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bulletin
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213

Autumn 2009 ~ 秋





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何建業
米埔

Far Eastern Curlew
Ho Kin Yip Kinni
Mai Po

24.03.2008

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



紅腰杓鹬
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From the Editor

~ John Holmes

We don't get many "Letters to the Editor" and these and any other contributions are always welcome.

In addition to the regular features and photos, highlights of this issue include "Migration of Seabirds in the Hong Kong area" by Geoff Welch, a follow-up to his article about land bird migration in Bulletin 211. Both articles reflect Geoff's dedication to making Po Toi Island his local "patch" and to his keeping of diligent notes.

Mike Kilburn has provided an entertaining account of a short trip to Taiwan he made in April this year, and an altogether more sobering account of the demise of the buffalo fields at Kam Tin. "Who killed Kam Tin?" should be required reading for anyone who cares about the threats to what is left of Hong Kong's natural environment.

The paintings and diary entries of Wendy YU are here presented for the first time. 

Society News & Projects ~ Lo Wai Yan

Members
Affairs

HKBWS Annual General Meeting 2009

Date : 29 Sept 2009 (Tuesday)
Time : 7:00 pm
Venue :
Room 1105, Scout Association of Hong Kong (Scout Path, Austin Road, Kowloon)

Personal Changes

As the sponsor has terminated the sponsorship to BirdLife International for executing our Yunnan Project, we have to regretfully bring it to an end. We would like to thank "Maicha" (Ms Dong Jiangtian) for being in charge of this programme for the past two years. The success of the project has been very much due to her.

HKBWS Bank Account

Please note that HKBWS has changed bank from HSBC to the Bank of China (Hong Kong). Our new savings account number is : 012-878-1-076439-9. Name of the account remains unchanged, that is "The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Ltd."

Bird Shop of HKBWS

Books and AV material (special offer for member)



Education &

Promotion Activities

Crested Bulbul Club

1. Early Morning Bird Watchers at Kowloon Park & HK Park

No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from May - July 09: 227

No. of participants in Kowloon Park from May - July 09: 389

2. Bird watching services and activities

31/5/2009 Hong Kong Park Green Fun (making of bird baths and birdwatching)

Survey,

Research and Training

Egretty Research Group Updates (Autumn)

~ Josephine WONG



ERG members conducted the annual egretty count of Hong Kong's nesting ardeids from April to July 2009. About 810 nests in 19 nesting colonies were recorded. Two

new colonies at Man Kam To Road and Ping Che were discovered, but two former colonies (at Tam Kon Chau and Ma On Kong) were found abandoned. Compared with the low total of 2008, there has been a 20% increase in the number of nests this year. Full details of the survey will be published in the 2009 egretty count report.

ERG also investigated neighbouring south China. A field trip to Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station was organized on 1st May 2009, when one nesting colony with 105 nests was recorded. Species in residence included Night Heron (76%), Great Egret (14%), Little Egret (5%) and Cattle Egret (5%). The nesting site appears to be indirectly protected by the restricted status of the power station but stealing of chicks by local people was seen. A short field report will be posted on the HKBWS website.

An Egretty Count Training Workshop was held on 19th April 2009, with 10 participants. After a presentation, all participants practiced their nest counting skills at the Mai Po village colony the same day. A follow up practice count was done at the Tuen Mun egretty in May.

Nature Conservation Management for Long Valley (March 2008 to Feb 2010)

~Vicky Yeung

Currently, the management project is engaged with 24 local farmers and landowners. Over 1,400,000 sq. ft. of land in Long Valley and Ho Sheung Heung is under management.



White-shouldered Starlings using a nest box for breeding, a first record in Long Valley.

During the breeding season, we have conducted breeding bird surveys in Long Valley and found several White-breasted Waterhen and Greater Painted Snipe nests in the managed shallow water habitat. In addition, a pair of White-shouldered Starlings was found breeding in a nest box which was installed early this year.

The problem of Red Fire Ants is getting serious. In June we invited staff from AFCD to demonstrate the use of insecticidal bait. The bait is specific to Red Fire Ants and should not have a negative effect to other animals and the environment. We will have a trial on several Red Fire Ant nests. If the bait is successful in controlling the ant population, we will carry out a large scale Red Fire Ant control operation in Long Valley. Bird watchers and photographers please do not disturb or damage Red Fire Ant nests to avoid spreading the ants around.



We are going to control the Red Fire Ant population in Long Valley.

Paddy rice attracts hundreds of Munias.
Photographer: Jemi & John Holmes



Hong Kong swift and swallow survey 2003-2008

~ Swift and Swallow Research Group

Foreword

The traditional Chinese name “swallow” actually includes both swifts and swallows: the bird families Apodidae and Hirundinidae. Only three types of swallows breed in Hong Kong: Little Swift (*Apus nipalensis*) Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) and - rare breeder in HK - Red-rumped Swallow (*Hirundo daurica*). These three species are listed in the China State Forestry Administration list of nationally-protected “beneficial” species, mainly because of the volume of insects they consume.

Development of swallow nest survey in Hong Kong

A systematic swallow nest survey was started in 1991. It was organized by an experienced birder, Mr. Wong Kai On. The major aim of swallow nest counting was concentrated in the New Territories; including Yuen Long town centre, Sheung Shui town centre, Tai Po Market and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. From 2002, Mr. Wong Lun Cheong, another HKBWS member, continued the survey in several locations in Hong Kong.

The HKBWS “Swift and Swallow Research Group” was developed in 2003/2004. The group started to do swallow nest surveys in Hong Kong for the long-term monitoring of the number and the distribution of swifts and swallows as well as to develop a conservation database. The survey takes place in the breeding period (from April to July) by volunteer counters every year. At the very beginning, the survey was done by team members and it concentrated on some of the important nesting sites in Hong Kong. In 2005, the group started to organize seminars and workshops every year. More and more voluntary surveyors have joined the work and the survey areas have been increased to more than 50 locations. Most of the urban areas of Hong Kong Island, half of the Kowloon Peninsula and most of the New Territories are included.

Result of the Little Swift survey

Within the areas surveyed, the number of Little Swift nests was about 900. Fewer than 10 nests (less than 1% of total) could be found on Hong Kong island. 180 nests were found in Kowloon (20% of total). About 700 nests were in the New



Territories and off-shore islands (80% of total). Results of the surveys done in 2005-2008 showed that the number of Little Swift nests decreased from 930 to only 860. We believe that the environment in Hong Kong Island is no longer suitable for the nesting and breeding of Little Swifts. The number of nests in Kowloon keeps stable but the number of nests in New Territories and off-shore islands is also decreasing.

The survey results show that the distribution of Little Swift nests is concentrated in several areas. The top-five areas are the campus of Chinese University of Hong Kong, Yuen Long urban area, Sham Shui Po, Sheung Shui town centre and Tai Po Market. Over 80% of the total bird nests are in these areas. Also, the three biggest communities of Little Swift are in the campus of CUHK (about 220 nests, 24% of total), the old North Kowloon Magistracy (about 120 nests, 14% of total) and Sheung Shui's San Fung Avenue HSBC branch (43 nests, 5% of total).

Besides, the surveying since 1991 has shown that the number of nests in some areas has dropped dramatically. In Sheung Shui town centre, there were originally 370 nests in 1991 which dropped to only 120 nests in 2008, a 66% decrease within these 18 years. There were originally 220 swallow nests in Tai Po Market, which dropped to 60 nests in the survey period, a 74% decrease. 720 nests in Yuen Long urban area dropped to only 130 nests between 1991 and 2008, an 82% decrease.

The research group believes the main reason for the decrease in the number of nests is the destruction of insect-rich habitat close to suitable nesting sites. In between 2003 and 2006, there were at least 3 cases of human destruction of bird nests, with a total of 50 nests destroyed which was about 5% of the total. However, these cases do not reflect the whole picture of swift nest decline.



outdoor training (01May09 at CUHK Library)

Barn Swallow survey

In 2008, 390 nests were recorded within the study areas. The actual number of nests should be greater than the recorded number. The number may over 1000. Most of the nests were found in the New Territories (about 220 nests, 56% of total). The second most important area was around Kowloon (about 120 nests, 30% of total). The smallest number of nests could be found on Hong Kong Island (50 nests, 14% of total). The survey showed that the nests are scattered in many areas. The highest number of nests in Kowloon, both of Barn Swallow and Little Swift, could be found in Sham Shui Po.

In recent years, there has been a 50% decrease in the number of Barn Swallow nests from 40 nests to only 19 between 2002 and 2008. Besides, since the survey began in 1991 the number of nests counted has been steadily declining. In Tai Po Market, Sheung Shui town centre and Yuen Long, there has been a 67-87% decrease compared to the data of 18 years ago. The number of nests in Tai Po Market dropped from 40 to 19 in between 1991 and 2008 which was about a 53% decrease. Similarly, in Sheung Shui town centre, the number dropped from 8 to only 1 nest between 1991 and 2008, almost an 88% decrease. Also in Yuen Long, the number dropped from 72 to 10 nests, an 86% decrease. Due to the scattered distribution of the barn swallow nests and the fact that most of the nests (80-90% of total) are located in villages, it is difficult to have efficient monitoring and it is hard to prevent human destruction of the bird nests.

outdoor training (01May09 at CUHK Library)



Conservation planning suggestions

The research group believes that the laws of conservation and urban planning strategy nowadays cannot stop the decrease in the future habitats of swifts and swallows. We have the following remedial suggestions:

1. A database of swift and swallow nest locations should be developed to aid enforcement of the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance.
2. The external factors for construction of the swallow nests should be studied. Suitable construction materials could be used on some Government buildings to facilitate the construction of swallow nests.
3. If there are any swallow nests found on a building the government should educate the property management, owners, owners' committees and owners' corporations with the knowledge of swallow conservation requirements and the related conservation ordinance.
4. Different types of public awareness of swifts and swallows should be promoted to reduce misunderstandings such as the fear of transmission of bird flu from bird nests.

