

THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1973



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HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

c/o The Chartered Bank, P.O. Box 21, Hong Kong.

(A registered society under the Hong Kong Societies Ordinance)

Records compiled by M. A. Webster, MBOU, MAOU,

and C. A. Viney

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Chairman

F. O. P. Hechtel

Hon. Secretary

C. R. Payne

Hon. Treasurer

M. A. Webster

Hon. Recorder

M. A. Webster

SOCIETY NEWS

For the third year running Society membership rose to a new record. It now stands at 116 of whom 32 are overseas members. I hope that this most encouraging trend will continue. In October we lost an excellent Hon. Secretary when Clive Briffett left the Colony for good. He devoted a great deal of time and energy to the Society and his presence was sorely missed. Clive Viney, a member of the Committee, stepped into the breach temporarily and it was not until February 1974 that we managed to find a new Hon. Secretary in Charles Payne.

All fourteen outings in 1973 were well attended. They were as follows:—

1st January	Long Valley
21st January	Mai Po marshes
3rd February	Mong Tseng
25th February	Tai Po Kau
18th March	Sek Kong wood / Lam Tsun Valley
8th April	Mai Po marshes
23rd April	Mai Po marshes
13th May	Mai Po marshes
27th August	Mai Po marshes
23rd September	Mai Po marshes
14th October	Mai Po marshes
18th November	Sek Kong wood / Lam Tsun Valley
9th December	Ping Shan / Luen Tak
26th December	Mong Tseng

We are still having to rely on Mai Po for outings but unfortunately even the marshes have not come up to expectations and on several outings very little was seen. Members who left the Colony more than five years ago would hardly recognise many of our traditional outing areas. One of the finest places for birds was around Ping Shan, Luen Tak and Mong Tseng. Today deep fishponds have replaced wet grassland and reed beds and much of the area has been turned into a rural shanty land. Over recent years outings in this part of the New Territories have been so disappointing that the Committee has debated whether there is any point in arranging further meetings there. In so many aspects of planning Government continues to drag its feet and so I fear the trend of environmental deterioration in the countryside overall is bound to continue.

The library is still growing and we continue to receive a great deal of material in the form of contemporary reports, journals and

scientific papers. Also during the year we received the following gifts of books:—

“The Birds of Hong Kong” by A. C. Herklots
Field Identification and Field Note Book
(Inscribed by the author)

presented by Mr. Valentine Lance

“The World’s Vanishing Birds” by Cyril
Littlewood & D. W. Ovenden

presented by Mr. Clive Briffett

A Japanese Field Guide (A booklet in Japanese
with coloured illustrations and scientific names)

presented by Mr. G. T. Nelson

Survey of the Birds of Tsinling by Dr. Cheng
Tso-hsin (In Chinese with scientific names)

presented by Mr. I. C. Orr

Our Annual Report is now being sent to 32 universities, museums and institutes in several countries and we are receiving increasing numbers of requests for current and earlier numbers.

A well attended 1973 Annual General Meeting took place on 6th April. It was followed by two films “Wild Wings” and “Wild Highlands” obtained from the British Council library.

“Reserved for Birds”, an excellent 83 minute film which we hired from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, was shown on 17th April. We invited members of the Hong Kong Natural History Society and the Conservancy Association to see the film with us.

Many people will know Patricia Penn and her excellent radio programmes on various subjects topical to South East Asia. In 1973 she produced an illuminating documentary on the trade in wildlife in Hong Kong entitled “Who’s Killing the China Animals?”. This was broadcast on the 6th December 1973 by BBC Radio 4. The programme was followed by an open discussion chaired by Mr. Robert Kee and in which Mr. John Riddell-Swan, the Deputy Director of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, Miss Penn, Mr. Michael Boorer, Education Officer of the Regent’s Park Zoo, and I took part. The programme and follow-up discussion were subsequently also broadcast in Australia. Radio Hong Kong refused to broadcast it which, in view of the unfavourable light in which Government appeared, is hardly surprising.

The most significant achievement of Patricia Penn’s work has been the wide overseas publicity given to the horrific and wasteful trade in wildlife in Hong Kong and of special importance from our point of view was the special emphasis placed on the trade involving birds of prey. In this respect Hong Kong is now on the map and

we intend to keep the whole issue alive both here and abroad until the Hong Kong Government is shamed into action.

The call for me to go to London to take part in the follow-up discussion came at very short notice and it was wonderful how many people came forward with generous contributions to cover the cost of the trip.

To end on a more cheerful note, 1973 saw the Government ban on hunting in an important area of the marsh at Mai Po. This is a step in the right direction which I hope will be followed quickly by positive action to protect the environment and to develop a nature reserve providing recreation and education for the maximum number of people.

F. O. P. HECHTEL
Chairman

REPORT ON THE BIRDS, 1973

Hon. Recorder:— M. A. Webster

Records compiled by:— C. A. Viney

The number of species seen each year remains fairly steady, in spite of the continual destruction of habitats; this year the total was 255. Three of these were new species for the Colony's list, the Sooty Shearwater which flew past the vehicular ferry in May, a beautiful male Pallas's Blue Robin which popped up almost under the feet of the Curator of Birds at the Botanical Gardens, and a Citrine Wagtail on the marshes. This brings the grand total of species recorded in Hong Kong to 374, 26 more than were listed in the last edition of the Checklist.

Two species which did not quite make it into the list were the Greenish Warbler, and Radde's Bush-Warbler, both of them species which should occur in this area, but both very difficult to identify in the field. In the first case, the description fitted perfectly, even to the distinctive call, except that one vital diagnostic feature was omitted (a good lesson for the Hon. Recorder, who was there). Radde's Bush-Warbler was seen too briefly for any certainty... just a pair of Dusky-like warblers on the marsh which certainly weren't Dusky.

The systematic list reveals a number of points of interest concerning individual species, but cannot easily give a picture of the massive irruption of woodland birds which took place at the end of the year. Treepies, Chestnut Bulbuls, thrushes of many kinds, the first Collared Sivas since 1966, and unusually large numbers of the smaller thrushes such as Daurian Redstarts and Red-Flanked Blue-tails, made December a memorable month, and things improved as the winter continued.

Looking at individual species, we draw attention to the following:—

All pelicans since the first sighting of the Dalmatian in 1971 have been of that species; this casts some doubt on previous records of Spotted-billed, though some of them were certainly correct.

Night Herons continue to breed in small numbers, and in general the egrets of the Colony are doing well. Apart from the main egretty at Yim Tso Ha, there are flourishing smaller egrettries at Naam San Wai, Au Tau, and Lok Ma Chau. However, Swinhoe's Egret seems to be losing ground, and may soon breed here no longer.

The winter of 1973-74 was a good one for duck, but the ban on hunting on the Mai Po Marshes does not seem to have encouraged the duck to come further inland; most sightings of any numbers are still on the Shum Chun river estuary.

Bonelli's Eagle now seems to be a regular breeding species in Hong Kong.

The Barred Button-Quail was recorded for the first time since 1966.

One of our rarest waders, the Asiatic Dowitcher, seems to be almost regular on migration now; its rarity can be judged by the fact that there is no other locality outside its breeding quarters where this species can be seen with any regularity.

The Large Hawk-Cuckoo appears to have re-established itself as a breeding species. This also applies to Jays, Rufous Woodpeckers, and the Greater Necklaced Laughing-Thrush.

On the other hand, the Chinese Starling appears to have had a poor season; there are no breeding season records for 1973. Frequent population fluctuations appear to be characteristic of this species.

A solitary Rook was the first record for almost forty years; since no field-notes were taken, some doubt must attach to this record.

The systematic list incorporates records from the following:—

Observers: Dr. R. J. Barnes, P. F. and C. P. Barnes, J. Beck, D. Bradford, A. J. Brandt, P. Branwhite, C. Briffett, J. M. G. Chapman, F. J. Elliott, Supt. D. J. Galloway, T. P. Garland, R. E. Hale, I. W. Harris, J. M. Ingles, J. Llewellyn, D. Rashley, Dr. K. C. Searle, H. D. Stead, I. M. Stewart, R. P. Tipper, C. A. Viney, M. A. Webster, B. D. Wilson.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 1973

2. Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Three or four at Deep Bay on 4 January and 3 February and one there on 3 April.

4. Little Grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis*)

Recorded throughout the year from fishponds and reservoirs in the New Territories, usually only a few birds but up to 12 at Plover Cove in mid-February. Breeding occurred on the Deep Bay Marshes at Mai Po North, where a family party of four was seen on 1 July and two juveniles on 5 August. Adults in full breeding plumage were regularly seen there in mid-summer and it is estimated that four or five pairs bred. Elsewhere, breeding possibly occurred at the feeder reservoir, Sek Kong.

5x. Sooty Shearwater (*Puffinus giseus*)

A new species to the Colony. One was seen in Hong Kong Harbour on 4 May. A large shearwater with typical banking flight, identified by paler underwings contrasting with rest of plumage. (IMS)

7x. Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*)

Only recorded from Deep Bay. Four records of up to 21 from the beginning of the year until 28 March and a flock of ten or eleven on 26 and 30 December.

7/7x. Pelican sp.

A flock of 40 pelicans not specifically identified was seen in Deep Bay in late January and early February.

8. Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Large gatherings of up to c.500 in the Deep Bay area until 23 March and up to 150 from 23 October. A group of 50+ sighted on the south coast of Lantau on 30 December suggests that the roost at Hei Ling Chau may still be in use. Elsewhere, recorded in smaller numbers on the coast at Silvermine Bay and Castle Peak and on reservoirs at Tai Lam Chung and Plover Cove. Extreme dates were until 26 March and from 23 October.

12. Yellow Bittern (*Ixobrychus sinensis*)

All records, apart from a dead female picked up at Kai Tak on 20 September, are from the Deep Bay Marshes. Summer visitors started to arrive as early as 25 March and numbers steadily built up thereafter, until in July the marshes were full of this species including many young. An estimated 50 pairs bred at Mai Po. By late October most of the birds had departed; however an unusual feature of this year's records is the large number of winter sightings, single birds being regularly seen in January, November and December and occasionally even two together.

- 13. Chestnut Bittern** (*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*)
One or two, including an adult male at Mai Po between 29 July and 27 August. One at Three Fathoms Cove on 15 August.
- 15. Bittern** (*Botaurus stellaris*)
One flushed at Mai Po on 18 December.
- 16. Night Heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)
Up to four at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry between 16 April and 25 August. Three at Mai Po on 23 September.
- 17. Chinese Pond Heron** (*Ardeola bacchus*)
Present throughout the year on the Deep Bay Marshes and in the northern New Territories. Recorded at the Yim Tso Ha Egrettry from 28 March, where it bred in some numbers as over 200 including many young were present on 2 July. At the Au Tau Egrettry up to five were present on 28 March and on 30 June an adult with two young was there. Outside this area, single birds were seen at Deepwater Bay on 4 October and Ho Chung on 24 November and 1 December.
- 18. Cattle Egret** (*Ardeola ibis*)
Common between late March and October in the northern New Territories, with a few winter records from this area, notably c.15 at Yuen Long on 17 January. Breeding activity was first noted at the Yim Tso Ha Egrettry in early April and on 2 July over 600 including many young were present. The population of this egrettry increases dramatically in the early evening as birds fly in to roost. Apart from a single bird on 28 March this species was not recorded at the Au Tau Egrettry. In mid-September large numbers were noted moving inland from Deep Bay at dawn indicating a large roost on the marsh. Outside this area, single birds were seen at Sai Kung on 9 March and Shouson Hill on 9 April.
- 19. Little Green Heron** (*Boturides striatus*)
Quite common on the Deep Bay Marshes from 20 April until 4 October where up to ten were seen, including two immature birds on 22 July. Breeding probably occurred at Ho Chung as one or two were present in the mangroves between 10 February and 30 September and an immature bird there from 14 July. Up to three at Three Fathoms Cove on 5 May and between 15 and 18 August. One or two at the headwaters of Tai Lam Chung Reservoir between 9 February and 1 March. One at Tai Po on 20 and 23 February and another at Pokfulam Reservoir on 31 December.
- 20. Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*)
Common throughout the year in the western and northern New Territories. At least 30 pairs bred at the Au Tau Egrettry where breeding commenced early, as on 18 March over 125 including several on nests were present. Breeding activity commenced later

at the Yim Tso Ha Egrettry, perhaps due to the presence of large numbers of pond herons (*Ardeola ibis*), but by 17 April about 30 with several nests in use were recorded. However, on 2 July over 200 including many young were noted there.

