*, the short-winged and long-tailed structure differs markedly from that species and closely resembles *agricola*.

##### Plumage

In worn plumage the supercilium is whitish, not creamy as in *bistrigiceps*, and is broadest in front of the eye where it drops onto the upper lores. Behind the eye, the supercilium is less conspicuous than that of *agricola*. Furthermore, it tapers to a point and lacks the clean-cut, slightly flared appearance of *bistrigiceps* — we have found this to be a useful and reliable field character. The supercilium is bordered above by a dark line similar to that of *bistrigiceps* but is shorter, browner and slightly more diffuse. In juveniles and freshly moulted adults in autumn the supercilium is less clearly defined and much more diffuse due to rufous fringes to the feathers. The feathers which form the dark line above the supercilium also have rufous fringes resulting in less contrast with the centre of the crown. These rufous fringes eventually abrade to produce the more contrasting head pattern associated with spring migrants and breeding birds. The eye stripe is usually more obvious than on *bistrigiceps*, particularly in front of the eye where it can appear as a broad loreal line reaching the base of the bill. On some birds it is restricted to little more than a loreal spot in front of the eye, quite similar to that of *bistrigiceps* but slightly more conspicuous. Behind the eye, the eye stripe is slightly broader than that of *bistrigiceps* while the ear coverts are paler and indistinctly mottled.

The crown is warmer and more rufous-brown than that of *bistrigiceps* with darker feather centres giving a finely mottled appearance to the forecrown. In fresh plumage the crown, nape and mantle are warm rufous-brown but fade to pale rufous-brown, slightly warmer than *bistrigiceps*. Only an exceptionally strongly coloured *bistrigiceps* in fresh plumage in the autumn could approach the colour of *tangorum*. The rump and uppertail coverts are distinctly rufous in tone and warmer than the rest of the upperparts, especially on worn birds. The tertials are pale brown with quite broad fringes, similar in colour to the mantle in fresh plumage. When worn, however, these fringes fade and contrast more with the centre of the tertials. The edges of the primaries and secondaries are slightly more rufous than the tertial fringes, while the coverts are warmer than in *bistrigiceps* and lack the contrast between the centres and the fringes. This produces a more uniform appearance to the closed wing. The tail is warmer brown than that of *bistrigiceps*, only marginally less rufous than the uppertail coverts and rump, although older feathers may appear darker.

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27. Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps* (left)  
and Manchurian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus tangorum* (right)  
Beidaihe, Hebei, China, 23 May 1991 (Peter R. Kennerley)



28. Manchurian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus tangorum*  
A moderately worn individual  
Beidaihe, Hebei, China, 23 May 1991 (Peter R. Kennerley)





29. Manchurian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus tangorum*  
A moderately worn individual  
Beidaihe, Hebei, China, 23 May 1991

(Peter R. Kennerley)



30. Manchurian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus tangorum*  
A heavily worn individual  
Shuangtaizihekou National Nature Reserve, Liaoning, China,  
28 July 1991

(Sue Earle)



31. Manchurian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus tangorum*  
A rather rufous, freshly moulted bird  
Khao Sam Roi Yot, Thailand, 6 May 1981

(Philip D. Round)



32. Manchurian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus tangorum*  
Beidaihe, Hebei, China, 16 May 1992

(Martin D. Williams)

Below, the chin and throat are white, washed cream, but appearing white in the field. Adults, when fresh, exhibit a warm rufous-buff wash on the breast, flanks and undertail coverts but this fades to washed-out buff in worn birds. Juveniles are brighter on the breast than adults, appearing peachy-buff, but this colour is lost during the post-juvenile moult, after which they appear similar to adults.

#### Bare Part Coloration

The iris colour of birds observed in May was brown, distinctly paler than the pupil and conspicuous in the field. However, as iris colour is known to change with age in some *Acrocephalus* species, this may not apply to first-winter birds.

The upper mandible is dark grey, appearing black in the field, with a narrow, pale pink cutting edge. The lower mandible is dull pink and typically lacks any darkening, although a minority of individuals do show an indistinct dark shadow towards the tip.

The legs and feet are a dark brownish-red or plumbeous colour.

#### Structure

The bill is longer and marginally stouter than in *bistrigiceps* and lacks the fine-tipped appearance of that species. The crown appears more angular than in *bistrigiceps*, and *tangorum* frequently raises the crown feathers, producing a concave appearance to the forecrown.

Although *tangorum* is similar in size to *bistrigiceps* the proportions are quite different. The tail is considerably longer and appears square-cut in the field although measurements contradict this (see Table 1). The wings appear shorter than those of *bistrigiceps* because the primary projection beyond the tertials is very short and six closely spaced primary tips are usually visible, the longest primary only reaching to the base of the tail. Furthermore, there is often a significant secondary projection beyond the longest tertial, a feature also shared with *concinens*.

#### Moult

Adults are known to have a body moult in the early autumn (Williamson 1976). Little else is known but presumably there is a complete moult during the winter.

#### Range and Status

The distribution of Manchurian Reed Warbler is as poorly documented as that of Streaked Reed Warbler. It was originally described by La Touche (1912) based on specimens taken at Qinhuangdao and named in honour of his highly regarded collectors, the brothers Tang. In autumn it occurred in large numbers in the millet fields from the middle of August to the middle of September, usually in the company of Black-browed and Streaked Reed Warblers. It re-appeared occasionally and in small numbers

in the late spring between 20 May and 6 June. Little has been published in either western or Chinese literature since La Touche (1925-30) and this, in fact, was largely a summary of his earlier publications (La Touche 1914, 1920). Cai (1987) noted migrants in the Beijing area in late May and again in mid-September 1962. More recently, between 16 and 23 May 1991, a minimum of 12 individuals was recorded on migration at Beidaihe where they frequented areas of wet grassland interspersed with small willows *Salix* sp. (pers. obs.). Williams and Hsu (1992) recorded a further 19 birds between 27 May and 7 June during large arrivals of migrants. A worn adult, presumed to be an early migrant, was trapped in a *Phragmites* reedbed at the Shuangtaizihekou National Nature Reserve near Panjin, Liaoning Province on 28 July 1991 (Brazil 1992).

Cheng (1987) stated that it breeds at Dailing and Harbin, Heilongjiang Province and also at Hulun Lake, Nei Mongol Autonomous Region (Inner Mongolia). However, Alström *et al.* (1991) failed to find it at any of these localities in 1987 and 1988 and suggested the Dailing record may be erroneous as the only specimen from this locality in the collection of the Institute of Zoology, Academia Sinica, Beijing proved to be a Black-browed Reed Warbler. They did, however, find it to be a locally common breeding bird at Zhalong, Qiqihar, Heilongjiang Province. It is also recorded as a breeding bird from Khanka Lake (Xingkai Hu) in the Primorsky Region of Russia on the Russian-Chinese border (Shibnev and Gluschenko 1977).

In winter it is known only from Thailand where it is very scarce and local, restricted to the central plains and vastly outnumbered by Black-browed Reed Warbler (Round in prep.).



**PADDYFIELD WARBLER** *Acrocephalus agricola*

Overall, rather variable with distinct rufous and sandy-grey plumage types. This variation is generally attributed to freshly moulted and faded and abraded birds respectively. The prominent supercilium is often bordered above by a darker line although this is never as conspicuous as that of *bistrigiceps* or *tangorum*.

**Plumage**

The supercilium is creamy-white and extends from the base of the bill to the rear of the ear coverts, typically widening above and behind the eye. Generally, the supercilium is less prominent and not as white as in *tangorum* and is thus not dissimilar to that of *bistrigiceps*. In unworn plumage it may be rather subdued with pale brown tips obscuring the paler bases but as these tips abrade the supercilium becomes more prominent. Such individuals have been likened to leucistic Sedge Warblers *A. schoenobaenus* (Flumm and Lord 1978). The dark borders to the sides of the crown above the supercilium are of rather variable intensity. These are not as obvious or clearly defined as in *tangorum*, often being little more than an indistinct shadow, and may occasionally be entirely absent, even in unworn birds. The eye stripe is indistinct and diffuse, typically being noticeable only immediately behind the eye. On most individuals the entire loreal region is dark and forms a complete line between the gape and eye but on a minority it is restricted to a loreal spot immediately in front of the eye, as in *bistrigiceps* and some *tangorum*.

A significant proportion of *agricola* display a fairly conspicuous pale wash extending from below the ear coverts onto the sides of the nape, producing a semi-collared appearance. Although rather diffuse, it can be very obvious on some individuals.

In fresh plumage the crown is warm rufous-brown. The nape and mantle are rufous-brown in unworn birds, similar to the crown colour, but fade to pale sandy-brown due to abrasion and bleaching. When worn and faded, *agricola* is paler and sandier than both *tangorum* and *concinens*. The rump and uppertail coverts are slightly warmer and paler than the mantle and being subject to less wear contrast markedly on pale worn individuals but less so on unworn birds. The tertials and coverts are dark brown with fairly broad brownish-rufous fringes, but again these wear and fade quite rapidly to produce an obvious, contrasting pale panel in the closed wing. The alula is dark brown, slightly darker than the tertial centres and with only a very narrow paler edge to the outer fringe. As such the alula is the darkest part of the wing but since this feature is also shared with *concinens* and *scirpaceus*, it is of little use in their separation. The tail is dark brown, similar to the tertial centre colour, and has pale buff tips when fresh. The outermost tail feathers of a minority of individuals are paler than the remainder of the tail.

