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The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



bulletin

216

Summer 2010 ~ 夏





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金腰燕  
陳土飛  
米埔

Red-rumped Swallow  
Thomas Chan  
Mai Po

22.11.2009  
DSLR Camera, 800mm f/5.6 lens



淡色沙燕  
吳偉文  
担竿洲路

Pale Martin  
Raymond Ng  
Mai Po Access Road

25.04.2010  
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens

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**Front cover :** Red-rumped Swallow - Jacky Chan (Mai Poi), 09.03.2009, DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 1.4 teleconverter

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## Editor's Note

The stifling days of high summer are upon us. Mindful that "One swallow does not a summer make..." you may take your pick of the varied swallow, swift and martin photos in this bulletin, and think of cooler seasons.

The 2010 Black-faced Spoonbill Census by YU Yat-tung highlights record numbers of BFS in Deep Bay during the past winter.

After a particularly cool spring, the apparent correlation between migrant arrival dates and average Hong Kong daily temperatures is charted by Geoff Welch.

This issue has the first of what I hope will be a series of "Local Patch" birding accounts - Andrew Sewell has written about the birds to be seen from a balcony in Tuen Mun.

Once again, many thanks to all the writers and photographers whose work appears here.



~ John Holmes

## Members Affairs

### We are glad to announce the following good news:

Yeung Lee Ki has been promoted as Senior Project Officer.  
Fion Cheung has been promoted as Senior China Project Officer.

#### HKBWS Bird Ringing Group

Cheung Ho Fai (Coordinator)  
Tam Yip Shing (Secretary)  
Cheung Mok Jose Alberto, Yu Yat Tung, Chow Ka Lai, Fu Wing Kan,  
Lee Kwok Shing, Sung Yik Hei, Wong Wai Tung, Yip Sze Man

### Bird Shop in HKBWS

Sales Items	Member's price	Non-member's price
Cross Binocular Straps (SOU0006)	HK\$60	HK\$80
Birdwatching in Forests (B0001) (Bilingual)	HK\$30	HK\$38
Birdwatching in Farmlands & Open Fields (B0002) (Bilingual)	HK\$30	HK\$38
Birdwatching in Wetlands (B0003) (Bilingual)	HK\$30	HK\$38
Butterflies & Moths of Hong Kong (B0009)	HK\$150	HK\$160
Birding South-east China (B0010)	HK\$240	HK\$240
生機處處 (B0011)	HK\$46	HK\$58
上海水鳥 (Waterbirds of Shanghai) (B0012) (Chinese only)	HK\$80	HK\$90
Hong Kong Birds for Kids by Tim & Thelma Woodward (B0015) (Bilingual)	HK\$60	HK\$60
A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Hong Kong (2010 edition) (B0016)	HK\$240	HK\$270
探索鳥類 (呂德恒 陳燕明著) (B0017)	HK\$30	HK\$38
Ecology of the Birds of Hong Kong (published by KFBG) (B0018)	HK\$200	HK\$200
Birds of Hong Kong and South China (B00019)	HK\$135	HK\$158
Hong Kong Bird Report 2003-04 (R0001)	HK\$110	HK\$140
China Bird Report 2004/2005/2006/2007 (R0002) (Bilingual)	HK\$100	HK\$100
A Century of Birds DVD (AV0002)	HK\$66	HK\$88
HKBWS "Birds and People in Harmony-Nature Forever" First Day Cover (SOU0001)	HK\$200	HK\$250
Hong Kong Migratory Birds First Day Cover (27 April 1997) (SOU0002)	HK\$20	HK\$25
HKBWS Hat (SOU0003)	HK\$20	HK\$30
Cotton batch of HKBWS logo (SOU0004)	HK\$10	HK\$15
Scaly-sided Merganser tie (SOU0005)	HK\$200	HK\$300

# Society News & Projects ~ (cont.)

## Hong Kong Bird Race 2010

### Acknowledgements

Dalmatian Pelican Sponsor: Swarovski Hong Kong Ltd

Media Sponsor: Hong Kong Discovery

Supportd by: Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

WWF-Hong Kong

Mr WONG For Sing

Volunteers: Vivian Chan and Alan Lam

The HK bird Race was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> April 2010. Besides the birdwatching contest, we also raised funds to recruit a full-time staff member to take care of conservation issues. Many Thanks to all supporters for their kind donations, as well as all friends and volunteers who participated.

### Racing teams and results:

#### Open Teams



	Name of Teams	Team Members	Best Records	Number of Species
1	The Waders	HF Cheung, Sze Man Hon, Cheung Heung Mui, Peter Chan	Wryneck	117
2	Asian Brown Flycatcher	Bill Man, Man Pui Man, Kwan Kwan Sin, Olivia Mok, Wu Fung Mui	Cattle Egret	70
3	Blue Magpies	Hung Tsang Mei Yuk, Hung Yiu Lam, Lam Tsui Kiu, Lai Siu Chun, Leung Kit Ying	Blue Magpie	59
4	Magpie Robins	Wong Lai Yee, Mok Chung Kei, Stephen Martin		56
5	The Spoonbills	Lau Shing Kwun, Chow Hung Fai, To Chi Tong, Leung Ho Chi, Ng Pui Man	Orange-bellied Leafbird	74
6	Black-headed Gull	Dick Tang, Chan Kin Fai, Suen Leung, Kwok Fung Mei, Candy Wong	Bonellis Eagle	66
7	Daurian Redstart	Chen Chi Po, Cheng Kam Yuen, Yeung Ping Chung	Pied Kingfisher	46



# Society News & Projects ~ (cont.)




## Open Teams (con't)

Image	Name of Teams	Team Members	Best Records	Number of Species	Image
	8 Common Kingfisher	Tsang Sau Chun, Wong Hing Keung, Lee Yuk Lin, Chan Wai Shun	Yellow Wagtail	34	
	9 菜鳥	Cheung Kwok Leung, Law Wing Yee, Leung Ka King, Leung King Tak Shum Hiu Lam	Ashy Minivet	107	
	10 Saunders's Gull	Wong Shui Chi, Law Sam Mui, Mandy Chan, Tang Wai Lan, Chong Cheuk Kong	Oriental Plover	83	
	11 Pied Kingfisher	Chan Fong Ling, Tso Sai Ho, Cheung Kin Kwok, Cheung Wing Hong, Ng Cheuk Hin	Pied Kingfisher	76	
	12 Agent Scott	Katherine Leung, Henry Lui, Roger Lee, Lau Mei-ling, Eva Cheuk, Polly Chik	Grey-tailed Tattler	118	
	13 Bunting Pheasant	Or Ka Man, Yeung Shan Wing, So Lok Hin, Shum Ting Wing, Wong Wai Shing, Chan Ying Chi	Grey-faced Buzzard	124	
	14 Bunting Nuthatch	Lau Sin Pang, Fong Hoi Ling, Yiu Sze Wing, Yuen Yan Ling, Cheung Ka Chun, Lo Pei Lai	Ferruginous Flycatcher	121	
	15 Grey-headed Flycatcher	Che Pak Lam, Ng Yuen Cheung, Law Chi Leung, Yu Chin Sing, Wong Pui Wah	Oriental Plover	66	
	16 Forest Hills	Ng Shiu Han, Siu Fun Fun, Lam Kwok Ling, Lai Yin Ping	Yellow Wagtail	72	



