

THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1974



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THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

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Published in 1975 by the

HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

c/o The Zoology Department, Hong Kong University.

(A registered society under the Societies Ordinance)

Records compiled by C. A. Viney

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Acting Chairman	M. A. Webster
Hon. Secretary	C. R. Payne
Hon. Treasurer	M. A. Webster
Hon. Recorder	C. A. Viney

SOCIETY NEWS

In spite of a high turnover rate as people come to Hong Kong and others leave, Society membership has remained steady at 119, of whom 33 are overseas members. Charles Payne joined the Committee in February 1974 to take on the Hon. Secretary's job, since when there have been no other changes on the Committee.

The thirteen outings in 1974 were all well attended. They took place as follows:—

1st January	Plover Cove/Bride's Pool
23rd January	Mai Po marshes
10th February	Mong Tseng
3rd March	Sek Kong Wood/Lam Tsun Valley
31st March	Mai Po marshes
15th April	Mai Po marshes
12th May	Mai Po marshes
26th August	Mai Po marshes
22nd September	Mai Po marshes
13th October	Mai Po marshes
10th November	Mai Po marshes
8th December	Various woodlands
26th December	Mong Tseng

The most significant event of the year was our sending Mike Webster to Canberra in August to attend the XVI World Conference of the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP). This is the first time that a member from the Colony has represented the Society—which is the National Section of the ICBP—at a World Conference. Apart from the Society's official vote towards the cost of the trip, contributions were made by The Conservancy Association, The Hong Kong Natural History Society, individual members of all three organisations and many outside sympathisers and we should like to thank all those whose generous help made this trip possible. Mike Webster has already sent a report to all contributors and they will all likewise receive copies of this Annual Report which includes two articles on matters which he raised at the World Conference. Having made a start, I hope that the Society will continue to be represented at ICBP World Conferences which take place every four years.

The Resolutions passed at the World Conference were sent to the Hong Kong Government by the Secretary General of the ICBP in November 1974. As late as May 1975 Government had not responded and no small wonder, for whilst one of the Resolutions

specifically calls for the protection of the Mai Po marshes as a Strict Nature Reserve, Government had for some time been holding secret negotiations with a private property developer wishing to build an estate to house 30,000 people on the very edge of the marsh area at Tai Sang Wai.

Ten years ago at the Asian Regional Conference of the ICBP which took place in Hong Kong, one of the Resolutions passed called upon the Hong Kong Government to set up nature reserves in the Colony and in his introduction to our 1964 Annual Report Commander E. D. Webb, my predecessor, wrote, "We have reason to believe that this recommendation is receiving serious attention." Little did any of us realise quite how hypocritical Government was to be in matters of conservation and how forlorn were the hopes. Since then there have been numerous reports and recommendations from many sources calling for a nature reserve to be set up in the Mai Po marshes, but it was not until 1973 — 9 years later — that Government took the first step by banning all hunting in the area. Apart from this, and providing full protection as a nature reserve for the egretty near Sha Tau Kok during the breeding season, from 1972 — 8 years later — nothing else has been achieved.

As the New Territories countryside continues to deteriorate it will have less and less to offer as a recreational outlet and it certainly has nothing exceptional to offer. However, developed upon the Seven Wildfowl Trust, Slimbridge principle, the Mai Po marshes could provide something very special; the sort of recreational and educational facility which we so sadly lack. Furthermore, as the only place in the Colony with any wildlife to speak of, and it is in fact rich by any standards in wild bird life, Mai Po offers the Colony its only chance of having a wildlife reserve and park.

In a city where most people, rich and poor, live in blocks of flats — the vast majority in overcrowded tenement estates — and where most will expect to spend all their lives, it is essential that usage of the countryside be planned to take full advantage of the meagre natural resources available to provide positive outdoor recreational facilities wherever possible for the benefit of the maximum number of people. In the circumstances, approval given to a housing estate of dubious public advantage on the edge of the Mai Po marshes is a sad reflection of unimaginative bureaucracy. In fact Government has already given its approval to the Tai Sang Wai housing project and at the time of writing the developers are simply waiting for Government to decide upon some of the conditions. There is no shadow of doubt that this development eliminates once and for all any hope of Hong Kong having its own wildlife park, simultaneously putting an end effectively to wildlife conservation in the Colony. To add insult to injury, the housing project is not

even part of an overall planned land usage policy, but simply a good example of the type of ad hoc development which Hong Kong has been subject to for far too long.

There are several disturbing aspects to this controversy and the manner in which Government seems to have conducted itself.

In the first place it gave its approval for the Tai Sang Wai housing estate long before any inkling of what was going on became public knowledge. It is a most disturbing thought that Government can take decisions of such importance to the community as a whole—decisions which can have such far-reaching and permanent effects, in total secrecy, without any form of consultation and without taking any notice of the objections which arise, regardless of their source. There is even greater cause for concern when such decisions are taken by senior civil servants who in all likelihood will not be in Hong Kong when the consequences have to be faced.

Secondly, it seems that most of the support for the housing development within Government itself comes from such senior civil servants as the Secretary for the Environment—which in itself is ironic—who at the time of writing has still not been able to come forth with any well reasoned argument in support of Government's decision. Government has said nothing so far to refute the charge that it made an ad hoc decision based on nothing more than a set of current localised circumstances—another instance of government by expediency.

Finally, one wonders why Government's own conservation advisory body, The Nature Conservation Sub-committee of the Advisory Committee on Recreational Development and Nature Conservation, was not asked for its approval or even for its comments on the Tai Sang Wai housing project before Government gave its approval. Having been informed of the decision it was told that its job was to produce a set of lease conditions which could be imposed upon the developer to lessen the impact of the housing estate upon the adjoining marsh area proposed as a nature reserve. The Sub-committee does not consist solely of Government employees, but includes amongst its members several biologists from the local universities. I find it strange that we have heard no word of public protest from these experts and one must assume that either they have given their full support to the Government decision, in which case there is little hope left for any conservation in Hong Kong, or they acquiesce quietly in the role of Government's rubber stamp.

F. O. P. Hechtel

REPORT ON THE BIRDS, 1974

Hon. Recorder: C. A. Viney

The number of species recorded was 266, disregarding four species which almost certainly escaped from captivity. This is easily the highest number ever recorded in one year, but almost certainly reflects the presence of more enthusiastic members than usual rather than an improvement in the environment. Another factor may be the steady destruction of suitable habitat in neighbouring China thus forcing species to visit suitable areas here.

Four new species were added to the Colony list during the year, two gulls, the Brown-headed Gull and the Great Black-headed Gull, a Sooty Flycatcher and a White-capped Water-redstart. This brings the grand total of species recorded in Hong Kong to 378, thirty more than those listed in the 1966 edition of the Check-List. However, a new Check-List is under preparation in a new format and hopefully will be published this year.

Examining the Systematic List the salient records can be briefly summarized.

The Night Herons continue to breed at the Yim Hso Ha egretty but the destruction of the small but densely populated egretty at Au Tau must affect the numbers of breeding Little Egrets in the Colony, if only temporarily. The second record of the Japanese Night Heron was somewhat dramatic when one flew into a flat. Duck continued to be seen in good numbers and variety in the Deep Bay area perhaps reflecting the effect of the hunting ban on the Mai Po Marshes. Records for large raptors were down but to a degree this was offset by the continued breeding of the Bonelli's Eagles and the return of Black Vultures to Long Valley in December.

Thanks to the appointment by Government of an ornithologist to investigate the bird-strike problem an interesting series of records, although often grisly, have been submitted from Kai Tak. These records include the second Colony record for a Bean Goose, a Yellow-legged Button-quail—the first for several years, Oriental Plovers, Australian Curlew, Little Whimbrels, summer records of Oriental Pratincoles and a most interesting series of gull records.

Asiatic Dowitchers are now regular passage migrants to the Deep Bay Marshes and as many as ten were seen in the spring. A Solitary Snipe at Sek Kong in February was only the second Colony record.

The Great Black-headed Gull must have been a straggler but to everybody's delight turned up at Deep Bay on a Society Outing. The other new gull species, the Brown-headed Gull, was seen quite regularly during the 1974/75 winter and has probably been overlooked in the past. Colourful non-passerines included a Red-winged Crested Cuckoo which flew into a flat and a Hoopoe which remained at Lok Ma Chau for a few days in late October.

The irruption of woodland species during late 1973 continued into 1974 and Treepies, Chestnut Bulbuls and Collared Sivas became almost common. Additionally, a minor irruption of Black Bulbuls occurred during February and March. A Sooty Flycatcher stayed for a few days at Sek Kong Woods in the late autumn but generally, apart from a Narcissus Flycatcher in the spring, flycatcher records were disappointing. A distinctive White-capped Water-redstart remained at Brides Pool from February until April despite huge numbers of visitors to the area at weekends and was well seen by many observers. The 1973/74 winter turned out to be excellent for thrushes and several species, including White's Thrush, became reasonably common, but by contrast the 1974/75 winter has been exceptionally poor.

The Cockatoos and Hill Mynahs have further pressed their claims for inclusion in the Colony List as established feral species.

Several species of our less-common breeding birds are apparently under-recorded and it is essential that records of these species in the spring and summer be submitted in order that any decline in their numbers can be gauged. I include in this category Chinese Francolin, Indian Cuckoo, Collared Scops Owl, Plaintive Cuckoo, Koel, Lesser Coucal, Common Kingfisher, White-breasted Kingfisher, Black-capped Kingfisher, Large White-rumped Swift, Great Barbet, Blacked-naped Oriole, Hair-crested Drongo, Fantail Warbler and Violet Whistling Thrush. Several of these species have unmistakable calls which do not make sight records essential. Generally speaking, our common breeding birds are not recorded by observers as they are probably rightly taken for granted, but on the other hand the rare species are well documented. However, between these two groups are the less-common breeding birds which although quite regularly seen and heard are often not made the subject of written records.

I feel that some clarification of place-names used in the Systematic List is required. Firstly, where several records for a species have been submitted for various parts of the marshes, e.g. Lok Ma Chau, Luen Tak, Mai Po, Sha Po, etc., I have used the general 'Deep Bay Marshes' or the wider 'Deep Bay area' to include the coastline and the Mong Tseng/Lau Fau Shan/Nim Wan area,

but I have been more specific in the case of breeding records or where records have been few or localised. Secondly, I have reduced the number of place-names by referring to 'near Saikung' or the 'Tai Po area' for instance rather than listing obscure villages or features. Finally, as a matter of protection, I have been deliberately vague when referring to the breeding localities of certain rare species.

Many of this year's records have been very kindly vetted by the outgoing Hon. Recorder, M. A. Webster. From 1975, the Recorder's task has been made less onerous by the appointment of a Rarities Committee comprising, in the first instance, four experienced observers. The Committee will examine records of rare and new species as well as reviewing doubtful records previously accepted.

The Systematic List incorporates records from the following observers:—

Dr. R. J. Barnes, D. Bradford, P. Branwhite, J. M. G. Chapman,
Dr. F. Cooke, Supt. D. J. Galloway, T. P. Garland, R. E. Hale, X
I. W. Harris, F. O. P. Hechtel, R. J. Isherwood, D. Melville, ✓
K. Oldfield, A. Proud, K. R. S. Proud, H. Quilliam, P. A. Reed, ✓
Dr. K. C. Searle, R. P. Tipper, C. A. Viney, M. A. Webster,
B. D. Wilson. ✓

? Stand
Fisher

SYSTEMATIC LIST FOR 1974

2. Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Single birds at Deep Bay on 10 February and at Lok Ma Chau on 3 March. Up to nine at Deep Bay from 15 December.

4. Little Grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis*)

Up to four at Mai Po throughout the year, where single juveniles were seen with adults during the summer. Elsewhere, a few birds were seen at various reservoirs in the New Territories until mid-March. One on a fishpond in the Lam Tsuen Valley in early December.

7x. Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*)

Up to 60 at Deep Bay until 15 April; the maximum count being made on 10 March. A pelican not specifically identified was seen there on 26 December.

8. Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Large gatherings of up to 400 in the Deep Bay area from 8 November including flocks over the main marsh. Up to 20 at Plover Cove during February and March and a single bird there in October. Up to 30 at Stonecutters' Island from mid-October and through November but only one seen there earlier in the year. Elsewhere, odd birds were seen in widespread areas during the winter months. Extreme dates were until 4 April and from 3 October.

12. Yellow Bittern (*Ixobrychus sinensis*)

All records are from the Deep Bay Marshes where an estimated 30 to 50 pairs bred. Outside of the summer months up to three seen in both winters.

13. Chestnut Bittern (*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*)

One or two on the Deep Bay Marshes between 12 May and 26 August. Two north of Saikung on 16 July.

14. Black Bittern (*Ixobrychus flavicollis*)

One at Mai Po on 13 July.

15. Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*)

One or two at Mai Po between 5 January and 26 March. One there between 8 and 22 December.

15x. Japanese Night Heron (*Gorsachius goisagi*)

One flew into a flat on Victoria Peak on 10 November and was subsequently identified and graciously cared for by Dr. K. C. Searle and his staff at the Botanical Gardens. It fed exclusively on a diet of earthworms and after a full recovery was released at Tai

Po Kau on 26 November by FOPH. This was the second Colony record.

16. Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Up to eight, including two young in July, at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry between 26 April and 14 July. At dusk on 18 June eight were seen to fly up from the mangroves at Mai Po and fly inland. Up to five, including on one occasion two immatures, were recorded at Mai Po between 3 August and 13 October.

17. Chinese Pond Heron (*Ardeola bacchus*)

Present throughout the year in the northern New Territories. Large numbers bred at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry. 60 pairs were noted at the Lok Ma Chau Egrettry in June. At the smaller egrettries five pairs bred at Mai Po and one or two pairs at Au Tau.

Odd birds at Kai Tak on 30 September and Ho Chung on 24 November.

18. Cattle Egret (*Ardeola ibis*)

Common in northern New Territories between late March and October but wintering birds at Lok Ma Chau and Long Valley in early January. Large numbers bred at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry where during the evening of 15 June huge numbers were present and for a short while 50 birds a minute arrived from the west to roost. 40 pairs were estimated at Lok Ma Chau Egrettry on 24 June. Three or four pairs were seen at Mai Po and Au Tau Egrettries in mid-June.

Elsewhere, up to six at Stonecutters' Island between 28 March and 26 April and odd birds at Kai Tak in October and Saikung on 10 November.

19. Little Green Heron (*Boturides striatus*)

One at Ho Chung on 16 January and two there on 11 July. Single birds north of Saikung on 21 February, 2 March and 16 July. One at Plover Cove on 22 March. Up to five at Mai Po between 28 April and 22 September. One at Yim Tso Ha on 14 July. One at Silvermine Bay on 20 October.

20. Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Common throughout the year in the northern New Territories. An estimated 150 pairs bred at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry, where breeding adults were present from 22 March. At the now destroyed Au Tau Egrettry 40 nests were constructed as early as 10 March and by 26 March over 300 birds were present.

At Lok Ma Chau Egrettry 150 pairs were noted on 24 June and at Mai Po Egrettry at least 12 pairs bred.