Below, the chin, throat and belly are silky white while the breast and flanks are warm buff, strongest across the breast and at the bend of the



33. Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*  
A rather rufous bird  
Mai Po, 1 January 1992

(Peter R. Kennerley)



34. Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*  
A rather rufous bird  
Mai Po, 1 January 1992

(Peter R. Kennerley)



35. Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*  
A sandy-grey bird  
Liang Hu, Zaidam, Qinghai, China, June 1987

(Urban Olsson)

wing, but apparently not approaching the peachy-buff of some *tangorum*. The flanks and undertail coverts are pale buff. Due to abrasion and bleaching, the underparts become much paler and can fade to white in worn birds.

#### Bare Part Coloration

The iris is warm brown to reddish-brown in adults but darker, more grey-brown, in first-year birds (Lewington *et al.* 1991). There is less contrast with the pupil than in *tangorum*, and the iris does not appear conspicuously pale in the field.

The upper mandible is dark brown or black with a narrow pale cutting edge and tip. The lower mandible is pink at the base but the sides are conspicuously darker towards the tip — much more so than in any of the other species under discussion — and this is one of the best means of separating *agricola* from *tangorum* and *concinens*. However, it may occasionally be indistinct or absent.

The legs and feet vary from yellowish-brown to pinkish-brown but lack the strong plumbeous tones of *tangorum*.

#### Structure

The bill appears rather short, similar to but marginally stouter than that of *bistrigiceps* in structure and quite different from the long and deep-based bills of *tangorum* and the majority of *concinens*. On most individuals this difference is quite apparent but the occasional small-billed *concinens* may approach the structure of *agricola* and caution must be exercised.

The structure of *agricola* is quite similar to *tangorum* with relatively short wings and a long tail. The tail is frequently flicked and held cocked, exaggerating its prominence. On the closed wing the primary projection beyond the tertials is very short with six or occasionally seven closely spaced primaries visible beyond the longest tertial while the secondary projection, unlike *tangorum*, is very short or negligible beyond the longest tertial. The uppertail coverts, at least on some birds, are very long and extend well beyond the tips of the closed primaries.

#### Moult

Adults and juveniles undergo a late summer body moult which is followed by a complete moult between late September and November upon arrival at the winter quarters (Williamson 1976).

#### Range and Status

Paddyfield Warbler breeds from the Danube delta on the Black Sea coast, across southern Russia and the Kirghiz Steppes to Mongolia and south to Russian Turkestan, eastern Iran and northern Afghanistan (Vaurie 1959). Within China, Cheng (1987) records breeding from the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province.

Outside the breeding season it migrates through Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan to India. In winter it is widespread throughout the whole sub-continent from southern Iran and Baluchistan to Bangladesh but excluding Sri Lanka (Smythies 1953, Ripley 1982, Ali and Ripley 1983). There are currently two published records from Thailand, both being taken as specimens from the northern provinces in February 1965 and February 1982 (Round 1983), and one from Burma (Smythies 1953). In eastern China a bird was obtained by Kolthoff at Xiushu (Siushu), Jiangsu Province on 12 August 1933. This specimen is housed in the Museum of Natural History, Gothenburg, Sweden and labelled *Acrocephalus agricola concinens* (i.e. Blunt-winged Warbler) but was found upon examination to be Paddyfield Warbler *A. agricola agricola* (U. Olsson *in litt.*). The only other known occurrence in eastern China is that of a bird at Mai Po, Hong Kong in January and February 1992 (Kennerley 1992).



### BLUNT-WINGED WARBLER *Acrocephalus concinens*

A rather nondescript *Acrocephalus*, readily separated from *bistrigiceps*, *tangorum* and *sorgophilus* by its less prominent supercilium and absence of dark border above the supercilium. It differs from *dumetorum* in its warmer, more rufous plumage tones and shorter wings and primary projection.

#### Plumage

The supercilium is short, indistinct, creamy-buff in colour and only conspicuous above and in front of the eye. Typically, this does not extend far beyond the rear of the eye but on occasional birds in worn plumage it may be more extensive; even then it is never more than a very thin and inconspicuous line over the ear coverts and does not appear as prominent as in *tangorum*. There is no trace of a dark border above the supercilium and no eye stripe behind the eye. The lores can appear darker and contrast slightly with the supercilium while the ear coverts are unmottled pale creamy-brown.

In fresh plumage the crown, nape and mantle are warm rufous-brown, quite uniform in tone. In worn birds the crown can become rather greyish and contrasts with the mantle, as in *scirpaceus*. The rump and uppertail coverts are slightly warmer than the mantle and this becomes particularly marked in dull worn birds. In fresh plumage the tertial centres are mid-brown with broad rufous fringes and appear similar to those of *agricola* and *tangorum*. On worn birds these fringes, although becoming narrower and sandy-brown in colour, do not fade appreciably paler than the mantle. The fringes to the secondaries are similar in colour to those of the tertials while the greater and median coverts are fairly uniform with little contrast between the feather centres and the fringes. The alula appears dark centred with a narrow pale brown fringe on the outer web which, when exposed, can appear as the darkest and most contrasting feature of an otherwise rather plain closed wing. However, this feature is also shared with *agricola* and *scirpaceus*. In fresh plumage the tail is warmer and browner than that of *agricola*, being darker than the mantle and closed wings and, given good views, the dark shafts may be apparent. The tail typically contrasts with the paler, more rufous rump, particularly on worn individuals.

Below, the chin and throat are very pale. Usually, the breast is washed sandy-brown, richer on the sides of the upper breast and only fading slightly along the flanks and undertail coverts. The lower breast and belly are white, appearing silvery-white in some individuals or with a very indistinct creamy tinge on others.

#### Bare Part Coloration

The iris is hazel-brown, paler than in *bistrigiceps* but not as pale or contrasting as in *tangorum* although it is not known to what extent this varies with age.



36. Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens*  
A fairly typical individual  
Mai Po, 21 April 1991

(Paul J. Leader)



37. Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens*  
Bung Boraphet, Thailand, 12 February 1981

(Philip D. Round)



38. Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens*  
A heavily worn individual - note contrast between mantle and rump  
Ba Bao Shan, Guangdong, China, 13 June 1988 (Michael L. Chalmers)



39. Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens*  
A heavily worn individual  
Ba Bao Shan, Guangdong, China, 13 June 1988 (Michael L. Chalmers)



40. Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens*  
A fairly typical individual  
Mai Po, 21 April 1991 (Paul J. Leader)

The upper mandible is dark grey-brown with a pale pink cutting edge while the lower mandible is pale pink, occasionally with an indistinct greyish shadow towards the tip. Both the upper and lower mandibles are tipped whitish.

The legs and feet are light brown, brownish-flesh or grey-pink.

#### Structure

The bill of *concinens* is typically long and deep-based, appearing rather stout in the field and, on extreme individuals, almost approaching the proportions of Thick-billed Warbler *A. aedon*. Rarely, the bill can appear relatively thin and similar to that of *bistrigiceps* in width and length.

[The cost of reproduction of plates 36-40 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



The wings are short and quite rounded, resulting in proportions generally similar to those of *tangorum* but with a slightly longer and even more rounded tail. The primary projection beyond the tertials is very short and usually six or seven tightly bunched primaries are visible beyond the longest tertial. The secondary projection beyond the tertials is usually distinct, and while this feature is also shared with *tangorum* and some *agricola*, it is slightly more conspicuous on *concinens*.

#### Moult

Nothing is known of the timing or sequence of the moult of *concinens*. However, spring birds are moderately abraded while summer adults are heavily worn, suggesting a winter moult (pers. obs.).

#### Range and Status

The nominate form of Blunt-winged Warbler breeds in eastern China north to Beijing where it was originally described by Swinhoe (1870). It is known as a summer visitor to the Summer Palace on the outskirts of Beijing where it breeds in *Phragmites* reedbeds which surround the adjacent lakes (pers. obs.). Further south, it occurs along the Huang (Yellow) and Changjiang (Yangtze) rivers in Hubei, Shaanxi and Jiangxi Provinces (Cheng 1987). South of the Changjiang, La Touche (1899, 1925-30) mentions a pair taken by collectors at 1,220m (4,000 feet) above Kuatun, northwest Fujian (Fohkien) Province on 19 May 1897 but considered them to be probable migrants. However, in June 1998 a bird was seen and subsequently trapped at a similar elevation on Ba Bao Shan, Guangdong Province, where it was singing from tall grass and bushes on a dry hillside and may possibly have been breeding (Chalmers 1988).

As a migrant it occurs throughout eastern China, west to Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province (Cheng 1987). To date, the only definite records from Beidaihe, Hebei Province are singles on 2 October 1986 (Williams *et al.* 1992) and 19 May 1991 (C.D.R. Heard *in litt.*). During seven years' residence at Qinhuangdao La Touche (1920) only obtained one specimen on 10 June 1914. It is also rare in southeast China and Cheng (1987) only includes one record in November from Guangdong Province while a further bird was recorded from Hong Kong in April 1991 (Leader 1992).

Information regarding the distribution of the nominate race in winter is rather limited. Lekagul and Round (1991) describe it as an uncommon visitor to Thailand where it occurs in grass and reedbeds close to water, and also in dry grassland up to 800 metres. It is suspected to occur in Burma where the race *stevensi* is a fairly common visitor to northern Tenasserim. Williamson (1976) and Alström *et al.* (1991) include southeast China within the wintering range but apart from the November record from Guangdong, which may have referred to a late migrant, there do not appear to be any other published records from China (including the southeast) during the winter months.

#### REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Reed Warbler shares with Blyth's Reed Warbler an indistinct supercilium and considerable primary projection beyond the tertials. However, it most resembles Blunt-winged Warbler in its plumage tones although it is typically greyer-brown above. The eastern race of Reed Warbler, *fuscus*, is generally greyer-brown than the nominate race and the details below refer exclusively to *fuscus*.

#### Plumage

The supercilium is indistinct and occasionally absent, at best being restricted to a slightly paler line above the lores. The sides of the crown lack a dark border, as in *concinens* and *dumetorum*. An indistinct eye stripe may be present behind the eye, and the lores and ear coverts are similar in colour to the crown. The resulting head pattern is typically plainer and less contrasting than that of *dumetorum*, offset only by a conspicuous cream or whitish eye ring.

The crown, nape and mantle colour of adults is uniform grey-brown, colder than in *concinens*, and lacking the olive cast of most *dumetorum*. First-year birds are generally warmer on the mantle than adults although a minority of adults may also be warmly coloured above (Pearson 1982). As in *agricola*, there is occasionally a pale half-collar extending onto the sides of the nape from below the ear coverts. When fresh, the rump and uppertail coverts are usually slightly warmer than the mantle and tail (although not as contrasting as in *concinens*) but when worn there is typically little or no contrast. First-year *dumetorum* may also show a warm cast to the rump and uppertail coverts but this does not contrast with the mantle to the same extent. The tertials are brown with slightly paler fringes which are usually more contrasting than on *dumetorum*. The wing coverts and edges to the secondaries are similar in colour to the mantle while the alula is slightly darker. When fresh, there are thin whitish tips to the primaries. The tail is usually dark brown, contrasting with the rump and uppertail coverts, but may sometimes be warm brown, similar to the rump colour. The unabraded tail shows pale tips which are rapidly lost.

The chin, throat and centre of the belly are white. The breast is similar but with a faint creamy wash and the flanks are slightly warmer. The undertail coverts vary but are typically creamy-white or white. The overall coloration of the underparts of first-year birds is warmer and browner than on adults.

#### Bare Part Coloration

The iris varies between grey-brown in first-year birds to warm brown in adults.

The upper mandible is dark grey with a pinkish cutting edge and the lower mandible varies between pink and pinkish-brown.

The legs and feet are usually dull greyish-pink.

### Structure

The wings of *scirpaceus* are long, producing a proportionately shorter-tailed appearance than *concinens*, *tangorum* and *agricola*. The primary projection beyond the tertials exceeds that of all the species under review including *dumetorum* and there are usually eight widely spaced primaries visible beyond the tertials.

### Moult

Adult and first-year birds undertake a complete moult in the winter. Pearson (1982) noted that in Kenya and Uganda there appear to be two distinct populations which arrive on the wintering grounds and moult at different times. Those birds which arrived in November and some which arrived in December and early January were still in old plumage and underwent a complete moult between January and early March. Others, mostly December and January arrivals, were freshly moulted, having completed their moult prior to arrival in the winter quarters.

### Range and Status

The breeding range of Reed Warbler of the race *fuscus* extends from Turkey eastwards through Transcaspia, the Tien Shan and northern Iran (Vaurie 1959). Migrants occur throughout the Middle East from Israel through Saudi Arabia to Iran. During the winter it occurs only in East Africa — from Ethiopia, south to northern Tanzania and Zambia, abundantly in Uganda and commonly along the Nile in Kenya. Although Vaurie (1959) believed both races wintered in Kenya, Pearson (1982), after examining birds in the wintering quarters, considered *fuscus* to be the only race occurring in Kenya and Uganda. The eastern origin of East African wintering birds is demonstrated by two recoveries of Kenyan-ringed birds on migration: one in early May at Astrakhan, Russia and the other in autumn in Saudi Arabia (Pearson 1982).

Until recently, the only record of Reed Warbler from China was that of a specimen taken from Xiushu, near Nanjing, Jiangsu Province on 9 October 1921. Although the documentation of this record provided by Kolthoff (1932) is inadequate to establish its identity, examination of the specimen (Catalogue number Av.ex.8698), which is housed in the Museum of Natural History, Gothenburg, Sweden, has confirmed that Kolthoff's identification was correct (U. Olsson *in litt.*). In June 1988 Grimmett and Taylor (1992) noted several singing birds and a recently fledged juvenile near Kashi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the extreme west of China, thus establishing Reed Warbler as a breeding bird within China.

[The cost of reproduction of plates 41-42 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



41. Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus*

A freshly moulted bird  
Jubail, Saudi Arabia, 16 April 1991

(Arnoud B. van den Berg)



42. Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus*

A recently moulted bird  
Jubail, Saudi Arabia, 5 May 1991

(Arnoud B. van den Berg)



### BLYTH'S REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Harvey and Porter (1984) and Harrap and Quinn (1989) discussed in great detail the identification of *dumetorum* and its separation from both Reed Warbler and Marsh Warbler *A. palustris* of western Europe. We are not proposing to add anything to their conclusions, only to review the identification of *dumetorum* in an East Asian context.

#### Plumage

The supercilium is rather variable but generally more marked than in *scirpaceus*. In adults it is prominent above the loreal area while in young birds it is rather subdued and can be almost non-existent. On some exceptionally well-marked individuals it is present as a fine line over the ear coverts. There is no hint of a darker border above the supercilium. The loreal stripe varies with age, with adults showing a rather contrasting loreal line while on young birds it is usually restricted to a very indistinct dark spot in front of the eye (H. Jännes *in litt.*). The eye ring is rather inconspicuous when compared to *scirpaceus*, especially above the eye. The ear coverts are very similar to the crown but sometimes appear slightly more mottled.

In freshly moulted birds in the winter, the crown, nape and mantle are olive-brown with a faint rufous wash. The rump and uppertail coverts are similar in colour to the mantle, typically lacking the warmer contrast usually present in the other species under consideration. Svensson (1984) noted that adults often, but not always, show a slightly rufous rump while first-winter birds are warmer and tinged rufous on the rump and wings. However, the rump is never as rufous and contrasting as in *scirpaceus*. A first-winter bird in Hong Kong in November 1990 did not show any trace of rufous in the plumage while a further bird seen in December 1991 was noticeably rufous, particularly in poor light (*pers. obs.*). This rufous cast is gradually lost due to the effects of abrasion and *dumetorum* then appears duller and more olive. The tertials are typically quite uniform olive-brown with virtually no contrast between the centres and the fringes although some fresh birds show indistinct rufous fringes. The alula and the edges to the secondaries, greater and median coverts are also fairly uniform, resulting in an extremely plain appearance to the closed wing. The freshly moulted primaries generally lack the whitish tips which are conspicuous in *scirpaceus*. The tail shows little contrast with the mantle, rump or uppertail coverts except on the occasional bird with a slightly warmer-coloured rump.

Below, the chin, throat and belly are dull white while the breast and flanks are faintly tinged dull brown. The undertail coverts are creamy-white.

#### Bare Part Coloration

The iris is warm brown or reddish-brown in adults and dull grey-brown in first-year birds.



43. Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*  
A rather rufous bird after winter moult  
Mai Po, 14 December 1991

(Peter R. Kennerley)



44. Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*  
An olive, first-year bird prior to winter moult  
Mai Po, 3 November 1990

(Paul J. Leader)



45. Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*  
A rather rufous bird after winter moult  
Mai Po, 14 December 1991

(Paul J. Leader)

The upper mandible is mid to dark grey with a pink cutting edge while the lower mandible is usually entirely pink, sometimes with an indistinct darker subterminal shadow, much as in *concinens*. Svensson (1984) stated that while *dumetorum* usually has a pale brown distal part to the lower mandible, this can appear much darker on a few individuals. Typically, there is an indistinct pale tip to the upper mandible.

The legs and feet are dull grey-brown, similar to *bistrigiceps*, but can appear dark brown during the spring and summer (H. Jännes *in litt.*).

#### Structure

The bill is long and relatively thin, appearing much more so than those of most *concinens* but similar to that of *scirpaceus*.

Although *dumetorum* shows a shorter primary projection than *scirpaceus*, it appears relatively long-winged when compared to *agricola*, *tangorum* and *concinens*. The visible primaries extend well beyond the base of the tail and only fall slightly short of the tip of the longest uppertail covert, much as in *bistrigiceps*. Usually seven primaries are visible beyond the longest tertial and these are quite widely spaced.

The tail is long, as in *tangorum* and *concinens* but, due to its longer wings, *dumetorum* does not appear as long-tailed as these species in the field.

#### Moult

Adults and juveniles undergo a body moult on the breeding grounds in the late summer followed by a complete moult in October and November shortly after arrival in the winter quarters (Williamson 1976).

#### Range and Status

Blyth's Reed Warbler breeds from southern Finland and Estonia, eastwards across the Urals and Siberia to western Yakutia and Irkutsk, and south through the Russian Altai and northwestern Mongolia to the Kirghiz Steppes, Transcaspia and eastern Iran (Vaurie 1959). It occurs in a wide variety of habitats from marshy areas near water to dry and barren localities and open hillsides, but rarely in reedbeds.