# Society News & Projects ~ (cont.)

## Open Teams (con't)

	Name of Teams	Team Members	Best Records	Number of Species
	17 Worcestershire Sauce Team	Cheung Mok Jose Alberto, Tam Yip Shing, Cecily Yip, Noira Chan, Wong Wai Tung	Water Rail	139
	18 Northern Swallow	Hou Xiaoru, Wang Zhen, Wang Jia	Hainan Blue Flycatcher	78
	19 The Albatross	Yu Yat Tung, Sung Yik Hei, Fong Kin Wa, Lee Kwok Shing, Cheung Yung	Oriental Plover	132
	20 Asian Barred Owlet	Apache Lau, Yu Po Yee, Ko Mai Yee, Chan Wai Shing, Tam Wah Sang	Greater Painted Snipe	64
	21 The Larks	Li Wai Ki, Luk Tsun Pun, Hung Wai Ming, Lau Kam Yuen	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	112

**Best Record:** Northern Swallow Team Hainan Blue Flycatcher

### President Cup Champion

Champion: Worcestershire Sauce Team








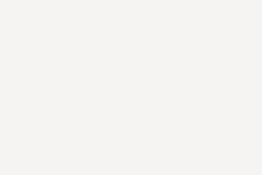
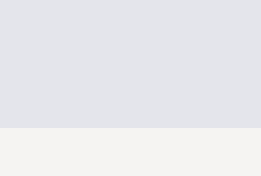

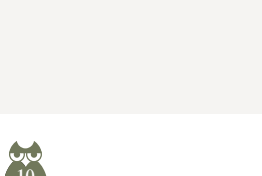
1st Runner-up: The Albatrosses 2nd Runner-up: Bunting Pheasant

## Family Team Swarovski Cup

	Name of Teams	Team Members	Best Records	Number of Species
	1 The Quails	Leung Kit Ching, Shum Wing Cheong, Chiu Yuet Fong, Tsui Mau Kin, Lam Mui Kwan	Silver-eared Mesia	71
	2 Tree Sparrow	Lo Wing Man, Kot Kin Man, Kot Wong Wing Kam, So Lai Wah, Ho Hang Cheung	Oriental Pratincole	59
	3 Grey Heron	Dominic Yip, Chan Chi Keung, Cheng Yiu Wan, Yau Siu Hing	Asian Barred Owlet	67

# Society News & Projects ~ (cont.)

## Family Team Swarovski Cup (con't)

	Name of Teams	Team Members	Best Records	Number of Species	
	4 Nightjar	Tam Yiu Leung, Anthony Lo, Doris Chu, Ronley Lee, Simon Wong, Lee Wai To	Blue-and-white Flycatcher	104	
	5 The Explorers	Lui Hei Yiu, Lui Ping Wai, Cheung Yuk Ping		52	
	6 Baby Red Bird	Kwan Wai Keung, Kwan Siu Chuen, Kwan Izen, Fung Yee Mei	Barn Swallow	69	
	7 The Wong's Bird Team	Irene Wong, Serene Wong, Angela Wong, Nora Wong, Allan Wong	Ashy Drongo	87	
	8 DT	To Chun Yin, Cheung Ming Ho, Tsang Chi Shun, To Wai Kei, Yeung Wai Fun		55	
	9 Kingfisher	Cheng Hung To, Lee Shuk Ling, Cheng Tsz Ching	Common Kingfisher	65	
	10 Small Indian Civet & Leopard Cat	Kwok Chi Tai, Kwok Tsz Ki, Kwok Ka Ki, Lau Chun Hung, Lau Hau Tung, Chan Chi Tat	Bay Woodpecker	115	

**Best Record:** Grey Heron Team Asian Barred Owlet

### Family Team Swarovski Cup

Champion: Small Indian Civet & Leopard Cat

1st Runner-up: Nightjar 2nd Runner-up: The Wong's Bird Team

## School Team

	Name of Teams	Team Members	Best Records	Number of Species	
	1 Kwun Tong Maryknoll College	Wong Man Chun, Lam Kwok Sai, Chu Chung Siu, Hung Lap Tak	Crested Serpent Eagle	75	

**Best Record:** Kwun Tong Maryknoll College Crested Serpent Eagle

### Student Team Champion

Champion: Kwun Tong Maryknoll College

**Top Fundraising Team:** The Waders (HK\$11,792.60)

**Total amount of raised funds:** HK\$127,153.00

## Name of Donors:

Chan Fong Ling	700.00	孔曾美玉	100.00	許慧劍	100.00	楊凱琪	50.00	鄧國偉	500.00
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Wong Chah Cheong	3,400.00	莫秀忠	100.00	楊均澤	200.00				
Wong Kan Neng	400.00	許明德	200.00	楊俊熹	50.00				
Wong Wai Ping Serene	1,200.00								

## Crested Bulbul Club

### 1. Early Morning Bird Watching at Kowloon Park & HK Park

No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from March to April 2010: 128

No. of participants in Kowloon Park from March to April 2010: 281

### 2. Bird watching interpretation in Hong Kong Wetland Park

A total of 100 participants in this service from March to April 2010.

## Survey, Research and Training

"Help to Save Long Valley with Words & Photos" oppose CDNCEA campaign



We need your support and cooperation to fight for conservation of Long Valley. © kysbum

## Nature Conservation

### Management of Long Valley (2010-2012)

~ Vicky Yeung

Nature Conservation Management for Long Valley 2010-2012 started on 1st March this year. By the end of April, the project had cooperated with 24 stakeholders and over 1 million sq ft of farmlands were under management.

This is the fifth year of the project, and problems faced by the management team have changed from technical problems, such as crop planting and habitat management to long-term issues like finding a sustainable management model, and taking on issues like the proposed changed land "zoning" around Kwu Tung North New Town Development Area.

To face these new challenges, the management team and steering committee need to handle all problems skillfully, and the support and cooperation of nature lovers is essential. In January 2010, bird watchers, photographers and those who love Long Valley participated in the "Help to Save Long Valley with Words & Photos" campaign to oppose the proposed CDNCEA land-zoning of Long Valley in the Kwu Tung NTDA. This is only the first stage, however, and we need your continued support until Long Valley can be made safe from these various long-term threats.

## Black-faced Spoonbill International Census - 2010

After the number of Black-faced Spoonbill peaked at 2,069 in 2008, a slight decline to 2041 was recorded last year. Although the decrease was only about 1%, we were worried that there would be a further decline this year. In fact, after the international census held from 8th – 10th January 2010, the number of BFS was found to have reached a historical high of 2346 individuals, a significant increase of 15%.

Mr. Yu Yat-tung, Coordinator of the HKBWS Black-faced Spoonbill International Census & Waterbird Project said: “We are quite surprised about the results of the census, because BFS is still an “endangered” species due to its’ overall low population. But the 15% increase is undoubtedly an encouragement to all those involved in its protection and it serves to prove that the cooperation in conservation in the region is a great success. However, as in the past, the presence of BFS is mainly concentrated in a very few sites. Two sites in Taiwan account for 55% of the whole population whereas Deep Bay (Hong Kong & Shenzhen) accounts for 20%. So, Taiwan and Deep Bay support 75% of the whole population of BFS, an increase of 5% compared with 2009. In other words, any destruction or deterioration in the habitat of any of these sites could have a catastrophic effect on the overall population. Fortunately, conservation of BFS is getting more and more prominent around the globe and we are confident that the prospects for BFS are good.”

Yu Yat-tung continued: “The census data also reflects the development of the different regions. The number in Taiwan is 16% higher than the previous record. Deep Bay (with both Hong Kong & Shenzhen) has the highest increase - of 40% - compared with other regions. There are no certain factors to explain the jump, but it shows that wetland in Hong Kong is playing a more and more important role. Vietnam, with only 2% of the total population has a 27% decrease compared with last year, which is the largest regional decline. The total number in China has slightly decreased by 5%, but the decrease is smaller than last year. There are no known reasons for the decline. Possibly it is just a natural fluctuation or some birds moved from China to Taiwan. It may also be due to the rapid development along the coastal areas leading to the destruction of suitable habitat and to human interference.”