Following last year's sighting a 'grey phase' birds was present

at Mai Po between 2 July and 13 September. Elsewhere, two at Kai Tak on 21 October and 14 seen flying west there on 31 October and up to four at Ho Chung between 23 October and 10 November.

21. Lesser Egret (*Egretta intermedia*)

Five egrets intermediate in size between *E. garzetta* and *E. alba* were at Mai Po on 1 December and three there on 30 November were probably part of this group. These egrets had rounded heads and short stubby bills which were dull yellow with black tip and base. The facial skin was greenish-yellow, legs and feet black. Although most probably this species the dark base to the bill does not tally with available published descriptions.

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

One or two at Yim Tso Ha Egretty between 13 April and 15 June.

23. Reef Egret (*Egretta sacra*)

Recorded in small numbers along rocky shores throughout the year. Well recorded from Victoria Harbour with up to six seen off Kai Tak in the latter part of the year. Five at Peng Chau on 18 April.

24. Great Egret (*Egretta alba*)

Present in small numbers on the Deep Bay Marshes during the winter months but an unusual summer record of two at Mai Po on 1 July. Two at Stonecutters's Island on 27 March. Single birds at Yim Tso Ha Egretty on 28 April and 14 July. Four at Tai Po on 22 October. Up to seven at Ho Chung between 23 October and 10 November. These records are more widespread than usual.

25. Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Apart from odd birds at Mai Po on 7 and 14 July up to 200 were recorded in the Deep Bay area until 19 May and from 3 August. Peak numbers were reached in January and from mid-October. Elsewhere, single birds were seen at Ho Chung and Kai Tak between 23 October and 11 November.

26. Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*)

Regularly recorded at the Deep Bay Marshes, up to five until 19 May. At dusk on 16 June 27 were counted flying in ones and twos from the north and north-east (China and the mouth of the Sham Chun River) towards the south and south-west where they appeared to come down somewhere near San Tin. Apart from 50 on 11 October, up to 20 were regularly seen from 24 June until the end of the year, but with few records for December.

Elsewhere, single birds were seen at Kai Tak on 31 October and flying over the Lam Tsuen Valley on 8 December.

28. Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*)

Two at Mai Po on 24 November.

29. White Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*)

A flock of 25 on the Deep Bay Marshes on 6 January, otherwise up to three seen there until 25 April. One at Mai Po on 2 June and three adults were resting at the now destroyed Au Tau Egretty on 16 June but there were no indications of breeding. Up to six seen again on the Deep Bay Marshes from 13 August onwards. One at Mong Tseng on 26 December.

31. Lesser Spoonbill (*Platalea minor*)

One at Mai Po on 6 January and one or two regularly there from 13 August onwards.

32. Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Ten at Mai Po on 8 November and two there the following day.

33. Yellow-nib Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*)

All records are for the Deep Bay area. Two seen during January is the only record from the early part of the year. Six on 13 July is an unusual summer record but coincides with a similar record for 1973. Common from 2 August until 2 November when up to 50 were seen, including a flock of 30 on 11 October.

34. Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Three, including a drake coming into full plumage, at Mai Po on 8 November.

35. Falcated Teal (*Anas falcata*)

Several males at Mai Po on 5 January. c700 at Deep Bay on 6 January. Up to 20 at Mai Po between 26 October and 10 November. A weak female at Kai Tak on 20 December was possibly an escape.

36. Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Huge flocks of c1100 and c2000 at Deep Bay on 6 and 20 January, respectively. Otherwise, only up to 11 in the area until 31 March. Up to five at Long Valley until 25 March. Common in the Deep Bay area from 15 September onwards where over 100 were regularly seen with a maximum of 300 at Mai Po during December. Single birds at Kai Tak and at the Hung Hom Reclamation in mid-November are unusual records.

38. Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

Up to 12 at Lok Ma Chau between 25 and 28 April. In the autumn up to 100 at Mai Po between 5 September and 24 November. A male and a female at Kai Tak on 24 October; the male also being seen the following day.

39. Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

A male at Mai Po on 5 January and eight at Deep Bay on 6 January. Up to 60 at Mai Po between 2 November and 11 December.

40. Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

One at Mai Po on 5 January. Eight at Deep Bay on 6 January and four there on 20 January. Recorded at Mai Po from 6 October onwards, usually only a few birds but over 100 seen on 10 November.

41. Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

A drake at Mai Po on 13 January and over 25 at Deep Bay on 20 January. Up to 20 in the Deep Bay area between 2 November and 12 December.

46. Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

One seen in Castle Peak Bay on 15 and 26 December. Two at Mai Po on 22 December. One at Nim Wan (Deep Bay) on 29 December.

47. Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Up to four in the Deep Bay area between 6 and 13 January and up to 35 there during December.

48x. Cotton Teal (*Nettapus coromandelianus*)

A female or eclipse bird at Mai Po on 23 October. This is the second Colony record.

51. Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis*)

One in very good plumage at Kai Tak on 16 and 17 December. This is the second Colony record.

52. Black-eared Kite (*Milvus migrans*)

Common and widespread. Groups of up to 200 recorded soaring over Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong Island, North-west Kowloon and the Tai Po area in the winter months.

54. Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Quite common and widespread during both winters. Five at San Tin on 6 January. Extreme dates were until 25 March and from 23 October.

56. Sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Single birds at Kowloon Hills on 18 March and at Ho Man Tin during April.

61. Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*)

Up to three in the Long Valley/Lok Ma Chau area until 24 March. An immature at Sek Kong on 3 March. One or two in

the Long Valley area from 25 October onwards and one at Mai Po on 24 November.

62. Steppe Eagle (*Aquila rapax*)

Single birds at Long Valley on 23 January and 25 October.

64. Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*)

Recorded throughout the year in widespread areas. Breeding activity was noted in February and December and indications are that as many as three pairs bred or attempted to do so.

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

Up to four together, including adults with immatures, recorded throughout the year from the eastern coastline, southern Hong Kong Island, Tolo Harbour and several offshore islands. An eyrie on a small island was in use both in February and December and the presence of young birds in the area early in the year indicates that breeding was successful.

67. Grey-faced Buzzard-eagle (*Butastur indicus*)

One at Tai Po Kau on 14 December.

68. Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis cheela*)

One north of Plover Cove on 1 January. A probable near Saikung on 16 February.

69. Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

Up to four on the Deep Bay Marshes until 15 April and up to five there from 1 October. Odd birds at Long Valley on 23 January and 25 March.

70. Pied Harrier (*Circus melanoleucos*)

Single males at Mai Po on 13 January and 26 February.

71. Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

A female 'ring-tailed harrier' on the Deep Bay Marshes on 24 October was probably this species.

73. Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*)

One or two in the Long Valley/Lok Ma Chau area during December.

74. Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Up to four in the Deep Bay area until 2 April and from 11 October onwards. One at Plover Cove on 1 January and 23 February.

76. Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

An adult and an immature at Mai Po on 26 October. One at Kai Tak on 1 November.

- 77. Peregrine Falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*)
Single birds in the urban area throughout the year. One was seen to catch a budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) at Kai Tak. Single birds also recorded from the Deep Bay area in most months. One near Saikung on 11 July and two there on 1 October. One over Junk Bay on 16 October was being mobbed by a Hair-crested Drongo (*Dicrurus hottentottus*).
- 79. Merlin** (*Falco columbarius*)
A probable at Mai Po on 9 November.
- 81. Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*)
Quite common and widespread during both winters. Extreme dates were until 17th April and from 29 September, apart from an exceptional summer record of one at Kowloon Peak on 23 June.
- 82. Chinese Francolin** (*Francolinus pintadeanus*)
Recorded in widespread areas of the New Territories and Hong Kong Island. One flushed at Tai Po Kau on 14 September collided with an observer causing minor but painful injuries.
- 83. Quail** (*Coturnix coturnix*)
A bird previously captured at the Hong Kong Cricket Club died on 2 January (see The Hong Kong Bird Report, 1973). Quails not specifically identified were flushed at Kai Tak in October and November.
- 86. Yellow-legged Button-quail** (*Turnix tanki*)
An injured bird was found at Kai Tak on 8 October. This is the first confirmed record for several years and certainly a new early date.
- 88. Water Rail** (*Rallus aquaticus*)
One at Mai Po on 1 December.
- 89. Banded Rail** (*Rallus striatus*)
Up to four recorded at Mai Po throughout the year. Single birds at Ho Chung on 15 March and Liu Pok on 25 March.
- 91. Ruddy Crake** (*Porzana fusca*)
The remains of a crake found at Kai Tak on 11 November were almost certainly of this species.
- 93. White-breasted Waterhen** (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*)
Quite common and widespread in the New Territories. Several family parties with downy young at Mai Po and Sha Po in the summer.
- 94. Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*)
Present on the Deep Bay Marshes throughout the year, usually

in small numbers but over 30 at Lok Ma Chau on 25 April. Successful breeding recorded at Mai Po, Sha Po and Lok Ma Chau. Also seen at Ho Chung and Liu Pok early in the year.

- 95. Watercock** (*Gallicrex cinerea*)
At least one pair were present at Mai Po between 5 May and 26 July and a display flight witnessed on the latter date indicates that breeding may have occurred. Also recorded from Lok Ma Chau on 2 June and 3 August, Lau Fau Shan on 24 June and at Mai Po again on 26 October.
- 96. Coot** (*Fulica atra*)
Quite numerous on the Deep Bay Marshes until 24 March, with up to 300 being recorded. Up to five at Mai Po between 19 May and 21 July, but formal proof of breeding is still lacking. Up to 140 returned to the marshes from 23 October onwards. Single birds at Starling Inlet on 1 January and Tai O on 19 February.
- 97. Pheasant-tailed Jacana** (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*)
A pair at Mai Po between 12 May and 21 July. Up to five, including three juveniles at Sha Po between 7 July and 25 September. One at Lok Ma Chau on 1 December.
- 98. Painted Snipe** (*Rostratula benghalensis*)
A male at Mai Po on 13 October. Hunters reported that several were shot at Long Valley in the autumn. One found dead at Kai Tak in early November.
- 100. Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)
17 at Long Valley and one at Saikung on 1 January. Up to ten at Lok Ma Chau during January. 11 at Mai Po on 3 February.
- 101. Grey-headed Lapwing** (*Microsarcops cinereus*)
Four at Long Valley until 20 February. One at Kai Tak on 15 and 17 March. One at Mai Po between 13 October and 2 November. Up to seven at Long Valley from 15 October onwards.
- 103. Little Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius dubius*)
Regularly reported from widespread areas of the New Territories and Kai Tak until 3 May and from 29 September. Usually only small flocks but up to 50 together in the Deep Bay area during the autumn.
- 104. Kentish Plover** (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)
Quite common in the Deep Bay area during both winters and regular at Kai Tak from 30 September. Large flocks at Mai Po included several hundred on 20 January, 200 on 10 November and 500 on 29 December. At Kai Tak up to 94 were seen in the autumn. Up to 15 wintered at Saikung from 10 November. Two

or three on the Hung Hom Reclamation during November. Two at Kai Tak on 14 June and 11 at Lau Fau Shan on 24 June are unusual summer records.

105. Greater Sand-plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)

106. Mongolian Sand-plover (*Charadrius mongolus*)

Most records are confined to the passages. At Mai Po up to 40 were present between 13 April and 27 May when full plumaged birds of both species were identified. Up to seven at Kai Tak between 21 March and 26 April. Over ten *C. mongolus* at Sha Tau Kok on 27 March. One at Stonecutters' Island on 26 April. Two at Lau Fau Shan on 24 June. During the autumn, up to 15 of either species at Mai Po between 6 July and 10 November, one or two at Kai Tak between 16 July and 21 October and three at Nim Wan on 23 October. Up to ten wintering *C. leschenaultii* at Sai-kung from 10 November and two at Lok Ma Chau on 22 December. (Unless mentioned records are for sand-plovers not specifically identified).

107. Oriental Plover (*Charadrius veredus*)

Single birds at Mai Po on 5 September and at Kai Tak between 21 and 25 October.

108. Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Up to three at Mai Po between 13 April and 27 May. One at Kai Tak on 19 April. Up to six at Mai Po from 17 October onwards. One at Kai Tak on 18 and 19 November.

109. Asiatic Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominicus*)

Three at Kai Tak on 21 March and one there on 30 April. Up to 12 at Mai Po between 25 and 28 April. Four at Mai Po on 26 August and up to 17 at Lok Ma Chau and Mai Po between 5 October and 10 November. Up to four at Kai Tak between 10 September and 26 November.

110. Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

Single birds at Lok Ma Chau on 22 April and Mai Po on 25 April.

111. Fantail Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

112. Pintail Snipe (*Gallinago stenura*)

113. Swinhoe's Snipe (*Gallinago megala*)

Snipe sp. were quite common and widespread during both winters, being recorded from the Deep Bay area (principally Lok Ma Chau in good numbers), Long Valley, Plover Cove, Saikung, Sek Kong, Kai Tak and Tai Tam. Records of specifically identified birds were:—

G. gallinago. Most of the snipe wintering at Lok Ma Chau appeared to be of this species. Two shot by hunters at Long Valley on 20 January and another shot there on 13 October. A wounded bird found at Ping Shan on 23 January. Ten at Plover Cove on 24 February. Two at Mai Po on 13 and 15 April.

G. stenura. One in a hunter's bag at Long Valley on 13 October.

G. megala. One at Lok Ma Chau on 28 April.

The extreme dates for snipe sp. were until 28 April and from 27 August.

114. Solitary Snipe (*Gallinago solitaria*)

One at Sek Kong Woods on 3 February. This is the second Colony record.

116. Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

One in Government House Garden on 28 January. Two at Kowloon Reservoirs on 3 March. Single birds at Mai Po Wood on 24 October and High Island on 22 December.

117. Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Two at Mai Po on 15 April. Up to five there between 31 July and 30 November.

118. Australian Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*)

One at Kai Tak on 21 October.

119. Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Up to eight at Mai Po between 25 April and 5 May and up to six there between 15 August and 13 October. A flock of 85 at Mirs Bay on 2 September. Up to three at Kai Tak between 6 and 20 September. Up to six at Tai Po between 21 September and 10 October.

120. Little Whimbrel (*Numenius minutus*)

Up to four at Kai Tak between 21 and 25 October. This is the second Colony record.

121. Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

One at Mai Po on 8 January. Up to 18 at Lok Ma Chau between 25 and 28 April. Up to three regularly seen on the Deep Bay Marshes from 13 August onwards.

122x. Asiatic Dowitcher (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*)

Four at Lok Ma Chau and six at Mai Po on 25 April were seen within an hour of each other indicating separate parties of this scarce species. Only one at Lok Ma Chau on 27 April. One at Mai Po on 13 August.

123. Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Widespread records from the New Territories until 25 April and from 31 August. Usually seen in ones or twos but occasionally small flocks of up to ten. One at the Hung Hom Reclamation on 25 November.

124. Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

Up to 40 on the Deep Bay Marshes until 28 April and up to 200 from 3 August with flocks of up to 50 regularly seen. Elsewhere, four or five at Long Valley between 23 January and 8 February. At Kai Tak, one on 9 April and up to four between 3 September and 21 October. One near Tai Po on 12 April. Although commoner on passage several remained during both winters at Lok Ma Chau.

125. Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*)

Common and widespread until mid-May and from mid-August although single birds at Mai Po on 16 June, 7 and 13 July, two at Kai Tak on 5 July and one at Kau Yi Chau on 8 July.

126. Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Ten at Mai Po on 20 January and eight there on 23 January are exceptional winter records. During the spring passage, one at Kai Tak on 21 March and up to 50 on the Deep Bay Marshes between 3 August and 10 November.

between 13 April and 27 May. In the autumn up to 15 on the Deep Bay Marshes

127. Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

Only recorded from the Deep Bay Marshes where it was quite common until 5 May and from 21 September. Up to 200 recorded in both winters.

128. Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Up to 67 on the Deep Bay Marshes between 6 and 23 January and up to 20 there between 15 and 28 April. One at Kai Tak on 26 April. Up to eight regularly on the Deep Bay Marshes from 20 August onwards. Single birds at Nim Wan on 23 October and Kai Tak on 6 December.

129. Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*)

Up to 20 on the Deep Bay Marshes during both passages. Extreme dates were 3 March until 19 May (most records for late April) and 26 August until 24 November.

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

Widespread during the spring passage. Two at Stonecutters' Island on 23 April, up to four on the Deep Bay Marshes between 25 April and 26 May, one at Kai Tak on 17 May and five at Sha Tau Kok on 19 May. In the autumn, one or two at Mai Po

between 15 and 31 August and one on 1 October and up to four at Kai Tak between 3 September and 11 November.

131. Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*)

One at Kai Tak on 21 March and two there on 26 April. Up to nine at Mai Po between 25 and 28 April and one on 26 May. In the autumn, up to 12 at Mai Po between 15 and 26 August.

132. Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

Two at Mai Po on 6 October.

134. Eastern Little Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)

One at Ho Chung on 28 February. Up to 150 on the Deep Bay Marshes between 10 March and 26 May. Three near Tai Po on 12 April. One at Kai Tak on 26 April and three there on 17 May. Up to 20 on the Deep Bay Marshes between 29 September and 24 November. One at Nim Wan on 17 and 23 October.

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

Up to 20 on the Deep Bay Marshes until 28 April and 25 from 29 September. Records are principally from the Lok Ma Chau area of the marsh.

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

Up to 20 on the Deep Bay Marshes between 3 February and 31 March. Five at Mai Po on 29 September and up to ten at Lok Ma Chau between 1 and 18 December.

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

One at Kai Tak on 3 May and up to six on the Deep Bay Marshes on 19 May. Up to three regularly at Kai Tak between 10 September and 25 October.

138. Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Up to 100 at Mai Po on 6 and 20 January. Four at Sha Tau Kok on 27 March. Up to six at Kai Tak between 20 September and 12 November. Up to 100 in the Deep Bay area from 1 October onwards.

139. Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Up to 50 on the Deep Bay Marshes between 13 April and 26 May. Three at Mai Po on 29 September.

140. Sanderling (*Crocethia alba*)

Three at Kai Tak on 26 April. Two at Lok Ma Chau on 19 May. A flock of 119 at Mai Po on 25 May.

142. Broad-billed Sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*)

One at Kai Tak on 26 April and two at Mai Po on 26 May.

143. Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

One at Lok Ma Chau on 25 April. Two at Mai Po on 29 September and 6 October. Two at Lok Ma Chau on 23 October.

144. Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*)

Six in the Lamma Channel on 16 March and two there on 14 April. Ten at Junk Bay and 50 near the Ninepins on 14 April. Over 30 seen again near the Ninepins on 19 May.

145. Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)

Only recorded from Mai Po. One on 13 July is an exceptionally early record. Up to 18 between 31 August and 12 October. One on 8 December.

146. Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

Five at Mai Po on 5 January.

147. Oriental Pratincole (*Glareola maldivarum*)

Five at Shuen Wan (near Tai Po) on 24 February. One found dead at Kai Tak on 28 February and up to five regularly there until 3 May. 15 at Mai Po on 31 March. During the summer several interesting records from Kai Tak of two adults and two juveniles on 31 May, one juvenile on 7 June, five adults and up to 12 juveniles on 14 June and one juvenile on 17 June. In the autumn, single birds at Kai Tak on 21 and 24 October and 25 there on 31 October. At Mai Po, 25 on 23 October and 14 on 3 November.

148. Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Regularly recorded from Victoria Harbour and Deep Bay during both winters. Also recorded from the West Lamma Channel (300+ on 23 March) and Plover Cove. Extreme dates were until 5 April and from 8 November.

149. Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)

Up to three probables in Victoria Harbour until 25 March. (D.S.M.)

150. Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

A first year bird at Kai Tak on 15 March (D.S.M.). This is the third Colony record (the first since 1936) and the only record for which a satisfactory description is available.

150x. Brown-headed Gull (*Larus brunicephalus*)

One seen off Green Island on 21 November (D.S.M.). This is a new species to the Colony. The adult bird in winter plumage has a distinctive wing pattern which readily distinguishes it from the generally similar *L. ridibundus* and *L. canus*. The most striking feature of the wing pattern is the large area of black on the wing tips and a prominent white spot in the centre of this, next to this

black area is a patch of white and grey. This species breeds in high Central Asia from Afghanistan to Tibet and winters south to India, Ceylon, Indo-China and as far north as the Gobi Desert. Hong Kong can be considered at the edge of its winter range. It has been recorded again in early 1975 from several localities.

151. Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*)

Up to three at Nim Wan (Deep Bay) from 15 December. Single first and second year birds at Kai Tak on 20 December. One at Castle Peak Bay on 29 December.

151x. Great Black-headed Gull (*Larus ichthyaetus*)

One adult in a huge flock of gulls about a mile south of Lau Fau Shan (Deep Bay) on 26 December (M.A.W., R.E.H.). It was noted as slightly larger than both races of accompanying *L. argentatus* and mantle paler grey; legs orange-yellow; bill yellow grading into red with subterminal black band and pale tip; crescent-shaped white marks above and below rear half of eye; forehead white, crown down to nape (level with eye) brownish grey; bill noticeably heavier, more hooked and longer than *L. argentatus*. In flight, tip of wing white, outer half of outer primaries black with white mirrors, rest of outer primaries white; inner primaries and secondaries grey, with white leading and more conspicuously white trailing edges; tail white. When swimming posture more upright than *L. argentatus*. This is a new species to the Colony. This gull breeds from the Caspian to north-west Mongolia and winters south to the Persian Gulf area and Indian Ocean east to Burma. This record is certainly for a straggler as it appears that this species has not been recorded east of Burma previously.

152. Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Very common in Victoria Harbour and approaches and in the Deep Bay area during both winters. Also recorded at Saikung, Junk Bay and Tai Tam. 1450 counted at Kai Tak on 20 December. Extreme dates were until 5 April and from 29 September, but an adult in summer plumage was seen at Mai Po on 26 August.

152x. Saunders' Gull (*Larus saundersi*)

Up to three at Mai Po until 3 February and reported again on 10 November and 1 December.

154. White-winged Black Tern (*Chlidonias leucoptera*)

Two at Lok Ma Chau on 7 May. Five at Mirs Bay on 16 May. Up to eight at Mai Po between 1 and 5 September.

155. Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*)

Seven at Mai Po on 30 June and two the following day. Up to 30 there from 5 September onwards. One at Kai Tak on 21 October.

156. Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)

One at Mai Po on 15 June. 12 at Lok Ma Chau on 1 September. Ten at Mirs Bay on 2 September. Five at Kai Tak on 21 October. Several hundred terns seen at Mirs Bay on 25 and 26 August were probably this species.

157. Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

Common in the Deep Bay area until 24 June, usually in small numbers but a flock of 35 at Mai Po on 16 June. One at Mai Po on 5 September. One found dead at Kai Tak on 21 October. Three at Tai Po on 22 October. Two at Saikung on 10 November after ayphoon. Common in the Deep Bay area again from 8 November, with a maximum of 20 at Nim Wan on 15 December.

158/158x Common/Arctic/Roseate Tern (*Sterna sp.*)

A tern of this group at Mai Po on 2 June. Four at Kai Tak on 21 October, including a first-year bird with very long tail feathers which may have been a roseate tern, *s. dougallii*. One there on 29 October.

160. Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*)

One at Kai Tak on 21 October.

164. Rufous Turtle-dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*)

Scarce. Two at Beas River on 12 January. One at Tai Po Kau on 1 March. Three at Route Twisk on 31 March. One at Tai Po Kau on 14 and 29 December. One at Pak Nai on 22 December.

165. Spotted Dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*)

Common and widespread. 25 over the outer bund at Mai Po on 20 January.

166. Red Turtle-dove (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*)

Three records from the Deep Bay Marshes of up to nine between 5 September and 12 October.

166x. Emerald Dove (*Chalcophaps indica*)

One or two seen at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, regularly until 28 February and thereafter on 26 May, 25 October and 1 November.

167. Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)

Frequently recorded from the Central/Happy Valley area in small flocks of up to 15. A roost containing over 30 was located in two banyan trees in Sports Road, Happy Valley on 30 July. In Kowloon, flocks of up to 25 were regularly seen. Also often seen at Sek Kong and in the Deep Bay area in flocks up to 16. One at Tweed Bay on 3 March.

168. Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

One at She Shan on 13 April.

170. Indian Cuckoo (*Cuculus micropterus*)

Recorded from Fanling Golf Course (up to three), Lok Ma Chau/Mai Po, Chi Ma Wan-Lantau and Ma Wan Island between 20 April and 16 June.

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

Heard at Tai Po Kau on 26 May.

172. Plaintive Cuckoo (*Cacomantis merulinus*)

Quite common and widespread between 23 February and late July. One at Sek Kong Woods on 24 November.

173. Red-winged Crested Cuckoo (*Clamator coromandus*)

One flew into a flat on Old Peak Road on 19 April and was subsequently released by Dr. K. C. Searle on 22 April.

175. Koel (*Eudynamis scolopacea*)

Recorded from the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, Three Fathoms Cove, Ho Chung, Fanling, Lok Ma Chau and Sha Tau Kok. It is likely that birds bred at these localities and elsewhere but this species is under-recorded. Noted in all months except January.

176. Greater Coucal (*Centropus sinensis*)

Common and widespread.

177. Lesser Coucal (*Centropus toulou*)

Scarce. One at She Shan on 13 January. One at Clearwater Bay on 24 January. A juvenile, unable to fly, at Plover Cove on 14 February. Single birds at Tai Po Kau on 26 May, Ho Chung on 8 June, Lam Tsuen Valley on 1 September and Mong Tseng on 17 November and 26 December. This species is probably under-recorded.

180. Collared Scops Owl (*Otus bakkamoena*)

Two at Po Shan Road, Hong Kong Island during February and early March and heard there again in late December. Birds also heard at Sha Lo Wan, Lantau in mid-January and at Tai Po Kau in early March.

181x. Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

A medium/large owl with typical flight of this species was seen over the Mai Po Marshes at mid-day on 9 November. As the bird was not seen through binoculars this record is regarded as only probable.

185. Japanese Nightjar (*Caprimulgus indicus*)

An adult male with an extensive brood patch was found with a broken wing at Shing Mun on 14 November. Dead birds were collected at Kai Tak on 18 and 25 November.

186. Savannah Nightjar (*Caprimulgus affinis*)

One flushed at Mong Tseng on 10 February. One found dead at Kai Tak on 6 December.

185/186 Nightjar sp. (*Caprimulgus sp.*)

Up to five 'churring' at Fanling Golf Course during the early evenings of 14 to 16 June. One unidentified nightjar at Mong Tseng on 17 November. The remains of a nightjar, not specifically identifiable, collected at Kai Tak on 6 December.

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

Recorded from Mai Po, eastern Hong Kong Island, Ho Chung, Kowloon Peak, Tai Po Kau and Lamma Island in small groups of up to 30 between 3 February and 14 September. This species is probably under-recorded.

188. House Swift (*Apus affinis*)

Quite common over urban Hong Kong and Kowloon in most months. Up to 70 at Happy Valley in early January. Also recorded from Tai Po in March, Yuen Long in June where there is a large colony and at Shueng Shui where one or two pairs bred.

189. Pied Kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*)

Up to three on the Deep Bay Marshes throughout the year, but more regular in the summer months. Single birds at Sha Tau Kok on 26 April and Plover Cove on 11 May.

191. Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Locally common and widespread until late-April and from mid-August. Summer records are from Lok Ma Chau, Mai Po, Ho Chung and Tai Tam. Odd birds at Kai Tak in October and November.

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

Common and widespread in the New Territories until late-April and from mid-August. Summer records are from Lok Ma Chau, Mai Po, Ho Chung, Sha Tau Kok and Fanling Golf Course. Odd birds at Kai Tak in March and mid-November onwards. One in central Kowloon on 22 November.

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

One or two recorded from widespread areas throughout the year, but principally the winter months. Summer records are from Sha Tau Kok, Ho Chung, Route Twisk and Sek Kong.

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

One near Tai Po on 3 May. Single birds near Saikung on 1 October, at Sek Kong Woods on 15 October and Clearwater Bay on 23 October.

196. Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)

One at Lok Ma Chau between 25 October and 1 November.

197. Great Barbet (*Megalaima virens*)

Up to eight recorded from the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve. One or two in the Lam Tsuen Valley in February and March. Also recorded from Ho Chung in early June.

199. Rufous Woodpecker (*Micropternus brachyurus*)

One at She Shan on 15 January.

200. Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)

Single birds at Tai Po Kau on 14 September, Mai Po on 25 September and 8 December, the Hung Hom Reclamation on 16 November and 25 December and Mong Tseng on 26 December.

202. Small Skylark (*Alauda gulgula*)

An interesting series of records from Kai Tak where a pair successfully bred, which is the first definite proof of breeding in the Colony. Skylarks were first recorded there on 7 March and up to five were noted during this month. Only a single bird was seen during April, May and June but on 5 July two adults were found with a fully fledged young. One or two were noted thereafter in July and August increasing to ten during September and October. Maximum numbers were achieved in early November when as many as 22 were counted. Up to ten remained there until the end of the year. Nearby, at the Hung Hom Reclamation skylarks were first noticed on 12 November and up to 16 were counted there until the end of the year. Elsewhere, single birds were seen at Sek Kong on 8 December and Mong Tseng on 26 December.

Reasonable doubts have been raised as to whether all of these birds, particularly those wintering here, are in fact *A. gulgula* and not *A. arvensis*, the European skylark. Apparently the two species are virtually inseparable unless examined in the hand.

203. Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Common and widespread between March and August but also recorded in small numbers outside of these months.

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

Four records from the Deep Bay Marshes of five on 27 January, one on 22 April, two on 12 October and three on 29 December.

