香港觀鳥會 The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



bulletin 會員通訊

212Summer 2009~夏







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Front cover: Eurasian Oystercatchers - K.K. Hui (Mai Po) 09/04/2009, DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter

Design & Printing:

Contemporary Development Company

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牛機處處 (B0011) HK\$46

HK\$30





Birds (B0013) (Bilingual)

HK\$40

小泥灘大發現龍尾潮間生 物圖鑑 (B0014) (Chinese only) HK\$5

Hong Kong Birds for Kits Tim & Thmlma Woodward (Bilingual) (B0015) Member: HK\$60 Non-Member: HK\$72







Episodes of Birds (AV0001) (Sold Out)

HKBWS Birdline (Chinese)

Thank you Mr. SL Tai for being the coordinator of our Chinese Birdline in the past. Mr. Jose Alberto Cheung Mok will take up this job in future. Your support is most welcome.

Opening of our Mini-library

After preparing for some time, our Mini-library is now open for Members to use. Due to the limitation in library and human resources, we can only provide the service in the morning of every Saturday. In addition, we are sorry that all the materials can only be used in the office. Here, we would like to thank the volunteers for their hard work!

Irene Wong, Donna Yam, Nora Hung, Judy Wan, Ann To and Kenny Lai. If you have free time and want to be a voluntary librarian, please don't hesitate and contact us!

The list of books and reference material has been uploaded to our forum.



Hong Kong Bird Race 2009

Thank you for joining the Hong Kong Bird Race 2009 on 25-26 April. Result of the race is as follows:



Team

Winner of the President's Cup: Agent Scott (A total of 145 species)

Team Member



The Best Record & The President's Choice; "Spoon-billed Sandpiper" recorded by the "Whitebellied Sea Eagle Team"

No. of Species Bird of the Day

參賽隊伍及隊員如下:

	Team	ream wember	ivo. of opecies	Dird of the Day	100 A
	One Shot	鄭諾銘 蘇樂軒 袁欣鈴 胡偉恒 黃偉誠	110	Lesser Coucal	
STATE OF THE STATE	Duckman	Chan Ying Chi, Or Ka Man, Chan Wai Bing, Lam Ting Yin, Dilys, Lo Pei Lai, Janice, Fong Hoi Ning, Cheung Ka Chun Tang Ching Ching	114	Cinnamon Bittern	THE !
	Phalarope	Bill Man, Wong Shui Chi, Wu Fung Mui, Ng Yan Ngar, Lo Chun Fai	123	Grey-streaked Flycatcher	THE RESERVE TO SERVE
	White-bellied Sea Eagle Research Team	Gary Chow, WS Tang, Wendy Yu, Shum Ting Wing, Christina Chan	140	Spoon-billed Sandpiper	2000
CAR WATER	Duck Chick	Sung Yik Hei, Yu Yat Tung, Lee Kwok Shing, Ying Hak King, Pang Chun Chiu	140	Chestnut-cheeked Starling	
	Larks	Ki Wai Ki, Lam Chiu Ying, Ng Cho Nam, Chan Ming Ming, JoseAlberto Cheung Mok	121	White-throated Needletail	NAME OF THE OWNER OWNER OF THE OWNER
) :340 to 42	Kite Group	Vicky Yeung, Karin Chin, Eric Chan, Fiona, Maria Lo, Beta Yip, Lachlan Chin, Yam Wing Yiu	127	Common Kingfisher	
STATE OF THE STATE	Agent Scott	Katherine Leung, Henry Lui, Bena Smith, Eva Cheuk, Mei-ling Lau, Tobi Lau, Polly Chik	145	Ashy Drongo	
Carlotte Control of the Control of t					





Chicken Little	Tony Hung 扶爵芝 羅樂榕 麥少慈 關麗瑩 馬翠盈 黎雅儀	128	Chinese Goshawk
Chicken Soul	Cindy Yuen, Vivian Fu, William But, Billy Hau, Ivy Mak	128	Chinese Goshawk
White Walk	Cheung Kwok Leung Klinsmann, Ng Ka Yan Connie, Leung King Tak Michael, Sze Tung Yam Stone, Au Yeung Man Kit Omar, Law Wing Yee Winnie, Tsui Pui Yee Apple	122	Yellow- crested Cockatoo
Target Sixty	Kwan Wai Keung, Kwan Siu Chuen, Fung Yee Mei, Kwan Izen, Fung Siu Yin	66	Asian Barred Owlet

干軍





Target 100

劉立峰 浦穎 鄒勝

Egret

About 200 people participated in this year's Target 100, 40 students and teachers come from the schools of Guangdong Province. Special thanks to the following volunteers: Wong Hok Sze, Peter Chan, Wong Chah Cheong, Apache Lau and members from the Crested Bulbul Club.

Pacific Golden Plover

Education &

Promotion-Activities

Crested Bulbul Club

1. The new committee of the Club is just elected. Detail is as follows:

Chairman: Choi Chung Pak

Vice-chairman (Internal Affairs): Wong Chiu Shu Vice-chairman (External Affairs): Man Kuen Yat, Bill

Secretary: Cheng Kam Yuen

Immediate Past Chairman: Leung Kwok Wah Committee Members: Chen Chi Pao (Chief Editor),

Tang Wing Sing, Leung Ho Chi

Team Leader: Man Kuen Yat, Choi Chung Pak, Wong Lai Yee, Wong Chiu Shu,

Ng Yan Ngar, Wong Shui Chi

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Concern Group: Leung Kwok Wa, Suen Leong, Tsang Wah



Society News & Projects - (cont.

Crested Bulbul Club

- Early Morning Bird Watchers at Kowloon Park & HK Park
 No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from Mar Apr 09: 124
 No. of participants in Kowloon Park from Mar Apr 09: 253
- 3. Bird watching interpretation in Hong Kong Wetland Park

A total of 128 participants in this service from Mar - Apr 09.