“Black-faced Spoonbill is not only the wetland superstar in Hong Kong; it is also an endangered bird species. Although the population has gradually increased in recent years, it still requires a lot of protection. Since 2003, the HKBWS and other regional conservation organizations, together with their governments, have studied Black-faced Spoonbill and its wintering habitats, a project that began in 2003.

This year’s BFS census was conducted on 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and the main points are as follows:

- A total of 2346 BFS were recorded in the 2010 census, an increase of 15% or of 305 compared to 2009.
- This is an increase of 14% compared with the previous peak count of 2065 in 2007-08.
- The largest wintering group is still in Taiwan. A total of 1208 accounted for 55% of the whole population of BFS, a 16% increase.
- Hong Kong and Shenzhen recorded 462, an increase over last year by 127, a 38% rise. This is the peak count in Hong Kong.
- The number along the coasts of mainland China reduced by 5% from 247 to 234 in 2010 (this is about 10% of the total BFS population). The main wintering sites in China are Hainan (55 birds) and Haifeng in Guangdong (72 birds). Fujian’s Xinghua Bay supported 104 BFS.
- A decline of 17 BFS was recorded in Vietnam, a drop locally of 27%.
- The surveyed sites included South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Shenzhen, and Macao. More than 100 surveyors participated in the censuses.
- A total of 77 sites were checked and BFS was present at 56 of them.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those organizations and volunteers who were involved in these censuses in the past. I believe that the success of the censuses helps to better protect the BFS.”



# Mai Po Update

~ Bena Smith

## Any comments on the Management Plan?

At the end of this year, WWF's current 5-year habitat and infrastructure management plan for the Reserve expires. The plan has guided all our on-site operations since 2006 and was the most ambitious yet in terms of scope and number of projects.

Within the 5-year period, many large-scale projects were undertaken to "keep the wetlands wet" such as restoring large areas of former open water - the more visual being gei wai #21 and Pond #16b - and de-silting one gei wai each year. These works, together with aquatic vegetation and tree management, are essential if the broader landscape is to remain attractive for waterbirds.

Of the many infrastructure projects completed, construction of the new boardwalk and floating hide at the intertidal zone, and the complete rebuild of the Hong Kong Jockey Club floating hide, ensured visitors enjoyed views of waterbirds in the bay. Inside the Reserve, many of the former fishermen's huts were successfully converted to small birdwatching hides, and two observation screens set up.

All of this inevitably comes with a hefty price tag, a staggering HK\$5 million per annum, and is only made possible through continued efforts to raise funds, gain sponsorship and membership, and attract paying visitors. A sincere thank you to everybody who over the years did their bit to help us meet this cost.

As this management plan draws to an end we are busy reviewing both its achievements and shortfalls in preparation for the next 5-year plan. Concurrently, a Mai Po Strategic Plan to address wider issues is being prepared. To this end I would like to ask Society members for their comment on the Reserve's management and general operations.

All suggestions and feedback are welcome, no matter how big or small !

## Establishing an Egretty at Pond #8a

In Deep Bay there are currently six active and regularly surveyed egretties with Mai Po Village and Tung Shing Lane supporting the largest breeding colonies.



*Credit WWF-HK*

Rather surprisingly though, none are located within the Inner Deep Bay and Mai Po Ramsar Site or within any conservation protected area, and it has long been thought one could and perhaps should be established inside the Reserve.

At a recent committee meeting, Mike Chalmers raised this point and, never a person to miss an opportunity, suggested one could be established in Pond #8a as part of this summer's enhancement works there. Pond #8a is the freshwater high-tide roost area in front of the 3-storey tower hide (formerly the landward end of gei wai #8). Mike's suggestion was unanimously supported.

To create the egretty, the island in the northwest corner will first be enlarged, its height raised and dimensions altered to maximise north-facing aspects. As most breeding herons and egrets seem to prefer the tree species *Celtis sinensis* and *Ficus macrocarpa*, and bamboo species *Bambusa euldiodes* and *Bambusa textilis*, a selection of these will be planted on the island.

There are however uncertainties. Firstly the poor quality soils at Mai Po restrict tree/bamboo growth such that it could take 20-30 years before they reach a suitable height (~ 10-15 metres). Secondly there is no guarantee herons and egrets will use it once established. Risks aside and with focus on the many potential benefits, a start will be made on this potential egretty in late summer.

## Update on the Buffalo Project

Over the last four years we've trialled buffalo grazing as a potential freshwater habitat management tool at the Reserve. The first study back in 2007 involved one buffalo and was partially successful whereas the current 18-month trial involves the participation of two buffalo - "Siu Mai" and "Wo Muk" - a male and a female.

The addition of a second buffalo has had quite a dramatic impact upon birds and to the pond's physical appearance. Preliminary results indicate winter waterbird abundance is double that of the first study and Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Pintail and Grey Heron are finding the shorter vegetation and heavier poached pond margins particularly attractive. Terrestrial species have increased too; winter abundance is up 40% mainly due to more Red-billed Starling and Crested Myna. Oriental Pratincole, Northern Lapwing and Black-faced Spoonbill are species only recorded in the second study, suggesting they too like the higher grazing pressure. Of the three target species, Cattle Egret is present in small flocks, but Snipe and Grey-headed Lapwing are still mostly absent. Perhaps the most interesting record of all is the Philippine Duck which seems quite at home with the buffalo.



*Credit Roger Lee*

Certainly a lot is being learned and - in consideration of the bleak outlook for the Kam Tin buffalo fields - these trials are going to be useful if grazed marshland is to be created one day in Hong Kong.



# Correlation between Spring and Autumn Migrant Arrival Dates and Weather

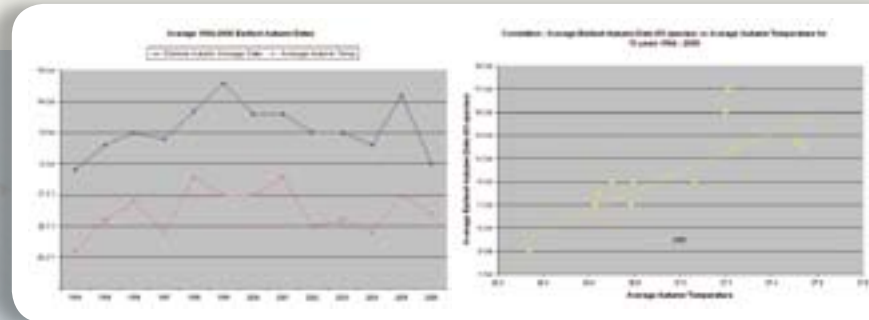
~ Geoff Welch

As part of a project for inclusion in the 2005/6 Hong Kong Bird Report, I have been collecting data on the Earliest Spring and Earliest Autumn Arrival Dates in each of the years 1994 to 2006 for a list of 34 spring migrant species and 63 autumn migrant species. All data is taken from the annual HK Bird Reports.

The list of species will appear in the Annual Summary of the 2005/6 Report. Species were chosen to give a representation across most species types (waterbirds, seabirds and land birds) but were particularly chosen to avoid potential confusion over dates. The spring migrant list excludes birds which can over-winter in Hong Kong and autumn migrant list excludes birds which can over-summer. This is why the list for autumn migrants is longer than that for spring migrants.

