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> 灰林䳭 何志剛 葵涌

Grey Bushchat Pippen Ho Kwai Chung

07.03.2007 DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



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# The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited



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Honorary President

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(Approved Charitable Institution of a Public Character)

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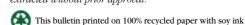
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# Society News & Projects ~ Lo Wai Yan



# Hong Kong Bird Report 2003-04

The Hong Kong Bird Report 2003-04 has just been published. Members\* will receive a copy free of charge. We would like to thank the contribution by Mr Geoff Carey as the chief editor of the report.

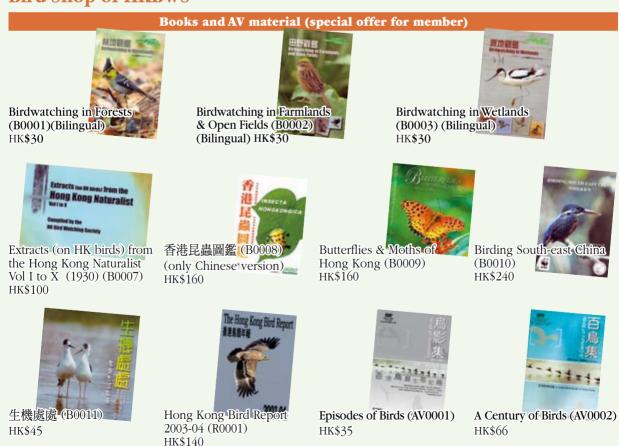
\* The following members will not receive the report, including student member, elderly member and spouse of member.

# "The Avifauna of Hong Kong" a Free Gift to Members

In order to acknowledge the ongoing support of our members, a free gift of the "Avifauna of Hong Kong" will be given to all members. Members are required to pick up the book in our office (address on the title page of this bulletin) during office hours.



# **Bird Shop of HKBWS**





# **Electronic version of Bulletin**

An electronic version of this bulletin will be launched in 2009. Please inform the Society if you want to receive an electronic version. We can forward a PDF file to you through e-mail, or you can download the file from the "Member's Zone" of our forum. We will keep sending you the hard copy if we do not receive the below notice.

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### **Education** &

#### **Promotion** Activities

# Hong Kong Bird Race 2009

Date: 25-26 April 2009 (Sat & Sun)

# **Green Orienteering in Hong Kong Park**





This annual event was held again for primary student on 13 and 20 Dec 2008 in Hong Kong Park. A new record of 27 teams, about 150 students and teachers joined the event this year. A half-day training was organized one week before the competition. The



competition comprised bird watching, a quiz of its natural environment and a design competition of bird hat. The winner of the whole competition came from "Xianggang Putonghua Yanxishe Primary School of Science and Creativity". The winning teams of the design competition came from S.K.H. Yan Laap Memorial Primary School, Tuen Mun Government Primary School and The Hong Kong Institute of Education Jockey Club Primary School. We would like to express our thanks to Crested Bulbul Club, Maggie Li and Alan Lam for organizing this event.

# Society News & Projects ~ (cont.)

# The 9th Inter-school Bird Race



The 9<sup>th</sup> Inter-school Bird Race was co-organised by Hong Kong Wetland Park and Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. The bird race aims to simulate interest in watching birds as well as monitoring the environment through counting and identifying

waterbirds. Hong Kong Wetland Park arranged a lecture and a field trip for students before the bird race. Applicants could also choose to join the "Inter-school Bird Race" only. The programmes consisted of three parts:

i) A half-day workshop on bird watching technique and mock race ;

ii) A half-day field trip at HKWP and Tsim Bei Tsui; and

iii) A full-day "Inter-school Bird Race "



About 40 teams participated in this year's competition. We would like to express our gratitude to our partner and all volunteers.

The winning teams are (in alphabetical order)

CUHK FAA Chan Chun Ha Secondary School Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club College Immanuel Lutheran College

Queen Elizabeth School Old Students' Association Secondary School Shenzhen Yi Tian Secondary School

# **Crested Bulbul Club**

- Early Morning Bird Watchers at Kowloon Park & HK Park No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from Dec 08 to Feb 09: 135 No. of participants in Kowloon Park from Dec 08 to Feb 09: 338
- **2. Bird watching interpretation in Hong Kong Wetland Park** A total of 114 person-time have been participated in this service from Dec 08 to Feb 09.
- **3.** The Sixth Crested Bulbul Club Volunteer Training Programme The training was held in Feb 2009. About 27 elderly joined the training this time and will certainly strengthen our volunteer team once again.

#### 4. Bird watching services and activities

13/12 & 20/12/2008Green Orienteering in Hong Kong ParkNov 2008 to Feb 2009Several school talks and birding tours24-29/12/2008The Flower, Birds, Insect and Fish Fair in North District



# Society News & Projects - (cont.)

# 2009 International Black-faced Spoonbill Census

 ✓ Yu Yat Tung, Waterbird Monitoring Programme Coordinator, HKBWS

This year's global census has been conducted during 9 to 11 Jan 2009. Main findings are as follows:

- The number of BFS in 2009's census is 2,041, 24 less than 2008, slight drop 1.4%;
- Only 1997, 1999 and this year recorded a decreasing number;
- Taiwan has got a number of 1,104, 54% of the total population. She has got a 7% increase this year and still possessed the largest population among all areas;
- Vietnam has made a record of 63, increase 14 or 20% more than last year;
- The number along the coastal area of Mainland China has decreased 20%, from 313 last year to 247 this year, less 12%. The largest groups were recorded in Hainan, Haifeng, Guangdong and Xinghua, Fujian which are 75, 71 and 69 respectively;
- Hong Kong & Shenzhen has recorded 335, 34 or 7% less than last year. That was the first time a decreasing recorded since 1999-2000;
- Survey areas including South Korea, Japan, Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Taiwan, Hong Kong & Shenzhen, Macao, Vietnam, Thailand and The Philippines. About 100 volunteer surveyors participated in this survey;
- Among the 81 surveying points, 41 points have found the distribution of BFS.

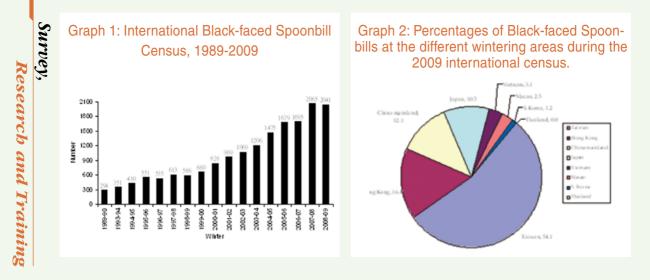
We would like to express our gratitude to all participating organizations and individual surveyors for their contribution to this survey.

