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會員通訊

220

Summer 2011 ~ 夏





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Editor's Note

There is plenty of material in this thick, summer edition of the bulletin, something for every taste. So, take a shady seat, grab a cool drink - and enjoy! 

John Holmes

Society News and Projects

~ Lo Wai Yan

Crested Bulbul Club

Members

Affairs

Staff - George HO completed his study of landbirds in HK's important bird habitats (reported in Bulletin 219) and resigned as a staff member. We thank him for his contributions over the past two years and we wish him all the best in the future.

1. Early Morning Bird Watchers

No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from Mar - May 2011: 213

No. of participants in Kowloon Park from Mar - May 2011: 268

2. Bird watching interpretation in Hong Kong Wetland Park

A total of 100 participants from Mar - Apr 2011.

3. Bird watching services and activities

5 & 26 Mar 2011 birding tour around Museum of Coastal Defence

Hong Kong Bird Race 2011

The HK Bird Race 2011 was held on 9th -10th April 2011. Beside the birdwatching contest, we also raised funds for HKBWS to achieve our vision of "Birds and Humans in Harmony, Nature Forever". Heartfelt thanks to all supporters for their kind donations as well as all friends who participated.

Racing teams and results:

Open Teams

Name of Teams	Team Members						Best Records	Number of Species
Eye Kite	Chan Kai Wai	Lo Chun Fai	Lam Chiu Hong	Ho Tsun Fung	Leung Ka Yi		Brown Wood Owl	147
Fat Swan	Chan Ka Ho	Kong Chun Yan	Leung Hiu Ning	Yang Yao	Chiu Ming Ho		Barred Owllet	114
Sunbirds	Tim Woodward	Thecma Woodward	James Woodward	Catherine Woodward	Rosana Bueza		Oriental Pratincole	65
Nightjar	Lo Kar Man, Anthony	Doris Chu	Tam Yiu Leung	Lee Wai To	Jimmy Chim	William Tsui	Grey-faced Buzzard	124
Carmen's Munia	Cheung Ka Chun	Hung Tun Hei	Or Ka Man	Yiu Sze Wing	Yuen Yan Ling	Fong Hoi Ning	Eurasian Wryneck	142
Small Niltava	Angela Wong	Irene Wong	Nora Wong	Allan Wong	Lisa Mak		Barred Owllet	117
The First Bird Song	Kwong Hoi Yan, Helena	Chan Chu Fung	Chow Lai Wah, Sharon	Ng Kit Wan, Alice	Brian Yuen	Monique Chan	Black-faced Spoonbill	117
Agent Scott	Katherine Leung	Henry Lui	Meiling Lau	Eva Cheuk	Raymond Wong		Ferruginous Flycatcher	144
咪走雞—單車熱血版	Alan Lam	吳子恩	李偉蕾	Chow Ming Him	游柏濤	鄭焯樺	Scaly Thrush	111
I saw penguin	Tang Wing Sze	Woo Chi Kit	Chan Sze Man	Wong Kin	Law Wing Yee	Chow Ka Lai	Japanese Yellow Bunting	148
Ketchup Team	Noira Chan	Tam Yip Shing	Cecily Yip	Cheung Mok Jose Alberto	Wong Wai Tung		Barred Owllet	150
Hea Team	Carrie Ma	YY Lee	CP Chu	AP Wong	Ada Chow		Eurasian Tree Sparrow	96
April Babies	Vivian Fu	Cindy Yuen	Philip Yip				Purple Heron	113
Blue Magpie	Chui Stephanie	Choy Ka Wun Karen	Lo Yee Ki Kary	Wong Yuen Man Agnes			Blue Magpie	69

Society News and Projects - (cont.)

Name of Teams	Team Members						Best Records	Number of Species
Lung Fu Minivet	Shum Ting Wing Bond	Jenny Lau Yuen Yung	Tse Wai Lung	Tsang Pak Nok Toby	Chung Yun Tak	Lam Siu Ting	Coot	133
Crazy Buzzard	Yam Wing Yiu	Law King Wai	Chan Sin Wai	Yeung Lee Ki	Chiang Wai On		Chinese Penduline Tit	144
Ambushed Niltava	Law Man Suet, Michelle	Lau Sin Pang	Chan Ngai Lung	Mak Chi Fung	Chung Wai In, Milka	Chan Tsz Lam	House Crow	108
Ying Ying Shui Lan Lan	Lee Kwok Shing	Sung Yik Hei	Ching Ka Lam	Pang Chun Chiu	Cheung Lai Ying		Grey-capped Greenfinch	150
Little Pratincole	Wong Hok Sze	Bonnie Chan	Ng Shiu Han	李碧華	何梁飛屏	Apache Lau	Great Cormorant	115
Tung Dong Jing Wa Team	Dong Wen Xiao	Yu Yat Tung	Li Jing	Forrest Fong			Red-necked Phalarope	141
Wader Team	HF Cheung	MH Sze	Vivian	Beetle Cheng	CK Ling		Black-winged Stilt	135
The Lark	Li Wai Ki	Luk Tsun Ping	Hung Wai Ming	Lau Kam Yuen			Blue Magpie	109