Thanks to:

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Crested Bulbul Club members and other volunteer. AU Wai Yin, CHAN Chi Hung, CHAN Christina, CHAN Hon Ki, CHAN Kei Hon, CHAN Kui Wai Miranda, CHAN To, CHAU Yim Fun, CHEN Chi Po, CHENG Ping Kuen, CHENG Wai Wa, CHOW Chek Pong, CHOW Frank, CHOW Hung Fai, CHUNG Mandy, FUNG Ka Chun Thomas, FUNG Robin, HON So, HUNG Lai Yung, HUI Wun Fung Alvin, IP Kee Kong, KWOK Fung Mei, KWAN Wai Keung, LAM Ngo Lun Alan, LAM Shet Fong, LAU Tak Yan, LAW Sam Mui, LEE Hung Chi, LEE Mei Ling, LEE Nicole, LEE Wai Chu, LEUNG Ho Chi, LEUNG Kwok Wa, LEUNG Kwok Wing, LEUNG Lai Kwan, LO Ho Fung, LO Wai Yan, LUI Kar Lau, Mak Yun On, MAN Kuen Yat Bill, NG Chack Wai, NG Che Hoo, NG Condy, NG Yan Ngar, POON Sui Wah, SO Lai Wah, SO Wai Yan, TANG Chi Kit, TANG Wing Shing, TSANG Sze Wan, TSUI Chi Yan, WONG Chi Sum, WONG Chui Shu, WONG Lai Yee, WONG Man Fong, WONG Man Kit, WONG Mei, WONG Shu Fong, WONG Shui Chi, WONG Tung Mui, WONG Wing Hang, WONG Wing Shan, WU Yuk Ho, YIP Dominic, YIU Ka Lun, YU Mandy, YU Yat Tung, YUEN Ming Yan.



Mai Po Update

~ Bena Smith

Division of gei wai #8

Over the summer months, the open water area in front of the tower hide at gei wai #8 was hydrologically separated from that at the seaward end by constructing short sections of earth bund and the installation of a pipe to control water. To avoid confusion, the water area in front of the tower hide is now referred to as #8a, and the other as #8b. There are now 37 separate ponds and gei wai inside the Reserve!

The division allows for greater flexibility to manage the gei wai. Firstly #8a can now be filled directly with rainwater thus lowering the water's salinity level. It's hoped this will attract Black-winged Stilt to nest and forage there in the coming years. Secondly, water-levels will be more constant in #8a throughout the year and we hope this will benefit the 100 or so Black-faced Spoonbill which roost there at night in winter time. Finally, water-levels in #8b can now be set and maintained to a height suitable for avian research in the reedbeds.



Gei wai #8 divided
(Credit - Bena Smith)

De-silting water channels in gei wai #19

An accumulation of silt over the last 10-20 years inside gei wai #19 has resulted in the direct loss of water volume and open water area, and led to a choking of the channels by unwanted vegetation such as reed grass. To restore the gei wai, this autumn a floating dredger will remove silt and place it on nearby bunds. The works will be complete by the end of October before the return of wintering waterbirds.

The build up of silt whether it is on the inter-tidal mudflats or inside gei wai, is a significant threat to the Ramsar Site's wetland biodiversity. The origin of the silt remains undetermined, but most likely related to human activity in the Pearl River Delta region. There is a general concern that the problem has worsened in recent years and the siltation rate has increased.



Water channels invaded by reed grass in gei wai #19
(Credit - Janet Lee)



Black-winged Stilt nesting
(Credit - Neil Fifer)

Waterbird nesting highlights at Mai Po

It was a good summer for nesting waterbirds at Mai Po. The annual Black-winged Stilt nest survey in May recorded 27 nesting pairs, nearly all from gei wai #16/17. With the exception of a single chick seen in Pond #20 in late April (an early record), chicks could be seen running around from the 2nd week of May onwards. Breeding success, as measured by the number of juveniles, seemed a little less than 2008, but up significantly on 2007. The news that a pair of Black-winged Stilts successfully raised young at the HK Wetland Park and another pair attempted nesting at the Lok Ma Chau Compensation Wetland this year shows that the species is now a well established breeder in Deep Bay and expanding its range locally.

Other good news is that at least two pairs of Greater Painted Snipe successfully bred on gei wai #16/17. From late May, both adults and chicks showed exceptionally well from Hide 3 for birdwatchers and photographers alike. Interestingly because one of the breeding adult males is leg flagged with Hong Kong colours (the only male flagged in Hong Kong) we know the same individual has bred on the gei wai for at least the past 3 years.

The "will they or won't they" debate concerning Pied Avocet breeding in Hong Kong looked as if it was finally resolved when on 19th May a pair were observed sitting on three eggs inside gei wai #16/17. However by the second week of June the parents abandoned the nest. Perhaps next year they will finally succeed. 

Who killed Kam Tin?

~ Mike Kilburn

Fifteen years ago the area to the north and west of Kam Tin consisted of marshy grazing, fishponds and vegetable fields supporting a wide range of birds and wildlife. These included Hong Kong's only regular wintering site for Grey Headed Lapwing – the Buffalo Fields – and what was once the only known breeding site for Greater Painted-snipe – the Mung Yeung School Marsh.

The site also held over 100 Water Buffalo, dumped here after their abandonment for agriculture throughout the NT. Their droppings provided food for insects, which in turn helped to attract over 150 species of birds. The buffalo also helped to keep the marshes wet by creating wallowing pools where they could cool off during the hotter months.

Since then, Kam Tin has been subjected to an assault that has turned this once rich area into a series of degrading and shrinking pockets of habitat, and fast disappearing wildlife. In the past there used to be large flocks of wintering starlings, Imperial and Great Spotted Eagle were recorded, and the muddy creek attracted a Baikal Teal, Long-billed Plover and a range of other waterbirds. The most recent attack, which took place this autumn, and saw yet more truckloads of construction waste dumped on the Buffalo Fields, may have finally driven off Hong Kong's last wintering flock of Grey-headed Lapwings. The buffalo are gone. It is significant for being the first wildlife site to be fully destroyed since Ha Tsuen, another NW NT wetland, was lost, about fifteen years ago.

This article examines why Kam Tin was subjected to such abuse, why it has never been protected, and what were the influences and bodies that led to its demise.

Kam Tin lies at the northwestern edge of the fertile flood plain running northwest from Shek Kong. It was one of the first places to be settled in Hong Kong. The first people to live here - the Punti (in Cantonese - the "Bun dei yan" and in English, the indigenous villagers) were Han Chinese, who established villages here long before the British arrived in the mid-19th Century.

For centuries Kam Tin remained agricultural; farming mixed with fishponds and Buffalo grazing in the wetter areas around the Kam Tin River until the late 1970s. Then, with the rising tide of refugees arriving from China, all flat land in the NT came under scrutiny as the government began reclaiming and resuming large areas to build the new towns of Sha Tin, Fanling, Sheung

Shui, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. At the same time, ***Kam Tin was identified as potential new town.*** Although our population growth slowed dramatically, the damage was done, because the ***infrastructure development began to transform Kam Tin into the ideal location for a new town, and when population growth slowed, Government never acted to stop the process.***

While there are currently no high-rise developments in Kam Tin, various ***private property developers, hoping to cash in on rising land prices bought up farmland around the Kam Tin valley.*** Cheung Kong bought a relatively small site - the Mung Yeung School Marsh - and perfectly legally, if unhelpfully, ***fenced the site, filled it in, and covered it in***

pot plants. Bye-bye wetland. Their site, now bisected by the Kam Tin Bypass, was intended for villa-style housing. So far, however, several years later, nothing continues to happen.

Sun Hung Kai bought a larger plot at Sha Po (a marsh supporting the Fourspot Midget, a globally-threatened dragonfly), and progressively ***filled what could legally be filled, destroying substantial ecological value.*** In a submission to the Town Planning Board the company described plans to build 45 blocks of 12-16 floors, retail space, clubhouse, and parking described - incredibly - as a "green naturalistic environmental project"! While this application was withdrawn, an older permission remains live.

The first infrastructure project was the massive **Kam Tin Main Drainage Channel**. Built in the mid-1990s by the **Drainage Services Department (DSD)**, **this huge concrete-sided channel simply obliterated the Kam Tin River**, a small, bird-rich stream blackened by manure from upstream pig and chicken farms. This channel, (including the base, sides, footpaths, railings and exotic flowerbeds) has a footprint 80 metres wide! **It not only replaced the river with a concrete ditch, providing no compensation, it also separated the School Marsh from the rest of the habitat.**

Additional flood prevention works on the northern bank cut a smaller all-concrete floodway up to the edge of the Buffalo Fields. For reasons explained as “provision of maintenance access”, this small channel required access roads on both sides! Remember those roads - we'll come back to them later.

There are also **two more concrete-sided flood prevention channels** (one built by the **Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)** and another by DSD) again **without compensation**, on the northern edge of Kam Tin. Supposedly intended to prevent flooding from two streams - neither more than two metres wide or a metre deep - and just 150 metres apart, they cannot have been built simply to prevent farmland from flooding. However, if the local villagers wanted to use the land for residential development, then it makes more sense, however damaging it might be to the environment.

Other big impacts added insult to injury. **The Kam Tin Bypass and roundabout bisected the Mung Yeung School Marsh, killing it as a site for Greater**

Painted-snipe. In compensation the **Highways Department** constructed small wetlands, but **constrained by the EIA process to only use land left from the construction footprint for mitigation**, these offer little value for wildlife, while the **glass noise barriers** are new, invisible killers of birds by collision.

The last of the major infrastructure projects is **West Rail**. The gigantic, mostly empty Kam Sheung Road station testifies to the planners' dreams for Kam Tin, while **the railway cuts across another corner of the marsh. The compensation wetlands**, again **built on the rubble of the construction site footprint and underneath the viaduct**, offer little comfort - and attracting wildlife to return remains a major struggle (compare what has been achieved at Lok Ma Chau with the poor diversity of Kam Tin to see the difference).

Another player - the one responsible for delivering the coup de grace - is the **indigenous villagers** seeking to apply the discredited **Small House Policy (Lands Department)** to build on flat land close to their villages. At Kam Tin they have used **access through the KCR site, the developers' sites and along DSD access roads to dump construction and demolition waste** on the Buffalo Fields and other parts of the site - regardless of whether it is legal to do so. This material comes from nearby construction sites by **truck drivers who save waste disposal charges, travel time and fuel by dumping nearby** - and sometimes are paid by villagers to dump their spoil.