Blyth's Reed Warbler winters throughout the Indian subcontinent where it is described as being an abundant winter visitor ranging from Baluchistan to Burma and Sri Lanka (Ripley 1982). In Nepal, it is a fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant up to 1,525m (Inskipp and Inskipp 1991). Ali and Ripley (1983) also include Bangladesh within the wintering range while Henry (1971) states that it visits Sri Lanka in large numbers each winter. There are no published records from China and Blyth's Reed is not mentioned by Cheng (1987). However, within the collection of bird skins housed in the Institute of Zoology, Academia Sinica in Beijing is a specimen (No. 38938) which had been incorrectly labelled *A. agricola*, but which was relabelled *A. dumetorum* by P. Alström on 15 June 1989. This specimen was obtained on 11 September 1960 at Ta Cheng, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, very close to the border with what was, at the time, the USSR. This specimen represents the only known occurrence of Blyth's Reed Warbler within China although the three recent Hong Kong records (Melville 1987, Chalmers *et al.* 1991, 1992) may indicate that small numbers of Blyth's Reed winter further east than was previously believed.



## APPENDIX 1

### SUMMARY OF USEFUL FIELD IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA

#### **Black-browed Reed Warbler** *A. bistrigiceps*

Broad creamy or off-white supercilium extending to rear of ear coverts where it flares slightly and terminates squarely  
Black border above supercilium contrasting with brown centre to crown  
Loral line restricted to a small spot immediately in front of the eye, creating a rather bland facial pattern  
Iris dark  
Legs dark grey  
Bill rather fine and small  
Relatively short-winged and short-tailed  
Long primary projection beyond the tertials

#### **Streaked Reed Warbler** *A. sorgophilus*

Supercilium broad and pale sandy-brown in colour  
Dark border above supercilium  
Crown and mantle streaked with dark brown  
Closed wing very contrasting  
Rump and tail unmarked warm rufous-brown  
Tertials very dark with thin, crisp straw-coloured fringes  
Relatively short-winged and short-tailed, similar in structure to Black-browed  
Long primary projection beyond the tertials

#### **Manchurian Reed Warbler** *A. tangorum*

White supercilium (tinged rufous in unworn birds) tapering to diffuse point behind eye  
Dark border above supercilium shorter, narrower and browner than in Black-browed, displaying less contrast with the centre of the crown  
Mottled forecrown  
Upperparts, especially rump and uppertail coverts, distinctly rufous in tone when fresh but similar to Black-browed when worn  
Closed wing rather contrasting with whitish edges to the tertials, secondaries and sometimes also the greater coverts  
Underparts strongly tinged peachy-orange when fresh  
Iris warm brown, clearly paler than that of Black-browed  
Long, deep-based bill  
Legs and feet dark brownish-red or plumbeous  
Relatively short-winged and long-tailed appearance  
Short primary projection beyond the tertials  
Secondaries project beyond the longest tertial

#### **Paddyfield Warbler** *A. agricola*

Conspicuous supercilium extending from bill to rear of ear coverts and flaring slightly over and behind eye  
Dark border above supercilium usually present but can be very indistinct  
Upperpart colour variable between rich rufous in fresh plumage and pale sandy-brown when worn  
Alula usually darkest part of wing  
Buffy wash on the breast and slightly warmer wash on the flanks of freshly moulted birds, fading to white on worn individuals  
Lower mandible always shows some darkening towards tip  
Legs yellowish-brown to fleshy brown  
Rather small fine bill  
Relatively short-winged and long-tailed appearance  
Short primary projection beyond tertials

#### **Blunt-winged Warbler** *A. concinens*

Supercilium prominent in front of and over eye, rarely extending behind eye  
Lacks dark border above supercilium  
Upperparts distinctly rufous, especially rump  
Closed wing fairly uniform but alula darker  
Tail darker than mantle  
Iris hazel, contrasting with dark pupil  
Bill usually long and deep-based, similar to Manchurian Reed  
Relatively long-tailed and short-winged appearance  
Short primary projection beyond the tertials  
Secondaries project beyond the longest tertial

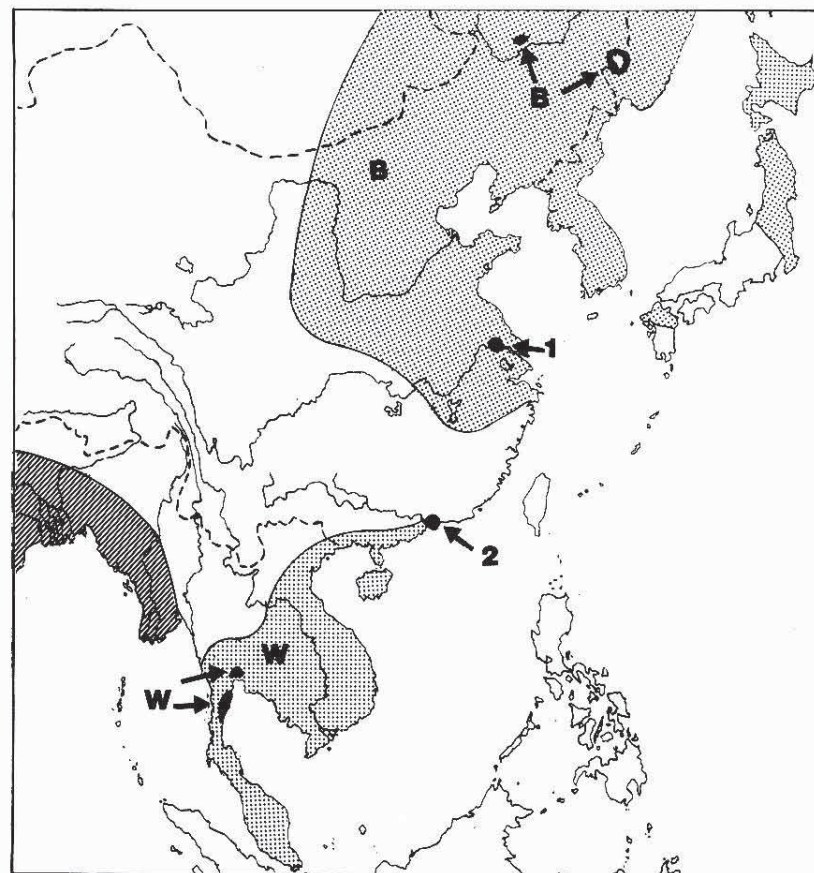
#### **Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*




Supercilium very indistinct between bill and eye and occasionally absent  
Lacks dark border to sides of crown  
Eye ring conspicuous on otherwise plain head  
Mantle grey-brown with olive cast contrasting with rufous rump  
Relatively long-winged appearance makes tail appear proportionately shorter  
Long primary projection beyond tertials

#### **Blyth's Reed Warbler** *A. dumetorum*

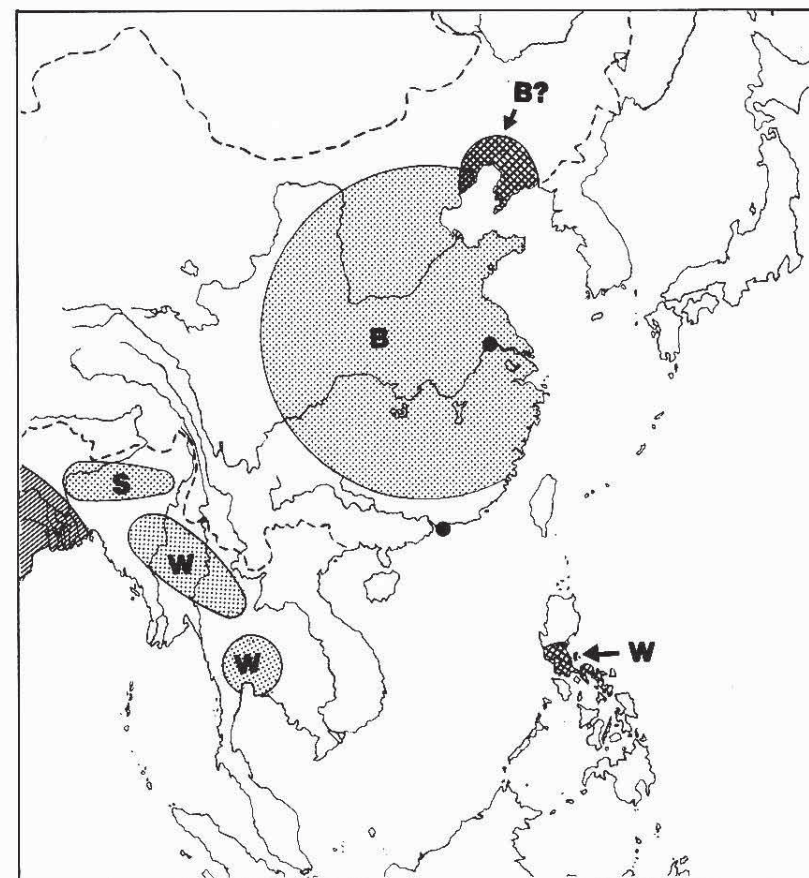
Supercilium very indistinct above loral area in young birds, becoming more obvious on worn adults but rarely extending behind eye  
Lacks dark border above supercilium  
Crown, nape and mantle uniform pale brown often with rufous or olive wash  
Uniform closed wing, lacking any contrast  
Legs and feet greyish  
Relatively long-winged appearance makes tail appear proportionately shorter  
Long primary projection beyond the tertials




**Figure 1.** Distribution of Blyth's Reed Warbler, Black-browed Reed Warbler, Manchurian Reed Warbler and Reed Warbler in eastern Asia.