Best Record



Brown Wood Owl by Eye Kite

President Cup Champions



Champion Ketchup Team & Ying Ying Shui Lan Lan (both 150 species)

Top Fundraising Team: The Wader (HK\$11,200) Total amount or raised fund: HK\$48,810

Nature Conservation Management of Long Valley (2010-2012)

Vicky Yeung

Survey, Research and Training

The season for growing and breeding has arrived which means a series of planting works as part of the management project has begun. In late April to early May, we organized two paddy rice-planting activities. All the rice paddies were planted by members of the newly launched "Rice • Flower • Bird • Eco Farm". Although participants are weekend farmers, their planting is tidy like more experienced farmers. Since the weather in April was unstable, the germination and growth of rice seedlings was affected which caused a delay of about two weeks in the rice-planting work. In order not to affect the planting schedule of a second crop, some of the fields have been left empty and will



Members of the "Rice • Flower • Bird • Eco Farm" has planted paddy rice in late April.

be planted with rice in July-August. Hopefully we can catch up with the migration of Yellow-breasted Buntings as well as other bunting species in September and October.



The "WANTED: Japanese Yellow Bunting in Long Valley" campaign has finished. This campaign not only collected records of the species this year but also filled the data gap from past years. This showed that the earlier lack of records of this species was due to insufficient coverage during the regular bird surveys instead of solely due to environmental change. Recently we have started a report system to collect breeding bird data in Long Valley. For more details, please visit <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/BBS/viewthread.php?tid=13905>.

All sightings are important to us. Please do not hesitate to submit your birding reports.

"WANTED: Japanese Yellow Bunting in Long Valley"



Urban Oasis Elderly Ambassador Scheme

Date: Mar – Dec 2011

Phase One of the project was launched at the end of May. The participating parks include: Sha Tin Park, Tsing Yi Park, Kowloon Walled City Park, Po Hong Park, Ma On Shan Park, Kowloon Park, Tai Po Waterfront Park, Tin Shui Wai Park, Chai Wan Park and Lai Chi Kok Park. It is hoped that 500 elderly people can be recruited. The training programme in Phase One includes talks and field studies and covers different kinds of wildlife inside the parks. Talks and guided visits for the elderly in the community (Phase Two) should start from Aug 2011.



Nature Conservation

~ Beetle CHENG

The recent High Court Judgement on the EIA report for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge has raised intense discussion. Despite this, many large-scale development proposals have been announced by developers and the environment is still facing intense threats.

Update on Nam Sang Wai

The developer has organised another meeting to brief Environmental NGOs, including the HKBWS, about their latest ideas on the proposed development. We insist that any residential development at Nam Sang Wai is unacceptable and would certainly oppose the project. However, we shall still keep an eye on the issue and will report progress on the HKBWS forum.

Other Developments

We have expressed concern about large-scale residential developments in rural areas such as Lamma Island and Ping Kong (north NT) by submitting our comments to the Town Planning Board and Environmental Protection Department. We shall also submit our comments or objections to other development proposals of smaller scale which may affect habitats of birds in Hong Kong.

Review of the EIA system

Following the the recent High Court judgement, the Legislative Council has initiated a discussion about reviewing the EIA system in Hong Kong. The HKBWS would urge for a complete review of the system, and will present our opinions to the Legislative Council and the HKSAR government in due course.

What YOU can do to help our conservation work

We will put updates about the latest development applications on the HKBWS forum. You can simply help by submitting objections or your own comments to parties like the Town Planning Board and relevant government departments. Besides, any bird records from sites under threat of development could be extremely important data. If you have birded in an area where there is a development proposal, please send your records to us (e-mail: cnokming@hkbws.org.hk).