This dumping is in turn facilitated by the final “invisible” players - **weak legislation and enforcement (especially grossly**

out of date fines for successfully prosecuted cases) against illegal dumping by a range of departments and weak zoning of ecologically sensitive areas - Kam Tin has never been designated as a protected area, although the green groups have collected data and raised awareness, and the press has reported regularly on this issue.

Interestingly this also shows that zoning for conservation is effective - KCRC considered it was acceptable to build at both Kam Tin and Long Valley because they were both zoned for agriculture, while other protected sites are considered no go areas because of the conservation zoning they have been awarded.

The answer to “Who killed Kam Tin?” is that many parties have had a hand on the knife. Many of these strands interconnect to make a depressingly complete story. As for the wildlife, Greater Painted-snipe are all but gone from Kam Tin, but have since been found elsewhere, including Long Valley and Mai Po. The Fourspot Midget hangs on in Sha Po Marsh, and at Mai Po. The Grey-headed Lapwing flock has relocated to the Kam Tin Main Drainage Channel, but with no grassland to feed on, its days must surely be numbered.

However, there is a (small) silver lining to this sad dark cloud. Careful cataloguing and protesting of these abuses by the green groups (including HKBWS) has led to tighter regulations and a better understanding of how to protect other sites. For example, the abuse of Kam Tin led to the famous fight to save Long Valley, and the success of the Lok Ma Chau constructed wetland also has its roots in the lessons learned from the failure of West Rail's compensation wetland.

The fight continues...

Note: - this article is based on a piece of the same title that was originally written for Hong Kong Discovery Magazine



A brief note on ageing White-bellied Sea Eagles

~ White-bellied Sea Eagle Research Group

Text: Gary Chow Drawing: Wendy Yu Photo: M.Y. Tang

Large raptors show variable plumage characters from juvenile to sub-adult, but with care their ages can be assessed. Ageing migratory raptors is quite difficult as we seldom see all different ages in same year or years and it is difficult to get familiar with them. So we can only resort to reviewing of references and draw on experience from other countries. However, for the residential raptors like White-bellied Sea Eagle, we can expect to see all the different plumages throughout the year. So with effort it should not be too difficult to work out a sequence of plumage patterns as the birds develop.

In order to age local White-bellied Sea Eagles, we need to understand their basic biology. White-bellied Sea Eagle chicks are born in winter, fledge in early summer and moult in spring. According to observation overseas, they will change to full adult plumage when 5 years old. Therefore, in summer, we might see any of 6 different plumage types.

Juvenile - First Year

WBSE juveniles are very distinctive. Breast and belly are dark brown; head buffy; underwing coverts brownish; inner primaries are white; base of secondaries are faded white. The most remarkable feature is the dark brown eye-stripes, which disappear after juvenile plumage

When it grows up, the breast and underwing covert would start to fade gradually. The whitish part of the flight feathers would also start to be replaced with predominant black. These three parts are the main features for aging.

First Immature - Second Year

The belly is mostly white but the breast still retains a brown collar and triangular shape. Underwing coverts are stained brown or buff yellow. The black-and-white pattern in flight still resembles that of the juvenile.



First year juvenile



Second year juvenile

Second Immature - Third Year

The color on the breast is mainly white, but underwing coverts are still buff yellow. The whitish part of flight plumage is not much different to the first year although the white area is fading and the contrast between black and white has become more obvious.

Sub-adult - Fourth Year

The breast is white in color and the wing covert is mainly white, if not stained buff yellow. Secondaries are mostly black and the inner parts of primaries are still clearly white with fading edge. However, the black-and-white pattern in primaries and secondaries at this stage is variable among different individuals.

Sub-adult - Fifth Year

Except for the white patches on primaries, all other features are as in adult.

WBSE should develop to full adult plumage at 5 years old. However, the references for WBSE are mostly from Australia which may not reflect the case in Hong Kong. In fact, we have seen WBSE developing a paired-up relationship and even breeding successfully without complete adult plumage. So, it is still questionable if a sub-adult in its' sixth year is indistinguishable from the adult.

All the description above is based on my observation, but in fact I am not fully confident on ageing the sub-adults. After the second year, their black-and white pattern on flight feathers is highly variable and not easy to be aged accurately. It is necessary to observe more different individuals before we can be certain on the interpretation and that part would need your help on furnishing us with valuable information. Should you have any information or photos of juvenile or sub-adult, you are welcome to share with us via e-mail wbse@hkbws.org.hk or directly post on the HKBWS discussion group. We hope that after receiving support from all sources we can publish a more comprehensive ageing key in the bird report in the near future.



Adult

SEABIRD MIGRATION IN THE HONG KONG AREA

~ Geoff Welch

This is a companion note to 'Land Bird Migration in the Hong Kong area' which was published in the Spring 2009 issue of this magazine and is based on observations of seabird migration made from Po Toi Island during the period March 2006 - May 2009.

Counts of sea bird species were made from the most southerly point on Po Toi twice daily after dawn and before dusk at the peak sea bird migration seasons in spring and autumn. The southern point of Po Toi is probably the best land location in Hong Kong from which to watch sea bird migration, as shown in section 3 below.

The note also includes conclusions from the Seabird Survey of Spring 2006 ('SSS6', Yu 2006) which was able to study seabirds over a wide area of southern and eastern Hong Kong waters. The results of both studies are very similar.



Fig 1. February Sea Surface Temperature, South and East China Seas

Source – China Geographic Atlas





1. Hong Kong Seabirds

The north part of the South China Sea is relatively poor for seabirds because for most of the year it is warm, without a mix of warm and cold currents to cause up-welling of nutrients and create food for seabirds. The exception is winter, when a current of cold water originating in the Sea of Japan passes along the northern coastline of the South China Sea almost reaching Hainan. This brings the February sea temperature in the Hong Kong area down to 16 deg C, similar to that of waters in southern Japan and 4 deg C below those around Taiwan (Fig 1 and 2), which allows wintering seabirds from the north to move down the China coast into Hong Kong waters and further west.

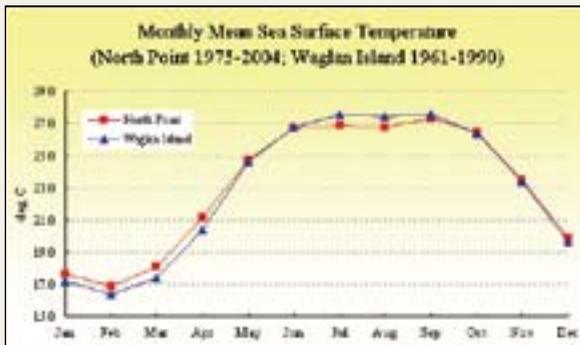


Fig 2. Hong Kong Monthly Sea Surface Temperature
Source – HKO Website

Apart from these wintering birds, most of the other seabird species seen in Hong Kong waters are migrating through the South China Sea from wintering areas around the equator to breeding areas in the north. Three species of terns from this group, Roseate, Black-naped and Bridled, remain to breed in Hong Kong waters, all near the northern limit of their breeding range. One migrating seabird species, the Short-tailed Shearwater, breeds in southern Australia and is moving north for its winter (our summer).

In addition to these true migrants, the occasional wandering Booby or Frigatebird can be seen in Hong Kong waters.

2. Seabird Migration Routes

Migration routes of each group detailed above are shown in Fig 3 and discussed below.

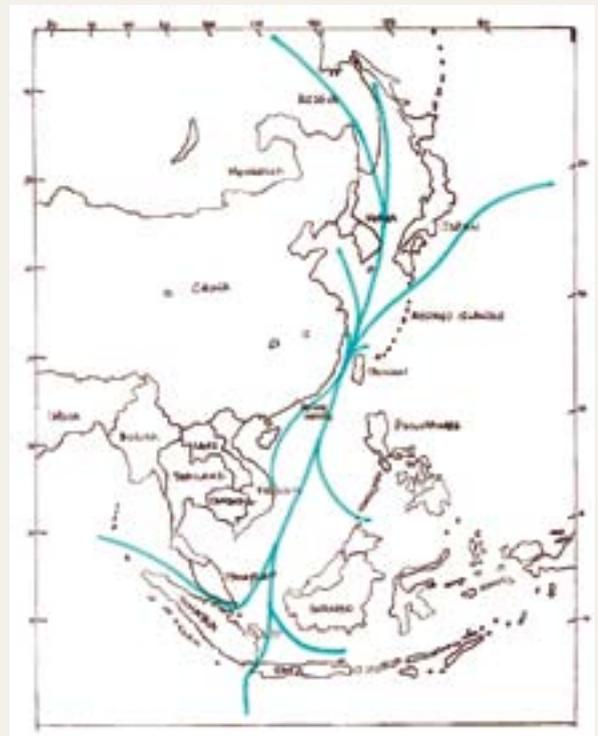


Fig 3. Seabird Migration Routes in the South China Sea

As is well known in Hong Kong, spring migration for seabirds is much heavier than autumn migration. The average number of seabird migrants seen during the study period on each day in spring was ten times that in autumn. This is primarily because of the location of Hong Kong in the north of the South China Sea relative to the birds' migration routes.



2.1 Birds wintering off the coast of south China

A number of seabird species breeding in northern latitudes such as sea ducks, gulls and Ancient Murrelet with the occasional diver and pelagic cormorant, winter in the Pearl River Delta and along the coast of south China. These birds migrate south in late autumn and winter, and return north in spring.

They can be seen from Po Toi on their return migration in spring, mostly in March. They are rarely seen in autumn and the reason for this is not entirely clear. It may be partly because they arrive in south China waters throughout the late autumn and winter in much less concentrated numbers than spring, and their arrival is mostly unseen. Gulls may arrive over the land from the north of Hong Kong and would therefore not be seen from Po Toi.

Some seabird species may move south during spells of cold weather in winter although no such movements were seen during the study period.

2.2 Birds wintering in equatorial regions or further south

The South China Sea is a passage area for seabirds which winter in equatorial regions or further south and migrate north in spring to breed in northern latitudes and south in autumn to return to their winter quarters. The main species in this group are skuas, terns, Streaked Shearwater and Red-necked Phalarope. The location of Hong Kong on the south China coastline combined with weather effects make spring a much heavier regular passage period through Hong Kong waters than autumn.

