

# THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1968



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**THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY**

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# THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1968

Records compiled by

M. A. WEBSTER, B.A., M.B.O.U.

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*Edited by*

**E. D. Webb**

*Published in 1969*

*by the*

**HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY**

*c/o* THE CHARTERED BANK, HONG KONG.

(A registered Society under the Hong Kong Societies Ordinance)

## INTRODUCTION

Membership continues at about 70, of whom a third are Overseas Members, nearly all friends of long standing. We suffered a great loss at the end of the year in Richard Hale, who has been posted to Japan, and we are grateful to Jim Payne for stepping into his shoes as Hon. Secretary. We shall also miss our keen Japanese member, Akira Hibi, who must find it strange to be taught in his native language after so many years here in K.G.V.; Mr. and Mrs. Wethey, who have gone to Brussels and Sir Michael Gass, who has returned to his former hunting ground in the Western Pacific. We congratulate him on his Knighthood. Among new members, we welcome Dr. R. K. Murton, some of whose excellent photographs appear in this issue; our first Junior Member, Robert Allison, and the four Government full-time Game Wardens as Honorary Members.

Outings during the year were as follows:—

1st January	Pak Tam
14th January	Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau
30th January	Sek Kong woods/Lam Tsuen Valley
18th February	Long Valley/Taipo Kau
3rd March	Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau
17th March	Ho Chung Valley
5th April	Ping Shan/Mong Tseng
15th April	Ping Shan/Luen Tak
28th April	Mai Po
19th May	Shataukok egrettry/Lam Tsuen valley

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Summer holidays for birds and watchers, but a lot of the former were observed at Mai Po by the more determined of the latter.

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8th September	Mai Po
22nd September	Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau
6th October	Ping Shan
20th October	Mai Po/Taipo Kau
30th October	Tai Mong Tsai
17th November	Sek Kong woods/Lam Tsuen valley
8th December	Ho Chung valley
26th December	Mong Tseng

It has been suggested that some shorter outings, say half a day on Saturday forenoons or afternoons would be popular and this good idea will be followed up.

A splendid number of birds were seen and five new species were added to the Colony List.

There have been a number of gifts to the Library:— from Mr. D. G. Robertson—a variety of books on the birds of New Zealand and Australia; from Mr. F.O.P. Hechtel a copy of Boonsong Lekagul's excellent "Bird Guide of Thailand"; and from Dr. Barnes a copy of "Australian Birds".

The battle for conservation continues slowly and painfully, more in ink than in action—see separate article.

E.D.W.

## REPORT ON THE BIRDS, 1968

To start with the statistics, a total of 237 species was recorded, of which no less than five were new Colony records. Apart from these, 1968 proved a very interesting year in many respects, particularly during the summer.

During the early part of the year, most observers concentrated on the Deep Bay marshes, understandably enough, as the wintering flock of Black Storks remained until March, and there were also wintering parties of Lesser Spoonbills and White Ibis. During the cold weather in February, there were large flocks of duck in the middle of Deep Bay, but these were usually too far away for identification. There were, however, unusually frequent reports of Wigeon, and a drake Shoveler was twice identified. Among the passerines during this period, mention should be made of 2 Rosy Minivets at Stanley, the first record since the "Cheung Chau rarities" of 1938 to 1940. On January 23rd, the first "new species", the Common Gull, was recorded from Hong Kong harbour.

The spring passage produced the usual crop of rarities, beginning with an Australian Curlew on March 31st. Wader migration brought records of the majority of the species on the Colony list, although the frequency of visits to Mai Po was probably controlled more by the arrival of the summer visitors than by the excitements of watching passage birds. Two Brown Hawk-Owls at Stanley in April were not only unusual, but made many of us wonder what has happened to our supposedly resident species of Owl.

Breeding at Sha Tau Kok egretty was successful, and at least two pairs of Swinhoe's brought off young. Undoubtedly much of the success was due to the efforts of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, whose increased staff of full-time Game Wardens spent much of the summer at the egretty.

While the Game Wardens concentrated on the egretty, most bird-watchers were concentrating on the southern end of the Mai Po marshes. Apart from the Moorhens, Watercock, and Little Grebes, all of which were present in much greater numbers than before, a new breeding species, the Pheasant-tailed Jacana, bred in the same area. Ten adults arrived in April, and it seems that at least two pairs bred successfully. Both the Black Bittern and the Purple Heron are also suspected of having bred. From July 7th onwards, yet another species, the Lesser Whistling Teal, was

regularly seen in the same area, and this species, which tends to spend most of the day hidden in thick grass, should also be watched for in the future.

At the end of August, Roseate Terns were almost certainly identified for the first time (see Systematic List). On September 8th, a few hardy members braved the fringes of a typhoon to go on a Society Outing to Mai Po, and two of them were rewarded by being able to identify the rare Spotted Greenshank, another first Colony record. Apart from these rarities, the autumn migration was comparatively disappointing, and also the continuing warm weather seems to have delayed the winter visitors, many of which did not arrive until late December. Meanwhile the grounds of Bethanie, in Pokfulam, were visited by two new species of Flycatcher, the Orange-bellied Niltava which was seen briefly on October 27th, and the Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher which first appeared on November 23rd and remained throughout the winter. Due to the similarity in colouration of these two species, the first of these records was considered doubtful for a while, but the appearance of yet another individual of the species at Tai Po Kau at the end of December at least confirmed its inclusion on the Colony list. Both of these species are rather spectacular, although both are notorious skulkers. All observers concerned can confirm this point!

Finally, there are a number of species about which information is particularly needed. No proper count has been carried out at Sha Tau Kok egretty for some years. According to hunters, Garganey are common in early autumn before the Teal arrive; the males at least can be distinguished by their pale "shoulders" in flight. Records of the three commoner species of Snipe depend on the identification of birds in the hand; observers are asked to check the species whenever they see hunters with dead birds. Most members of the Society must see gulls in the harbour every winter; could we have more records, please? Please record all sightings of the Lesser Crow-pheasant; the status of this species is very poorly documented. Does the Chinese Starling still breed in the New Territories? Summer records of most species are few and far between; we particularly need more information on the Chinese Pipit, the Crested Bunting, and all the Kingfishers. The present status of the Chinese Greenfinch is uncertain, and in particular there were no records at all last summer; does this species no longer breed in Hong Kong? Is the egretty at Sha Tau Kok still the only one in the Colony?

## SYSTEMATIC LIST 1968

The answers to all these questions, and many more, may well be known already to some members of the Society, or alternatively can be pieced together from the records of a number of observers. The records given in the Systematic List come mainly from about half a dozen observers, and this is too small a number to enable us to get a proper picture of what is happening. Please do not hesitate to send in your records, however unimportant you may think them; our reports tend to concentrate on rarities only because there is not sufficient information supplied on the commoner species. The Committee of the Society is deeply concerned with the problem of conservation in Hong Kong, and we are often asked to supply information to Government bodies. Individual records have therefore a double value; they help us to provide this information, and they also help us to publish the only report from the whole coastline of Asia between South Korea and Thailand. We hope that more members will supply records in future; the information which your personal records give can be immensely valuable, but only if it can be published and thus made available for others to use.

M.A.W.

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### List of observers

R. J. Allison  
Dr. R. J. Barnes  
D. J. Galloway  
Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Garland  
T. P. Garland  
R. E. Hale  
Mr. and Mrs. F.O.P. Hechtel  
A. Hibi  
Dr. R. K. Murton  
J. C. Payne  
M. P. Rice  
D. G. Robertson  
Cmdr. E. D. Webb  
M. A. Webster  
R. P. Weeks  
R. A. I. Wilson

2. **Great Crested Grebe** *podiceps cristatus*  
Up to 20 in Deep Bay until March 10th, with an unusually large flock of c.200 on February 4th. (MAW, EDW). One at Jubilee Reservoir on January 12th. (DJG). Up to 10 in Deep Bay from December 8th.
4. **Little Grebe** *podiceps ruficollis*  
Seen throughout the year at reservoirs in the New Territories, and on the Deep Bay marshes. At least 3 pairs bred on the Deep Bay marshes, the maximum number of juveniles seen being 13 on September 8th.
7. **Spotted-billed Pelican** *pelecanus philippensis*  
Up to 70 in Deep Bay until March 24th.
8. **Cormorant** *phalacrocorax carbo*  
Frequent in winter in Deep Bay and along other parts of the coast. Numbers usually small, but a concentration of c.300 was noted at Deep Bay on February 11th. (AH, MAW), and over 100 on February 14th and 15th. (REH). Last spring date February 25th, first autumn record October 27th.
12. **Yellow Bittern** *ixobrychus sinensis*  
Apart from one at Mai Po on February 3rd (REH), all records are from the Deep Bay marshes between March 31st and November 3rd. The breeding population was estimated at c.40 pairs (MAW, AH).
13. **Chestnut Bittern** *ixobrychus cinnamomeus*  
Present on the Deep Bay marshes from June 16th to October 6th with one there on December 18th. Possibly 2 pairs bred; at least 2 males were present.
14. **Black Bittern** *ixobrychus flavicollis*  
One at Mai Po from May to September (FOPH, RJB).
16. **Night Heron** *nycticorax nycticorax*  
One immature at Mai Po on September 1st (REH, DGR, MAW).
17. **Chinese Pond Heron** *ardeola bacchus*  
Present throughout the year in marshy areas throughout the New Territories, with one record from Aberdeen on April 10th (RAIW). The estimated breeding population at Sha Tau Kok was upwards of 50 pairs (MAW, AH).
18. **Cattle Egret** *ardeola ibis*  
Apart from a party of 7 on the Deep Bay marshes on February 1st (MAW, AH), all records fall between March 30th and December 1st. Most records are from Mai Po, and Sha Tau Kok, where over 40 pairs nested (MAW, AH).

19. **Little Green Heron** *butorides striatus*  
Up to 6 at Mai Po from April 15th to October 20th (possibly one pair bred). 2 at Tai Lam Chung on March 23rd (EDW).
20. **Little Egret** *egretta garzetta*  
Common on the Deep Bay marshes throughout the year. At least 50 pairs bred at Sha Tau Kok. 6 at Stanley on April 6th.
21. **Lesser Egret** *egretta intermedia*  
One at Mai Po on October 6th. (MAW, REH, RKM).
22. **Swinhoe's Egret** *egretta eulophotes*  
Two pairs bred at Sha Tau Kok (MAW, AH, REH).
23. **Reef Egret** *egretta sacra*  
Individual birds seen throughout the year at various localities round the coast. All were of the grey form, except one bird of the white form on March 8th. (REH).
24. **Great Egret** *egretta alba*  
Common throughout the year on the Deep Bay marshes, with odd records from other localities.
25. **Grey Heron** *ardea cinerea*  
Up to 150 on the Deep Bay marshes until April 28th, and up to 100 there from September 1st onwards.
26. **Purple Heron** *ardea purpurea*  
Far more records than usual. Apart from one bird over Shouson Hill on March 31st (MAW), all records are from Mai Po, where a pair may have bred (an adult with two juveniles just capable of flight were seen on September 1st). Records month by month were as follows:—  
January 7th (1), 24th (2).  
April 5th (1), 7th (2), 24th (1), 28th (3).  
May 5th (1).  
June 9th (2), 16th (1).  
July 14th (2).  
August 18th (1).  
September 1st (3), 22nd (6), 29th (1).  
October 6th (6), 12th (1), 13th (1), 27th (1).
28. **Black Stork** *ciconia nigra*  
Up to 8 birds on many occasions on the Deep Bay marshes up to March 10th (REH, RPW, RJB, MAW, RAIW, AH, EDW).
29. **White Ibis** *threskiornis melanocephalus*  
Up to 11 on the Deep Bay marshes until March 24th. 7 there on April 28th. Up to 4 in the same area between November 3rd and December 15th.
31. **Lesser Spoonbill** *platalea minor*  
Up to 3 on the Deep Bay marshes regularly until April 5th, but flocks of 11 on March 24th and 8 on March 31st were probably on passage.
32. **Mallard** *anas platyrhynchos*  
2 on the Shum Chun River on February 3rd (REH).
33. **Yellow-nib Duck** *anas poecilorhyncha*  
Apart from 30+ on February 3rd (REH), and 2 on April 28th (REH, AH, RPW), all records fall between September 1st and December 18th, the maximum being 14 on October 20th. All records are from the Deep Bay marshes.
34. **Gadwall** *anas strepera*  
One at Mai Po on September 1st (MAW).
35. **Falcated Teal** *anas falcata*  
10 near Luen Tak on October 6th (RKM, MAW).
36. **Teal** *anas crecca*  
c.30 in Deep Bay on February 25th (MAW, AH), and one over Deep Bay marshes on March 3rd (MAW, REH, AH, RPW). 172 at Tai Lam Chung on February 25th (MAW, AH), and 39 there on March 23rd (EDW). Up to 14 on the Deep Bay marshes between September 1st and November 11th (MAW, REH, DJG, RAIW, DGR). c.20 at Lo Wu on December 22nd (MAW).
38. **Garganey** *anas querquedula*  
One at Mai Po on August 26th (DGR), and 8 there on September 1st (REH, MAW).
39. **Wigeon** *anas penelope*  
Up to 30 in the Deep Bay area until March 31st (MAW, REH, AH). Large flocks of duck on Deep Bay on February 25th and March 10th were suspected of being this species.
40. **Pintail** *anas acuta*  
14+ at Mai Po on October 20th (MAW, DGR).
41. **Shoveler** *anas clypeata*  
A male in Deep Bay on February 25th and March 10th (AH, MAW).
46. **Red-breasted Merganser** *mergus serrator*  
All records from Deep Bay:—c.40 on February 4th. (EDW, MAW), c.26 on February 25th (MAW, AH), 5 on December 12th (MAW).
47. **Shelduck** *tadorna tadorna*  
A flock of at least 71 birds wintered at the mouth of the Shum

Chun river, being last seen on March 10th (MAW, REH, RPW, EDW, AH). One at Mai Po on April 5th (REH, DGR, AH). The first winter record was on December 1st., and numbers steadily increased to 115 on December 29th (MAW, REH.)

**48. Lesser Whistling Teal** *dendrocygna javanica*

Up to 8 birds present on the Deep Bay marshes from July 7th to September 1st (MAW, AH, TPG, RJA, RAIW, REH).

**52. Black-eared Kite** *milvus migrans*

Common and widespread.

**54. Buzzard** *buteo buteo*

Common in the winter months; last spring date April 15th; first autumn date August 22nd. One over Victoria on July 1st (RPW).

**56. Sparrowhawk** *accipiter nisus*

Frequent records of single birds throughout the New Territories up to April 5th, and from October 6th to November 10th.

**60. Golden Eagle** *aquila chrysaetos*

An immature on the Deep Bay marshes on January 21st (MAW, AH), January 28th (MAW), February 11th (REH). An adult at Ping Shan on February 4th (EDW, MAW). An adult over Sekkong on November 17th (MAW, REH).

**61. Imperial Eagle** *aquila heliaca*

2 at Lo Wu on January 11th (DGR), and 3 on February 18th (MAW, RPW, AH, RAIW). 2 in the same area on December 22nd (MAW).

**63. Spotted Eagle** *aquila clanga*

One at Mai Po on December 8th (REH).

**64. Bonelli's Eagle** *hieraaetus fasciatus*

One at Luen Tak on April 15th (AH, RAIW, DGR, RPW), and Sha Kong on April 22nd (RPW). One on Lantau on May 5th (REH).

**66. White-bellied Sea-eagle** *haliaeetus leucogaster*

Up to three commonly seen off Hong Kong Island and the offshore islands. Two eyries were reported, one on Kau-i-chau on February 11th, and one on Shek-wu-chau in December.

**68. Serpent Eagle** *spilornis cheela*

One at Tai Po Tau Treatment Works on April 28th appeared to be carrying nesting material (JCP, EHG, IG). One at Tai Mong Tsai on October 30th (REH, MAW, RAIW).

**69. Marsh Harrier** *circus aeruginosus*

A male and two females seen regularly over the Deep Bay marshes up to April 7th. Again, a male and two females there from September 22nd to the end of the year.

**71. Hen Harrier** *circus cyaneus*

Single males were seen on the Deep Bay marshes on January 7th (MAW, AH, REH), January 14th (AH), February 13th (REH), and December 1st (MAW). Females of this species or of 70 (Pied Harrier) were seen singly on many occasions up to April 5th, and from September 22nd onwards. Three females were seen on January 14th (REH).

**74. Osprey** *pandion haliaetus*

Up to 5 in Deep Bay until April 5th, and from October 6th onwards. One at Tai Lam Chung on March 23rd (EDW), and one at Three Fathoms Cove on January 14th (DGR).

**77. Peregrine Falcon** *falco peregrinus*

Frequent records of one or two birds over Victoria and Kowloon throughout the year, particularly the winter months. The Peninsula Hotel was used as a regular roost from January to March, and again from October onwards. Two birds were also reported regularly from the Deep Bay area. One at Clearwater Bay on April 18th (DJG).

**81. Kestrel** *falco tinnunculus*

Common up to April 5th, and from October 12th onwards.

**82. Chinese Francolin** *francolinus pintadeanus*

Reported from the Mong Tseng/Ping Shan area, Lantau, and Hong Kong Island.

**88. Water Rail** *rallus aquaticus*

Single birds at Mai Po on September 1st (MAW, DGR, REH), and Ping Shan on October 6th (REH).

**89. Banded Rail** *rallus striatus*

Up to 2 reported from the Deep Bay marshes throughout the year.

**92. Crimson-legged Crake** *amaurornis akool*

Single birds at Tsing Lung Tau on April 16th and 22nd, and Ting Kau on September 22nd (DJG).

**93. White-breasted Waterhen** *amaurornis phoenicurus*

Fairly common in marshy areas.

**94. Moorhen** *gallinula chloropus*

One at Lo Wu on January 11th (DGR), and 5 young birds near Sheung Shui on January 21st (AH, MAW). All other records are

from Mai Po marshes, summarised as follows:— February 3rd (1), March 10th (1), April 5th to December 18th (seen regularly, with a maximum of 30 seen on June 30th). It is thought that about 20 pairs bred; chicks were seen from June 30th onwards, although many pairs still had eggs on July 14th..... four complete nests with eggs, probably of this species, were taken by small boys from the nearby village on this date. It appears that many birds left in September, and most were gone by mid-October.

**95. Watercock** *gallicrex cinerea*

Up to 8 were seen regularly on the Mai Po marshes from June 16th to October 13th. The first juvenile was seen on July 13th. Probably at least 4 pairs bred.

**96. Coot** *fulica atra*

One near Sheung Shui on January 21st (MAW, AH). All other records are from Mai Po as follows:— January 21st (3), March 31st (1), September 8th (1), November 11th (1), December 8th (3), December 27th (7).

**97. Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *hydrophasianus chirurgus*

One found dead at Mai Po on April 5th (DGR). From April 16th to December 1st, up to 10 were seen there regularly; juveniles were seen from September 1st onwards. This is the first breeding record for Hong Kong.

**98. Painted Snipe** *rostratula bengalensis*

One at Mai Po on June 2nd (REH). Two shot by a hunter at Mai Po on September 28th (DGR).

**100. Lapwing** *vanellus vanellus*

5 at Mai Po on January 7th (REH, MAW, AH), 12 on January 14th (REH, RPW, MAW, RJB, EDW, AH), one on January 28th (MAW).

**101. Grey-headed Lapwing** *microsarcops cinereus*

Single birds at Mai Po on January 14th (MAW), September 14th (DGR), October 6th (MAW, REH), and two on December 8th (REH).

**103. Little Ringed Plover** *charadrius dubius*

Present throughout the year on the Deep Bay marshes, the biggest numbers in March. Also recorded from Yuen Long and Castle Peak Bay.

**104. Kentish Plover** *charadrius alexandrinus*

Present on the Deep Bay marshes up to April 28th, the maximum being c.400 on March 10th. Small numbers there from September 8th onwards.

**105/106. Sand-plovers** *charadrius leschenaultii/mongolus*

Recorded from the Deep Bay marshes from March 3rd to November 3rd, the largest number being c.200 on April 12th.

**108. Grey Plover** *charadrius squatarola*

Up to 27 on the Deep Bay marshes until May 12th, 3 on August 24th, and one on September 14th and December 15th.

**109. Asiatic Golden Plover** *charadrius dominicus*

8 at Mai Po on April 28th, 2 on May 12th, 40 on September 22nd, 20 on October 6th, and 8 on October 20th.

**110. Turnstone** *arenaria interpres*

3 at Mai Po on May 12th (REH).

**111-113. Snipe** *gallinago spp.*

Common in the New Territories up to May 12th, and from September 1st onwards. Specific identifications (from shot birds) as follows:—

**111. Fantail Snipe** *gallinago gallinago*

2 on January 18th, 9 on September 28th, 8 on October 13th.

**112. Pintail Snipe** *gallinago stenura*

5 on September 1st.

**113. Swinhoe's Snipe** *gallinago megala*

1 on September 1st, 3 on October 13th.

**116. Woodcock** *scolopax rusticola*

One at Tai Mong Tsai on January 1st (RAIW). One at Tai Po Kau on December 29th (MAW).

**117. Curlew** *numenius arquata*

Present on the Deep Bay marshes until April 12th, and from August 26th to the end of the year. Maximum 120+ on February 3rd. One at Big Wave Bay on August 19th (TPG, RJA).

**118. Australian Curlew** *numenius madagascariensis*

One at Mai Po on March 31st (MAW, AH).

**119. Whimbrel** *numenius phaeopus*

Up to 9 at Mai Po from April 28th to May 5th, and up to 11 from August 26th to October 20th.

**121. Black-tailed Godwit** *limosa limosa*

All records are from Mai Po as follows:— 1 on March 3rd (MAW, REH, AH, RPW), 5 on March 30th (EDW), 2 on March 31st (MAW, REH, AH), 5 on April 7th (MAW, AH, REH), 3 on



September 1st (MAW, RAIW, DGR, REH), 5 on October 6th (MAW, REH), and 1 on October 20th (REH, RPW). See 1967 Report for details of frequency of previous records.

**122. Bar-tailed Godwit** *limosa lapponica*

All records are from Mai Po as follows:— 5 on March 31st (REH), 1 on April 5th (DGR, REH, AH, RPW), 2 on April 12th (DGR), 1 on April 28th (REH, AH, RPW), and 1 on October 6th (MAW, REH).

**123. Green Sandpiper** *tringa ochropus*

Frequent in winter in small groups of up to 20 birds up to April 28th, and from October 13th to the end of the year. Reported from many parts of the New Territories.

**124. Wood Sandpiper** *tringa glareola*

Up to 30 on the Deep Bay marshes from March 5th to April 28th, when numbers rose sharply to 200+. Also numerous on May 12th. Autumn records are of up to 80 birds between August 18th and December 26th.

**125. Common Sandpiper** *tringa hypoleucos*

Small numbers seen in every month of the year except June on the Deep Bay marshes, and in many other parts of the Colony.

**126. Redshank** *tringa totanus*

Recorded throughout the year, except June to August, on the Deep Bay marshes, the maxima being c.100 on April 28th, and c.30 on September 22nd.

**127. Spotted Redshank** *tringa erythropus*

Up to 70 on the Deep Bay marshes until April 30th, and up to 40 between September 8th and December 1st.

**128. Greenshank** *tringa nebularia*

Up to 40 on the Deep Bay marshes until May 12th, and up to 30 from September 1st to the end of the year.

**128x. Spotted Greenshank** *tringa guttifer*

One at Mai Po on September 8th, the first record for the Colony (MAW, DGR). The diagnostic features for identification were noted as follows:— legs shorter than Greenshank, with which it associated; neck and sides of breast streaked; back gave mottled effect, contrasting with clear colouration of Greenshank; base of lower mandible yellow. General impression is of a short-legged, rather plump Greenshank.