-  Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum* — winter
-  Black-browed Reed Warbler *A. bistrigiceps* — B : breeding  
W : winter
-  Manchurian Reed Warbler *A. tangorum* — B : breeding  
W : winter
- 1 Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus* — vagrant
- 2 Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum* — vagrant

**Figure 2.** Distribution of Paddyfield Warbler, Blunt-winged Warbler and Streaked Reed Warbler in eastern Asia.



-  Paddyfield Warbler *A. agricola* — winter
- Paddyfield Warbler *A. agricola* — vagrant
-  Blunt-winged Warbler *A. concinens* — B : breeding  
W : winter  
S : *A. c. stevensi* (resident)
-  Streaked Reed Warbler *A. sorgophilus* — B? : breeding suspected  
W : winter



APPENDIX 3. Biometric Data (all measurements in mm). For summary see Table 1.

Species	Source (see below)	SKs(S) Live(L) Birds	Wing length (maximum chord)		Tail length		Tail difference		Bill length (to skull)		Bill width (at base of nostrils)	
			n	Range	n	Range	n	Range	n	Range	n	Range
Black-browed Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus bistrigiceps</i>	W	S	60	50-58	45	42-52	-	9-13	45	12.0-15.0	-	-
	HK	L	245	50-61	138	47-56	-	-	-	-	-	-
	R	S	22	52-57.5	22	46-51	-	-	22	14.0-16.0	22	3.5-4.0
Streaked Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus sorghophilus</i>	W	S	3	56-59	3	46-48	-	-	3	14.0-14.5	-	-
	K & L	L	1	53	1	46	1	9.0	1	15.1	1	3.8
	K & L	S	-	-	-	-	3	9.0	-	-	-	-
Manchurian Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus tangorum</i>	W	S	-	-	11	45-59	-	9-13	12	14.0-16.0	-	-
	R	S	13	51.5-57.5	13	50-59	-	-	13	14.7-16.5	13	4.0-4.6
	K & L K & L	L S	4 -	54-57 -	4 -	51-56 -	4 10	9.5-14.5 8.5-12.0	1 -	15.4 -	-	-
Paddyfield Warbler <i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>	W	S	66	53-61	67	47-60	-	8-12	34	13.5-16.0	-	-
	S	S	51	53-61.5	-	-	-	-	43	13.0-15.5	-	-
	R K	S L	25 1	55-62 59	25 1	51.0-62.0 57	- 1	- 10	25 1	14.1-16.6 14.2	25 1	3.3-4.0 4.2
Blunt-winged Warbler <i>Acrocephalus concinens</i>	W	S	35	52-58	34	51-61	-	10-15	31	14.5-16.0	-	-
	R	S	5	53-57	5	54.5-59.0	-	-	5	15.6-16.5	5	3.6-4.4
	L K & L C	L S L	1 - 1	54 - 54	1 - 1	55 - 54	1 5 1	12.0 12.0-15.0 13.0	1 - -	15.5 - -	1 13 1	3.3 3.0-3.4 4.0
Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus</i>	W	S	-	59-71	-	48-58	-	4-7	-	15-18	-	-
	P & B	L	100	64-75	20	51-57	-	-	23	16-19	100	3.7-4.8
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blyth's Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	W	S	117	58-65	116	47-57	-	4-8	43	15.5-18.0	-	-
	S	S	79	58-65	-	-	-	4.0-7.0	60	15.3-17.5	-	-
	H & P HK	- L	- 3	- 62-65	73 3	48-58 52-54	- -	- -	68 3	16.0-19.0 16.2-18.5	- -	- 3.5-4.0

## BIOMETRIC DATA

The biometric data appearing in the preceding table has been obtained from several sources which are summarised below. Data has been taken from published references as well as specimens and live birds.

### Sources

C	=	Chalmers (1988)
H	=	A. Harris (pers. comm.)
HK	=	Hong Kong ringers (unpublished data)
H & P	=	Harvey and Porter (1984)
K	=	Kennerley (1992)
K & L	=	Kennerley and Leader (unpublished data)
L	=	Leader (1992)
P & B	=	Pearson and Backhurst (1988)
R	=	P.D. Round (pers. comm.)
S	=	Svensson (1984)
W	=	Williamson (1976)

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Chris Heard, Phil Round and in particular Hannu Jännes for providing useful reference material, commenting on an earlier draft of this article and discussing the finer points of *Acrocephalus* identification. Arnoud van den Berg, Mike Chalmers, Sue Earle, Urban Olsson, Phil Round and Martin Williams have kindly allowed us to use their photographs. We are grateful to Peter Colston at the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, England, Mike Hounscome at Manchester Museum, England and Professor Tan Yao Kuang of the Institute of Zoology, Academia Sinica, Beijing, China for allowing us to examine *Acrocephalus* specimens housed within their respective collections. Urban Olsson kindly checked specimens in the Museum of Natural History, Gothenburg, Sweden. We also express our gratitude to David Melville for providing Chinese references and to Susanna Li for translating these references and typing the draft of this article. Finally, we thank our editor, Verity Picken, for her encouragement and constructive comments throughout the preparation of this article.

近期在東南亞的野外考察結果，解開了分辨七種在中國東部錄得的小型 *Acrocephalus* 葦鶯時的疑難。本文詳細剖析了牠們（黑眉葦鶯 *A. bistrigiceps*、點斑葦鶯 *A. sorghophilus*、東北稻田葦鶯 *A. tangorum*、稻田葦鶯 *A. agricola*、鈍翅稻田葦鶯 *A. concinens*、蘆葦鶯 *A. scirpaceus fuscus* 和布氏葦鶯 *A. dumetorum*）的特點、各種生物統計資料、情況和分佈。



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# THE IDENTIFICATION AND STATUS OF THE RUSSET BUSH-WARBLER IN CHINA AND CONTINENTAL SOUTHEAST ASIA

Philip D. Round

## INTRODUCTION

The continental Asian Bush-warblers of the genus *Bradypterus* have long presented ornithologists with identification difficulties. Although a good deal of museum material exists and some of the important morphological features are already described (e.g. in King *et al.* 1975) these can be exceedingly difficult to discern in the field owing to the birds' extremely skulking habits. In addition, observers may be unaware of the relative importance of the various distinctions: there is a tendency to concentrate on the presence or absence of breast-spotting, for example, rather than on the all-important undertail covert patterns and on the birds' overall proportions, especially the length of the tail. The songs of the various forms are not widely known and, in at least one instance, have been incorrectly attributed. *Bradypterus* can also be surprisingly difficult to net as they are not easily flushed, preferring to run along the ground rather like mice. Because of these difficulties and the past confusion in the published literature, the increased field work in south and southwest China during the 1980s has been slow to clarify the picture.

Here, I draw attention to the status and the identification of the Russet Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmii*, one of the more wide-ranging members of the genus in southern and western China and northern Southeast Asia.

## THE DISCOVERY OF BREEDING *B. seebohmii* IN THAILAND

PDR and J.W. Wall taped the buzzing, prinia-like *zreee-ut...zreee-ut* song of a *Bradypterus* at c1,600m on Doi Ang Khang, Chiang Mai Province (19°52'N, 99°03'E) on 9 April 1983. The song was inadvertently recorded in the background while taping the song of Red-faced *Liocichla* *Liocichla phoenicea* and when the *liocichla* song was played back, a *Bradypterus* also approached and responded by singing, and by calling with an excited *chut...chut...chut*. This was the first observation of any *Bradypterus* in Thailand under circumstances which suggested breeding.

A subsequent visit to Doi Ang Khang by PDR during 16-19 July 1983 revealed at least 20 individuals singing on open, deforested grassy hillsides. In spite of the resemblance of the song to that described for Brown Bush-Warbler *B. luteoventris* by Smythies (1953) as 'a rapid *creee-ut-creee-ut...* at the rate of 2-3 pairs of notes per second.', and subsequently quoted by King *et al.* (1975), the birds were identified as *seebohmii* on the basis of the whitish tips to the undertail coverts. Spotted Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus thoracicus*, which shares this feature, and with which PDR was familiar, was immediately excluded from consideration since *thoracicus* is shorter-tailed. One bird was netted and collected and the specimen (field number

ACW 40) deposited in the Thai National Reference Collection. The circumstances of this find, and the original identification as *Bradypterus seebohmii*, were published in full (Round 1983) but are repeated here for the sake of completeness. Identification of the northern Thai breeding population as *seebohmii* was confirmed beyond any doubt in July 1988 when PDR examined the type specimen of *B. seebohmii melanorhynchus*, which appeared virtually identical to the Doi Ang Khang specimen. Although Delacour (1952) assigned the only two previous Thai specimens — USNM 350293, collected on Doi Phu Kha (19°05'N, 101°01'E) on 5 April 1936, and MCZ 196866 from Mount Angka (an older name for Doi Inthanon) on 3 March 1937 — to *B. s. idoneus* rather than *B. s. melanorhynchus*, the basis for this is not clear. Nonetheless, it can safely be assumed that all three Thai specimens belong to the same form, whether *idoneus* or *melanorhynchus*, and that both forms are closely similar (and perhaps even synonymous).

*Bradypterus seebohmii* has subsequently been seen or heard singing on Doi Pha Hom Pok (20°04'N, 99°10'E); Doi Chiang Dao (19°23'N, 98°50'E); Huai Nam Dang (19°17'N, 98°37'E) and Doi Inthanon (18°35'N, 98°30'E) at elevations between c1,300m and c1,900m. The records cover the months November, December, February, April and July. *B. seebohmii* has therefore been conclusively established as a fairly common resident in the hills of northern Thailand.