Birds migrating north in spring across the South China Sea need only make a small westerly diversion to find themselves on the coast of south China (see Fig 3). If they meet the coast west of Hong Kong, they will pass through Hong Kong waters as they fly east along the coast and up through the Taiwan Strait. Strong easterly winds, which are common in spring, can cause migrant seabirds to be drifted further west than they intend and increase the numbers seen in spring.

Birds migrating south in autumn across the South China Sea have to make a major diversion to pass through Hong Kong waters (see Fig 3). Even a strong easterly wind will not bring them into Hong Kong, but a typhoon can and this is the reason why many seabirds are seen in autumn during typhoons, particularly typhoons which approach Hong Kong from the south east.

Those species which are regularly seen in autumn from Po Toi (Common, Aleutian Tern and Red-necked Phalarope) may be migrating around the coastline or completing post-breeding moult before continuing south.

2.3 Southern breeders

In addition to seabirds migrating north to breed, a small number of Short-tailed Shearwaters which breed on the south coast of Australia in the southern summer also pass through Hong Kong waters in spring. Statistics from the study suggest their number is between 50 and 100 birds each year.

These seabirds follow a loop migration, coming up from east Australia on the western side of the Pacific Ocean to winter in Japanese waters and further north, returning to Australia through the central and eastern Pacific. Their numbers are huge - about 20 million make this migration annually and it is likely we see some of a relatively small number which pass through Indonesian and Philippine waters into the South China Sea on their way north in spring (Fig 3). In autumn, they are very far to the east in the Pacific Ocean and do not pass through the South China Sea.

2.4 Occasional wanderers

Seabirds, particularly the larger ones, take several years to develop to maturity. During this time, immature birds may wander over a wide area. Frigatebirds and Boobies are well-known wanderers and they appear in Hong Kong waters in small numbers, usually immature birds in the period March to September. With the exception of Christmas Island Frigatebird, it is not really known where they come from although seabird colonies in the south of the South China Sea and to the north of Taiwan are possible sources.

3. The Dangan Islands

The Dangan Islands form a chain 15 kms off the south coast of Hong Kong and well into the South China Sea. They probably have two opposing effects on the number of seabirds seen in spring in Hong Kong waters. Firstly they act as a barrier to seabirds entering Hong Kong waters. But they can also act as a funnel at their southern end to catch seabirds migrating coastally and then concentrate their movements as they depart through a single channel between Po Toi Island and Dangan Island itself (see Fig 4).



Fig 4. The Effect of the Dangan Islands in Spring

Fig 4 shows why the southern point of Po Toi Island is a good location from which to observe seabird migration in spring.

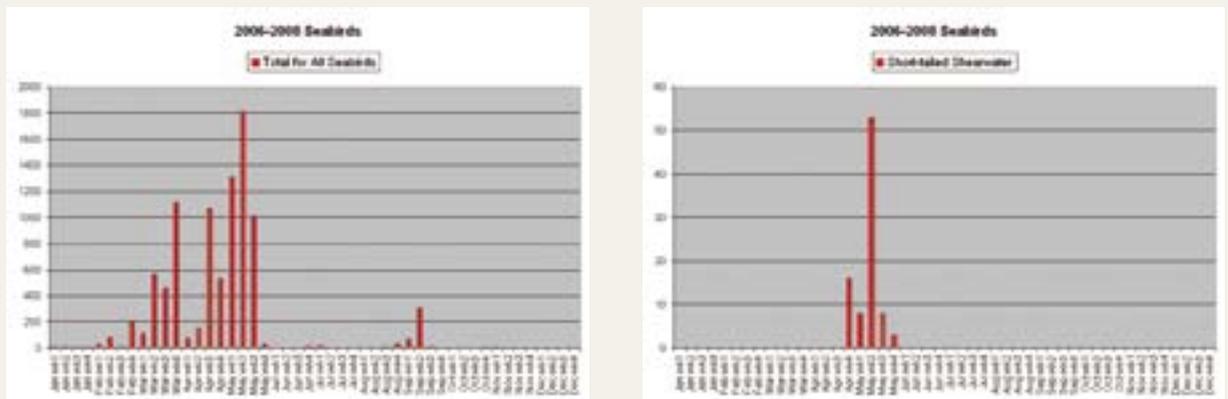
Results from SSS6 suggest that terns and other seabirds are commoner in spring in waters south of Lamma Island. It is possible that some seabird migrants use the area to the south and west of Lamma Island as a feeding and resting ground before continuing their migration. This particularly applies to terns which often migrate in concentrated movements.

4. Timetable for Spring and Autumn Migration

The timetable for migrating seabird species as seen from Po Toi is quite specific in both spring and autumn as follows

March	April	May	Early September
Gulls, Red-breasted Merganser, Ancient Murrelet and other species wintering in south China waters. Red-necked Phalaropes from mid-March	Skuas, terns and Red-necked Phalaropes	The largest tern movements and Short-tailed Shearwaters	Terns and a few Red-necked Phalaropes

Fig 5 is a graphical display of the number of birds seen each week over the period 2006-2008 for all seabirds and for some particular species



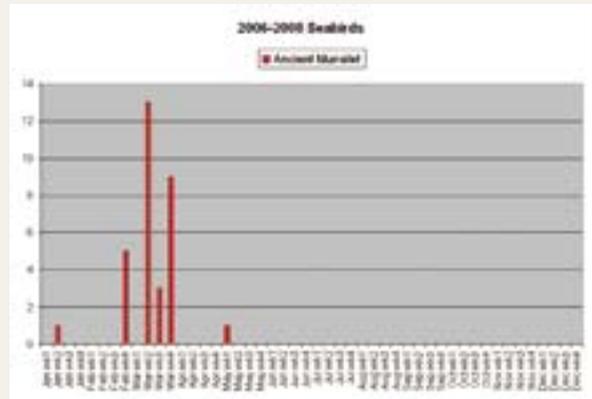
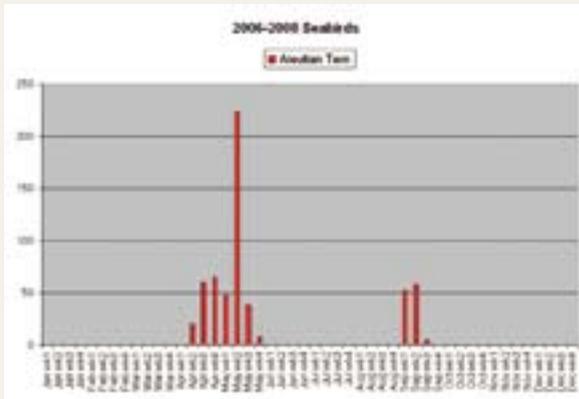
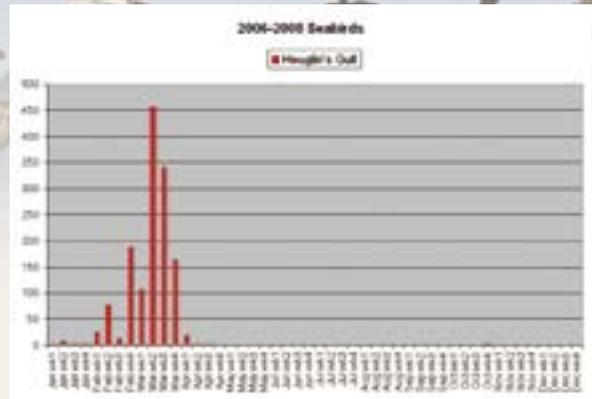
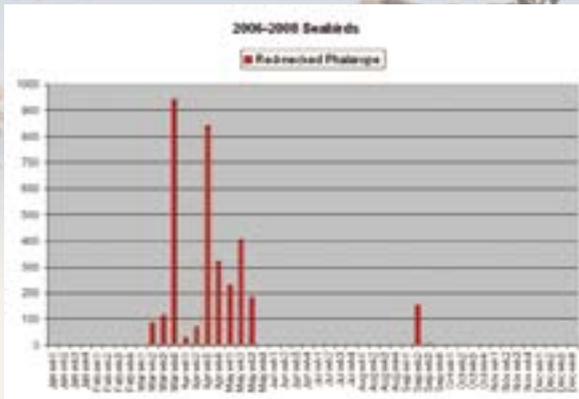


Fig 5. Seabird Species by Week 2006-2008

5. Weather Effects

A period of strong easterly winds can bring more seabirds into the Hong Kong area particularly in April. Apart from that and typhoons, wind appears to have little effect except that most of the large tern movements in May occur in light southerly winds.

The time of day is the most significant factor for seeing migrating seabirds from Po Toi in spring, late evening being the peak time for gulls in March and early morning in April and May for terns and skuas. This suggests that gulls are primarily overnight migrants whereas terns and skuas are primarily day time migrants. Red-necked Phalaropes migrate throughout the day in small numbers, feeding as they go, although mass movements sometimes occur.

Visibility is also important. Good visibility, which allows the birds to see the northern end of Dangan Island usually results in them heading for this point and therefore being further away from Po Toi. In misty conditions, they come much closer to Po Toi.

Seabird migration in autumn is a very brief affair in early September with mostly terns and a few phalaropes involved. Aleutian Tern appears to be the commonest tern in autumn while Caspian Terns have been seen regularly migrating past Po Toi in early November. Autumn typhoons may bring in a variety of seabirds, particularly if they approach Hong Kong from the south east.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Mike Chalmers for his very useful comments on an early draft of this note.

References

Yu, Y.T. 2006. Seabird Migration Survey, Spring 2006 ('SSS6'). Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. 