**129. Marsh Sandpiper** *tringa stagnatilis*

Records from Mai Po as follows:—8 on March 24th (MAW, AH), c.20 on March 31st (MAW, AH), 5 on April 7th (MAW, AH), 1 on April 28th (AH), c.10 on September 22nd (MAW, REH, RAIW), 1 on October 20th (RJB).

**130. Grey-rumped Sandpiper** *tringa brevipes*

Two at Mai Po on May 12th (REH).

**131. Terek Sandpiper** *tringa terek*

3 at Mai Po on March 24th (EDW), 1 on April 12th (DGR), 3 on September 22nd (MAW, REH, RAIW).

**134. Eastern Little Stint** *calidris ruficollis*

Up to 9 at Yuen Long from January 11th to February 1st. Up to 30 on the Deep Bay marshes from February 11th to May 12th, 7 on June 9th, and up to 20 from September 1st to October 20th.

**136. Temminck's Stint** *calidris temminckii*

Up to 5 at Mai Po in January, c.40 there on April 12th, 2 on October 12th, and 1 on October 20th.

**137. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *calidris acuminata*

2 at Mai Po on April 28th (REH, RJB), 5 on May 5th (RJB), 5 on May 12th (RJB, REH), and 1 on June 9th (REH, RJB, AH).

**138. Dunlin** *calidris alpina*

Common on the Deep Bay marshes (up to 200 birds) until March 31st, and from August 26th onwards.

**139. Curlew-sandpiper** *calidris ferruginea*

Up to 12 at Mai Po from March 24th to May 12th (REH, DGR, RJB, MAW, EDW, AH).

**142. Broad-billed Sandpiper** *limicola falcinellus*

Up to 7 at Mai Po between March 31st and May 12th (REH, RJB, RPW, MAW, AH), and 10+ on September 22nd (REH, RAIW, MAW).

**143. Ruff** *philomachus pugnax*

c.5 at Mai Po on April 28th (AH).

**145. Black-winged Stilt** *himantopus himantopus*

Records from Mai Po:— 11 on August 26th (DGR), 2 on September 22nd (REH, RAIW, MAW), 3 on October 6th (MAW, REH), 1 on November 3rd (MAW).

**146. Avocet** *recurvirostra avosetta*

One at Mai Po on January 28th (RJB).

**147. Collared Pratincole** *glareola pratincola*

Up to 15 at Mai Po from March 31st to April 28th (DGR, RJB, REH, RPW, MAW, AH), 20 there on September 8th (REH), 1 at Ping Shan on October 6th (MAW), 3 at Mai Po on October 20th (RJB, RPW, REH), and 1 there on December 1st (MAW).

**148. Herring Gull** *larus argentatus*  
Present in Hong Kong Harbour and Deep Bay up to April 3rd, with a maximum of c.400 on January 31st. First winter date, December 15th.

**148x. Common Gull** *larus canus*  
One in Hong Kong Harbour on January 23rd, observed with 148 and 152 (DGR). The first Colony record.

[**149. Slaty-backed Gull** *larus schistisagus*  
Six "Herring Gull type", but "as dark as British Lesser Black-backed Gulls" in Hong Kong Harbour on April 1st (MAW). See 1967 Report, p.31, for comments on this species.]

**152. Black-headed Gull** *larus ridibundus*  
Up to 400 in Deep Bay, and a few in Hong Kong Harbour up to March 31st; from October 20th onwards, small numbers until December 22nd, when c.500 were seen along the coast from Laichikok to Mong Tseng, and December 27th, when at least 1000 were in the Western approaches to the Harbour.

**154. White-winged Black Tern** *chlidonias leucoptera*  
One at Mai Po on June 2nd (REH).

**155. Whiskered Tern** *chlidonias hybrida*  
One at Mai Po on September 14th (DGR), c.20 there on September 22nd (MAW, REH), one there on October 12th (DGR), and 5 at Ping Shan on October 13th (REH).

**156. Gull-billed Tern** *gelocheilidon nilotica*  
Up to 50 at Mai Po from April 5th to June 16th (AH, RAIW, RPW, RJB, DGR, REH). 5 in Hong Kong harbour in a typhoon on September; 8th (MAW, DGR). 6 at Mai Po on September 22nd (REH, RAIW, MAW), and 3 at Luen Tak on October 6th (MAW).

**157. Caspian Tern** *hydroprogne caspia*  
c.20 at Lau Fau Shan (DJG) and 2 at Mai Po (REH, AH, MAW) on March 31st. One at Mai Po on June 16th (AH, MAW, REH), and one at Sha Tau Kok on June 23rd (AH, MAW). 4 at Mai Po on November 3rd (RJB).

**158. Common Tern** *sterna hirundo*  
2 in the Shum Chun estuary on September 1st (DGR, MAW, REH).

**158x. Roseate Tern** *sterna dougallii*  
c.35 over the East Lamma Channel on August 30th (TPG, RJA). 2 over Hong Kong harbour on September 1st and 9th (DGR). The diagnostic feature noticed in all cases was the bright red bill, tipped with black on a few birds. The general descriptions given identify the birds without doubt as belonging to the Common/

Arctic/Roseate group. The tail was described by TPG as white with darker outer rectrices, not deeply forked. The latter point was also noted by DGR. Both these points suggest Arctic Tern, although the fork of the tail is not an accurate guide in autumn. In view of the facts that the Arctic Tern is not known to occur west of Hawaii, whereas Roseate occurs regularly on the China coast, and that the descriptions of the two species in the available literature are inaccurate and confused, I can only conclude that these records are of Roseate Terns (Common Tern has a black bill, subsp. nordmanni). It must however be borne in mind that the occurrence of Arctic Terns is not impossible, though distinctly unlikely. These identifications must therefore be regarded as subject to review in the light of further information.

**160. Little Tern** *sterna albifrons*  
One at Mai Po on April 28th (AH, RPW). One in Hong Kong harbour on September 3rd (MAW).

**164. Rufous Turtle-dove** *streptopelia orientalis*  
Apart from a flock of 14 birds wintering at Stanley up to April 27th, there are several records of birds on passage at Victoria Barracks, Ho Chung, and Tai Po Kau, up to May 27th. Autumn records from the same localities range from August 11th onwards, and at least 10 birds were at Stanley by the end of the year.

**165. Spotted Dove** *streptopelia chinensis*  
Common and widespread.

**166. Red Turtle-dove** *streptopelia tranquebarica*  
One at Mai Po on December 1st (MAW).

**166x. Emerald Dove** *chalcophaps indica*  
One at Tai Po Kau on February 18th (MAW, AH), and 2 there on March 9th (AH, RPW).

**167. Rose-ringed Parakeet** *psittacula krameri*  
Far more widespread than usual. Detailed records are as follows:-  
Stanley Cemetery:—January 6th (1), October 27th (1), November 2nd (11) and 30th (4), December 25th, 26th, and 28th (4).  
Turtle Cove:—November 21st (1).  
Headland Road:—November 25th (c.12), December 8th (20).  
Shouson Hill:—April 5th (1), December 1st (1).  
Central District (Victoria Barracks- Old Peak Road):—February 11th (1), March 14th (2), 22nd (40+), and 24th (14), April 22nd (1) and 23rd (3+), July 3rd (2), November 16th (2).  
Happy Valley:—frequent reports of up to 5 from January 13th to April 27th, and up to 7 from September 4th to November 5th.  
Aberdeen:—October 5th (1).  
Pokfulam:—December 1st (1).

Kowloon:—up to 5 from August 16th to October 26th.  
 Mong Tseng/Ping Shan:—February 13th (3) and 14th (2), June 23rd (3), October 6th (3), December 8th (1) and 29th (2).  
 Mai Po:—January 14th (1), October 13th (1), December 1st (3).  
 Sekkong Woods:—January 14th (1).  
 Kwai Chung :—October 8th (1).  
 Cheung Chau:—January 13th (1).

- 170. Indian Cuckoo** *cuculus micropterus*  
 Heard on Lantau on May 4th and 5th (REH).
- 172. Plaintive Cuckoo** *cacomantis merulinus*  
 One at Sekkong on January 14th (REH, RPW, AH). Heard frequently in many areas from March 20th until June 25th.
- 175. Koel** *eudynamis scolopacea*  
 Heard frequently throughout the year in most wooded areas both on the Island and in the New Territories.
- 176. Crow-pheasant** *centropus sinensis*  
 Common and widespread.
- 177. Lesser Crow-pheasant** *centropus bengalensis*  
 Only 4 records of this species were received. The species is still believed to be locally common, but there is no data on which to base any sound definition of its status.
- 179. Scops Owl** *otus scops*  
 A bird of the grey form was picked up by M. Ward at 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ m.s. Castle Peak Road on November 10th; it died on November 14th from internal injuries.
- 180. Collared Scops Owl** *otus bakkamoena*  
 One at Fanling on February 15th (REH). One at Magazine Gap on March 20th (REH). One near Old Peak Road on June 12th (REH). One at Headland Road on July 8th (DGR).
- 182. Brown Fish-owl** *ketupa zeylonensis*  
 One at Pak Tam on January 2nd (REH).
- 183. Brown Hawk-owl** *ninox scutulata*  
 Two at Stanley on April 6th (RPW, AH).
- 185. Japanese Nightjar** *caprimulgus indicus*  
 A female at Stanley on April 6th (MAW, DGR).
- 187. Large White-rumped Swift** *apus pacificus*  
 Common and widespread, especially in March and April.
- 188. House Swift** *apus affinis*  
 Common and widespread, especially in spring and autumn.

- 189. Pied Kingfisher** *ceryle rudis*  
 Up to 4 in the Deep Bay marshes throughout the year.
- 190. Crested Kingfisher** *ceryle lugubris*  
 One at Tsing Lung Tau in May (DJG).
- 191. Common Kingfisher** *alcedo atthis*  
 Common near water throughout the New Territories and Hong Kong Island up to April 22nd, and from September 1st onwards. Single birds at Tai Tam Tuk on July 24th, and Mai Po on May 12th, August 5th and 16th, may indicate that a few still breed here.
- 192. White-breasted Kingfisher** *halcyon smyrnensis*  
 Common near water throughout the year, though less so in summer. A nest with young in Little Hong Kong woods on June 2nd (MAW). Probably at least one pair also bred at Tai Lam Chung.
- 193. Black-capped Kingfisher** *halcyon pileata*  
 Small numbers in various parts of the Colony in the winter months. A pair probably bred in Little Hong Kong woods, and one was seen at Shing Mun Reservoir on July 1st (RAIW).
- 195. Broad-billed Roller** *eurystomus orientalis*  
 One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on November 17th (RJB, MAW, RAIW).
- 197. Great Barbet** *megalaima virens*  
 While most records are from Tai Po Kau, this species was also recorded from Ho Chung (twice), Pak Tam, Lam Tsuen Valley, Sha Tau Kok, Plover Cove, and Three Fathoms Cove.
- 200. Wryneck** *jynx torquilla*  
 Single birds recorded from many areas up to February 18th, and from September 28th onwards.
- 203. Swallow** *hirundo rustica*  
 Fairly common throughout the year, with large flocks in March, April, August, and September.
- 204. Red-rumped Swallow** *hirundo daurica*  
 One over central Kowloon on April 10th (AH, RPW). One at Ping Shan on October 6th (RKM).
- 206. Sand Martin** *riparia riparia*  
 Two at Mai Po on April 28th (REH, AH, RPW). Three at Ping Shan on October 6th (MAW, RAIW, RKM). One at Mai Po on December 29th (MAW).
- 208. Rufous-backed Shrike** *lanius schach*  
 Common and widespread.

210. **Brown Shrike** *lanius cristatus*  
Fairly common in the winter months up to April 20th, and from September 1st onwards.
211. **Black-naped Oriole** *oriolus chinensis*  
Summer records from Victoria Barracks/Bowen Road, Fanling, and Tai Po Kau. One at Stanley on September 29th, two at Ping Shan on October 6th, two at Pokfulam on October 27th, and one at Mai Po on the same day. Extreme dates April 27th to October 27th.
212. **Black Drongo** *dicrurus macrocercus*  
Apart from one at Cheung Chau on January 13th, all records, from widespread localities, fall between April 27th and October 27th.
- 213(a). **Ashy Drongo** *dicrurus leucophaeus salangensis*  
One at Stanley up to April 27th, and again from November 24th onwards (EDW, MPR, MAW, DGR, AH, REH, RPW). One at Pokfulam on March 30th and 31st (MAW, EDW), and November 2nd (MAW). One at Shouson Hill on February 10th (MPR). One at Cheung Chau on April 12th (EHG, IG).
- 213(b). **White-cheeked Drongo** *dicrurus leucophaeus leucogenis*  
One at Stanley up to April 14th, and from October 20th onwards (MPR, DGR, MAW, EDW). One at Pokfulam on January 6th (MAW), and December 17th and 18th (DGR).
214. **Hair-crested Drongo** *dicrurus hottentottus*  
Fairly widespread in the New Territories from April 15th to October 8th, though less common than 212.
215. **Chinese Starling** *sturnus sinensis*  
Fairly common in the New Territories, and occasional on Hong Kong Island, up to April 22nd, and from September 17th onwards. No summer records.
216. **Silky Starling** *sturnus sericeus*  
Fairly common in the New Territories, and occasional on Hong Kong Island, up to April 5th. One at Ping Shan on October 6th (RAIW).
217. **Grey Starling** *sturnus cineraceus*  
Recorded only from the Deep Bay marshes and surrounding woods, up to March 3rd, and on December 26th, except for 5 at Sekkong on January 14th.
218. **Black-necked Starling** *sturnus nigricollis*  
Main stronghold is still the Mong Tseng Peninsula, where up to 10 were seen throughout the year. The fairly frequent records from Mai Po could well be the same birds. Other records as follows:-  
Kam Tin (1 on June 2nd), Lantau (5 on December 26th), Sekkong (2 on April 15th), Ho Chung (5 on October 20th).
219. **Common Mynah** *acridotheres tristis*  
Still confined to Mong Tseng/Ping Shan, where up to 27 were recorded throughout the year.
220. **Crested Mynah** *acridotheres cristatellus*  
Common and widespread.
221. **Jay** *garrulus glandarius*  
6 at Tai Po Kau on January 27th (REH), one remaining until March 9th (AH, RPW, REH). 4 at Jubilee Reservoir on February 10th (DJG). 3 at Tai Po Kau on October 20th (MAW).
222. **Blue Magpie** *urocissa erythrorhyncha*  
Fairly common and widespread.
223. **Magpie** *pica pica*  
Common and widespread.
226. **Jungle Crow** *corvus macrorhynchos*  
Common and widespread.
227. **Collared Crow** *corvus torquatus*  
Up to 6 over the Deep Bay marshes throughout the year. Other records from Lantau (1 on January 23rd), Lo Wu (2 on February 18th), Tai Mong Tsai (1 on January 2nd), and Plover Cove (1 on January 21st).
228. **Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike** *coracina melaschistos*  
One at Headland Road on March 30th (DGR).
230. **Rosy Minivet** *pericrocotus roseus*  
Two at Stanley on March 30th (DGR). This is the first report since 1939; it should be noted, however, that some authorities regard this as a race of *p. divaricatus*.....231.
231. **Ashy Minivet** *pericrocotus divaricatus*  
c.30 at Mai Po on March 30th (EDW), and 4 there on April 5th (REH) and 7th (MAW, AH). 2 at Shouson Hill on March 24th, and 7 on April 7th (MPR). 3 at Pokfulam on April 6th (MAW, DGR). One at Stanley on December 20th (DGR).
233. **Scarlet Minivet** *pericrocotus flammeus*  
A male at Tai Po Kau on December 31st (DGR).
234. **Chestnut Bulbul** *hypsipetes flavala*  
At least 3 at Tai Po Kau from January 20th to March 24th (DGR, MAW, RPW, AH). Heard there on December 27th and 31st (DGR). Several in the Lion Rock Catchment area on March 16th (DGR).

235. **White-headed Black Bulbul** *hypsipetes madagascariensis*  
2 at King George V School grounds on February 22nd (AH, RPW).
236. **Crested Bulbul** *pycnonotus jocosus*  
Common and widespread.
237. **Chinese Bulbul** *pycnonotus sinensis*  
Common and widespread. Exceptionally large numbers from September onwards.
238. **Red-vented Bulbul** *pycnonotus aurigaster*  
Common and widespread, though generally less common in built-up areas than 236 and 237. One ringed as full-grown at Lo Wu on 24.3.66 was found dead in the same area on 30.1.69.
243. **Black-faced Laughing-thrush** *garrulax perspicillatus*  
Common and widespread.
244. **Black-throated Laughing-thrush** *garrulax chinensis*  
Often heard on Hong Kong Island, but rarely seen.
245. **Hwamei** *garrulax canorus*  
Common on Hong Kong Island, with records from several parts of the New Territories.
254. **Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher** *hypothymis azurea*  
A male at Tai Po Kau on January 27th (REH).
255. **Brown Flycatcher** *musciapa latirostris*  
Single birds seen in widespread localities up to April 23rd, and from September 11th onwards, most records being in April and October.
256. **Grey-spotted Flycatcher** *musciapa griseisticta*  
One at Ping Shan on October 13th (REH). One at Stanley on December 25th (MAW).
257. **Ferruginous Flycatcher** *musciapa ferruginea*  
One at Pokfulam on March 30th (DGR).
258. **Verditer Flycatcher** *musciapa thalassina*  
One at Victoria Barracks on January 26th (AH). Two at Wong Chuk Yeung on October 30th (REH, MAW).
259. **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *musciapa parva*  
Two at Tai Po Kau on March 9th (RPW, AH). One on Lantau on April 7th (RPW). One at Lau Fau Shan on November 6th (DJG). One at Fanling in November (per REH).

260. **Robin Flycatcher** *musciapa mugimaki*  
One at Tai Mong Tsai on January 1st (MAW). c.20 at Tai Po Kau on January 20th (DGR), one on February 18th (MAW, AH), and two on March 9th (RPW, AH). One at Shouson Hill on April 2nd (MPR). Two at Tai Po Kau on November 24th (REH), and December 27th (DGR). One at Stanley on December 7th (MAW).
261. **Narcissus Flycatcher** *musciapa narcissina*  
A male at Pokfulam on April 6th (MAW, DGR).
- 262x. **Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher** *musciapa rubeculoides*  
A male at Pokfulam from 23rd November, 1968, to 21st March, 1969 (DGR, MAW). Upperparts slaty-blue, brilliant in places; dark chin; breast orange grading into white of underparts; brownish rump; 5½ ins. The chin colouring, which is important for identification, was described as follows:—"orange" (DGR, 23.11.68), "suggestion of narrow dark patch immediately below bill" (MAW, 15.12.68), "dark" (MAW, 28.12.68), "no blue on chin" (DGR, 21.3.69). On the assumption that all the sightings were of the same bird, there remains some doubt as to whether this was *m. rubeculoides* or *m. tickelliae* (which may be conspecific). *M. rubeculoides* has a dark chin, and the orange of the breast grades into the white of the underparts. *M. tickelliae* has an orange chin, but the orange of the breast is sharply divided from the white of the underparts. According to Vaurie, there is a subspecies *m. rubeculoides klossi*, locality Kwangtung to Southern Annam, but I can find no further details of this. The various subspecies of *m. rubeculoides* differ mainly in the extent of blue on the throat. There must therefore remain some doubt as to the precise identification of this bird, though it certainly belongs to the *rubeculoides/tickelliae* group. Alternatively, the records could involve two or more birds.
- 263x. **Orange-bellied Niltava** *niltava sundara*  
A male at Pokfulam on October 27th (REH). A first-winter male at Tai Po Kau on December 29th (MAW). Crown, rump, tail, and small patch on side of neck, bright blue; primaries chestnut, with darker shafts; rest of upperparts, forehead, chin, and throat blue-black; bill black; underparts bright orange, getting paler on lower abdomen, and very pale on vent; 7 ins. The pattern is similar to 262x. but the difference in size should prevent confusion.
264. **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** *cyanoptila cyanomelana*  
Single birds, all males, at Shouson Hill on March 10th, Little Hong Kong woods on March 31st, Lower Shing Mun Reservoir on April 1st, Lam Tsuen Valley on April 7th, and Stanley on October 26th, and November 2nd.
265. **Chinese Bush Warbler** *cettia diphone*  
Fairly frequent records up to April 12th, and from October 27th onwards.

267. **Short-tailed Bush-warbler** *cettia squameiceps*  
Single birds at Mai Po on March 10th (RJB), Pokfulam on March 16th (MAW) and December 7th (DGR), Stanley on December 16th (DGR) and 25th (MAW), and Tai Po Kau on December 27th and 31st (DGR).
268. **Pallas's Grasshopper-warbler** *locustella certhiola*  
One at Mai Po on January 7th (MAW, AH), and September 28th (DGR). Two in the Deep Bay area on January 14th (AH).
269. **Styan's Grasshopper-warbler** *locustella (ochotensis) pleskei*  
One at Ping Shan on October 6th (MAW, FOPH).
270. **Von Schrenck's Reed-warbler** *acrocephalus bistrigiceps*  
4 at Mai Po on April 12th (DGR), and 2 on September 1st (MAW).
271. **Great Reed Warbler** *acrocephalus arundinaceus*  
Common on the Deep Bay marshes from August 18th to November 3rd, the majority in September and early October. The only spring record was one on April 28th.
273. **Dusky Warbler** *phylloscopus fuscatus*  
Common, especially on the Deep Bay marshes, up to April 28th, and from September 22nd onwards.
274. **Yellow-browed Warbler** *phylloscopus inornatus*  
Common and widespread up to April 27th, and from September 29th onwards.
275. **Pallas's Warbler** *phylloscopus proregulus*  
2 at Tai Po Kau on January 20th (DGR). One at Stanley on November 9th (MAW). One at Castle Peak Monastery on December 12th (DGR). 2 in the Lam Tsuen Valley on December 27th (DGR). Up to 15 at Tai Po Kau on December 29th (MAW) and 31st (DGR). (This species is quite easily distinguished from 274.....once you know how! The upperparts are olive-green on 275, brown on 274, and 275 has yellow coronal and rump.)
276. **Arctic Warbler** *phylloscopus borealis*  
2 at Stanley on October 7th (MAW). One at Tai Mong Tsai on October 30th (DGR). One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on November 17th (MAW).
278. **Crowned Willow-warbler** *phylloscopus occipitalis*  
One at Stanley, and one at Chung Am Kok, both on January 20th (MAW).
- [281. **Fulvous-faced Flycatcher-warbler** *seicercus albogularis*  
A probable record of this species at Tai Po Kau on February 25th (REH).]

282. **Long-tailed Tailor-bird** *orthotomus sutorius*  
Common and widespread.
285. **Brown Wren-warbler** *prinia subflava*  
Common on the Deep Bay marshes, with occasional records elsewhere.
286. **Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler** *prinia flaviventris*  
Common and widespread, particularly on the Deep Bay marshes.
287. **Fantail Warbler** *cisticola juncidis*  
Common on the Deep Bay marshes, and at Lo Wu. One record from Sekkong on January 30th.
289. **Red-tailed Robin** *luscinia sibilans*  
One at Pokfulam from January 6th to February 24th (RPW, DGR, AH). One at Starling Inlet on January 14th (DGR). One at Stanley from December 25th to 30th (DGR). One at Tai Po Kau on December 31st (DGR).
290. **Bluethroat** *luscinia svecica*  
Up to 2 at Mai Po from January 14th to April 7th (EDW, AH, MAW, REH, RPW, RJB).
291. **Rubythroat** *luscinia calliope*  
Reported from several localities up to January 27th, and from October 27th onwards.
292. **Red-flanked Bluetail** *tarsiger cyanurus*  
All females or young males..... one at Pak Tam on January 2nd (REH), one at Pokfulam on December 15th and 28th (MAW), one at Mong Tseng on December 26th (RJB, RAIW, MAW), one at Tai Lam Chung on December 29th (MAW).
293. **Magpie Robin** *copsychus saularis*  
Common and widespread.
294. **Daurian Redstart** *phoenicurus auroreus*  
Common up to March 10th, and from November 9th to 30th; one on December 8th, and common again from December 26th onwards. Generally, observers felt that this species was far less common than usual in the latter part of the year.
296. **Stonechat** *saxicola torquata*  
Common and widespread up to April 28th, and from September 8th onwards.
297. **Grey Bushchat** *saxicola ferrea*  
Up to 2 at Tai Mong Tsai on January 2nd, and October 30th. Up to 3 in the Lam Tsuen Valley on January 30th and February 16th. 2 by the Sekkong-Tai Lam Chung road on February 25th.