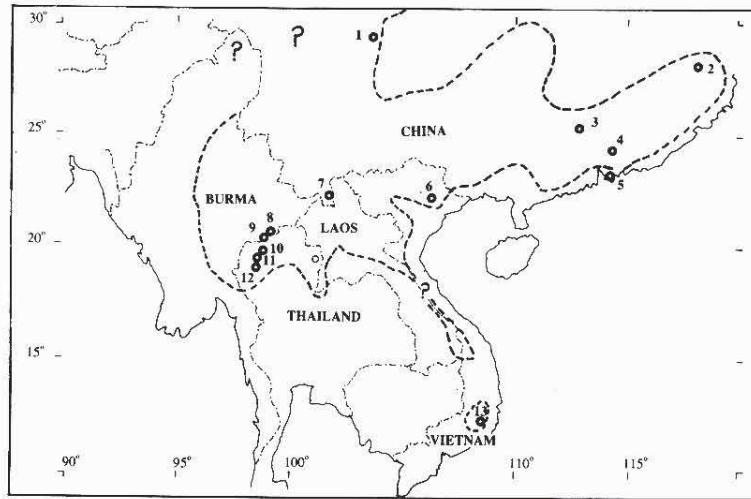
## EVIDENCE FROM ELSEWHERE

Independent evidence confirming that the *zreee-ut (creee-ut)* song is indeed *B. seebohmii* has since come from the population in Java, *B. s. montis*. Although this is sometimes treated as a separate species, *B. montis*, Rozendaal (1989) found that the song was more or less identical with mainland forms, necessitating its retention within *B. seebohmii*. This same song has subsequently also been heard from birds on Bali (Kennerley 1989).

Elsewhere within the previously known range of *B. seebohmii*, the *zreee-ut* song has been heard from Dalat, South Annam, Vietnam (11°57'N, 108°26'E), near the type locality of *B. s. idoneus* (C. Robson *in litt.*) and from Wu Yi Shan, northwest Fujian Province, China (27°43'N, 117°40'E), near the type locality for *B. s. melanorhynchus*, in 1986 and 1990 (P.R. Kennerley *in litt.*).

There are also a number of new sites which significantly extend the known range of the species. These include Tam Dao, Tonkin, Vietnam (21°27'N, 105°35'E), where it was heard by J. Eames and F. Rozendaal (C. Robson *in litt.*); Nan Gong Shan (21°20'N, 101°30'E) and surrounding areas in Xishuangbanna, south Yunnan Province, China (P.R. Kennerley and PDR) and north as far as Emei Shan, Sichuan Province, China (29°33'N, 103°24'E) (C. Robson *in litt.* and other observers subsequently). Elsewhere, in southeast China, birds have been regularly seen and heard each breeding season since 1987 at Ba Bao Shan in northern Guangdong





**Figure 1.** Projected possible range of Russet Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmii* on the mainland of Southeast Asia and southern China based on the locations of singing birds (indicated by stars) and the approximate extent of montane habitat. 1 = Emei Shan; 2 = Wu Yi Shan; 3 = Ba Bao Shan; 4 = Nan Kwun Shan; 5 = Hong Kong; 6 = Tam Dao; 7 = Nan Gong Shan; 8 = Doi Pha Hom Pok; 9 = Doi Ang Khang; 10 = Doi Chiang Dao; 11 = Huai Nam Dang; 12 = Doi Inthanon; 13 = Dalat. The location of Doi Phu Kha is indicated by the open circle.

Province (24°55'N, 113°01'E) and Nan Kwun Shan in central Guangdong (23°38'N, 114°38'E). Birds giving the same *zree-ut* song also occur in small numbers during the winter months in Hong Kong where they can be heard occasionally between early November and March in scrubby areas from sea level to the higher hills (P.R. Kennerley *in litt.*).

In addition, *seebohmii* presumably occurs much further west than is currently known: in Burma, where Smythies (1953) reported a *creee-ut* song which he erroneously attributed to the Brown Bush-Warbler *B. luteoventris*; and perhaps even in northeast India. A thorough examination of existing *Bradypterus* specimens in the British Museum, some of which may have been misidentified, would almost certainly clarify the picture further.

#### SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES

The indications are, therefore, that Russet Bush-Warbler, previously only known from a series of disjunct continental and island populations (Mayr *et al.* 1986), in fact occupies a large and near-continuous swathe of non-xeric upland habitat extending eastwards from the southern and eastern margins of the Tibetan Plateau (Figure 1). Since it overlaps in much of this region with either or both the Spotted Bush-Warbler and the Brown Bush-Warbler, some mention of its separation from these forms is appropriate.

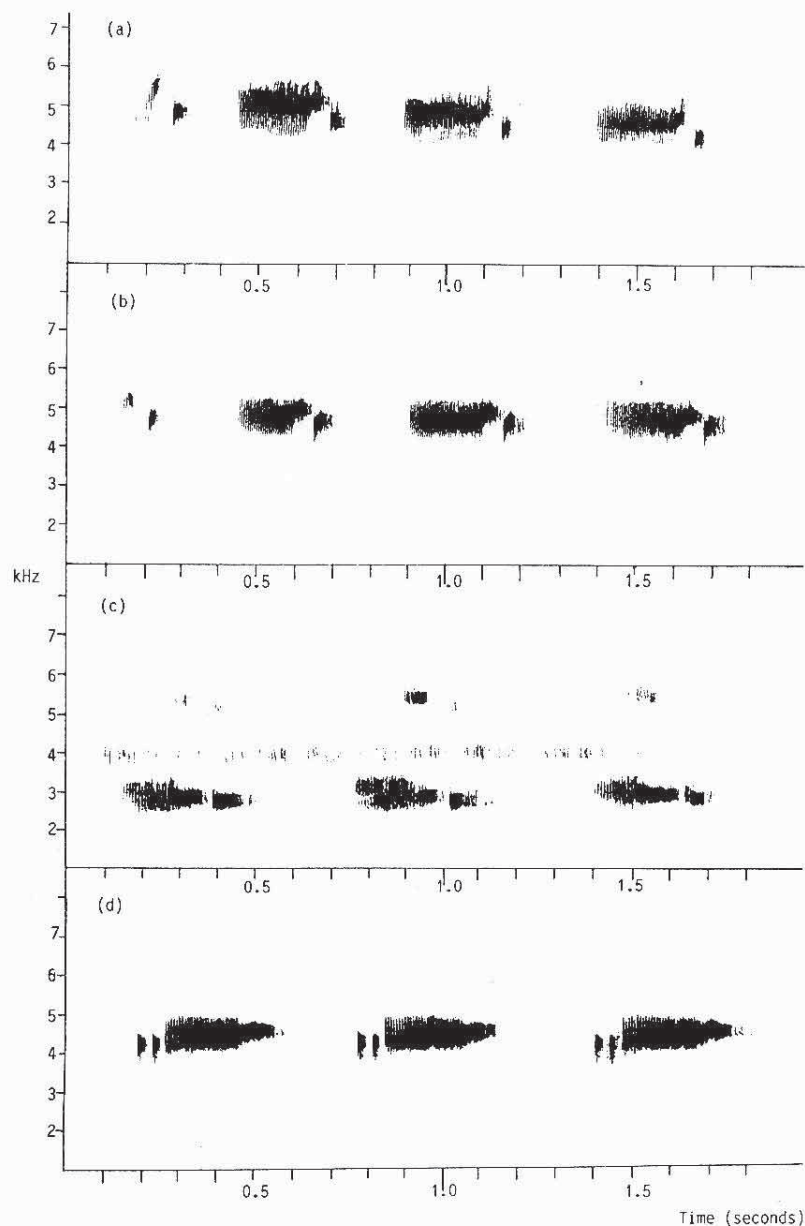
#### VOICE

The song of Russet Bush-Warbler is a repetitive, buzzing, prinia-like series of notes, variously described as *creee-ut* (Smythies 1953); *zreee-ut* or *zree-ut* (Round 1983 and *in litt.*) or *zee-bit* (P. R. Kennerley *in litt.*). Each sequence may contain one to over 20 individual notes, each of around 300-320 msec duration and usually uttered at a rate of one note per 0.5 to 0.9 seconds. The notes usually span the frequency range 4-6 kHz and each series is usually introduced by a short, quiet *pwit* note (Figure 2). On some occasions, there may be an interval of as little as one second between successive sequences. This song is diagnostic for mainland populations and for the island populations of *B. seebohmii* on Java and Bali. It is not clear whether the slight differences in the sonagrams in Figure 2 are attributable to geographic or individual variation. The song of birds taped on Ba Bao Shan and Doi Ang Khang appeared almost identical, though the bird taped on Emei-Shan by C. Robson sang at a lower pitch, c3 kHz. The song of the bird at Dalat, also taped by C. Robson, was slightly different again, though the song was also recognisably, and closely, similar to the preceding three. In contrast, the song of Brown Bush-Warbler was a long, continuous reeling *tic-tic-tic-tic...* (F.R. Rozendaal *in litt.*).