China Projects

~ Vivian Fu

Projects of Hong Kong Bird Watching Society China Conservation Fund 2011/12

Successful applications for the China Conservation Fund 2011/12:

Province	Project title	Project leader	Organization
Yunnan	Distribution survey and conservation of White-speckled Laughingthrush, <i>Garrulax bieti</i> , in Lijiang	Han Ben, Han Lian-xian	Southwest Forestry University
Yunnan	Bird education programme at Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden	Wang Xi-min	CAS Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden
Qin Hai	Promotional materials for Qinghai wild birds	Dong Jiang-tian	Shenzhen Bird Watching Society
Hubei	Survey of Baer's Pochard in Wuhan	Zhu Mi-hui	Wuhan Bird Watching Society

Successful applications for the China Conservation Fund – Scaly-sided Merganser 2011/12*:

Province	Project title	Project leader	Organization
Jilin	Monitoring programme of the Scaly-sided Merganser at Chang Bai Shan and Ya Lu Jiang	Yao Wen-zhi	
Zhejiang	Study of the population, distribution and threats of the SSM in Southwest Zhejiang	Wu Xiao-li	Zhejiang Wild Bird Society

*This funding was supported by the sales from Scaly-sided Merganser ties.

Former United States Treasury Secretary Mr. Henry Paulson and his wife enjoyed bird watching in Hong Kong

On 11 April, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society was honored to receive the former Treasury Secretary of the United States, Mr. Henry Paulson and his wife, Mrs Wendy Paulson during their stay in Hong Kong. Mr. and Mrs. Paulson are both keen bird watchers and they had paid a visit to Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve and Mai Po Nature Reserve. Their first stop was Tai Po Kau for forest birds, and were accompanied by our honorary president, Mr. Lam Chiu Ying and birders Mr. Lee Wai Kee and Mr. Yu Yat Tung. Then with the guide of Mr. Bena Smith and Yu Yat Tung, they visited Mai Po Nature Reserve, where they enjoyed watching flocks of waterbirds. The couple were amazed by the remarkable scene of waterbirds and gave a high appraisal of the trip.

Mrs. Paulson devotes herself to conservation, and is a supporter of BirdLife International, while Mr. Paulson is actively promoting conservation and protection of natural resources, and is especially concerned about the impact of development in China on the environment.



The Paulsons' visit to Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve (From the left: Mr. Paulson, Lee Wai Kee, Mrs. Paulson, Lam Chiu Ying and Yu Yat Tung) (©Vivian Fu)

The 2011 Black-faced Spoonbill International Census



HKBWS Press Release –

Black-faced Spoonbill is not only a Hong Kong wetland key species, Birdlife International have categorized it as “Endangered”. In order to protect BFS, a number of conservation organizations and governments in East Asia have worked together to protect the habitats it uses since the 1990s. In 1995, an Action Plan, the first of its kind, was drawn up to protect the BFS. An amended 2010 Action Plan focused on setting up more protected areas and carrying out more detailed surveys of breeding grounds, as well as strengthening cooperation amongst regions.

Habitat destruction and degradation is still the main threat to the conservation of Black-faced Spoonbills. Many coastal areas are surrounded by a variety of development projects in South Korea, Macau and Hainan. Illegal hunting still occurs in some of the sites. For example, 11 Black-faced Spoonbills were rescued from the hands of hunters in Vietnam during the last winter. Hong Kong's Deep Bay area is still plagued by huge development pressure. There is still a long way to go for the conservation of this species.

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society began coordinating the Black-faced Spoonbill International Census in 2003. The census has helped to improve our understanding of the needs of this Endangered species. This year the census was conducted from 21st to 23rd January 2011 and the results were as follows:

1839 spoonbills were recorded in 2011 census, a decrease of 507 in numbers or 22% versus 2010;

The largest wintering group is still in Taiwan. The total number is 834 or 45% of world's population. Taiwan recorded the largest decline of all areas, a drop by 446 in numbers versus 2010;

411 spoonbills were recorded in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, which is 11 % down or 51 in number versus 2010. Last year's count was 462.

Mainland Chinese coastal areas fell by 15%. Only 198 were recorded in 2011, decreased by 36 from last year's total of 234.

A slight increase in Japan, Vietnam and Macau was not enough to fill the gap from Taiwan, Deep Bay and mainland China.

South Korea, Japan, Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Macau, Cambodia and Vietnam joined this year's census.

HKBWS would like to acknowledge all the organizations and volunteers involved in the census, without whom it would not have been completed successfully. We hope that continued international efforts can succeed in preserving the future of the Black-faced Spoonbill.



Black-faced Spoonbill, a globally endangered species, occurs on the eastern fringe of Asia. Over the last decade, the number of Black-faced Spoonbills (BFS) has been increasing. The world population count reached a record high of 2,346 in 2010. However, the International Census conducted in January this year recorded only 1,839, a 22% decrease from last year. It is the biggest slump since the census started in 1993. The situation is worrying.