- 298(a). Blue Rock-thrush** *monticola solitaria pandoo*  
One in the King George V School grounds, Kowloon, from January 12th to February 28th, and 2 thereafter until April 4th (RPW, AH). 3 on Cheung Chau on January 13th (DGR). Single birds on Lantau on February 11th (EDW) and December 26th (REH), Mong Tseng on February 14th (REH), and Pak Ngau Sek on August 3rd (DGR).
- 298(b). Red-bellied Rock-thrush** *monticola solitaria philippensis*  
Recorded from several areas up to April 2nd, and from September 28th onwards.
- 299. Chestnut-breasted Rock-thrush** *monticola rufiventris*  
One at Tai Mong Tsai on January 1st (MAW, AH), and one at Stanley on December 31st (DGR).
- 300. Violet Whistling-thrush** *myiophoneus caeruleus*  
Common throughout the year, always near running water.
- 301. Pale Thrush** *turdus pallidus*  
One at Pokfulam between February 24th and April 6th (MAW, AH).
- 303. Brown Thrush** *turdus chrysolaus*  
One in the Tung Chung Valley, Lantau, on March 10th (REH).
- 304. Grey-backed Thrush** *turdus hortulorum*  
Common up to April 6th, and from November 30th onwards, though much less common than 307.
- 305. Dusky Thrush** *turdus naumanni*  
One at Chung Am Kok on January 27th (AH).
- 306. Blackbird** *turdus merula*  
Reported in parties of up to 6 from Sekkong, Pokfulam, the Lam Tsuen Valley, Kam Tsin, Fanling, Lo Wu, and Mai Po, the last being on March 3rd (DGR, RJB, MAW, EDW, RPW, AH, RAIW). One at Aberdeen on December 30th (RAIW).
- 307. Grey Thrush** *turdus cardis*  
Common up to April 14th, and from November 10th onwards.
- 308. Siberian Thrush** *turdus sibiricus*  
One at Stanley, a female, on April 14th (DGR).
- 310. White's Thrush** *turdus dauma*  
One at Pokfulam from December 15th to the end of the year (MAW).
- 313. Great Tit** *parus major*  
Common and widespread.

- 315. Richard's Pipit** *anthus novaeseelandiae*  
Common up to April 28th, and from October 6th onwards. The only summer records are of 3 at Lo Wu on July 7th, and one on Tai Mo Shan on August 5th.
- 316. Indian Tree-pipit** *anthus hodgsoni*  
Common up to April 28th, and from October 26th onwards.
- 317. Red-throated Pipit** *anthus cervinus*  
Apart from one at Yuen Long on April 4th, all records are from Mai Po as follows:—one on January 14th, up to 20 between March 30th and April 28th, one on October 20th (REH, RPW, MAW, EDW, AH, DGR).
- 319. Upland Pipit** *anthus sylvanus*  
Several on Ngong Ping, Lantau, on January 23rd (DGR). One on Tai Mo Shan on March 31st (MAW, AH), 5 there on August 3rd, and one on October 22nd (DGR).
- 320. Forest Wagtail** *dendronanthus indicus*  
One at Stanley on September 15th (DGR).
- 321. White Wagtail** *motacilla alba*  
Common up to April 28th, and from August 17th onwards. Estimated to be at least 500 at Mai Po South on October 13th.
- 322. Grey Wagtail** *motacilla cinerea*  
Widespread in small numbers up to April 28th and from August 24th onwards.
- 323. Yellow Wagtail** *motacilla flava*  
Most records are from the Deep Bay marshes, where small numbers were present in the early part of the year, and large flocks from March 31st until May 12th. First autumn record on September 1st.
- 324. Fork-tailed Sunbird** *aethopyga christinae*  
Most records are from Tai Po Kau, where up to 4 were seen throughout the year, and more heard. At least one pair bred near Headland Road, where they were frequently seen and heard from April to August. Heard at Ho Chung on December 8th.
- 325. White-eye** *zosterops japonica*  
Common and widespread.
- 326. Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker** *dicaeum cruentatum*  
A male at King's Park on January 30th (RJB). A female at Pokfulam on December 7th (DGR). A male at Tai Po Kau on December 31st (DGR).

- 327. Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** *dicaeum ignipectus*  
More records than usual. A female at Tai Om wood on January 30th (AH). A male near Government House on February 17th (EDW). Three at Wong Chuk Yeung on October 30th and December 8th (REH, MAW). About 5 at Ho Chung on December 8th (MAW, RAIW, RJB). Two at Pokfulam on December 28th (MAW, EDW).
- 328. Black-tailed Hawfinch** *eophona migratoria*  
Quite common in winter in the Northern part of the New Territories, where flocks of up to 39 were seen until April 22nd, and from November 17th onwards. The only records elsewhere are 2 on Lantau on April 7th, and one at Stanley on December 7th.
- 329. Chinese Greenfinch** *chloris sinica*  
The distribution of this species in Hong Kong is not well understood, and therefore all records are given in full:—  
Tai Lam Chung.....4 on January 2nd, 2 on January 18th.  
Bowen Road, Hong Kong.....1 on January 6th and 11th.  
Tin Kwong Road, Kowloon.....1 on January 24th and March 28th.  
Sekkong Woods.....3 on March 3rd, 1 on June 9th, 6 on November 17th.  
Ho Chung.....1 on March 17th.  
Stanley.....15+ on April 6th, 5+ on April 14th.  
Peak.....2 on April 4th.  
Ting Kau.....23 on October 11th.  
Lo Wu.....6 on December 22nd.  
Mong Tseng.....12 on December 29th.
- 331. Common Rose-finch** *carpodacus erythrinus*  
About 20 near Sekkong on March 3rd (AH, EDW, MAW).
- 332. Masked Bunting** *emberiza spodocephala*  
Common and widespread up to April 28th, and from October 30th onwards.
- 335. Tristram's Bunting** *emberiza tristrami*  
3 at Tai Po Kau on March 24th, and 6 on December 27th, 7 on December 29th.
- 337. Yellow-breasted Bunting** *emberiza aureola*  
Apart from a small party at Shatin on March 16th, all records fall between October 6th and November 10th, when parties of up to 70 were seen on the Deep Bay marshes, and smaller numbers at Tai Mong Tsai, Stanley, Pokfulam, and on Lantau.
- 338. Grey-headed Bunting** *emberiza fucata*  
Recorded from Tai Lam Chung and Lo Wu in January, and from October 30th onwards from Tai Mong Tsai, Lo Wu, Stanley, and Lau Fau Shan.
- 339. Little Bunting** *emberiza pusilla*  
Recorded from many districts until April 15th. The only later records are 1 at Sekkong on November 17th, 1 at Ho Chung on December 8th, 2 at Mong Tseng, and 2 or 3 at Mai Po on December 29th.
- 340. Crested Bunting** *melophus lathamii*  
Apart from the usual winter records from Ho Chung, Tai Mong Tsai, and the Tai Lam Chung area, there are several records from Tai Mo Shan between April 28th and August 5th, one at Pokfulam on August 10th, and 3 males in the hills between Tai Lam Chung and the sea on June 16th.
- 341. Tree Sparrow** *passer montanus*  
Abundant.
- 343. Red Avadavat** *estrilda amandava*  
6 at Mai Po on January 7th, 16 on January 28th, 2 on February 3rd, 4 on September 22nd, 2 on October 20th, 2 on October 27th, 2 on December 15th, and 3 on December 18th. 30 at Lo Wu on January 11th. 9 at Shing Mun Reservoir on March 14th.
- 344. Java Sparrow** *padda oryzivora*  
1 at Tai Tam Tuk on July 24th (TPG, RJA).
- 345(b). Chestnut Munia** *lonchura malacca atricapilla*  
Up to 3 on the Deep Bay marshes on April 15th, and between August 28th, and September 14th, 10+ there on December 18th. 1 at Lo Wu on December 22nd.
- 346. Spotted Munia** *lonchura punctulata*  
Fairly common and widespread.
- 347. White-backed Munia** *lonchura striata*  
6 at Victoria Barracks on January 12th (AH). 2 at Pokfulam on August 31st (DGR).



## "COMMON AND WIDESPREAD"

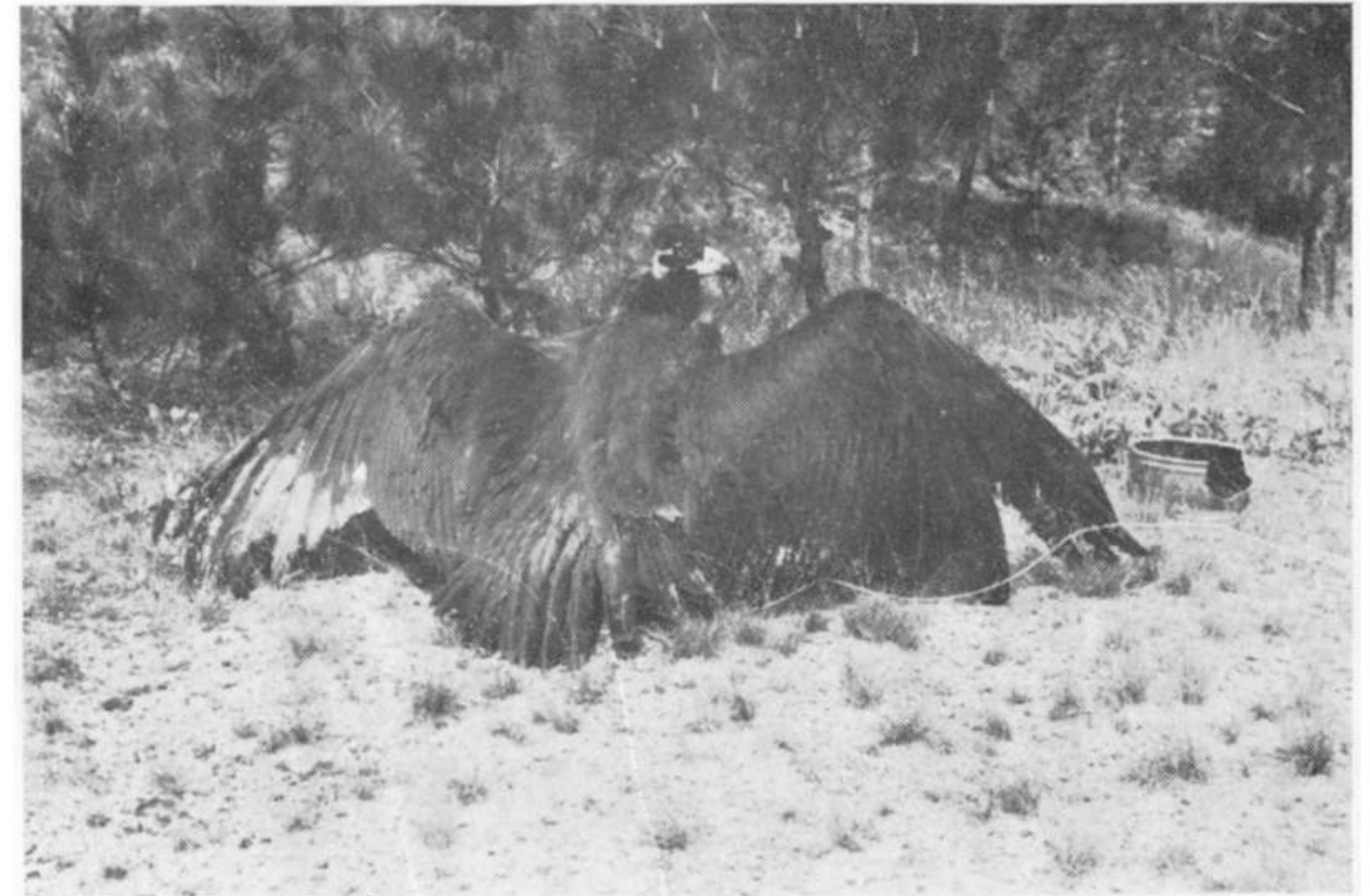
On reading through an old Bird Report the other day, I was struck by the frequent appearance of this phrase used to describe species which are so abundant as to be scarcely worthy of attention. It set me wondering whether we are not too complacent about the true status of some of the birds dismissed in the Report with this curt remark, and also whether the knowledge that their abundance makes them less interesting encourages the less-dedicated amongst us to give them hardly a second glance.

First, then, is the comment "common and widespread" always true? One can hardly quibble in the case of bulbuls, kites, and crested mynahs, but I found it also applied to the crow-pheasant (much less common recently?) house swift, both magpies, magpie robin, great tit, masked bunting, spotted munia and many others. Other birds which are described as merely "common" I would hesitate to put in that category: the osprey, "common" sandpiper and lesser crow-pheasant (which I am not sure I have ever seen.)

What is the effect on the bird-watcher? I am sure he is too ready to dismiss the common birds with only a cursory examination, and thus, of course, may easily miss something interesting. One hardly bothers to look for the flock of laughing thrushes which can be heard threading their way through the bushes. Until last year, when a red-rumped swallow suddenly appeared before the astonished gaze of a party of bird-watchers on an outing, who bothered very much about the swallow and swift population? Great tits (which really are not at all common) would, I think, repay a closer study of their habits and status.

Some years ago a kite survey was carried out, but apart from what was disclosed by the ringing project, nothing has been done concerning other common species. It might perhaps be possible to select one species a year and pay special attention to it. Perhaps this would result in our recognizing that some of them are no longer "common and widespread".

R.A.I.W.



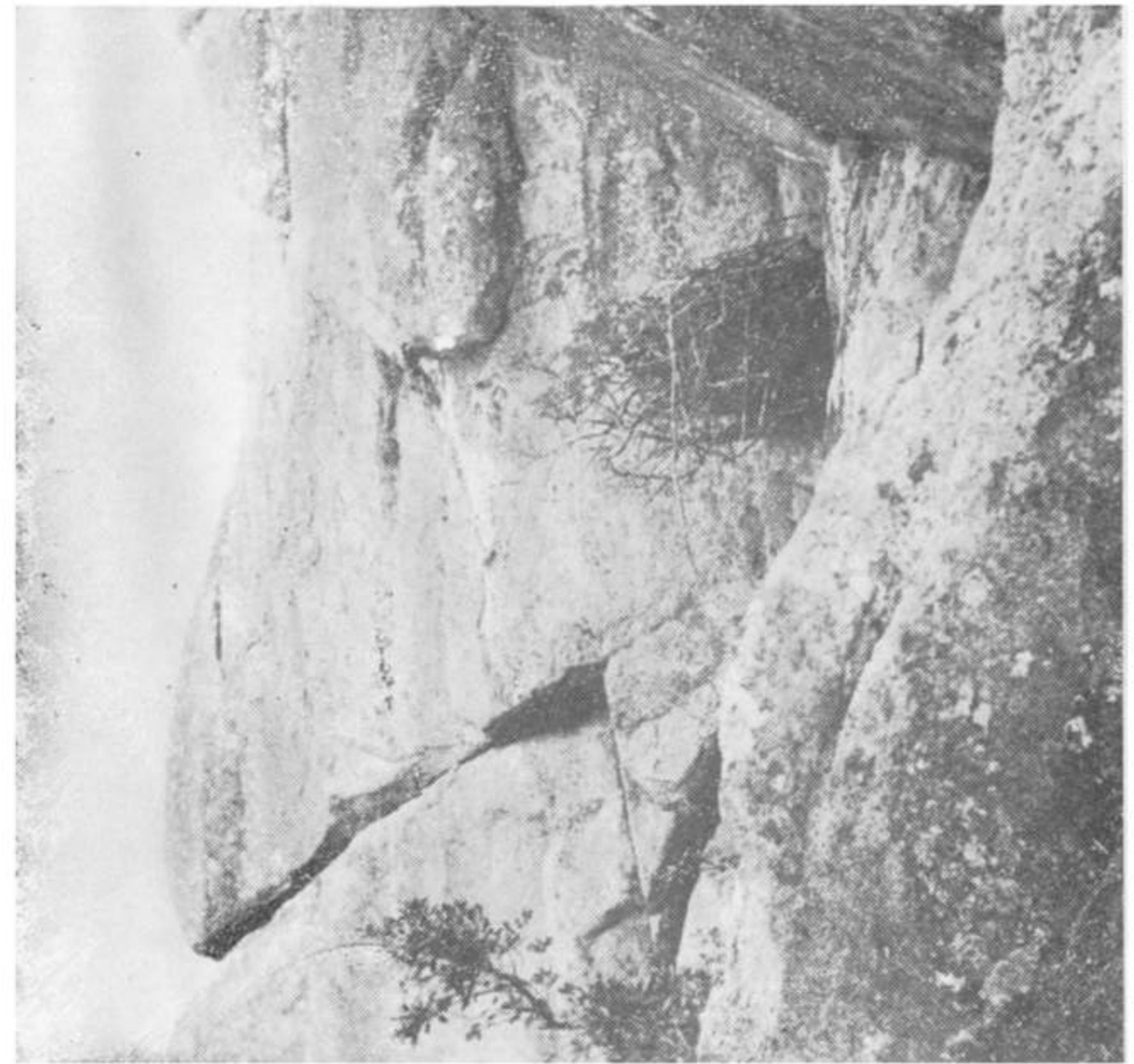
"WILLY" (Aegyptus monachus)