- 205. House-martin** (*Delichon urbica*)
One at Lok Ma Chau on 26 February.
- 206. Sand-martin** (*Riparia riparia*)
One at Mai Po on 23 January.
- 208. Rufous-backed Shrike** (*Lanius schach*)
Common and widespread but generally avoids urban areas. A confusing 'dusky shrike' resident in Kowloon Tong from October onwards had pure white primaries.
- 210. Brown Shrike** (*Lanius cristatus*)
Scarce, but recorded from widespread areas until 26 April and from 26 August.
- 211. Black-naped Oriole** (*Oriolus chinensis*)
Two pairs definitely bred at Fanling Golf Course and as many as five pairs were present in the area in mid-June. Four adults at Tai Po on 21 April. A female at Tai Om on 19 May. A pair in a garden at Tai Po Kau on 8 June. An immature at Pokfulam on 22 September. Single birds were again quite regularly recorded at Sek Kong Woods during both winters. One at Long Valley on 15 December.
- 212. Black Drongo** (*Dicrurus macrocercus*)
Quite common and widespread from early April until the end of October. Two or three pairs bred at Fanling Golf Course and several newly fledged young were seen at Stonecutters' Island at the end of June. Gatherings of up to ten noted in early October at Cheung Chau, Shuen Wan and Three Fathoms Cove. Fairly regular winter records from Lok Ma Chau, Long Valley, Mong Tseng, Saikung and Tung Chung on Lantau.
- 213. Ashy Drongo** (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*)
One at Sek Kong Woods on 6 January.
- 214. Hair-crested Drongo** (*Dicrurus hottentottus*)
From the records submitted it appears that pairs bred at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, Ho Chung, She Shan and Shing Mun but this species is probably under-recorded. Also seen at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau in late April and Shouson Hill and Junk Bay in mid-October. Two winter records of single birds at Pokfulam on 4 January and She Shan on 14 December.
- 215. Chinese Starling** (*Sturnus sinensis*)
Quite common in the Deep Bay area (particularly Lok Ma Chau) in small flocks of up to 20 until the end of February. Eight at Sek Kong on 6 January. Single birds at Mai Po in late April and on 16 June a flock of 20 including several young were seen

there; it is interesting to note that the young birds closely resembled *S. sericeus* as they did not have white or even paler grey shoulder patches. Two at Tai Po on 7 May. Five at Sek Kong Woods on 13 August. Flocks of up to 80 regularly recorded at Lok Ma Chau from 29 September onwards.

- 216. Silky Starling** (*Sturnus sericeus*)
Quite common and widespread during both winters including records from Lantau, Lamma Island and Hong Kong Island. Usually seen in flocks with a maximum count of 110+ at Tai Po on 10 November. Extreme dates were until 25 March and from 25 October.
- 217. Grey Starling** (*Sturnus cineraceus*)
Up to nine at Lok Ma Chau until 6 January. One at Long Valley on 6 January. Two at Ping Shan on 10 February. One or two at Lok Ma Chau on 25 and 26 October and 1 December. Two in central Kowloon on 2 November.
- 217x. Common Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
Up to ten remained at Lok Ma Chau until 26 February and three returned from 25 October onwards.
- 218. Black-necked Starling** (*Sturnus nigricollis*)
Locally common in the New Territories throughout the year. In the eastern New Territories it has expanded its range to include Junk Bay and can now be seen within one or two miles of Kowloon. The roost at Fanling Golf Course contained at least 50 birds, including many young, in mid-June. Three at Sha Lo Wan on 18 January indicates that Lantau is included within this species range.
- 219. Common Mynah** (*Acridotheres tristis*)
One at Ping Shan on 2 June. Two at San Tin on 16 June. One at Mong Tseng on 26 December.
- 220. Crested Mynah** (*Acridotheres cristatellus*)
Common and widespread.
- 221. Jay** (*Garrulus glandarius*)
Single birds recorded at Tai Po Kau on 11 January, 9 February and late December. One at Saikung on 1 January and one at Kowloon Reservoirs on 26 January. One or two at She Shan between 17 February and 7 April. Three at Shing Mun on 27 February and one there on 22 November.
- 222. Blue Magpie** (*Urocissa erythrorhyncha*)
Common on Hong Kong Island but only locally common in the New Territories.

- 223. Magpie** (*Pica pica*)
Common and widespread. A flock of 20 at Fanling on 15 June.
- 224. Treepie** (*Crypsirina formosae*)
Following the irruption of this species the previous year several small flocks were seen in widespread areas of the New Territories until 20 April.
- 226. Jungle Crow** (*Corvus macrorhynchus*)
Locally common in the New Territories and on Hong Kong Island. Two or three on Stonecutters' Island throughout the year. Large numbers regularly seen on the mud at Tai Po with maximum counts of 39 on 16 March and 40 on 10 November.
- 227. Collared Crow** (*Corvus torquatus*)
Seen on the Deep Bay Marshes throughout the year in varying numbers but with a maximum of 15 on 22 September. One or two resident in the Saikung area. Up to six at Stonecutters' Island in the spring and two there in mid-November.
- 228. Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina melaschistos*)
Regularly recorded in ones or twos from widespread areas during both winters. Extreme dates were until 24 March and from 14 September.
- 231. Ashy Minivet** (*Pericrocotus divaricatus*)
Single birds at Tai Po Kau on 14 September and Cheung Chau on 17 October.
- 233. Scarlet Minivet** (*Pericrocotus flammeus*)
Up to six at Tai Po Kau until 7 March and up to 30, including two full plumaged males, there from 11 December. Two at Sek Kong on 3 March. A flock of 15 at She Shan on 24 November and a full plumaged male there on 22 December.
- 234. Chestnut Bulbul** (*Hypsipetes castanotus*)
Following the irruption of this species the previous year several small flocks were seen in widespread areas of the New Territories and Hong Kong Island until 13 April. The maximum number recorded was 30 at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve.
- 235. Black Bulbul** (*Hypsipetes madagascariensis*)
A minor irruption of this species occurred between 3 February and 26 March when it was regularly recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories and Hong Kong Island. Usually seen in small numbers but at least 30 were present in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve.
- 236. Crested Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus jocosus*)
Common and widespread.
- 237. Chinese Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus sinensis*)
Common and widespread. One nest containing three fledglings found in a low bush at Junk Bay in late August. 200+ roosting in the mangroves at Ho Chung in November.
- 238. Red-vented Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*)
Common and widespread but avoids urban areas.
- 243. Black-faced Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax perspicillatus*)
Common and widespread.
- 244. Black-throated Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax chinensis*)
Four near Aberdeen Reservoir on 5 January. Single birds at Chung Hom Kok on 16 January and at Mount Parker on 15 February. Two at separate localities on Victoria Peak during November.
- 245. Hwamei** (*Garrulax canorus*)
Quite common on Hong Kong Island and locally common in the New Territories including a record from Cheung Chau. Although widespread, this species was not as regularly recorded as in 1972 or 1973. A family party with at least one juvenile seen at Fanling Golf Course on 15 June.
- 246. White-cheeked Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax sannio*)
Up to three recorded at Tai Hang, Hong Kong Island in January, March and August. One in central Kowloon on 12 May was probably an escape.
- 246x. Greater Necklaced Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax pectoralis*)
All records are from the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve of up to ten regularly seen until 24 March and again on 5 October.
- 249. Collared Siva** (*Yuhina castaniceps*)
Following the irruption of this species the previous year, one or two flocks of about 30 each remained at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve until 24 March. Flocks were also recorded at Po Shan Road, Hong Kong Island (18 birds), Kowloon Reservoirs (20/30 birds) and She Shan (c30 birds) during January. A small flock of c ten at Mount Parker on 15 February.
- 251. Ince's Paradise Flycatcher** (*Terpsiphone paradisi*)
Single birds were seen at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 3 September and 5 October and at Sek Kong Woods on 29 September.
- 252. Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** (*Terpsiphone atrocaudata*)
A male at She Shan on 7 April and a female/immature at Fanling on 28 and 29 December.

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

One at Sek Kong Woods until 7 March. Two, at different woods, in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 25 January. One at She Shan on 14 December.

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

At least two separate birds at Sek Kong Woods until 7 March. One at Shouson Hill on 5 January.

255. Brown Flycatcher (*Muscicapa latirostris*)

Quite common and widespread in wooded areas until 15 April and from 2 September.

255x. Sooty Flycatcher (*Muscicapa sibirica*)

One at Sek Kong Woods on 27 October and 8 November (D.B., C.A.V.). This is the first Colony record. The general shape was noted as similar to *M. latirostris* and *M. griseisticta* and on the initial observation a direct comparison could be made with the latter species. However, the breast and flanks were dark greyish-brown, almost the same shade as the upper-parts which were just darker. On closer observation of the under-parts, the coloration was seen to comprise of thick close blotches on a paler background but the general effect was of uniform colouration. Centre of breast and lower abdomen paler than flanks. Throat distinctively white clearly contrasting with breast. Edges of wing coverts buff giving the appearance of a wing bar. Indistinct buff/white eye ring. Continually returned to the same perch, a bare branch 25 feet above ground but below the main tree canopy. This species breeds in the eastern palaeartic region and migrates south to Indo-China, Malaysia, North India and South China. There seems to be no reason why this species should not occur here regularly outside of the breeding season.

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

Two at Shing Mun on 11 May and one at Pokfulam on 13 May. One at Cape D'Aguiar on 13 September. One at Tai Hang, Hong Kong Island on 17 October. Two separate birds at the Colonial Cemetery on 24 October and 6 November. Up to five at Sek Kong Woods between 27 October and 10 November.

258. Verditer Flycatcher (*Muscicapa thalassina*)

Quite regularly recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories until 9 March. One at Sek Kong on 29 September is an early sighting. One at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 29 December.

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

Single birds at Sek Kong Woods until 19 March and the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve until 1 March. Elsewhere, one at Lamma

Island on 4 February and the Colonial Cemetery on 27 February. Up to three returned to the Colonial Cemetery between 24 October and 13 November. Single birds at Pokfulam on 27 October, Sek Kong Woods on 10 November and Saikung on 14 December.

260. Robin Flycatcher (*Muscicapa mugimaki*)

A male at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 20 November and a female there on 30 November.

261. Narcissus Flycatcher (*Muscicapa narcissina*)

A male near Ma On Shan on 2 April.

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

A male at Tai Om on 2 April.

265. Chinese Bush Warbler (*Cettia diphone*)

Quite common and widespread until 15 April and from 23 November.

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

Quite common and widespread until 2 April but most often recorded from the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve where up to five were seen. One at Ho Chung on 7 December.

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

Several at Mai Po between 10 March and 19 May. One there on 29 September and three on 10 November. Small numbers at Kai Tak in the spring and up to seven there between 25 August and 6 November.

271. Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*)

One or two at the Deep Bay Marshes between 31 March and 19 May. Common on the Mai Po Marshes during the autumn passage; the extreme dates were 26 August until 10 November with the majority of birds being seen in late September and early October.

273. Dusky Warbler (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*)

Common and widespread until 28 April and from 29 September. Over 50 at Mai Po on 11 October and 8 November.

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

Common and widespread until 25 April and from 29 September.

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

Quite common and widespread during both winters. Extreme dates were until 26 March and from 29 November.

276. Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*)

Several records from widespread areas during the autumn; extreme dates were from 8 September until 17 October, apart from a very late sighting of one at Sek Kong Woods on 8 December.

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

Single birds at Sek Kong Woods on 3 February and Tai Po Kau on 1 November (M.A.W.).

279. Yellow-breasted Willow-warbler (*Phylloscopus ricketti*)

Two in a wood on Mount Parker on 15 February (R.J.I.).

282. Long-tailed Tailor-bird (*Orthotomus sutorius*)

Common and widespread.

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

Large number on the Deep Bay Marshes during the spring and summer and many of the *prinias* sp. there in the winter are likely this species.

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

Common and widespread.

287. Fantail Warbler (*Cisticola juncidis*)

Locally common in the New Territories, with one record from Kowloon, until 23 March. Recorded again from 22 November at Hung Hom, Ha Tsuen and Mai Po. It is probable that this species is under-recorded and in particular its spring and summer status is uncertain.

290. Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*)

One or two at Mai Po between 5 and 29 January and a full plumaged male there on 31 March.

291. Rubythroat (*Luscinia calliope*)

Quite common and widespread until 25 March and from 2 November.

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

Remained common and widespread until 22 March. A female/immature at Mount Collinson on 8 December and up to four, including two males, at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 29 and 31 December.

293. Magpie-robin (*Copsychus saularis*)

Quite common and widespread, including Stonecutters' Island.

294. Daurian Redstart (*Phoenicurus aureus*)

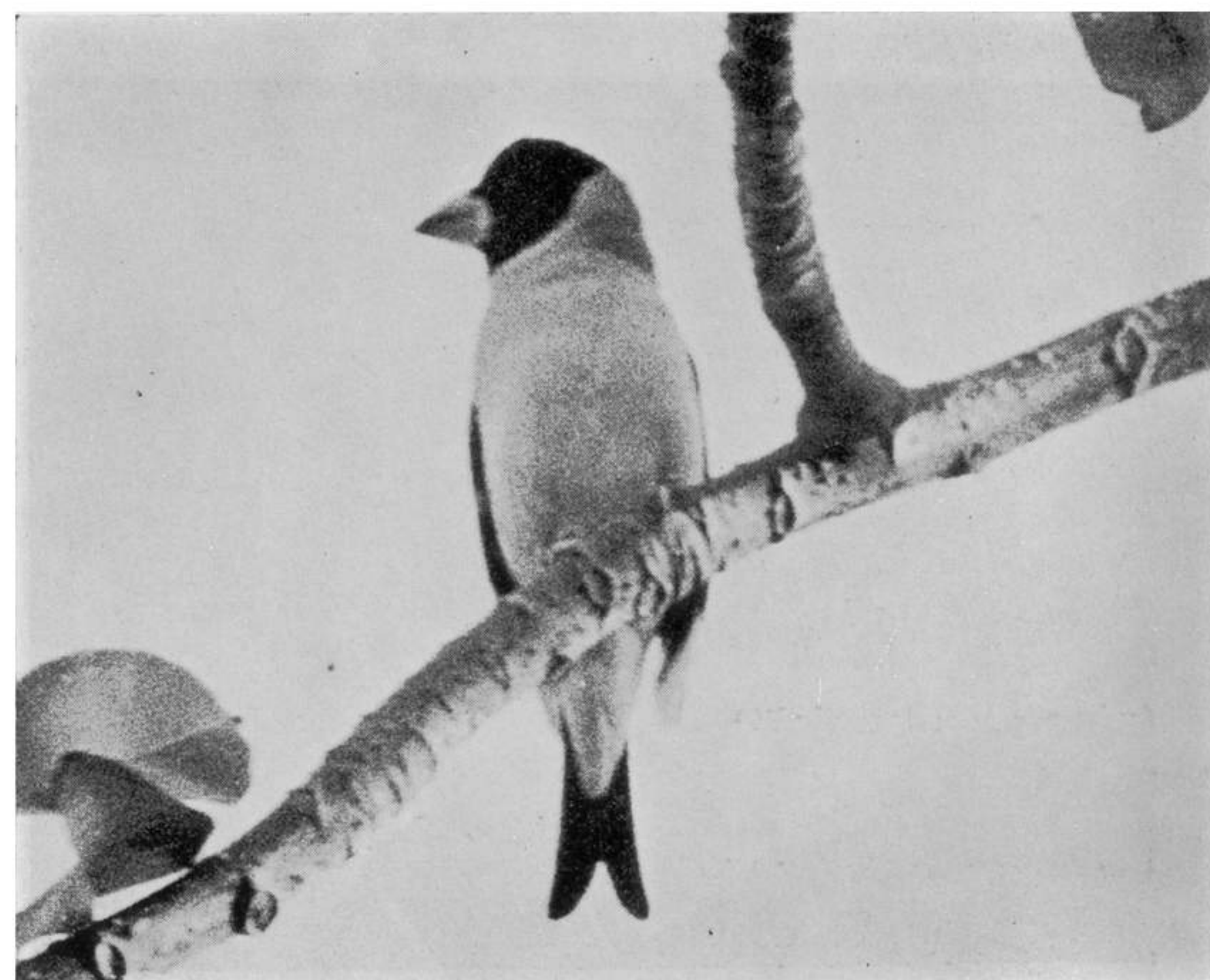
Quite common and widespread until 22 March and from 4 November.