An extraordinary "grey phase" bird was at Mai Po between 27 August and 16 September keeping company with several normal birds. A roost of c.500 was found shortly before dawn near the outer bund at Mai Po on 16 September. Outside this area, five rested at Kai Tak on 19 October and single birds were seen at Sai Kung on 11 March, Ho Chung on 3 April and Three Fathoms Cove on 15 August.

- 22. Swinhoe's Egret** (*Egretta eulophotes*)

Up to three in the vicinity of Yim Tso Ha Egrettry between 15 April and 2 July.

- 23. Reef Egret** (*Egretta sacra*)

Recorded throughout the year, mainly from Sai Kung and the eastern shores of Hong Kong Island, but also seen at Hong Kong Harbour, Aberdeen, Sandy Bay, Lamma Island, Kau Yi Chau, Cheung Chau and Silvermine Bay and Chi Ma Wan on Lantau. Usually only one or two together but at least four at Lamma on 12 May.

- 24. Great Egret** (*Egretta alba*)

Regularly recorded in small numbers on the Deep Bay Marshes until 5 May and from 16 September. One summer record of a single adult at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry on 2 July.

- 25. Grey Heron** (*Ardea cinerea*)

Up to 100 at the Deep Bay Marshes in both winters. Extreme dates were until 29 April and from 16 September.

- 26. Purple Heron** (*Ardea purpurea*)

Regularly recorded from the Deep Bay Marshes. Up to five there until 29 April and up to seven from 17 August. Summer records are of one on 1 July, two on 8 July, seven together in the mangroves on 22 July and three on 29 July indicating the possibility that this species breeds on the marshes. Elsewhere, one at Long Valley on 18 November.

- 28. Black Stork** (*Ciconia nigra*)

Four records, of single birds in the Lok Ma Chau/Long Valley area on 3 January, 18 February, 16 and 17 December.

- 29. White Ibis** (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*)

Up to 18 regularly recorded at the Deep Bay Marshes until 13 May and single birds seen there from 6 November.

- 31. Lesser Spoonbill** (*Platalea minor*)

Four records, all from Mai Po, of two on 2 March and single birds on 28 March, 2 and 6 April.

32. Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)
Ten, including four adult males, at Mai Po on 4 November. This is the first record since 1969.

33. Yellow-nib Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*)
Only six records, all from the Mai Po Marshes. No spring records but an unusual summer record of two on 29 July. Up to six seen between 9 September and 14 October, also three on 9 December.

36. Teal (*Anas crecca*)
At the Deep Bay Marshes, only three spring records of up to 16 until 25 March, but in the autumn quite common from 23 September onwards, with several hundred seen on 23 October and over 200 in early November. Elsewhere, up to 60 on Tai Lam Chung Reservoir between 9 February and 1 March, two females at Tsing Lung Tau on 3 February and two records from Long Valley of two on 18 November and four on 26 December.

38. Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)
All records were from the Deep Bay Marshes. In the spring up to 12 between 25 March and 29 April and large numbers in the autumn between 13 September and 16 November, with several hundred seen on 23 October and 100 plus on 14 October.

39. Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)
A flock of 80 plus at Tai Lam Chung Reservoir on 28 and 29 January. Up to 17 at Mai Po between 20 October and 6 November. Also recorded from Deep Bay on 30 December.

40. Pintail (*Anas acuta*)
Up to 12 including three adult males at Mai Po between 4 and 20 November. A male at Braemar Reservoir, North Point at the beginning of the year.

41. Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)
Up to four at Mai Po between 23 October and 4 November. c.60 at Deep Bay on 26 and 30 December.

44. Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)
Two females at Lok Ma Chau on 2 December.

45. Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)
One at Deep Bay on 26 December is only the third Colony record and the first since 1959.

46. Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)
All records are from Deep Bay of up to 30 from 4 January until 25 March and up to 60 between 26 and 30 December.

47. Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)
Up to 50 at Mai Po until 21 January and up to four there between 8 and 29 April. c.50 at Deep Bay on 26 and 30 December.

52. Black-eared Kite (*Milvus migrans*)
Common and widespread throughout the year but particularly common in the vicinity of Hong Kong Harbour. A pair were seen courting and constructing a nest at Hebe Haven on 14 January.

54. Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)
Many winter records from widespread areas including Lantau and urban districts. Usually single birds but occasionally two or three together. Extreme dates were until 28 March and from 8 November.

56. Sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter nisus*)
Single birds at Long Valley on 27 and 28 January, Tai Po Kau on 4 and 30 March, 21 April and 28 October, Stanley on 23 April, South Bay on 29 April, Chi Ma Wan on 7 May and Tai Po on 21 October. A sparrow-hawk carrying a young magpie-robin (*Copsychus saularis*) at Happy Valley on 4 April was probably this species.

58. Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)
Single birds in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 5 February and Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 19 December.

59. Horsfield's Goshawk (*Accipiter soloensis*)
One at Pokfulam on 5 and 12 May. This is the first record since 1965.

60. Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
Single immatures at Long Valley on 7 and 14 January.

61. Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*)
Up to four at Long Valley until 26 February including two harassing a black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) on 7 February. At least two there from 11 November. Elsewhere, one at Lok Ma Chau on 7 January, one at Mong Tseng on 26 January and two at Ping Shan on 6 February.

62. Steppe Eagle (*Aquila rapax*)
Single birds at Lok Ma Chau on 7 January, Mai Po on 11 November and Long Valley on 26 December.

63. Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*)
An immature at Lok Ma Chau on 16 March was the only record.

64. Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*)
This species successfully bred in the Colony in 1972 and breeding activity was noted at the same locality again in early 1974. Pairs of birds were seen in widespread areas throughout the year and it is possible that more than one pair may breed here.

66. White-bellied Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*)

Recorded throughout the year from the eastern coastline, the southern shores of Hong Kong Island including the reservoirs at Pokfulam and Tai Tam, Lamma Island, Lantau and offshore islands. Odd records for Deep Bay and Hong Kong Harbour are unusual. No definite breeding records but immature birds were seen in the late summer.

68. Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis cheela*)

One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 4 and 11 February and 2 December.

69. Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

At least four at the Deep Bay Marshes until 23 April and six there, including an adult male, from 27 September. One at Long Valley on 9 December.

70. Pied Harrier (*Circus melanoleucos*)

An adult male over the Deep Bay Marshes until 1 April and again from 2 October.

71. Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

Two sub-adult males at Mai Po on 21 January.

73. Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*)

One or two remained in the Long Valley/Lok Ma Chau area until 16 March.

74. Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

At least two in the Deep Bay area until 27 April and a minimum of four there from 25 September. Elsewhere, one at Plover Cove from 16 April until 3 June and on 16 December and single birds at Shek O at the beginning of the year and Three Fathoms Cove on 29 September.

76. Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

One at Mai Po on 18 October.

77. Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

At Mong Tseng on 17 January a peregrine was seen to strike down a kingfisher, carry it to a tree and shortly afterwards fly off with the prey. However, a second peregrine challenged the first and the two fought over the prey in mid-air. The kingfisher was finally torn apart. One was seen almost daily at Kai Tak throughout August and early September and on one occasion was seen to make an unsuccessful stoop at a spotted dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*). A male was seen at Mui Wo, Lantau on 14 January. Single birds were also seen at Tai Lam Chung on 1 March, Mount Davis on 15 April, Ocean Terminal on 20 July and Ho Chung on 1 September.

81. Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Regularly recorded in the winter months from widespread area including urban districts. Most records are of single birds but occasionally a pair was seen. Extreme dates were until 21 March and from 7 October.

82. Chinese Francolin (*Francolinus pintadeanus*)

Recorded in widespread areas of the New Territories and Hong Kong Island. Usually only heard from early February until October but several sight records.

83. Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)

One was flushed from rice stubble at Silvermine Bay on 14 January. A single bird at the Hong Kong Cricket Club on 14 October and 29 December was probably escape.

85. Barred Button-quail (*Turnix suscitator*)

One was flushed and well seen near She Shan in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 4 February. This species was last recorded in 1966.

89. Banded Rail (*Rallus striatus*)

One or two recorded from the Mai Po Marshes throughout the year.

93. White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*)

Quite common and widespread throughout the New Territories. An adult with four down-covered young was regularly seen at Ho Chung in April (the small area at Ho Chung Ponds holds a minimum of five pairs). Young birds were also seen at Chi Ma Wan in early May and She Shan in early July.

94. Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Now quite common on the Deep Bay Marshes throughout the year. Successful breeding took place at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau as young and immature birds were frequently seen there with adults during the summer. Elsewhere, one or two at Ho Chung until 13 April and on 28 December and up to two at Tsing Lung Tau until 29 April and on 25 December.

95. Watercock (*Gallixrex cinerea*)

Only three records, all from a small area of marsh at Mai Po North. An adult male and a female were seen there between 29 July and 19 August suggesting that at least one pair may have bred in this last remaining area of suitable habitat.

96. Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Up to 300 on the Deep Bay Marshes until 7 February and recorded there again from 18 November, becoming abundant towards the end of December. A single bird at Mai Po North on 29 July is an unusual summer record. Elsewhere, c.30 at Plover Cove on 11 February and one at Ho Chung on 3 and 4 March.

- 97. Pheasant-tailed Jacana** (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*)
Up to ten on the Mai Po Marshes from 13 July until 2 October. No juvenile birds noted.
- 98. Painted Snipe** (*Rostratula benghalensis*)
One, freshly shot, found in a hunter's bag at Lau Fau Shan on 9 December.
- 100. Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)
Three at Ho Chung on 24 November and one there on 28 December. One at Mong Tseng on 26 December and three at Lok Ma Chau on 30 December.
- 101. Grey-headed Lapwing** (*Microsarcops cinereus*)
All records are from Long Valley of one on 11 March and 6 April, three on 18 November and four on 26 December.
- 103. Little Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius dubius*)
Regularly recorded from the Deep Bay and Saikung areas and also seen at Long Valley and Tai O. All records are of small groups up to 30. Extreme dates were until 16 April and from 30 September.
- 104. Kentish Plover** (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)
Regularly recorded from the Deep Bay and Saikung areas and also seen at Castle Peak and Sha Tau Kok. Usually in flocks of up to 40 but over 100 at Mai Po on three occasions. Extreme dates were until 29 April and from 4 September.
- 105. Greater Sand-plover** (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)
- 106. Mongolian Sand-plover** (*Charadrius mongolus*)
Birds of either species regularly recorded during both passages from the Deep Bay and Saikung areas. Extreme dates were 21 February until 5 May and 15 August until 7 October, but also two winter records of five at Mai Po on 6 November and ten at Saikung on 28 December. Usually seen in small groups, but up to 100 occasionally recorded (100+ at Mai Po on 6 April). Several records of separable, full plumage adult birds, *C. leschenaultii* well outnumbering *C. mongolus*.
- 108. Grey Plover** (*Pluvialis squatarola*)
All records are from the Deep Bay area. Two on 1 January, up to 20+ between 8 and 23 April and up to eight between 2 October and 5 December.
- 109. Asiatic Golden Plover** (*Pluvialis dominicus*)
Up to three at Mai Po between 23 and 29 April and up to nine there between 9 September and 18 November. Up to three at Lok Ma Chau between 2 and 16 October. One at Kai Tak on

28 August. One at Nim Wan (Deep Bay) on 14 October. A single winter record of 13 at Mai Po on 9 December.

- 110. Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*)
Up to five at Mai Po between 23 and 29 April. Two or three at Saikung between 30 September and 7 October.
- 111. Fantail Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*)
- 112. Pintail Snipe** (*Gallinago stenura*)
- 113. Swinhoe's Snipe** (*Gallinago megala*)
Snipe sp. recorded from the Deep Bay Marshes (principally Lok Ma Chau, where in the winter 1973/74 they were quite numerous), Long Valley, Plover Cove, Saikung, Sek Kong, Happy Valley and Kai Tak. Specifically identified records are for *G. gallinago*, six shot at Long Valley on 1 April, one at Lok Ma Chau on 23 April and many identified there on 14 October and one at Mai Po on 29 April, and for *G. stenura*, single birds were identified at Lok Ma Chau on 23 April and 14 October and one found in a hunter's bag at Luen Tak on 9 December. Extreme dates for snipe sp. were until 5 May and from 15 August.
- 116. Woodcock** (*Scolopax rusticola*)
Four records of a single bird at Sek Kong on 18 February and between 2 and 30 November. One at Silvermine Bay on 4 November and one at Junk Bay on 16 November.
- 117. Curlew** (*Numenius arquata*)
All records are from the Deep Bay area. Up to 50 between 21 January and 15 February, seven plus on 20 April and for the latter part of the year up to 22 on several occasions from 9 September onwards.
- 119. Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*)
Up to nine at Mai Po between 23 and 29 April. Two at Sha Tau Kok on 3 May. In the autumn, up to 18 at Mai Po between 27 August and 7 October and six at Tolo Harbour on 22 September.
- 121. Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*)
All records are from Mai Po. One on 3 March and up to 47 between 1 and 29 April. In the autumn, one on 27 September, two on 23 October and one on 4 and 6 November.
- 122. Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*)
All records are from Mai Po. Up to three between 28 March and 23 April and in the autumn one on 9 September and two on 13 September.
- 122x. Asiatic Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*)
Three records from Mai Po, of one on 20 April, two on 11 September and one on 23 September.

123. Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Quite common and widespread in the New Territories until 23 April and from 16 September. Usually seen in ones and twos but occasionally small flocks of up to eight. Two summer records of single birds at Tsing Lung Tau Reservoir on 22 July and Mai Po on 29 July.

124. Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

Flocks of up to 50 on the Deep Bay Marshes until 29 April and up to 100+ from 11 September. Most records are for the passages but several winter records, particularly at Lok Ma Chau. Elsewhere, recorded in smaller numbers from Ho Chung during both passages, Plover Cove in the spring and at Long Valley and Sek Kong in November and early December. Extreme dates were until 3 May and from 1 September.

125. Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*)

Common and widespread in coastal areas until early May and from mid-August. At least two at Mai Po between 30 June and 29 July. Usually only one or two together but up to 35 regularly in a small area at Ho Chung Ponds.

126. Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Common on the Deep Bay Marshes during the spring passage with over 100 regularly seen. Much less common in the autumn with only a few records of up to six birds. One at Ho Chung in mid-April and Saikung on 11 April. Two at Sha Tau Kok on 29 April. Extreme dates for the spring passage were 11 March until 13 May and in the autumn 27 August to 7 October.

127. Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

All records are from the Deep Bay Marshes where it was quite common during both winters. Maximum number seen was over 200 on 5 January. Extreme dates were until 5 May and from 23 September.

128. Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Quite common on the Deep Bay Marshes where up to 50 could be seen until 5 May and up to 20 from 9 September. Single birds at Sha Tau Kok on 22 April and Saikung on 26 May.

129. Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*)

Up to 15 on the Deep Bay Marshes during both passages. Extreme dates for the spring passage were 25 March until 29 April and in the autumn 11 September to 5 December.

130. Grey-rumped Sandpiper (*Tringa brevipes*)

Widespread during both passages. In the spring, one at Ho Chung on 20 April and four there on 26 May, one at Mai Po on 23 April, up to 25 at Sha Tin Wai between 29 April and 15 May,

c.20 at Sha Tau Kok on 29 April and four at Saikung on 26 May. In the autumn, one at Three Fathoms Cove on 18 August, up to three at Saikung between 8 September and 7 October, one at Mai Po on 27 September and one at Hebe Haven on 7 October.

131. Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*)

All records are for the spring passage of up to five at Mai Po between 1 April and 5 May, two at Sha Tau Kok on 29 April and two at Saikung on 26 May.

132. Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

One at Mai Po on 27 August.

133. Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*)

Three at Mai Po on 8 April, one on 23 April and one there on 4 October.

134. Eastern Little Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)

Most records are for the spring passage. Over 100 on the Deep Bay Marshes between 11 March and 13 May and up to three at Ho Chung between 7 April and 2 May. In the autumn, up to six at Lok Ma Chau between 2 October and 18 November. In the winter, single birds at Mai Po on 1 January and Ho Chung in December.

135. Long-toed Stint (*Calidris subminuta*)

Regularly recorded at Lok Ma Chau, where up to 20 were present until 29 April and up to 30 from 18 September. One at Mai Po on 5 May and at least two there on 11 September. One at Ho Chung on 13 April.

136. Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*)

One at Lok Ma Chau until 23 April and up to ten there from 30 September. At Mai Po, four on 25 March, two on 27 September and several on 30 October.

137. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)

Up to four on the Deep Bay Marshes between 16 April and 5 May. One at Mai Po on 13 September.

138. Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

All records are from the Deep Bay Marshes, usually only seen in small numbers, but flocks up to 200+ were seen in January, late November and early December. Extreme dates were until 8 April and from 27 September.

139. Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris farruginea*)

Up to 30 on the Deep Bay Marshes between 2 and 29 April and three there on 6 and 7 October.

- 140. Sanderling** (*Crocethia alba*)
One at Mai Po on 29 April.
- 141. Spoon-billed Sandpiper** (*Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*)
Two at Mai Po on 8 April.
- 142. Broad-billed Sandpiper** (*Limicola falcinellus*)
One or two on the Deep Bay Marshes between 2 and 23 April and from 27 September until 7 October. One at Ho Chung on 14 April and 2 May.
- 143. Ruff** (*Philomachus pugnax*)
Up to three at Lok Ma Chau between 2 and 23 October. It is interesting to note that the three birds present on 7 October had different coloured legs, red, yellow and green.
- 144. Red-necked Phalarope** (*Phalaropus lobatus*)
Up to three at Ho Chung and Saikung between 11 and 20 April. Eight in the West Lamma Channel on 15 April and one at Lok Ma Chau on 5 May. Only one autumn record of a single bird at Mai Po on 30 September.
- 145. Black-winged Stilt** (*Himantopus himantopus*)
Up to eight, including two full adults, at Mai Po from 11 to 30 September. One at Lok Ma Chau on 14 and 16 October.
- 147. Oriental Pratincole** (*Glareola maldivarum*)
Up to three at Ho Chung and Saikung between 6 and 11 April. One at Kai Tak on 10 April. One at Mai Po on 23 April and five there on 27 September.
- 148. Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*)
Up to 100 in Hong Kong Harbour and the Western Anchorage until 25 March. In the Deep Bay area up to 350 were seen until 28 March, including distinctive adults of both sub-species. Also recorded in much smaller numbers from Castle Peak Bay and Tolo Harbour. 100+ at Deep Bay on 9 December.
- 151. Black-tailed Gull** (*Larus crassirostris*)
Up to 14 in Castle Peak Bay between 27 January and 24 February. Up to three in Deep Bay between 13 January and 24 March. 18 in Starling Inlet on 17 February.
- 152. Black-headed Gull** (*Larus ridibundus*)
Very common in the winter in Hong Kong Harbour and approaches and in the Deep Bay area. Also commonly seen at Tolo Harbour, Junk Bay, Aberdeen, Castle Peak Bay and occasionally at Shatin, Saikung and Starling Inlet. Extreme dates are until 1 April and from 21 October.

- 152x. Saunders' Gull** (*Larus saundersi*)
One near Lau Fau Shan on 18 February and 18 March.
- 154. White-winged Black Tern** (*Chlidonias leucoptera*)
14 at Mai Po on 8 April. Up to 50 on the Deep Bay Marshes between 6 and 13 May. 150+ in the East Lamma Channel on 2 September and two at Lok Ma Chau on 2 October.
- 155. Whiskered Tern** (*Chlidonias hybrida*)
150+ in the East Lamma Channel with *C. leucoptera* on 2 September. Up to five on the Deep Bay Marshes between 9 September and 2 October.
- 156. Gull-billed Tern** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)
Up to 40 in the Deep Bay area between 1 and 23 April. At least three adults and an immature remained at Mai Po between 30 June and 13 July, which is an unusual summer record. Three at Mai Po on 9 September and one there on 14 October.
- 157. Caspian Tern** (*Hydroprogne caspia*)
Common in the Deep Bay area until 20 May, with a maximum of 80 at Pak Nai (south of Lau Fau Shan) on 23 April. At least one bird in non-breeding plumage remained at Mai Po through the summer, being seen from 10 June until 25 September. Up to eight in the Deep Bay area from 9 December.
- 160. Little Tern** (*Sterna albifrons*)
Up to 50 at Mai Po between 8 and 29 April, ten there on 9 September and three on 2 October.
- 164. Rufous Turtle-dove** (*Streptopelia orientalis*)
Scarce. Four at Beas River on 22 January and one at Tai Po Kau on 3 February. One at Tai Po Kau on 25 November, three at Mong Tseng on 26 December and at least two at Po Shan Road on 30 December.
- 165. Spotted Dove** (*Streptopelia chinensis*)
Very common and widespread including urban areas.
- 166. Red Turtle-dove** (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*)
Up to ten at Mai Po between 25 September and 18 October. Four at Saikung on 7 October and one at Sek Kong on 21 October.
- 166x. Emerald Dove** (*Chalcophaps indica*)
One or two seen at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 5 February, 26 August, 7 and 9 December. One at Three Fathoms Cove on 18 August.
- 167. Rose-ringed Parakeet** (*Psittacula krameri*)
Many records from widespread areas in all months except June and July. Usually in small flocks of up to 35. Most often record-

ed from Sek Kong, the Mai Po area, Mong Tseng and Hong Kong Island but other areas include urban Kowloon, Clearwater Bay, Shatin and Lamma Island.

170. Indian Cuckoo (*Cuculus micropterus*)

Recorded from Ho Chung, Lok Ma Chau, Fanling, Mai Po, Jubilee Reservoir, Mong Tseng and Lamma Island. More often heard than seen. Three together at Mong Tseng on 13 May. All records fall between 15 April and 13 July.

171. Large Hawk-cuckoo (*Cuculus sparverioides*)

One or two in Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve between 29 April and 22 June. At least two heard at Jubilee Reservoir on 29 April.

172. Plaintive Cuckoo (*Cacomantis merulinus*)

Common and widespread between 3 February and 7 August. Many of the records submitted are for urban areas, including a pair in the Royal Observatory grounds on 12 May. One called through the night in early April at Hang Hau. Two winter records of single birds at Sek Kong on 2 December and Fanling on 8 December.

175. Koel (*Eudynamis scolopacea*)

Quite common and widespread from 9 January until 19 September. The main strongholds appear to be Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve and Fanling Golf Course, both areas holding at least two pairs. Elsewhere, recorded from Mong Tseng, Ho Chung, Three Fathoms Cove, Lam Tsuen Valley, Sek Kong and Junk Bay. An unusual record is of one calling in Victoria Barracks on 10 April. Single birds at Three Fathoms Cove on 5 December and Tai Po Kau on 10 December.

176. Greater Coucal (*Centropus sinensis*)

Quite common and widespread throughout the year. Breeding suspected in a number of differing localities where pairs or young birds were seen. Five in the mangroves at Mai Po on 8 April.

177. Lesser Coucal (*Centropus toulou*)

Recorded throughout the year from the central and eastern New Territories, Hong Kong Island and Lamma Island. Most records are of single birds, often only heard, and the present overall status of this species is still unclear.

178. Barred Owlet (*Glaucidium cuculoides*)

One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 23 December.

180. Collared Scops Owl (*Otus bakkamoena*)

One at Conduit Road, Hong Kong Island on 9 September.

183. Brown Hawk-owl (*Ninox scutulata*)

One at Stanley on 5 April. This is the fifth Colony record and

it is interesting to note that it was last seen at the same place, on 6 April, 1968.

185. Japanese Nightjar (*Caprimulgus indicus*)

A female was found at Kowloon Tong on 12 February, examined and released. One was found dead at Lai Chi Kok on 10 October.

186. Savannah Nightjar (*Caprimulgus affinis*)

A female was seen at Mong Tseng on 3 February.

187. Large White-rumped Swift (*Apus pacificus*)

Regularly recorded from widespread areas in groups of up to 40. Apart from 24+ at Repulse Bay on 29 December all records fall between 1 February and 27 August.