At the heart of the image
 於心 見心

Nikon Sport Optics

遠在天邊 帶到眼前
 藝康光學望遠鏡系列



觀鳥單筒望遠鏡

- 六款目鏡切合不同需要
- 配備目標瞄準器(target sight)方便快速鎖定目標
- 大物鏡及多層鍍膜鏡頭·影像更明亮
- 充氣處理·防水防霧防塵·適合戶外活動



Spotting Scope
RAIII 65 WP

Spotting Scope
RAIII 82 A WP

雷射測距儀

- 簡易操作·以雷射精準測量距離
- 兩種測量模式·切合不同需要·如高爾夫球·打獵
- LCD顯示·資料一目了然
- 輕巧設計·令單手操作更容易



LASER 800S

LASER 1200S

雙筒望遠鏡

- 高折射率棱鏡及多層鍍膜鏡頭·影像更明亮
- 充氣處理·防水防霧·適合戶外及水上活動
- 棱鏡及鏡片均採用無鉛無鉍環保區區製造
- 防撞橡膠外層提供更穩固舒適手感



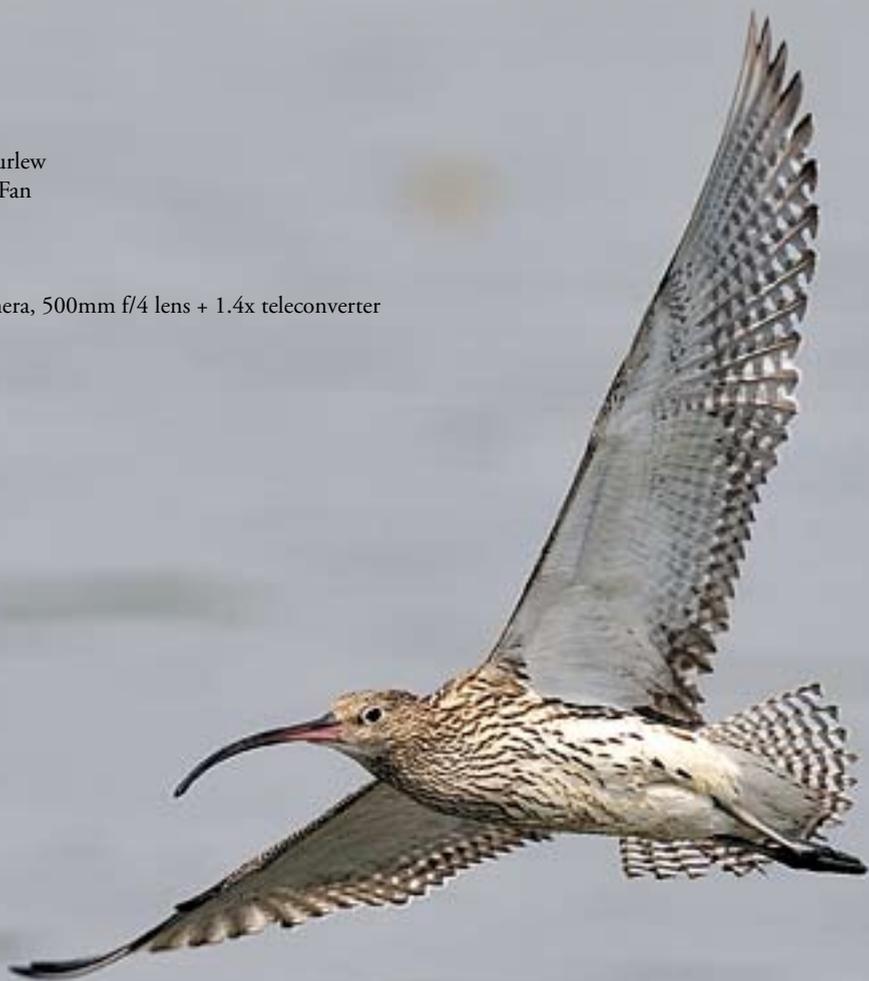
MONARCH
8x42 DCF

MONARCH
10x42 DCF

白腰杓鹬
麥江帆
米埔

Eurasian Curlew
Mak Kong Fan
Mai Po

15.03.09
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



黑尾塍鹬
張玉良
塋原

Black-tailed Godwit
Andy Cheung
Long Valley

02.05.2009
DSLR Camera,
600mm f/4 lens +
1.4x teleconverter



斑尾塍鹬
何志剛
米埔

Bar-tailed Godwit
Pippen Ho
Mai Po

21.03.2008
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 2x teleconverter



半蹼鹬
林文華
米埔

Asian Dowitcher
James4j
Mai Po

27.04.2008
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



翻石鹬
鄧玉蓮
米埔

Ruddy Turnstone
Joyce
Mai Po

25.04.2008
DSLR Camera, 400mm f/5.6 lens



灰尾鸕
崔家祥
西貢西沙

Grey-tailed Tattler
Chui Ka Cheung
Sai Kung

24.10.2008
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter





大石鴉
何建業
米埔

Great Thick-knee
Ho Kin Yip Kinni
Mai Po

24.06.2009

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



大石鴉
何建業
米埔

Great Thick-knee
Ho Kin Yip Kinni
Mai Po

24.06.2009

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



大石鴉
孔思義、黃亞萍
米埔

Great Thick-knee
John and Jemi Holmes
Mai Po

24.06.2009

DSLR Camera, 800mm f/5.6 lens + 2x teleconverter



長趾濱鶉
張玉良
米埔

Long-toed Stint
Andy Cheung
Mai Po

06.05.2009

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



青腳濱鶉
黃卓研
米埔

Temminck's Stint
Cherry Wong
Mai Po

16.04.2009

DSLR Camera, 400mm f/4 lens + 2x teleconverter

My Bird Watching Diary

~ Text and Illustrations: Wendy Yu



12 Feb 2009 (Thu)

A flowering *Syzygium jambos* growing at the roadside has attracted birds. In the early morning, under a tree, I hear the singing of the Fork-tailed Sunbird. I have been attracted by this bird's beautiful colour and plumage since the first time I met it. It is a wonderful experience to meet such a beautiful creature in the city that I live. 

Letter to the Editor

from Mr Clive Viney

15th June 2009

Earlier this month I received and thoroughly enjoyed The Hong Kong Bird Report 2003-04. All good things are worth waiting for. This publication must rank among the best reports of its kind in the world and the photographs are simply stunning. I especially enjoyed the accounts of species making their first appearance in Hong Kong and those recorded breeding in the SAR for the first time. Geoff Carey and Helen Lockey and their team are to be congratulated.

The Systematic List contains a good number of species that were unheard of in Hong Kong during the thirty years I spent birdwatching there. Admittedly there were fewer birdwatchers but I sometimes feel that we must have had our eyes closed, especially as today the habitat is much more restricted and we never had to contend with poor visibility caused by pollution. But it is not all good news; in the thirteen years since I left it is sad to see that summering Yellow Bitterns are now so few; that the Falcated Ducks that wintered in flocks in Deep Bay are now so rare and that even Eurasian Coots have become scarce. And where are the Crested Buntings? Not a single bird in two years – that is incredible.

Yours sincerely,
Clive Viney





Taiwan: The Central Highlands

27 April – 4 May, 2009

~ Mike Kilburn

Following in the footsteps of several top bird photographers, my wife Carrie and I decided to take a week to visit the mountains of central Taiwan, taking advantage of the cheap flights, easy hire car arrangements in Taichung, and the closeness of some top sites for Taiwan's wonderful rare and endemic birds.

Monday 27th April

A jerky start which included:

- being busted by the sniffer beagle at Taichung airport for the ginger Carrie insisted on bringing to make healthy ginger tea (amazingly, ginger is for sale in Taiwan!),
- scraping the hire car 15 minutes after picking it up, then
- finding all the banks closed 15 minutes previously. Hmmm.

We finally wobbled onto the highway and headed for Anma Shan, one of the best places for Taiwan's upland endemics. During a hairy drive - neither of us had driven on the right before - we saw almost no birds until a **Taiwan Partridge(e)** poked its head up to look at us. Amazing! the one endemic I thought I had no chance of seeing was the first of the trip! We arrived at the Anma Shan Hotel an hour after dark, happy to have survived our first day on the roads.

Tuesday 28th April

An early morning walk up from the hotel at KM43.5 (and 2,300 metres asl.) produced a fine array of Taiwan endemics in a habitat of giant fir trees and deciduous under-storey. As I left the room (wood cabin no 308) a party of **Rufous-crowned Laughingthrushes(e)** (recently split from White-throated) inspecting the stairs and railings down to the lower cabins were the first lifer of the day. Unfortunately I only had naked eye views - my binoculars were in the room! A **Steere's Liocichla(e)**, growling quietly to itself in the undergrowth, provided some compensation.

Soon after a flock of **Taiwan Yuhinas(e)**, elegant with finely-pencilled head markings appeared. They turned out to be the commonest bird on the mountain. Next a pair of chatty and confiding **Taiwan Barwings(e)** hunted up and down the





tree-trunks at the roadside like gigantic tree-creepers. They were followed by a pair of **Vinaceous Rosefinches**, a **Grey-headed Bullfinch** (the distinctive Taiwanese race *oustoni* is a likely split), the first of several **White-whiskered Laughingthrushes(e)**, and a **Grey-cheeked Fulvetta**. A solitary **Nutcracker** showed all the features of the distinctive local race. **Collared Bush Robins(e)** guarded every 500 metres of road, while just one **White-browed Bush Robin** appeared later in the morning. All of these are either endemic species or subspecies and were exactly the reason I'd come here.



The commonest warbler was unquestionably **Yellow-Bellied Bush Warbler**, with birds in full song almost everywhere, while a few **Rufous-faced Warblers** drew attention with their “prrrww” telephone call. It seems strange that for all its endemics Taiwan has no spectacled warbler or resident phyllosc, but these philosophical musings were dismissed with very brief views of a **Taiwan Flamecrest(e)**! Later in the morning **Green-backed** and **Black-throated Tits** appeared at various times, but most interesting was the Taiwan race of **Coal Tit**, which has a distinctively long crest. One showed well near Tian Chi pool above KM 49 at the top of the mountain.

The major targets here are, of course the pheasants, with Mikado(e) staked out at KM 47, and Swinhoe's(e) at KM 23. This evening Carrie and I joined ten birders at the staked out grassy lay-by. A cold, misty 90 minutes of inaction saw off all but four of us as the mist thickened and visibility dropped below 10 metres. But as can happen in the mountains the mist suddenly thinned . . . to reveal a pair of **Mikado Pheasants(e)** which gave stunning views as they foraged along the roadside at point-blank range !

Wednesday 29th April

Next morning the **Chestnut-headed Laughingthrushes** were again on the stairs, and a pair of **Taiwan Sibia(e)** collected moss for nesting material. A **Eurasian Jay** was hunting moths which had settled overnight underneath the street light. An **Ashy Wood Pigeon** showed very well in a roadside tree as I returned for another look at the **Mikado Pheasants** around 0730. They had just appeared and posed superbly, I got a reasonable photo- even with my clunky digiscope set-up (my coolpix 4500 is 2002 vintage!) I also pished in two **Taiwan Flamecrests**, which gave much better views.