Photos — F. O. P. Hechtel

See page 34



**KORI BUSTARDS**



**Sea Eagle's nest on Lamma**

*See page 38*

*Photos — E. D. Webb*



**RUFF in winter plumage**

*Photos, in Kenya — R. E. Hale*

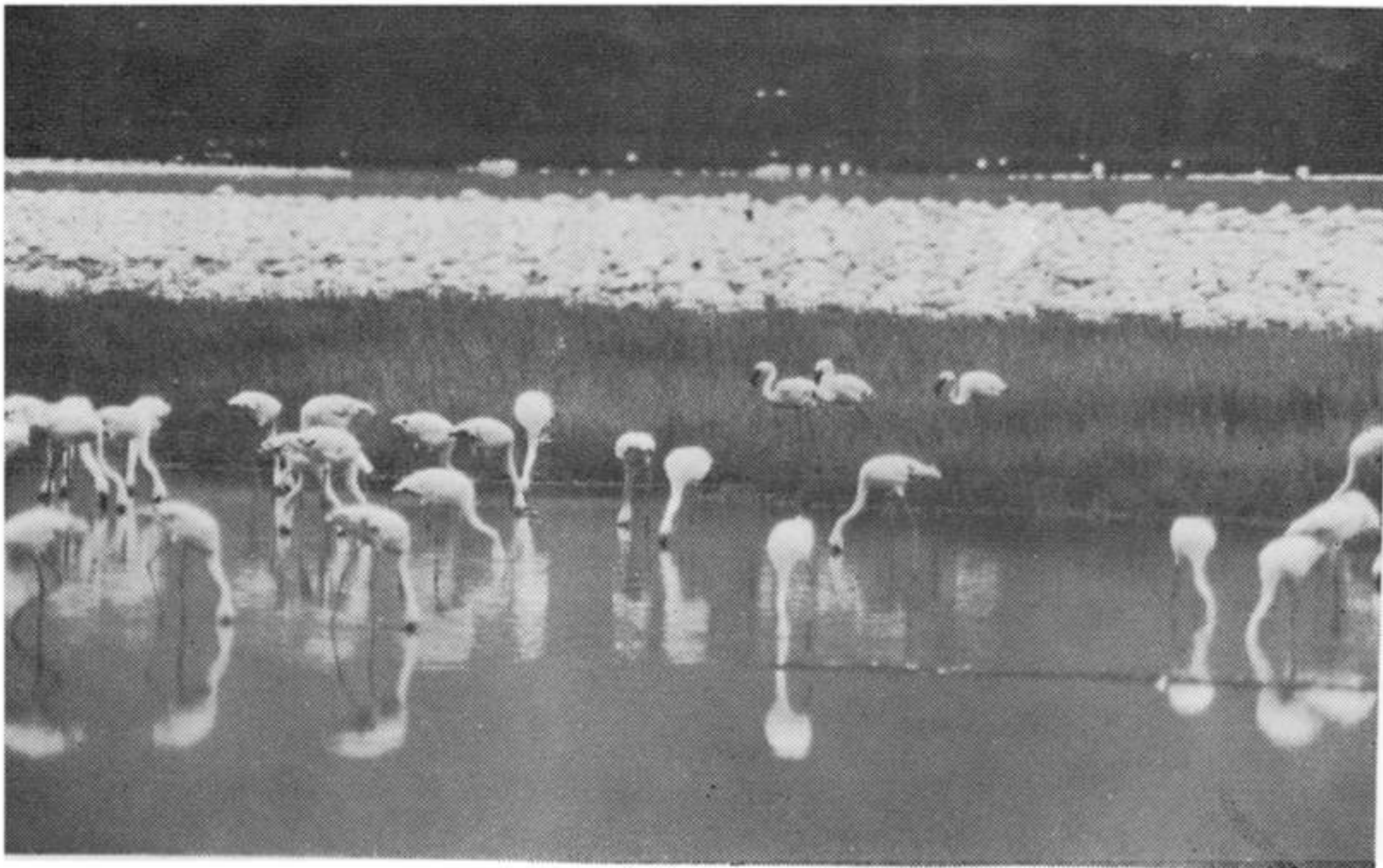
*See page 43*



**BLACK-WINGED STILTS**



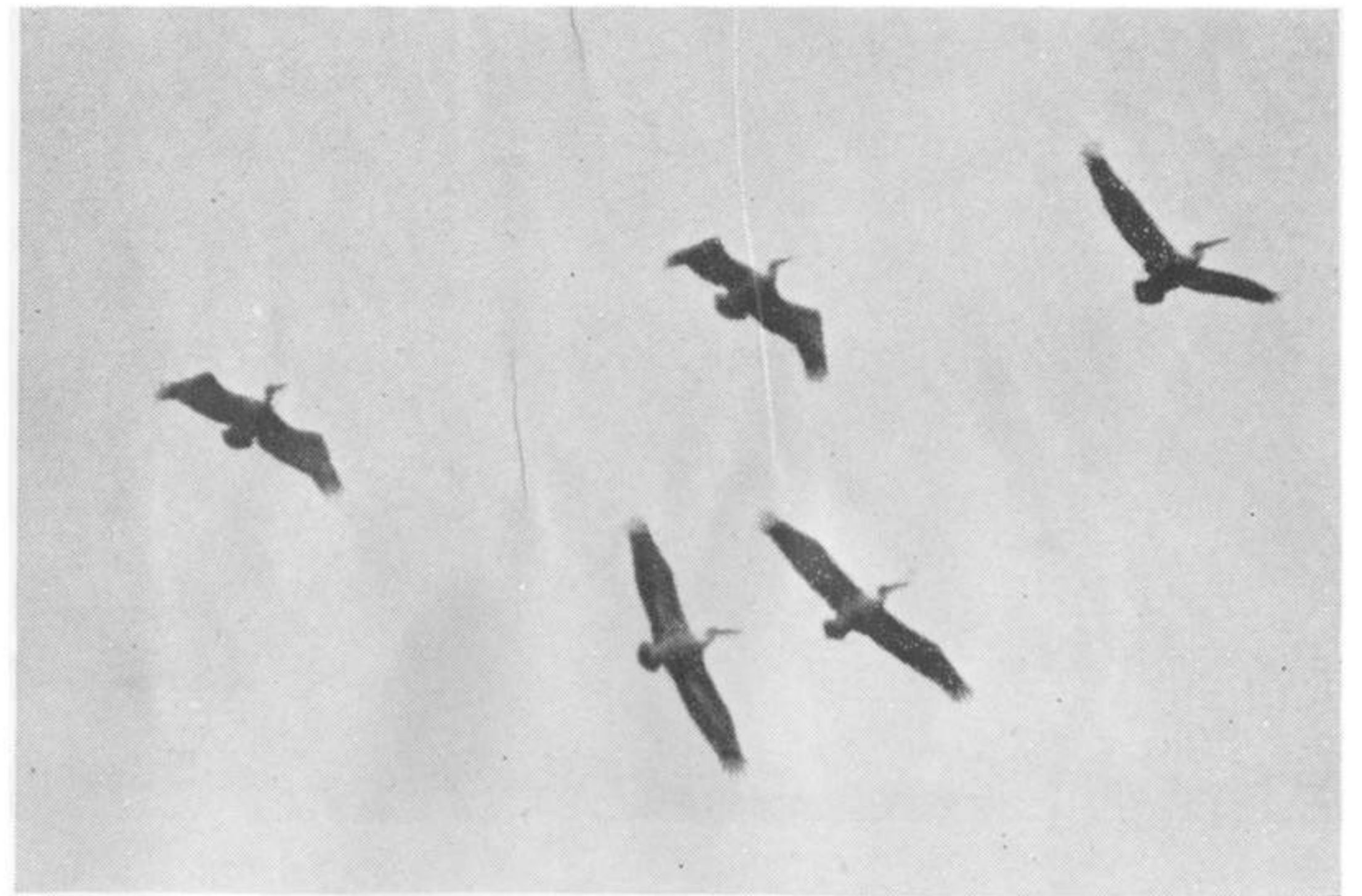
**BLACK-NECKED STARLING**



**FLAMINGOES**

*Photos, in Kenya — R. E. Hale*

*See page 43*



**PELICANS**

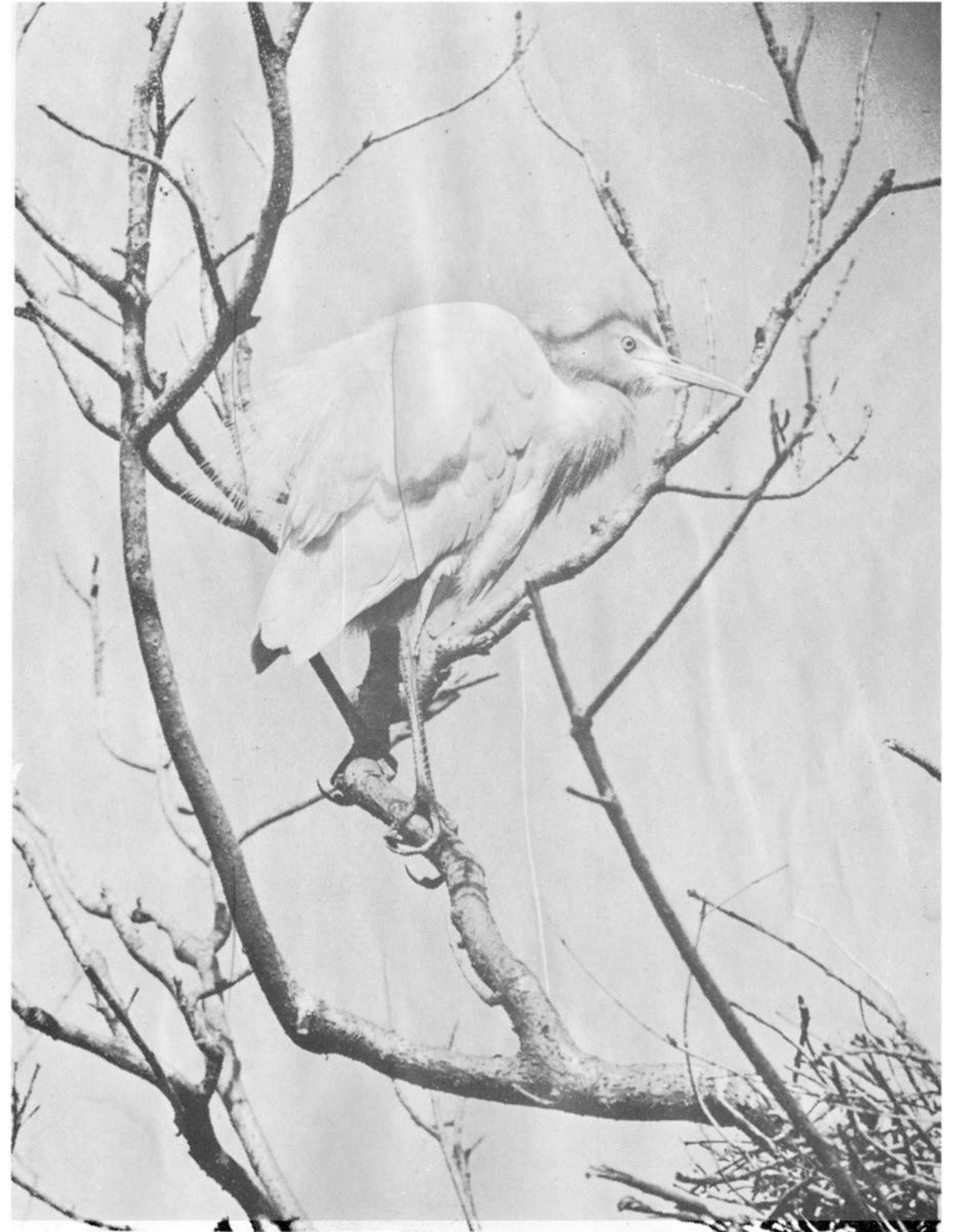
*Photos — R. J. Barnes*



**VIOLET WHISTLING THRUSH**

University Hall

*photo copyright—Dr. R.K. Murton*



**CATTLE EGRET — Display**

Shataukok

*photo copyright—Dr. R.K. Murton*



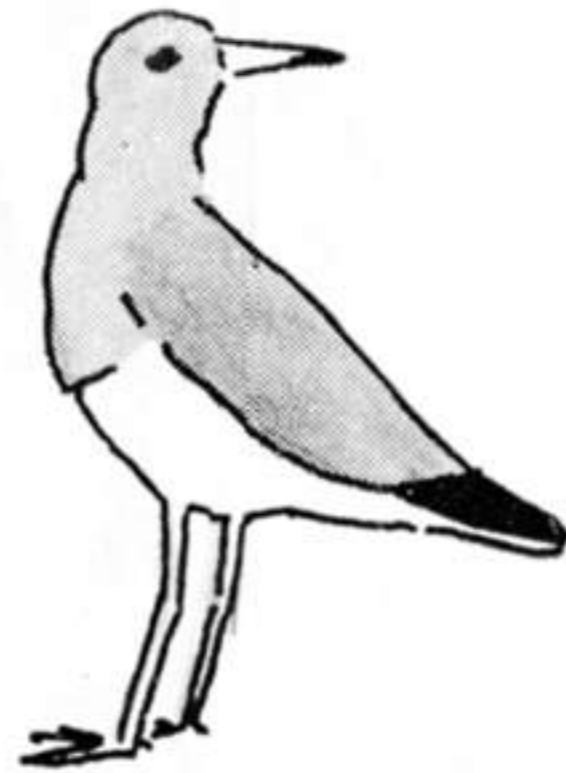
**GREY THRUSH**  
searching for  
food in leaf litter  
“BETHANIE”  
*photo copyright*  
**Dr. R.K. Murton**



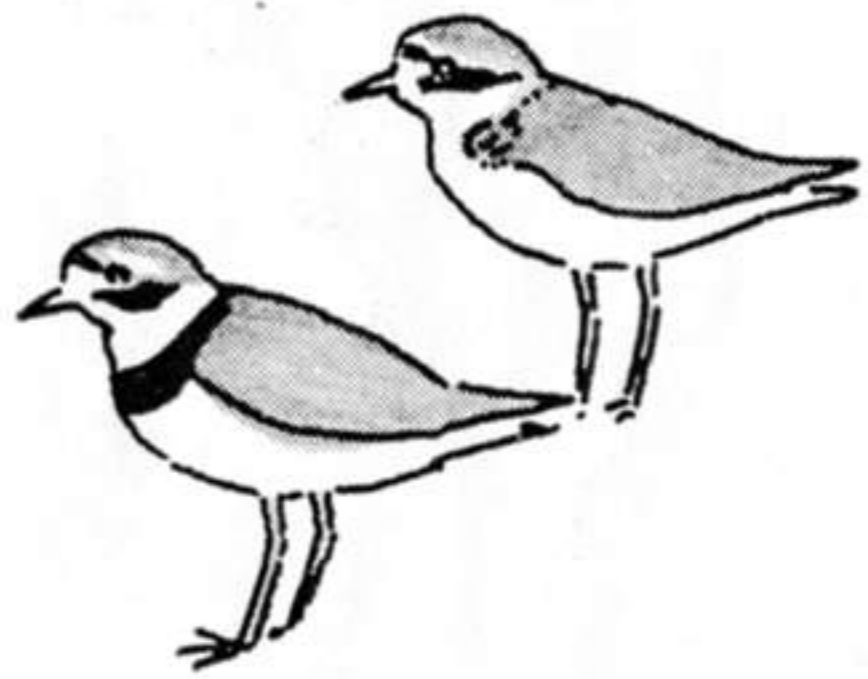
**KITE**  
at  
Stonecutters'  
Island  
—  
*photo copyright*  
**Dr. R.K. Murton**