188. House Swift (*Apus affinis*)

Several breeding colonies in urban areas including various New Territories towns. The colony at Yuen Long holds over 30 pairs and three small colonies in Sham Shui Po hold at least 12 breeding pairs. All records fall between 10 March and 19 September.

189. Pied Kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*)

Up to four regularly recorded on the Deep Bay Marshes throughout the year. On 22 July, two pairs and a single bird were seen on the main marsh and another pair was seen at Lok Ma Chau. One at Starling Inlet on 3 May.

191. Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Common and widespread throughout the New Territories and Hong Kong Island until mid-April and from mid-August. Summer records submitted for several areas, including Three Fathoms Cove, Saikung, Tsing Lung Tau, Victoria Peak, Tong Fuk, Fanling and the vicinity of the Deep Bay Marshes where young birds were seen in the summer months.

192. White-breasted Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)

Common and widespread, particularly in the winter months. Pairs seen in display flights at Three Fathoms Cove and at She Shan. Quite regularly seen in the summer months in widespread areas of the New Territories and Hong Kong Island. Two unusual records are of single birds in central Kowloon on 20 July and 24 December.

193. Black-capped Kingfisher (*Halcyon pileata*)

Many records of up to three together from widespread areas throughout the year. Summer records are from the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, Three Fathoms Cove, Kowloon Peak and She Shan. An unusual record is of one at Happy Valley on 13 March.

195. Broad-billed Roller (*Eurystomus orientalis*)

One at Sek Kong on 16 and 23 September. One or two in the vicinity of the Kowloon Reservoirs on 2 and 10 October.

197. Great Barbet (*Megalaima virens*)

Resident in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve where at least ten were seen on 10 June, suggesting several breeding pairs. Up to four in the Lam Tsuen Valley throughout the year. Elsewhere, recorded at Jubilee Reservoir, Sha Tau Kok and various places in the Saikung area.

199. Rufous Woodpecker (*Micropternus brachyurus*)

Single males at She Shan on 5 February and 16 December.

200. Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)

Single birds at Sheung Shui on 26 February, Lau Fau Shan on 16 March, Mai Po Marsh on 16 September, Kai Tak on 20 September, Ho Chung on 18 November and Long Valley on 23 December.

203. Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Recorded throughout the year, being very common and widespread from mid-February until mid-September but only sporadically recorded from the Deep Bay Marshes outside this period.

204. Red-rumped Swallow (*Hirundo daurica*)

Five at Sha Tau Kok on 1 January. Up to 20 at Lok Ma Chau between 3 and 7 January. One at Mai Po on 21 April and another one there on 9 December.

205. House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

Eight at Tai Po Kau on 25 November.

206. Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Two at Lok Ma Chau on 3 January. At Mai Po, two on 11 November and up to three between 9 and 17 December.

208. Rufous-backed Shrike (*Lanius schach*)

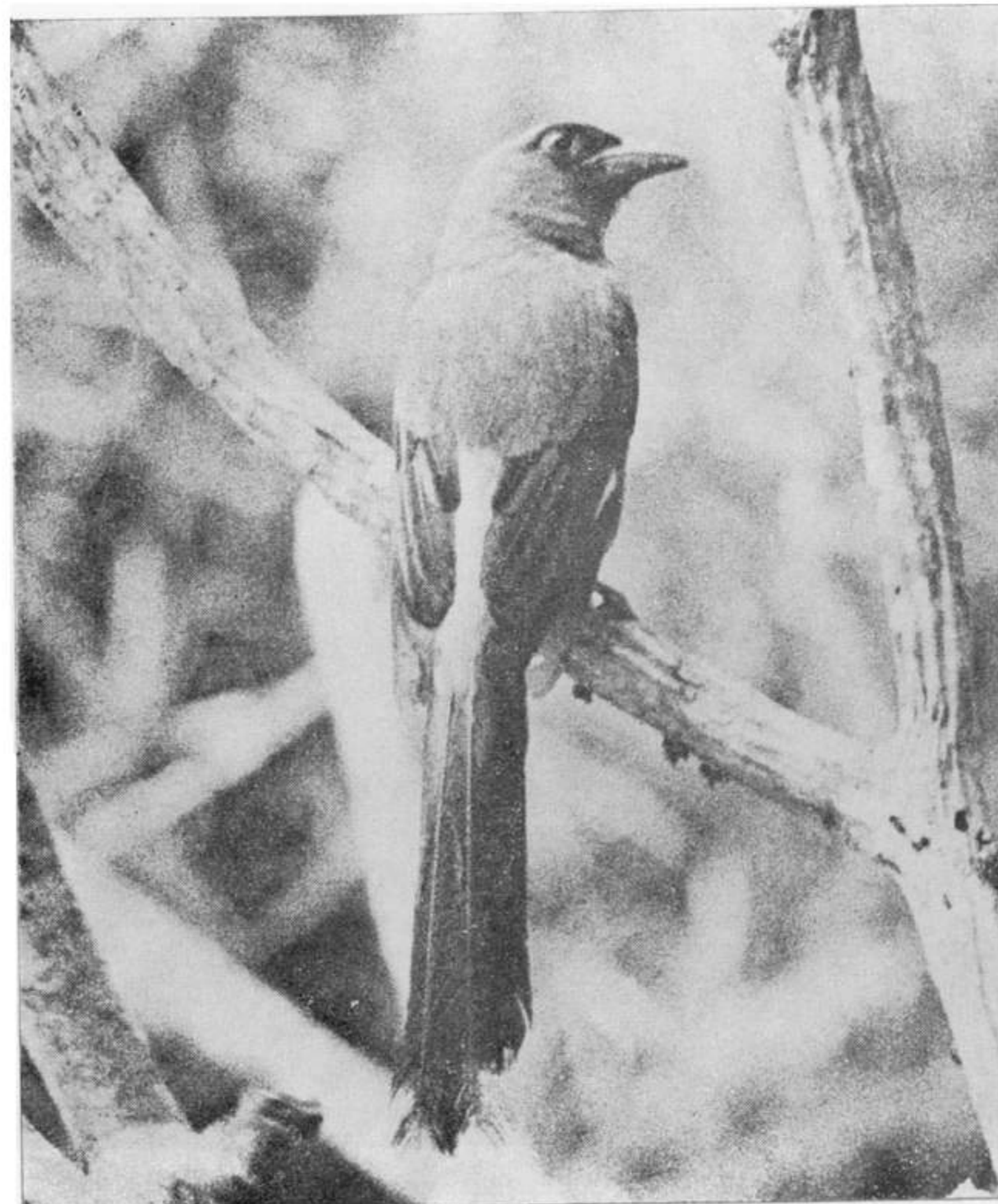
Common and widespread in the New Territories, particularly in the summer months. Appears to be only locally common on Hong Kong Island. The melanistic Dusky Shrike was often recorded and at the village of Tai Lam Wu in the Ho Chung Valley a pair has been seen in three consecutive winters.

210. Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*)

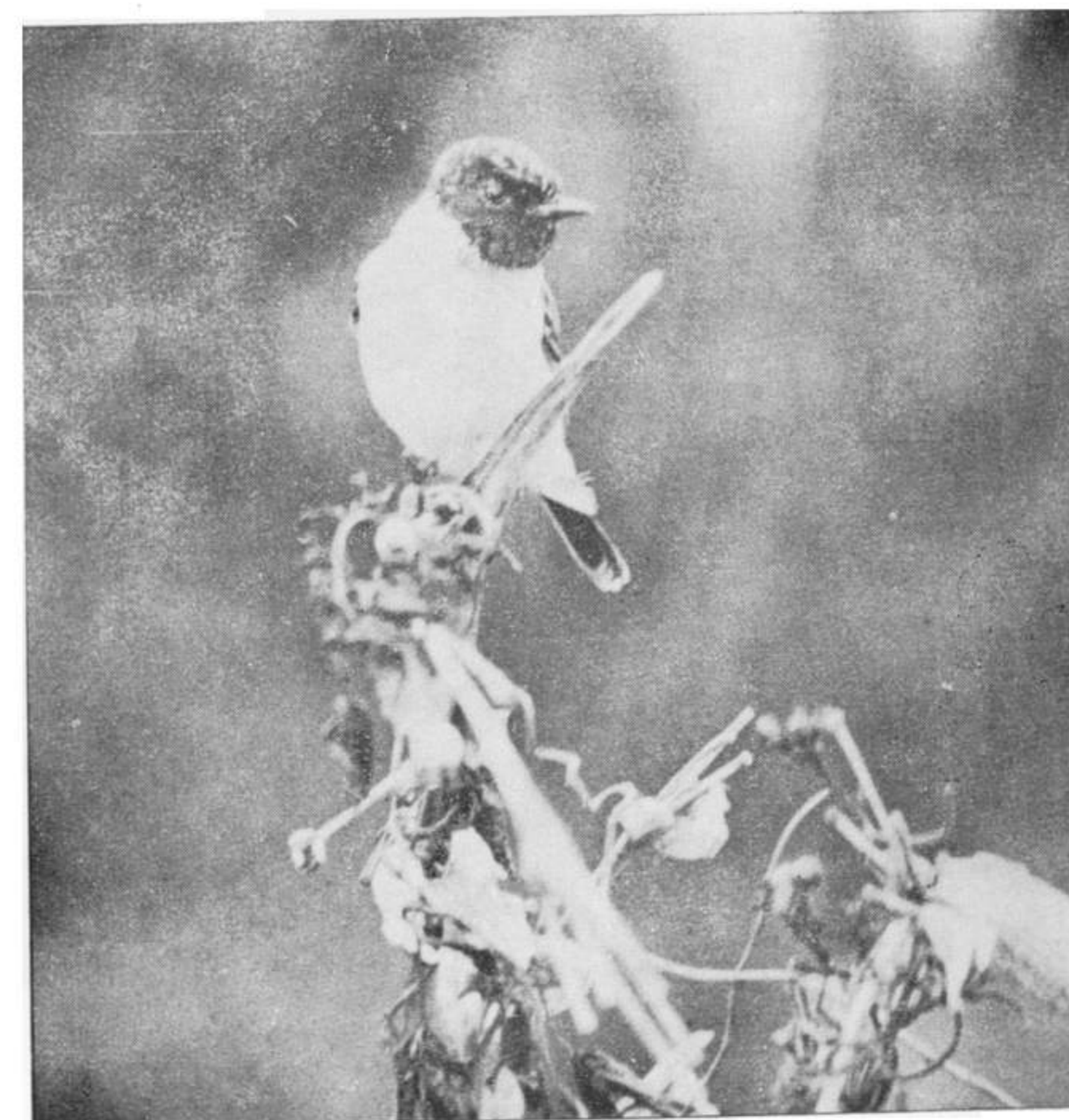
Recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories and urban Kowloon until 5 May and from 26 August but is not common. One at Three Fathoms Cove was seen impaling an insect on barbed wire.