Two songs have been recorded among the various races of the Spotted Bush-Warbler, strongly indicating, in fact, that this may be a composite of two distinct species (Round *in prep.*). The northern races, *suschkini* and *davidi*, both sing with a series of drawn-out, buzzing notes, described for *suschkini* as *dzzzzzzr...dzzzzzzr* by Mild (1987), slightly longer than, and lacking the distinctive terminal inflection of, *seebohmii* strophes. A similar drawn-out note is also given, at longer intervals, by wintering *B. t. shanensis* in Thailand (Round *in prep.*) but likewise should offer no confusion with *seebohmii* song. Birds attributed to nominate *thoracicus* by Alström (*in litt.*), heard in western China, give a highly distinctive, rhythmic vocalisation, described by C. Robson (*in litt.*) as *trick-i-di... trick-i-di*.

Call-notes given by *B. seebohmii* include explosive *pwit* or *tit* notes and an excited, rapid chacking. Similar notes are also given in alarm by both Spotted Bush-Warbler and Brown Bush-Warbler (as well as, incidentally, by wintering Lanceolated Warblers *Locustella lanceolata*). In addition to the typical reeling song *B. luteoventris* on Ba Bao Shan has been taped giving a loud, almost European Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)-like *pink* by P.R. Kennerley (*in litt.*). Such a note is unknown in *seebohmii*. In addition, *seebohmii* in Thailand has been heard to give a series of up to six or seven rasping, explosive notes: *rink-tink-tink-tink-tink-tink*. Again, there is a remarkable similarity between this note and a common call of Lanceolated Warbler (Lekagul and Round 1991).





**Figure 2.** Sonograms of the song of Russet Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmi* (a) Doi Ang Khang, July 1983, PDR; (b) Ba Bao Shan, June 1988, P.R. Kennerley; (c) Emei Shan, May 1986, C. Robson; (d) Dalat, January 1990, C. Robson

## MORPHOLOGY

*B. luteoventris* and *B. seebohmi* are almost identical in proportions and both share warm rufous-brown upperparts, though these are more strongly rufous-tinged, and darker, in *seebohmi*, especially on the wing coverts and forecrown. *B. seebohmi* may be distinguished by its reasonably obvious buffy-whitish tips to dark brown undertail coverts. *B. luteoventris* has paler, buffy-brown undertail coverts which (*contra* the illustration in Inskipp and Inskipp 1985) lack any clearly contrasting paler tips. Bill colour may also be a useful supporting character. Whereas *luteoventris* usually (perhaps always) shows an entirely pale or almost entirely pale lower mandible throughout the year, in *seebohmi* the lower mandible is normally blackish, at least during the breeding season. However, the colour of the lower mandible probably varies seasonally and outside the breeding season *seebohmi* may show a pale base to the bill, or sometimes an entirely pale lower mandible (as do both specimens USNM350293 and MCZ 196866, for example). In addition, the bill of *seebohmi* also appears slightly blunter and heavier than the longer, more spiky bill of *luteoventris*. Both species show a short, buffy-white supercilium which does not usually extend behind the eye. *Luteoventris* also shows a pale buffy-brown, plain and unspotted breast while in *seebohmi* the breast is usually greyer and often slightly spotted (though there is some individual variation and some *seebohmi* are almost as brown and unspotted as *luteoventris* on the breast). The rest of the underparts are similar, both usually showing a whitish throat and centre to the belly, though the flanks are more brightly tinged rufous in *seebohmi*. *Seebohmi* might also be confused with Spotted Bush-Warbler *B. thoracicus*, particularly the nominate race, which is slightly rufous-tinged above and greyish on the breast and which normally shows an all-dark or mainly dark lower mandible. In *thoracicus*, however, the tips to the dark brown undertail coverts are sharper, broader, whiter and altogether more strongly contrasting than in *seebohmi*. Another important distinction is in proportions: *thoracicus* is markedly shorter-tailed than either *seebohmi* or *luteoventris*, with a tail:wing ratio of roughly 0.8-0.9 (compared with c1.1-1.2 in *seebohmi*), appearing similar to Lanceolated Warbler in proportions. The extent and strength of breast spotting in *B. thoracicus* varies greatly and must be used with care as a distinguishing feature (some individuals of *B. t. shanensis*, a form known only in winter, almost completely lack breast spotting). Generally, however, the spots are larger, blacker and more sharply defined in *thoracicus* than in *seebohmi*.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to fellow bush-warbler enthusiasts Per Alström, Peter Kennerley, Craig Robson and Frank Rozendaal for the exchange of ideas, tapes and information over the past few years as well as for permission to quote their unpublished observations. Craig Robson kindly provided tapes of songs from Emei Shan and Dalat as well as photographs of some *Bradypterus* specimens in US museums. I am grateful to J.W. Hardy of the Florida State Museum for kindly preparing the sonagrams and to Mike Chalmers for a most helpful discussion of the Hong Kong records.

生長在大陸地區的高山短翅鶯 *Bradypterus seebohi* 有非常獨特的歌聲，曾分別被描述為 *creee-ut*、*zreee-ut* 或 *zee-bit*。憑藉一些零散的紀錄，顯示這種短翅鶯的分佈範圍遠較初時所知為廣，包括了中國的南部和西部與東南亞的北部。文中略述牠和棕褐短翅鶯 *B. luteoventris* 及斑胸短翅鶯 *B. thoracicus* 的分別。

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#### NOTES

#### SPOTTED EAGLE SCAVENGING ON PREY OF IMPERIAL EAGLE

R.P. Tipper

On 8 December 1991 I was photographing Oriental White Storks *Ciconia ciconia boyciana*, six or seven of which were on the scrape at the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, Hong Kong. The scene was a familiar one — some 100 Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea* spread across the scrape with a sprinkling of Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* and Great Egrets *E. alba*. At approximately 1440h all the birds, including the storks, suddenly burst into the air. At first I could not see what had caused the alarm but as the herons began to settle I noticed the dark shape of an Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* on the central island. Closer inspection showed it was standing over a dead Grey Heron. While concentrating on photography and the Oriental White Storks I had completely missed seeing the kill. The eagle started plucking, using sharp head movements.

Within a matter of five minutes a Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* glided in low over the scrape and landed very close to the Imperial, which showed no obvious reaction. The Spotted Eagle made no attempt to share the prey, but merely moved away slightly — to a distance of about three metres — and settled in for what proved to be a long wait. Shortly after



46. Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* resisting threats of Imperial Eagle *A. heliaca* by spreading wings  
Mai Po, 8 December 1991  
(Ray Tipper)



the Spotted Eagle's arrival, two Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus* circled low over the scene and one landed some 30m away from the eagles but stayed for only five minutes.

An hour passed before the Spotted Eagle made its first tentative attempt to feed on the heron. The Imperial Eagle reacted immediately, lunging at the Spotted, which swiftly withdrew a few metres. The Imperial then dragged the corpse, although this could have been a result of the bird's efforts to tear flesh from the heron rather than an attempt to avoid the attention of the Spotted Eagle. Over the course of the next 45 minutes the Spotted tried several more times to feed but retreated as soon as the Imperial threatened. The Spotted became more persistent and on one occasion instead of withdrawing from the Imperial's attack stood its ground, spreading its wings which had the effect of reducing the significant size difference between the two eagles. Shortly after this incident, some one hour and fifty minutes after making the kill, the Imperial departed, leaving the heron corpse to the Spotted which promptly began to feed. Almost immediately one of the Marsh Harriers returned, initially keeping its distance, approximately 10m away from the Spotted Eagle, but it soon commenced to feed at the place where the Imperial had first plucked its prey. The Spotted meanwhile fed separately on the main carcass.

Several interesting points arise out of this observation. Cramp and Simmons (1980) do not mention Grey Heron as a prey item of Imperial Eagle. The fact that the Spotted Eagle was willing to wait almost two hours in preference to searching for another food source suggests that from previous experience it knew its patience was likely to be rewarded! In contrast, the Marsh Harriers were not prepared to wait and one returned only after the Imperial had departed.

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#### BIRD OBSERVATIONS IN THE EAST AND SOUTH CHINA SEAS APRIL AND MAY 1991

*Alan Loynd*

A series of intermittent bird observations was made during two sea-going towing assignments in the spring of 1991. The first series was between 10 and 14 April 1991 from Kure near Hiroshima, Japan, through the Inland Sea and then south past Kagoshima to the Taiwan Straits and Hong Kong.

The first seabirds observed were numerous Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster* about 50km northwest of Osumi Gunto, in the same place where I first saw them on a similar voyage in March 1989. They were to remain with us until just before Hong Kong, and reached a maximum of 100 in a feeding flock north of Taiwan.

On 14 March 1989 at position 26°26'N, 122°48'E I had seen a single Short-tailed Albatross *Diomedea albatrus* apparently following Taiwanese fishing vessels, but although the fishing fleet appeared on schedule this time, the albatross did not!

The most interesting record in 1991 occurred at 0800h on 14 April at position 26°50'N, 123°27'E, when a single Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* passed 10m from the wheelhouse heading northeast. This adds to the small number of recent East China Sea records (Hopkin 1990, Lamont 1990) but is 2-3 weeks earlier than previous dates.

Non-seabird migrants were also recorded. In April 1991 these comprised Great Egret *Egretta alba*, Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* and small waders on the sea, almost certainly Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*, Swallow *Hirundo rustica* and wagtails including Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*.

On 8 and 9 May 1991, during the second towing assignment, sightings between Shan-t'ou, Guangdong Province and Hong Kong consisted of Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*, White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*, Swallow, Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* and Yellow (Blue-headed) Wagtail *Motacilla flava*.