I have then taken the average (median) date across all Earliest Spring and Earliest Autumn species for each year 1994 to 2006 and compared that with the average daily temperature for spring (March and April) and autumn (mid-August to end October) for the same year, taken from HKO data. I was surprised to find there was a noticeable direct correlation between the average arrival date and the average temperature in both spring and autumn. In both seasons, a higher average temperature usually resulted in a later average date for migrant arrivals, and vice-versa. See these graphs.

The correlation coefficient is 0.57 for spring and 0.75 for autumn. The spring correlation

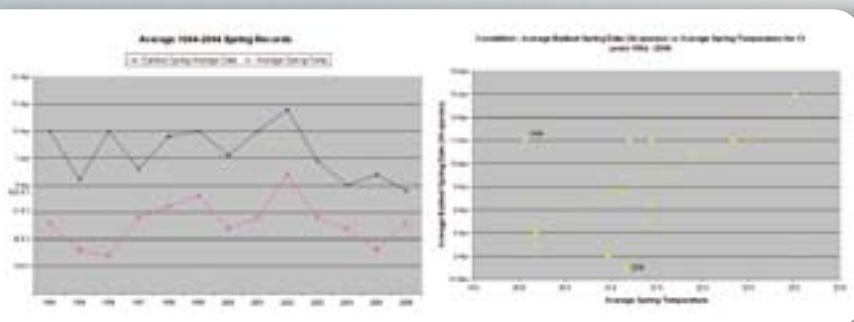


rises to 0.77 with the exclusion of just one year, 1996 (see below). These correlations are significant and unlikely to be due to chance.

Although I was initially surprised to find such significant correlations, on further thought it is not so surprising. We know that certain weather conditions are likely to bring migrants into Hong Kong in spring and autumn - cold fronts in spring and northerly winds in autumn. The statistics are simply reflecting these weather conditions in the average daily temperature. A low average daily temperature in spring is a reflection of more cold fronts in that year. Similarly, a low average daily temperature in autumn is a reflection of more northerly winds. In the exceptional spring year of 1996, when low average temperature did not cause early migrant arrivals, there were

the normal numbers of cold fronts but they included two very intense ones which each lasted several days and brought the average temperature for the whole period down.

A simple straight-line correlation between earliest dates and average temperature can only be achieved if other influencing variables remain constant over the period. One particular variable is the number of observers and the location of observations. Whilst these variables may have been fairly constant over the period 1994 to 2005, I am not sure this is the case from 2006 onwards. With more observers posting their observations on the website and more regular coverage of migration hot-spots like Po Toi, there could be a step change in the data after 2005. It may be significant that both spring and autumn records for 2006 lie well below the correlation line (see Correlation Charts for Spring and Autumn above), in both cases showing earlier migrant arrival dates than would be expected from past data for the average temperatures recorded. However, even with a step change, a positive correlation between earliest migrant dates and weather would still exist although on a different baseline.



小白腰雨燕  
何建業  
尖鼻咀

Little Swift  
Kinni Ho  
Tsim Bei Tsui

18.10.2009  
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



短嘴金絲燕  
夏敖天  
担竿洲路

Himalayan Swiftlet  
Martin Hale  
Mai Po Access Road

24.01.2008  
DSLR Camera, 300mm f/4 lens





家燕  
陳巨輝  
大生圍

Barn Swallow  
Sam chan  
Tai Sang Wai

17.03.2009  
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens

家燕  
何國海  
米埔

Barn Swallow  
Danny Ho  
Mai Po

20.04.2010  
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens







毛腳燕  
夏敖天  
落馬洲

Northern House Martin  
Martin Hale  
Lok Ma Chau

20.11.2009  
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens

煙灰毛腳燕  
林傲麟  
梅樹坑公園

Asian House Martin  
Alanzaku  
Mui Shue Hang Park

17.02.2010  
DSLR Camera, 300mm f/4 lens



白背針尾雨燕  
黃理沛 江敏兒  
蒲台

Silver-backed Needletail  
Michelle & Peter Wong  
Po Toi

06.04.2010  
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/5.6 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



白喉針尾雨燕  
壞蛋 1 號  
米埔

White-throated Needletail  
Bad Egg No.1  
Mai Po

26.04.2009  
DSLR Camera, 400mm f/5.6 lens

# Notes from a Balcony Birdwatcher

~ Andrew Sewell

The new town of Tuen Mun doesn't usually feature on lists of birding sites in Hong Kong. But since moving here three years ago, I've seen a total of 54 bird species from my balcony - a testament to the biodiversity and birdwatching interest of Hong Kong's hidden corners. It's true that the balcony in question is somewhat exceptional. My flat is in Villa Pinada, a development of over a hundred three-storey houses on the northern fringes of the Tuen Mun-Yuen Long valley. It's at the foot of the barren hills that make up the former Castle Peak Firing Range, extending from Castle Peak itself to Yuen Tau Shan in the northeast. From the latter peak, Tsim Bei Tsui and Mai Po are visible.



While the flat is of modest proportions, the balcony is large and has an unobstructed view over a fairly typical New Territories landscape: 'abandoned' banana plantations, overgrown fields and fung shui woods at the foot of the hills. As is often the case, what appears to be abandoned land has become home to a variety of plants and animals. Even the former army firing range has residents and visitors: nightjars, francolins and various raptors, such as Crested Serpent Eagles.

The pleasures of balcony birdwatching lie mainly in sharing some of the daily life of the avian population, rather than in spotting

rarities. The appearance of the unexpected, such as a Black Baza or a Dollarbird, certainly adds interest. But the everyday brings charm: Japanese White-eyes bathing in morning dew, a Black-crowned Night Heron arriving stealthily at dusk before sizing up the neighbour's koi carp, a Bonelli's Eagle being pursued across the valley by a protesting crow.

The passage of the seasons is marked by bird calls, especially those of four species of cuckoo (Large Hawk, Indian and Plaintive, as well as the Common Koel). A sure sign of the arrival of spring is the call of the Savanna Nightjar from a darkening sky. The open uplands of the Castle Peak Firing Range attract a summering population of these birds, and are also home to Chinese Francolin. Few hikers make it onto the treeless hills, making the area a reserve of sorts. Perhaps they are put off by the colonial-era sign at one of the entrances, warning against touching any 'object' inside the range: IT MAY EXPLODE AND KILL YOU. On the Korean peninsula, the Demilitarised Zone has also become a refuge for wildlife, including perhaps our familiar Black-faced Spoonbills. On the Castle Peak hills, the occasional exercises by the People's Liberation Army don't seem to disturb either wildlife or people.

A bird that seems to have made a year-round home of one of the fung shui woods is the Hair-crested Drongo. A core group of around a dozen is supplemented by visitors around the time of the lunar new year, and in early February I counted over forty in a kind of drongo reunion party. These acrobatic birds seem to follow a regular routine, leaving their roost in the morning and returning in the late afternoon. Birds of prey form the largest group of species seen from the balcony. The piercing cry of the Crested Serpent Eagle is often heard above the valley, mainly in spring and early summer. Crested Goshawk and Besra are regular visitors. The midnight hour is often accompanied by the soft hooting of the Collared Scops Owl. I was puzzled by another

nocturnal 'bubbling' call until the caller appeared in a tree early one morning: an Asian Barred Owlet, mobbed by the wood's usual citizens such as bulbuls and laughingthrushes.

Balcony birdwatching has taught me not to overlook the everyday in our quest for wildness. 54 species is only a fraction of the total in Hong Kong, but the wide range of species - including top predators such as birds of prey - suggests that the 'abandoned' and unglamorous corners of the region may be important in maintaining biodiversity. Many of these apparently marginal areas contain wildlife oases, as surveys of fung shui woods have shown. Just across the border, things are not so rosy for the bird population (see Bulletin 214 in the case of Guangdong).