Mr. Yu Yat Tung, representing the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, is the Coordinator of the International Census of Black-faced Spoonbill. He pointed out that the slump was mainly due to the apparent 35% decrease of the Taiwanese population. Taiwan has always accounted for the largest share of wintering BFS. Over the past few years, the spoonbills were mainly concentrated at a few sites. According to this year's findings, two key areas in Taiwan accounted for 45% of the total number of Black-faced Spoonbill. Deep Bay (Hong Kong and Shenzhen) accounted for 22%. So these two regions share 67% of the world's population. In other words, any threats or catastrophic events at these sites will seriously affect the continued existence of this species.

In fact, a large number of Black-faced Spoonbills were recorded in Taiwan in early winter but they were found missing during the census, making the count drop by 35% versus last year. The Mainland China count was also down by 15%. A relatively smaller decline, 11% over 2010, was recorded in Deep Bay (Hong Kong and Shenzhen). The numbers of BFS in Japan, Vietnam, Macau and Cambodia have increased slightly but are still far from sufficient to fill up the gap. According to last year's information, no large die-off was recorded and we suspect that the decline may be due to a persistently freezing cold winter. It may also be due to unsuccessful breeding the preceding summer. The real cause is yet to be discovered.

Cambodia joined the census this year. A Black-faced Spoonbill with a satellite-tracking device fitted in South Korea was found in that country before and after the census. This may indicate that the migratory birds were forced to move further south by the cold winter weather. Having said that, we were not able to track Black-faced Spoonbill in great numbers in southern Asia.

YEAR 2010 SWIFT AND SWALLOW NESTS SURVEY RESULTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

~ Swift and Swallow Research Group

Field work for the 2010 "Swift and Swallow Nests Survey in Hong Kong" was completed last summer. 2071 nests of House Swift and 1132 nests of Barn Swallow were recorded, of which, the numbers of active nests were 1524 and 781 respectively. Detailed figures and analysis can be found in the later part of this article.

The Swift and Swallow Research Group would like to thank all our hardworking volunteers for collecting valuable data in the scorching heat of mid-summer, and contributing to the conservation of swifts/swallows. In alphabetical order, they were:

AU Wai Yin & WU Yuk Ho, CHAN Fong Ling Bonnie, CHAN Heung Tuen & CHAN Candy, CHAN Stanley, CHAN Wai Kwan & CHAN Chung Ning, CHAN Ying Chi, CHENG Sau Kuen, CHENG Wai Wa William, CHENG Yiu Wan & YAU Siu Hing, CHEUNG Ann, CHOW Hung Fai, CHOY Mei Lin Christine, CHU Tony & CHAN April & CHU Wing Ka, FUNG Dolphin, FUNG Ka Chun Thomas, FUNG Wing Yeung Kenny, HO Kam Yi, HO Pik Har Irene, HO Sui Chang Jan & CHENG Wai Keung, HUI Etta, HUI Wun Fung Alvin, HUNG Lai Yung, HUNG Wing Yu Vera & CHAN Hoi Yan Crystal, IP Kee Kong Herman, KO Tsz Yan, KWAN Wai Keung Ken, KWOK Fung Mei, LAM Ngo Lun Alan, LAM Shet Fong, LAU Admond, LAU Wai Man Apache, LAW Sau Man Lawman & LAU Yiu Kwan, LEE Wai Chu Ronley & SHAM Tin Lung Ronnie, LO Wing Bun & CHAU Kam Chui, LUI Ka Lau Richard, MAN Kuen Yat Bill, NG Yan Nar, POON Sui Wah, SHEK Tommy, SO Lai Wah Lisa, TANG Chi Kit Marine & LEE Hung Chi Godwin, TANG Mei Han, TANG Wing Sing Dick, TONG Chung Tun, TSANG Ping Wa Thomas, TSIM Siu Tai, TSUI Ya Yeng Irene, WONG Chiu Shu, WONG Hoi Yan Sophia, WONG Hok Sze, WONG Lun Cheong Captain, WU Fung Mui, YIP Tai Wai Dominic, YIU Ka Lun, YU Sau Ling Wendy, YU Yat Tung.

"Yin Ji" is a common name in Chinese given to a group of small birds with long narrow wings that can fly very fast and catch insects in the air. The records of "Yin Ji" in Hong Kong actually include two different families (Apodiformes and Hirundinidae), and more than 10 species. Most of them are migratory, passing and seasonal, and residents are in fact a small minority. The Swift and Swallow Research Group concentrates on the two most commonly seen "Yin Ji" that breed in Hong Kong, the House Swift belonging to the Apodiformes family and the Barn Swallow of Hirundinidae.