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## OBSERVATIONS ON THE CALL AND BEHAVIOUR OF A HUME'S YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER IN HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader

While birdwatching at She Shan in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 6 January 1991, Peter Kennerley and I found a Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus humei*.

The bird was initially located by its diagnostic call: *wee-lou* rising on the 'lou' and with an almost sparrow-like quality. The call was, in fact, not unlike that of Two-barred Greenish Warbler *P. plumbeitarsus*.

The bird occasionally flew into the *fung shui* wood nearby but spent most of its time in low, completely bare peach trees, either searching the branches (presumably for insects) or flycatching. This behaviour was very different from that of the majority of nominate *P. inornatus* in Hong Kong whose habits are much more arboreal. Its behaviour was reminiscent of Chiffchaffs *P. collybita* I have observed in winter in the UK and Hong Kong.

We watched the bird down to seven metres for about 30 minutes and took the following description:

'Supercilium off-white, tapering from eye to bill, thinner than on *P. i. inornatus*. Indistinct eye stripe. Indistinct pale central crown stripe (only visible from behind). Cheeks pale. Upperparts grey with an olive wash to the mantle. Thin, off-white fringes to the tertials. Two off-white wing bars thinner than those on *P. i. inornatus* (especially the median covert wing bar). Underparts sandy-grey, throat slightly paler, undertail coverts white. Bill and legs black.'

The call, black bare parts, reduced median covert wing bar and lack of any yellow or green in the plumage ruled out the races *inornatus* and *mandellii* and confirmed the identification as *P. i. humei* (for a more detailed discussion of the identification of *humei* see Leader 1990).

This is the second record of *humei* for Hong Kong, the first having been trapped at the University of Hong Kong Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre, Shek Kong on 2 December 1989 and again on 27 January 1990 (Leader 1990).

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Leader, P.J. 1990. Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler: a new subspecies for Hong Kong. *Hong Kong Bird Report* 1989:99-104

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## GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF RECORDS

### Recording

One of the most important functions of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society is the publication of the *Hong Kong Bird Report*. The value of this publication depends on members providing written notes and all are encouraged to submit records at the end of each year.

The Society provides 152 x 106mm record cards to facilitate analysis and storage and these are available from the Recorder. Completed cards are stored in a species-indexed filing system and members wishing to look at past records are asked to contact the Recorder. It is hoped that the ease with which records can be retrieved will result in interested people analysing migration patterns and population trends and undertaking other studies.

The Society also maintains a collection of reports of birds recorded during members' visits to various parts of Southeast Asia and China to assist others in planning overseas trips.

### Rarities

While the birds of Hong Kong are better known than those of many areas of the Far East, new species are continually being added to the Hong Kong List and the status of many other species is uncertain.

Field identification techniques for species in the area still need refining and the Society has a Records Committee to assist the Recorder in the unenviable task of assessing records and ensuring that a high standard of reporting is maintained. A list of species considered by the Committee is given below. The list may seem dauntingly long and to include some unmistakeable species such as Oystercatcher but nevertheless field descriptions of the birds listed are required if the record is to be considered for publication.

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

- a) Date, time and location of sighting.
- b) Power of binoculars/telescope used, distance of bird from the observer, weather and light conditions.
- c) Description of habitat and what other birds, if any, it was associating with.
- d) Angle of view and actions: at rest, in flight, swimming etc. The more varied the conditions the better.
- e) Its general size, shape and structure compared with other more familiar species. Structural features which may be important should be detailed: e.g. bill length compared to length of head; relative position of wing



tips to uppertail coverts; projection of primary tips beyond closed tertials; length of hind claw etc.

- f) The most detailed description possible of the plumage and bare parts, not just those parts thought to help in identification. This description should be logical and organised. The following sequence is suggested:

- i) Head
- ii) Upperparts
- iii) Wings, including underwing if seen
- iv) Tail, both upper and lower sides
- v) Underparts
- vi) Bare parts (iris, bill, gape if seen, legs and feet)

More experienced observers will expand on features known to be critical e.g. extent and shape of supercilium and wing bars in warblers, pattern of scapular feathers in waders etc. A rough sketch or diagram is helpful.

- g) Any calls, indicating especially the quality of the sound (harsh, rattling, shrill, hoarse, liquid etc.) and comparison with calls of other species.
- h) Notes on previous experience with the species, or species with which it may be confused.
- i) Names of other observers present, if any.

If possible try to get someone else to see the bird as two descriptions are better than one. *Make sure that you take full field notes on the spot* — it is all too easy to imagine field marks after consulting a book!

Even if you do not know what the bird is please send in the description as it may be possible for the Committee to identify it for you. Many species of cage birds have been recorded as escapes in Hong Kong and they may not be included in any of the local books.

The increasing number of field guides on the market often make positive identification appear straightforward, but it must be remembered that there are still many difficult species and groups of birds and it is only by careful, painstaking observation that such species can be identified.

The following list of species (for which written descriptions are required) is based on the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong* (Chalmers 1986) plus additions detailed in the annual *Hong Kong Bird Reports* from 1984/85 onwards. Full descriptions are required for all species. In addition, the Recorder may request descriptions of other species under unusual circumstances.

Records submitted without descriptions will not be considered.

The list is subject to revision each year to include new species and delete those for which descriptions are no longer needed because of better defined status or fewer identification problems.

**Species for which written descriptions of all sightings must be submitted to the Recorder for consideration by the Records Committee**

## CATEGORY A

Red-necked Grebe	Slender-billed Gull
Black-necked Grebe	Common Gull
Streaked Shearwater	Slaty-backed Gull
all storm petrels	Glaucous-winged Gull
all frigatebirds	Glaucous Gull
Japanese Night Heron	Kittiwake
Swinhoe's Egret	Greater Crested Tern
Glossy Ibis	Roseate Tern
Lesser Treeduck	Bridled Tern
all geese	Sooty Tern
Cotton Teal	Ancient Auk
Baikal Teal	Bar-tailed Cuckoo Dove
Ferruginous Duck	White-bellied Green Pigeon
Velvet Scoter	Thick-billed Pigeon
Goldeneye	Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo
Crested Honey Buzzard	Common Cuckoo
Black-shouldered Kite	all owls except Collared Scops Owl and Barred Owllet
Brahminy Kite	Japanese Nightjar
Hen Harrier	all swiftlets
Pied Harrier	Collared Kingfisher
all accipiters except Crested Goshawk	Crested Kingfisher
Upland Buzzard	all woodpeckers
Mountain Hawk Eagle	Blue-throated Bee-eater
White-legged Falconet	Chinese Pitta
Amur Falcon	all larks except Oriental Skylark
Merlin	Pechora Pipit
Saker Falcon	Water Pipit
all button quails	Citrine Wagtail
Water Rail	White Wagtail (all races other than <i>leucopsis</i> and <i>ocularis</i> )
all crakes	Rosy Minivet
Purple Gallinule	Brown Dipper
Common Crane	Wren
Oystercatcher	Japanese Robin
Ringed Plover	Siberian Blue Robin
Oriental Plover	Grey Bushchat
Little Stint	Pied Wheatear
Pectoral Sandpiper	White-capped Redstart
Jack Snipe	White-throated Rock Thrush
Solitary Snipe	Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush
Long-billed Dowitcher	Orange-headed Ground Thrush
Little Whimbrel	Siberian Thrush
Lesser Yellowlegs	Brown Thrush
all skuas	Slaty-backed Forktail
Great Black-headed Gull	
Relict Gull	

Pale-footed Bush Warbler  
 Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler  
 Bright-capped Cisticola  
 Styan's Grasshopper Warbler  
 Lanceolated Warbler  
 Blunt-winged Warbler  
 Paddyfield Warbler  
 Blyth's Reed Warbler  
 Thick-billed Warbler  
 Chestnut-crowned Warbler  
 Fulvous-faced Flycatcher Warbler  
 Two-barred Greenish Warbler  
 Yellow-browed Warbler  
     (race *humei*)  
 Radde's Warbler  
 Chiffchaff  
 Fukien Niltava  
 Sooty Flycatcher  
 Striated Yuhina  
 Gould's Sunbird  
 Plain Flowerpecker  
 Tiger Shrike  
 Bull-headed Shrike  
 Chinese Great Grey Shrike  
 Daurian Jackdaw  
 Purple-backed Starling  
 Chestnut-cheeked Starling  
 European Starling  
 Rosy Starling  
 Brambling  
 Siskin  
 Japanese Grosbeak  
 Yellow-throated Bunting  
 Yellow-browed Bunting  
 Rustic Bunting  
 Reed Bunting  
 Pallas's Reed Bunting  
 Japanese Reed Bunting

## **CATEGORY B**

Ring-necked Pheasant  
 Pygmy Wren Babbler

## **CATEGORY C**

none

## **CATEGORY D**

Emerald Cuckoo  
 Blue-winged Pitta  
 Singing Bushlark  
 Greater Cuckoo Shrike  
 Brown-breasted Bulbul  
 Japanese Waxwing  
 Bohemian Waxwing  
 Small Niltava  
 Pale Blue Flycatcher  
 Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler  
 Rufous-capped Babbler  
 Vinous-throated Parrotbill  
 Grey-headed Parrotbill  
 Grey-cheeked Fulvetta  
 Ruddy Sparrow  
 Burmese Shrike  
 Pallas's Rosefinch  
 Hawfinch  
 Meadow Bunting  
 Grey-necked Bunting

## **CATEGORY E**

all new species

## **CATEGORY F**

all