211. Black-naped Oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*)

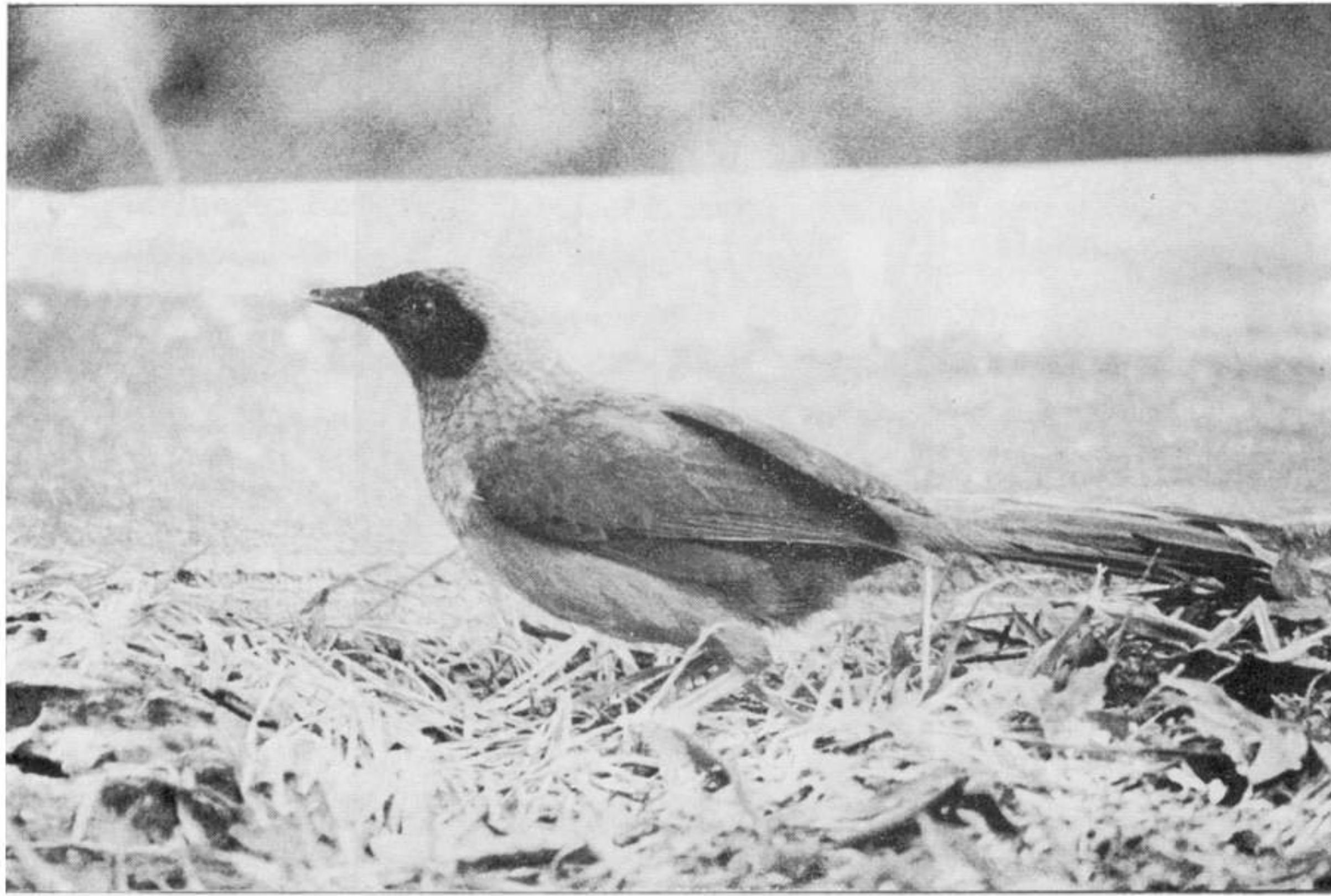
Breeding birds were present at Fanling Golf Course from 17 June until 18 September, with a maximum of three pairs including one pair with two young on 1 July. 20+ were seen there on 11 November and a single bird on 9 December. One or two were regularly seen in Sek Kong Woods between 3 February and 2 April



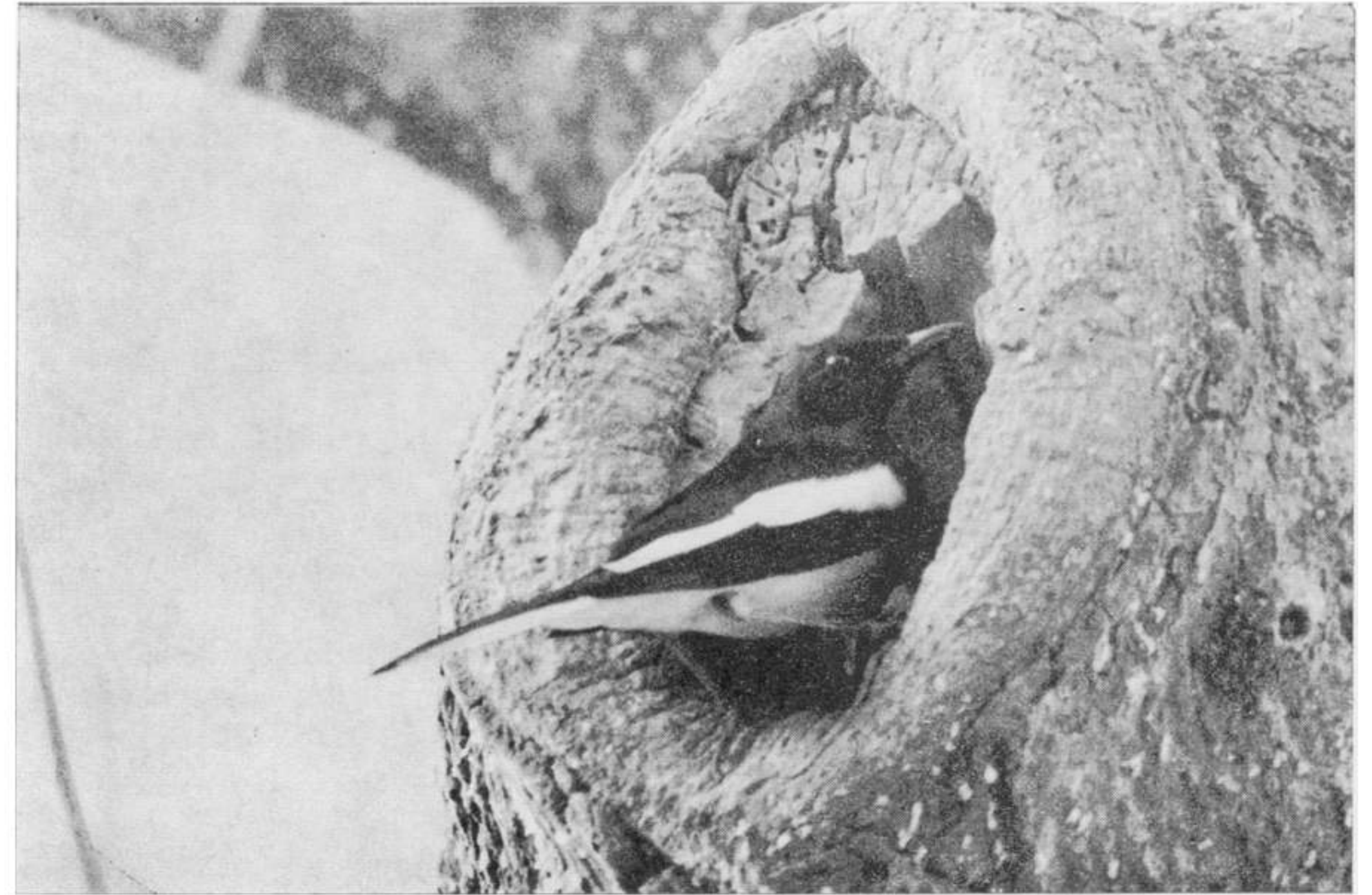
Treepie
(*Crypsirina
Formosae*)



Male Stonechat
(*Saxicola Torquata*)



Black-faced Laughing-Thrush (*Garrulax Perspिलлатус*)

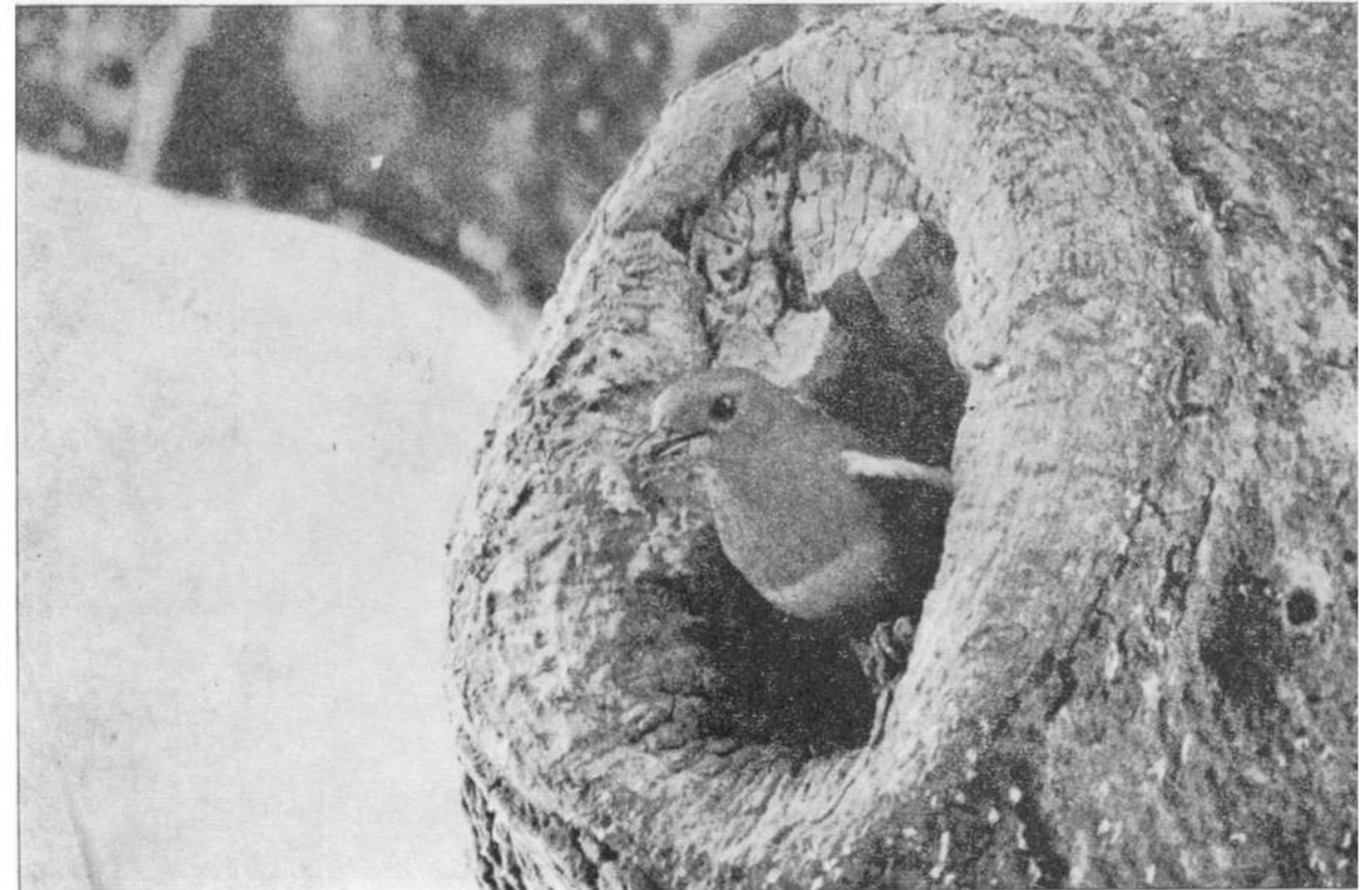


Male (above) and Female (below) Magpie Robin (*Copsychus Saularis*)
at nest hole

Photos: D. J. Galloway



Little Bunting (*Emberiza Pusilla*)
Photos: D. J. Galloway





Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)
Feeding and Taking Flight

Photos: D. J. Galloway



and again from 6 November until 2 December. Elsewhere, single birds were seen at She Shan on 4 February, Tai Po Kau on 8 September and Kowloon Reservoirs on 28 October.

212. Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocerus*)

Quite common and widespread from early March until the end of August. Five pairs at Fanling Golf Course on 1 July and young birds there with adults in late August. At least three pairs at Sai-kung on 14 July. The records submitted suggest that in the autumn small parties assemble prior to migration, with a maximum of 12 at Three Fathoms Cove on 19 September. Several winter records from Lok Ma Chau, Mai Po, Mong Tseng, Sek Kong and Saikung.

213. Ashy Drongo (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*)

Single birds of the sub-species *salangensis* at Sek Kong Woods on various dates between 14 January and 18 March, Stanley on 13 and 14 February, Lam Tsuen Valley on 18 September and Kowloon Reservoirs on 10 October. One or two birds of the sub-species *leucogenis* (White-cheeked) at Sek Kong Woods until 14 April and also one at Tai Po Kau on 16 December. On 3 February birds of both sub-species were seen together in adjoining trees at Sek Kong Woods, *salangensis* appeared slightly smaller.