100. *Lapwing*



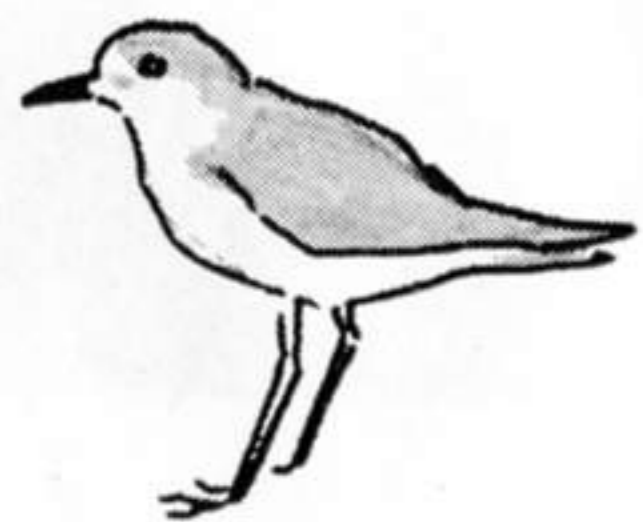
101. *Grey-headed Lapwing*



103. *Little Ringed Plover*

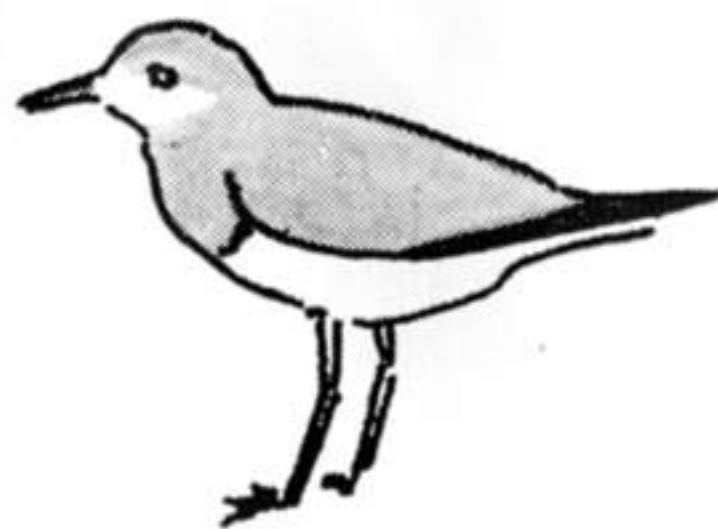


104. *Kentish Plover*

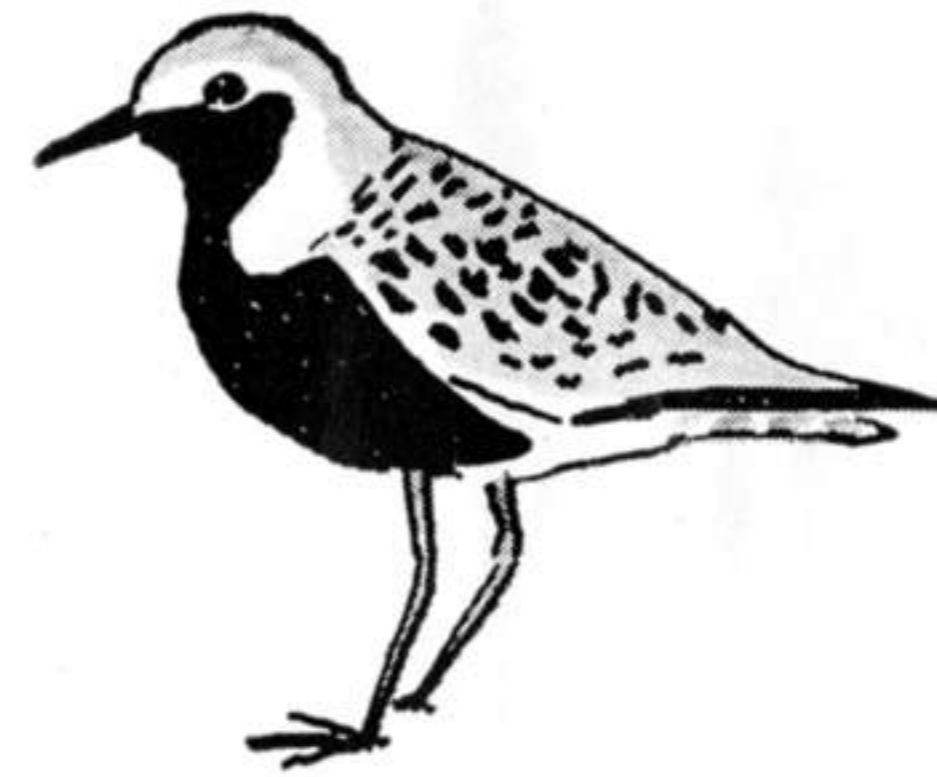


105. *Greater Sand Plover*

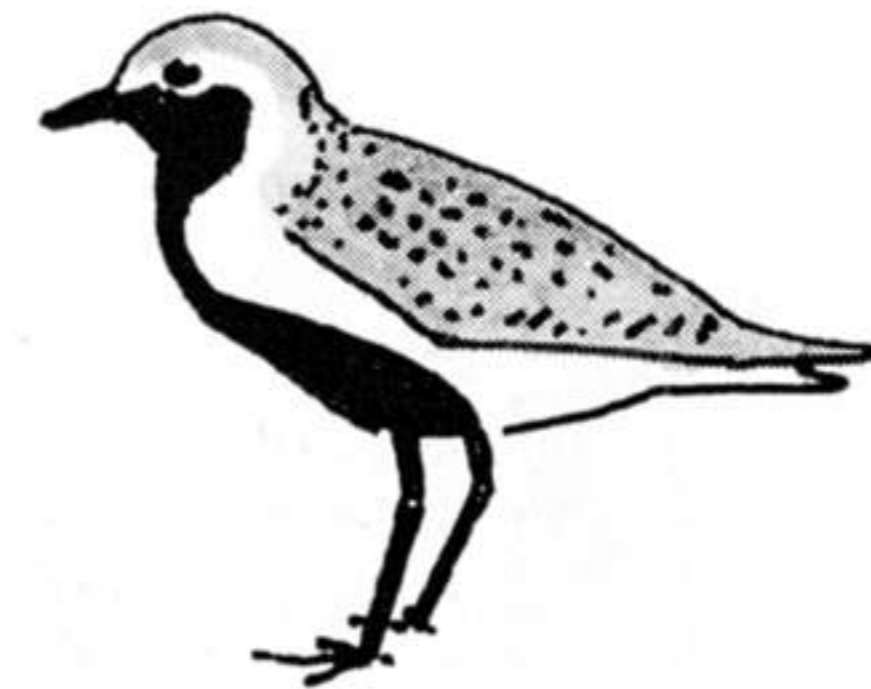
106. *Mongolian Sand Plover*



107. *Caspian Plover*



108. *Grey Plover*



109. *Asiatic Golden Plover*



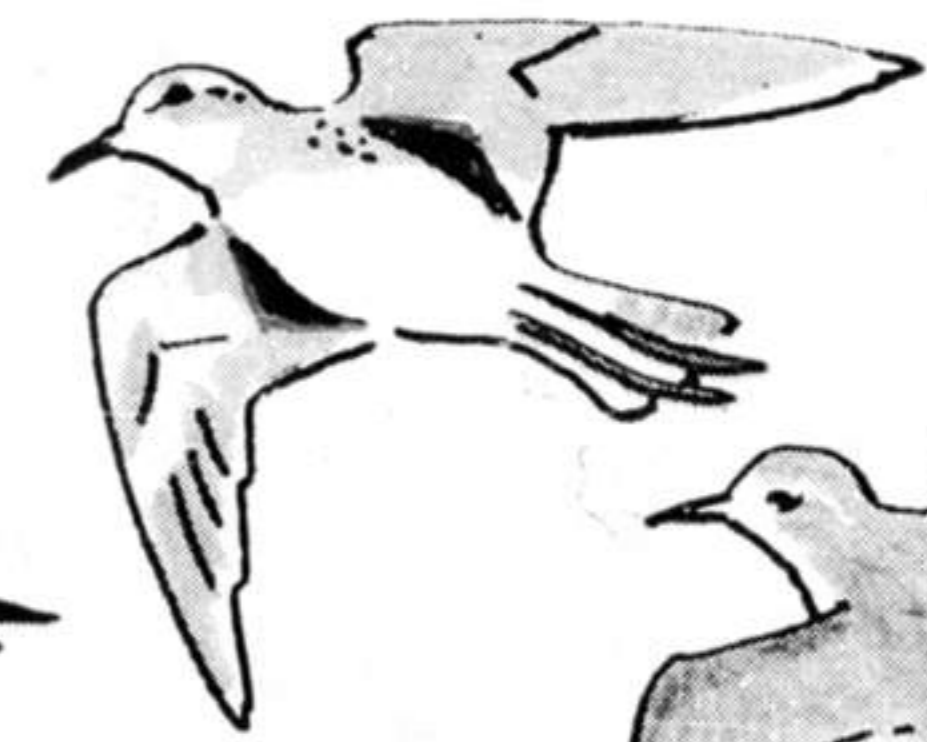
110. *Turnstone*



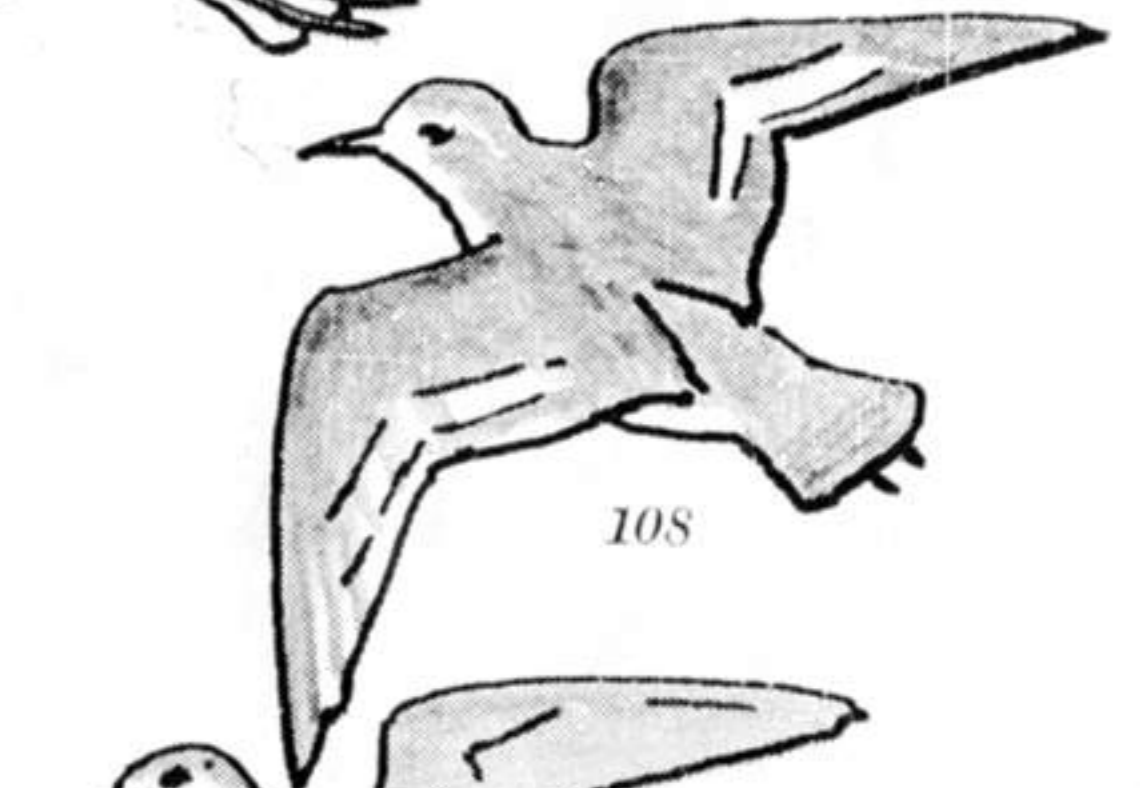
111. *Fantail Snipe*

112. *Pintail Snipe*

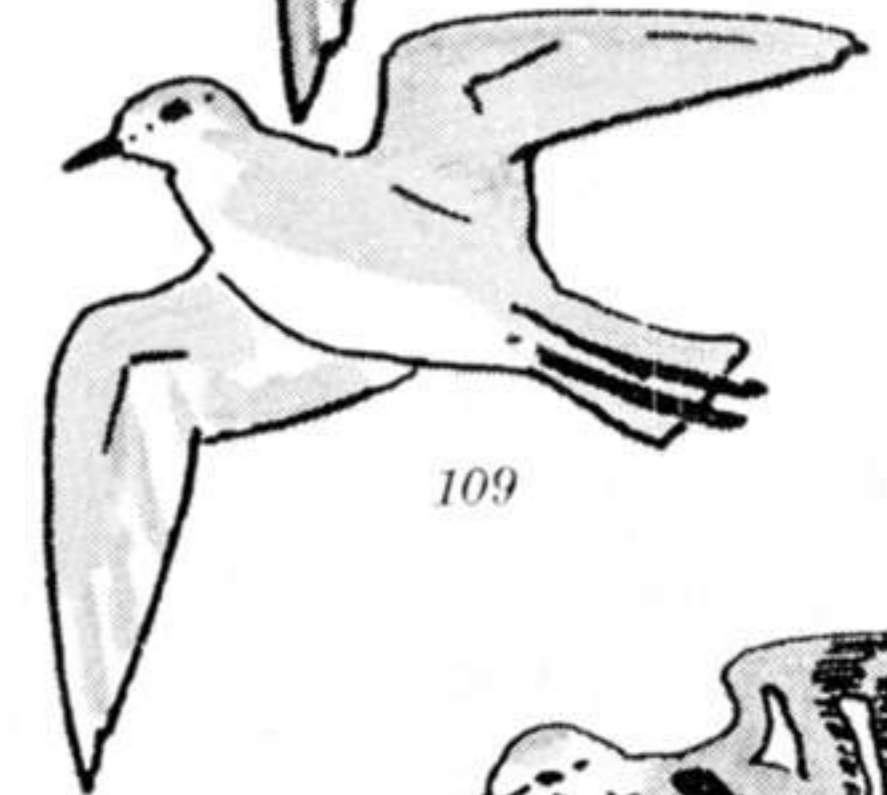
113. *Swinhoe's Snipe*



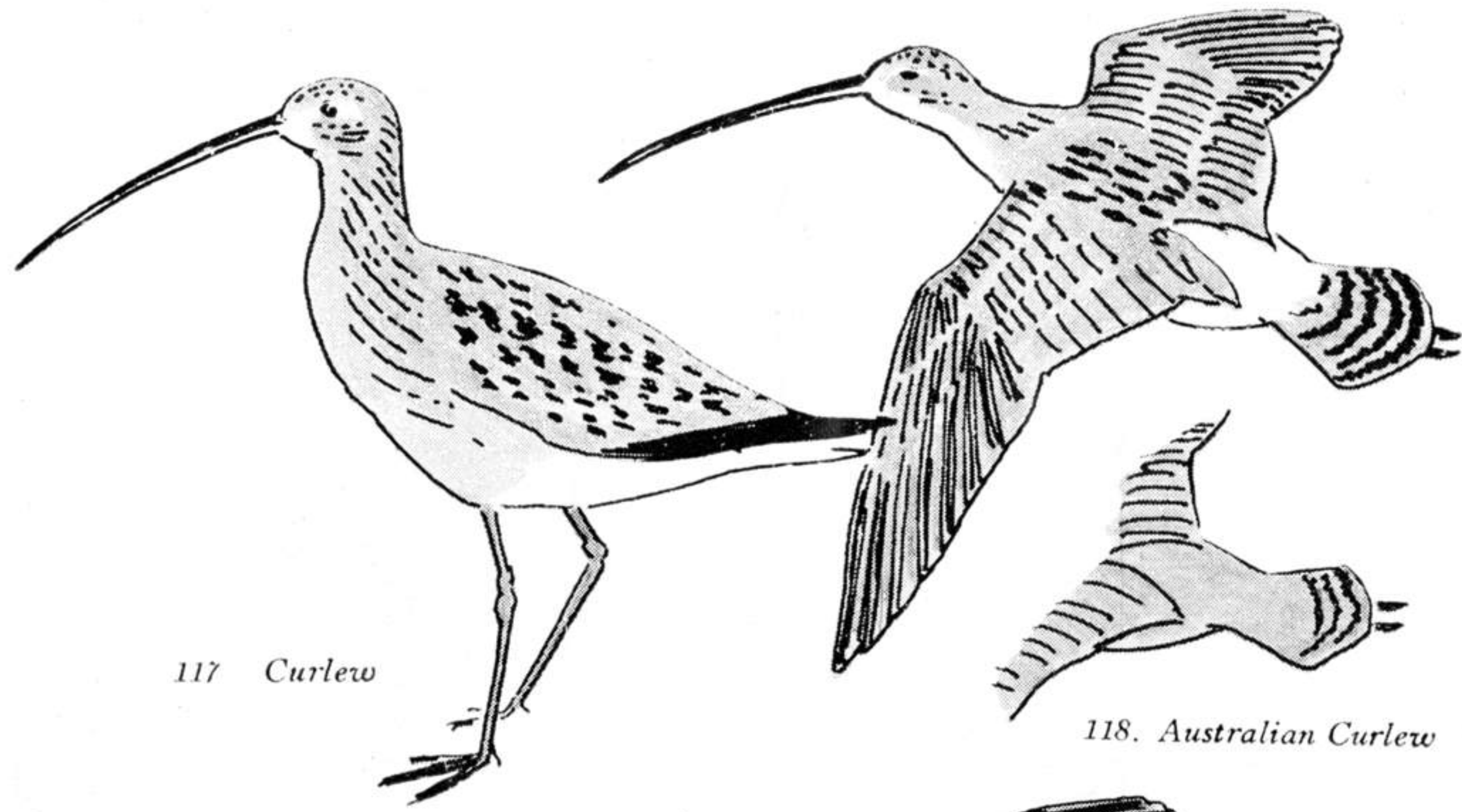
108



109

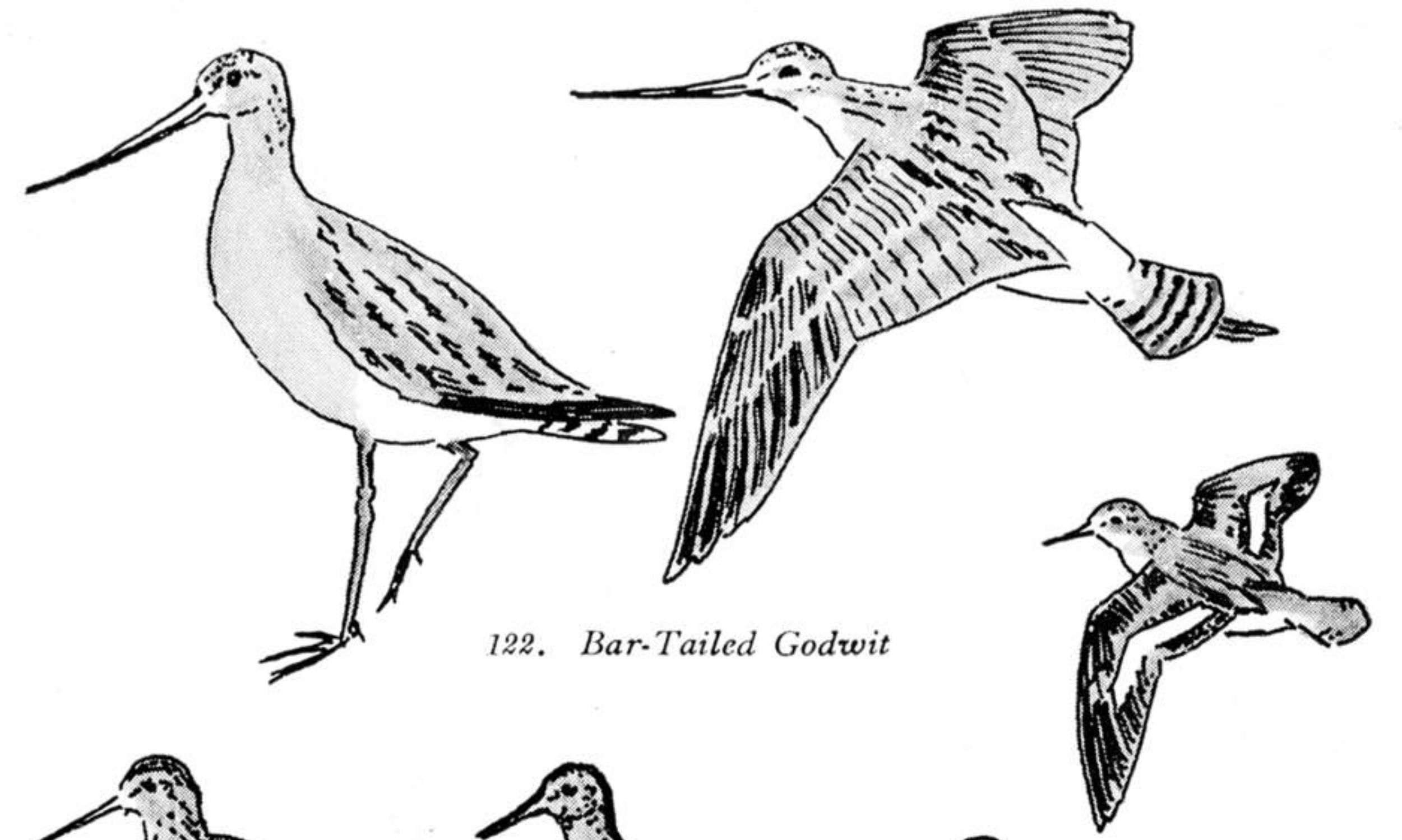


116. *Woodcock*

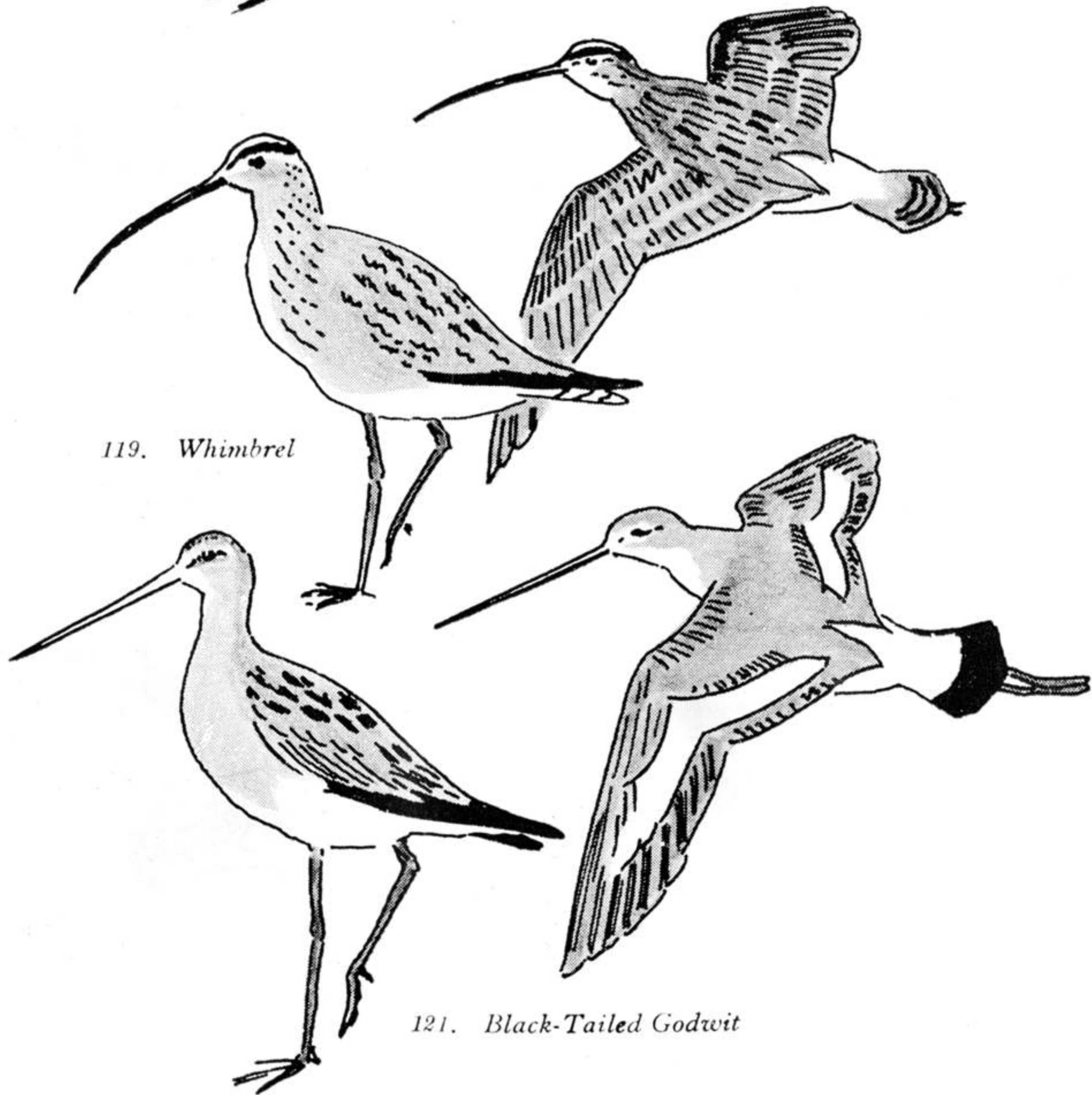


117 Curlew

118. Australian Curlew

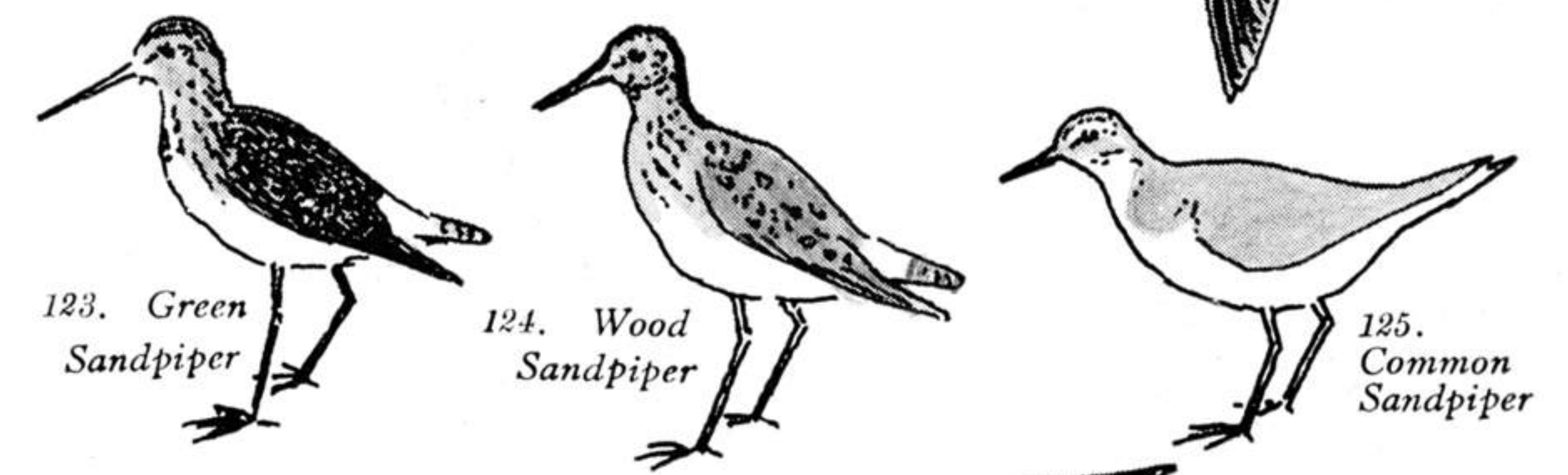


122. Bar-Tailed Godwit



119. Whimbrel

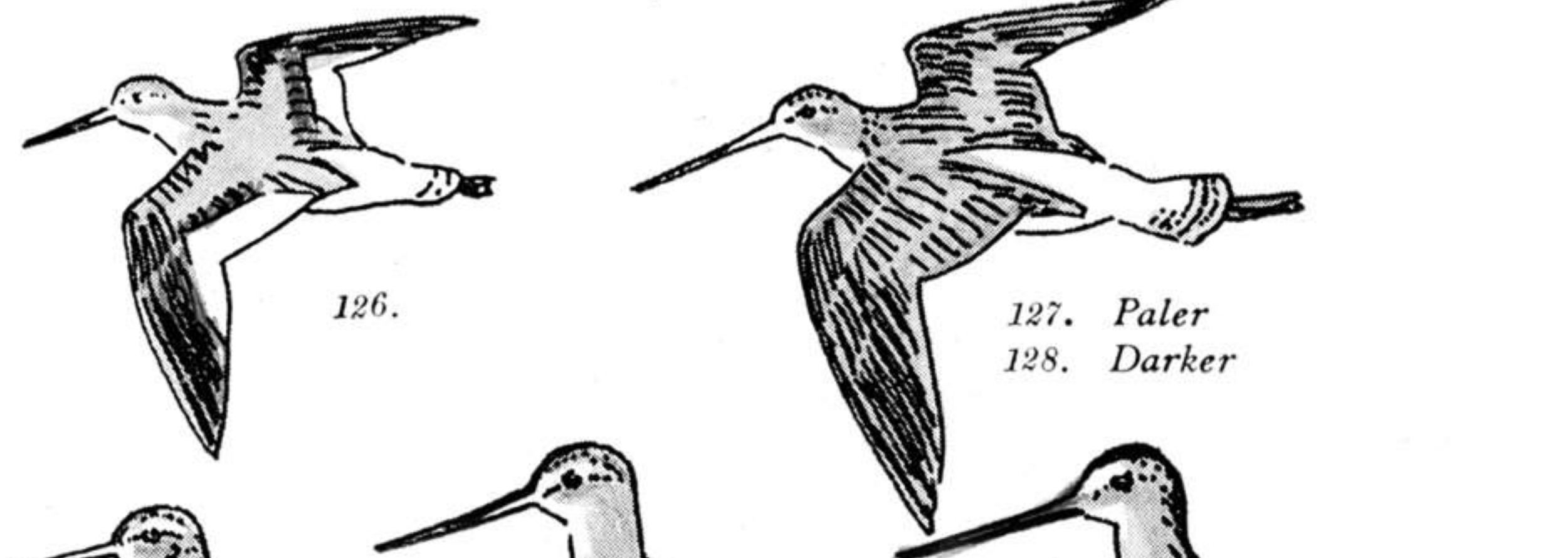
121. Black-Tailed Godwit



123. Green Sandpiper

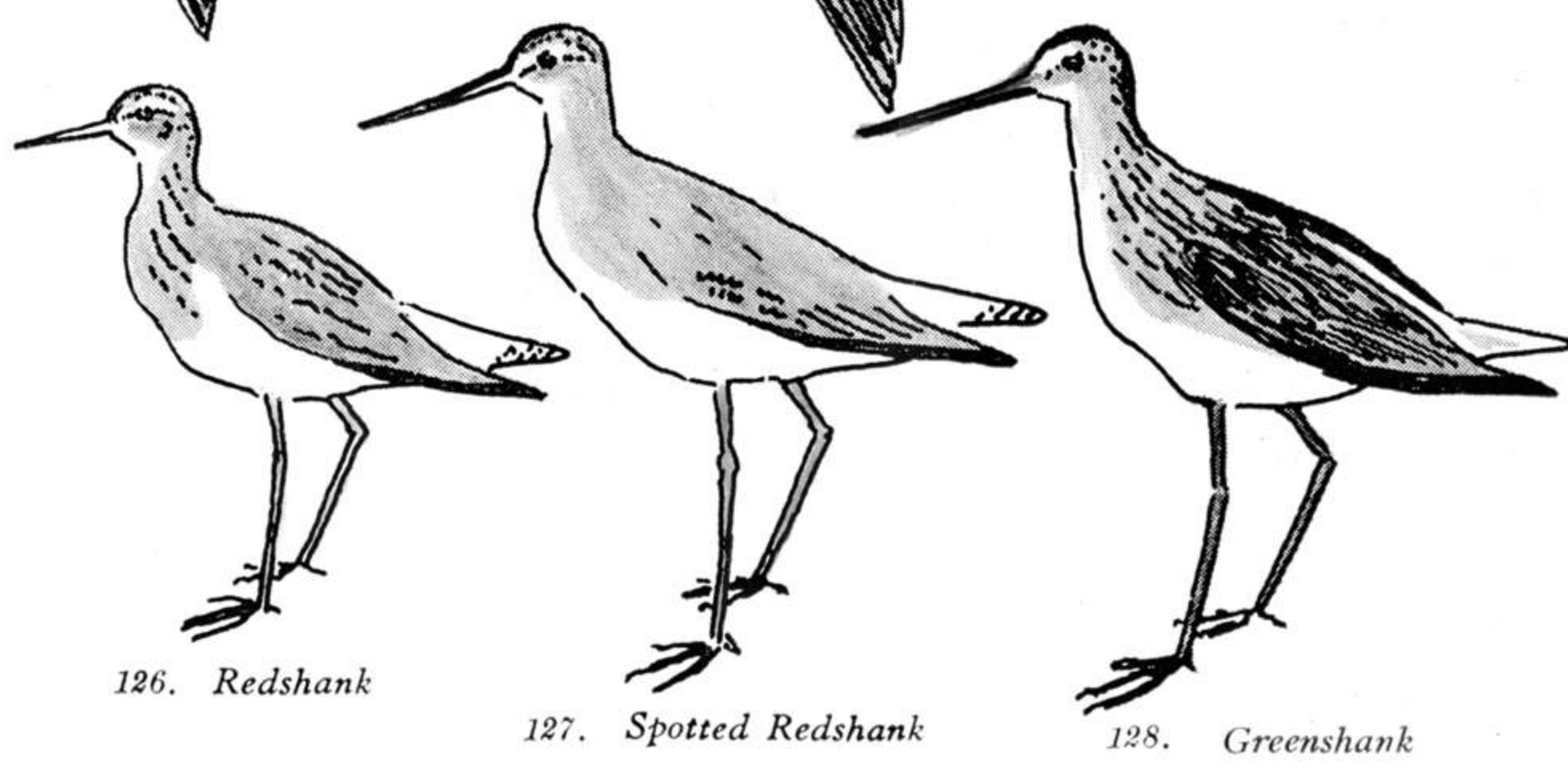
124. Wood Sandpiper

125. Common Sandpiper



126.