The disappearance of these areas may significantly reduce both the overall biodiversity of Hong Kong and the quality of life for those who live there. The fields and fung shui wood remnants around Villa Pinada have been preserved mainly because of their inaccessibility. But elsewhere in the New Territories, the development of land classed as 'agricultural' gathers pace as a property boom meets inappropriate legislation and uneven enforcement. It has been argued that such 'abandoned' land attracts mosquitoes, but using this as an argument for dumping and development is a diversion from the real issues.

<http://hongkongbirds.wordpress.com/>





# Child Birding Training

~ Bad Egg No. 1

Since my little boy was born, I have spent much less time birding. In order to get back into the birding hobby without giving up my family relationship, I am trying to train up my little kid as a bird lover.

Although there are animal encyclopedias for children, there are hardly any books on Hong Kong's common birds that are for youngsters. My little boy likes to read and he also tears books to pieces, which makes me reluctant to pass him any field guides. Therefore, I need to think of other ways to train him in birding skills.

Parents, like me, always love to take photos of their kids and put the photos into handy photo albums. My little sweetheart loves to look at the album, remembering all the names of our relatives and friends. That inspired me to put my own photos of birds into the album. I hoped my son would look at the photos of birds and develop an interest in them.

As it turned out, my son wasn't too eager on animals and he had no interest in looking at photo albums of birds.

It seems that most males are born to be car lovers, and my son seems to be one of them. Delegated by my wife, I needed to take photos of different cars, such as buses, mini buses, trucks, vans, cop cars, ambulances, etc. I waited beside the road, snapping light rail trains and buses.

At first I printed the car photos and put them in albums. Later, I started to show my son images directly from the screen of my digital camera, which he was keen to see. Then I mixed in some photos of birds, as well as damselflies, which we saw along the banks of a stream near our home.

This family-based activity is nice. Hugging my little kid, looking at the photos through the monitor of the camera, is a great thing to do. My son is able to call out the name of every vehicle when he sees a photo. After every few photos of vehicles, I slipped in one photo of an animal, which my son didn't hate. This story teaches us that you should never under-estimate a less than 2-year-old infant's learning ability. Initially, my boy was only able to recall the category of the animal, such as "Bird" or "Damselfly". Soon, he started remembering the Chinese names of some of them, such as Sparrow, Magpie, Spotted Dove, Black-faced Spoonbill, Black-headed Gull, Olive-backed Pipit, Japanese White-eye, Common Blue Jewel, Yellow Featherlegs, Orange-tailed Midget, etc. He had a little problem pronouncing the Chinese name of the Orange-tailed Sprite, however, which has 5 Chinese characters.

I, science educated, had doubts about my son's cognitive ability. Was he able to really recognize the species or could he only recall the species from the image? For example, he was able to differentiate East Rail, West Rail and MOS Rail. However, there should be no difference among the trains running on those lines! Therefore, I tried to give him photos of a Magpie with different backgrounds, and he was at first unable to recognize it! After a series of attempts, the situation improved.

For further training and proving my son's bird recognizing ability, outdoor training is almost a must! Since birds are afraid of human beings, and my son isn't used to watching birds with binoculars, outdoor training seems impractical at this stage. It is easier for him to look at Tree Sparrows. Recently, there are opportunities to bring my son out to the park and the nearby village to have a walk, and I realized that previous training has results. He is able to call the Chinese name of Black-collared Starling after giving some hints. When he saw a black-and-white bird (a White Wagtail) that he had not seen in the digital camera before, he would say that was a Magpie. The best surprise is that, he is able to recognize Spotted Dove without hints when he sees one up close, but I still can't figure out if he is in love with the Spotted Dove. That is because whenever he sees any birds in my camera which he never saw before, he will say "Spotted Dove!".

Anyway, so far it is a success introducing my son to this wonderful world of nature. I am not sure if he will keep up his bird enthusiasm, but I am looking forward to putting more time into birding again.



# The 8<sup>th</sup>

~ Alan Lam

# Bird-Watching Class

The 8<sup>th</sup> bird-watching class concluded with success. Many new friends joined the class this year, from school pupils to retired people, showing that there are no age limits to birdwatching.

We were lucky to have held the class in the best bird-watching season, especially because we discovered the famous Philippine Duck during our class outing to Mai Po.



In order to get participants familiar with the birds, we added a listening session, and the majority could easily answer all questions in the examination. However, many participants were not able to answer a photo question, which related to a baby sparrow. Only few of them, including the youngest participant, a seven year-old girl, answered correctly.

We sincerely thank all instructors, and the participants in the earlier bird-watching classes, for the experiences shared by them.



# Revelation of the Red-whiskered Bulbul

~ Samson So

In my early birding days, I had my focus on the identification of species. When I looked through the scope, it was the name of the bird that mattered to me, because it might represent a new 'tick' - a 'tick' closer to my goal of breaking 200, 250 or even 300 (meaning the number of bird species that I had seen in Hong Kong). This period lasted until the mid 90's, but, around that time, when I was guiding a group of Japanese birders I found my birding take on a new perspective. We were in nowhere more exotic than Kowloon Park. Back then there wasn't any Slaty-legged Crake or Orange-headed Thrush, nor was there any Asian Barred Owlet, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, or White-capped Water Redstart. The reason for picking that location was simply because it was recommended in the Birds of Hong Kong and South China, and a good spot in a tight schedule.

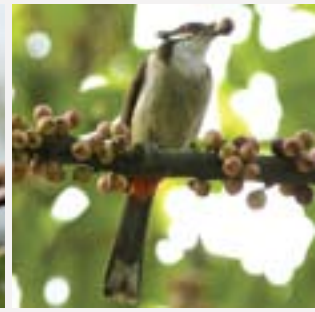
Kowloon Park is like my back garden, I used to take the Star Ferry to Kowloon side and spend the whole afternoon there after school, admiring different kinds of flycatchers, thrushes and warblers, or looking for the silhouettes of peregrine and buzzard between the skyscrapers.

I remember quite vividly, as soon as the Japanese birders arrived at Kowloon Park, they noticed some movement in a tree. With mounting excitement, they set up their telescopes and started watching. There was admiration in their eyes and an excited rush of words. Although I don't speak Japanese, I could imagine that this was praise for the bird in view. They then took out their guidebooks for comparison (it was the most current edition of Birds of Hong Kong and South China at that time, the one with Black-capped Kingfisher on the cover). Some began to quickly write down their

observations, some did pencil sketches, and with just a few simple lines, the bird's characteristics came

to life (this was before the era of digital bird photography). White cheeks, a dark body, and the unmistakable mohawk crest,

- the object of all this excitement was a Red-whiskered Bulbul, a bird that every birder in Hong Kong knows.