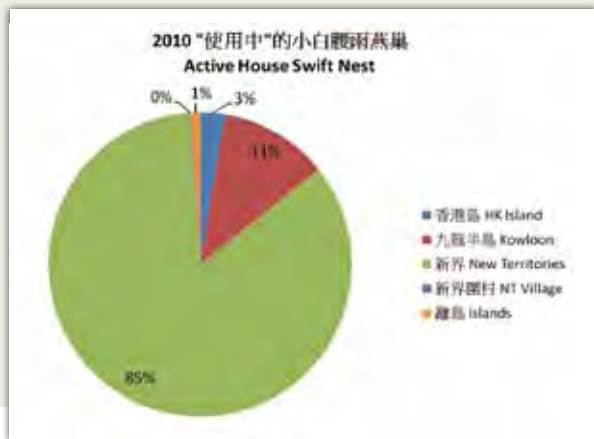
Although the subject species belong to two different families, they both like to build nests beneath the eaves of buildings. The Research Group has been conducting surveys on the nests of these two "Yin Ji" species since 2005 in order to better understand their breeding conditions.

The survey in 2010 covered over 80 locations on Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula, New Territories and the Outlying Islands. However, due to manpower limitations and other factors, the surveys mostly concentrated in urban areas, plus

several outlying islands and six "Wai Tsuen" (walled villages) in New Territories. We have divided the locations into 5 key areas and 28 districts for easy data analysis.

Out of the 1524 active nests of House Swifts counted in 2010, over 80% were found in the New Territories, about 1290 in total.

Within these 1290 active House Swift nests in the NT, over 80% were concentrated in 4 districts: Sha Tin and Ma On Shan (400 nests, 31%), Sheung Shui and Fanling (345 nests, 27%), Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai (192 nests, 15%), and Tai Po (118 nests, 9%).



It was noted that the nests of House Swifts tend to be built in higher places than in previous years. In Sheung Shui and Fanling, Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai, and Tai Po, these 3 areas, 50-70% of the active nests were built as high as 2/F (the maximum height of the balcony eaves of Hong Kong's old buildings). It is possible that the House Swifts have chosen to go higher because there is more human disturbance around balcony eaves, and it is easier for them to take off with their gliding style.

Mai Po Update

~ Bena Smith



Credit : Bena Smith
Black-faced Spoonbill roosting in shallow water – the habitat to be restored in Gei wai #7

2010 "使用中"的家燕巢
2010 Active Barn Swallow Nest



Compared to those of the House Swifts, the nests of Barn Swallows are more dispersed. In 2010, the distribution of the 781 active Barn Swallow nests recorded in 5 areas totaled between 13% and 26%.

Further dividing the areas into 28 districts, the highest number is found around Sham Shui Po (locations including Prince Edward, Sham Shui Po, Cheung Sha Wan and Lai Chi Kok, about

104 nests). Next comes Lantau Island (locations including Mui Wo, Pui O, Tai O and Tung Chung, about 77 nests). 3rd highest is Cheung Chau (58 nests).

Outlying islands have become important nesting areas for Barn Swallows. Sham Shui Po is now the only urban district popular with Barn Swallows. Since the closure of the old airport and the building collapse in Hung Hom, "Urban Renewal"-type

redevelopments and renovations have gained pace. These threaten the key nest-building position for urban-breeding Barn Swallows, which is balcony eaves, so the Barn Swallows may soon disappear too.

Apart from that, the traditional house of the walled village in New Territories is also a favorite nest-building site for Barn Swallows. From our survey we discovered that in walled villages with a suitable environment, such as Mai Po Village, Sai Kung's Sha Kok Village and Fanling Wai, more than 20 active Barn Swallow nests might be found. But if the peripheral environment is not suitable, e.g. Yuen Long's Tin Liu Village, and Fung Yuen Old Village, only a few nests can be found.

Although the Swift and Swallow Research Group cannot stop the redevelopment of old areas and renovation of old buildings, in the past 2 years, we have kept up our efforts to reduce the impact on survival space for Barn Swallows and the active nest sites. In this regard, we are grateful to the staff of AFCD's Wetland and Animal Protection (Birds) Units, who have spent much time patiently explaining to buildings and estate managers, coordinating and lobbying for their help. We are also grateful to our volunteers. We also thank other fellow birders and kind citizens who notified us of nests in danger from building works, enabling us to act in time, following up with foremen and workers and discussing possible measures to minimize development impact on nests.

Summer is the breeding season for swifts and swallows, a crucial period in their annual cycle. The Swift and Swallow Research Group would like to take this opportunity to appeal for your assistance. If you discover any illegal dismantling of swift or swallow nests, or nests being affected by building renovation, please contact us and email details of the address and photos of the site to ssrg@hkbws.org.hk. Thank you!