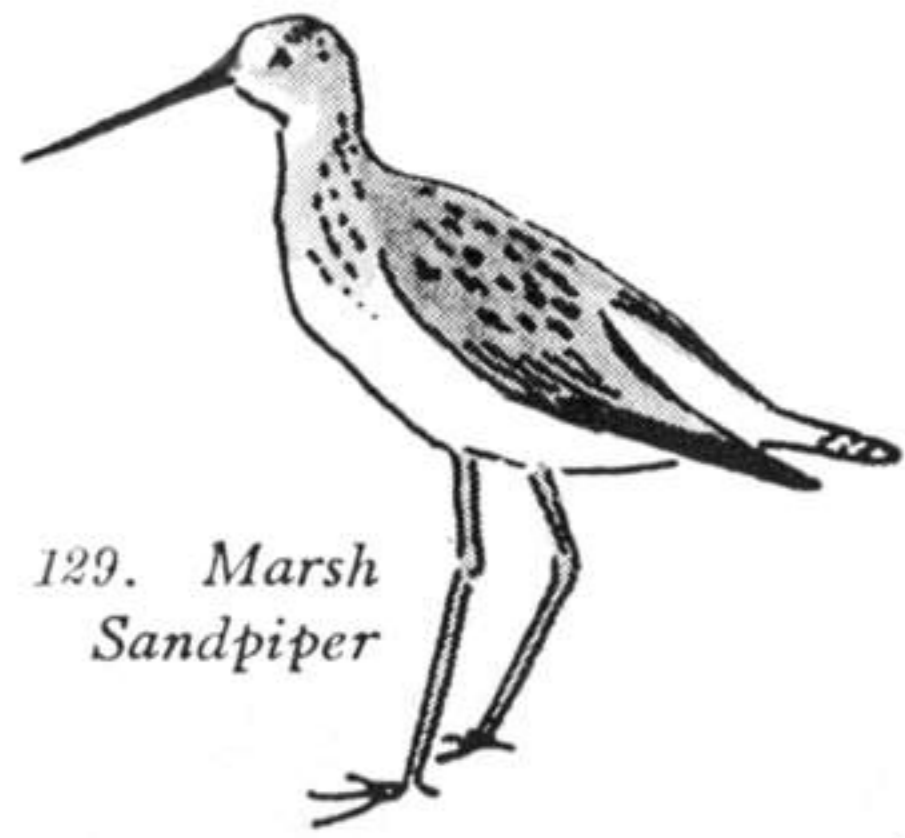
127. Paler  
128. Darker



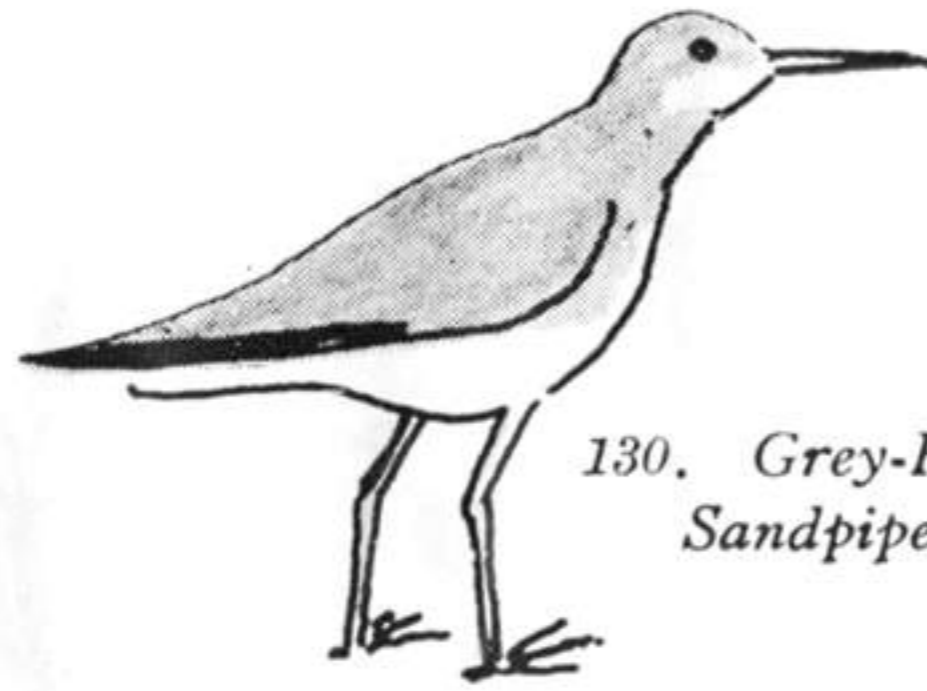
126. Redshank

127. Spotted Redshank

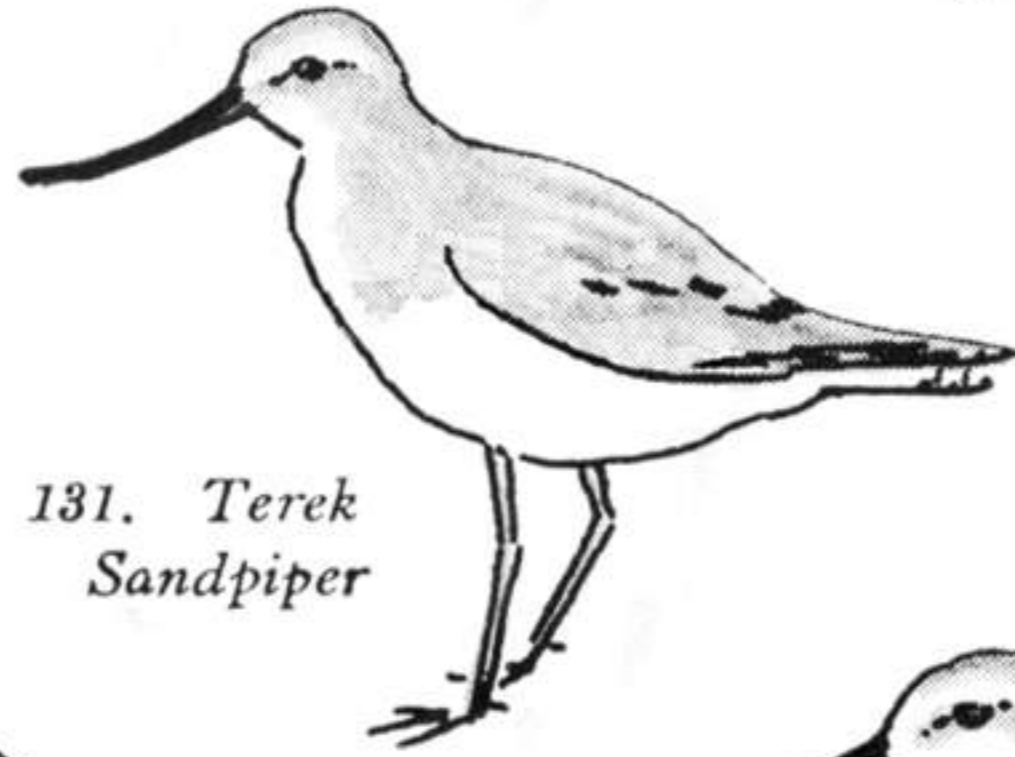
128. Greenshank



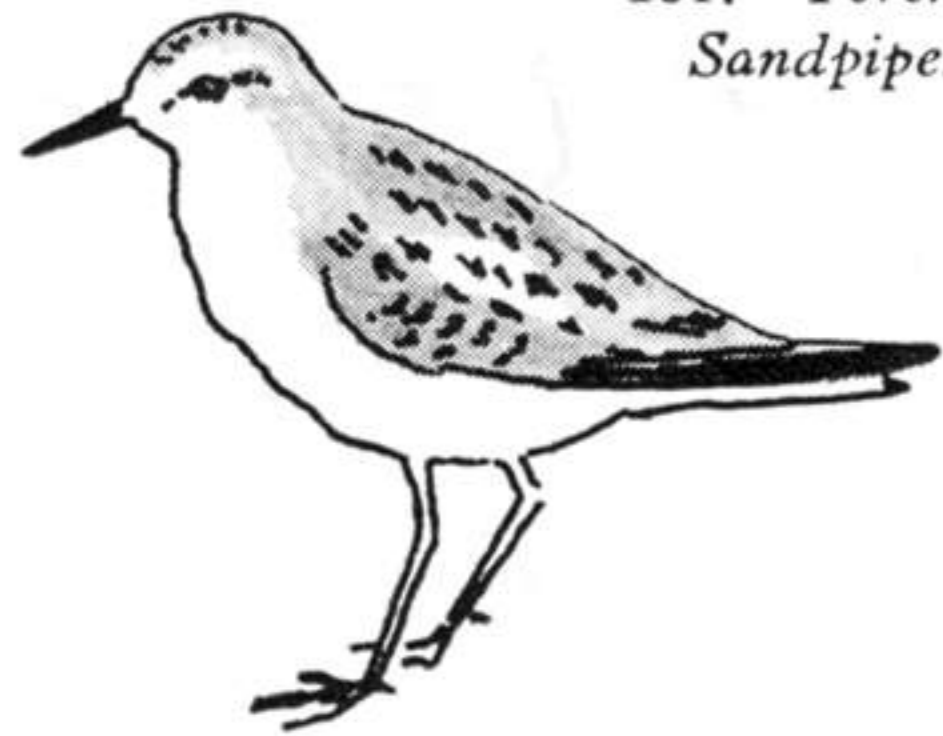
129. Marsh Sandpiper



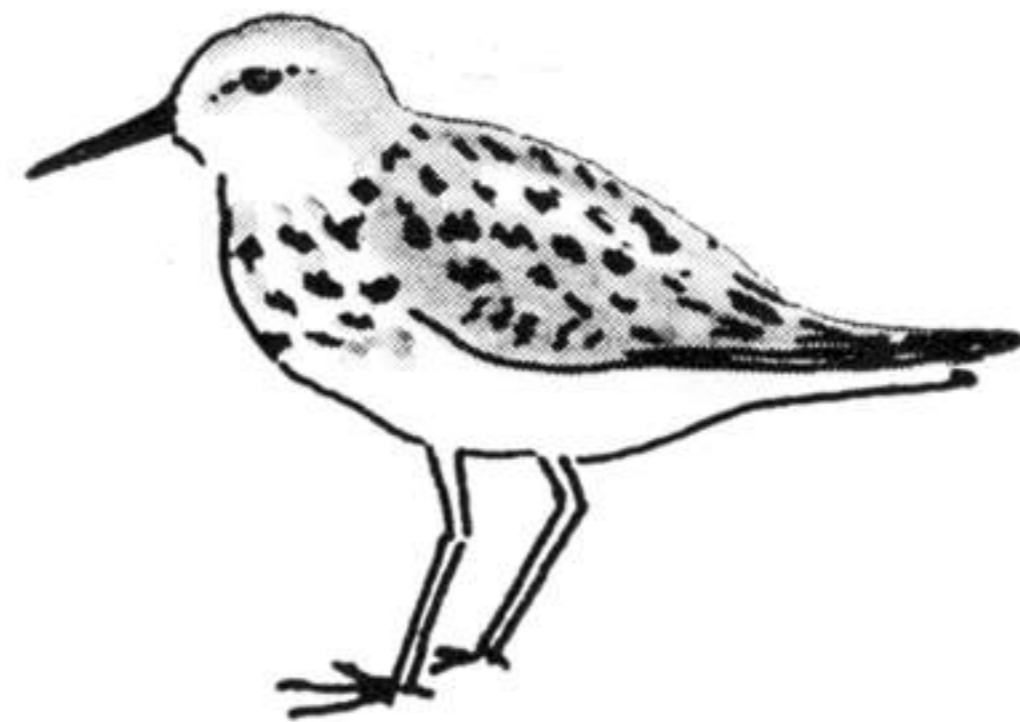
130. Grey-Rumped Sandpiper



131. Terek Sandpiper



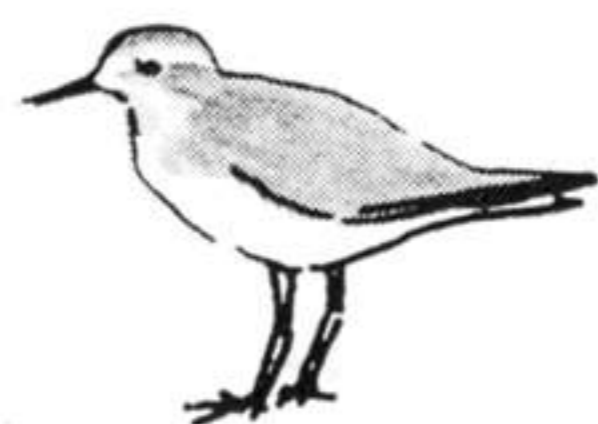
132. Knot



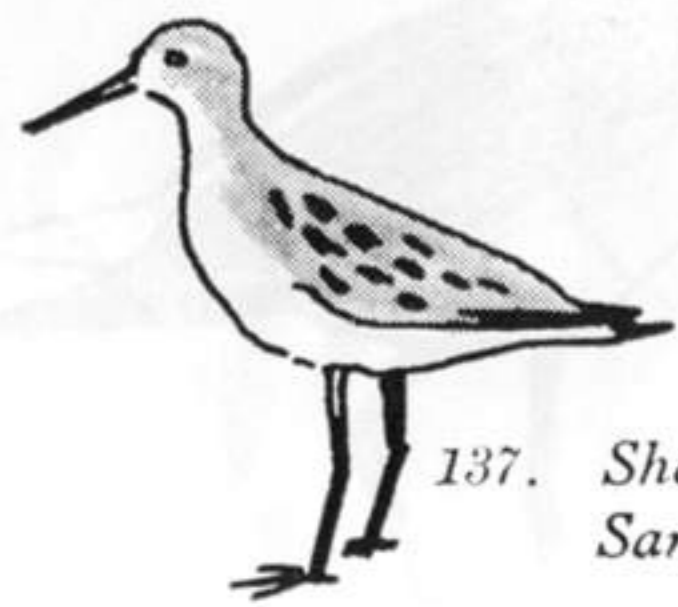
133. Great Knot



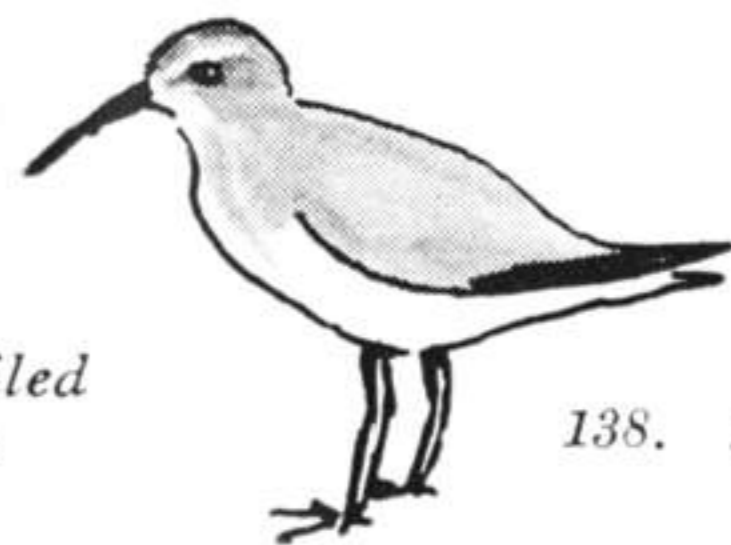
134. Little Stint



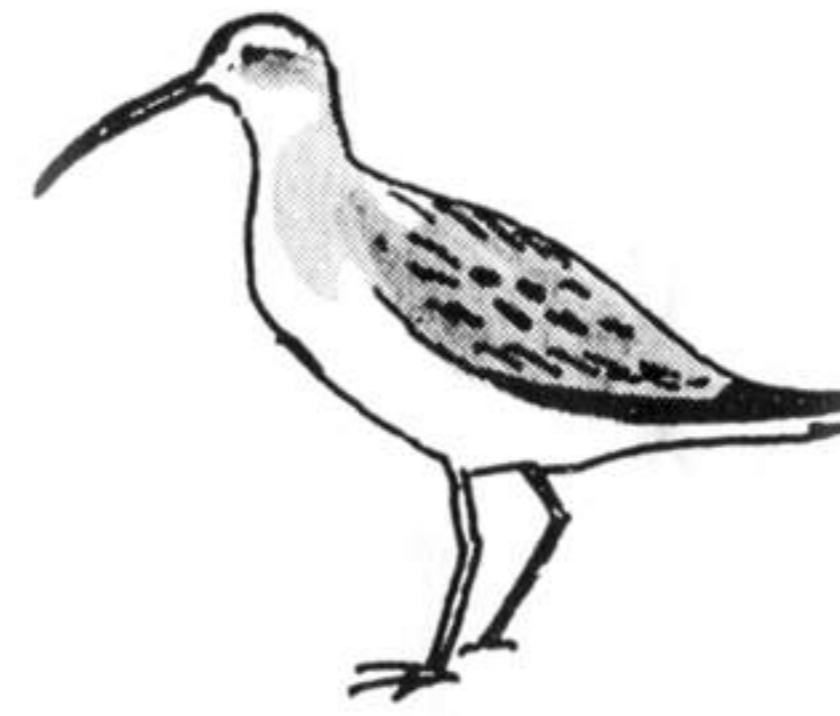
136. Temminck's Stint



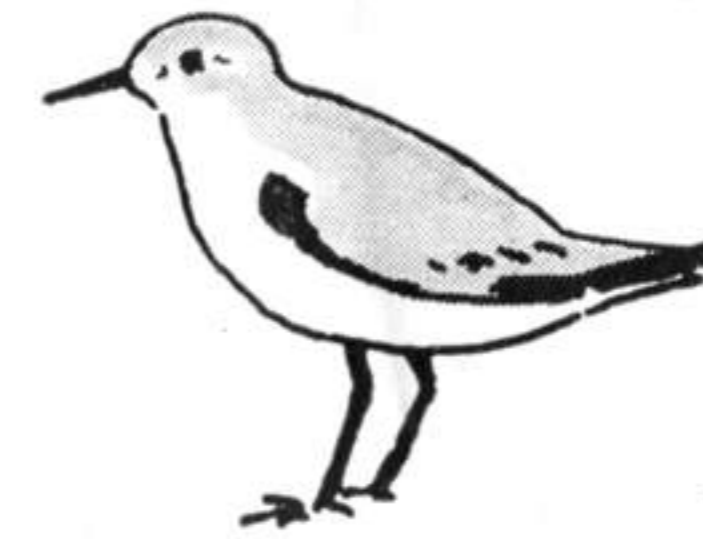
137. Sharp-Tailed Sandpiper



138. Donlin



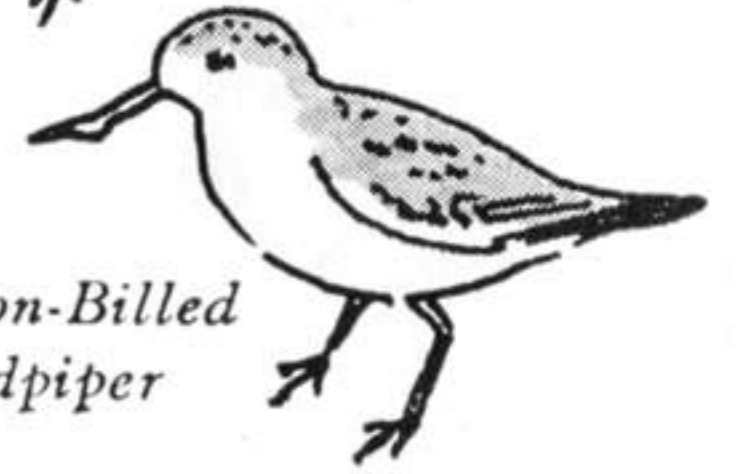
139. Curlew Sandpiper



140. Sanderling



141. Spoon-Billed Sandpiper

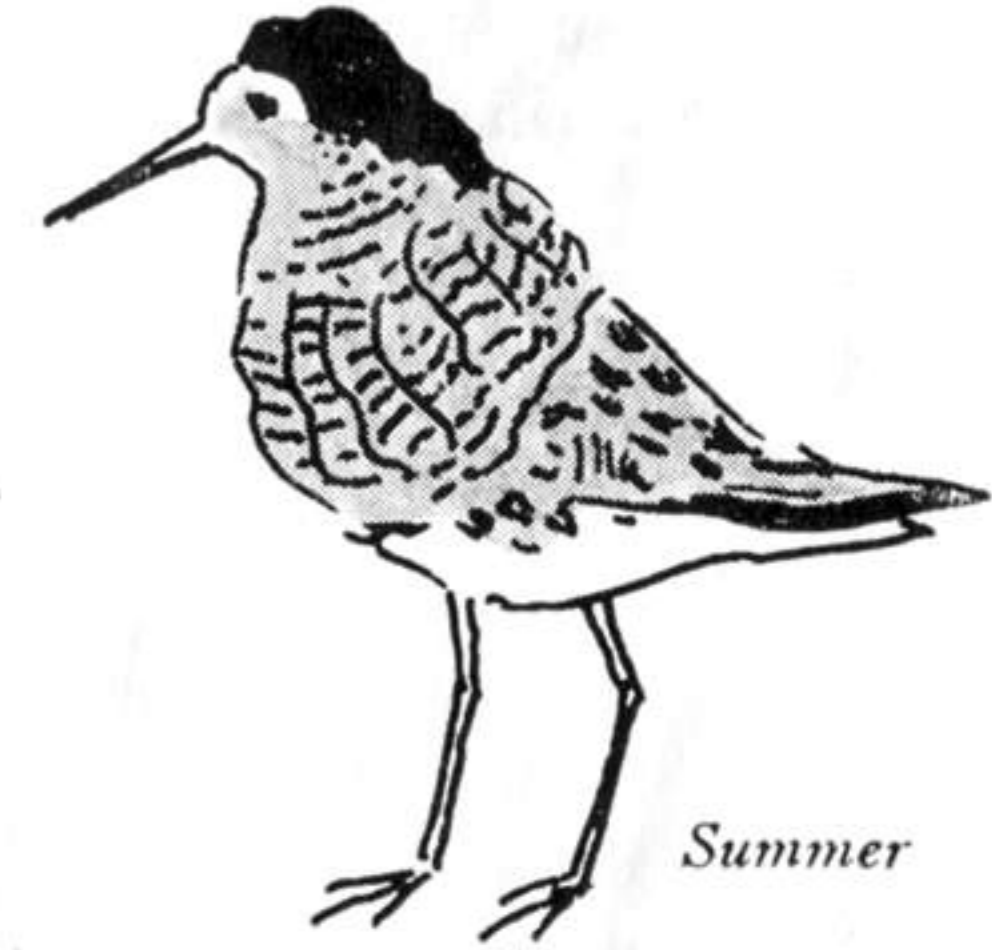


142. Broad-Billed Sandpiper

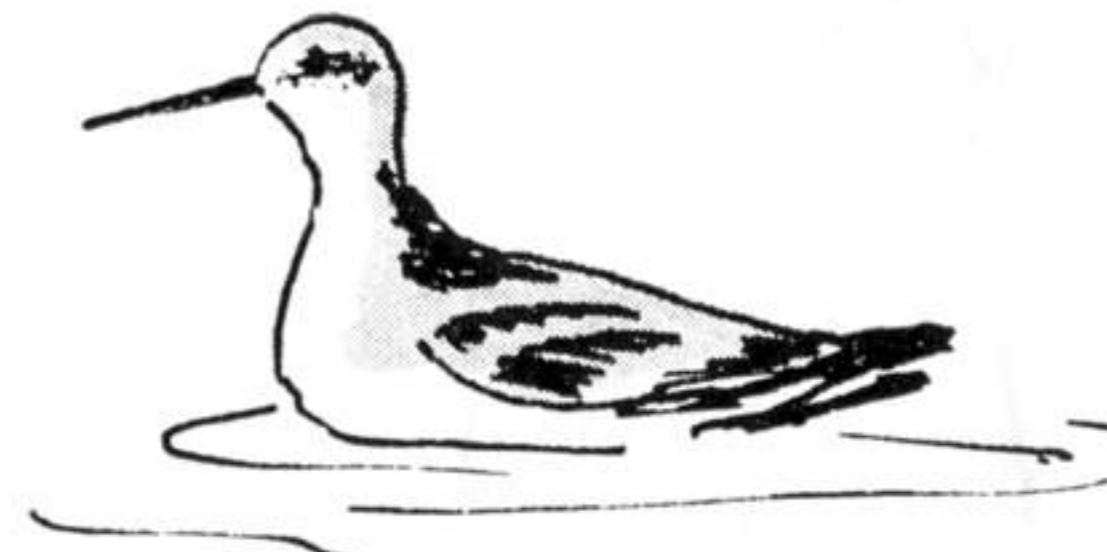


Winter

143. Ruff



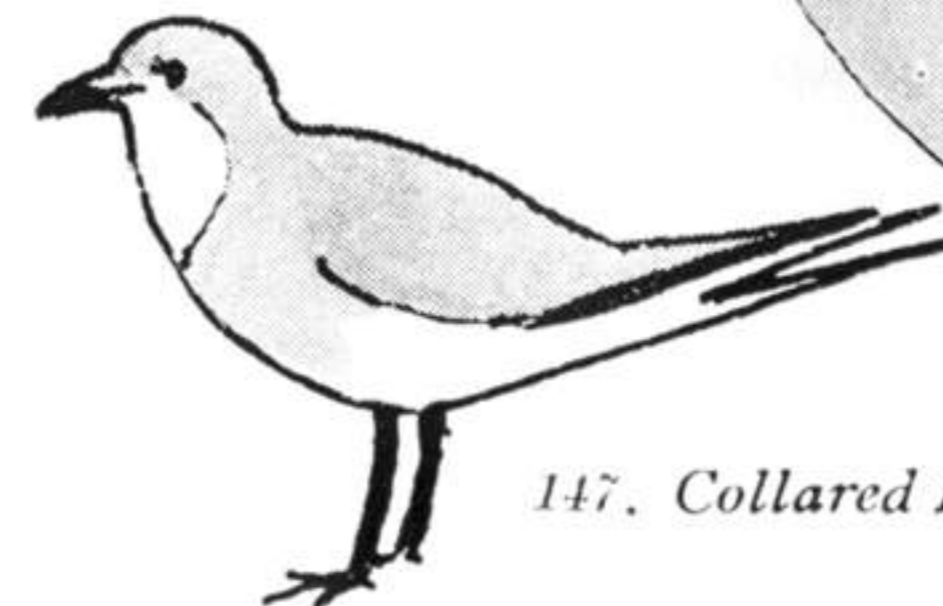
Summer



144. Red-Necked Phalarope



147. Collared Pratincole



145. Black-Winged Stilt



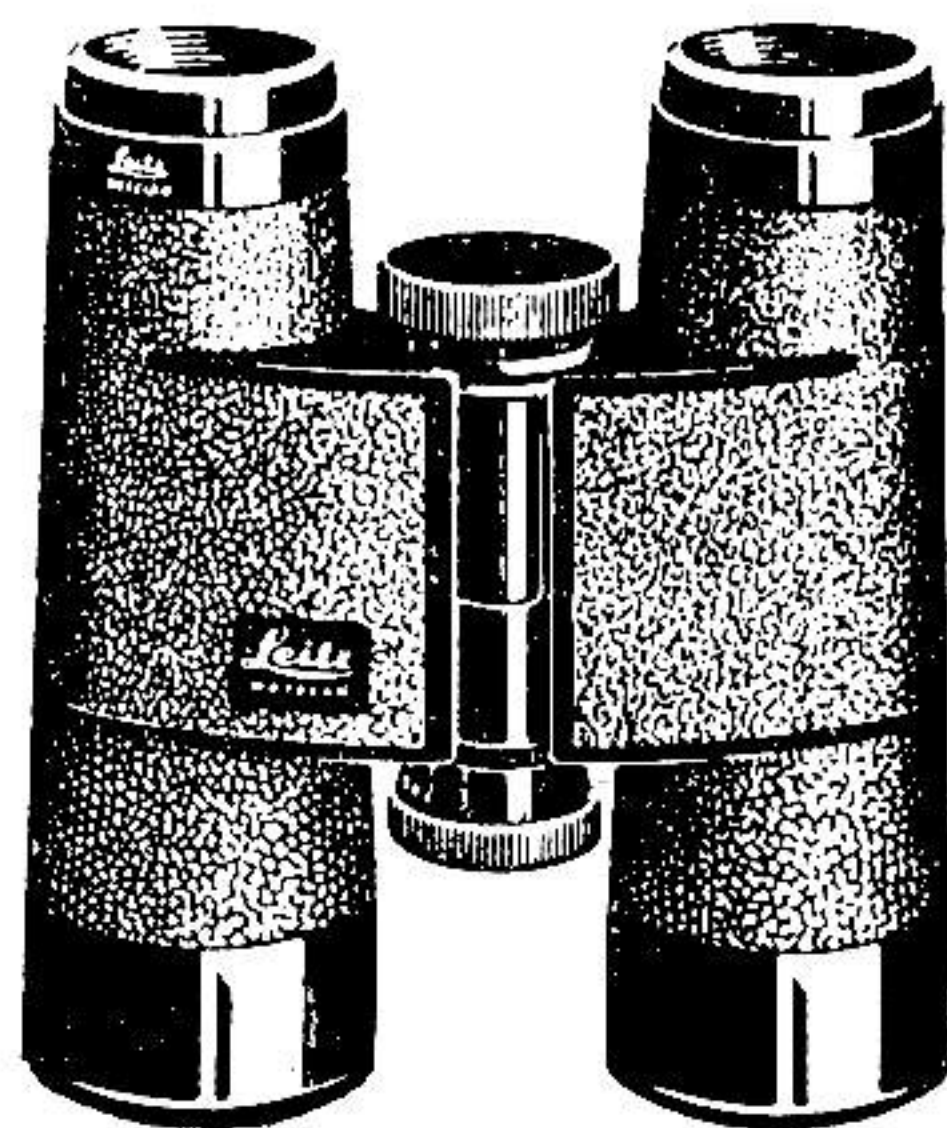
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## JUBILEE RESERVOIR

Jubilee reservoir, less than 25 minutes drive from Tsim Sha Tsui, is well worth a visit for those watchers to whom time is at a premium. My own infrequent visits have produced 43 different species within the last two and a half years and with a lot more knowledge and a little more effort I feel sure that this figure could be increased to 60 with ease.