29/3/2009 A guided tour of birdwatching for general public in the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defense



Survey,

Research and Training

Nature Conservation Management of Long Valley (Mar 08 – Feb 2010) ~ Vicky Yeung

Survey on House Crow Nest 2009

The Society has been commissioned by AFCD to conduct a survey on House Crow Nest in the coming two months. The purpose is to provide data to AFCD in order to reduce the number of this exotic species which may threaten the natural environment of Hong Kong. You are welcome to inform us the location of the nest. Photos or map showing exact location is most welcome.

The first project year of "Nature Conservation Management of Long Valley" has just passed. Over 1,360,000 sq. ft. of farmland is managed under our programme.

The construction work of the fishpond in Long Valley was finished in early January. Fish fry were restocked into the pond in late February. We are going to lower the water level from May to June in order to provide more food for the breeding egrets and herons nearby.

To raise the public awareness on wetland conservation, 11 eco-tours to Long Valley were arranged for teachers and students of secondary and primary schools. More than 400 participants joined the tours, which were guided by trained eco-guides, introduce the importance of wetland, ecology, agriculture, birds of Long Valley etc. In addition, a harvesting activity and Paddy rice planting activity were organized in February and April respectively. There were

During Easter Holiday, 2 new bird species to Long Valley were recorded. They were Eurasian Spoonbill and Chinese Egret. Both are recorded on our managed fields.

New Species to Hong Kong Willow Warbler

altogether about 150 participants.

New Species to Long Valley

Grey-tailed Tattler, Yellow-crested Cockatoo, Black-faced Spoonbill, Pale Martin, Eurasian Spoonbill, Chinese Egret





Survey,

Society News & Projects - (cont.)

The Logbook of a Black, Kite nesting in Hong Kong Observatory 2009

修理舊巢 Renovating the old nest.





中午下着大雨,雌性黑鳶 坐在巢內孵蛋,渾身濕 一 透,下午14:15分雄鳶換班 Female gets soaked sheltering eggs from the heavy rain, relieved by male.

雨點紛紛兩隻小鳶順利誕生,當母鳶移動身體時,披着疏落雛毛身體泛粉紅,鳶嘴輪廓清晰的雛鳥趣致可愛帶點傻氣。 The chicks hatch in the drizzle. Seen here - pink and helpless. The shape of the bill can be clearly seen.





young from attack by three

Blue Magpies.

兩隻可愛的小鳶 Two downy chicks.



寧靜地過了一個下午 A quiet afternoon.



紅嘴藍鵲再度來犯 Another attacked by Blue Magpies.



幼鳥不斷拍翼



~ Recorded by Leung Kit Ching Photo by Wong Shui Chi

17/02	Adult mating
19/02	One egg was seen
20/02	Parents nesting alternately
23/03	Chick was seen (35 days from parent nesting to the birth of the chick)
24/03	A total of 2 chicks were born.
01/04	Blue Magpie attacked the parent when feeding the young.
- 04/04	The chicks are twelve days old. Parents were harassed by the Blue Magpie repeatedly. Fortunately, the chicks were safe.
15/04	Chicks grew bigger.
05/05	Two chicks stayed in the nest where their parents kept their eyes on them from a branch.
12/05	Moving the wings up and down and jumping in the nest
13/05	Starting to learn flying by stretching the wings
14/05	Feeding the chicks with a mouse by the parent
15/05	Larger chick can fly over the nest with adults but sometimes attacked by the Blue Magpie. Smaller chick remains perched on the branch.

A juvenile spends about 50 days from hatching to leave their nest.

(This is a record made by invited volunteers conducted from a long distance to ensure the safety of the breeding.)

小鳥可以翱翔天空了 Able to soar independently.



A note on White-bellied Sea Eagle Survey

Establishment of the WBSE Research Group

∼ by White-bellied Sea Eagle Research Group

The Disneyland development aroused early concerns about WBSEs. In those days WBSEs were considered a rare species of raptor, of particularly high conservation value, and there were thought to be only a limited number in Hong Kong. They received attention again recently because of a nesting site at an electric pylon at Tin Wan (near Aberdeen). Nesting progress was reported widely by the news media. Knowledge of this local raptor has been mostly limited to their appealing appearance, but not their intriguing ecology, despite the image of WBSE used on the 10 cents postage stamp. Has the number decreased recently in Hong Kong? How many breeding pairs are there and what is the breeding success rate? All these questions have inspired the formation of the WBSE study group, which aims to find out more about their ecology through in-depth field observation.

Experience of a field trip...

On a morning in February 2009, when there were no NE monsoon winds for a few days and the sea was not choppy but with surges, four members took a boat to the southern waters of Hong Kong to look for WBSEs. This was our fourth field trip, and the previous few trips were all along the coast of Sai Kung.

WBSE like to build their nests at the coast, and winter is their breeding season. One of the purposes of the study group is to look into their breeding status in Hong Kong. In this field trip, we searched along the coastline of a small island. Soon we found an adult perched at a tree, suggesting that the nest should not be far away. The boat stopped in rough seas, and we searched for the nest by telescope. The nest was, as usual, well hidden by trees, and not easily seen from below. The trick was to look for the place where they land. As expected, soon afterward another adult carrying a branch landed at the crown of a tree not far away. This was nest-building behaviour – we had managed to locate the nest!

Despite knowing the location, we could not watch what the adult was doing because it was totally inside the deep nest. Fortunately, another adult returned to the edge of the nest, and seemed to be gently playing with something inside. Was it playing with a chick? Without witnessing, how did we confirm if there was any chick? We had no choice but continue to watch. What we expected did happen – another adult flew



to the sea, foraging and gliding near the sea surface. At an opportunistic moment it plunged into the water and caught a small fish. Then it carried the prey back to the nest, passing us overhead. Normally it would eat the prey while perching at a tree. Yet, this time it carried the prey to the nest, indicating that it would use the prey to feed the chick. Finally, we could confirm that this pair had successfully produced a chick.