Rice Paddy Trial

Starting from July, a freshwater area close to Hide #1 will be planted with rice in an exciting project to see if a rice paddy can be successfully established at the Reserve.

The project is experimental and designed to generate information about the rice growing conditions at Mai Po and the type of wildlife it can attract. As Long Valley has shown, rice can attract a range of seed-eating birds, particularly munias and buntings. In winter it could attract snipe if the rice stems are left intact.

Munias feeding on rice, Long Valley

Restoration Work for Black-faced Spoonbill

Over the summer you will encounter a lot of activity in and around Gei wai #7. At first glimpse you might think the works are just our routine annual gei wai maintenance, but in fact they are the first phase of a large-scale long-term project to restore open water habitat in northern Mai Po to benefit the globally endangered Black-faced Spoonbill.

Looking at the northern gei wai from a bird's eye view, it's alarming to see how small the area of open water actually is. When the current day habitat distribution is compared to that in the early 1980s using aerial photos, the change is quite astonishing with large areas of open water being lost to reed grass and climbers.

This year's work, which is only possible through funds raised from the Big Bird Race, kicked off in May with the removal of rank vegetation at the seaward end of the gei wai. Then dozers and diggers moved in to skim off mud and gradually lower the floor of the gei wai to create varying water depths. Ideally we would like to restore the whole gei wai, but factoring in time and financial constraints, we anticipate the restoration of about two thirds back to open water.

If all goes to plan and the typhoon season is kind to Mai Po, the works should be complete by the end of October, just in time for the returning Spoonbills. As with all works of this nature there's no guarantee the target species - Spoonbills in this case - will use the newly created habitat. Sometimes it can take a few years for them to react to the change.

Potentially the situation may differ somewhat at Mai Po because both the soil and water salinity is higher than in Long Valley. Due to these conditions, the planted rice will need to be brackish tolerant species, similar to the traditional Red Rice planted at Mai Po in the early 1900s.

I sincerely hope I will be writing a similar update in next years' summer bulletin and be able to share some positive news from the trial and a more solid plan for the future of rice paddies at Mai Po.



Summer on Po Toi lasts from the second week of June to the third week of August and is very dull from a bird-watching perspective, so this issue of the Bulletin gives me the chance to talk about Po Toi resident birds. But I'll start with some summer species which are not resident.

Black Drongos are the land birds of summer – up to five pairs have held territory within my area each year although the number can fluctuate and 2009 and 2010 have been poor years for breeding birds (see Figure 1). Holding territory for a Black Drongo means terrorizing every other bird in the near vicinity – they are completely fearless and attack anything that moves including Crows and Black Kites. Unfortunately, when establishing their territories in spring, they also make short work of more interesting species like Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, which makes the Black Drongo one of my least favourite birds.

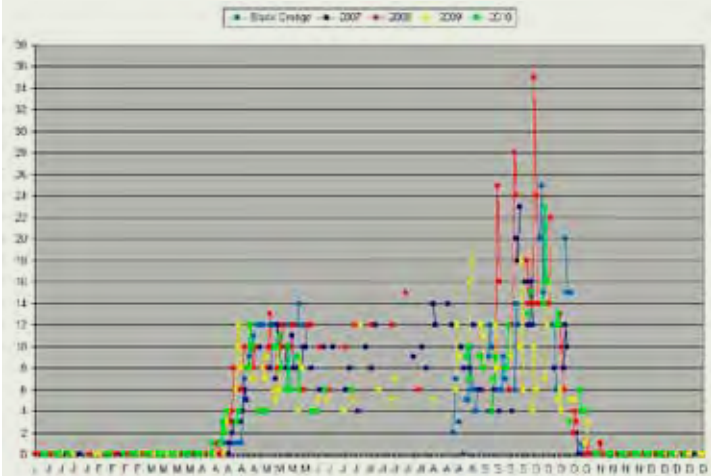
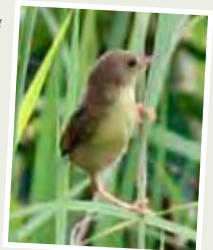


Figure 1. Daily Counts of Black Drongo 2006-2010

Juvenile Bright-capped Cisticola
– 2nd September 2010



Both Indian Cuckoo and Koel remain over summer and no doubt get their own back on the nesting Black Drongos as well as the resident species. Pacific Swifts are regular summer birds and must be nesting somewhere in the vicinity and a few of the migrant Tree Sparrows usually remain over summer with at least one breeding record.