The western side of the reservoir has always produced the best results for me—starting from the bus terminus and taking either the steps that lead directly into the area or approaching via the narrow road that leads to the catchwater and then crossing the bridge.

Bulbuls—white eyes—great tits—tailor birds—rufous-backed shrikes—spotted doves and black-faced laughing thrushes can normally be seen within 50 yards of the terminus all the year round. Autumn brings large numbers of wagtails, pied and grey, tree pipits and phylloscopus warblers to the same area in large numbers. At least one pair of jungle crows lives in the vicinity and can usually be heard if not seen. Less mundane winter visitors include jays, chestnut bulbuls, wrynecks and small parties of little grebe whilst in summer the area seems full of koels—easier to hear than to see. Summer has also brought black-naped orioles and broad-billed rollers.

In January 1968 I was rushed to the area to see a large “Wild Goose” that was swimming in the reservoir. A goose would have been a great event but I settled for the great crested grebe that it turned out to be. A pair of Bonelli's eagles, seen at the northern tip of the reservoir in the early summer of 1967, appeared completely unperturbed by myself or my dog. The area is good for thrushes in winter and again in 1967 produced a White's thrush with its strange—almost as if injured—walk. A pair of verditer flycatchers were in residence during the early part of the same year and 1968 produced the larger and more striking blue-and-white flycatcher.

Finally, after attempting to whet your appetites, one word of warning—stay clear at weekends as the whole area is normally invaded by thousands of picnicking children.

D.J.G.

## BROWN HAWK OWL

On 6th April, Robert Weeks and I went to the Stanley Cemetery to see Ashy and White-cheeked Drongos which were supposed to be wintering there.

As soon as we got to the cemetery we saw an Ashy Drongo. But White-cheeked Drongo was nowhere to be seen. So, searching for the bird we went into a wood above the cemetery.

A small path was winding through the wood. As we rounded a bend, a big brown bird flew down from top of a tree, passed by us, and dived into thick undergrowth. We were still wondering what it was when, a few moments later, it flew onto a low exposed branch about fifteen yards away revealing itself as an owl of a sort.

The ground was sloping away from us, so although the bird was perched in a tree we were looking down at it.

It was too big to be an Owlet, and it was not a Collared Scops Owl as it had neither ear-tufts nor a facial disk. Its head was dark greyish brown with dark grey mustache feathers and golden-yellow eyes. The upperparts were of uniform dark brown and the underparts were white boldly streaked dark brown. Upper surface of the tail was dark brown banded with light creamy brown while the other side was creamy white with two bands of dark brown. Its beak was slate grey and its feet were yellow.

After taking these down into our notebooks, Robert crawled down the slope to have a better look at the owl. I stayed where I was and as I watched, I noticed another owl similar to the first flying in the background. Robert saw it too and said that it was identical with the other. So there were two of them.

When Robert was about five yards from the perched bird, it flew up and, with the other one, disappeared between the trees. We searched the wood from top to bottom for about an hour or so, but we failed to find them again.

When I got home, I searched various books and found out, to my delight, that they were Brown Hawk Owls, the fourth record for the Colony and first for me.

A.H.

## THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

It was a bright, sunny December day and we had had lunch sitting on a hill out by Mong Tseng looking over Deep Bay and watching the Great Crested Grebes as they surfaced, dived and surfaced again. I had hoped for Pelicans or duck but neither were to be seen and there was little enough on land. Lunch was a rather soporific affair and so it was not until quite late on in the afternoon that we ambled up a small valley leading northwards from the place where the Mong Tseng village track leads off the road to the Police post. There were hawfinches here and there, and a Wryneck clambered about in a dead bush not more than fifteen yards away but other birds had gone elsewhere. We could hear the Black-necked Starlings in the distance, and once an indeterminate eagle soared high above but the hedges and bushes remained quiet and without movement.

Coming round a corner I saw that there was a waterhole in a shady corner, partially masked by bushes and overlooked by lychee trees. Various Buntings flew out and were immediately lost to view but then two other birds, finches of a sort, perched on a bare branch. The male had bright chestnut on his breast and this and all other features agreed with my memories of illustrations of Bramblings. The female was considerably paler but obviously still the same species. They flew off into the lychee trees and it was only after crashing about in the undergrowth for some time that we saw them again, joined by two more, in pine trees further up the hillside. They appeared remarkably tame and were eating seeds out of the pine cones. I got to within a few feet to take photographs and we went home confident of adding a new species to the Colony list. The books confirmed my identification and noted that Bramblings had been recorded in Fukien, so it was possible that they should penetrate further south. The only worrying thing was their behaviour. By rights they should not have been in the pine trees at all, nor eating pine cone seeds but I put this down to the effect of the tropics.

The next day I broadcast news of the new species but was received with reserve and scepticism. I checked the bird shops and disillusionment came when they said they had been swamped with Bramblings for the past three weeks.

R.E.H.

## "WILLY" (*Aegyptius monachus*)

We first met Willy, a Black Vulture, at University Hall where he had been in residence for a week or so, recovering from the devastating experience of existing in a hawk's basket for an unknown period of time, before he was rescued by Mr. John Llewellyn and restored to health.

The purpose of our meeting was to ring and release Willy somewhere in the Lau Fau Shan area where vultures have been seen on rare occasions, circling high up on their long square-ended wings.

I had expected the bird to be large but in fact he was enormous with a wing span of nearly ten feet and his leg took a very solid-looking ring as John Llewellyn calmly held him while Fred Hechtel put the ring on rather like a blacksmith.

The next thing was the journey by car out to the New Territories, for which the poor fellow was put into a large sack, and away we went to a good area we knew of with a bit of a gorge between two slight cliffs somewhere inland in the Deep Bay area.

After carrying this quite heavy load of about twenty pounds for nearly half an hour to our chosen spot, came the exciting moment to release him. I had visions of Willy stretching out his vast wings, joyfully taking to the air and rising in ever widening circles until he would appear as that characteristic silhouette, a thousand feet up. But it wasn't like that at all. Willy came slowly and with dignity out of the sack. He shook himself, looked round, shook himself again, stretched his neck and then stood looking expectantly at us. Then he thrust each wing downwards and outwards and flapped them gloriously upwards—but that was all.

We waited. After a while we got behind him and clapped our hands and shouted—but Willy merely turned slowly round to see what all the fuss was about. We then decided to leave him alone and watch him from a distance. Very quietly we moved away while he was peacefully preening and not noticing us. Suddenly he noticed that we had gone and become almost agitated. He looked all around. "Horrors! Where are they?" It didn't take him long to spot us. "Whoops! There they are." And he tucked his wings up behind him and came rollicking after us. Dear Willy. Next we thought that if we could just get him airborne he might rediscover the joy

of flight and freedom, so we tried chasing him along waving things at him and making fearsome noises. But Willy ran only as long as we ran and then just stood looking vacantly around. What on earth could we do? One last try. We chivvied him nearer the edge of the gorge and crept away from him. I eased my car coat up over my head and, wearing some very large black sun glasses, flapping my arms and making dreadful hissing sounds, I swooped upwards at the horrified Willy. "It CAN'T be! But it IS!" he reasoned, and he ran and ran over the precipice and—he was AIRBORNE. A moment's anxiety for us as we gazed down upon that beautiful spread of wings, and then he was actually climbing up and up in widening circles. "How marvellous. Goodbye Willy and good luck!"

But wait,—he was coming down again. Oh Willy!—down and down—till there he was standing beside a path below us, some little distance away, with woodcutters working quite near him. We tore down to the rescue; he was anybody's bird. We got him back, rested him and tried once more but it was no use. By now it was getting late and we did not dare leave him, so Fred carried him in his arms and I carried the sack and the cameras and all the other equipment so that I didn't have a hand to spare. It would soon be getting dark and we must hurry,—but good heavens, what was that strange crawly feeling around my neck, down my back, up my sleeves, in my hair, yes everywhere. But we must hurry, no time to fool around, said Fred. But what were they?

When we got back to the car, I saw for myself what they were. They were young alligators, only a bit smaller, the utmost in creepy-crawlies. "Perfectly harmless" said Fred "mallophaga (feather mites, but BIG). They much prefer vultures to human beings", which I suppose must be something in their favour.

On the way back we put Willy on the back seat of the car, where he stood solemnly looking out of the windows. In traffic jams and on the ferry, people glanced, looked again and goggled at this enormous bald-headed bird sitting behind my bald-headed husband and me. Unfortunately we were unable to give ourselves over to the complete enjoyment of the amusing situation, as the mallophaga were now on the rampage. We were smothered in them and by the time we got home they formed a full halo all over my head, and though they were quite easy to deal with once we were home, I dreamt about them all night and imagined them for days.

From then on Willy lived in the back yard on a diet of dead rats obtained daily from the Urban Services Department, and an enormous dead python which Mr. John Romer also supplied. The bird ate up to four pounds of meat of this kind daily but fasted completely about every fifth day. It was interesting to see him picking the snake bones absolutely clean as he went along, leaving the other parts untouched. Willy certainly enjoyed his delectable chow and when Fred brought these delicacies home for him, Willy would galumph after him in a series of bumbling, lurching skips, pursuing Fred with great vigour until he'd got it.

Perhaps the occasion of greatest joy for Willy was the first time we gave him a bath. We watered him with a garden hose and for Willy it seemed to be the most blissful experience in the world. There was no doubt that he wanted the water. He turned himself towards the spray, ducking and splattering, heaving over on to one side and lifting up his wing to get the water into his "armpit" and then the other side. Then he sat right back on his tail with his legs stretched out in front so that he could get a deluge right down breast and vent. If ever a bird expressed delight it was Willy on this occasion.

By now of course it was realised that no one would ever have the time to wean Willy away from his dependence upon man and so negotiations were under way to find him a "good home". Here Dr. Kenneth Searle came to the rescue and Willy flew home to the Bristol Zoo—by B.O.A.C. of course.

E.L.H.

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### R. I. P.

Castle Peak Monastery is dead. Birdless and lifeless, it is now a monument to 'improvement'. Once the only remaining oasis of natural vegetation in western New Territories providing food and shelter for the Japanese Paradise Flycatcher, Himalayan Cuckoo, Yellow-breasted Willow Warbler and many other unusual birds, it has been brutally destroyed by the construction of 2 dual track roads from the bottom to the top and by wanton clearance of the remaining undergrowth.

This pointless 'improvement' has benefitted no one. Not one person will sleep more comfortably, eat more fully or work more rewardingly because of it. The incredible thing is that it appears to have been initiated by the monks themselves, people who are unique in Asia by traditionally loving animals. What kind of 'love' destroys the animals' habitat? What faceless minion in the District Office Yuen Long approved this vandalism? How can Government's pious approval of conservation be reconciled with the wanton destruction of this unique habitat? What will be next, motor racing at Mai Po, resettlement blocks at Tai Po Kau?

Castle Peak, we mourn your passing, you will remain forever as a memorial to man's incredible folly and stupidity.

D.G.R.

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### JUNIOR BIRDWATCHING

Each morning I get up at 6.30 and go for a walk up Po Shan Road. The first birds I normally see are the Bulbuls, usually Chinese with a Crested here and there. Further up the road a pair of Violet Whistling Thrushes greet me, but best of all are the Chinese Blue Magpies which adorn the Flame of the Forest tree in the Japanese Consulate's garden. Later on in the day a Long-tailed Tailor Bird will come and fight it's own reflection in a mirror at the bottom of Po Shan Mansions' Drive.

Last spring Mrs. Garland found a Tailor Bird's nest, but alas it was destroyed by a Magpie Robin. Crow Pheasants are seen frequently in the Hong Kong University grounds. A flock of Hawfinches seem to make their home there each winter. Plaintive Cuckoos also seem to be resident, but I have only seen them once.

With the help of the Society I am learning to recognise and identify the numerous birds that are found from time to time in Hong Kong and the New Territories. The outings I enjoy immensely. My favourite bird-watching place is Ping Shan, because it probably has the most varied selection of birds.

I wish to thank Mr. M. Rice for my initial introduction to the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, and all members for the tremendous help they have given me, especially Mr. & Mrs. Garland for providing me with transport and stimulating my interest.

R.J.A.

## EAGLE'S NEST

The early morning of Chinese New Year saw the chairman and another intrepid member of the society embarking on the ferry for Lamma Island, in company with myriads of Chinese picnickers en route for the same destination. We were accompanied by some fully equipped rock-climbers hung about with ropes and rucksacks who were to point out to us the site of an eagle's nest which they had come upon during their assaults on Mount Stenhouse the previous year.

After landing on the island it was not long before our path separated from the picnickers' and began to wind upwards over the rather barren hillsides. It was surprisingly hot for the time of year and a cloud hovered over the upper regions of the island and bid fair to descend and blot out the view entirely. It was impossible to see our goal in the mist, but on a signal from the mountaineers we suddenly turned on to a path which led directly up the face the mountain and soon gave way to scrub in the annoying fashion these paths have of petering out amongst the scrub. However, the going, though very steep, was not particularly difficult, even if we did lose a lot of perspiration. We soon penetrated the lower layers of the cloud and just above us loomed a bare, vertical rock face.

This was the signal for our climbers to unlimber all their gear, for they were proposing to climb this particular outcrop. One of them, who had very kindly organized the expedition largely for our benefit, took us round to one side of the main rock mass, and there was the nest we had come to see.

A small tree had sprouted from a fissure in the rock and on this the nest was supported. Above it the rock stretched out in an overhang, making it inaccessible from above and at the same time no doubt providing welcome shelter from the weather. Alas, there were no signs of occupation this year. The nest consisted of a truly amazing quantity of sticks, enough to fill several wheelbarrows. In addition, at least an equal quantity lay on the ground beneath the nest where they had fallen from it. I imagine we were looking at the accumulated work of several years. A thought that struck

me was, why does the eagle not retrieve a stick which falls out instead of collecting new ones from further away? It appears that once on the ground under the nest it is no longer regarded as suitable building material.

The rock overhang prevented us from seeing inside the nest, but both of us were able to get quite close to it by some hair-raising feats of balance and agility! (Actually it was not all that difficult). This was no doubt the nest of the White-bellied Sea-eagle (*haliaetus leucogaster*). A pair are usually to be seen in this area, but I believe I am right in saying that they have not been seen there in the past year. Two or three years ago a pair would often circle over Aberdeen and visit Tai Tam, but they seem to be much more rarely seen now, and none have been over Aberdeen during last winter. It is to be hoped that the site of this nest will be borne in mind and a watch kept to see whether breeding takes place next year. The site seems fairly inaccessible to predators—human and otherwise—and provides a good prospect for the young to be reared.

R.A.I.W.

## NOTES ON THE PHOTOGRAPHS BETWEEN PAGES 30 AND 31

All but one of the photographs were taken from hides using a tripod mounted Bronica camera taking  $2\frac{1}{2}$  sq. frames. In all but one case the lens was a 200 mm. Nikkon. All photographs were taken on Kodak Tri-X film as follows:—

**Grey Thrush.** Wintering thrushes were known to favour a particular gully in the woods at Bethany Monastery and a hide was erected in an area where birds seemed often to occur. About two days of waiting resulted in the plate shown together with a few other pictures. Electronic flash was used, in this case there being two lamps at about 7 ft. from the subject. Camera-subject distance was about the same. Lens aperture f22.

**Violet Whistling Thrush.** Birds were watched building in a palm tree in the grounds of University Hall, the birds feeding and collecting their nesting material in the thrush gully at Bethany. Electronic flash with two lamps at  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ft, camera at 7 ft, f22 synchronised on the X camera setting equivalent to 1/40 sec. Effective speed of exposure was virtually entirely due to the flash as the site was very dark and was equivalent to 1/800th second.

**Kite.** Nesting on Stonecutters Island and photographed from a pylon hide. The bird visited the nest infrequently, and would only appear once between 11.00 hrs. and 18.30 hrs; such infrequent visits are normal in the birds to prey, especially if they are finding it difficult to obtain food. One flash lamp was used to fill in shadow detail resulting from back natural lighting, the only time when daylight only could be used was between 10.00 and 12.00 hrs. and no visits occurred at this time. A compur shutter was used synchronised to the flash at 1/25th sec. to allow natural light to enter the lens. The camera was a Linhof plate equipped with a Voigtlander Apo-Lanthar f4.5, 150mm. lens set at an aperture of f16.

**Cattle Egret.** Taken from a pylon hide permanently erected for the season in the egret colony at Sha Tau Kok. Brilliant light conditions were experienced enabling a fast shutter speed of 1/125th at f11 on Tri-X film. Nevertheless, the film was purposely over-exposed at this rating to allow film development to be undercut to 50%. By this means the contrast of the film could be reduced allowing a much fuller gradation of tone values to be obtained than would otherwise have been possible under such harsh lighting conditions.

All films have been developed in Kodak Microdol-X developer diluted by 1 part of developer to 3 parts of water.

R.K.M.

## TO THE U.K. VIA CEYLON AND KENYA

“We can understand you going to Kenya, but why Ceylon?” was the usual question when I told my friends my route home to England. I explained that I hoped to do some bird watching there, and they looked doubtful. They need not have worried.

I arrived in Ceylon in mid January which is probably the best time of the year to do so, both from the point of view of the weather and of seeing birds. My stay began with a few frustrating days in Colombo trying to arrange accommodation up country and the hire of a reliable car, but once these problems were solved I covered the Island fairly thoroughly with the exception of the East coast. There were birds to see everywhere but in this article I shall confine myself to two areas only, those where I was able to see most, although experts who have been in Ceylon may tell me that there are still better places.

The first was Jaffna, on the northern tip of the island. It is a city of Tamils which has a history stretching back over many centuries. The old Dutch fort and buildings are interesting but for bird watchers it is the lagoon and marshes which are the centre of attraction. On mile upon mile of deserted shallow water fringed with flat sandy shores and occasional palm trees, egrets, herons and waders abound, but the most amusing sights were the fish traps. These were of the pattern usual in South East Asia, made of lines of stakes driven into the mud under the water so that the fish swim along the line and into the circular enclosure at the end. Once inside they cannot get out again. These enclosures are ten to fifteen feet in diameter and are made of nets attached to stakes. On each stake sits a Pond Heron looking inwards and poised ready to dive. The instant a fish comes near the surface ten to twenty birds dive simultaneously. How fierce is the battle under the water I could not see, nor would I like to guess how often a bird loses its eye but while I watched I did not see any casualties.

The second, and I think even more interesting place was Polonnaruwa which is on the itinerary of most visitors to Ceylon. This is a series of ancient ruined temples within a few miles of a large ‘tank’ or artificial lake probably built about the same time several hundred years ago. I went there with a friend who was interested in the ruins and knew a lot about them but was somewhat taken aback when he found I was busy photographing birds. I could get to within a few feet of bee-eaters, hoopoes, rollers, plover and sandpipers

and they seemed to show no fear whatever, probably due to the fact that the ruins are Buddhist holy places where no hunting or shooting is allowed. The Rest House, which is definitely better than the local hotel, is situated on the edge of the tank and from it a narrow road runs for several miles along the rim of the dyke, giving excellent views over the lake and the surrounding countryside. At dusk I was intrigued by flight after flight of black birds leaving the tank in V formation and so drove down this road as fast as safety would allow to the spot they all seemed to pass. Ninety-nine per cent were in fact cormorants with an occasional egret by way of contrast and the earlier leavers were heading for a large mountain some miles away to the East. As it got darker a change took place and the birds began to hurtle in fifteen feet above my head and settle in the branches of a large clump of trees a hundred yards away below the dyke. Through the binoculars I found the reason for this change of plan. Until sunset the whole clump was covered with Fruit Bats (Flying Foxes), large bats with a three or four foot wingspan and a slow straight flight. As the light left the sky they woke up and flew off, each place being taken by a bird. Each species appeared to have its own area, the Night Herons at one end, Cormorants in the middle and egrets at the other. While all this "hot bunk system" change over was taking place, flocks of terns were flying in over my head and on out over the tank to where a submerged forest left many bare branches above the water. These were their resting places each night.

From Ceylon I flew to Kenya via Bombay. My first purchase after arrival was two books, 'The Field Guide to the Birds of East and Central Africa,'\* and 'A Field Guide to the Game Reserves' both by John Williams. The first lists about seven hundred species which one may see and the second another two hundred or so which are locally fairly common but not widespread. It also gives invaluable lists of what has been seen in what park and so saves one from some of the wilder flights of fancy. On a winter visit, which is undoubtedly the best time, I would also recommend taking along the 'Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe'.\* Over a thousand species have been recorded in Kenya and so any newcomer on his own spends three quarters of his time thumbing through the books in a usually fruitless search to identify what he has just seen. This problem, however, is reduced to manageable proportions after a couple of weeks and many unidentified species.