That was it for Anma Shan, and as we started down we flushed a **White-tailed Robin**, then a **Taiwan Whistling Thrush(e)** (slimmer, darker, and without the spots of Blue Whistling Thrush) off the road, and best of all a superb male **Swinhoe's Pheasant(e)** picked its way along the roadside - bingo! With all pheasants and the partridge safely bagged I was more relaxed about doing non-birding stuff with Carrie. We stopped for brief views of a punk-crested **Taiwan Tit(e)**, brought in by a birding guide who used his van's stereo to blast out the call. Not elegant, but it worked.





Lower down a **Crested Serpent Eagle** called and two **Black Eagles** drifted over, although the major victory was not stepping on a sleeping cobra in the grass at the roadside! **Collared Finchbills** and **Black Drongos** were plentiful, as were **Pacific and Striated Swallows**.

We headed for Sun Moon Lake on the totally mistaken premise that it was a quiet little mountain village. Wrong wrong wrong. It felt like Pattaya, with lots of neon, a mega hotel (a copy of Dubai's 6-star "sail" megalith) being built on the formerly beautiful wooded headland and a coachpark on a reclaimed corner of the lake. I had a distinct and disappointing sense of the innocent local beauty turning into a cynical, grasping, hard-edged hag.



We eventually decided to leave, but our stop revealed **Taiwan Barbet(e)** and **Grey-throated Marten**, plus **Oriental Turtle Dove**, so it wasn't a complete dead loss. There are other good birds here, but I felt fine about walking away from the distinctive (ha!) local race of Plain Flowerpecker, and didn't need Large Cuckooshrike and the Taiwanese race of Maroon Oriole. We headed instead for Dongpu, a village noted for its hot springs (of which Carrie is a big fan) on the edge of Yushan National Park

Taiwan's mountains are interspersed by broad and stony river valleys, bearing testament to heavy erosion from the tropical rain and occasional earthquakes. Taking a detour to Shuili, which lies beside one of these rivers we headed up a different valley through mountain villages and fields perched between the steep hills to Dongpu. It was too late for birding, but I did hear a singing Hwamei(e) (which has been split). As dusk fell a couple of Grey-cheeked Fulvettae scrambled about in the bamboo.

Thursday 30th April

The farmland setting of the hotel meant that my first birds were right outside the room. **Chinese Bamboo Partridge** called close-by but did not show, **Red-headed Tit** came into the pine tree by the door, **Black-naped Monarch** showed well, and a lucionensis **Brown Shrike** was my only migrant of the trip. An after-breakfast walk to a nearby waterfall was interesting for climbing through plum and apricot orchards that doubled up as tea terraces. The top birds were my first **Taiwan Scimitar Babblers(e)** (with the lovely scientific name *pomatorhinus musicus*), which look very different from our Streak-breasted's - with stronger black breast spots and a more contrasting black crown (ours has a chestnut crown). A male **White-tailed Robin** held territory in a small bamboo patch, **Rufous-faced Warblers** were very approachable and both **Little Forktail**, **Plumbeous Redstart** and **Taiwan Whistling Thrush** were on the river. Unfortunately there seems to be little regulation of the hot springs business and every hotel sends its own pipe into the spring, creating a medusan labyrinth of pipes, which sadly blight the beauty of the river. On the way down a male **Vivid Niltava**, another of Taiwan's isolated montane oddities, showed well. A peek over the parapet paid off as an adult **Malayan Night Heron** was lurking on the edge of a pool.





In the afternoon, after not very “wild” boar and mountain veggies we tried a more ambitious walk into the park. I had high hopes of seeing Swinhoe’s Pheasant along the steep, forested mountain trail. After being lulled into a false sense of security by the gently rising track, and good views of a **Mountain Hawk Eagle** we turned a corner and found ourselves on a real trail - crossing a landslide and edging along a narrow path hacked out of the cliff-face. The only birds of note were three **Large Hawk Cuckoos**, 20-odd **Asian House Martins** and a **Crested Goshawk**. This was probably just as well - watching my highly-urbanized wife picking her way uncertainly along the trail, flares flapping, was a nerve-racking experience!



Friday 1st May

I spent the next morning photographing the **Malayan Night Heron**. In the end I was happy, but it took the best part of 3 hours and 90 shots with the trusty Coolpix’s 10 second delay set to reduce camera shake. The drive up to Tatajia was rather bird-free, with only a stop at a stake-out for Rusty Laughingthrush offering much respite. The laughter never showed but I loved the “Invasion of the Daleks” atmosphere created by the photographers’ hides.

However, I enjoyed close views of **Buff-bellied Flowerpecker** of the distinctive endemic race formosum. The top of the mountain was fogbound so we zipped down, pausing only for a monkey that jumped on the car! Alishan Forest Park was even more crowded than Sun Moon Lake and eventually we decided to stay in Fenqihu, where I took my first ever bath in a cedar wood tub.

Saturday 2nd May

I spent my early morning walk looking for Taiwan Wren Babbler, Taiwan Shortwing and Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler - nada! However it was fun to see **Eurasian Jay**, **Taiwan Sibia** and **Taiwan Barwing** swooping in to the railway station to feed on moths attracted to lights left on overnight. The forest walk did produce a nesting pair of **Crested Goshawks**, but little else until a flicker between some bamboo stems eventually showed itself as a male **Snowy-browed Flycatcher**. I watched a pair of this tiny flycatcher nest-building (using moss taken from dead twigs) about five feet up a creeper-swathed tree trunk for about 20 minutes. This intimate moment was a highlight of the trip.

The weekend traffic was scary (especially the giant tour-buses), so we decided to take a side-trip down to Dayanigou - a river in a gorge the indigenous people manage to protect the fish stocks. More interesting was the drive south. About forty minutes on we passed through a more wild area. Both **Oriental Turtle Doves** and **White-bellied Green Pigeons** were perched on roadside bamboos. The same area held lots of **Bronzed Drongos** and four **Grey-capped Woodpeckers**. The drive became rougher as we passed a 10km stretch where the road had been trashed by an earthquake. However an **Emerald Dove** lightened the gloom.



That evening we met Mark Bruce in Yunlin, and after trying hard not to bore our wives with non-stop talk about birds over dinner, we headed off to temple at Huben to look for **Mountain Scops Owl** - a bird I first heard back in 1991, and had often heard since but never seen. As we left the restaurant we heard the familiar "chrieeek" of a **Savannah Nightjar**. At Huben we heard several MSOs, but failed spectacularly, even when shining torches into the right tree for over 20 minutes - twice! It was great hearing at least three **Fairy Pittas** calling. Mark explained that these were newly arrived birds looking for a mate. Despite the disappointment, we did briefly see a *flyng squirrel* in the same area and a highly venomous, but typically docile, *Many-banded Krait* crossing the road.

Sunday 3rd May

Next morning we returned to Huben in search of Fairy Pittas. Mark and I were joined by Dr Scott Lin of the Taiwan Endemic Species Research Institute who took us to a site where a pair of Fairy Pittas he was studying were nest-building in a forested gully. After 15 minutes pushing through tall grass and scrambling over fallen trees Scott picked up a movement. A flash of blue disappeared round the corner. A few seconds later, casual as you like, a **Fairy Pitta**, obviously curious, hopped out onto an exposed perch to check us out. Even though I saw one a few years earlier in HK I was blown away - this stupendous, gorgeous bird standing unconcerned in full view. And then, just as I was getting my breath back it's mate landed on the same branch! They sat for a few seconds, allowing me a chance to drink in every detail of this stunning bird in a superbly atmospheric setting, before dropping off the branch and disappearing into the undergrowth - an absolutely mind-blowing bird!

After thanking Scott, Mark & I headed off to look for **Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler**. Mark told me that they were much more difficult to see than the smaller Taiwan Scimitar Babbler because their territories were about 20 times larger. However, they do respond well to playback, and we got great views of a pair that came in very close. They are very different from Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler of southern China (another recent split) - much darker, with strong contrast between the rufous forecrown and the grey crown and nape. We also saw several **Crested Serpent Eagles**, a pair of **White-bellied Yuhina** with newly fledged chicks and **Grey Treepie**, but gave up on better views of the Taiwanese race of **Chinese Bamboo Partridge** (also due to be split) rather than become a filling station for the local mosquito squadron.

We spent our last night at Hsitou, a mid-level forest park. It was good to arrive as the weekenders were leaving, but I dipped on Taiwan Shortwing, Taiwan Wren Babbler and Rusty Laughingthrush and had to be content with adding **White's Thrush** to my trip list, and a family of **Snowy-browed Flycatchers**.

And that was it. We drove back to Taichung, negotiated the charge for the scratch on the car - we nailed four panels down one side- then headed off to the airport. We had a while to wait, which leaves time for the obligatory Asian birding trip toilet story. Airport toilets can be pretty rank, but I was pleasantly surprised to walk into a clean airy, room with pictures on the walls, plants on shelves and everything spotless. In place of graffiti the attendant had posted a selection of uplifting phrases in Chinese and English. One such note (perfectly positioned at squat level) cheerily reminded me: "Practice makes perfect". So self-consciously hoping that once a day for 39 years would be enough to pass muster, I finished up, got on the plane and left. 

‘The Best Wild Bird Pictures of China: Volume One’

edited by Zhang Suqinq and Zhao Cao

published by Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, RMB 198



China is a country with over 1300 species of bird, some 20% of the world total, including many endemic species as well as globally endangered species. All of these birds make good subjects for wildlife photographers.

Digital technology has invited more people to indulge in wildlife photography. Economic development in mainland China has also made photography a more affordable hobby. Over the last decade, more and more elusive birds in China were shown to the world.

In 2008, Chinese National Geography organized ‘The Best Wild Bird Pictures of China’ photo competition which attracted a good number of entrants. Some of these wonderful bird pictures are now in print, in the ‘The Best Wild Bird Pictures of China: Volume One’ which includes 122 pictures from 77 photographers. The assorted pictures show the beauties of birds of montane regions, primary forests, snow-covered areas as well as coastal wetlands.

The book has a map showing suitable birdwatching locations in China which enthusiasts can refer to. In addition, a map showing the migratory routes of birds over China provides essential information for birdwatchers and photographers to understand the global importance of China in terms of bird conservation.