Rarer breeders include a pair of Orange-headed Thrush which bred in 2009 producing two young. Bright-capped Cisticola may breed on the South Peninsula, juveniles are sometimes seen in early autumn. Bridled, Black-naped and Roseate Terns established a colony on the Po Toi Rock in 2007 and again in 2008 but their attempts in 2009 were frustrated by wandering fishermen and a typhoon and they did not return in 2010.



Juvenile Orange-headed Thrush
– 2nd September 2009



And so to the resident species. There are currently fifteen, Pacific Reef Egret, Black Kite, Spotted Dove, Greater and Lesser Coucal, Red-whiskered and Chinese Bulbul, Long-tailed Shrike, Oriental Magpie Robin, Blue Whistling Thrush,

Masked Laughingthrush, Yellow-bellied Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Crested Myna and Large-billed Crow. I say 'currently' because I have lost another two species over the past five years, Black-necked Starling and Common Magpie, as well as a second pair of Large-billed Crows which tried to establish themselves in 2008, failed and disappeared. As I write, it seems the same fate has happened to a pair of Blue Magpies which arrived in May 2009 but only one has recently been seen.

All these 'lost' species were single pairs, which shows the difficulties of establishing new colonies and the dangers of small numbers of any species on isolated islands. This may explain the puzzle of why Hwamei is not resident on Po Toi although common on the close-by islands and mainland. The resident pair of Large-billed Crows will probably be the next to disappear. They have only successfully produced young in two out of five years but when they do go they may be quickly replaced by a pair of the migrant Large-billed Crows which regularly pass through Po Toi in spring.

The numbers of other resident species have been constant over the five year period although many of them can be seen more often at particular times of the year. Spotted Dove is most common in May, which may be a reflection of breeding or some other factor (see Figure 2). I only realized the consistency of this pattern recently when looking at Figure 2 for the first time, which shows the value of regular recording of numbers even for common species.

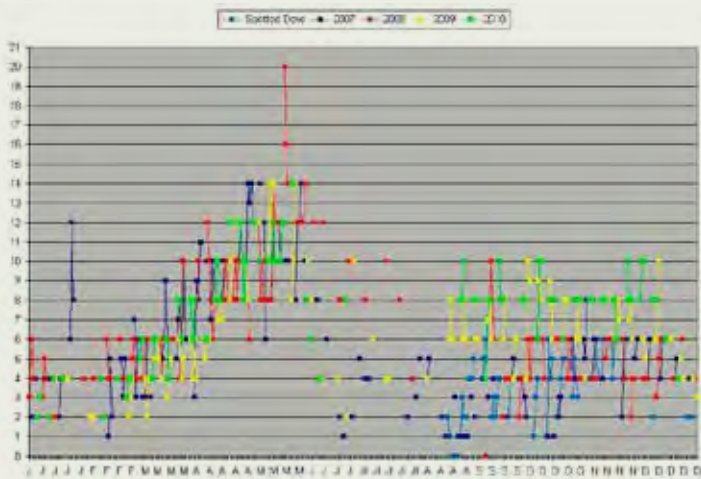


Figure 2. Daily Counts of Spotted Dove 2006-2010

Coucals are more easily seen and heard in spring as they establish breeding territories and Long-tailed Shrikes are most common in early autumn when the young of that year move out from the scrubland where they were born and often establish territories in the central area.

Dollarbird – 3rd July 2008



Dispersing first-year birds from off the island are also often seen in late summer. Juvenile Common and White-throated Kingfishers are regular July dispersals with at least one Grey Wagtail, a Hoopoe and a Chestnut Bulbul. An adult Dollarbird on 3rd July 2008 was a first ever summer record for Hong Kong and an adult Oriental Turtle Dove which stayed for the last two weeks of June 2007 was almost equally unusual. My intended day visit to the island on 25th June 2009 ended up as a two-night stay due to the close passage of Tropical Storm Nangka but I did manage to do some sea-watching and saw Streaked Shearwater, Lesser Frigatebird and Greater Crested Tern – an indication that summer can be a good time for seabirds if the weather is helpful.

In fact, looking back over this article, it seems that summer is not so bad after all.