214. Hair-crested Drongo (*Dicrurus hottentottus*)

In the summer months recorded from 21 April until 21 October. The main breeding strongholds appear to be the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, where a minimum of ten were regularly seen including fledglings, and the Lam Tsuen Valley, where a maximum of seven were seen at Hang Ha Po Wood on 2 July. Elsewhere, in the summer, recorded from the Saikung area, Sha Tau Kok, Tai Lam Chung and Sek Kong. Three winter records of one at Shouson Hill on 31 January, up to three at She Shan on 4 and 7 February and one at Tai Po Kau on 7 February.

215. Chinese Starling (*Sturnus sinensis*)

Widespread and locally quite common in the New Territories and eastern Kowloon in the winter months. Usually seen in small flocks of up to 30 but over 100 in the mangroves at Mai Po on 27 August. Extreme dates are until 20 April and from 15 August.

216. Silky Starling (*Sturnus sericeus*)

Widespread and locally common in the New Territories in the winter. One record from Hong Kong Island of one or two at Stanley on 14 February. 25 at Lamma Island on 28 January. Most often seen in small flocks up to 30 but c.100 at Long Valley on 1 January, 60+ at Ho Chung in both winters and c.60 at Tai Po Kau on 4 March. Extreme dates were until 25 March and from 11 November.

217. Grey Starling (*Sturnus cineraceus*)

Scarce. Two at Pak Nai (near Lau Fau Shan) on 13 January, one at Happy Valley in a flock of 50+ Crested Mynahs (*Acridotheres cristatellus*) on 20 January and six at Saikung on 11 April. For the latter winter, single birds at Beas River on 8 December and Pok Wai on 9 December.

217x. Common Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

The wintering birds remained at Lok Ma Chau until 18 February, a maximum of 11 being seen. They returned again on the 2 December and were still present at the end of the year, a maximum of seven being seen. It is interesting to note, that in the three winters since its discovery in the Colony this species has apparently confined itself to a small area at Lok Ma Chau, its numbers have remained almost static and its arrival and departure dates have been virtually the same each winter.

218. Black-necked Starling (*Sturnus nigricollis*)

Common throughout the year in the northern, central and eastern New Territories, but confined to these areas. Numbers appear to have substantially increased. A large evening roost was located at Fanling Golf Course on 1 July, where 52 were counted feeding on one fairway with others in the trees around. This roost was in use throughout July and August and contained many young birds. Nests were located at Yim Tso Ha, Long Valley, Fanling Lodge, Three Fathoms Cove and Ho Chung. In the winter months flocks of up to 27 were regularly recorded.

219. Common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*)

The apparent decline of this species continues. Only three records of one at Mong Tseng on 26 January, two at Ping Shan on 6 February and one at Sek Kong on 27 August.

220. Crested Mynah (*Acridotheres cristatellus*)

Very common and widespread throughout the year. Breeding noted from 18 March onwards. Flocks up to 50 noted in the winter months.

221. Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

On 2 June an adult and a juvenile were watched for sometime at Jubilee Reservoir and others may have been nearby, strongly suggesting the possibility of breeding. About five were seen there on 25 December. At Tai Po Kau one or two were seen on various dates until 16 April and on 30 December. A pair above the Lam Tsuen Valley on 9 December.

222. Blue Magpie (*Urocissa erythrorhyncha*)

Common on Hong Kong Island, particularly at Mid-levels. In the New Territories only locally common but widespread. Usually

recorded in noisy groups of up to nine. Two young with adults at Pokfulam Reservoir on 25 July. A largely albino bird was seen at Tung Chung, Lantau on 14 January.

223. Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Common and widespread, particularly in the winter. Breeding activity noted in widespread areas. Flocks of up to 18 seen.

224. Treepie (*Crypsirina formosae*)

An irruption of this species occurred from 7 October onwards when the first birds were recorded in the Lam Tsuen Valley. At least 80 were seen near the Kowloon Reservoirs on 28 October, mainly in small loose flocks of between five and 30 birds, most of which eventually moved off in a south-easterly direction. Up to 12 remained in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve and up to ten at Long Valley. Elsewhere, one or two were seen at Mong Tseng and Beas River.

225. Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

One seen associating with four Magpies (*Pica pica*) at Tai Tam Road, Hong Kong Island on 18 January. This is the only post-war record of this species; no field notes were taken; however the observer is very familiar with this species. (BL).

226. Jungle Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*)

Quite common and widespread in the New Territories and Hong Kong Island throughout the year. Most records are of one or two birds but nine at Tai Po on the foreshore on 7 February.

227. Collared Crow (*Corvus torquatus*)

Locally common throughout the year in the New Territories. Up to seven usually seen on the Deep Bay Marshes but in September numbers increased considerably when a maximum of 25 were seen on 25 and 27 September flying inland at dawn from a roost beyond the outer bund. Up to three regularly seen in the Saikung district. Two regularly at Plover Cove and Sha Tau Kok and at the latter place five immatures were seen on 15 April. Elsewhere, single birds were seen at Tai Po and Lai Chi Kok. This species would now appear to be holding its own or even increasing in numbers.

228. Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike (*Coracina melaschistos*)

Regularly recorded in both winters from widespread areas of the New Territories and Hong Kong Island. Usually only one or two in each locality but up to four at Sek Kong Woods and in the Lam Tsuen Valley. Extreme dates were until 2 April and from 2 October.

231. Ashy Minivet (*Pericrocotus divaricatus*)

One at She Shan on 21 September and nine there on 21 October. One at Sek Kong Woods on 14 October.

233. Scarlet Minivet (*Pericrocotus flammeus*)

Four female/immatures near Sha Tau Kok on 28 January. A male and a female/immature at She Shan on 5 February. Up to six female/immatures at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 14 and 19 December.

234. Chestnut Bulbul (*Hypsipetes castanotus*)

An irruption of this species occurred from 22 November when the first bird was seen at Pokfulam. At the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve up to 30 were present. At Pokfulam numbers increased to four and elsewhere six were seen at Tai Lam Chung, five at Jubilee Reservoir, two at Kowloon Reservoirs and a pair on Sunshine Island indicating the extent of the irruption.

236. Crested Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*)

Very common and widespread throughout the year.

237. Chinese Bulbul (*Pycnonotus sinensis*)

Very common and widespread throughout the year. Flocks of over 100 at Sai Kung in February and September.

238. Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*)

Common and widespread in rural areas throughout the year.

243. Black-faced Laughing-thrush (*Garrulax perspicillatus*)

Common and widespread throughout the year. Young birds seen being fed in family parties in June and early July.

244. Black-throated Laughing-thrush (*Garrulax chinensis*)

One or two irregularly recorded from various parts of Victoria Peak between 19 February and 28 July.

245. Hwamei (*Garrulax canorus*)

Common on Hong Kong Island with over ten at Victoria Peak on 28 July. In the New Territories, numbers have recovered and it is now fairly common and widespread. This species is particularly common in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve.

246. White-cheeked Laughing-thrush (*Garrulax sannio*)

Two seen and others heard below Mount Kellett on 11 March and again reported from Pokfulam on 26 May. It is possible that these were escaped birds but again the likelihood of an established feral colony on Hong Kong Island cannot be disregarded.

246x. Greater Necklaced Laughing-thrush (*Garrulax pectoralis*)

Up to 20 regularly seen in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve until 21 April and from 25 November.

248. Pekin Robin (*Leiothrix lutea*)

Single birds on Victoria Peak on 5 and 6 March and 12 November. A male at Ho Chung on 10 April had no abraded feathers and appeared to be wild.

249. Collared Siva (*Yuhina castaniceps*)

An irruption of this species occurred from 1 December when the first flock of 30 to 40 were seen near the summit of Route Twisk. On the next day a flock of over 35 were seen in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve and at least two or three similar flocks remained there during the month. Elsewhere, several other flocks were reported, one of 20 to 25 near Kowloon Reservoirs, another of c.40 at Jubilee Reservoir, ten at Tai Lam Chung and 18 at Po Shan Road on Hong Kong Island.

251. Ince's Paradise Flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*)

Six records, all of females or immatures. Single birds in Sek Kong Woods on 14 and 28 January, 12 and 23 September. One at Kadoorie Farm on 18 September and She Shan on 23 September.

253. Grey-headed Flycatcher (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*)

One at Bethanie on 6 January and 1 February. One at Sek Kong Woods between 30 November and 16 December. Single birds at Ho Chung on 30 December and at Tai Om on the same day.

254. Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher (*Hypothymis azurea*)

Up to two female/immatures at Sek Kong Woods from 14 January until 18 February. Single female/immatures at Bethanie on 1 and 17 February and Happy Valley on 27 February. An adult male at Bowen Road, Hong Kong Island on 20 November. An adult male and a female/immature in Sek Kong Woods from 2 December. A female/immature at Sunshine Island on 26 December.

255. Brown Flycatcher (*Muscicapa latirostris*)

Quite common and widespread until 26 March and from 5 September onwards. Most records are from Sek Kong Woods and the Lam Tsuen Valley but other localities include Kowloon Park and Happy Valley.

256. Grey-spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa griseisticta*)

All records are of single birds at the following localities, Lamma Island on 28 April, Sek Kong Woods on 13 May, Pokfulam on 6 and 25 May, Bethanie on 20 October, Tai Po Kau and Sek Kong on 21 October and Victoria Peak on 2 and 5 November.

258. Verditer Flycatcher (*Muscicapa thalassina*)

Regularly recorded from widespread areas until 30 March and from 18 November. Usually seen singly, but a pair at She Shan on 18 November and three at Jubilee Reservoir on 14 January.

259. Red-breasted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa parva*)

All records are of single birds at the following localities, Sek Kong Woods between 1 January and 11 February, She Shan on 7 and 28 October, Pokfulam on 5 November, Tai Po Kau Forestry

Reserve on 22 and 30 December, Ma Po Mei Wood and Sek Kong Woods on 26 December.

260. Robin Flycatcher (*Muscicapa mugimaki*)

Up to ten remained in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve until 5 February. One at She Shan on 4 February. For the latter part of the year, single birds at Kowloon Reservoir on 28 October, Sek Kong Woods on 8 November, Victoria Peak on 18 November and two at Bethanie on 1 December.

262. Tricolour Flycatcher (*Muscicapa zanthopygia*)

A female at Sek Kong Woods on 18 September.

263x. Orange-bellied Niltava (*Niltava sundara/davidi*)

A female at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 30 November. A male at She Shan on 17 December.

264. Blue and White Flycatcher (*Cyanoptila cyanomelana*)

Single females at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve and Sek Kong Woods on 28 October. A male in the Colonial Cemetery, Happy Valley on 14 November.

265. Chinese Bush Warbler (*Cettia diphone*)

20 records from widespread areas until 18 March and from 9 December. Usually seen singly but up to three in the same locality.

267. Short-tailed Bush Warbler (*Cettia squameiceps*)

One at Sai Kung on 20 January, two at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 27 January and one there on 20 February, one at Jubilee Reservoir on 24 January, one at She Shan on 4 February and one at Bethanie on 6 February. Up to four at Tai Po Kau from 30 November until the end of the year. One or two at Po Shan Road, Hong Kong Island between 29 and 31 December.

268. Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella certhiola*)

One at Lok Ma Chau on 30 December.

269. Styan's Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella ochotensis pleskei*)

Single birds at Mai Po on 25 March and 16 September.

270. Von Schrenck's Reed-warbler (*Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*)

Several at Mai Po between 16 April and 5 May. Unusually common at Mai Po between 25 September and 20 November, one there as late as 11 December. A few at Lok Ma Chau on 16 October.

271. Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*)

Several at Mai Po between 16 April and 5 May. Very common on the autumn passage at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau, the extreme dates being 27 August until 11 November, apart from a very

late sighting of one on 2 December. One at She Shan on 21 October.

273. Dusky Warbler (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*)

Common and widespread until 23 April and from 2 October. Very common at Mai Po during October and November.

274. Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

Common and widespread until 20 April and from 19 September. Several at Tsim Sha Tsui on 25 March.

275. Pallas's Warbler (*Phylloscopus proregulus*)

Reported from widespread localities until 4 March and from 22 November.

276. Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*)

Only one spring record of a single bird at Pokfulam on 6 May. 11 records of up to six between 8 and 30 September from widespread areas including Government House and Kowloon Park. One at Sek Kong on 11 November is an unusually late sighting.