Each picture in this book has the Chinese, English and scientific names of the bird. Photographers’ notes and background information of the birds are also provided. ‘The Best Wild Bird Pictures of China: Volume One’ is a valuable reference book for vivid birdwatchers and wildlife photographers.

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~ Richard Lewthwaite

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

April

- ▶ Sunny and dry with unusually low humidity levels for the time of year, April 2009 was a wonderful month to be out and about in, and some fine birds were found, but it was too dry to be a birding classic. There was one potential first record - a **Sooty Shearwater** in southern waters. Other highlights were the long-staying **Steppe Eagle** in Deep Bay, two **Oystercatchers** in front of the Mai Po boardwalk hide, a **Temminck's Cormorant** at Stanley, a **Blue-winged Pitta** and a **Green-backed/Owston's Flycatcher** at Po Toi, first spring records of **Brown-breasted Flycatcher**, **Chinese Blue Flycatcher** and **Rosy Starling**, record numbers of **Gull-billed Terns** and **Chestnut Bulbuls**, strong passage of **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters**, and breeding/nesting records of **Brown Fish Owl** and **Brown Wood Owl**. There was also a possible **Collared Owlet** at Tai Po Kau.
- ▶ To start with landbirds, Po Toi was once again the premier site, with a wide range of tropical and palearctic species reported during the month (mainly GW), including **Japanese Sparrowhawk** (up to two, 7th-21st), **Chinese Goshawk** (up to 53, 9th-25th), **Grey-faced Buzzard** (up to eight, 2nd-22nd), **Slaty-legged Crake** (one on 29th), **Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** (singles, 7th-9th), **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo** (one on 15th), **Northern Boobook** (singles on 1st and 4th), **White-throated Needletail** (one on 16th), **Silver-backed Needletail** (two on 13th), **Hoopoe** (one on 8th), **Blue-tailed Bee-eater** (up to eight on 20th-21st), **Blue-winged Pitta** (one on 28th, only the 3rd Hong Kong record), **Forest Wagtail** (one on 21st), **Pechora Pipit** (singles on 27th and 30th), **Ashy Minivet** (up to 10, 1st-21st), **Brown Shrike** (up to 37, 20th-27th), **Red-tailed Robin** (singles on 13th and 18th), **Brown-headed Thrush** (one on 5th), **Pale Thrush** (a rather late one on 18th), **Japanese Thrush** (one on 5th), **Eyebrowed Thrush** (up to six, 16th-21st), **Orange-headed Thrush** (one on 1st), **Asian Brown Flycatcher** (one on 18th-20th), **Grey-streaked Flycatcher** (one on 21st), **Ferruginous Flycatcher** (up to two, 2nd-18th), **Red-breasted Flycatcher** (one on 13th), **Mugimaki Flycatcher** (one on 27th), **Narcissus Flycatcher** (up to three, 2nd-30th), **Green-backed/Owston's Flycatcher** (female on 2nd-4th, the individual found late March), **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** (up to four, 2nd-20th), **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** (one on 1st-2nd), **Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** (summer-plumaged male, 5th-11th), **Oriental Greenfinch** (one on 1st), **Chinese Grosbeak** (male on 28th), **Japanese Yellow Bunting** (one on 1st-2nd), **Chestnut Bunting** (one on 20th), **Yellow-browed Bunting** (one on 27th-28th) and **Chestnut-cheeked Starling** (one on 29th).
- ▶ The only other offshore island to be regularly covered was Cheung Chau, where the best day was 28th with 11 **Arctic Warblers**, six **Grey-streaked Flycatchers**, four **Asian Brown Flycatchers**, a **Chinese Grosbeak** and a singing **Black-naped Oriole** (MDW). Visits to two other islands were reported on single dates (JAA), with a **Red-tailed Robin**, **Pale Thrush** and **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** at Lamma on 5th and a **Dollarbird**, a **Red-tailed Robin**, a **Narcissus** and two **Blue-and-white Flycatchers** at Dong Ping Chau on 13th.
- ▶ The most notable landbird in Deep Bay was the long-staying **Steppe Eagle**. This was regularly seen at fishponds beside the Mai Po access road during 1st-4th and again there and at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau during 17th -28th, having disappeared in the meantime. Following a record autumn, it was the best yet spring for **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters**, with a total of over 100 at Mai Po during 6th-28th, including 71 on 14th (per KL). When will it colonise Hong Kong as a breeding species? Also reported in Deep Bay and adjacent areas were 45 **Silver-backed Needletails** at Crest Hill on 7th (PJL), a **Citrine Wagtail** at Long Valley on the same day (SYH) and a **Daurian Starling** at Mai Po on 20th (per KL).
- ▶ Elsewhere in the NT, regular coverage of Tai Po Kau led to the first Hong Kong spring records of **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** (one on 13th, KPK, PW, MK) and **Chinese Blue Flycatcher C. (rubeculoides) glaucicomans** (a female on 29th, KPK). Both of these flycatchers appear to be expanding their ranges into

Southeast China - a pair of Brown-breasted bred at Dinghu Shan in May 2008 (per Lei Jinyu) and a male and female Chinese Blue were seen in the Wuyi Shan summit area in early April 2005. Also of note at Tai Po Kau was a possible **Collared Owlet** calling, or something or someone mimicking it, on 13th (MDW). Other reports from Tai Po Kau (mainly KPK) included a **Crested Honey Buzzard** on 14th, up to four **Chestnut-winged Cuckoos**, up to three singing **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoos** (JAA), a **Bay Woodpecker**, a **Siberian Blue Robin** (on 29th, the latest ever spring record by 10 days), an **Orange-headed Thrush** (on 30th), seven **Mountain Tailorbirds** on 17th, a **Ferruginous Flycatcher** on 4th, a **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** on 18th, up to six **Hainan Blue Flycatchers** through the month and single **Japanese Paradise Flycatchers** on 1st and 12th. Record numbers of **Chestnut Bulbuls** passed Tai Po Kau Headland, with a count of 219 on 1st and a single flock of 254 photographed on 11th (RB), whilst visit to Tai Mo Shan on 10th and Pat Sin Leng on 14th turned up totals of 14 singing **Brownish-flanked Bush Warblers** on the first date and eight on the second date (KB).

▶ Away from Tai Po Kau, singing **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoos** were also reported in suitable breeding habitat at Tai Lam Chung (PCC, SYH), Ng Tung Chai (EMSK) and Brides Pool Road (RWL).

▶ Breeding/nesting reports of two rare owls were received, both at undisclosed localities in the NT. A **Brown Fish Owl** was photographed at a nest on a village house roof on 7th, and a **Brown Wood Owl** chick was found on 16th and taken into care at Kadoorie Farm.

▶ Hong Kong Island was perhaps rather under-watched until the end of the month when an **Orange-headed Thrush** at Lung Fu Shan on 29th (SYH).

▶ Moving from landbirds to waterbirds, a strong passage of shorebirds was noted in Deep Bay this April (YYT). Greatly appreciated were two **Oystercatchers**, an adult and first-summer (subspecies *osculans*, a potential split) which mingled for over an hour with the shorebird assemblage in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 9th. These are only the second for Hong Kong and the first in spring. Another major rarity was a **Temminck's Cormorant** photographed at Stanley on 14th (LCY), potentially only the 2nd or 3rd for Hong Kong. Also of note were seven **Great Bitterns** on 4th (BS), single **Spoon-billed Sandpipers** on multiple dates, 6th-26th, one or two **Little Stints** through the month (favouring the area in front of the new boardwalk hide), up to 30 **Nordmann's Greenshanks**, four **Long-billed Dowitchers** on 8th, 105 **Bar-tailed Godwits** on 10th, the highest ever spring count, a **Ruddy Crake** on the same day, a **Little Curlew** on 14th, and 1900 **Black-tailed Godwits** on 17th, the highest count for some years (YYT, KL), a first-winter **Glaucous-winged Gull** from 8th to the end of the month (MDW, YYT), 102 **Caspian Terns** on 3rd (RWL) and a record count of 731 **Gull-billed Terns** on 19th (EMSK), this more than doubling the highest counts of previous years. Gull-bills (or "Gullibles" as Mike Kilburn affectionately calls them) going through Hong Kong in spring may well have spent the northern winter in Australia. One photographed at Mai Po on the 18th (YYT) had been leg-flagged over 4500 km away at Roebuck Bay, Broome in northwest Australia on 10 November 2008 (Clive Minton), the second such record following an Australian-flagged bird photographed at Mai Po on 19 April 2007 (KY).

▶ Away from Mai Po, two fine waterbirds were added to the Long Valley list - a **Eurasian Spoonbill** on 4th and a **Swinhoe's Egret** on 6th; two **Black-faced Spoonbills** were also present there on the first date (SYH, PCC).

▶ April has now established itself as the best month for seabirds. Among species found during boat-based surveys of southern and eastern waters (YYT, MT, et al) and late afternoon seawatching sessions at Po Toi (GW) were **Sooty Shearwater** (one on 25th, the first for Hong Kong), **Short-tailed Shearwater** (one on 20th), **Streaked Shearwater** (up to eight, 2nd -24th), **Brown Booby** (singles on 6th and 24th), **Lesser Frigatebird** (one on 21st-22nd) **Ancient Murrelet** (three on 6th), the three usual **skua** species (5th-25th) and at least eight **tern** species, including **Sooty Tern** (juvenile on 5th, the earliest ever record), **Aleutian Tern** (up to 30, 11th-25th) and **Greater Crested Tern** (up to 21, 7th-25th). Also seen at sea on the boat trip of 25th was a flock of 15 **Black Bitterns** (PW, MK), a record count.