The members on the boat were all pleased with this episode of discovery. Yet, the prospect of sea sickness soon forced us to return to port once the excitement had died down. The Study Group began its' first step in 2008/09, and the way forward is still to be determined. But we are sure that we shall soon be able to share more news with you about Hong Kong's resident WBSEs.





White-bellied Sea Eagle Profile

WBSE is a coastal raptor, mainly distributed from Australia to SE Asia. HK and South China are at the most northerly part of the range.

WBSE has long been considered a rare raptor in Hong Kong, but in fact their population has been quite stable in the last decade. As they usually occur at coastal areas, they are not commonly encountered by the birdwatcher at inland woods and northwest New Territories wetlands. According to a survey in 2003, there were 8 breeding pairs then, or 16 adults. Based on the observation of this Study Group, there are now a stable number of about 10 breeding pairs.

In Australia, the breeding success rate is observed to be about 80%. The survey data in Hong Kong indicates that the local situation is highly variable and the overall success rate is lower than in Australia.

Nest distribution in Hong Kong does not clearly show a preference to coastal areas. Nesting sites can be found both at eastern waters, where the wind and waves are strong, as well as at western waters, where the influx from the Pearl River mixes with sea water. Nevertheless, Sai Kung has the highest density of nesting sites. After the breeding season, WBSEs may appear away from the nesting areas, including at inland reservoirs.

When a pair of WBSE pair, their relationship will remain for years. They usually breed at the same location every year. Yet, there may be exceptions, and faithless behaviour has been observed. This has been rarely recorded in ornithological literature, and the causes and frequencies have still to be determined.

Every winter, they will return to the same location to build nest. Although it might not be the exact location or tree, they would faithful to same area. They build nests on trees, cliffs, and most famously, on the electricity pylon in Tin Wan.

Scruffy newly-bred chicks tend remain close to the nest. Because of their camouflage colour, they are not easily seen. They are also not good at catching fish at the beginning, and have to be looked after by their parents. Four months later, they start to be independent, and finally leave the nest area. The precise dispersion movements of the juveniles are still unknown. Between July and December, we can occasionally see juveniles, but we are more likely to see adults than juveniles.



Note: If someone has any view or particular records of WBSE, he/she is welcome to inform us. Email: wbse@hkbws.org.hk



~ Bena Smith

Inter-tidal Habitat Trial at Gei Wai #22

Inter-tidal gei wai are known to provide ardeids, waterfowl and spoonbills with feeding opportunities in winter, and on occasion temporary roosting areas for shorebirds and spoonbills. So when gei wai #21 was converted into a high-tide roost in 2008, the reserve not only lost an inter-tidal gei wai, but an important habitat for waterbirds.

As reported in bulletin 208, gei wai #22 was to be trialled over the winter 2008/09 period to test its suitability as inter-tidal. The trial was successful with reasonable numbers of roosting shorebird (1,000+) and Black-faced Spoonbill (60-100) observed in late evening on rising tides. Morning time, count data showed #22 attracted greater numbers of feeding/roosting waterbirds in 4 of the 5 winter months than the former inter-tidal gei wai. An interesting finding was that duck only really used #22 in early winter, and ardeids mainly in the second half of winter. This may be related to differences in water flow to and from each gei wai and differing floor profiles.

Anyhow, #22 performed well as an inter-tidal gei wai and will be handed the baton, as it were. To improve its function, there may be a need to clear debris and vegetation from the small approach channel in the coming years.

Deep Bay Research Priority List

Under guidance from the Mai Po management committee, we' ve compiled a comprehensive list of priority research topics for Deep Bay. The list has been produced to encourage research into the needlest areas to better understand Deep Bay's unique wildlife, environment, and the threats facing its biodiversity. In the long-term such research will aid conservation decision making and help target appropriate action.

The list is wide ranging and includes topics such as waterbirds, exotic plants, management techniques and even a study on climate change. Please download, take a look http://www.wwf.org.hk/eng/maipo/randm/info.php , and forward to anyone you think might be interested.





Bird Observation Screens

Walking through the Reserve it's impossible to not notice the large open gaps where Hides #2 and #4 formerly commanded views over gei wai #18, and no doubt you' ve wondered what on earth we're up to. Well, we are in the process of replacing the hides with smaller observation screens (see picture), a new type of structure for the Reserve.

The next step is to plant medium sized shrubs on both ends of the screen to reduce disturbance to nearby birds and provide shade to birdwatchers. To attract birds such as kingfishers and possibly ospreys into the water areas in front of each screen, a number of perching posts will be set up. Obviously it will take a number of years for the planted shrubs to mature, so your patience is appreciated!

Shenzhen's Monthly

Since the Winter of 2003-2004, the Shenzhen Bird Watching Society (SZBWS) has participated in waterbird counts at the Fu Tien section of Deep Bay, in tandem with counts on the HK side.

Statistics from the past 5 years show that the number of waterbirds at Fu Tien has gone up a lot. Hong Kong and Shenzhen Bird Watching Society staff are co-operating to produce clear ideas on research areas, methods and processing of information.

Development of the Fu Tien waterbird census project.

Scope of Investigation

There are five main areas (see illustration) including:

- 1. River Delta of Feng Tang;
- 2. Lower Sha Yu Tang;
- 3. China City Wetland;
- 4. Ecological Park;
- 5. Sha Tsui Keng Tower (since April 2006).

The first, second and fifth sites are located inside the core area of Fu Tien Mangrove Reserve. The third site is a wetland which the china government delegated the China City Corporation to manage; the fourth area is a government-run park open to the general public, managed by the Council of Fu Tien Mangrove Reserve, outside the core area.