277. Pale-legged Willow-warbler (*Phylloscopus tenellipes*)

Single birds in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 28 January and at Bethanie on 17 and 25 February and between 23 and 31 December.

278. Crowned Willow-warbler (*Phylloscopus occipitalis*)

One in Sek Kong Woods on 18 November.

282. Long-tailed Tailorbird (*Orthotomus sutorius*)

Common and widespread throughout the year. Young birds noted as early as 21 March.

285. Brown Wren-warbler (*Prinia subflava*)

Apart from two at Shueng Shui on 26 February all records are from the Deep Bay Marshes from early March until the end of the year. Breeding activity noted in June and July when this species was particularly numerous. During September and October there appeared to be only a few present, but numbers built up again in November and December.

286. Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler (*Prinia flaviventris*)

Quite common and widespread throughout the year. Particularly numerous on the Deep Bay Marshes where considerable breeding activity was noted from March onwards. Outside the marsh this species is found anywhere, including urban areas, where there is a stand of tall grass.

287. Fantail Warbler (*Cisticola juncidis*)

Recorded in small numbers from the Deep Bay Marshes, the Sai Kung area, Long Valley, Sek Kong and Silvermine Bay. Apart

from two at Mai Po on 29 July all records are until 11 March and from 8 September.

289. Red-tailed Robin (*Luscinia sibilans*)

Two at Jubilee Reservoir on 9 January.

290. Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*)

A female/immature at Sheung Shui on 26 February. One at Mai Po on 14 November.

290x. Pallas's Blue Robin (*Erithacus cyane*)

A male in the Botanical Gardens on 19 April. The bird was in excellent plumage and showed no signs of being an escape and is therefore accepted as a new species to the Colony. (KCS).

291. Rubythroat (*Luscinia calliope*)

Fairly common and widespread until 16 March and from early November. Sight records are of up to three. Only two records of birds in "female" plumage. Regularly heard in many areas during late autumn.

292. Red-flanked Bluetail (*Tarsiger cyanurus*)

A male at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 5 February was the only record for the winter 1972/73. However, this species was very common and widespread from 17 November until the end of the year. Female/immatures outnumbering adult males by at least ten to one.

293. Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*)

Quite common and widespread throughout the year including urban areas. A pair nested in a signboard overhanging Nathan Road opposite Kowloon Park in early July.

294. Daurian Redstart (*Phoenicurus aureus*)

Fairly common and widespread until 28 March. However, much commoner from 2 November onwards in widespread areas.

295. Plumbeous Water-redstart (*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*)

A male and a female/immature at Tai Lam Chung on 28 and 29 January and a female/immature there on 25 December. A female/immature at Jubilee Reservoir on 25 December.

296. Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

Common and widespread in rural areas until 20 April and from 30 September. Much less common in April.

297. Grey Bushchat (*Saxicola ferrea*)

A female at Long Valley on 1 January and five there, including an adult male, on 14 January. A female at Tai Lam Chung on 12 January and a male and a female there on 24 February. Three near Mui Wo, Lantau on 13 January. A male at She Shan on 7 Febru-

ary. A female at Ho Chung on 24 February. A male at Sek Kong Woods on 14 October. Three males and three females above Plover Cove on 4 November. A male and a female in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 2 and 30 December. A male near Tai Po on 9 December.

298. Blue Rock-thrush (*Monticola solitaria*)

Both sub-species quite common along rocky coasts and inland near hill-tops and reservoirs but also quite regular in urban Kowloon. The last spring date was 5 April and the first autumn record 23 September.

299. Chestnut-breasted Rock-thrush (*Monticola rufiventris*)

One at Sai Kung on 11 April.

300. Violet Whistling Thrush (*Myiophonus caeruleus*)

Widespread and locally common throughout the year. This species appeared to be commoner than usual during the latter winter.

301. Pale Thrush (*Turdus pallidus*)

Single birds at Bethanie on 17 and 25 February. Up to three at Victoria Peak and one at Pokfulam Reservoir from 30 November onwards. One at Mong Tseng on 9 December and one at Tai Lam Chung on 25 December. Up to three at Bethanie from 26 December. Single birds at Tai Hang Road on 29 December and Mount Parker on 30 December.

302. Eyebrowed Thrush (*Turdus obscurus*)

Up to two males and four female/immatures at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve between 10 February and 21 April.

303. Brown Thrush (*Turdus chrysolaus*)

An adult male at Lai Chi Kok from 7 to 10 February. A male at Jubilee Reservoir on 25 December.

304. Grey-backed Thrush (*Turdus hortulorum*)

Scarce until 2 April, with only four records of single birds at Sek Kong and She Shan. Quite common and widespread from 11 November onwards.

305. Dusky Thrush (*Turdus naumanni eunomus*)

Single birds of the race *eunomus* at Lok Ma Chau on 16 and 30 December and at Victoria Peak from 27 December.

306. Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Two at Long Valley on 1 January. One in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 5 January and ten there on 11 February. Five at Sek Kong Woods on 18 February and another at Lok Ma Chau on the same day. Up to 15 at Long Valley between 18 November and 16 December. Up to four in the Lam Tsuen Valley from 1 December. One at Kings Park, in the centre of Kowloon, on 4 December. One at Beas River on 8 December. One or two at Sek Kong Woods from

16 December. Single birds at Jubilee Reservoir and Kadoorie Beach on 25 December.

307. Grey Thrush (*Turdus cardis*)

Recorded until 5 April with up to 20 at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve and eight at Bethanie. In the latter part of the year single birds have been recorded at Sek Kong Woods, Pokfulam Reservoir and Tweed Bay from 8 November onwards. This species now seems to be common only on passage, except at a few favoured localities such as Stanley and Bethanie.

309. Orange-headed Ground-thrush (*Turdus citrinus*)

A male remained at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve between 27 January and 30 March.

310. White's Thrush (*Turdus dauma*)

One at Victoria Peak from 7 November onwards. Single birds in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 1 December, Tai Po Kau on 2 December and Sek Kong on 30 December.

313. Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Common in wooded areas throughout the year. Very young birds being fed by adults at the Colonial Cemetery, Happy Valley on 4 April. Elsewhere, young birds noted at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve and Sek Kong in the early summer.

315. Richard's Pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*)

Fairly common and widespread in open areas of the New Territories until 5 May and from 30 September. 30+ at Sek Kong Airstrip on 29 July were presumably of the race *sinensis*, they were noted as having greyer backs and not as uprights as race *richardi* and with a less harsh call.

316. Indian Tree Pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*)

Common and widespread until 4 April and from 20 October.

317. Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*)

Quite common at Mai Po, Lok Ma Chau and Long Valley until 20 April and from 9 December. Elsewhere c.15 at Mui Wo, Lantau on 13 January, up to three at Ho Chung Ponds from 17 February until 7 April and one at Sek Kong on 18 November.

319. Upland Pipit (*Anthus sylvanus*)

Two singing males and two female/immatures at Kowloon Peak on 30 June and one or two there until 5 August. Up to three seen and heard on Tai Mo Shan in July.

320. Forest Wagtail (*Dendronanthus indicus*)

One at Ma Nam Wat (Sai Kung) on 15 September.

321. White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)

Very common and widespread until 16 April and from 18 September.

322. Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Quite common and widespread until 29 April and from 21 September, apart from one at Tai Lam Chung on 18 August.

323. Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

Fairly common in the area of the Deep Bay Marshes, but numbers fluctuated considerably, until 13 May and from 30 September. Elsewhere, recorded at Ho Chung, Sai Kung and Sha Tin Wai.

323x. Citrine Wagtail (*Montacilla citreola*)

An adult male at Mai Po on 11 September. This is the first time this species has been recorded in the Colony. Females and immatures could be confused with *M. flava* and may therefore have been overlooked in the past. (JMGC).

324. Fork-tailed Sunbird (*Aethopyga christinae*)

Regularly recorded from the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve throughout the year. Numbers are difficult to assess but up to four were seen on one visit. Also recorded from Ho Chung (a pair), Junk Bay, Sek Kong Woods (2 July), Ma Nam Wat (Sai Kung), Three Fathoms Cove and She Shan.

325. White-eye (*Zosterops japonica*)

Common and widespread for most of the year. A flock of 70+ at Pokfulam Reservoir on 22 November.

326. Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum cruentatum*)

Widespread, but no records for May, June and July. Regularly seen at Sek Kong Woods (up to three) and in the Lam Tsuen Valley, particularly at She Shan (up to four). Also recorded at Government House, Jubilee Reservoir, Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, Three Fathoms Cove and Lok Ma Chau.

327. Fire-breasted Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum ignipectus*)

A female at She Shan on 7 October and a male at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 25 November.

328. Black-tailed Hawfinch (*Eophona migratoria*)

Quite common locally in the winter months. Regularly recorded at Sek Kong (30 on 7 January) and the Lam Tsuen Valley (40 on 3 December). Elsewhere, a flock of up to 25 at Ho Chung in the spring, 12 at Pokfulam in December and odd birds at Bethanie, Long Valley and Mong Tseng. Extreme dates were until 31 March and from 28 October.

329. Chinese Greenfinch (*Chloris sinica*)

Reported from widespread areas throughout the year, but generally uncommon only being regularly seen in the Sai Kung area and at Pokfulam Reservoir. Most records are for the cooler months. Several small flocks were seen passing overhead at Mai Po in mid-September perhaps indicating migratory movement. Usually recorded in small flocks of up to 15 but 80 at Pokfulam Reservoir on 20 January and 35 there on 18 February.

330. Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Up to 30 in one or two flocks in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve between 13 January and 20 February. This is perhaps the first authentic record of wild birds for the Colony.

331. Common Rosefinch (*Carpodacus erythrinus*)

Three at Long Valley on 18 February and three at She Shan on the same day. Ten female/immatures at Sek Kong Woods on 21 February. A female at Sek Kong on 2 December and a male and four female/immatures there on 30 December.

332. Masked Bunting (*Emberiza spodocephala*)

Quite common and widespread until 29 April and from 30 October.

335. Tristram's Bunting (*Emberiza tristrami*)

Up to 12 in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve until 28 March and up to 15 there from 25 November. One at Jubilee Reservoir on 31 January and 27 February. Four at She Shan on 18 March.

336. Chestnut Bunting (*Emberiza rutila*)

Single females at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 28 October and the Lam Tsuen Valley on 11 November.

337. Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*)

Single birds at She Shan and Silvermine Bay on 14 January and Sai Kung on 2 May. Two at Mai Po on 23 September, at least one at She Shan on 25 October and two at Sek Kong on 8 November.

338. Grey-headed Bunting (*Emberiza fucata*)

Three at Long Valley on 1 January. Up to four at Silvermine Bay on 13 and 14 January. Single birds at Mong Tseng on 3 February and Mai Po on 11 March. One at Long Valley from 18 November onwards. One at Mai Po on 18 November.

339. Little Bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*)

Uncommon. Recorded in the winter months in small numbers at Mai Po, Mong Tseng, Lam Tsuen Valley, Silvermine Bay, Sek Kong, Junk Bay, Mount Davis and Kowloon Reservoirs. Extreme dates were until 5 April and from 28 October.

340. Crested Bunting (*Melophus lathamii*)

Recorded from widespread areas in the winter months, usually in small numbers but 30+ at Silvermine Bay on 28 January and 20+ at Three Fathoms Cove on 5 December. In the summer, recorded from Kowloon Peak on 20 June and Tai Mo Shan in May, June and on 1 July, where three singing males were noted.

341. Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Very common in the vicinity of habitation throughout the year. A flock of 100+ feeding on uncut rice at Sai Kung on 30 September.

343. Red Avadavat (*Estrilda amandava*)

All records are from the Mai Po Marshes; a male and a female on 16 September, two pairs on 23 September and two on 7 October.

345. Chestnut Munia (*Lonchura malacca*)

Only recorded from the Mai Po Marshes where up to ten of the race *atricapilla* were regularly seen from 25 March until 30 October. An adult of the race *malacca* (three-coloured munia) was seen in company with four or five of the usual race on 29 July at Mai Po North.