Place	Number in 2009 (% of total)	Number in 2008 (% of total)	Trend (compare to 2008)
South Korea	25 (1%)	28 (1%)	slightly decrease
Japan	215 (11%)	224 (11%)	slightly decrease
Mainland China (Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Shanghai)	247 (12%)	313 (15%)	decrease 20%
Taiwan	1,104 (54%)	1,030 (50%)	increase 7%
Hong Kong & Shenzhen	335 (16%)	369 (18%)	decrease 9%
Масао	52 (3%)	50 (2%)	slightly increase
Vietnam	63 (3%)	49 (2%)	increase 30%
Thailand	0	2 (0%)	-
Total	2,041 (24 less than last year, slight decrease 1%)	2,065	decrease 1%

#### Table 1: Results of 2009 International Black-faced Spoonbill Census

Survey,

# Society News & Projects ~ (cont.)



### White-bellied Sea Eagle Research Group

 $\sim$  Gary Chow

A White-bellied Sea Eagle Research Group was established in December 2008 with the aim of studying the ecology of White-bellied Sea Eagle in Hong Kong. The Group will report regularly the result to let members know more about this beautiful raptor. The Group operates in small-scaled research study and will consider organizing an outing later. The Group now consists of 7 members, all of them are keen birdwatchers. In order to strengthen the Research Group, we will keep recruiting new members. For those who may wish to join this Group, please e-mail wbse@hkbws.org.hk to contact us.

Convener: Gary Chow

Members: Christina Chan, Dick Lai, Bond Shum, Samson So, M.Y. Tang and Wendy Yu

### China Project

**China Coastal Waterbird Census** 

 $\sim$  Fion Cheung

#### Organized by HKBWS Supported by bird watching groups and voluntary birdwatchers in Mainland China Partially sponsored by the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation Duration: July 2008 to December 2009

The "China Coastal Waterbird Census" project was started in September 2005 with the support from members of the HKBWS. In this project, voluntary surveyors along the eastern coast of China Mainland (in Dandong (Liaoning), Tianjin, Hebei, Shandong, Shanghai, Fuzhou (Fujian), Xiamen (Fujian), Haifeng (Guangdong) and Shenzhen) conduct monthly waterbird surveys in order to monitor the changes of waterbirds (mainly the migratory ones) in terms of both abundance and species richness. A report covering results from September 2005 to December 2007 will be published and a waterbird survey training workshop was held in December 2008.



# Society News & Projects ~ (cont.)

# Action for the Critically Endangered Chinese Crested-tern

Co-organized by HKBWS and BirdLife International Implemented by Fujian Birdwatching Society Partially sponsored by the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation Duration: July 2008 to December 2009

Objectives:



China

Project

Opening Ceremony for the Chinese Crested-tern project in Fuzhou Wushan Primary School (© FJBWS)

- locating undiscovered breeding colonies and feeding areas of Chinese Crested-tern along coastline between Fuding City and Fuqing City;
- 2) conducting education and awareness work on conservation situation of Chinese Crested-tern at schools and local communities around key sites of Chinese Crested-tern in northern Fujian Province; and
- 3) raising awareness among stakeholders in Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces and in Chinese Crested-tern and the need of strengthened law enforcement and other actions addressing the threats faced by the terns.

From July to November 2008, Fujian Birdwatching Society developed a voluntary group in holding the project, prepared materials for the education and awareness work, organized an Opening Ceremony for the project, held a training workshop for the volunteers and a school visit in the Changle Jinfeng Secondary School (長樂金 峰中學), the school nearest to the Min Jiang Estuary (the place with records of the Chinese Crested-tern). The Opening Ceremony attracted a lot of media coverage and a Voluntary Chinese Crested-tern Conservation Group has been set up in the Jinfeng Secondary School.



The Voluntary Chinese Crested-term Conservation Group set up in the Changle Jinfeng Secondary School. (© FJBWS)



Outdoor introduction of the Chinese Crested-tern to teachers and students of the Changle Jinfeng Secondary School. (© FJBWS)

Remarks: Chinese Crested-tern (Sterna bernsteini) is a critically endangered species in the IUCN Red List with an estimated population of less than 50 individuals in the world. This is an exceptionally poorly-known species, recorded breeding recently at only two sites on the eastern coast of China: Zhejiang and Fujian Provinces. (Information source: website of BirdLife International)

# Society News & Projects - (cont.)

# World Conference and Global Partnership Meeting of BirdLife International in Argentina



The booth of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society in the Partnership Fair. Most of the people there had to wear their traditional costumes... including me! (© Mr. Noritaka Ichida)





HIH Princess Takamado was excited to see the Scaly-sided Merganser tie. (© Mr. Lim Kim Keang)

HIH Princess Takamado bought the ties. (© Mr. Noritaka Ichida)

From 22nd to 27th September 2008, I had a chance to attend the World Conference and Global Partnership Meeting of BirdLife International in Argentina. To all the partners, partner designates and affiliates, the Conference, which is held every four years, is an important event where they gather and celebrate successes, share experience and develop solutions to solve some urgent conservation problems related to birds. Being a unique global Partnership of 108 national and territorial conservation NGOs that work together to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, nearly 500 participants joined the Conference and it is the largest conference that I have ever attended.

Besides the plenary sessions where reviews and future 4-year plans were talked about, workshops were another highlighted component of the World Conference. There were a series of workshops that you could choose to attend and I took part in those related to "Conservation Education", "Cage-bird Trade", "Ecoservices", "Local Conservation Groups of Important Bird Area (IBA)" and "Bioenergy". In the "Cage-bird Trade" workshop, it was said that there are more than 3,500 bird species targeted as cage-birds and Indonesia is the country with the most serious overexploitation problem. The situation in Indonesia is really worrying because it holds 421 and 119 endemic and threatened bird species respectively, and about 40% households keep birds according to a survey. For African Grey Parrot, a relatively common "pet" bird, although it is widely distributed in Africa (23 countries), there is a lack of a systematic population monitoring system in a single country which results in an information gap about how many African Grey Parrot left in Africa. In addition, the mortality rate of exporting the parrot reaches 30-40% which is mainly caused by the harsh trapping conditions and poor handling of the young birds.

In the workshop about "Bio-energy" which is a recent hot topic, the present situations of the growth of sugarcane and other plants for producing biofuels such as oilseeds in Europe, Brazil, Africa, Neotropical grasslands and India were introduced. In Brazil, the growth of sugarcane is now replacing soya production, especially in Southern Brazil, and if the situation goes on, people will need to grow soya at Amazon area (33% of the area is suitable for agriculture) and greatly affect this important biodiverse place in the world.

During the World Conference, Partnership Fair, which is an interactive conservation exhibition with booths set up by different BirdLife's members, was held. By having our own booth, I introduced the works of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society to the visitors and it was exciting to have the visit of HIH Princess Takamado (Honorary President of BirdLife) because of the new Scaly-sided Merganser ties!



 $\sim$  Bena Smith

### **Duck Satellite Tracking Project**

The project is now in full swing. In December, a team comprising of international experts from the Food and Agriculture Authority and US Geological Survey (USGS), and local experts from the University of Hong Kong, Asia Ecological Consultants and Worldwide Fund For Nature Hong Kong, successfully captured and fitted satellite receivers to 24 duck - 20 Northern Pintail and 4 Eurasian Wigeon (see photo) – at Mai Po. Their movements can now be monitored by visiting the USGS website ( http:// www.werc.usgs.gov/sattrack/hongkong/maps.html ). At the time of writing, most duck have remained in or around the Deep Bay area although a few Northern Pintail ventured over to the Macau side of the Pearl River

Delta. You will no doubt encounter a few of these tagged ducks inside the Reserve (particularly on the Education Centre Duck Ponds) before migration kicks off in spring and they head northward.



# Avian Influenza

At the time of writing, Mai Po has been closed to the public for yet another 21 day period. This is in accordance with the current government guidelines that the Reserve closes should a H5 infected bird be found within 3 Km of the boundary.

These 2006 guidelines were a welcome and significant improvement on those before (a 7-week closure in winter/spring 2004 because of an outbreak of avian flu on the Mainland!), but after many years of living with Avian Influenza in Hong Kong and backed up by a sizeable data set, there's evidence that the past pattern of dead H5N1 infected wild birds in HK is of single isolated cases. Therefore closure of the Reserve based on a single case within a 3 Km radius is unnecessary. In fact the current government guidelines are based on the World Organization for Animal Health's 21-days standard for poultry farms (not wild birds) which also makes no mention of the need to close nature reserves.

WWF-HK continues to push for change based on evidence and fundamental truths such as:

- There have been no cases of people being infected with the H5N1 virus from wild birds. All the known cases have been due to contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces;
- The surveillance monitoring of wild birds wintering at Mai Po that the Microbiology Department at the University Hong Kong has been carrying out since 2003, has shown that none of the samples collected have had the H5N1 virus; and
- It is internationally recognised that the most effective way of containing the H5N1 virus is at the level of the commercial poultry industry through improved management.

### Nest boxes at Mai Po

More nest boxes have been put up around the Reserve. These include four designs to attract breeding birds; three chambered boxes for Eurasian Tree Sparrow, small-hole boxes for Great Tit, medium-hole boxes for Spotted Dove and Magpie Robin (see photo), and medium-hole front opening boxes to attract White-shouldered Starling.



# A study on the effect of ploughing ~ Vicky Yeung farmlands to birds in Long Valley

### Background

The Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) supports a Hong Kong Bird Watching Society project: "Birds and Humans in Harmony – A Sustainable Management Scheme in Long Valley". This project aims to enhance the conservation value of Long Valley, especially for birds, through a management agreement (MA) scheme between the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) and the local farming community from December 2005 to March 2008. The effectiveness of management practices has been reflected by the use of habitat by birds in the area and a regular Bird Monitoring Programme records this data.

### Introduction

Water Spinach (summer) and Water Cress (winter) are the most common crops planted in Long Valley. In autumn, farmers start to prepare farmlands for planting Water Cress by ploughing Water Spinach fields, adding fertilizers and lime and inundating with freshwater. During this transitional period, physical parameters of the farmland such as vegetation cover, water levels, etc. change quickly. To investigate whether ploughing is a key element affecting bird use of this habitat, a plough test was carried out on 50,000 ft<sup>2</sup> wet agricultural land during autumn 2007, i.e. September to November 2007.

### Methodology

The wet agricultural lands used in the plough test, which were grew with Water Spinach, are: #238q, 280/281, 284, 285a and 288. The fields were ploughed then inundated with shallow water (about 2-5cm deep) after the plough. One of the fields (part of #285a) was planted with Water Cress after ploughing. During the same period of time, three plots of shallow water habitat (#176, 177 and 238p) were also ploughed to study the effect of plough on different kinds of habitats. Location of the fields is showed in Figure 1 and 2.

Bird assemblage data of these fields was monitored. The Bird Monitoring Programme consists of bird surveys which were conducted twice a week during the study period in the Long Valley area. The survey was conducted by following a standard transect to obtain comparable and complete coverage of all farmland in the shortest time.

### Result

Figure 3 showed the number of birds recorded in the wet agricultural land and shallow water habitat with indication of

Figure 1. Map of Long Valley showing the location of the wet agricultural land managed during September to November 2007 (green) and shallow water habitat (blue).



Figure 2. Map indicating the farmland planted with Water Cress after plough.

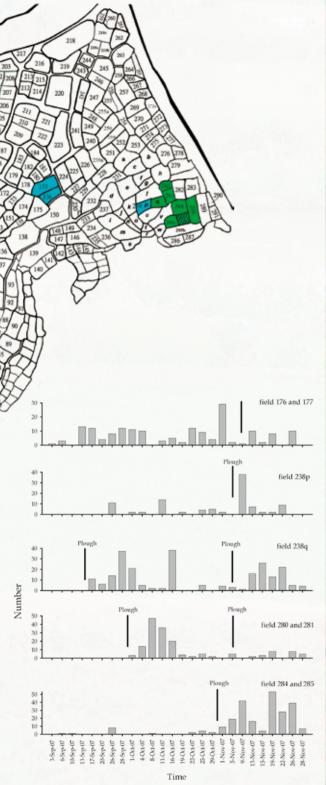


Figure 3. Number of birds recorded in wet agricultural land and shallow water habitat with plough schedule during Sep to Nov 2007.

plough schedule. Ploughing was carried out at different dates in different fields.

The bird usage in the wet agricultural land is very low before ploughing. While in shallow water habitat, the number of birds recorded was quite high in #176&177 and low in #238p before ploughing.

Wet agricultural land: It is obvious that the number of birds increased greatly after each ploughing, and the bird utilization drops off after about two weeks. Some of the fields (#238q, #280/281) were ploughed twice during the study period. Bird use rose again after the second ploughing as well, not as much as after the first time.

Shallow water habitat: In #238p, a result similar to that of the wet agricultural land obtained. A "peak" in the number of birds occurred right after ploughing. Nevertheless, the result of #176&177 is different. The bird utilization did NOT change much after ploughing.

#### Discussion

The wet agricultural fields were conventional farmland and planted for many years with crops. Fertilizers were added regularly to the fields and the soil is believed to be rich in worms. This traditional presence of dense crops affects the accessibility to birds of worms within the soil. On the other hand, shallow water habitat #238p, which was a partially vegetated field, was not ploughed for more than a year after it was changed from an abandoned field. Once these fields were ploughed, vegetation was cut and mixed with soil and worms were exposed as well. This action created new habitats and food sources for birds which could attract birds successfully.

Contrastingly, #176&177 is an open-water type shallow water habitat with vegetation cover <5%. Worms in these fields are relatively exposed compared to the vegetated fields. In addition to the high bird usage since management began in April 2006, worm content in #176&177 may be low. Furthermore, some of the other wet agricultural lands were ploughed a week before #176&177 were, and birds might have been attracted away by those areas. This is possibly why ploughing in #176&177 did not have the same effect as in other fields.

### Conclusion

To sum up, ploughing does have a positive effect on bird utilization. Yet the amplitude of the effect is influenced by many factors such as the period of abandonment or lying fallow, vegetation coverage and application of fertilizers etc. Further investigation is recommended. 北紅尾鴝 - 雌鳥 陳澤榮 塱原

Daurian Redstart - female CW Chan Long Valley

29.11.2008 Digiscoping

> 北紅尾鴝 - 雄鳥 關朗曦 西貢

Daurian Redstart - male Matthew Kwan Sai Kung

26.12.2008 DSLR Camera, 100-400mm lens

紅尾水鴝-雄鳥 何志剛 大埔

Plumbeous Redstart - male Pippen Ho Tai Po

18.12.2006 DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 2x teleconverter

紅尾水鴝 - 雌鳥 黄卓研 大埔

Plumbeous Redstart - female Cherry Wong Tai Po

28.01.2007 DSLR Camera, 100-400mm lens 烏灰鶇 何建業

Japanese Thrush Ho Kin Yip,Kinni 11.02.2007

DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter

> 赤胸鶇 陳燕明 曹公潭

Brown-headed Thrush Christina Y.M. Chan Tso Kung Tam

19.01.2007 DSLR Camera, 300mm len + 1.4x extender



Blue Rock Thrush Chan Kai Wai Tuen Mun

02.01.2009 Digiscoping

> 虎斑地鶇 Andrew Hardacre 清水灣郊野公園

Scaly Thrush Andrew Hardacre Clearwater Bay Country Park

06.02.2007 DSLR Camera, 300mm f/2.8 lens

白腹鶇 郭匯昌 蒲台

Pale Thrush Andy Kwok (Andiona) Po Toi

20.01.2008 DSLR Camera, 300-800mm lens

灰背鶇 馮漢城 石崗

Grey-backed Thrush Ken Fung Shek Kong

21.12.2008 DSLR Camera, 400mm f/5.6 lens

烏鶇 壞蛋1號 碗窰

Blackbird Bad Egg #1 Wun Yiu

Jan 2003 DSLR Camera, 600mm f/5.6 lens

白眉鶇 Neil Fifer 大澳

Eyebrowed Thrush Neil Fifer Tai O

28.02.2008 Digiscoping

# CHINA COASTAL WATERBIRD CENSUS TRAINING WORKSHOP

 $\sim$  Fion Cheung



A group photo of the China Coastal Waterbird Census training workshop (by Samson So)

As part of the China Coastal Waterbird Census project supported by the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation (OPCF), Hong Kong Bird Watching Society and Dongying Bird Watching Society organized a training workshop in Dongying, Shandong Province, from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> December 2008.

A total of 22 people coming from Birdwatching Societies in Jilin, Liaoning, Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Henan, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Wuhan and Chengdu, and 11 people from 5 nature reserves participated the workshop. Ms Fion Cheung, Dr Cheung Ho Fai and Mr. Samson So from HKBWS and 9 coordinators from the China Coastal Waterbird Census Project from Dandong (Liaoning Province), Tianjin, Cangzhou (Hebei Province), Lianyungang (Jiangsu Province), Shanghai, Fuzhou and Xiamen (Fujian Province), Haifeng and Shenzhen took part in the workshop as trainers and /or facilitators.

The workshop was divided into indoor and outdoor sessions. The indoor session included lectures on the importance of waterbird census, waterbird identification, waterbird survey method design, waterbird flyway and migration, data analysis and report writing while the outdoor one was a practical exercise where participants were separated into small groups and conducted waterbird surveys along the same coastal area.

In order to encourage more birdwatchers to help in conducting waterbird surveys along the eastern coast of China, the coordinators described the important conservation issues surrounding their survey sites. A questionnaire conducted after the workshop showed that all the participants were satisfied with the workshop and most of them learnt much from it. The only difficulty faced during the workshop was the heavy snow storm on the last day!



Participants paid attention to the lecture (by Samson So)



Participants were divided into small groups and conducted waterbird survey along the coastal area (by Samson So)



These three participants followed Dr. Cheung' s instruction and carried out data analysis step by step (by Samson So)



Every participant was presented with a certificate after the workshop (by Samson So)



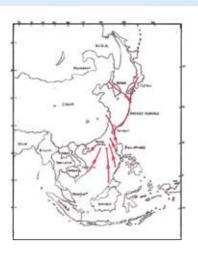
# Land Bird Migration in the Hong Kong area

 $\sim$  Geoff Welch

This note summarises the conclusions of a study of bird migration on the island of Po Toi, Hong Kong over the period March 2006 to June 2008. The full results of this study are expected to be published in the 2005/2006 HKBWS Annual Report.

#### **1. Migration Routes**

Migration routes of land birds into Hong Kong are different in spring and autumn, and are believed to be as given in Fig 1 below



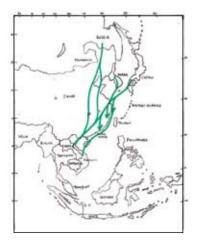


Fig 1. Land Bird Migration in Spring and Autumn in the Hong Kong area

#### **1.1 Spring Migration**

Spring migrants arriving in Hong Kong have mostly made a crossing of the South China Sea from The Philippines, north Borneo, east Vietnam or Hainan (see Fig 1). Their departure will depend on the wind direction assisting their direction of flight at their place of departure. If they do not experience bad weather during the flight, they may over-fly the coastal areas of Hong Kong and land in suitable habitat some distance inland. If they encounter adverse winds and rain on the flight, many will land on the coast to rest and recover provided they can find an acceptable habitat. Even localized conditions such as coastal fog can bring over-flying migrants down on the coast.

#### **1.2 Autumn Migration**

Autumn migrants in Hong Kong are mostly birds making a north east to south west crossing of China which have either drifted or been blown south of their intended direction and have arrived in Hong Kong or further east on the coast (see Fig 1). These will include many first winter birds which are less familiar with the correct direction of flight and less able to make the necessary corrections for the wind. Migrants arriving at the coast will then generally follow a coastal route around south China to their SE Asia wintering grounds, passing through Hong Kong on their way.

#### **1.3 Differences in Wintering Areas of Spring and** Autumn Migrants

As explained above, spring migrants in Hong Kong are mostly from the Philippines/north Borneo wintering area with some from east Vietnam and Hainan. Autumn migrants in Hong Kong are mostly those which winter in SE Asia or south China. This difference in wintering areas leads to different species being seen in spring and autumn.

Species which winter only in the Philippines/north Borneo are usually seen only in spring (e.g. Narcissus Flycatcher, Japanese Yellow Bunting) whereas species which winter only in SE Asia are usually seen only in autumn (e.g. Dark-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-rumped Flycatcher). Species which winter in both places (e.g. Asia Brown Flycatcher and many others) are seen in both seasons.

#### 2. Weather and Migration

The landmark paper dealing with the effect of weather on bird migration in Hong Kong is by Lam and Williams in the HKBWS 1993 Annual Report, and the conclusions of this study are similar to those given by Lam and Williams.

#### 2.1 Spring

A cold front or depression passing through Hong Kong will cause influxes of spring migrants on the coast immediately after the passage of the weather system. Rain with the system will increase the size of the influx. In the absence of a weather system, migrants

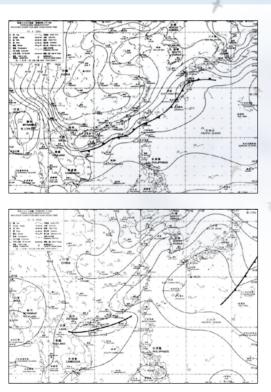


Fig 2. Spring Cold Front – 15.4.2006 and Spring Depression – 21.5.2008 (Source - HKO Website)

arriving in the Hong Kong area may over-fly the coast and even Hong Kong altogether, to reach suitable habitat inland.

Typical HKO Weather Maps for a Spring Cold Front and a Spring Depression are given as Fig 2.

Both systems create light southerly winds over the South China Sea which encourage migrants to start their journey north over the sea. Before reaching the coast of South China, these birds meet squally conditions at the front, a change of wind to the northeast against their flight direction and probably some rain. Birds tired after their flight come down on the first available land, the coastline or offshore islands.

15.4.2006 was the date large numbers of Chinese Goshawks started to appear over Po Toi. More than 1000 were counted over two days, 15th and 16th April. The weather system remained over the South China Sea for four days, 13th to 16th April, unusual for a spring cold front.

21.5.2008 was the date of a large influx of small herons and bitterns on Po Toi and later Hong Kong. The weather system also remained over the South China Sea for 4 days, but this is quite normal for a depression in mid-May.

#### 2.2 Autumn

A consistent northerly wind across south China can bring more migrants into the Hong Kong area by drifting them from their intended route into Hong Kong from the north. Rain has little effect in autumn. Visible migration of land birds is more evident in autumn, with most birds following a coastal migration route from north east to south west.

HKO Weather Maps for two days prior to the largest influx created by an autumn north wind during the study period, on 12th September 2006, are given as Fig 3

This was the weather system which brought large numbers of Tiger Shrikes and other migrants into Hong Kong in mid September 2006. Migrants moving north east to south west across China start another leg of

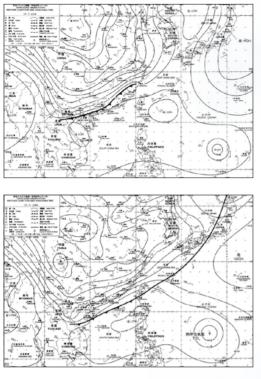


Fig 3. Autumn North Wind Change – 9 and 10.9.2006 (Source - HKO Website)

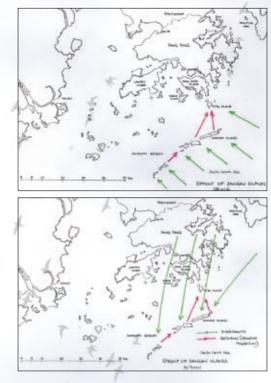


Fig 4. The Effect of the Dangan Islands in Spring and Autumn

their migration in the northerly winds following the passage of the cold front. Many are blown south of their intended destination and end up in Hong Kong or further east, gradually continuing their migration south westwards along the coast into Hong Kong.

#### 3. Other Conclusions

Some other conclusions from the study are

The Dangan Islands, which form a chain 15 kms off the coast of Hong Kong, act as a catching net for migrants in both spring and autumn. Many birds which arrive on the Dangan Islands subsequently move off to the north, either to continue their migration as in spring, or to return to the coastline in autumn (reversed migration).

Some of these birds fly into Po Toi, usually just after dawn, increasing the number of species seen on Po Toi. Others may over-fly Hong Kong altogether, particularly in spring. Egrets migrate coastally in both spring and autumn and can be seen flying NE past Po Toi in spring and SW in autumn. They may also have regular migration routes across the South China Sea to the area of the Philippines.

Some species normally considered resident in Hong Kong are seen as migrants on Po Toi. Of these, Tree Sparrow is the most obvious migrant in both spring and autumn, probably following a coastal migration route around south China which may also stretch up into east China.

Sea bird migration occurs mostly in spring. Sea bird species follow a regular timetable and are less affected by weather than land birds although more birds may arrive in periods of strong easterly winds and tern movements are more concentrated in light southerly winds.



# From Naught to Nothing ~ Chan Ming Ming

With no preparation or expectation, just to find out what it was all about, I signed up for a bird watching course. When it was time for field practice, I dug out a pair of miniature binoculars purchased long ago and, after much hard work, spotted the white rump of a Little Swift.

I decided to continue after nearly one year. I wanted a pair of binoculars with higher magnification, light and waterproof, and of course, at a reasonable price. After endless bargaining, the purchase finally paid off: I could tell a sandpiper from a plover, and that was when I truly fell for birds.

Obsessed, I could not help but craved for more. Armed with a telescope, I marched into Mai Po for the vista at the mudflats. And what a splendid scene it was: besieged by countless birds in quiet stillness, punctuated with occasional flashes of movement. Vision through the tube has no limits!

Yet something was still missing five to six years on. With much pondering, I decided to pledge myself to bird watching, and committed seriously on a pair of top-range binoculars. The woodland birds in my dreams finally came within grasp.

Another twelve years went by, but the gap between experience and ability was widening. All I could do was to resort to an even bigger telescope... And before I knew it, the burden became so heavy that I could hardly progress. Was getting close to birds supposed to be so tiring?

With nothing to lose, I reverted to my old self as a novice, leaving my telescope and even my binoculars at home. Sure enough, as long as I have birds in my heart, freedom and satisfaction follow. Try this from time to time and the baggage is gone – isn't it wonderful!  $\checkmark$ 



# HKBWS 50th Anniversary

#### ∼ Wong Choi-On

Growing up in a village, I was surrounded by nature in my childhood. I saw a lot of wildlife, especially birds. When I started to learn to observe birds in 1997, I took the path

towards nature protection and found a new outlook on life. I began to spend hours enjoying their beauty and listening to their pleasing and magnetic song. During that period of time, I had the great good fortune to meet a special band of nature lovers in the HKBWS. We shared interests and I came to realize that every bird has its' place in the ecosystem.

Having determined to study them more thoroughly, I am excited at every new species I encounter, and enjoy any opportunity for new discovery. But the most important point is that I get a chance to share my enthusiasm with others. Together we can improve our observation skills, and increase our awareness of the importance of protecting birds. It is an honor for me to get this chance on the 50th anniversary of HKBWS to express my happiness at what we've done so far, and what we should hope to achieve in the future. I wish that the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society can have a niche in the temple of fame, and maintain a good name for a hundred generations in order to benefit the birds.



# The Story of Two Bird Mania ~ Christine Chov

"When we were young, you always giggled your appreciation of my silly jokes. Once we sat under a peach tree to enjoy the breeze and the whistling birds....". This Chinese folk song always reminded me of my childhood.

by Peter Chan

When I was at my primary school, I always watched a family of Eurasian tree sparrows under a big tree with my best friend. We enjoyed endless discussions about topics such as the new members of the bird family. How came the birds were gaining so much weight ? What were the birds most favorite snacks ? We considered that there should be a 'Bird Club' which allowed kids to enjoy bird watching without always being cruelly interrupted by the school bell.

Only two years ago after joining the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS), I started to realise that the society was founded 50 years ago. This was the reality created by a group of nature lovers who owned a child's heart. The thrill of having my dream realized was beyond description.

The culture of bird watching has been growing in Hong Kong. Through working as a volunteer guide for the Long Valley project, I can experience the kids' appreciation towards nature and the curiosity shown towards birds in particular. School kids always give very enthusiastic feedback regarding the tour. I consider this kind of activity a good component of holistic and liberal studies. HKBWS is not just playing a leading role in scientific research on birds, it also modestly plays a role in education.

This year, the HKBWS has reached another milestone. We now own a more spacious office. We have also become the strategic partner of Birdlife International. I would like to express my best wishes to HKBWS through the following poem.  $\checkmark$ 

'God has mercy on birders and blessed them with hundreds of birds. The HKBWS would win renown internationally like a high flying bird'

Long Yuen trip on 14 Feb by Christine Choy

# Collared correspondent

 $\sim$  SU Yiqing, Xiguan Foreign Language School, Guangzhou

(Looking at this situation on the campus of a famous university in China, I felt very ill at ease. In order to draw more people's attention to the situation, I stayed up late to complete this "letter". Doing conservation work in China is sometimes very difficult, and determination is required. I hope we can continue to encourage each other. - SU Yiqing)



Otis,

Feb.2nd, 2009

#### Hi there

by Prof. Liao Xiaodong

Kung Hei Fat Choy! How are things for you Collared Scops Owls in Guangzhou Sun Yatsen University? I haven't heard from you for several weeks but I know Bill MAN from the Crested Bulbul Club has gone all the way to Guangzhou to see you guys, unfortunately you had already moved on.

I heard that the bamboo grove at your favourite roost had been partly cut down to create a Mahjong Den for people with nothing else to do. You had to put up with their noise for a long time without complaint. Humans have so many places they can use and yet they eventually destroyed your home. You are lucky you left or you might have ended up on the menu in a wild animal restaurant.

These humans must really have cotton wool for brains, can't they see that we only need a little bit of space, can catch a lot of mice, and help maintain an ecological balance?

Although we owls are nationally-protected, you know that a few years ago my cousin here in Hong Kong was caught by people, killed, and put into a soup. Life in Yuen Long can be difficult, for a long time I couldn't find a proper nest hole and had to roost in a tree near a store

Lately, things have been better. Thanks to the HK Bird Watching Society my face has been in several newspapers and I have been an attraction for many birders, who then patronise the nearby noodle shop. I've become a bit of a feature round here, and I can see that some people's conservation attitudes are improving.

On the family side, I've become a father of three, and I'm working hard to catch even more snakes and rodents to feed my young family.

So, despite the financial crisis, the attention of the birdwatchers and the noodle store people have made it a good year for me. Well, may you live in peace and enjoy a healthy New Year!

Must Fly,

~ Richard Lewthwaite

These are unchecked records and members (this means YOU) are reminded of the importance of submitting all records on cards or electronically

### November 2008

- A mainly quiet month enlivened by birdy periods in the middle and end of the month, the highlight being a **Greater White-fronted Goose**.
- The first week was unusually quiet for the time of year, with just 10 migrant species noted at Po Toi on 4<sup>th</sup> as against 25 species found at the same time in previous years (GW). Among very few notable reports in the first week were two Caspian Terns, an Ashy Minivet, a Red-breasted Flycatcher (first found in late October), a male Narcissus Flycatcher (a long-stayer remaining from early October to at least the middle of November) and up to three Bramblings at Po Toi (GW, YLN), 120 Chinese Bulbuls at Dong Ping Chau, a Pheasant-tailed Jacana and a *Manchurian Reed Warbler* at Long Valley (DAD, PW, MK), a Ruddy Crake, two Lanceolated Warblers and two Chinese Penduline Tits at Mai Po (JAA) and another Lanceolated Warbler at Cheung Chau ferry pier (MDW).
- On 10<sup>th</sup>, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** was photographed at Nam Sang Wai (BC), only the second Hong Kong record. Among other waterbirds reported during 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> were a **Black Stork**, 612 **Black-winged Stilts** (a new high count), two **Nordmann's Greenshanks**, two **Long-billed Dowitchers** and 593 **Black-tailed Godwits** (a high count for autumn/winter) at Mai Po (BS, RWL), and a **Baillon's Crake** at Long Valley (J+JH). Landbirds found during the same period included a **Siberian Thrush**, a late **Eastern Crowned Warbler** and a **Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** at Tai Po Kau (KPK, MDW), up to five **Chestnut-eared Buntings** at Mai Po and Long Valley (BS), a possible **Yellow-throated Bunting** at Po Toi (GW), a **Bull-headed Shrike** at Chek Lap Kok (GJC), a **Radde's Warbler** near Hong Kong University (SYH), an **Orange-headed Ground Thrush** at Kap Lung (NG), a **Carrion Crow** at Pui O (PA) and up to three **Bramblings** at Po Toi, Mai Po and near Hong Kong University (GW, DB, BS, PCC). In addition, a **Grey Nightjar** was found at Po Toi on 12th (GW), a well-photographed though as yet unidentified **Boobok** (either Brown or Northern) was present at Lai Chi Kok Park from 13<sup>th</sup> until at least 25<sup>th</sup> (PW, MK et al) and an unidentified boobok-sized owl was seen at Cheung Chau on 20<sup>th</sup> (MDW).
- In what was to be a good winter for Bull-headed Shrikes, another was seen at Nam Chung on 16<sup>th</sup>, whilst on the same day a Black-headed Bunting was found at Long Valley (EMSK) and a Japanese Yellow Bunting, rare in autumn, was photographed at Po Toi (PW, MK). Other birds attracted to Po Toi during 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> included a Black Stork (at sea), a Brown-headed Thrush and two Eurasian Siskins (GW).
- A flurry of reports from Po Toi in the last week of the month included a **Daurian Redstart**, a **Red-flanked Bluetail** (both unusually rare at this point of the winter), a **Japanese**, at least three **Greybacked**, two **Pale** and two **Eyebrowed Thrushes**, a **Chinese Blackbird**, five species of **Bunting** (**Black-faced**, **Chestnut**, **Little**, **Chestnut-eared** and **Yellow-browed**) and a **Common Rosefinch**. Among notable reports from other sites at this time were three **Buff-bellied Pipits** at Long Valley (KJ), a **Common Starling** and a **Chestnut Bulbul** (rare in Deep Bay) at Mai Po (MH, BS) and a **Crested Honey Buzzard** at Tai Po Kau (OC).

### **December 2008**

Though poor for bluetails and thrushes, a fairly good variety of birds were reported during the month, the greatest rarity being a **Chinese Leaf Warbler** at Pak Sha O.

- The first week of the month brought reports of a Greater Scaup (rare away from Deep Bay), a Ruddy Crake, a Brown Fish Owl and a Dusky Thrush at Po Toi (PA, YLN, HI), a Eurasian Chiffchaff, perhaps only the 5<sup>th</sup> for Hong Kong, at Mai Po (PJL), a Black-winged Kite at Long Valley and an unidentified waxwing at Po Toi (PW,MK) which on very brief views was thought probably a Japanese Waxwing.
- Reports on 9<sup>th</sup> included a **Bay Woodpecker** at Tai Po Kau, four **Bright-capped Cisticolas** at Lam Tsuen (EMSK), a probable **Little Stint** from the boardwalk (JAA) and a **Black-faced Spoonbill** and a **Eurasian Hoopoe** at Long Valley. This was the first **Black-faced Spoonbill** record from Long Valley, and subsequently two were present there on 11<sup>th</sup>.
- In the middle of the month, a **Bull-headed Shrike** was found at Sai Kung (AH) and there were sightings of a male **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** at Ng Tung Chai (KPK), a female **Baikal Teal** inland at Tong Kung Leng (JGH), 43 **Greater Painted Snipes** and a **Lanceolated Warbler** at Long Valley (PJL) and two **Buff-bellied Pipits** near Mai Po (JAA).
- A **Red-breasted Flycatcher** was found at Ping Che on 20<sup>th</sup> (PJL) and there were also 15 **Bright-capped Cisticolas** and 40 **Little Buntings** there on the same day. Over the next two days a **Brown Bush Warbler** was noted at Tai Om (EMSK) and 20 **Grey-headed Lapwings** were counted at Kam Tin (NLY).
- ▶ In the last week of the month, woodland and shrubland sites hosted a good variety of birds including two **Bay Woodpeckers**, three **Goodson's Leaf Warblers**, a **Bianchi's Warbler** (**PW**, **MK**) and a flock of **Chestnut-crowned Yuhinas** (as they are now called following the split from **Striated Yuhina**) at Tai Po Kau, another flock of **Chestnut-crowned Yuhinas**, a possible **Grey-crowned Warbler** (MK), potentially only the 2nd for Hong Kong, and a **White-throated Fantail** (for about the 4th successive winter) (EMSK) at Ng Tung Chai, and a **Chinese Leaf Warbler**, only the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> for Hong Kong, and a **Mugimaki Flycatcher** at Pak Sha O (GJC). Also reported at this time were a **Large Grass Warbler** in the Lin Au area (EMSK), a **Citrine Wagtail** at Long Valley, a **Brown-headed Thrush** at Po Toi (GW) and two **Ruddy Crakes** and a **Water Rail**, possibly of the western form, at Mai Po (JAA).

# The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours (May - Aug 2009)

Outings						
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (13)	Target species		
2/5/2009 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	<b>Aberdeen Reservoir</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Central MTR Station, Exit B, Hang Seng Bank)	ልል	Forest birds		
3/5/2009 (Sun)	0745 - 1600	<b>Po Toi and HK South Waters</b> (07:45 Hang Seng Bank, Sai Wan Ho MTR Station) Note: This will be a long trip on open waters. The ride could be quite rough and some people may be seasick.	***	Seabirds		
10/5/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Ho Chung (08:00 Ho Chung Road entrance)	ልል	Forest birds		
24/5/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	**	Waterbirds		
6/6/2009 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	<b>Shing Mun</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Station, Exit B, Hang Seng Bank)	**	Forest birds		
7/6/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Nam Chung and Luk Keng (08:00 Fanling Town Centre Access Exit, Fanling MTR Station)	☆ ☆	Waterbirds		
28/6/2009 (Sun)	0815 - 1600	<b>Mirs Bay and Eastern Waters</b> (08:15 Start at Ma Liu Shiu Pier, one hour at Tap Mun for lunch; 16:00 finish at Sai Kung Pier) Note: this will be a long trip on open waters. The ride could be quite rough and some people may get seasick. Those who want to leave at lunchtime may take the ferry (departing hourly) at Tap Mun for Wong Shek Pier. The fare is non-refundable irrespective of early departure at Tap Mun.	***	Seabirds (terns)		
4/7/2009 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	<b>Tai Po Kau</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	**	Forest birds		
19/7/2009 (Sun)	0815 - 1600	<b>Mirs Bay and Eastern Waters</b> (08:15 Start at Ma Liu Shiu Pier, one hour at Tap Mun for lunch; 16:00 finish at Sai Kung Pier) Note: this will be a long trip on open waters. The ride could be quite rough and some people may get seasick. Those who want to leave at lunchtime may take the ferry (departing hourly) at Tap Mun for Wong Shek Pier. The fare is non-refundable irrespective of early departure at Tap Mun.	***	Seabirds (terns)		
1/8/2009 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	<b>Shing Mun</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tsuen Wan MTR Station, Exit B, Hang Seng Bank)	**	Forest birds		
23/8/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	**	Waterbirds		

Member: Free of Charge Non-member: Free of Charge (no registration required)
Member: Free of Charge Non-member: HK\$30 (HK\$10 for age under 19 student) (registration not required)
Member: HK\$40 (Student Member: HK\$20) Non-member: HK\$70 (registration required)
Member: HK\$160 Non-member: HK\$200 (registration required)

# Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Activity Booking Slip

I would like to register the following HKBWS activities: (Please  $\blacksquare$  as appropriate)

Po Toi and Hong Kong South waters [Boat Fare: Member: HK\$160 Non-member: HK\$200]

□ 3 May 2009 (Sun) (\_\_\_\_\_ member(s), \_\_\_\_\_ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) is \_\_\_\_\_\_)

#### Mai Po Outings [Coach Fare: Member: HK\$40 Student Member: HK\$20 Non-member: HK\$70]

(Members not using the coach do not need to pay. Non-members will have to pay the coach fare of HK\$70 disregard of whether they make use of the coach.)
□ 24 May 2009 (Sun) (member(s), non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is )

 $\square 23 \text{ Aug 2009 (Sun)} \qquad (\underline{\qquad} \text{ member(s)}, \underline{\qquad} \text{ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is } )$ 

Mirs Bay and Eastern Waters [Boat Fare: Member: HK\$160 Non-member: HK\$200]

- □ 28 Jun 2009 (Sun) (\_\_\_\_\_ member(s), \_\_\_\_\_ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) is \_\_\_\_\_\_ )
- □ 19 Jul 2009 (Sun) (\_\_\_\_\_ member(s), \_\_\_\_\_ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) is \_\_\_\_\_\_ )
- \*\* We will confirm the participants whether their application is accepted or not about 1 week before the outing. Once confirmed, no refund will be made no matter they can attend the outing or not. If we cancel the outing due to inclement weather or special reason, all participants will be refunded.

According to the requirement of the Hong Kong Police and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, participants entering Mai Po should provide their full name and Hong Kong ID Number (passport number for oversea visitors )in order to access to the Frontier Closed Area and Mai Po Marshes.

Date	Destination	Name	Membership No.	HK ID No. (for entering Maipo)	Mobile Phone	Email Address	Fare*

#### \* Please use separate cheque for each activity.

Enclosed please find a Cheque of HK	\$	(Payable to The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited)	
Name :	Membership no: _	E-mail:	

Mobile Phone No. : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_ Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this slip together with a **crossed cheque** to:

#### Floor 14, Ruby Commercial Building, 480 Nathan Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon

#### Notes :

- Application should be made at least two weeks before the date of the outing and on the first come first served basis. HKBWS Members have a high priority to participate the activities.
- Any changes of the activities will be announced in our Website: (www.hkbws.org.hk/phpBB2/all\_activity.php).
- Arrangement during bad weather: When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No.3 or above or Rainstorm Warnings Red or Black are hoisted by the Hong Kong Observatory at 7:00 am on the event day, the activity will be cancelled. If Thunderstorm Warning is announced during the activity, Team Leader will decide if the activity should be continued or cancelled. You can call the team leader at 9457 3196 during the event day if you have any query about the weather.

#### Disclaimer

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society shall have no responsibility, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or other liabilities arising from the activities. Participants are recommended to purchase relevant insurance.



紅喉歌鴝-雌鳥 郭匯昌 貝澳

Siberian Rubythroat - female Andy Kwok (Andiona) Pui O

18.02.2008 DSLR Camera, 300-800mm lens

紅喉歌鴝 - 雄鳥 余柏維 石崗

Siberian Rubythroat - male Yue Pak Wai Shek Kong

03.02.2008 DSLR Camera, 100-400mm lens 藍喉歌鴝 - 雄鳥 謝鑑超 塱原

Bluethroat - male Wallace Tse Long Valley

25.03.2007 DSLR Camera, 300mm lens + 1.4x teleconverter

> 藍喉歌鴝-雌鳥 陳巨輝 塱原

Bluethroat - female Sam Chan Long Valley

27.12.2008 DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter

紅脇藍尾鴝-雌鳥 陳家強 貝澳

Red-flanked Bluetail - female Isaac Chan Pui O

08.03.2008 DSLR Camera, 300mm lens + 2x teleconverter

紅脇藍尾鴝-雄鳥 壞蛋1號 城門

Red-flanked Bluetail - male Bad Egg #1 Shing Mun

01.2007 DSLR Camera, 400mm f/5.6 lens, with Flash 斑鶇 葉紀江 貝澳

Dusky Thrush Herman Ip Pui O

06.12.2008 DSLR Camera, 100-400mm lens