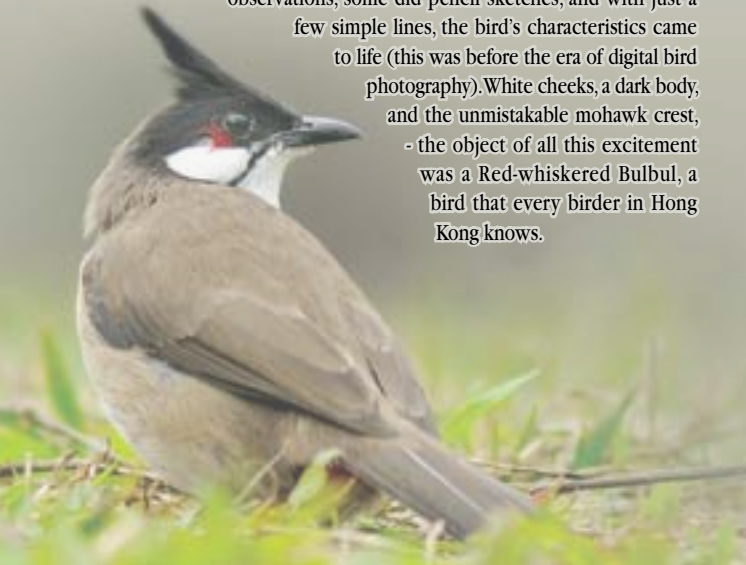


I was amazed that a bird we see every day here in Hong Kong could have aroused so much interest from a group of experienced birders. Was it because we see it so often that we've taken this bird for granted and neglected its existence? Maybe we just haven't looked closely enough. Perhaps we're too afraid to be mistaken for a birding rookie who views birds indiscriminately, so we won't raise our binoculars if we have pre-judged the bird in view to be "common".

In the midst of sighs of wonder and the sound of scribbling, I looked through the scope, what appeared in front of my eyes wasn't the 'Red-whiskered Bulbul that is seen everywhere', but a small lovely bird with clean and shiny feathers, eyes sparkling with life, and crest feathers fully displayed. This little creature was striving for survival and reproduction, even in such an urban jungle of concrete and steel. There and then, I awoke to what the bird in the telescope truly represented. It was much more than some kind of birding celebrity that brings glory to the birder who seeks rarity, it was a manifestation of life itself, in flesh and blood.

After fully feasting on the beauty of the Red-whiskered Bulbul, my group of Japanese birders turned their attention to other species, and continued their four-course feast of admiring, note taking, discussing and sharing. No one noticed my epiphany, but it has proved a valuable lesson for my whole life. The joy of birding can be found not only through challenging personal records and increasing the tally of species, but also through treasuring creation itself with awe and respect.


HKBWS has the aptly-named "Red-whiskered Bulbul Club" that guides gatherings of casual birdwatchers every Friday morning at Kowloon Park. Anyone can join in, so more and more people can get to know the neighbours that share the same city as us. The Club's volunteers will be introducing the Red-whiskered Bulbul through the scope. With a growing trend of rare-bird paparazzi (sometimes to the extent of disturbing and harming the birds), perhaps it's time for us to rethink the meaning of bird watching.

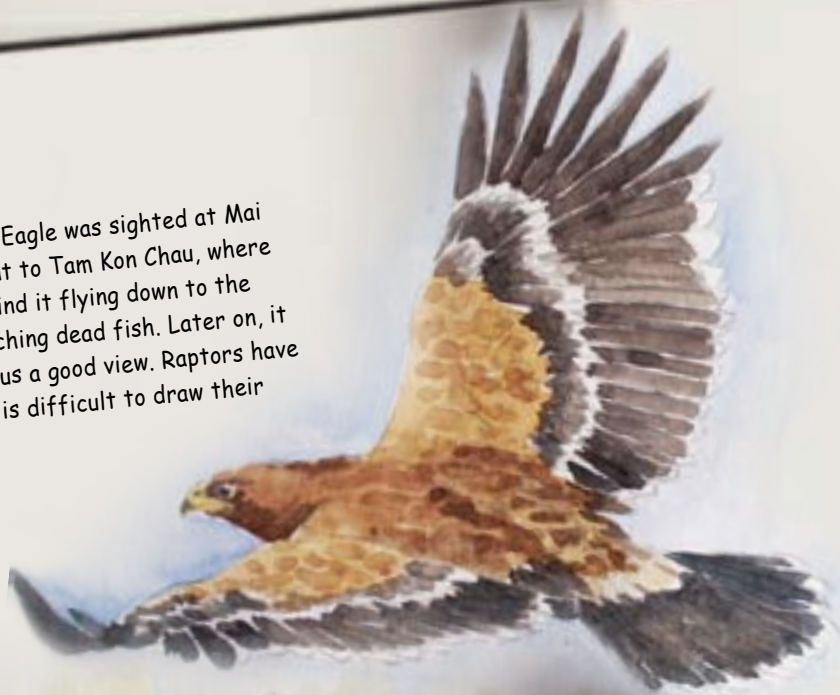


# My Bird Watching Diary

~ Text and Illustrations: Wendy Yu

04 Apr 2009 ( Sat )

Last week, a young Steppe Eagle was sighted at Mai Po, so my father and I went to Tam Kon Chau, where we were lucky enough to find it flying down to the side of the ponds and catching dead fish. Later on, it rested in a tree, allowing us a good view. Raptors have a lot of character, but it is difficult to draw their eyes. 



~ Richard Lewthwaite

*(These are unchecked records and members are reminded of the importance of submitting all records to the Records Committee on cards or, preferably, electronically – Ed.)*

## January

- ▶ Highlights of the month were a first-winter **Eurasian Oystercatcher** seen in Deep Bay during 9<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> (YYT et al), a **White Wagtail** of the subspecies *personata* at Ping Che during 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> (JAA), both 3<sup>rd</sup> records for Hong Kong, and a first-winter **Relict Gull** regularly seen in Deep Bay from 8<sup>th</sup> (KK). In addition, record totals of at least 20,000 **Northern Shovelers** and 496 **Black-faced Spoonbills** were present in Deep Bay on 24<sup>th</sup> (YYT), though not all were within the borders of Hong Kong.
- ▶ The low point of the month was the news that the former buffalo fields at Kam Tin were totally covered with construction rubble.
- ▶ Notable reports in the first week of the month included a **Chestnut-eared Bunting** at Long Valley on 1<sup>st</sup>, the **Dalmatian Pelican** in Deep Bay, a Red-breasted Flycatcher at Mai Po (EMSK), at least 12 **Oriental Greenfinches** at Lai Chi Wo and Kuk Po and 50 thrushes (the majority of these identified being **Grey-backed**) at Dong Ping Chau (JAA), all on 2<sup>nd</sup>, five **Black-faced Spoonbills**, a **Eurasian Spoonbill**, two **Citrine Wagtails** and 10 **Buff-bellied Pipits** at Long Valley on 3<sup>rd</sup>, a **Manchurian Reed Warbler** at Mai Po and a **Large Grass Warbler** along the Pak Ngau Shek Trail (Lam Tsuen), both on 4<sup>th</sup>, and a **Black-headed Bunting** at Po Toi on 7<sup>th</sup>.
- ▶ A **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** was found at Sha Po on 8<sup>th</sup> and was still present there at the end of February, the first ever winter record, whilst a **Slaty-legged Crake** at Lai Chi Kok the next day (KK) was another instance of this secretive species being found in an urban setting in winter. Among other reports at this time were two Common Rosefinches at Wu Kau Tang, a **Brown Fish Owl** at Pui O (FC) and a **Kamchatka Gull** in front of the Mai Po boardwalk (PW, MK), all on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>.
- ▶ In mid-month, a **Brown Bush Warbler** at Mai Po was the first for the reserve, and there were reports during 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> of a **Eurasian Hoopoe** at Shek O Golf Course (DB), a **Grey Bushchat** at Ping Yeung, a **Chestnut-crowned Warbler** at Shing Mun (GHO) and 25 **Grey-headed Lapwings** along the Kam Tin River (EMSK).
- ▶ Two rare owls were reported on 18<sup>th</sup> - a **Brown Fish Owl**, the first for Cheung Chau (MDW), and a **Brown Wood Owl** at Tai Po Kau (KB, RB).
- ▶ A **Lesser Frigatebird** showed itself in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 19<sup>th</sup> (DS) and was subsequently seen on several occasions through to the end of the month.
- ▶ At least 30 **Buff-bellied Pipits**, a record count, were estimated to be present at Long Valley on 22<sup>nd</sup> (MH).
- ▶ Coverage of Deep Bay (due to the Monthly Waterfowl Count) on 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> led to sightings of two **Black-necked Grebes**, 700 **Heuglin's Gulls**, the **Kamchatka Gull**, two **Slaty-backed Gulls**, 22 **Black-tailed Gulls** and two **Nordmann's Greenshanks** (RWL).
- ▶ Elsewhere, there were reports of up to two **Plumbeous Redstarts** at Chung Mei and Lam Tsuen (DAD, EMSK), a **Dusky Thrush** and a **Grey Bushchat** at Kam Tin (DS, JAA), 18 **Black Bulbuls** at Tai Om (EMSK), all during 10<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>.
- ▶ As the month came to an end, two **Siberian Thrushes** were noted at Fanling Golf Course on 29<sup>th</sup> (NG) and a **Chestnut-crowned Warbler** at Shing Mun on 31<sup>st</sup> (SLT).
- ▶ Also on 31<sup>st</sup>, three **Pelagic Cormorants** were seen just outside Hong Kong waters on a small islet in the Lema Island group (KJ). The only previous Guangdong records date back over 100 years.





## February

- ▶ The most surprising birds of the month were a hepatic cuckoo tentatively identified as a **Himalayan Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*, which was found at Airfield Road, Shek Kong on 18<sup>th</sup> (OC, SMP) and remained until at least 24<sup>th</sup>, and an **Oriental Cuckoo** *C. optatus* (formerly known as **Horsfield's Cuckoo** *C. horsfieldi*) at Mai Po on 27<sup>th</sup> (KJ). There are no previous records of Himalayan/Oriental Cuckoos until April, the occurrence of the former is still unconfirmed in Hong Kong and definite records of the latter are very few in number. A **Crested Honey Buzzard** photographed at Tai Po Kau on 10<sup>th</sup> (CT) was thought to be of the southern subspecies *ruficollis*, a potential split from the nominate subspecies which has not previously been recorded in Hong Kong or indeed anywhere in continental China except Yunnan. Possibly the same individual was seen over Lam Tsuen on 28<sup>th</sup> (EMSK).
- ▶ The month opened with a report of three **Brown Fish Owls** at Cheung Chau on 1<sup>st</sup> (MDW). Subsequently, one was seen there on 6<sup>th</sup>.
- ▶ With cold weather prevailing over much of China, hopes were high that birds which usually winter further north might turn up in Hong Kong. Indeed a **White-capped Redstart** found in suitable habitat at High Island Reservoir in a remote part of the NT on 2<sup>nd</sup> (SC) seemed a promising candidate for a genuine wild bird, but the photographs suggested captive origins (CC). Tantalisingly, three slim, slender-necked cormorants flew over the reservoir in late afternoon on 3<sup>rd</sup>, but were not positively identified (DW).
- ▶ Other reports of interest in the first week of the month included a **Mountain Tailorbird** at Lung Fu Shan, a rare record from Hong Kong Island, on 4<sup>th</sup> (RS), a **Pied Harrier**, a **Little Stint**, a **Spoon-billed Sandpiper**, the **Relict Gull** and a **Pallas's Gull** from the boardwalk on 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> (GJC, RWL), and a **Ferruginous Duck** at Nam Sang Wai (MK), the **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** at Sha Po (EMSK), a **Slender-billed Gull** in Deep Bay (GJC) and still at least 30 **Buff-bellied Pipits** at Long Valley (RWL), all on 7<sup>th</sup>.
- ▶ Notable reports of the second week of the month included an **Eastern Water Rail** and a **Eurasian Skylark** at Lok Ma Chau on 9<sup>th</sup> (PJJ), 65 **Temminck's Stints** and nine **Buff-bellied Pipits** beside the Mai Po access road the same day (MLC), a **Japanese Quail** at Stanley on 10<sup>th</sup> (DS), a **Citrine Wagtail** and a slightly unseasonal **Asian House Martin** at Ma Tso Lung on 13<sup>th</sup> (GJC), and four **Bull-headed Shrikes** in total at Lam Tsuen and Siu Lek Yuen also on 13<sup>th</sup> (EMSK, Ken).
- ▶ A **Common Ringed Plover**, possibly the first since the late 1990s, was found in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 15<sup>th</sup> (PW, MK) and thereafter intermittently seen to the end of the month.
- ▶ On 18<sup>th</sup>, a **Yellow-throated Bunting** was photographed at Lai Chi Chong (JH) and a total of three **Grey Bushchats** were found at Mai Po and Tuen Mun (WKC, OC). These sightings were followed by reports of a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** at Hok Tau on 19<sup>th</sup> (GC), a mystery owl, possibly a **Brown Wood Owl**, heard at Lam Tsuen on 20<sup>th</sup> (DT) and an **Ancient Murrelet**, 101 **Heuglin's Gulls** and a **Kittiwake**, all during a visit to Po Toi on 23<sup>rd</sup> (GW).
- ▶ The month ended with a highly photogenic male **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** found at Po Fu Lam Reservoir on 27<sup>th</sup> (PCC), which remained into March.

## March

- ▶ A **Philippine Duck**, a first for Hong Kong that was almost as hard to predict as last June's **Great Thick-knee**, was found at Mai Po on 7<sup>th</sup> (CM) and remained to at least 30<sup>th</sup>. Other highlights were a male **Owston's Flycatcher** *Ficedula (narcissina/elisae) owstoni* at Harlech Road, Hong Kong Island during 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> (PCC), perhaps only the third for Hong Kong, a record count of 31 **Great Bitterns** at Mai Po on 19<sup>th</sup> (PJJ), with 26 there on 23<sup>rd</sup> (DS), and return passage of **Yellow-throated Buntings**, with up to four at Po Toi from 28<sup>th</sup> (HKBWS, GW).
- ▶ News also came out this month that the record of a **Red-throated Thrush** photographed at Po Toi on 19 November 2009 (EL) had been accepted, bringing the number of species on the main Hong Kong list to 500, a significant milestone.