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

Single female/immatures at Tai Po Kau on 6 January and Ho Chung on 30 January. A male and female/immature in the Bride's



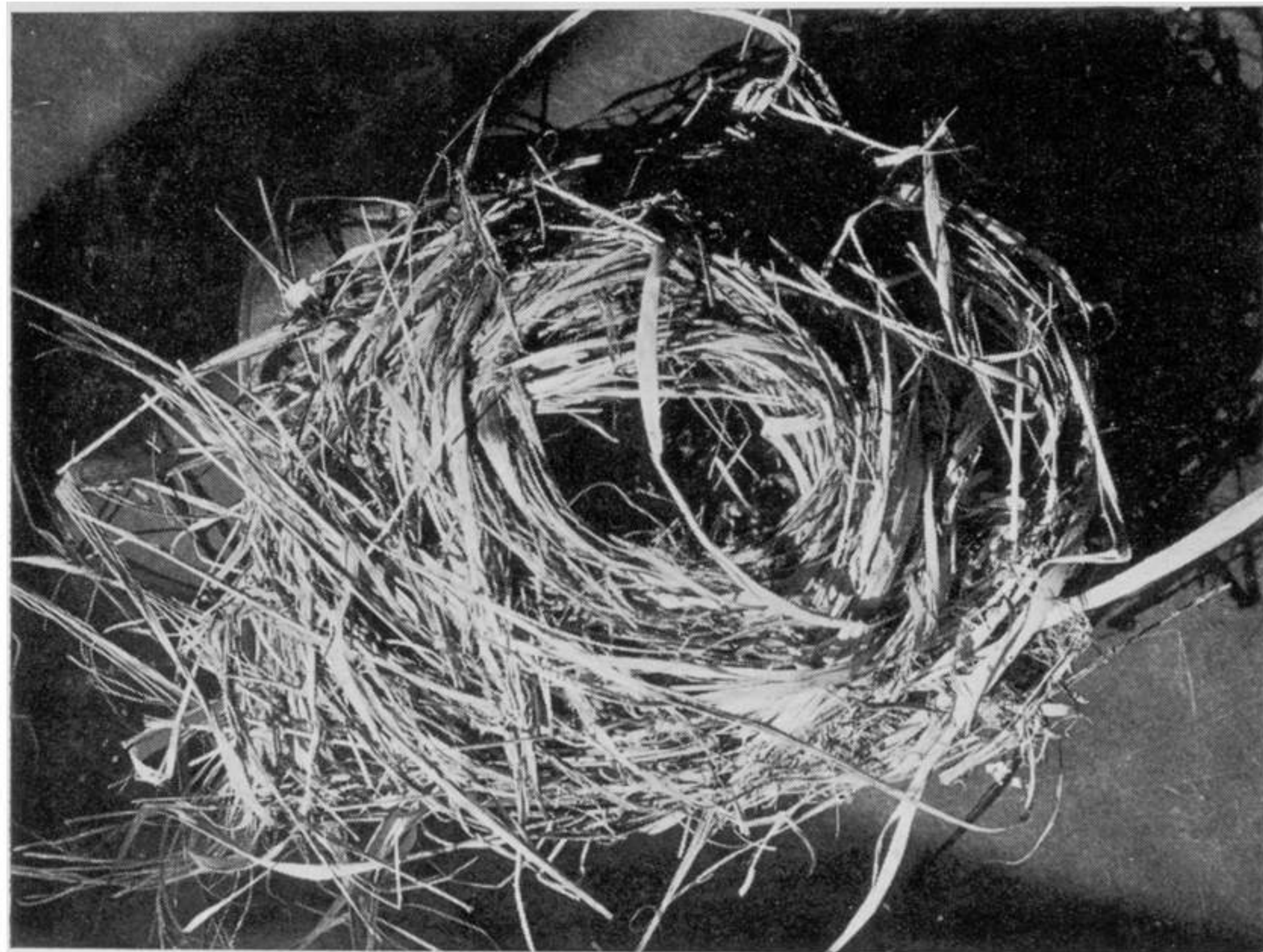
Male Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)



Male Black-tailed Hawfinch (*Eophona migratoria*)
Photos: D. J. Galloway



Nest and Eggs of Crested Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*)



Nest of White-backed Munia (*Lonchura striata*)
Photos: D. J. Galloway

Black Tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*)
Above: Adult Photo: A. Hibi
Below: Juvenile with Black-headed Gulls (*Larus ridibundus*)
Photo: D. J. Galloway



Flock of Silky Starlings (*Sturnus sericeus*)
Photo: D. J. Galloway



Yellow-Nib Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*)
Photo: T. Shiota

Pool area (Plover Cove) from 20 February until 2 March. A male at Causeway Bay in urban Hong Kong on 28 and 29 November. Single female/immatures at Lam Tsuen Valley on 26 December and Bride's Pool on 27 December.

295x. White-capped Water-redstart (*Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*).

One at the Brides Pool (Plover Cove) between 18 February and 13 April. This is the first Colony record. This distinctive bird was seen by several observers and was noted to have an unmistakable white crown and nape, black body and chestnut belly, rump and tail. This species breeds from Afghanistan east to the mountainous regions of inland China and is not migratory although altitudinal movement does occur in winter, e.g. to the foothills of the Himalayas. This is the first time this species has been recorded in Kwangtung Province. It certainly occurred in the most suitable habitat available in Hong Kong and was not deterred by the presence of numerous visitors to the area at weekends.

296. Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

Common and widespread until 25 April and from 22 September apart from a very early bird at Lok Ma Chau on 26 August. Up to three at the Hung Hom Reclamation from 6 November.

297. Grey Bushchat (*Saxicola ferrea*)

Two at She Shan between 25 January and 3 March. A pair at Ho Chung on 7 December. A female at Mai Po on 8 December and a pair at Mong Tseng on 26 December.

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

Both sub-species recorded from widespread areas, including urban Kowloon. The last spring date was 3 April and the first autumn record 11 October.

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

One at Castle Peak on 2 February.

300. Violet Whistling Thrush (*Myiophoneus caeruleus*)

Locally common and widespread. A female found sitting on a nest containing four eggs on 5 May in the Plover Cove area. The nest was situated eight feet above ground in a deserted building.

301. Pale Thrush (*Turdus pallidus*)

Quite common and widespread until 31 March, including one in Central Kowloon and up to five in Sek Kong Woods. No records for the latter part of the year.

303. Brown Thrush (*Turdus chrysolaus*)

The male at Shing Mun was seen again on 25 January. Single males at She Shan on 1 December and Kadoorie Beach on 15 December.

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

Quite common and widespread until 31 March. A few records of one or two at Tai Po, Tai Po Kau, She Shan and Sek Kong Woods from 28 November.

305. Dusky Thrush (*Turdus naumanni*)

Quite common and widespread, including urban areas, until 27 April. All records are for the race *eunomus* apart from a distinctive bird of the red-bellied race *naumanni* at Lok Ma Chau. No records for the latter part of the year.

306. Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Quite common and widespread, singly or in small flocks of up to eight, until 25 March and from 3 November.

307. Grey Thrush (*Turdus cardis*)

Quite common and widespread until 7 April. Single birds at Tai Po Kau, She Shan, Kadoorie Beach and Sek Kong Woods from 30 November.

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

Quite common and widespread until 2 April. Single birds at Sek Kong Woods, She Shan and Tai Po Kau from 8 December.

313. Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Locally common and widespread.

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

Locally common and widespread until 24 May and from 10 September. 42 were counted at Kai Tak on 22 October.

316. Indian Tree-pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*)

Common and widespread until 31 March and from 23 October.

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

Quite common in the Deep Bay area until 25 April and from 8 November. One at Sek Kong on 1 February. Recorded at Kai Tak between 3 and 26 April and from 11 October onwards, with a maximum count of 46 on 1 November. Up to five at the Hung Hom Reclamation from 15 November onwards.

318. Water-pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*)

A large dark pipit with dark legs at Lok Ma Chau on 11 December was probably this species.

319. Upland Pipit (*Anthus sylvanus*)

Recorded from Ma On Shan, Kowloon Peak/Tates Cairn, Tai Mo Shan, Pat Sin Range and Sunset Peak-Lantau during the spring and summer.

320. Forest Wagtail (*Dendronanthus indicus*)

One at Lo Wu on 27 April. Single birds at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 3 September, Tweed Bay on 8 September and the Colonial Cemetery on 2 October.

321. White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)

Common and widespread until 28 April and from 29 September.

322. Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Quite common and widespread until 26 April and from 17 September.

323. Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

Quite common in the Deep Bay area and at Long Valley during both winters and the passages but numbers fluctuated considerably. Elsewhere, reported from widespread areas during both passages and occasionally in the winter months. Extreme dates were until 31 May and from 26 August.

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

Up to four seen at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve throughout the year. Also reported from several places in the Saikung area, Shing Mun, She Shan, Tai Po, Ho Man Tin and on Hong Kong Island at Victoria Peak and the University.

325. White-eye (*Zosterops japonica*)

Common and widespread.

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

Up to eight seen at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve throughout the year. A female with two young at Shing Mun on 14 July. Also reported from Sek Kong, Wong Chuk Yuen (near Saikung) and Tai Om in the Lam Tsuen Valley.

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

A small flock of six at the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 20 January and single birds also seen there on 6 February and 15 November. One at She Shan on 8 December.

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

Quite common and widespread, usually in small flocks, during January, February and early March. One at Tai Po on 23 April. Recorded again in flocks of up to 30 at various localities in the New Territories from 8 November.

329. Chinese Greenfinch (*Chloris sinica*)

Uncommon but recorded from widespread areas throughout the year, usually in small flocks of up to 15. The status of this species is still unclear.

- 331. Common Rosefinch** (*Carpodacus erythrinus*)
Up to seven at Sek Kong Woods during January. One at Tai Po Kau on 28 February. Three at Plover Cove on 31 March. One at Mong Tseng on 26 December.
- 332. Masked Bunting** (*Emberiza spodocephala*)
Common and widespread until 28 April and from 21 September.
- 335. Tristram's Bunting** (*Emberiza tristrami*)
At least ten at the Tai Po Kai Forestry Reserve until 24 March and from 30 November. One at Castle Peak on 9 March.
- 336. Chestnut Bunting** (*Emberiza rutila*)
A female at Silvermine Bay on 27 October.
- 337. Yellow-breasted Bunting** (*Emberiza aureola*)
Up to five at Mai Po between 13 and 28 April. Over 200 there on 13 October. Two at Saikung on 10 November. Three at Hung Hom Reclamation on 14 November. One found dead at Kai Tak on 18 November.
- 338. Grey-headed Bunting** (*Emberiza fucata*)
Up to 15 at Long Valley until 27 January. Up to four at Mai Po until 13 April. One at Ho Man Tin on 23 October. A male at Shuen Wan on 14 December. Two at the Hung Hom Reclamation on 25 December.
- 339. Little Bunting** (*Emberiza pusilla*)
One at Chi Ma Wan, Lantau on 5 January. Up to ten at Mai Po between 17 February and 15 April. Seven at She Shan on 27 February. One at Plover Cove on 31 March. One at Kai Tak on 18 November. Two at Mong Tseng on 26 December.
- 340. Crested Bunting** (*Melophus lathamii*)
On Lantau, up to 50 at Chi Ma Wan until 5 January, two at Sha Lo Wan on 18 January and two pairs at Leung Teung on 10 April. Over ten at Plover Cove on 1 January. Five at She Shan on 17 February. Single males holding territory at Lamma Island on 27 June and Plover Cove on 24 July. A pair, carrying food, on the Pat Sin Range on 5 August. Two at Tai Mo Shan on 30 June. Four at Ho Chung on 2 November.
- 341. Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*)
Common and widespread but usually associated with habitation. Flocks of 200+ at Hung Hom in November.
- 343. Red Avadavat** (*Estrilda amandava*)
A male at Kai Tak on 2 August and two males here on 26 August. Up to four at Mai Po and Sha Po between 31 August and

24 November. Up to three including a male at the Hung Hom Reclamation between 15 November and 4 December.

- 345. Chestnut Munia** (*Lonchura malacca*)
All records are for the race *atricapilla* from the Deep Bay Marshes between 26 March and 17 October. Usually small flocks of up to ten seen but increasing to 20 and 30 in late September.
- 346. Spotted Munia** (*Lonchura punctulata*)
Quite common and widespread, usually in flocks of up to 50, but fewer summer records.
- 347. White-backed Munia** (*Lonchura striata*)
Quite regularly recorded in the winter months from widespread areas, usually in small flocks of up to 16. One summer record of one carrying nesting material (dried grass) at Kowloon Tong on 26 May.

ESCAPES

Sulphur-crested/Lemon-crested Cockatoos

(*Kakatoe sulphurea/citrinocristata*)

Flocks of up to 20 were in the vicinity of Victoria Barracks throughout the year. A pair were regularly recorded at Kowloon Tong. On Stonecutters' Island five were seen in late March and up to four between 13 September and 29 November, including two displaying around a suitable nesting site on 13 September and another in a possible nesting hole on 29 November. One at Tai Po Kau on 24 March had a new chain around its leg and was obviously an escape. One was seen at Happy Valley on 10 January and seven there on 25 December.

Indian Hill Mynah

(*Gracula religiosa*)

Two at the Royal Observatory, Kowloon on 24 January. One or two at the Hong Kong University on 7 and 14 February. Two at Tai Po between 21 and 30 August. Up to four at She Shan between 27 October and 22 December. One at Saikung on 14 December. Most of these records are for birds that appeared in good condition and in an apparently wild state.

House Crow

(*Corvus splendens*)

One seen in the Kowloon Tong area during November, usually associating with magpies (*Pica pica*). This is presumed an escaped bird although populations exist as close to Hong Kong as Thailand.

BIRDS IN THE HIMALAYAS

In the spring of 1974 a group of British army climbers in Hong Kong organised a mountaineering expedition to Lamjung Himal (22,900 ft.), an unclimbed mountain in West Nepal. I was fortunate to be included in the party, the only civilian, and also to get a three month leave which enabled me to spend some time in northern Pakistan and the Vale of Kashmir at the end of the expedition. All three areas gave me some good bird watching, and an account of what I saw may be of interest to anyone considering a Himalayan holiday.

Our expedition started in Pokhara, the principal town of West Nepal. The British Gurkha Pension Paying Post (PPPP to those who know the jargon), on the northern edge of the town, housed us for a few days while we organised porters and packed our food and equipment. Close by an impressive gorge gave me a Crested Kingfisher, White-capped and Plumbeous Redstarts and a Brown Dipper. A walk over one of the closest hills yielded a Red-breasted Falconet, and impressive eye-level views of the White-backed and Egyptian Vultures which were commonly seen soaring over the valley.

Our first day's walk out of Pokhara led through a flat valley full of paddy fields, over a ridge line into a parallel valley, the Madi Khola, and steeply up to the village of Yanjakot at 7000 ft. The first ridge proved good for raptors; I saw male Pied and Pallid Harriers, a Serpent Eagle, a Lammergeier and a probable Buzzard Eagle. In Yanjakot we stayed in the house of a retired Gurkha officer whose front porch gave excellent close-up views of the vultures—Lammergeiers, King Vultures, Egyptian and White-backed. A little further up the trail I saw the first of several Himalayan Griffons, and also a Peregrine and an unidentified Sparrow-hawk.

On previous visits to Nepal I had seen a great variety of passerine birds in the rhododendron forests which cover much of the southern flanks of the mountains from 7000-10,000 ft. Leading a group of sixty porters up an ill-defined footpath limited the time I could spend looking for birds, but fortunately the porters demanded rests which were both frequent and reasonably long. I saw Red-headed Tits, a Red-throated Thrush (black throated race), Verditer and Orange-gorgeted Flycatchers Yellow-bellied Fantail Flycatcher, Stripe-throated Yuhinas, Variegated Laughing-thrushes and a monstrous eagle, and only got the party lost once.

Higher up, on the fringes of the snow line, I saw Blue-fronted Redstarts, and Blue Rock-thrushes with very bright blue crowns—a feature I have not been able to find in any book. Pipits, feeding on the very edge of the melting snow, had a distinctive lilac-pink flush on the breast and proved to be the Vinaceous-breasted Pipit

(*Anthus roseatus*). Another Pallid Harrier flew below us one day as we carried loads along a steep hillside toward our base camp. The lower snowfields were full of the tracks of small and medium-sized mammals (cloven-hoofed, rodent-like and dog-like) but we saw no trace of the Yeti.

Above the base camp we used no porters and carried everything ourselves, so even a pair of binoculars was a luxury I could not afford, and the interest of my notes is limited by uncertain identifications. We spent about ten days in all, in late April and early May, camped on a snow saddle at 17,000 ft. in a notch in the main Himalayan divide. This saddle was only a few miles west of the Marsyandi Khola, a major river valley whose bed was ten thousand feet below us; nevertheless a few migrant birds seemed to choose the hard way north to Tibet. I saw twenty gulls, probably Brown-headed, flying at 20,000 ft., a falcon (Shahin or Indian Hobby), a *Zoothera* thrush, three Martins and a small group of redshank-sized waders. The only apparently resident birds seen anywhere above the snowline were a dozen Alpine Choughs, soaring at around the 20,000 ft. level.

After climbing the mountain three of us returned to Pokhara by a longer route, descending to the north from the 17,000 ft. snow saddle and entering the upper part of the Marsyandi Khola. At first we were too preoccupied by sliding on our bottoms down long snowslopes, and subsequently groping through some very steep pine forest, to spend any time looking for birds, but once in the valley we hired two Tibetan porters to carry our packs and travelled light down the easy footpath. The upper parts of this valley, however, were very poor in birds; in two days I saw only fifteen species, compared with a further forty-seven in the two following days. In the pine woods and rocky gorges of the upper valley the only notable birds were two Himalayan Griffons, a Grey-headed Flycatcher-warbler and a small Niltava. Lower down I saw Bonelli's Eagle, Black-backed Forktail, Great and Blue-throated Barbets among a range of the common and uncommon birds of Hong Kong. In the midday heat low down in the valley a burst of sound drew attention to a Barred Owllet being mobbed by two Chestnut-bellied Nuthatches.

My next destination was the Hunza valley in the far north of Pakistan. The country here was a contrast to Nepal—barren rocky hillsides with forbidding rivers flowing between them, and vegetation almost limited to the cultivated "oases" of alluvial soil where subsidiary streams joined the main valleys. This is far enough west to be wheater country, and I recorded Pied and Desert Wheatears, the former in a variety of colour-combinations, and one white-headed "mystery bird" which may have been the uncommon white-throated form of Pleschanka's Chat (*Oenanthe pleschanka* var. *vittata*). The river near Gilgit gave a fine Citrine Wagtail, and a few miles up the

road to Hunza I saw a flock of Red-fronted Serins. Hunza proper, a beautiful village of wheat fields, poplars and apricots surrounded by huge mountains, was full of European Golden Orioles, Meadow Buntings and Chiffchaffs. Two dark soaring raptors filled a couple of pages of my notebook, and gave me enough detail to identify them fairly confidently as the dark phase of the Booted Eagle.

I was fortunate to be in Hunza at a time when travel restrictions were less severe than for several years, and a combination of coincidences allowed me to go up the new Karakoram highway right to the Chinese border. The high valleys near the border gave Mountain Finches, Brown Accentors, Turkestan Rock Pigeons, Snow Pigeons and a Horned Lark. I walked past many rosefinches before it occurred to me that they were not all the same; I subsequently recorded enough details to sort out the Great, White-browed, Red-breasted and Common, the first and last being the most frequent. However the most memorable sight was of a Ruff and Reeve, in breeding plumage, in a wet meadow at around 11,000 ft., far away from their nearest recorded breeding site in Central Asia. Whether or not they were breeding I do not know, but on May 27th they were fairly late to be migrants.

The Vale of Kashmir, my last stop before returning to Hong Kong, is considerably more accessible than Hunza, with several daily flights and bus services from Delhi to Srinagar. I stayed in a sprawling old hotel surrounded by plane trees and watched Paradise Flycatchers and Tickell's Thrushes from the verandah. Outings on the lakes by *shikari* (sampan, more or less) gave excellent views of Citrine Wagtails, Whiskered Terns, Little Bitterns and Dabchicks but, surprisingly, no Jacanas. Night Herons, Grey Herons and Little Egrets were breeding in a group of trees literally in the town of Srinagar.

Two hours by bus to the east of Srinagar is the Pahalgam valley which, I learnt months later, is one of the best places in India to find the Ibis-bill. Unaware of this, I ignored the river bed and spent my time in the pine forests and mixed woods on either side of the valley. I saw a fine variety of flycatchers—White-browed Blue, Slaty Blue, Rufous Tailed, Kashmir Red-breasted, and many Brown. A pair of Central Asian Hobbies chased one another through the pines, and a Himalayan Griffon Vulture and a Lammergeier both appeared high overhead. Other birds seen in the mixed woodland were the Indian Bluechat, Hodgson's Shortwing, the Blue-headed Rock thrush, Russet Sparrows and several White cheeked Nuthatches. Crowned Willow warblers were singing conspicuously in many trees. Black and Crested Black Tits were feeding in the conifers, as were several Pied Woodpeckers.

Nearly all the birds I have mentioned are common species in the areas I visited, and a far greater variety could be seen, particularly in the lower woodlands, if one travelled more slowly and if

one did some homework in advance. I took Salim Ali's "Indian Hill Birds" which covers many of the common species, and managed to track down many more in Salim Ali and Ripley's "Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan"—but of course there were a lot of birds unidentified at the end, and many species that I felt I should have seen, if I'd known of their existence. I'm going back to look for them this year.

Dick Isherwood

CONSERVATION OF THE DEEP BAY MARSHES HONG KONG

*Compiled by Michael Webster, Executive Secretary,
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(ICBP National section)*

Synopsis

Land usage and the zoological significance of the Deep Bay Marshes of Hong Kong are reviewed in detail. Notes are given on all attempts to conserve the marsh habitat since 1964, including a report from the Hong Kong Government on what has been done since an earlier copy of this paper was published in 1970. It is then suggested that a nature reserve cum bird park should be established in the area, and general outlines are given of how such a project might be established there.

This paper is based on Case Study B of the Report of the Provisional Council for the Use and Conservation of the Countryside (Hong Kong Government, June 1968 [published August 1970]), revised and updated where necessary.

Description of area and present status

1. This report is concerned with a total land area of about 10,058 acres and a total sea area of about 4,526 acres. This area is described in this report as the Deep Bay Marshes; a smaller area of approximately 2,500 acres, for which stricter reserve status will be proposed, will be referred to as the Mai Po Marshes.

2. The principal economic activities and land use within the area can be classified as follows:—

- (a) agricultural, including rice, vegetable, fish, and oyster farming, duck and pigeon rearing, and associated activities. These are the prime activities within the area, and they occupy the majority of the population of approximately 50,000. The remainder find employment either in small scale industrial operations, or in the neighbouring town of Yuen Long.
- (b) villages, of between 300 and 5,000 inhabitants.
- (c) small scale industry.
- (d) mud flats; at low tide, almost the whole of Deep Bay is exposed mudflat, intersected by the Shum Chun River and a few subsidiary streams; the total area of mudflat at low tide is about 5,000 acres, some of which is effectively on

the Chinese side of the border. These mudflats are covered at high tide.

- (e) oyster beds; these provide the major economic activity for the coastal villages.
 - (f) mangrove and other swamps; mangrove swamps are encroaching on the mudflats of Deep Bay, with the result that the whole system of kei wais is changing; the mangroves induce silting up of the creeks, and it is necessary to continually dredge these approach streams, or to build new kei wais further out into the Bay.
 - (g) kei wais; these are enclosed mudflats below high tide level, in which the tide can be artificially controlled by use of sluices. In general the centre of each kei wai is a shallow mudflat, sometimes covered by mangrove and a profusion of marsh plants, and surrounded by a raised bund. Between the bund and the mudflat is a deeper channel of water. These kei wais are used to catch sea fish, and a particular type of shrimp much prized in Chinese cuisine (retail price about US\$15 per kilo). Both fish and shrimps are caught in nets placed over the sluiceways; fish can be caught at any time, but the shrimps, the most profitable crop, are nocturnal and are easiest to catch at full moon. The purpose of the deep channel round each kei wai is to accelerate water flow off the mudflat in the centre, and by increasing the flow, ensure the maximum possible catch. The mudflats are one of the most important features of the whole area, as they provide a feeding-ground for large numbers of resident and migratory birds.
 - (h) illegal netting, trapping, and shooting. At present, most of the Mai Po Marshes is a 'no hunting' area. However, there is still large-scale illegal netting of birds in the area, which is virtually uncontrolled, and probably uncontrollable except in the context of a restricted-entry area. It is also reported that hunters send their beaters to disturb birds in the 'no hunting' area, and then shoot them as they fly over the boundaries of the 'no hunting' area. Licensed hunters shoot game birds in many other parts of the Deep Bay Marshes, and many of them do not restrict their activities to shooting game birds.
3. Land tenure. Land tenure within this area is complicated. While most of the land is scheduled as agricultural, and is held from the Crown on Crown Permit, renewable annually, much of it has belonged to the clans which now utilise it since before the lease of the New Territories to the Crown in 1898, and such land-owners have rights of tenure which in general would make it difficult

to use the normal processes of resumption of Crown Land. The situation is further complicated by the fact that many of the families concerned are resident in Mainland China. Within the Mai Po Marshes, two lots are private land on agricultural lease, and there are about 15 kei wais farmed by 6-10 operators (one clan controls most of them). Some are on Crown Permit; others are technically Crown Land available for lease, but have in fact been farmed by certain clans since before the lease of the New Territories, and their position has never been regularised. Some of the population are dependent on these enterprises for a living, but it is uncertain how much of the return from this type of farming remains with the farmers or goes back to absentee landlords (the introduction of mechanised dredging of silted-up kei wais on a large scale, at a cost of US\$70 per day per dredge, indicates substantial outside interests being involved in the operations; dredges have been in use constantly since the early months of 1972).

Zoological significance and special considerations

The following factors have to be taken into account in any discussion of the future of this area:—

1. A combination of geological, geographical, and political factors have combined to give this area an unique biological importance. This is the only habitat of its type accessible to Western scientists, as Deep Bay alone outside China has a similar environment. Since mangrove swamps are a primary method of land formation, study of such environments is important worldwide, and it is badly needed in an unique habitat of this particular nature. Political considerations, with restricted usage of land on the Hong Kong/China border, have helped to preserve the habitat in its present form, but they may also make it difficult to control the land utilisation so that the present gradation of habitats from dry farmland to tidal estuary can be satisfactorily maintained.

2. The most important single factor, from a conservationist's viewpoint, is the wide diversity of bird life in the area. Apart from the main habitat-types, mudflats, mangrove swamps, reedbeds, and fishponds, the area also contains small wooded hills, and various types of agricultural land. The net result of this is an amazing diversity of bird life, over 230 species having been recorded in the area, of which at least 109 are rarely if ever found elsewhere in Hong Kong. Bird life on the marshes can be divided into three groups, summer, winter, and migratory.

(a) summer. The marshes provide the specialised habitat required for several species of Ardeidae to breed (Yellow Bittern, *Ixobrychus sinensis*, Chestnut Bittern, *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*, Black Bittern, *Ixobrychus flavicollis*, and Little Green Heron, *Boturides striatus*), as well as such

species as the Banded Rail, *Rallus striatus*, Watercock, *Gallix cinerea*, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*, and the Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*. It also serves as a major feeding ground for Little Egrets, *Egretta garzetta*, Cattle Egrets, *Ardeola ibis*, and Chinese Pond Herons, *Ardeola bacchus*, some of which breed on the marshes, as well as Night Herons, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Swinhoe's Egret, *Egretta eulophotes*, (a Red Book Species), and a large non-breeding population of the Great Egret, *Egretta alba*.

(b) winter. The main wintering species are Spotted Redshanks, *Tringa erythropus*, Dalmatian and Spot-billed Pelicans, *Pelecanus crispus* and *P. philippensis*, Cormorants, *Phalacrocorax phalacrocorax*, Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus*, Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*), Grey Herons, *Ardea cinerea*, and large flocks of duck, mainly Teal *Anas crecca*, Falcated Teal *Anas falcata* and Spotbill *Anas poeilorhyncha*; a large variety of other species have occurred with more or less regularity; noteworthy is a single record of another Red Book species, the Oriental White Stork, *Ciconia ciconia bovciana*. Over fifty species may be seen in a morning at any time from December to March.

(c) migration. The main ornithological importance of the marshes is for migrant waders in April, May, August, September, and October. Up to 25 species may be seen on a single day, in numbers ranging up to five hundred or more of a single species. As well as the large numbers, some rare and little-known species are recorded, Asian Dowitcher, *Limnodromus semipalmatus*, and Spoon-billed Stint, *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*, on almost every migration, and rarely, Spotted Greenshank, *Tringa guttifer*. Another rare species of particular interest is Saunders' Gull, *Larus saundersi*, which is a regular spring migrant, and may also winter. Terns and a wide variety of other species also occur on migration.

It is clear that the migrant birds provide the main argument for the creation of a strict nature reserve. The study of bird movement in East Asia is still very much in its infancy, and a great deal of work remains to be done. Migrant waders which stop over at Deep Bay belong to species which breed in Siberia and winter as far south as Australia. Numbers of birds involved can only be estimated by those observed on the ground, but it is now known from radar observation that huge numbers of birds are moving over the area every night from late March to late May, and again from mid-August to early November. For sheer volume of passage, this

must be one of the most spectacular radar displays in the world. Hong Kong is certainly on a major migration route, as radar observations have proved beyond any residual doubt, and the Deep Bay Marshes are the only wetland area on that route between South Korea and South Vietnam where there is any possibility of studying these migrants on the ground.

The importance of the area is increased by the fact that the birds involved require specialised habitats, and are therefore vulnerable to any destruction or disturbance of established stopover points.

Quite apart from the pure ornithological interest of this massive migration, scientists are now beginning to be aware of the role of birds in carrying plants, some viruses, and other organisms over vast distances. This can only be studied by continual observation and mass examination programmes conducted by a scientific organisation on the spot.

3. Other fauna. The fauna of the mangrove areas form a specialised community of their own. Living on the leaves of the plants is the littorine mollusc *Littorina (Littorinopsis) melanostoma* and a whole range of insects, particularly those which use the leaves as places to lay their eggs, and leaf miners and borers. The gastropod *Cerithidea ornata* hibernates on the leaves. The water snake *Enhydris bennetti* (probably restricted to south-east China) lives among the branches, feeding on mudskippers and young birds. The stems of the mangroves are colonised by barnacles and oysters, typically species found also on sheltered rocky shores, such as *Chthalamus malayensis*, *Balanus albicostatus*, and the oyster *Saccostrea cucullata*. Nestling between the oyster shells may be found the bivalve *Trapezium liratum*. A number of other gastropods and bivalves, the polymorphic snail *Clithon oualaniensis*, the mangrove shrimp *Laemedia astacina*, and some molluscs of primarily terrestrial origin live in or on the mud between the mangrove roots. The mudskippers (amphibious fish) *Periophthalmus cantonensis* and *Boleophthalmus chinensis* are of particular interest. Crabs of the mangrove region include *Sesarma sinensis*, the fiddler crab *Uca dussumieri* and the predacious swimming crab *Scylla serrata*.

4. Botany. The Deep Bay Marshes are of particular interest to botanists. They contain mangrove and other plant formations which only occur in this type of specialised habitat brought about in bays or estuaries where saline silts or sandy mud are alternately exposed and covered by tides. Mangroves are characteristically a tropical plant formation and though some few genera extend as far north as Kyushu, Hong Kong is close to the northern limits of this formation. It is the northern limit for some of the mangrove genera as far as is at present known. The characteristic plants belong to a limited number of genera all of which probably occur in Deep

Bay including the genus *Kandelia* which is restricted in geographical distribution. Deep Bay appears to be the only site in Hong Kong where the whole range of mangrove genera may be seen, all other sites have fewer representatives. These plants play an important role in colonising and eventually stabilising the newly emerged mudflats; they are of great biological importance because of the remarkable adaptations due to their environment which these plants possess. Whilst the intact mangrove formation plays a positive role in further deposition of sediments and gradual reclamation of land from the sea, the removal of the mangrove formation reverses the process and the result is shoreline erosion and loss of land to the sea. This effect is clearly displayed in the vicinity of Tsim Bei Tsui where duck farmers have cleared the mangroves to form duck enclosures. Evidence from other southwest Pacific areas suggests that once mangrove is removed in this way, the subsequent changes in the substrate make it unlikely that recolonisation will be successful. It is useful to stress that once the plants are removed the entire habitat has changed so that it no longer supports the same fauna, loss of the plants ultimately means disappearance of the whole ecosystem.

5. International Scientific Significance—the wide selection of bird life and other fauna and flora of the Deep Bay Marshes which is not easily available for study elsewhere has attracted much attention in the international scientific world and a number of proposals and recommendations concerning conservation have been made over the past few years. In addition to the above, attention is drawn to the following:—

- (a) Report on a Brief Visit to Hong Kong in October 1964 by Peter Scott — 'Recommendations 5.7. An area of the biologically rich mudflat and mangrove swamp should be set aside as a scientific and educational study area, but it might be desirable to link it with a group of fish ponds in the Mai Po Marshes thereby adding a substantial ornithological interest to the reserve.'
- (b) Conservation of the Hong Kong Countryside (Talbot & Talbot 1965) — 'C2. (c) Mai Po Marshes and the associated fish ponds contain a rich bird life. An area of mudflat and mangrove swamp should be protected as a strict nature reserve, and an adjacent and larger area of the fish ponds could be a limited access, no hunting reserve.'
- (c) Letter from Prof. S. Dillon Ripley, President of the International Council for Bird Preservation, to H.E. the Governor (Oct. 1966) requesting Government to do everything rationally possible to preserve the Mai Po

Marshes area for the preservation of birds and wildlife and with the suggestion that it might be possible to set aside this area as a no-hunting reserve.

6. Significance for Hong Kong—the area is clearly significant for scientific studies in Hong Kong and also of great value to local people who make a hobby of biological studies in view of its easy access from the main road. There is no alternative area of comparable, even if different, biological value.

7. Primary productive uses. The area contains fishponds, duck and pigeon farms (generally sited above the fishponds so that the droppings can be re-used in the ponds to stimulate algal growth and eventually provide food for the fish and for the ducks), as well as vegetable farms and oyster beds. As far as possible, these activities should be encouraged to co-exist with the nature reserve concept; some of them are directly necessary to maintain the nature of the habitat-type, but others, especially deepwater fish culture, reduce the area available for birds. A careful balance must be struck between the various types of agriculture; increased production is not incompatible with use as a nature reserve. A careful watch must be kept on the production of domestic and industrial waste, and measures taken to ensure that disposal keeps pace with production.

8. Areas of Scenic Interest—A great deal of natural beauty is found in Deep Bay. From a scenic point of view, the area is unique in Hong Kong, and it is of particular value in view of the limited opportunity for people to visit similar areas. The area contains a number of attractive and historically interesting old villages such as San Tin and Ping Shan, the latter with its old pagoda and its exceptionally beautiful and unusual gables on the houses, probably unique in Hong Kong.

Recommendations

In view of the above considerations, we recommend the following action:—

1. The whole Deep Bay Marshes should become a No Hunting area as soon as possible. Certain small pockets of true marsh in this area, but outside the Mai Po Marshes should be protected from further development.

2. The Mai Po Marshes, and a small area of coastal mangrove at Mong Tseng should immediately be turned into strict nature reserves.

3. The remainder of the Deep Bay Marshes should be conserved for intensive agriculture and fish-farming so as to retain the character of the whole area.

4. Industrial development should be kept out of this area entirely, and measures should be taken to see that no contamination of the Deep Bay Marshes from industrial effluents from Yuen Long or other industrial areas is possible.

5. Planning should be initiated for the development of part of the area for medium and high density recreational use; the combination of a bird garden and restaurant with the strict nature reserve at Mai Po would be extremely popular, and would help to provide the study facilities which would make the whole project scientifically worth while. It would also contribute substantially towards educating the general mass of the population in care and appreciation of the countryside.

The following are more detailed ideas on the above recommendations:—

1. It was recommended in 1968 that a minimum of six Game Wardens would be needed to patrol the area. Even if these men were well-trained and adequately paid, neither of which applies to the three Game Wardens currently employed, it is probable that a greater number of specialised staff would be needed, quite apart from the staff of the reserve itself. In view of the fact that most illegal netting takes place at night, and illegal hunting at dawn and dusk, the warden service needs to be maintained 24 hours a day.

2. The strict nature reserves. These should be areas of restricted entry, basically maintained in a similar ecosystematic condition to the present, but with a certain amount of additional mudflat, or cover, where considered advisable to attract migrant birds. Before any development plans for a reserve are carried out, a thorough ecological study of the area should be completed, though this should not be allowed to inhibit the initiation of interim measures for protection of the areas. In order to make maximum use of the reserve area, it is suggested that a bird park should be established on the border of the reserve, where people can view wild birds, especially waterfowl, in a pinioned state. This form of educational reserve needs careful supervision, but if properly managed, it should help with the main job of attracting down and protecting migrants, as well as helping to provide finance for the operation of the reserve. It is important that access should be rigidly controlled by a special corps of wardens, whose duties could, however, also include a certain amount of maintenance work on the reserves. It is envisaged that the traditional methods of fish farming should be encouraged, but that conversion of keiwais into deep water fishponds should be prohibited. In this way it should be possible to satisfy the claims of traditional users of the land.

3. The maintenance of satisfactory surroundings is almost as important as the establishment of a nature reserve; the area covered

by the nature reserve would only be small, and might not prove large enough to be entirely self-sufficient. This could be achieved by permitting development along current lines, i.e. intensive agriculture and fish-farming, provided that proper care is taken of waste disposal, and that the land is not permitted to be used for industry. Particular care must be taken to restrict pig and chicken farming to a level at which the waste can be controlled without further damaging the environment. Clearly it would also be necessary to limit the population in some way, though lack of job opportunities would naturally keep the population within acceptable limits.

A number of more detailed comments could be made on various aspects of the proposed nature reserve, but it is felt that the above are sufficient to give an idea of what is envisaged, without going into wearisome detail which would anyway be premature at this stage. This appeal to the ICBP is made because of the fact that the importance of the area has been appreciated for at least ten years, and yet very little has been done to implement any of the suggestions, or even to discuss them. Both the need for such a recreational and study area grows rapidly, with the increasing development of Hong Kong, and yet at the same time, the threat to this unique habitat grows almost daily. The Deep Bay Marshes will not be destroyed by a deliberate act of vandalism, but by neglect and attrition, unless the Government of Hong Kong takes steps rapidly and effectively to conserve them. This is why conservationists in Hong Kong appeal for all the help possible from organisations and individuals outside as well as inside the Colony.

Subsequent to the publication of the Provisional Council Report, of which the above is an updated version, a number of developments have taken place. These are set out below, as listed in a letter from the Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong, dated February 27, 1974:—

- (a) In order to increase productivity, and thus their standard of living, fish farmers in the area have taken advantage of modern machinery to deepen their fish ponds. This has reduced the area of mud banks and has resulted in objections from the Bird Watchers in respect of the "loss of bird habitat".
- (b) District Officer (Yuen Long) produced a comprehensive and carefully researched statement on the history and land tenure position particularly in respect to the "Kei Wais" which are the most important areas too the Bird Watchers. This was discussed and formed the basis of a site inspection on February 23rd 1972 carried out by the Nature Conservation Sub Committee when D.O. (Y.L.) was able to answer additional questions raised.

- (c) Following this inspection, D.O. (Y.L.) took action to formalise the land tenure of the most important "Kei Wais". This has been done by the issue of permits carrying the following conditions which relate to the manner of working the Kei Wais for shrimp and fish production vis a vis their value for conservation purposes.

Conditions

- (1) No dredging may be carried out without the approval of District Office Yuen Long.
 - (2) No cross bunds may be constructed.
 - (3) No Kei-wai should be completely cleared of vegetation.
 - (4) No conversion of any part of the Kei-wai to fishpond is allowed.
 - (5) A Banker's bond of \$10,000.00 is to be placed with the Hong Kong Government within three months after the issue of permit.
- (d) Acting on the Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for Recreational Development and Nature Conservation in the New Territories, His Excellency the Governor made an order under the Wild Birds and Wild Mammals Protection Ordinance taking the most important areas of Mai Po Marshes into the Fourth Schedule of the Ordinance. The order was published on 23rd March in Gazette Notice L.N. 64 of 1973, and has the effect of prohibiting hunting and the carrying of fire arms (other than along a road).
 - (e) A large number (58) of Notices made of weather-proof aluminium material were erected at all path junctions, bunds and entrance points to the area by June 30th 1973, so that hunters would be well aware of the position. Similarly a Press Release was prepared and reported upon in South China Morning Post and the Hong Kong Standard in their editions of 24th March, 1973.
 - (f) In spite of this publicity two cases of persons carrying fire arms were brought to the notice of the Department by an Honorary Game Warden. However, since there was insufficient evidence to bring a successful prosecution to court, the only action possible was the issue of formal letters of warning to the culprits.
 - (g) The Nature Conservation Sub Committee has now been reconvened following the amalgamation of the two parent Advisory Committees and is taking up again the subject of the Research Project which is intended to improve our

understanding of the delicate ecological balance which needs to be maintained if

- i) the Kei Wai operators are to receive reasonable reward in fish or shrimp production for their labour and for their permit fees etc.
- ii) the area is to retain its attraction and importance for both itinerant and resident bird life.

The above should be read in the light of the following comments:—

1. The Colonial Secretary's letter refers only to the Mai Po Marshes, admittedly the most important part of the whole area; it does not take account of the fact that an area as small as this needs a buffer zone around it to maintain its value as an area of exceptional biological interest.

2. While the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society has always been outspoken regarding the need for a Nature Reserve in this area, it should not be forgotten that it is the whole habitat which needs conserving, and that there are many zoological and botanical aspects of interest as well as the bird life.

3. The ecological survey proposed in para (g) of the letter was recommended at least two years ago, and still seems to be no nearer becoming an actuality.

4. While nominal legal protection for the Mai Po Marshes is now much stronger, there is no additional enforcement staff, and there has certainly been no decrease in illegal netting of birds there.

5. This is a man-made habitat, and it remains of exceptional value only while it is maintained in its present condition by the kei wei system.

It is therefore suggested that the following is a feasible proposal for a Nature Reserve at Mai Po, taking full account of the problems of the land tenure, and the necessity for enabling the operators to improve their current low standard of living.

1. The Mai Po Marshes area should be turned into an area of limited access, controlled by permit, and enforced by actually fencing in the area, and allowing access only from certain specified points.

2. Land on the edge of the area, but not forming part of the Mai Po Marshes, should be turned into a Bird Park/Research Centre, to give the public the opportunity of seeing what it is the Nature Reserve is intended to conserve. This could very well be combined with fishing gardens/restaurants (two of these exist in the area already).

3. This could be done before the ecological study is complete, as there is already sufficient information on the botanical and zoological importance of the area for the Hong Kong Government to know what it is trying to conserve.

4. Operators of the kei wai could, in addition to their normal occupations, form part of the staff of the reserve, with the primary duties of maintenance and keeping out unauthorised intruders. The emoluments which they receive for this could well help them raise their standard of living. It should be remembered that the kei wai operators are not always the same people as the Crown permit-holders; the latter are often entrepreneurs from the neighbouring town of Yuen Long, who sublet the kei wais to farmers, who actually do the work.

5. A certain amount of dredging is necessary to maintain the kei wais in the condition which has proved favourable for birds and for the various plants and crustacea etc. This could be controlled by the management of the reserve.

6. No hunting should be allowed within the Deep Bay Marshes.

7. As the reserve becomes established, it would be possible to improve the habitat so as to attract more migratory birds; this would require a certain amount of 'gardening', which should be done as far as possible in such a way as to make it possible for the kei wai operators to continue to farm in the traditional way.

8. Covered walkways and hides within the reserve would add to its value to scientists by permitting a close approach to birds without disturbing them.

Conclusion

It is the feeling of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, the National Section of the ICBP in Hong Kong, that discussion of this area and its unique qualities has gone on at a high level for twelve years; meanwhile the area offering the specialised features which make it important has been shrinking, until now it barely extends beyond the Mai Po Marshes, with a few other very small areas near Ping Shan and Mong Tseng. We wish to emphasise that we now feel it is time, long past time, for action to preserve this area; we appreciate that there are problems involved, but we are convinced that these problems will never be solved by the kind of passive acceptance of the situation which the Colonial Secretary's letter reflects. It is time for an aggressive policy to afford positive protection to this unique habitat, and we therefore call upon the ICBP to urge the Hong Kong Government to adopt a progressive attitude towards the whole area, either by the implementation of the scheme roughly outlined above, or by some other equally positive means.

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May 1974.

HONG KONG'S TRADE IN WILDLIFE

(a summary compiled by Michael Webster, Executive Secretary, the Conservancy Association, Hong Kong, on behalf of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, National Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation.)

SYNOPSIS

Hong Kong is the end-user of a vast commerce in birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, from China and elsewhere. Numbers are difficult to assess, but it appears likely that both nocturnal and diurnal raptors, and some mammals, notably the Chinese pangolin, may eventually be endangered by this trade. The overall effect of the trade on the ecological balance of South China (which includes Hong Kong) is discussed.

* * * * *

Much of China's external trade depends on Hong Kong entrepreneurs, and trade in wild animals is no exception. For many species, however, the animal trade differs in that it is destined for local use in Hong Kong; the quantities re-exported are small in comparison with the quantities imported.

Quantities Hong Kong Government statistics are so confusing that it is not possible to say how many wild animals or birds enter the Colony annually, or what is the value of the trade. Official statistics confuse wild animals with captive-bred animals; some are listed by quantity, others by weight. The best estimate I have been able to derive from official figures for wild animals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians entering the Colony annually from China is US\$600,000, but this figure is almost meaningless . . . and certainly far too low. There is no check on imports at the border with China, let alone on what is imported via the thousands of junks which anchor in Colony waters every day.

Purpose of imports Some species are imported for consumption for medicinal purposes, others for consumption as food. Many of them combine the two aims. For example, civets are eaten to restore strength, improve virility, heat the body in cold weather, . . . and just because they taste nice. Owls, on the other hand, are made into a broth principally as a cure for bad eyesight.

Chinese medicine has uses for practically every creature which is found in these parts. The droppings of a particular kind of grasshopper are used to make an infusion to cure stomach complaints; newborn rats are eaten alive to cure TB (night-jars plucked by the light of a full moon are also good for this); broth of kingfisher's heads is a sovereign specific for gout. Perhaps the best example of all is the Chinese pangolin; its flesh is good in cold

weather, because it helps to keep the body warm; its blood gives strength; an infusion made from its scales is used to improve lactation in nursing mothers, and as a salve on skin irritations; and it has four very special scales which are effective at keeping away ghosts.

Certain species are traditional delicacies in Chinese cuisine; the classic case is monkeys' brains being scooped from the skull of the living monkey. Cruel practices such as this still occur, but are probably quite rare.

Species involved The full list would comprise almost every species which occurs in South China, and some which come from even further afield. Appendix I gives official figures for the mammals imported from China in 1973, as reported by three of the wholesalers.

Mammals are the only group for which any statistics at all exist, and of these, only a limited number of species have to be reported to the Hong Kong Government; the law in this respect has been changed in theory, if not in practice, in that all animal dealers are now supposed to keep a register of all creatures which pass through their hands. The accuracy of the 1973 figures may be judged by the fact that over 20 porcupines were seen in one shop on one visit, whereas only 9 were reported as being imported during the whole year. On another occasion, a leopard was seen in one of the shops, but this was never reported to Government authorities, although it is on the list of species which the dealers are supposed to report.

A fairly wide range of reptiles and amphibia are also imported, many of the former coming from Thailand rather than China, though it is by no means easy to determine the country of origin. One dealer, writing to a prospective 'customer' on February 2, 1974, claims to have imported 17 tons of live snakes from Thailand in the past two months, and to have 6000 snakes in stock. The Chinese Giant Salamander, *Megalobatrachus davidianus* was commonly on sale until the beginning of this year. Most of the reptiles and amphibia from China came from neighbouring provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, but there are indications that some came from as far afield as Yunnan (the Reticulated Python (*Python reticulatus*) first appeared in the shops on the winter 1971-72; this has been recorded from Burma, but never officially from China, so Yunnan is the most likely state of origin).

By far the widest variety is among birds, of which over 500 species have been seen in the shops; this does not include a number which remain unidentified, but it does include species from India, Indonesia, and Australia, as well as from much of continental South-East Asia. The following figures may give some idea of the scope of the trade:—

1. Bewick's Swan *Cygnus bewickii jankowskii*; a shipment of about 300 arrived in November 1972; 30% were maimed on arrival. Six in January 1974.

2. Duck spp.; a wide variety in the winter months, the maximum sighted on any one occasion being about 3000 in one shop in January 1974.

3. Birds of prey; special attention was paid to estimating numbers of birds in this group, and it was concluded that at least 10,000 a year are imported; this does not take into account those which are killed in the trapping, or lost en route to Hong Kong. Appendix II gives our conclusions as to the approximate numbers and species involved.

4. Cranes; one of the more expensive delicacies, and fortunately rare; a Hooded Crane *Grus monacha* was imported in April 1974, with a batch of Common Cranes *Grus grus*, but before it even arrived, the local importer received a cable from his supplier in Canton asking him to ship it straight back.

5. Hwamei *Garrulax canorus*, Peking Robin *Leiothrix lutes*, White-eye *Zosterops japonica*, and an African species of *Serinus* are imported in quantities exceeding 100,000 a year each. It is quite impossible to give specific figures, but for the Hwamei and White-eye, anyone who has visited the shops will confirm that over 10,000 can be seen on any one day, especially in winter.

6. Buntings are generally imported more as food than to keep as cage-birds; over 2000 Grey-headed Buntings *Emberiza fucata* were seen on one occasion, and as many Chestnut Buntings *E. rutila* on another.

7. Thrushes also come in large numbers in winter; one shop had about 6000 Siberian Thrushes *Turdus sibiricus* and 300 White's Thrushes *Zoothera dauma* in a single shipment.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT

Hong Kong is a tiny enclave of just over 400 square miles on the south-east coast of China. Its own fauna, especially the avifauna, has been well documented, and we know that there are wide variations in numbers of even some of the commoner migrants and winter visitors from year to year. We have no parallel information from the People's Republic of China. We know that in the late 1950s there was a nationwide campaign against the birds, in order to protect the harvest; this had the disastrous result of removing natural controls on insect pests, so that more of the harvest was lost to pests than ever before. We also have a wide variety of press statements on conservation from China, which have the general import that wild beasts are there for man to make use of, and they should be treated as a renewable natural resource which can be utilised for food or to produce a cash crop; the annual

quota for leopards *Panthera pardus* in one province is said to be 3000. At the same time, posters in Peking and the neighbouring countryside extol the virtues of owls, tits and other birds and exhort the people to protect them (in the south of the country, the same species are being trapped, limed, or taken from the nest to satisfy the capitalist market of Hong Kong).

There seems to be a great deal of difference between the principles enunciated in Peking, and the actual practice of the provincials in Kwangtung and elsewhere. It is apparently possible to order any species from China, however rare it may be; an enquiry for Lord Derby's Parakeets *Psittacula derbyana* produced the reply that the minimum order would be 5000 birds, as a special expedition would have to be mounted to get them. Even panda skins are reportedly available.

The regular trade in raptorial birds must be having an effect; many of these birds prey on rats or mice... and 10,000 raptors a year is a substantial number even in the perspective of China's enormous land area. Such evidence as exists, and this is pretty tenuous, suggests that the numbers imported are increasing, because some species have only recently appeared in the shops in any numbers (*Hobbies Falco subbuteo* were not recorded before 1970, yet 300 were seen in one shop on one day in November 1973).

Many of the mammals also live partly or entirely on rats. One of these is the Masked Palm Civet, which is allegedly bred in captivity for the trade (breeding of civets in captivity has been tried, unsuccessfully, in Ethiopia; moreover, many animals arrive with legs smashed by gin-traps. The obvious unreliability of this report is a warning against believing too much of the propaganda put forward by the operators of the trade, and too often accepted blindly by the Hong Kong Government.

In terms of ecological disruption, the Chinese pangolin is one of the more interesting species. In the wild, this feeds only on a limited number of species of ants and termites, notably the house termite *Coptotermes formosanus*; the nature of its diet suggests that the species cannot exist in large numbers in a limited area, yet in 1973 Hong Kong imported 7000 at least. Clearly we can say that this depredation must be having an impact on the species as a whole, but we cannot judge how great this impact is.

The same applies throughout. The quantities of birds and mammals brought to the Hong Kong market every year are large enough for us to be able to be sure that the ecological balance of parts of South China is being disrupted, but information from China itself is so scanty and unreliable that no quantitative assessment can be made. There are, however, a few facts available which may help us to reach a reasonable conclusion as to the effect of this trade:—

1. In the winter of 1971-72, as well as the Reticulated Python, we recorded a number of Yellow-bellied Tits *Parus venustulus* in the shops, and these also were said by the dealers to come from Yunnan.

2. Conversations with dealers give a general impression that the animals and birds imported now come from farther afield, as there is less available in Kwangtung and Kwangsi.

3. A New China News Agency press release of February 1972 says, among other things, that '350,000 wild pelts have been bagged since winter 1971 in Heilungkiang, Chinghai Province caught 120 tons of game in 1971, part of Kiangsu province caught 90,000 weasels in 1971... China has launched a people's war in hunting the wild beasts over recent years.'

4. There is evidence of a number of species of birds extending their range to Hong Kong, the most extraordinary being the Common Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris*, which has wintered annually in small numbers for the past three years, though the nearest previous records were a thousand miles to the north. This is a species notoriously quick to colonise new territory; is this range extension the result of the reduction in numbers of a competitive species?

5. Dishes containing pangolin are said to be only available in Canton restaurants which serve foreigners; does this mean that they are now so uncommon that there are not enough to go round?

LEGAL RESTRAINTS IN HONG KONG

It is illegal to trap, or hunt, any bird and mammal in Hong Kong with the exception of a limited number of game birds; this law is not well enforced... in many ways it is unenforceable, as the same species may be possessed quite legally if imported from China. It is illegal to be in possession of a live specimen of any species on Schedule I of the recent IUCN Convention... but skins may be traded with impunity (witness a stack of 500 leopard skins in one dealer's cold store; piles of elephant tusks are a common sight as they are unloaded onto the pavement outside an ivory dealer's shop). Importers of birds and animals are supposed to keep a register of all creatures which pass through their hands, giving numbers, species, and eventual destination; this would be fine if there was any means of checking it, and if the dealers themselves knew the species which they are handling. Recently the law on conditions in traders' premises has been tightened up, though there is still considerable cruelty in the trade.

BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF THE TRADE

The only beneficial effect is the small amount of foreign exchange which China receives for the animals... which is less than she receives for a single day's trading in pigs. The medical benefits

have never been scientifically examined (this is an area where research is badly needed), but in the absence of better evidence of medical usefulness, claims of cures should be regarded with suspicion.

CONCLUSION

The trade in birds and mammals could be doing a great deal of damage to the ecological systems of South China, but it is impossible to specify how great this damage is, or what it is. In the long run, certain species, especially some of the mammals, are endangered by the trade; birds of prey are also badly affected. There is little to be said in favour of the trade. It is unnecessary and involves great cruelty. It may affect regions far from China, as many highly migratory species are involved. It is a trade which would not be permitted in Britain, yet which is defended by British officials in a British Colony.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. An official approach should be made by the ICBP, the IUCN, the FPS, and other concerned bodies to the Chinese People's Government, to get the trade stopped. (NB:—any bodies having links with Taiwan should not attempt to make contact with the Peking Government.)

2. These bodies should also ask the British Government to take the matter up with Peking.

3. Individuals should be asked to write to the British Government, British members of Parliament, or the Colonial Secretariat, Hong Kong protesting about this trade.

4. Every attempt to publicise this trade should be used by all those who have access to publicity media.

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Patricia Penn's radio documentary "Who's Killing the China Animals?", first broadcast in December 1973 by BBC Radio Four, is full of information and detailed research into this trade. I would also like to thank the following for information incorporated in this paper:— Dr. K. C. Searle, F. O. P. Hechtel, Dr. B. S. Morton, Dr. V. Lance, and K. T. Leung.

Appendix I. Schedule of wild mammals for consumption imported to Hong Kong from China — 1973

Species	Total	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Masked Palm Civet	5677	565	550	130	127	122	119	55	70	98	316	1257	2268
Small Indian Civet	790	65	15	38	35	22	15	33	17	31	11	208	300
Chinese Ferret-badger	548	32	—	24	12	15	26	32	36	62	53	39	217
Leopard Cat	1000	51	20	31	24	26	37	80	30	108	94	167	332
Pangolin (<i>M. pentadactyla</i>)	7004	186	1254	741	550	450	356	534	586	1142	274	401	530
Deer Sp.	215	18	17	7	2	2	3	4	3	1	25	18	115
Raccoon Dog	1460	38	—	19	12	14	33	150	89	112	270	577	146
Monkey Sp.	451	25	26	104	12	6	10	28	29	22	41	72	76
Porcupine	9	2	5	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wild Pig	18	—	8	2	3	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bear	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
Total	17,174	982	1,895	1,096	778	660	602	917	861	1,576	1,084	2,739	3,984

Appendix II. Raptors imported into Hong Kong

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, several hundred a year.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*, occasional.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, at least 1000 a year.

Sparrowhawks *Accipiter spp.*, over 100 a year (this number is unreliable, because odd sparrowhawks mixed up with a consignment of Kestrels would be missed under the appalling viewing conditions).

Goshawks *Accipiter gentilis*, occasional, but becoming more frequent.

Golden Eagle *Acquila chrysaetos*, first recorded in November 1973, when a mixed bag of circa 40 identifiable Golden Eagles and several unidentifiable *Aquila* eagles was seen.

Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*, 200-300 a year.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila rapax*, occasional.

Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus*, over 100 a year, and becoming more frequent.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, specimens obtained by a local 'zoo' were probably bought in the local market.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, recorded on at least four occasions, including nestlings at least once.

Grey-faced Buzzard-Eagle *Butastur indicus*, rare.

Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela*, several hundred a year; the commonest eagle.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, rare.

Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*, at least twenty a year.

Red-thighed Falconet *Microhierax caerulescens*, four to twelve birds recorded on several occasions.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, normally rare, but 300 at once, Nov. 1973.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, 30-50 a year.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*, by far the most numerous of all, estimated to account for half the total imports.

Amur Falcon *Falco vespertinus amurensis*, three or four records.

Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*, rare.

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei*, rare.

Scops Owl *Otus scops*, fairly common.

Collared Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena*, of the order of 500 a year.

Grass Owl *Tyto longimembris*, of the order of 300 a year.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*, of the order of 300 a year.

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*, over 500 a year, including nestlings.

Even this is not an exhaustive list; several other species have been seen once or twice, and others may have been wrongly identified. Figures for owls are less reliable, because of identification difficulties.

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; and 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.