Bird situation

As in Hong Kong, bird numbers are highest in winter in the Fu Tien area of Deep Bay. 96% of the waterbirds stay in Fu Tien between October and April. Duck comprise 53%, waders about 33%, ardeids 7% and gulls just 5%,

During 2004 to 2008, the months with the highest number of waterbirds recorded were February 2004 (8,478), January 2005 (17,786), December 2006 (13,595), February 2007 (31,988) and December 2008 (32,294). The large increases in 2005 and 2007 are due mainly to more effective surveying methods. First of all, the Shen Zhen Bird Watching Society added manpower and facilities to do the count over a wider

area. Secondly, the newly added Sha Tsui survey spot in April 2006 was a blind spot in earlier years, blocked by mangrove growth on two sides. Therefore, it didn't overlap with Feng Tang River Delta and Mai Po Nature Reserve in Hong Kong. Inclusion

Bird situation in the Ecological Park at Fu Tien Mangrove Reserve when the tide level at Tsim Bei Tsui is 1.2 meters.



Waterbird Census

∼ by Dong Jiantian

of this site is one of the main reasons for the higher waterbird counts since 2007.

Winter tide levels are a significant factor affecting waterbird counting. Co-ordinated waterbird surveying requires many bird counters to cover the maximum area during a limited period. Due to historical reasons, surveys were done when the tides were "best" in Hong Kong, that is, over 2.2 metres. The Shenzhen side of Deep Bay is best surveyed when the water is well under 2 metres.

With integration of data between Shenzhen and HKBWS's project coordinator, we have been able to confirm that the total amount of waterbirds known to be in Deep Bay (including the ones on the Hong Kong Side) increased largely in winter 2008/9.



Bird situation at Feng Tang Delta on 17 December 2006.

Some practical issues

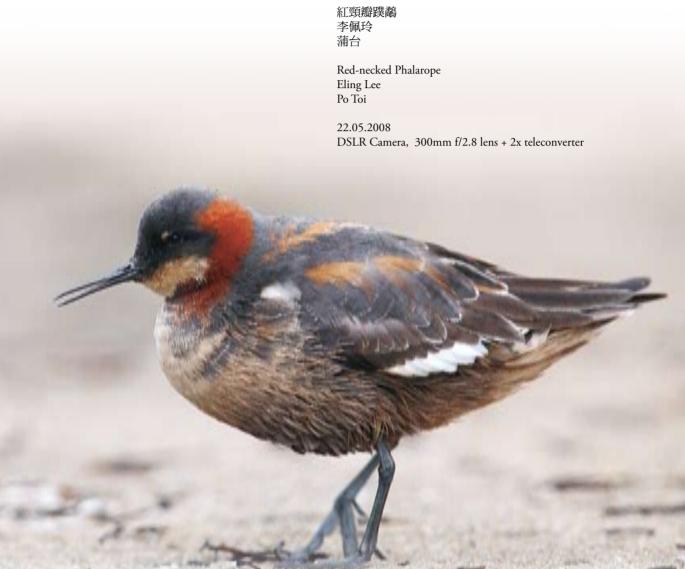
- The outer beach located between the Feng Tang River Delta and the ecological park does not have a clear-cut boundary. Currently, we only rely on immediate communication between investigators to set counting areas in order to reduce double counting.
- 2. Experienced waterfowl counters are stationed in each survey area in order to reduce errors by less-experienced colleagues.
- 3. During 2008 and 2009, there have been many infrastructure projects ongoing around the Shenzhen side of Deep Bay, affecting both the river delta and the fish pond area. We hope that the situation will stabilize.
- 4. According to the tidal forecast map of Tsim Bei Tsui from the Hong Kong Observatory, the best tide level for observation at the Shenzhen Ecological Park is between 1.2-1.5 meters. For Feng Teng Delta and Sha Tsui, the best tidal level for observation is between 1.7-2 meters. The count period is limited to 1 hour in order to avoid statistical errors due to egrets and waders leaving as the water rises.
- 5. At high tide, some of the Black Faced Spoonbills fly and rest in the mangrove located at the core region of the Fu Tien Reserve. Nothing can be observed in this area when the species are idle. So the BFS count begins an hour before high tide.











鳳頭麥雞 深藍 米埔 Northern Lapwing Owen Chiang Mai Po 07.01.2006 DSLR Camera, 300mm f/2.8 lens + 2x teleconverter

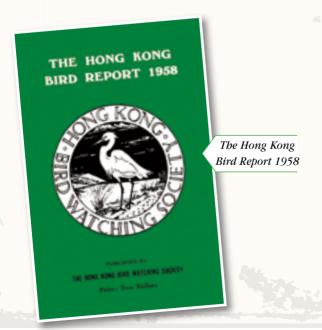


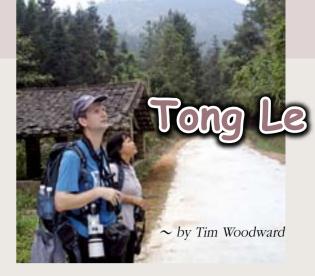
The Hong Kong Bird Report -

First issue 1958

~ Mike Roser

I was stationed at Sek Kong as a national serviceman with 49 Field Regt RA from 1957-59. The Adjutant was A.M. MacFarlane with whom I have had the good fortune to meet up with again after 50 years. It was through his kindnesses that I was able to see rather more of Hong Kong's bird life than I might have expected if left to my own devices. I was keen on sketching/painting and was asked to come up with a cover logo for the report - hence the Swinhoe's (Chinese) Egret on the early editions. I have enjoyed swapping birding reminiscences with Maxwell again and vividly recall my first Hwamei, Daurian Redstart and Rubythroat seen at Tai Mo Shan, and So Kwun Wat, a small village off the old Castle Peak Road. I'm still actively birding in the UK; and a recent stopover in Hong Kong on way to Australia gave me the opportunity to see the new developments associated with Mai Po and beyond. May I wish you continued success with the Society and the many challenging aspects of today's birding world.