May

- ▶ Apart from a wet spell which set in for a few days towards the end of the third week, the weather was pleasantly fine and dry right through to the end of the month – most unusually so, May typically being a month of heavy rain and high humidity levels. Best birds of the month were a **Band-bellied Crake** on Hong Kong Island, single **Malayan Night Herons** at Po Toi and Pui O, a **Blue-winged Pitta** at Po Toi and a **Chinese Blue Flycatcher** at Tai Po Kau, these mainly in the first week, and a nesting **Pied Avocet** at Mai Po at the end of the month.
- ▶ The month opened with a **Shrenck's Bittern** at Long Valley, a **Bay Woodpecker** at Tai Po Kau and a **Baillon's Crake** at Shing Mun Valley Park, Tsuen Wan (WKC). The latter was joined by another on 4th and at least one individual remained until 10th, delighting many photographers.
- ▶ On 2nd, a major rarity in the form of a **Band-bellied Crake** was found at the Lung Fu Shan Environmental Education Centre, HKU (Thanks to Maggie, Cindy, Tony, YYT and SYH !). Skulking in low shrubs on the edge of a lawn, this bird was elusive at times and remained until 8th. It was only the fourth Hong Kong record, the previous records all involving birds found dead or injured. Among other reports this day and the next were a **Grey-faced Buzzard** and **Pechora Pipit** on south Lantau (JAA), single **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoos** at Pak Sha O (GJC) and Tai Po Tsai (RB), a possible **Chinese Leaf Warbler** at Brides Pool (RWL) and a **Narcissus Flycatcher** and a male and female **Chinese Blue Flycatcher** at Tai Po Kau (KPK, SLT), these in the same general area as the female found in late April.
- ▶ A **Blue-winged Pitta** of secretive habits showed briefly at Po Toi on 3rd and again on 6th (RWL, PW, Aaron, GW). First found on 28 April, this is only the 3rd record for Hong Kong following singles birds at Cheung Chau on 4 May 1989 and Po Toi during 17 April-4 May 2008. This fine pitta is very rare east of Yunnan, and so it is of interest to note that there were records this spring from Taiwan in late April (per YYT) and Futian, Shenzhen in early May. The latter individual, which remained from 3rd to 10th, was of a far more confiding nature than the Po Toi bird and would come out and feed on an open lawn. Quite a few Hong Kong birders and photographers crossed the border to see it (see photos on the HKBWS web-site).
- ▶ On 5th, a **Malayan Night Heron**, **Swinhoe's Minivet** and **Lanceolated Warbler** were found at Po Toi (GW), the heron remaining until 9th. Passage of **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters** continued with up to eight at Long Valley and Mai Po on 6th-7th (SYH, KL).
- ▶ As things started to go quiet, a vocal and apparently cage-damaged **Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike** at Po Toi on 9th-10th attracted interest because it sounded very different from birds in Southeast China and was noticeably smaller and darker. Could there be more than one species in the present Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike complex? Other reports in the middle part of the month included 16 **Shrenck's Bitterns** at sea in the West Lamma Channel on 11th (YYT), a late **Dusky Warbler** on 14th (GW), two **Silky Starlings** at Tai Mei Tuk on 15th (RWL), single **Orange-headed Thrushes** at Ng Tung Chai on 16th (EMSK) and Tai Po Kau on 18th (KPK) and a **Black-naped Oriole** at Shek O on 17th (DB).
- ▶ Conditions on Po Toi on 24th, following a period of heavy rain accompanied by fairly strong easterlies, appeared just right for an influx of small bitterns, but none were recorded, the only migrants of note being a **Dollarbird** and two **Red Turtle Doves** (GW).
- ▶ At Mai Po, the long-staying, heavily-abraded **Glaucous-winged Gull** and one or two first-summer **Black-tailed Gulls** (YYT) remained throughout the month. There were also three late **Tufted Ducks** on 11th (KL) and a **Black Bittern** on 16th. Potential breeders present all month were up to five **Swinhoe's Egrets** (KL) and up to six **Oriental Pratincoles**, whilst a locally-ringed **Greater Painted Snipe** raised young for the second

successive year and a **Pied Avocet** nest on the scrape was seen to contain three eggs towards the end of the month (BS), the first record of eggs in Hong Kong. A dry spring must help nesting Avocets - nests in previous years have failed following inundation by spring rains. Finally at Mai Po, a **Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** was found on 31st (PW, MK), the latest ever spring record by a whole month.

- ▶ Despite regular coverage of Hong Kong waters, seabirds were recorded in smaller numbers than usual. The weather, especially the lack of rain and the unusually good visibility at sea, seems to have been a major factor, whilst disturbance by recreational fishermen is clearly deterring terns from nesting at traditional sites (see website postings by HKBWS Tern Research Group). Notable seabird species reported in southern & eastern waters, the West Lamma Channel and from Po Toi (mainly YYT, GW) this month were **Streaked Shearwater** (singles on 6th and 13th), **Short-tailed Shearwater** (1-8 on 9 dates, 3rd-26th), **Brown Booby** (an adult on 3rd, PJJ), **Frigatebird sp** (one on 13th), **Pomarine Skua** (one on 6th) and **Arctic Skua** (2-4 on 3 dates, 7th-12th). In addition, 13 **Streaked Shearwaters** were seen at sea from a ship approximately 2 hours south of Hong Kong on 10th (CC).

June

- ▶ Highlight of the month and probably the most surprising mid-summer record of the past 20 years was a **Great Thick-knee**. The month also brought news of breeding attempts and over-summering waterbirds as well as a series of seabird sightings.
- ▶ The **Great Thick-knee** was found at Mai Po on 24th (BS, RL) where it favoured a small strip of mud on the scrape. As news spread it was seen by at least 30 people that day, but to the disappointment of many, including a contingent from the Shenzhen Bird Watching Society who assembled early the next morning, it was not found again. This was a totally unexpected record, involving a species whose main range lies well to the west of Hong Kong found at the poorest time of year for rarities.
- ▶ Also at Mai Po, **Black-winged Stilts** again bred successfully, with 20-30 chicks seen on the scrape and nearby ponds on 6th. A nesting attempt by a pair of **Pied Avocets** failed, though, following heavy rain. Potential breeders were up to ten **Oriental Pratincoles**, a pair of **Chinese Blackbirds** around the car park and a **Zitting Cisticola** in song flight over the scrape, whilst non-breeding over-summerers included eight **Black-faced Spoonbills**, a **Garganey**, two **Tufted Duck**, a **Far Eastern Curlew**, six **Black-headed Gulls**, the long-staying **Glaucous-winged Gull** (still present on 1st), a **Gull-billed Tern** and four **Caspian Terns** (KL, BS, RL).
- ▶ A male **Cyornis flycatcher** with an orange breast was again seen in Tai Po Kau on 1st (SYH). A comparison of photos of this bird taken in April (KPK, P&MW) with illustrations in the latest edition of "Birds of South-East Asia" (Robson 2008) suggest that it was in fact a **Blue-throated Flycatcher** of the subspecies *klossi*, which breeds in southern Indochina and has not been recorded in China, rather than a **Chinese Blue Flycatcher**, as originally thought.
- ▶ Elsewhere, **Greater Painted Snipe** chicks were seen at Long Valley, a **Black Bittern** remained at Hong Kong Park during 7th-13th, **Silky Starlings** were observed at a nest-hole on Cheung Chau on 13th and there were reports of an adult **Slaty-legged Crake** accompanied by five young at Clearwater Bay CP on 20th (GT) and a **Crested Kingfisher** at So Lo Pun on 22nd (GJC).
- ▶ Boat-based surveys led to sightings of an unidentified dark **shearwater** in eastern waters on 5th, a **Lesser Frigatebird** in the West Lamma Channel on 11th and an **Arctic Skua** in eastern waters on 19th (YYT), whilst a **Streaked Shearwater**, a probable **Lesser Frigatebird**, and a **Greater Crested Tern** were found during seawatching sessions from Po Toi on 26th-27th (GW). 

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours (OCT 2009 - Mar 2010)

Outings				
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
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.	☆☆☆	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)	☆☆	Forest birds
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)	☆☆	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)	☆☆	Wintering forest and farmland birds
27/12/2009 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆	Forest birds
2/1/2010 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tsim Bei Tsui (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tin Chak Estate Shopping Centre Exit near Tin Yat Light Rail Station, Tin Shui Wai)	☆	Waterbirds
3/1/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Long Valley (08:00 Exit C near Taxi Station, Sheung Shui MTR Station)	☆☆	Farmland birds & waterbirds

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours (OCT 2009 - Mar 2010)

Outings				
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
10/1/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆	Forest birds
17/1/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Lam Chung Reservoir (08:00 Intersection of Siu Lam Road)	☆☆	Forest birds
24/1/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shek Kong (08:00 Exit C, Kam Sheung Road West Rail Station)	☆☆	Forest & farmland birds
31/1/2010 (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
6/2/2010 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Nam Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Happiness Restaurant, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	☆	Waterbirds
7/2/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shing Mun (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Tsuen Wan MTR Station)	☆☆	Forest birds
14/2/2010 (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
21/2/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Ng Tung Chai (08:00 Tai Wo Indoor Recreation Centre Access Exit, Tai Wo MTR Station)	☆☆☆	Forest birds
28/2/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Luk Keng (08:00 Fanling Town Centre Access Exit, Fanling MTR Station)	☆	Waterbirds
6/3/2010 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Nam Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Happiness Restaurant, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	☆	Waterbirds
7/3/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆	Forest birds
14/3/2010 (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
20-21/3/2010 (Sat & Sun)		Hong Kong Bird Race 2010		
28/3/2010 (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.	☆☆☆	Seabirds and migrants

- 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 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.)

- 31 Jan 2010 (Sun) (_____ member(s), _____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is _____)
- 14 Feb 2010 (Sun) (_____ member(s), _____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is _____)
- 14 Mar 2010 (Sun) (_____ member(s), _____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is _____)

Po Toi and Hong Kong South waters

[Boat Fare: Member: HK\$160 Non-member: HK\$200]

- 28 Mar 2010 (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.	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.

彩鹬(雌鳥)
陳家華
米埔

Greater Painted Snipe (female)
Jacky Chan
Mai Po

25.04.2009
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



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- 超寬廣的視野與超短的對焦距離
- 觸感絕佳，及富彈性的機身包裹外觀
- 蔡司專利的蓮花鍍膜使影像晶瑩剔透

試試看我們所提供參考機權。活動期間：2009年8月1日至9月30日
有關本活動的詳細內容，請致電查詢蔡司專業望遠鏡經銷之經銷商



We make it visible.

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Email: trade@ceset.com.hk



Victory FL

彩鹬(雄鳥和幼鳥)
林文華
米埔

Greater Painted Snipe (male and chicks)
James4j
Mai Po

28.05.2009
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens