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- ▶ Rarities reported earlier in the winter in Deep Bay which remained into March included the **Slender-billed Gull** to 6<sup>th</sup>, the **Relict Gull** and up to three **Vega Gulls** to 9<sup>th</sup>, the **Lesser Frigatebird** to 18<sup>th</sup>, and one or two **Kamchatka Gulls** and **Pallas's Gulls** to 21<sup>st</sup>. In addition, the wintering **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** at Sha Po was again seen on 24<sup>th</sup>. Among passerines reported in February and seen again in March were the **Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush** at Kadoorie FBG and the **Japanese Grosbeak** at Airfield Road, both up to 5<sup>th</sup>, and the **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** at Pok Fu Lam to 13<sup>th</sup>. The latest of the wintering **Grey Bushchats** was reported at Lam Tsuen on 15<sup>th</sup> and the latest of the **Bull-headed Shrikes** at Airfield Road on 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - ▶ These apart, birds of note in the first week of the month were four singing **Mountain Tailorbirds** at Mount Parker on 1<sup>st</sup> (RB), a rare record for Hong Kong Island, a **Siberian Blue Robin** at Po Toi on 3<sup>rd</sup> (GW), the only record of this species between mid February and early April, an early **Black-naped Oriole** at Long Valley on 5<sup>th</sup> (DAD) which remained to at least 16<sup>th</sup> (SYH).
  - ▶ A **Ruddy Turnstone** in Deep Bay on 6<sup>th</sup> (GJC) was earlier than usual, as were a **Gull-billed Tern** and two **Whiskered Terns** in front of the boardwalk on 8<sup>th</sup>. Also present on the latter date were four **Slaty-backed Gulls** and 45 Black-tailed Gulls (PJL, DAD).
  - ▶ The first **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** of the spring, a male, was found at Po Toi on 9<sup>th</sup> (GW) and remained until at least 11<sup>th</sup>. A **Gorsachius Night Heron**, either Japanese or Malayan, flushed from dense cover on Po Toi on 10<sup>th</sup> (GW) was briefly seen again on at least two further days up to 13<sup>th</sup> but remained unidentified. Seen from the Po Toi ferry on 13<sup>th</sup> were five **Ancient Murrelets** and 24 **Black-tailed Gulls** (GJC), whilst up to three **Red-breasted Mergansers** were noted flying past Po Toi on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> (GW).
  - ▶ A **Brown Wood Owl** was again heard in Lam Tsuen on 18<sup>th</sup> (EMSK).
  - ▶ The third week of the month brought earliest spring reports of three species: **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo** singing at Shing Mun on 16<sup>th</sup> (PCC), the earliest by 11 days, an adult **Malayan Night Heron** at Shing Mun on 18<sup>th</sup> (PCC), the earliest by a whole month, and a **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** at Mai Po on 20<sup>th</sup> (SS), the earliest by 2 days.
  - ▶ On 23<sup>rd</sup>, two **Grey-faced Buzzards**, the first of the spring, were noted at Po Toi (GW) and 14 singing **Brown-flanked Bush Warblers** and an **Upland Pipit** were found at Tai Mo Shan (DS).
  - ▶ As the month came to an end, single **Asian Brown**, **Ferruginous**, **Narcissus** and **Blue-and-white Flycatchers** were found at Po Toi (GW) on 25<sup>th</sup>, and the same four species were again present there three days later.
  - ▶ Reports on 26<sup>th</sup> included a **Himalayan Swiftlet** at Ma Tso Lung (GJC), a singing **Goodson's Leaf Warbler** at Cheung Chau (MDW), a **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** at Shing Mun (SLT) and the **Owston's Flycatcher** at Harlech Road. The latter bird, though remaining three days, was very elusive and coverage of the area led to sightings of single **Pale** and **Brown-headed Thrushes** (PW, MK) on 27<sup>th</sup> and a **Rustic Bunting** nearby on the Governor's Walk, Mount Austin (VBP) the next day.
  - ▶ Also on 27<sup>th</sup>, a **Spoon-billed Sandpiper** and the first **Asian Dowitcher** of the spring were both present at Mai Po (JAA, MDW).
  - ▶ On 28<sup>th</sup>, a **Yellow-throated Bunting** was found at Po Toi during an HKBWS outing, the first there since the influx of the autumn. It was followed by two there on 30<sup>th</sup> and four on 31<sup>st</sup> (GW). Other birds seen at Po Toi on 28<sup>th</sup> included an early **Dollarbird**, single **White's** and **Brown-headed Thrushes**, an **Eastern Crowned Warbler** and a **Pale-legged Leaf Warbler**.
  - ▶ On 30<sup>th</sup>, there were reports of 32 **Grey-faced Buzzards** near Lok Ma Chau (JAA), 105 **Garganey** in front of the Mai Po boardwalk (RWL), possibly the highest spring count since the 1980s, and the first **Ashy Minivet** of the spring at Po Toi (GW).

# The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours (Sep - Dec 2010)

Outings				
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
4/9/2010 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	<b>Tai Po Kau</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆☆	Forest birds
12/9/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Shing Mun</b> (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Tsuen Wan MTR Station)	☆☆	Forest birds
19/9/2010 (Sun)	0745 - 1600	<b>Po Toi Island</b> (07:45 Aberdeen Praya (Ferry Pier to Po Toi Island) Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, participants can decide their own returning time.	☆☆	Migrants
26/9/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	<b>Mai Po Nature Reserve</b> (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
2/10/2010 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	<b>Aberdeen Reservoir</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Hang Seng Bank near Exit B, Central MTR Station)	☆	Forest birds
10/10/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden</b> (08:00 Entrance of Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden)	☆☆	Raptors
17/10/2010 (Sun)	0730 - 1600	<b>Po Toi and HK South Waters</b> (07:30 Aberdeen public pier, near Ocean Court) 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
24/10/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	<b>Mai Po Nature Reserve</b> (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
6/11/2010 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	<b>Tsim Bei Tsui</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 outside 7-11 Convenient Store, Tin Chak Estate Shopping Centre, Exit near Tin Yat LT, Tin Shui Wai)	☆	Waterbirds
7/11/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Wild Card Day</b> (Details will be announced on 5 Nov on Discussion Forum) (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road exit))	☆☆	Migrants
14/11/2010 (Sun)	0945 - 1200	<b>Po Toi and HK South Waters</b> (07:45 Aberdeen Praya (Ferry Pier to Po Toi Island) Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, participants can decide their own returning time.	☆☆	Migrants
21/11/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Tai Po Kau</b> (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆☆	Forest birds
28/11/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Shing Mun</b> (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Tsuen Wan MTR Station)	☆☆	Forest birds
4/12/2010 (Sat)	0800 - 1200	<b>Luk Keng</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 56K minibus station, outside Fanling MTR, Station)	☆	Waterbirds
12/12/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Pui O</b> (08:00 Exit B, Tung Chung MTR Station)	☆	Wintering forest and farmland
19/12/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Sha Lo Tung and Fung Yuen</b> (08:00 Taxi Station outside Tai Po Market MTR Station)	☆☆	Wintering forest and farmland
26/12/2010 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Tai Po Kau</b> (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆☆	Forest birds

Member: Free of Charge

Non-member: Free of Charge (registration not 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				
Date	Time	Topic	Speakers	Venue
18/8/2010 (Wed)	1900 - 2100	<b>Identification of Pipits and Buntings (Cantonese)</b>	Dr. Cheung Ho Fai	Rm. 901, Scout Asso of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon
9/2/2010 (Thu)	1900 - 2100	<b>Birding trip to Xinjiang (Cantonese)</b>	Mr. Koel Ko	Rm. 1107, Scout Asso of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon
20/10/2010 (Wed)	1900 - 2100	<b>Wildlife Photography in Nepal (English)</b>	Mr. Prajwal Pradhan	Rm. 1107, Scout Asso of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon
4/11/2010(Thu)	1900 - 2100	<b>Birding trips to Falkland Islands and New Zealand (Cantonese)</b>	Miss Eling Lee	Rm. 1113, Scout Asso of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon

# 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.)

26 Sep 2010 (Sun) ( \_\_\_\_\_ member(s), \_\_\_\_\_ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is \_\_\_\_\_ )

24 Oct 2010 (Sun) ( \_\_\_\_\_ member(s), \_\_\_\_\_ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is \_\_\_\_\_ )

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) that day in order to access to the Frontier Closed Area and Mai Po Marshes.

**Po Toi and Southern Water** [Boat Fare: Member: HK\$160 Non-member: HK\$200]

17 Oct 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 5 days before the outing. Once confirmed, no refund will be made no matter they can attend the outing or not. Refund will be made only if the outing is cancelled officially due to inclement weather or special reason.

## Information of Participant(s)

Date	Activity	Name	Membership No.	Mobile Phone	Email Address	Fare*

\* Activities are processed individually, please use separate cheques 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: **14/F, Ruby Commercial Bldg, 480 Nathan Road, Kln**

**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 higher priority to participate in the activities.
- Any changes of the activities will be announced in our website: (<http://www.hkbws.org.hk/BBS>).
- 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 the 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.

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