In my view nothing really beats leaving the office in the late afternoon to travel for a long weekend birding in China. These days there are no steamers any more but there is a 4.15pm bus from CTS in Sheung Wan to Zhaoqing which is a great base for birding. This trip was with Thelma, Andrew Young and Roger Muscroft, most of the Wandering Tattlers Bird Race team. We decided this would be our 2009 "race".

The original intention was to go to Heishiding but access to Guangdong reserves has tightened considerably in recent years and although I called the Forestry Dept two weeks in advance the application process for foreigners now takes six weeks. Undeterred, we decided to go to Tong Le Da Shan, a little-known and presumed degraded reserve in Yunan county near the Guangxi border.

The bus to Zhaoqing arrived at 8.45pm and we stayed in the Mien Tien hotel next to the main bus station, having bought a ticket to Yunan for the following morning. Early the next day we had time for a little birding around Seven Star Crags lake. At least it is easy to get in from the south entrance now (it was blocked for outsiders for many years) and there are still some marshy areas near the lakes that enabled us to see Common Snipe and Moorhen. However, these days the lake is too disturbed to attract much in the way of duck.



Da Shan and Ding Hu Shan

19-22 March 2009

Our bus arrived in Yunan before lunch and we checked into a renovated hotel for a rather pricey RMB160. We took a taxi out to the back entrance of Tong Le Da Shan reserve, about 20km away to the north-west. The driver got us up to around 500m altitude and there were some good views. However, the whole area was clearly Pinus massonia plantation that was very actively managed. The only deciduous native trees were those used along the ridges as firebreaks. Amazingly there were still some varied birds – plenty of treepies, at least one Crested Serpent Eagle. Best of all we heard a single but very clear rattling drill of Chinese Barbet. We spent four hours in the area and eventually descended.





After a long while we finally realized that the highpitched 'tseep- tseep' call in the pines were small parties of Black-throated Tits. One impressive sight was the Paulownia tree with its stunning pendulous trumpet flowers (and at this time of year no leaves).

The following morning we tried the front entrance of the 'reserve'. This has been turned into an enormous mountain orange grove. There were few interesting birds here. We found a Blue Whistling Thrush and heard an unknown babbler (if only we had a bird calls of south-east China CD). However, it's still an intriguing and remote area.



In the afternoon we took the bus back along the West River to Zhaoqing and then through to Ding Hu Shan. This is my fourth trip in the past few years though the first time to stay in the reserve for at least a decade. Since we had a couple of hours daylight we hired a van to take us out to Yongan to look for the Pheasant-tailed Jacana site. The prickly-leaved lotus is not yet being planted but we looked for the birds regardless. It was strikingly quiet. The most notable sighting was a flock of 50 Silky Starlings on a wire. Our van driver thought it was amusing to suggest that every bird we saw should be 'bung, bung'. He burst out laughing each time and since his laughter was infectious after a while we found it funny too.

Back in Ding Hu Shan reserve after dinner we decided on a short walk just in case we heard an owl. Within a hundred metres we heard a Mountain Scops owl ("poop poop"). Within another hundred metres a Slaty-legged Crake ("parp parp") and within another hundred metres an Oriental Scops Owl ("poop, parp, parp"). It was pretty impressive collection of night birds – or perhaps they were all frogs....

The next morning we were up bright and early and on the road by 6am. Even then there are plenty of people around. We climbed up the back road, located Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler (horrible name) near





the top and on the way down a male Silver Pheasant and two females. A bit lower down at the junction a male Orange-bellied Leafbird was getting aggressive with his own reflection in a hotel window. Further down still and close to the hotel a Chinese Barbet perched on top of a tree and called incessantly. Some Scarlet Minivets came too close for comfort and he twirled his tail around in obvious annoyance. Actually I think his tail was damaged – and any more twirling would probably mean it would come off altogether. There were several Chinese Barbets around and yes, they are still most easily seen from the Qingyun Temple as they perch on the Bombax tree lower down.

We returned to Hong Kong after lunch, door-to-door in less than five hours from Zhaoqing. Bird total for the trip was 76 species. ightharpoonup





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"Chinese Wildlife – a visitor's guide"

published by Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., UK (Feb. 2008) 200pp Price 16.99 pounds

Author: Martin Walters

Photographers: Heather Angel and her "Natural Visions" associates

ISBN - 10 1-84162-220-6 & 13 978-1-84162-220-0

Attempting coverage of Chinese Wildlife in 200 pages (minus the photos) is a big task. A problem for compilers of books of this kind is that China is very large, very diverse and so little about the wildlife is known for sure. Should they leave out some photos and try make the text more informative? Should they concentrate on a few well-known and recommendable nature reserves or try to mention all the major ones? This book may qualify as an "introduction" but probably not as a "guide" in any useful sense, because the broadness of the coverage is too ambitious.

The first two-thirds of this book consist of a very general commentary on habitats and wildlife. A section on mammals is followed by 45 pages on birds. Hong Kong birders won't learn much from the bird species accounts, which seem to be aimed at the most general of British or American readerships. The "Black Bulbul" on page 96 is a Blackbird. Many of the species mentioned and photographed are very marginal to China, and seem to have been selected just because the shots were available, i.e. Rufous Treepie, Red-wattled Lapwing, and Greater Flameback. Spotted Owlet (Athene brama) on page 83 is not recorded in any of the recent China Bird Reports.

Indeed, too many of the photos are of birds and mammals in captivity or outside China. Apart from Ms. Angel's shots of Snub-nosed Monkeys and Pandas in the snow, the photos lack an authentic look. Several shots were taken in Malaysia, including a fine shot of a striding Sun Bear that I recall from an Insight guide to Malaysian Wildlife published in the 1980s.