346. Spotted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*)

Quite common and widespread for most of the year, usually in flocks of up to 50 but 120 at Silvermine Bay on 14 January. Apparently less common in the summer. Pairs seen constructing nests at She Shan on 18 March and at Ho Chung on 20 April.

347. White-backed Munia (*Lonchura striata*)

Quite regularly recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories and Hong Kong Island until 31 March and from 16 August, usually in small flocks of up to ten.

ESCAPES

Sulphur-crested/Lemon-crested Cockatoos

(*Kakatoe sulphurea/citrinocristata*)

Numbers of the resident flock at Victoria Barracks fluctuated throughout the year. Up to mid-February only a few were seen, usually about five, but numbers increased to 20 during the flowering of the cotton trees (*Bombax malabaricum*). By early April the flock was reduced to ten and in May and June further dispersal was evident as the flock was down to five. Towards the end of July numbers began to steadily increase up to 18 by the end of the year numbers fluctuated considerably but with a maximum of 20.

Away from Central, cockatoos were regularly seen in the vicinity of Happy Valley and the University. At the University the usual flock was five until the end of the summer, but increased to 14 in September. An interesting incident was noted there in the summer when a pair was seen to mob a Kite for half-an-hour. The actions of this pair suggested the behaviour of breeding birds.

Outside of Hong Kong Island, one was at Jubilee Reservoir at the beginning of the year, one at Ma Nam Wat (a wooded area near Sai Kung) on 11 July and 18 November and up to three at Three Fathoms Cove between 15 August and 19 September.

It is difficult to draw any satisfactory conclusions from the above records but these cockatoos are definitely increasing with the lemon-crested apparently outnumbering the sulphur-crested. The incident at the University, the continued expansion of the population, the apparent summer dispersal from Victoria Barracks possibly to the eastern New Territories does suggest that breeding may take place.

Indian Hill Mynah

(*Gracula religiosa*)

A pair was seen well up the Ho Chung Valley on 21 January and appeared to be quite wild. Pairs were also seen at Bethanie on 8 September and at Tai Om in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 30 December.

As with the cockatoos this species is a popular cage bird and the Colony is outside its normal range, but again it is possible that a breeding feral population may have established itself.

A GOOD DAY FOR DUCK

During the latter half of December, 1973, while looking from the Mong Tseng peninsula across to the Mai Po marshes, I was intrigued to observe large flocks of duck resting on the waters of Deep Bay just beyond the mangrove line. Through my x7 binoculars they appeared as little more than specks and it was difficult enough to estimate numbers, let alone identify species. I decided that the only way to obtain satisfactory views of these duck would be to approach them through the mangroves beyond the outer bund of the Mai Po marsh and resolved to attempt this at the earliest available opportunity.

So on 8 January, 1974, in the half light of dawn, I stumbled out across the Mai Po marshes and clambered up onto the outer bund. Peering out across the mangroves I could just discern tantalising glimpses of groups of duck resting on the still waters of Deep Bay. I walked along the bund until I found a spot, halfway between two creeks, that seemed a little drier than the rest. Here I waded through the muddy channel that separates the mangroves from the bund and began walking in the direction of the bay. The going was comparatively easy at first as large areas of mangrove had been chopped down by local fishermen and the dead branches lying on the mud gave a firm footing. Unfortunately after about sixty yards I came to an impenetrable mass of mangrove and was forced to walk along the front of this until I emerged at one of the creeks running down to the bay.

Here I took off my shoes and waded along the side of the creek, clutching onto the mangroves with my right hand. At every step I sank into the mud over my knees so that progress was laboriously slow.

After forty five minutes plodding I rounded a bend in the creek and startled a group of 7 pelicans resting on the mud not more than twenty yards away. Without using my binoculars I could see the orange lower mandible and lack of black on the underwing which identified them as Dalmatians.

The tide was now rising alarmingly fast and was lapping around my knees, but this had one unforeseen advantage — the rafts of duck were feeding just behind the tide line and were being drifted in towards the shore. So at a suitable place I climbed out of the creek and pushed over a small mangrove to act as an observation platform.

Scanning the bay in front of me through binoculars I was astonished to see that the whole area was seething with birds. A continuous line of duck were stretched out along the shore as far as the eye could see. I soon picked out eight Wigeon, the males

conspicuous with orange crowns, over a thousand Teal and three Shelduck. There were also several hundred duck of a species that I did not recognise; the males had a green and brown head, a conspicuous white throat patch with a bisecting black line and a grey body with a white patch below the tail. On thumbing through my field guide I was delighted to discover that they were Falcated Teal, a new species for me.

The mud between the water and the mangroves was alive with waders; mainly Dunlin and Kentish Plover, with seven Spotted Redshank and a solitary Greenshank.

An Osprey flapped lazily along the water's edge, closely followed by four Caspian Terns. At least three Marsh Harriers were hunting over the nearby mangroves.

I glanced upwards casually as a gull circled overhead, calling. At first it appeared to be one of the numerous Black-headed Gulls but something was not quite right. Training my binoculars on it was astonished to see the bill was slightly hooked and jet black in colour. A careful scrutiny revealed that the primaries lacked the leading white wedge of the Black-headed Gull; two dark patches were visible on the fore-wing as the bird approached head on and the leg colour was blackish red. This was a Saunders' Gull, my second new species of the day. A careful check of the surrounding gulls, previously ignored, revealed two more birds of this species.

The duck flocks were now in a state of constant agitation, new birds flying in from north and south whilst others took off and disappeared from sight across the bay. A few Black-eared Kites passing high overhead caused instant panic and the whole assemblage took to the air with a great roar of wings and rocketed back and forth in wild myriad combinations before once more settling down ten minutes later. I was able to pick out a few Yellow-nib amongst the larger ducks. A flight of eight elegant Pintail, four males and four females, flew quickly past without alighting.

Far out across the bay on the edge of binocular vision were more masses of wildfowl. Certainly the number of duck assembled in Deep Bay on this morning must have run into many thousands.

By noon I was approaching a state of physical exhaustion. My legs ached with the strain of balancing on the mangrove, my eyes were red and raw and my clothes were drenched in sweat and mud. I reluctantly decided to call it a day and began making my way home.

I reflected as I plodded back that the Deep Bay marshes are one of the few places in Asia where such a unique assemblage of wildlife can be observed. Long may they be preserved so that others can enjoy a morning such as mine!

David Bradford

Sri Lanka

In an article in the report for 1968, R. E. Hale described a bird-watching visit in mid-January to Ceylon, in particular to Polonnaruwa where he witnessed flocks of cormorants coming to roost in the evening in a clump of trees gradually vacated by day-roosting fruit bats. It so happened that, in late August 1973, I too visited Sri Lanka and in due course made my way to Polonnaruwa.

But a word about the preliminaries. As I knew little of Sri Lanka before I went, I tried to prepare by reading all the brochures put out by its' tourist board. None of it prepared me for the fact that only a quarter of the island is wet tropical country (round Colombo half way up the west coast); the remaining three-quarters constitutes the dry zone, with a partly different lot of birds. All this became apparent only when I obtained in Colombo a copy of G. M. Henry's "A Guide to the Birds of Ceylon". It's a paperback with excellent pictures of birds and most useful information on distribution of birds between the wet and dry zones.

On the first day, in the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery in Colombo, I saw a male Koel, an Indian Roller, a Red-wattled Lapwing and a Green Bee-eater (a common bird later on). We drove 100 miles north through the wet zone to reach Sigiriya in the dry zone. It's an enormous rock several hundred feet high, with the remains of an ancient palace on and around it. High up the side on a dizzy-making iron footwalk, when I ceased to admire the well known frescoes, I had a look instead at the twittering White-rumped Swifts which nest in huge colonies on the rock.

Early next morning, wandering round the former palace and the surrounding forest, I was delighted to see Pond Herons, Grey Heron, White-breasted Kingfisher, Red-backed Woodpecker, Black Robin, Southern Magpie-robin, and a Black-winged Kite (which is largely white). For every bird I saw and identified, there was at least one more that I couldn't identify, usually because it didn't stay round long enough to be scrutinised or because something else turned up to distract attention.

At least, in the country, we were spared the myriads of House Crows that plague Colombo and its surroundings. It's nearly true to say that, wherever you are in Colombo, you can see and hear a Crow. Croaking and quarrelling, they're everywhere, not moving till people are almost walking on them. As unpaid civil servants, they do a fairly good job in scavenging and refuse removal.

From Sigiriya, we drove eastwards to Polonnaruwa which again contains the remains of ancient palace buildings spread over many acres, but this time on flat ground. The rest house stands at the

edge of a huge lake (lakes are known locally as "tanks") which must be about a mile square. On the shores of the tank were Indian White-necked Stork, Little Ringed Plover, Wood Sandpiper, and White Ibis. On the surface of the tank itself were great rafts of thousands of Little Cormorants, with much smaller numbers of Indian Shag, Spotted-billed Pelican and Little Grebe. It took me some time to identify Darters which were swimming round with their bodies submerged and only a narrow long-billed head and bit of neck protruding above the water. It wasn't till one eventually climbed on to a rock that I made out what they were.

In late afternoon, we drove for some miles round one side of the tank to a further huge tank where the road was built on a bund some 50 ft. above the level of the surrounding flat countryside. In the tank near the bund were dozens of dead trees standing out of the water, with flocks of Cormorants flying in to roost on the bare branches. Other flocks circled round, made off and apparently came back again.

On the landward side of the bund, about 100 yards from the road, stood half a dozen tall trees on small islands in a marshy pond. These trees were festooned with thousands of black fruit bats with brown faces, hanging downwards from the branches in black triangles about a foot long. What amazed me here (and in the other instance I witnessed in Sri Lanka) was the fact that the bats made no attempt to conceal themselves in the shade of the foliage, but were draped in the full sun. To some extent, this may have been because the poor trees had little foliage left and what there was of it had been painted a dirty grey from droppings.

We watched fascinated for an hour till after the sun had dropped below the horizon and light began to fail. But still the fruit bats did not depart. There was a ceaseless squeaking from them; they shifted position; one or two made a little flight round, but there was no general exodus (such as I had once seen years ago at Angkor Wat in Cambodia when a snaking line of what looked like a mile of small black bats emerged at dusk from the main temple). All this time, more and more Cormorants arrived. Egrets began to settle in the trees amongst the fruit bats, together with a few other large birds which I couldn't make out in the gathering dusk. Still the fruit bats didn't move. Impatient Cormorants landed amongst the fruit bats, causing branches to bend and other birds to fall off. But the bats hung on tight, the noise level rose higher and higher, and the overloaded trees which seemed to have long since reached maximum capacity suffered impossibly greater loads like cross-harbour buses.

When it was completely dark, the fruit bats gradually took off in ones and twos, swooped down to the surface of the tank for a

quick drink, and departed landwards. In the opposite direction came the Cormorants from the dead trees in the tank, outlined as moving objects against the stars and lighter colour of the sky. An occasional car on the road stopped to see what the trouble was when they saw us in the headlights. Explanations about birds and bats left them visibly surprised; tourists were clearly odd people. But, as far as we were concerned, it was one of the more delightful experiences of life. And to think that this magnificent performance is presumably repeated every night free of charge for all to watch.

A list of birds seen in Sri Lanka would be dull reading. There were so many species to be seen, with wide variation between the wet and dry zones, and the tea-growing highlands which go up to 6,000 ft. (it was really chilly and foggy up on Horton Plains). A male Ceylon Paradise Flycatcher with a black crest, head and throat, and chestnut wings, back and 9" tail was a magnificent sight. Noisy Brown-headed Barbets with bright green wings and tail were excellent value for mere yards of walk. From my hotel room in Kandy, I watched a Purple Sunbird 10 feet away feeding on the flowers of a papaya tree. But it took me some time to identify it, as it was apparently in eclipse plumage with not a scrap of purple to be seen. Familiar HK birds also appeared: White-eye (found only above 3,000 ft); Drongo; Tailor-bird; Spotted Munia. I didn't see more than a small proportion of the total number of species in Sri Lanka. I didn't go to any game parks or bird sanctuaries, as they were all too far off my week's unhurried route. But, even so, I was more than satisfied with what I saw and eager to see more on some future occasion. So I'm buying more sweep tickets than ever.

Brian Wilson