Although birds abound in East Africa and are far less shy than those in Hong Kong, the most outstanding of the places I visited

\*In the Society's Library. Ed.

was Lake Nakuru National Park about a hundred miles North West of Nairobi. Even a person with no interest whatever in birds could not fail to be impressed by the sight of from one and a half to two million Flamingoes feeding round the shores of this soda lake. The sight as they take off in pink and white clouds would need far more of a poet than I to describe it. Suffice it to say that, in the words of a Michelin Guidebook, "It is worth the journey".

Although the flamingoes overawe by their sheer weight of numbers, other water birds abound. Pelicans glide smoothly on the water in line abreast, their wings arched like swans and their bills down. The shallows teem with Ruffs and Reeves in winter plumage, with Black Winged Stilts by the hundred, with Avocets, Terns, Sandpipers, Storks, Spoonbills, Egrets..... Cormorants and Darters nest by the thousand in old dead trees along a mile or two of the shore. Ducks and Grebes speckle the surface of the lake and Herons flap leisurely by. On my first visit I moved only three hundred yards in the first four hours, and need not have moved that far.

Besides the lake the park includes several stretches of woodland, open grass country and a rock escarpment where Eagles and other birds of prey nest. You can see all kinds of birds from Barbets to small insignificant Warblers, from Secretary Birds to Munias and Weavers. If by any chance you get weary of birds there are always monkeys, gazelle, buck and other wild life about, and if you are lucky you may see a Dik Dik, a tiny deer standing only thirteen inches high.

I have so many memories of Kenya now, the Sand Grouse and Lovebirds on the plains, Kori Bustards giving a mating display, Vultures and Maribou Storks picking at the carcass of a zebra, or Sunbirds on a flowering shrub five feet away. It is impossible to decide what was the highlight. I can only suggest one thing—go and see for yourself.

R.E.H.

## IDENTIFICATION OF WADERS

This brief guide is intended to give some help in the identification of waders on the Mai Po marshes, and elsewhere in the Colony. Identification of this group is frequently difficult, and even the most experienced observers can often find themselves nonplussed by a particular bird. In most species, winter and summer plumages differ considerably, and, in general, the winter plumages have been described here.

### PLOVERS

General characteristics:— plump waders with short bills. Most species prefer sandy ground, and seldom actually wade.

#### A. LAPWINGS

100. **Lapwing.** 12". Iridescent greenish-black upperparts, black throat and breast. Whitish cheeks and white underparts. Long black crest. In flight, wings are broad and rounded. Black wings, white tail, black terminal band. Scarce winter visitor, found in grassy fields.
101. **Grey-headed Lapwing.** 14". Head, neck, throat, and breast grey, rest of upperparts brown. Underparts white. Bill yellow with black tip. Legs yellow. In flight, similar to Lapwing, but distinguished by more pointed wings, grey and white with black primaries. Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly in grassy parts of the marsh.

#### B. RINGED PLOVERS

103. **Little Ringed Plover.** 6". Note yellowish or pinkish legs, white line above black band across forehead. Black breastband is *complete* in adult, but in immature shows as two dark brown smudges either side of the breast, *not* joining across breast. No wingbar in flight. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.
102. **Harting's Ringed Plover.** 8". Distinguish from Little Ringed Plover by larger size, and longer bill. One record.
104. **Kentish Plover.** 6". Distinguish from Little Ringed Plover by black legs, no white line above black band across forehead, and clearcut, but incomplete, black breastband. One white wingbar in flight. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.
105. **Greater Sand-plover.** 8". Like a large version of Little Ringed Plover, but no breastband in winter, chestnut breastband in summer, when it also has chestnut markings on head and neck. One white wingbar.

106. **Mongolian Sand-plover.** 7½". Not safely distinguishable from Greater Sand-plover, although bill is shorter. Both species are common passage migrants and winter visitors, and both prefer sandy ground.
107. **Caspian Plover.** 9". Rather similar to Sand-plovers, but whole of throat and breast bright chestnut in summer male (with curved black border), brown in females and immatures. Dark primaries contrast with light brown upperparts. Irregular passage migrant.

### C. GREY AND GOLDEN PLOVERS

108. **Grey Plover.** 11". Brownish-grey, with underparts black in summer, white in winter. Most easily distinguished by black axillaries ("armpits") in flight, when white rump and faint white wingbar also distinctive. Winter visitor in small numbers.
109. **Asiatic Golden Plover.** 11". Golden-brown above, with underparts black in summer, white in winter. Pale grey axillaries not readily noticeable. No wingbar, upperparts uniformly dark in flight. Passage migrant in small numbers.

### D. TURNSTONE

110. **Turnstone.** 9". "Tortoiseshell" plumage in summer is unmistakable. In winter, dark brown above, dusky breast, orange legs. In flight, two white wingbars, white lower back divided from white tail by black upper tail-coverts; black terminal band to tail. Scarce passage migrant.

### SNIPE AND WOODCOCK

General characteristics:— dark brown birds, heavily marked with black. Long straight bills. Rarely seen except in flight. Usually among reeds or thick grass (snipe only).

111. **Fantail Snipe.** 11". ) Indistinguishable from each other  
112. **Pintail Snipe.** 11". ) in the field. Passage migrants and  
113. **Swinhoe's Snipe.** 11". ) winter visitors, though the exact status of each is not known.
114. **Solitary Snipe.** 12". Paler than 111-113. Normally found in drier country. Only one record.
115. **Jack Snipe.** 7½". Like a miniature of 111-113, with comparatively shorter bill. Only two records.
116. **Woodcock.** 13½". A *woodland* bird, generally similar to Snipe, but with rounded wings (snipe's are pointed). Winter visitor.



## OTHER WADERS

Very varied; for identification it is easiest to check for a few striking characters, according to which the following list is divided.

### A. LARGE: BLACK AND WHITE

99. **Oystercatcher.** 17". Black upperparts and head; prominent wingbar, orange bill. One record.
145. **Black-winged Stilt.** 15". Black upperparts, greyish crown, no wingbar, very long pink legs, which trail behind it in flight. Scarce winter visitor.
146. **Avocet** 17". Pied upperparts, long upturned bill, blue legs. Irregular winter visitor.

### B. LARGE: STRONGLY DECURVED BILL

117. **Curlew.** 22". Very large, brown. Very long bill. No stripes on head. White back and rump seen only in flight. Common winter visitor.
118. **Australian Curlew.** 24". Similar to Curlew, but no white on back or rump. Irregular passage migrant.
119. **Whimbrel.** 16". Like small Curlew, but with boldly striped crown. Easiest means of identification is "rippling" call. Common passage migrant.
120. **Little Whimbrel.** 12". Like a very small Whimbrel, but much shorter bill, and no white on back or rump. One record.

### C. LARGE: STRAIGHT BILL

126. **Redshank.** 11". Red legs. In flight, back, rump, and hind edges of wings are white. Common passage migrant.
127. **Spotted Redshank.** 12". Red legs; practically no white on wings, otherwise similar to Redshank. Common winter visitor.
128. **Greenshank.** 12". Greenish legs. No wingbar. Wings appear blackish in flight, and at rest contrast strongly with white underparts. White of rump extends well up centre of back. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.
- 128x. **Spotted Greenshank.** 11". Distinguished from Greenshank by shorter legs, and by yellow base to lower mandible (Greenshank's bill is entirely black). One record.
129. **Marsh Sandpiper.** 9". Like small Greenshank with very long legs, very slender bill. Passage migrant.
121. **Black-tailed Godwit.** 16". Long straight bill. Grey-brown with white underparts (head and breast chestnut in summer).

Easily distinguished in flight by broad white wingbar, and black sub-terminal band on white tail. Scarce passage migrant.

122. **Bar-tailed Godwit.** 15". Similar to Black-tailed, but bill is shorter and slightly upturned. In flight, no wingbar; tail closely barred blackish. Scarce passage migrant.
- 122x. **Asiatic Dowitcher.** 13". Like Godwits, but with long snipe-like bill. Shorter legs than Godwits. No wingbar. Back and rump grey in flight. One record.

### D. MEDIUM: SANDPIPERS

General characteristics:— all about 8-9". Most species associate freely with smaller waders, and wade often. Generally rather slender birds.

123. **Green Sandpiper.** 9". Greenish-black wings and upperparts, white rump and underparts; dark under wings. Usually flushed from marshy ground or river banks. Winter visitor.
124. **Wood Sandpiper.** 8". Brown upperparts; yellow legs. Pale under wings in flight. Normally in small parties. Common passage migrant.
125. **Common Sandpiper.** 8". Uniform brown upperparts (not speckled as in Wood Sandpiper). A riverside bird. In flight shows white wingbar, brown rump and tail, white at sides of tail. Frequently bobs head and tail up and down. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.
130. **Grey-rumped Sandpiper.** 11". Uniform grey upperparts, with no white on wings or tail. Bright yellow legs. Passage migrant.
131. **Terek Sandpiper.** 9". Long upturned bill and short orange legs diagnostic. In flight, a white patch at the inner hind edge of the wing. Passage migrant.
137. **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.** 8". Upperparts brown, heavily streaked with black. Breast lightly streaked with brown. Legs greenish. Very slight white wingbar. Dark centre tail feathers. Passage migrant.

### E. SMALL TO MEDIUM: STINTS

All the Stints have brown to chestnut upperparts in summer; winter plumages described below.

134. **Little Stint.** 5½". Very small; grey-brown upperparts, streaked. Black legs. Common passage migrant.
135. **Long-toed Stint.** 6½". Like Little Stint, but darker, browner. Yellowish legs. Four records.

136. **Temminck's Stint.** 5½". Like Little Stint, but grey, and only slightly streaked. Yellowish legs. Passage migrant and winter visitor.
141. **Spoon-billed Sandpiper.** 6". Similar to Temminck's, but spoon-shaped tip to bill is diagnostic. Scarce passage migrant.
142. **Broad-billed Sandpiper.** 6½". Heavy bill, and striped appearance of head are easiest characteristics. Passage migrant.
138. **Dunlin.** 7". Like a large grey Stint; longish, slightly decurved bill. Black belly in summer. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.
139. **Curlew-sandpiper.** 7½". Similar to Dunlin, but bill more decurved. White rump diagnostic in flight. Head and underparts bright red-brown in summer. Passage migrant.
140. **Sanderling.** 8". Pale grey, with black "shoulder" patch. Passage migrant.

#### F. MISCELLANEOUS.

98. **Painted Snipe.** 11". Dark brown, with chestnut breast divided from white underparts by narrow black band (female); male is duller. Eye-ring and stripe behind eye white in female, buff in male. Bill fairly long. Winter visitor; mainly in grassy fields.
132. **Knot.** 10". Plump, grey upperparts with greyish rump. Bill short. Scarce passage migrant.
133. **Great Knot.** 12". Like Knot, but longer bill, white upper tail-coverts, and band of dark spots on breast are diagnostic. Scarce passage migrant.
143. **Ruff.** 10" (female), 12" (male). Like a very brown Redshank, but shorter bill and yellow legs. Best distinguished in flight by oval white patches each side at base of tail; short white wingbar. Scarce passage migrant.
144. **Red-necked Phalarope.** 7". Grey, with black eye-patch, and slender bill. Usually seen swimming, often in open sea. Passage migrant.
147. **Collared Pratincole.** 9½". Dark brown, with pale brown chin, and black "necklace". Flies like large Swallow; white rump and lower abdomen, and dark, deeply-forked tail. Passage migrant.

The following species, which are all normally present at Mai Po from November to March, can form a basis on which to base a sound knowledge of waders:—

Plovers:— Little Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Sand-plovers, Grey Plover.

Snipe:— Fantail/Pintail/Swinhoe's Snipe.

Large, with decurved bill:— Curlew.

Large, with straight bill:— Spotted Redshank, Greenshank.

Sandpipers:— Common Sandpiper.

Stints:— Little Stint, Dunlin.

The main periods for wader passage are late April to early June, and from late August throughout September. During the spring passage, many birds are partly or completely in summer plumage; particular care is needed for identification at this period.

M.A.W.,

Drawings between pages 30 and 31 by R.J.B.

## CONSERVATION

In last year's Report it was hoped that by this time it would be possible to show some significant progress in the field of conservation in Hong Kong. Regrettably actual progress in the past year has been slight. There has been a small increase in the number of full-time Game Wardens employed by Government. A third warden was engaged by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department in December 1968, and the appointment of a fourth approved by Government in January 1969. This is a far cry from the 16 full-time posts recommended by the Society as the minimum necessary but welcome none-the-less. Also the number of Game Wardens having other full-time posts in Government was increased from 45 to over 130, partly as a result of our representations.

It is understood that consideration is being given by Government to revising the present "Wild Birds and Wild Mammals Protection Ordinance" and that this may include an increase in the scale of fines for infringement of the Ordinance and an increase in the number of areas in which hunting will be prohibited. Also it is hoped that the Sha Tau Kok egret will receive special protection. Further, and as a result of our efforts supported by the International Council for Bird Preservation, there is a possibility that the Grey and the Golden Plover will be removed from the Schedule of Game Birds.

Three areas of the Colony—Mai Po Marshes, Tai Mo Shan and Stonecutters Island—are being studied by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature for their probable designation in the near future as sites of special scientific interest. The I.U.C.N. is concerned on a world-wide basis with habitats that are unique or diminishing and are in particular need of protection. Documentation of the ecology of these areas is kept in Geneva and this includes details of soils, vegetation and species composition. The contribution of the Society to the knowledge of birds in Hong Kong in general and in these localities in particular will be valuable for this documentation. One important outcome of the designation, of course, is that it should assist to a more general appreciation of the value of the areas and that they should be protected for posterity as an irreplaceable inheritance.

The Provisional Council for the Use and Conservation of the Countryside which was established in March 1967, and on which the Society was represented by Mr. Hechtel, made its final report to Government in June 1968. As yet this report has not been made

public nor has Government give any indication of its intentions regarding its recommendations.

In last year's Report, correspondence between the Society and Government was quoted. This had resulted from our appeal for immediate interim measures to protect Hong Kong's remaining wild life. This correspondence continued with the following letter from the Colonial Secretariat on the 28th August 1968:—

"I note your Society's kind offer to co-operate with Government in the education of the public regarding the importance of conservation of wild life and I am passing a copy of your letter to the Director of Education so that he may consider how the members of your Society could best assist Government in teaching this subject in schools and teachers training colleges.

You raise the point of why Government has not agreed to the establishment of the posts for 16 Game Wardens as recommended by your Society and, in this regard, I would reiterate Mr. Haddon-Cave's statement that the adequacy or otherwise of the present establishment of full-time Game Wardens must be looked at in the context of all available Game Wardens. You may, however, be interested to note that the Agriculture and Fisheries Department has recently pressed for an increase in the Department's establishment of full-time Game Wardens and one post has recently been approved, while the justification for a further post is currently under examination.

You question whether Government is satisfied that the forty-seven officers of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department recently gazetted as Game Wardens have been sufficiently trained satisfactorily to carry out their duties. Each of these officers has undergone an intensive short course of training so as to give him sufficient knowledge to identify the game birds which he is likely to see in his particular area of work. Though, of course, these officers will have other responsibilities, the fact that these other responsibilities will involve them in outdoor activities within their areas will, it is considered, assist them in their new responsibilities of helping to enforce the provisions of the Wild Birds and Wild Mammals Protection Ordinance. Government is, therefore, satisfied that the appointment of these officers will have a very real effect on the supervision and control of illegal netting, trapping and shooting.

With regard to your remarks about Honorary Game Wardens, I would point out that the appointment of Honorary Game Wardens has never been put forward as a reason

for reducing the number of full-time Game Wardens. On the contrary, Government believes that Honorary Game Wardens can play a most useful part, complementary to that performed by Government, in the conservation of fauna and that the appointment of responsible and enthusiastic members of the public for these posts gives scope for those people who are particularly interested in conservation to play a valuable part in the work of fauna protection.

I note your remarks about the need for a definite Policy statement of Government's attitude on conservation and the preservation of wild life and when decisions have been taken on the report of the Provisional Council for the Use and Conservation of the Countryside and on the current review of Government's current forestry policy, the possibility of making such a statement will certainly be borne in mind. In the meantime, I hope that I have made it clear that Government is fully aware of the importance of conservation measures."

To this we replied, on the 2nd October 1968:—

"We look forward to receiving the Director of Education's proposals for feasible ways in which we may assist the teaching of conservation,\* and are glad to learn that the complement of full time Game Wardens has been increased to three, and may be increased to four in the near future. Although this is a great improvement we do not consider that even four are sufficient to cope with the problem.

We welcome your reassurance on training of Game Wardens but would like to suggest that any Farm Advisors who are not yet Game Wardens might be gazetted as such. We understand that their duties bring them into close contact with areas where trapping is prevalent and feel that they could do much to assist in preventing this.

Although we feel that larger numbers of Game Wardens should be employed, we look forward to seeing the incidence of trapping and illegal shooting decrease, as the number of prosecutions increases. It might be of interest to point out that on the morning of 1st September two Game Wardens and six Honorary Game Wardens patrolled a small area (1½ miles square) of the Mai Po Marshes and were able to check 29 hunters during the morning.

It was not, however, possible to cover the rest of the Marshes, or those around Ping Shan and this may give you some idea of the problems involved.

We should be most grateful if you would let us know the number of prosecutions and convictions under the Wild Birds & Wild Mammals Protection Ordinance which have come before the courts over the past three years.

\*No proposals yet received

You will agree that the record of Government in the conservation field leaves much to be desired to date and we trust that future developments will bear out your statement that it is fully aware of the importance of conservation matters."

Subsequently, on the 5th November 1968 we received the following answer from the Colonial Secretariat:—

"Your suggestion that all Farm Advisers be appointed as Game Wardens was passed to the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries who welcomed the suggestion and action is now in hand for their appointment.

Attached are the statistics for prosecutions and convictions over the last three financial years. There have been two cases since 1st April 1968, both brought by Departmental Game Wardens. Two persons were charged under Section 4 and fined \$200 and \$120 respectively for possessing snares and attempting to trap wild birds."

An important event during more recent months has been the "Conference on the Development and Conservation of the Countryside" organised by the University of Hong Kong. Experts and interested persons from South-East Asia, Australia, America and Britain met for a week of discussion which commenced on March 17th, 1969. Over forty papers were presented including those by such experienced experts as Lord Holford, Professor of Town Planning at London University, and Sir Hugh Elliott, Chairman of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The Conference expressed particular concern at the apparent lack of communication between the actual and potential users of the countryside and between such users and the Hong Kong Government. It was felt that public discussion should be regarded as a vital part of the official decision-making process on major issues affecting the use of the countryside. A Standing Committee to advise the Government on the wisest use of the countryside for the benefit of the community as a whole was among the recommendations officially tabled at the Conference. This Committee, it was suggested, should consist of unpaid members representing the major potential users of the countryside and should be served by a permanent secretary qualified to exercise broad control of data collection.

Although, therefore, the past year has produced very little tangible progress in conservation in Hong Kong, there are hopes that awareness of the need may be increasing and certainly those who recognise the need are continuing to press for action.

J.C.P.

## SHORTER NOTES

### Mystery Voice

Just before going on leave in March 1968, I heard some most attractive bird song coming from a dense thicket on a hillside in the New Territories. It was musical, distinctive and entirely new to me. The Hon. Recorder pointed out reasonably enough that as I had not seen the bird and could not describe the song, it was a little difficult to be absolutely certain of the species.

A few weeks later I was walking among the foothills of the Southern Alps of Japan when I heard the same cheerful song. My friend Iwao at once said "Uguisu". This turned out to be not a swearword or expression of wonder but the local name for the Japanese Bush Warbler (see page 30 and plate 13 of Kobayashi's "Birds of Japan"). On another walk with the cookboy apprentice Kazuo, the same thing happened and it seems the song is a welcome sign of Spring and well-known to most Japanese children. On each occasion I had a good look at the bird.

From which I guessed that the bird singing in the New Territories was a Chinese Bush Warbler, a close relative.

This theory was partially confirmed the following Chinese New Year when the song was heard loud and clear, coming from dense bamboos in the Long Valley. What was seen of the bird suggested a Chinese Bush Warbler and page 74 of Maura Benham's "Introduction to the Birds of Hong Kong" gives a good idea of the song "Kolo-olo-olo- wiclit-chit". The first part is low and bubbling, the second high and reminiscent of a Crested Bulbul's Spring song.

E.D.W.

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### Brief Notes on a Juvenile

Throughout the summer of 1966, my two sons and I were puzzled by a fairly large number of birds at King's Park which we labelled 'non-descripts'. We had noted that they were frequently in company of Chinese bulbuls and resembled them in shape, size and colour except that their heads varied from a very light grey to a grey of deeper hue. The olive green of their backs were singularly similar to their companions the Chinese Bulbuls. It was obvious that this species was far too numerous to be unique in Hong Kong but we hopefully nursed the prospect that this was a hitherto unknown variety of bulbul. The mystery was solved when we joined the H.K.B.W. Society and discovered that the species was none other than the juvenile form of the Chinese Bulbul (juv. chin. b.)

In 1967, I decided to record in greater detail the occurrence and numbers of the juv. chin. b. at King's Park and on May 27th recorded the first 3 juveniles of the year. Throughout June and July they were commonly seen in groups of up to 8 in number; they pecked at berries and fed frequently on insects on the wing. The latter occupation did not seem popular amongst the adults. On August 15th the garden-count was 15 juvenile Chinese Bulbuls and 5 adult Chinese Bulbuls, a ratio of 3 to 1 in favour of youth. The highest count of juvenile Chinese Bulbuls was over 20 made on 13th August.

By September 9th many crowns were developing the black colour of adulthood and the back of the heads began shewing patches of white. In spite of this, on the 26th and 29th September both adults and juveniles were still plentiful. But on 14th October adults outnumbered juveniles and most of the latter wore black caps; from then onwards into winter, only the adults of the species were seen.

R.J.B.

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### Tailorbird Aerobatics

In the past I have known tailorbirds much more by sound than sight. This winter (1968/9) they seem to be very much on view. Twice in an hour, one tailorbird in "Bethanie" and one in the University area across the road gave a wonderful display of hovering, something I have never seen before.

E.D.W.

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### Siege Perilous

The roof of Government House tower is always popular with the Crested Mynahs, who potter round the eaves and no doubt nest in the vicinity. Until fairly lately a kite could often be seen on the roof, especially in the early morning, and there was the mystery bird of prey with feathered spats whose photograph appeared in the 1966 "Hong Kong Bird Report", between pages 32 and 33. At other times we have had a buzzard and often the five or more Sulphur-crested Cockatoos that scream around the neighbourhood together.

For the last two winters, however, the roof has been dominated by a Kestrel who likes to perch on the four-pronged lightning conductor, a most uncomfortable perch one would think, if not fundamentally dangerous. Its presence does not worry the magpies and mynahs on the nearby eaves, who are not on the menu. When the kestrel is away, one and sometimes two magpies take a turn on the lightning conductor—two at a time certainly looks extremely dangerous. And when no-one else is about, a Crested Mynah has been known to take the stand.

**Stop Press** On the morning of 12th February, a female kestrel was perched on the lightning conductor and there were several magpies

on the tower roof. Suddenly a magpie chased the Kestrel away and took over as "king of the castle". A minute later a male Kestrel appeared and circled round the female until she ousted the magpie and again perched on the lightning conductor. I was all agog to see if *two* Kestrels would occupy this hazardous perch but after a little while the female flew away over Garden Road with her would-be mate in pursuit.

E.D.W.

*With the Compliments*

*of*

**Metropole Press**

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## RECORDING

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

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

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

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

4. Please do NOT use diary form.

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

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

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

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

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

## SIGHT-RECORDS OF RARE BIRDS

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

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

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

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

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

## HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

Application for Membership

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

Introduced by.....  
(if applicable)

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

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

Name & Address (block letters) .....

Telephone No.....(home)..... (Office)