Guidance is offered after p.137 by a chapter entitled "Making the most of it" with short subsections devoted to "When to go", "What to take", "Health and Safety" and "Watching for Wildlife". Here also Ms Angel herself contributes an essay on "Photographing Natural China", including the lines "one of my first ports of call is the botanic garden within any major city.....wild birds are more approachable here...". A pity, then, that there are no bird shots in the book that look like they were taken in Chinese parks and gardens. Not a sparrow, bulbul, or even a Magpie Robin.



10000 Finally, 46 pages on "Where to go". Eight of China's bio-geographic regions are selected, and a shopping list of nature reserves presented for each. There are no details of how to get there, whether visitors are actually welcome, or how much a visitor could expect to pay. A quote about a Guangdong reserve familiar to many HK birders - Chebaling, "A splendid reserve in which the rare south China tiger may still roam, along with clouded leopard and asiatic golden cat". Hmmmm... A number of references listed as "further reading" appear on p.199 at the end of the book. These include books familiar to HK birders such as "A Field Guide to the birds of Hong Kong and South China" by Viney, Phillipps and Lam, and "A Field Guide to the Birds of China" by Mackinnon and Phillipps. Another very useful reference is Tim Woodward's "Birding South-East China" and a 1996 book by WWF-HK called "A guide to biodiversity in China" edited by Geoff Carey. What many people expect of a "visitor's guide" are answers to questions like "Where should I go?", 32 "How do I get there?", "What might I see?", "How much should I expect to pay?" The best this book can do is to recommend that seekers of Chinese wildlife go on an organised tour, which is a bit of a cop-out, considering that every year, thousands of foreigners travel independently in mainland China. If the only recommendation is "go on a tour", why would you need this book? The "perfect introduction to the country's flora and fauna" says the blurb on the back cover... an introduction, yes, but a long way short of perfect. If you speak and read Chinese, then there is plenty of information in print and on the internet about wild places in China. Any foreigner contemplating a visit to China with an interest in wildlife won't make much progress with this a book like this. For guidance, the foreign reader would do better to look at Tim Woodward's book or the Lonely Planet (and similar) country guides which include details of natural areas (such as, for example Xishangbanna, Jiuzhaigou and Emei Shan), and plan their trip accordingly.



~ Richard Lewthwaite

These are unchecked records and members are reminded of the importance of submitting all records on cards or electronically

(STOP PRESS: A juvenile **Steppe Eagle**, the first confirmed Hong Kong record, was photographed at Mai Po on 22 and 25 December 2008 by Daniel CK Chan)

January

- The year opened memorably with a **Bean Goose**, a potential first for Hong Kong, in front of the Mai Po boardwalk (KWC, RWL) and a **Hawfinch** at Airfield Road, Sek Kong (DAD), both on the first day. There were no further sightings of the Bean Goose, but the Hawfinch, a female, having been refound at Airfield Road on 10th (TC), thereafter became a reliable midday visitor to a particular Celtis sinensis tree for over a week, to the delight of many birdwatchers and photographers, after which it was occasionally reported to the end of the month.
- Among a fine variety of birds also noted during the first week were a **Bull-headed Shrike** at Sai Kung (GT), a **Bay Woodpecker** and **Sulphur-breasted Warbler** at Tai Po Kau (EMSK, KPK), a **Black-winged Kite** and **Himalayan Swiftlet** at the Mai Po access road (MH, PJL), a **Gull-billed Tern** (very rare in winter) in front of the Mai Po boardwalk, a **Ruddy Crake** at Mai Po, a **Citrine Wagtail** at Long Valley (SYH) and a **Paddyfield Warbler** at Lok Ma Chau (PJL).
- Coverage of the nullah bordering Airfield Road during the second week led to sightings of up to six **Red-throated Flycatchers** and two **Black-naped Monarchs** (MLC) as well as the **Hawfinch**. Elsewhere during this period, there were reports of two **Bay Woodpeckers** at Tai Po Kau (KPK), a **Mugimaki Flycatcher** at Shek O (DB), a **Nordmann's Greenshank** from the boardwalk (YYT), an **Asian Paradise Flycatcher** at Shing Mun (TSL) and a **Red-throated Flycatcher**, **Grey-headed Flycatcher** and **Black-naped Monarch** at Fung Yuen (DAD).
- In what was starting to become an unusually good winter for crakes and rails, there were sightings of single **Eastern Water Rails** at the Ng Tung River (MRL) and at Ho Sheung Heung (PCC) in midmonth.
- A **Whiskered Tern** in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 18th was the second rare wintering tern of the month, and three **Falcated Ducks** were also seen at Mai Po on the same day.
- Reports in the last days of the month included a **Mountain Tailorbird** (a rarity at this point of the winter) at Long Valley (PJL), a **Radde's Warbler**, **Siberian Thrush** and **Eurasian Siskin** at Sek Kong Catchment (DAD, KPK), a **Yellow Bittern** and 20 **Grey-headed Lapwings** at Kam Tin (JAA), and a **Pallas's** (aka **Great Black-headed**), a **Common Gull** *beinei* and up to two **Slaty-backed Gulls** in front of the boardwalk (YYT, EMSK).



February

- This was the warmest February on record and rather quiet for birds, the highlight being a possibly genuine **American Wigeon**, a potential Hong Kong first, at Tsim Bei Tsui (YWH). Also of note were a series of sightings of crakes and rails in the northern NT and the discovery of quite large numbers of **Brownish-flanked Bush Warblers** apparently on territory on the upper slopes of Pat Sin Leng.
- The rails and crakes peaked in the first ten days of the month, with a **Brown Crake** at Nam Chung (SYH), single **Eastern Water Rails** at Ho Sheung Heung and Nam Chung (PCC, SYH) and up to two **Ruddy Crakes** at Ho Sheung Heung, Nam Chung and Mai Po (SYH, EMSK, JGH).
- Among other notable records in this period were up to two **Black-naped Monarchs** at Ho Sheung Heung (PCC), a **Citrine Wagtail** at Long Valley (PCC), a **Speckled Piculet** at Tai Po Kau Garden (GHo), a **Slaty-backed Forktail** at Brides Pool (KPK), an unidentified **Spectacled Warbler** at Fung Yuen (CYW), an **Orange-headed Thrush**, a **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** and 20 **Chestnut-collared Yuhinas** at Tai Po Kau (KPK), two **Grey-capped Greenfinches** at Luk Keng (EMSK), a **Common Rosefinch** at Kam Tin (JAA) and a **Plumbeous Redstart** at Chung Mei (DAD).
- The **Hawfinch** found at Airfield Road, Sek Kong the previous month was photographed again on 1st (MC) and a female (possibly a different individual) was photographed at Ping Che on 19th (MH). There was also news of a rare record of one on Taiwan in February (per Eling Lee).
- A number of boat trips were made into eastern and southern waters, with varying degrees of success, the most notable sightings being a **Black-legged Kittiwake** south of Lamma on 2nd, a **Grey Phalarope** in eastern waters on 5th and two **Pomarine Skuas** on 10th (YYT).
- Best birds from Mai Po NR and the boardwalk in early month (before the reserve was closed in response to another H5N1 scare) were nine **Common Shelducks**, 42 **Great Knot** (the highest ever winter count), two **Long-billed Dowitchers** and a **Slaty-backed Gull** (RWL, JGH). During the 21-day closure, a **Common Gull** and **Nordmann's Greenshank** were noted (YYT) and a **Dalmatian Pelican** was reported from the Futien side of Deep Bay, but there were no sightings on the Hong Kong side. The end of the month, which is traditionally the time for gull numbers and diversity to peak, was disappointing, the only gulls of note being a first-winter Pallas's, two first-winter **Slaty-backed** and just seven **Black-tailed Gulls** (JGH, YYT, RWL).
- Elsewhere, a quiet mid-month period was enlivened by a dark **Ashy Drongo** at Sek Kong, a **Hoopoe** at Tai Mo Shan (NG), a **Red-breasted Flycatcher**, a **Dusky Thrush** and three **Bright-capped Cisticolas** at Ping Yeung (PJL) and a possible baicalensis **White Wagtail** at San Tin (JAA). The first **Oriental Pratincole** of the year was also reported at this time.



In the last week of the month, an apparently genuine **American Wigeon** was found and photographed at Tsim Bei Tsui (YWH). Elsewhere, a **Bay Woodpecker** was once again noted in Tai Po Kau and a juvenile **Pied Harrier** was present at Lok Ma Chau (PJL), a rather unusual record in that most birds seen in Hong Kong in winter are adult males. A hike across the upper slopes of Pat Sin Leng led to the discovery of 12 **Mountain Tailorbirds** and 29 singing **Brownish-flanked Bush Warblers** (KB, RB) – record numbers of both species.

March

- This was a varied and interesting month, with a marked arrival of waterbirds and flycatchers in the last week. The key birds for many observers were the **American Wigeon** in Deep Bay and the juvenile **Steppe Eagle** at Mai Po. Other highlights were a **Brown Wood Owl** at Lam Tsuen, a **Glaucous-winged Gull** in Deep Bay and a female **Green-backed Flycatcher** at Po Toi.
- Coverage of Deep Bay from the Mai Po boardwalk during high tides at the beginning of the month led to sightings of up to 635 **Heuglin's** (quite a high count), 52 **Saunders's Gulls** and over 40 **Curlew Sandpipers** and **Red-necked Stints**. Gull counts were otherwise fairly low, with not more than seven **Black-tailed**, two **Slaty-backed** and one **Pallas's**, and no rarer species found.
- Also reported in the first week were a **Ruddy Crake** at Mai Po NR (YYT), an **Asian House Martin** beside the Mai Po access road (PJL), a **Grey-headed Lapwing**, two **Citrine Wagtails** and a **Common Starling** at Long Valley (SYH), a **Brown Wood Owl** calling at Lam Tsuen (EMSK), a **Pacific Swift** and an **Asian House Martin** at Po Toi (GW), a **Speckled Piculet** at Tai Po Kau (AL) and five **Pomarine Skuas** and an unidentified **dark shearwater** in eastern waters (YYT).
- A variety of landbirds noted on 8th included a **Bay Woodpecker** at Tai Po Kau (KPK), a **Japanese Robin** at Ng Tung Chai (PW, MK), a **Dusky Thrush** and a **Black-naped Oriole** at Lam Tsuen (CKK), two **Chestnut-flanked White-eyes** at Tai Po Kau Headland (JAA) and 12 **Chinese Starlings** at Shek O (DB).
- As the mid-point of the month approached, notable birds included up to 11 **Asian House Martins** beside the Mai Po access road and at Long Valley, Lok Ma Chau and Lam Tsuen, two **Bay Woodpeckers** and three **Mountain Bulbuls** at Tai Po Kau, the male **American Wigeon**, a female **Baikal Teal** and a first-winter **Common Gull** of the subspecies *heinei*, all in Deep Bay (YYT).

 Up to two **Ancient Murrelets** were near Cheung Chau and Po Toi (YYT, GW) and up to 11 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were noted flying past Po Toi (GW).



- A **Humpback Whale**, the first for Hong Kong, was seen near Po Toi on 17th and 18th and then on subsequent days near Cheung Chau, Shek O and Tsuen Kwan O.
- Reports during 20th-22nd included an **Oriental Plover** at Mai Po (PJL), a **Lesser Sand Plover** of the form *atrifrons* (JAA), a **Glaucous-winged Gull** (first reported on 18th), a **Common Gull** *heinei*, a **Pallas's Gull** and 350 **Red-necked Stint**, all from the Mai Po boardwalk (MDW, YYT, BS), the first **Narcissus Flycatcher** of the spring, a **Common Rosefinch** and a **Tristram's Bunting**, all at Lam Tsuen (EMSK), and the first **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** of the spring at Shing Mun (JAA).
- An influx of waterbirds was noted in Deep Bay during 25th-26th, with over 1300 **Red-necked Stints**, unusually large numbers for March, a **Little Stint**, three **Nordmann's Greenshank**, 170 **Great Knot**, a **Sanderling**, 860 **Pacific Golden Plovers**, perhaps the second highest count on record, an early **Asian Dowitcher**, and 22 **Caspian**, 17 **Gull-billed** and two **Whiskered Terns** (YYT, RWL). An early Chestnut-winged Cuckoo was also seen along the boardwalk (MH).
- During the same two days, a flock of 25 **Garganey**, 16 **Grey-faced Buzzards**, a **Woodcock**, two early **Common Terns**, a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** and a **Yellow-browed Bunting** were noted at Po Toi (GW), whilst the first **Ashy Minivet** and **Pale-legged Leaf Warblers** of the spring were found at Sai Sha (PJL).
- On 28th, the juvenile **Steppe Eagle** was rediscovered over Mai Po marshes (EMSK), having evaded detection or identification for three months. A desperate search finally led to it being found again on 31st, this time near the Mai Po access road (JAA), where it showed well.
- Wader counts continued to be high for the time of year, with 3000 **Marsh Sandpipers** on 28th and 326 **Great Knot** and 736 **Black-winged Stilts**, the latter a record count, on 31st (YYT).
- Visits to Po Toi during the last three days of the month turned up a Lesser Frigatebird, a Greyfaced Buzzard, an Ancient Murrelet, an Oriental Cuckoo, a Northern Boobok (Brown Hawk Owl), three Narcissus, a female Green-backed, two Hainan Blue, and three Blue-and-white Flycatchers as well as an Oriental Greenfinch (MK, PW, MH, GW). An arrival of flycatchers occurred at this time, with Black-naped Monarch, Ferruginous, Narcissus, Hainan Blue, Blue-and-white and Japanese Paradise Flycatchers all found, notable sites being Tai Po Kau (KPK, WT), Ng Tung Chai (KJ) and Mai Po (MK, BS).



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours (Sep - Dec 2009)

Outings					
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (13)	Target species	
5/9/2009 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tai Po Kau (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆ ☆	Forest birds	
13/9/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shing Mun (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Tsuen Wan MTR Station)	☆☆	Forest birds	
20/9/2009 (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)	<i>አ</i> አ	Waterbirds	
27/9/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi and HK South Waters (08:00 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.	ታ ታ ታ	Seabirds	
3/10/2009 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Aberdeen Reservoir (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Central MTR Station)	**	Forest birds	
11/10/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (08:00 Main Entrance, Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden)	**	Raptors	
18/10/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi and HK South Waters (08:00 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.	ឯឯឯ	Seabirds	
25/10/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Hok Tau (08:00 Exit Fanling Town Centre, Fanling MTR Station)	**	Migrants	
1/11/2009 (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	
7/11/2009 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tsim Bei Tsui (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tin Chak Estate Shopping Centre, Exit near Tin Yat LT, Tin Shui Wai)	☆	Waterbirds	
8/11/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	ል ል	Forest birds	



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours (Sep - Dec 2009)

Outings					
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (13)	Target species	
15/11/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shing Mun (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Tsuen Wan MTR Station)	☆☆	Forest birds	
22/11/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Mui Tze Lam (08:00 Exit B, Tai Shui Hang MTR Station)	አ አ	Forest birds	
5/12/2009 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Luk Keng (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 56K Minibus Station, outside Fanling MTR Station)	☆	Waterbirds	
13/12/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Pui O (08:00 Exit B, Tung Chung MTR Station)	☆	Wintering forest and farmland birds	
20/12/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Sha Lo Tung and Fung Yuen (08:00 Taxi Station, Tai Po Market MTR Station)	አ አ	Wintering forest and farmland birds	
27/12/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	አ አ	Forest birds	

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)

Indoor Meetings (Aug - Oct 2009)							
Date	Time	Topic	Speakers	Venue	Remarks		
5/8/2009 (Wed)	1900 - 2100	Bird trip to Pakistan Bird Watching in Yunan	Mr. Lee Kam Cheong Ms. Dong Jiang-tian	Rm 924, Scout Asso of HK Austin Road, Kowloon	Mem:\$10 Non-Mem:\$30		
27/8/2009 (Thu)	1900 - 2100	Trip to North-east India Trip to Kenya, East Africa	John and Jemi Holmes Sung Yik Hei, Pang Chun Chiu	Rm 901, Scout Asso of HK Austin Road, Kowloon	Mem:\$10 Non-Mem:\$30		
19/9/2009 (Sat)	1900 - 2100	Identification of Warblers	Mr. Lei Jin Yu / Dr. Cheung Ho Fai	Rm 1105, Scout Asso of HK Austin Road, Kowloon	Mem:\$10 Non-Mem:\$30		
14/10/2009 (Wed)	1900 - 2100	Is change of waterbird numbers related to climate?	Mr. Yu Yat Tung	Rm 902, Scout Asso of HK Austin Road, Kowloon	Mem:\$10 Non-Mem:\$30		



Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Activity Booking Slip

I would like to register the following HKBWS activities: (Please **☑** as appropriate)

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.) ☐ 20 Sep 2009 (Sun) (member(s), non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is (_____ member(s), _____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is _____ ☐ 1 Nov 2009 (Sun) Po Toi and Hong Kong South waters [Boat Fare: Member: HK\$160 Non-member: HK\$200] ☐ 27 Sep 2009 (Sun) (member(s), non-member(s)) No. of person(s) is (_____ member(s), _____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) is _____) ☐ 18 Oct 2009 (Sun) 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. Membership HK ID No. Mobile Phone Date Destination Name **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:

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).

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

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.