Mid-August sees the return of the first early migrants, usually a Yellow Wagtail or an Arctic Warbler or perhaps an Asian Paradise Flycatcher. Which brings me to the scariest moment I have ever had on Po Toi. Not a Python or the Wild Pig or even a typhoon – this was a natural phenomenon but completely unpredictable. 19th August 2009 was a hot but totally calm day – no wind at all. As I sat at the South Point waiting for some seabirds, a large black cloud gradually came overhead and as it did, the water started boiling about 100 metres in front of me. A shoal of fish I thought, but it gradually became more intense, a cloud of spray ten metres in diameter. And then suddenly, without warning, a huge column of water spray rose up from the sea, 1000 feet up into the black cloud above my head. I now understand how waterspouts form but at the time I sat in disbelief at this thousand feet tower of water swirling above my head just a short distance away. I could have taken an unforgettable video on my mobile phone but I forgot completely I had one in my pocket. I don't mind admitting I hid beneath a rock and about ten minutes later the spout just disappeared as fast as it had formed. I simply crept out and ran away. I still haven't quite recovered from the shock.



Waterspout in Po Toi waters – 19th August 2009 – photo by Mr Lawrence Leong. X marks the spot where I was sitting.



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鷗嘴噪鷗
張冠南
米埔

Gull-billed Tern
K.N.Cheung
Mai Po

08.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 600mm lens + 1.4x teleconverter

鶴鶉
吳偉民
塋原

Japanese Quail
Raymond Ng
Long Valley

03.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens +
1.4x teleconverter





棕頭鷗
施文漢
米埔

Brown-headed Gull
Sze Man Hon
Mai Po

11.03.2011
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



鬚浮鷗
陳芳玲
担竿洲

Whiskered Tern
Bonnie Chan
Tam Kon Chau

30.03.2011
Digiscoping



棕尾褐鶇
葉紀江
蒲台

Ferruginous Flycatcher
Herman Ip Kee Kong
Po Toi

16.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 300mm f/2.8 lens+ 1.4x teleconverter

琉球鶇
余柏維
石崗

Owston's Flycatcher
Yue Pak Wai
Shek Kong

10.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens +
1.4x teleconverter



紅胸姬鶇
余柏維
蒲台

Red-breasted Flycatcher
Yue Pak Wai
Po Toi

21.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



海南藍仙鶴-雌鳥
哈囉米
蒲台

Hainan Blue Flycatcher - female
L-mike
Po Toi

22.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 800mm f/5.6 lens



海南藍仙鶴-雄鳥
梁文瑛
蒲台

Hainan Blue Flycatcher - male
Jennifer Leung
Po Toi

24.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 400mm f/5.6 lens





勺嘴鷸
黃理沛 江敏兒
米埔

Spoon-billed Sandpiper
Michelle & Peter Wong
Mai Po

05.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 800mm f/5.6 lens



流蘇鷸（中）及澤鷸
何建業
米埔

Ruff (middle) & Marsh Sandpipers
Kinni Ho Kin Yip
Mai Po

22.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens +
1.7x teleconverter

黃嘴白鷺
何建業
米埔

Swinhoe's Egret
Kinni Ho Kin Yip
Mai Po

02.05.2011
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RED-THROATED DIVER

~ Samson SO



blending with the oval pebbles around it. With a the roundness of body shape and a long pointed bill, this can only be the diver! If not for the call from Tam, it would have been quite impossible to discover a bird that

was camouflaged so well. I had a good long look through the scope. Satisfied with the observation, I ducked closer one step at a time, fearing that I might scare off Hong Kong's second Red-throated Diver.

The photographing session was a test of physical strength. The camera gear felt as heavy as an LP gas tank. With the addition of both a tripod and monopod, I moved forward slowly imitating the marines, taking pictures as I moved, panting and sweating during the process.

While I was panting and sweating, the bird at the other end of my lens was taking it's time grooming and relaxing, at times turning around, at times lowering its head, posing in various styles. I kept moving meter by meter for a closer shot, and finally arrived at a reasonably close position after 30 minutes. I chose the background carefully, and finally got a very low shooting angle almost touching the ground. With a clean background, I got my ideal shot.

Time had ticked away and it was already 1:40pm. I remembered my guiding duty for a birding activity at Mai Po Nature Reserve.

As a nature photographer, one important code of conduct is to try your best not to disturb the subject. I live by this conduct and for years I keep telling my students to do the same. When I finished shooting, I retreated in the same marine-like manner as before, carrying my 13kg of gear and carefully backing away from the bird.

The Red-throated Diver became more distant and only then did I feel the cool sea breezes blowing off the heat of midday, while egrets were busy building nests in the mangrove around me. A captivating wetland moment with a rare visitor and the common residents, all just as wonderful in their own ways.

Although I spent less than 3 hours with the diver, it was enough to erase from my memory all records of other birds I had seen in the previous 48 hours. The memory of a Hong Kong "second" remains: the Red-throated Diver. What could be nicer after a birding competition apart from a dinner and sleeping? Perhaps spending time with a rare bird is not a bad option.

Bird Races can be exhausting. During a race one has to stay focused all 24 hours, be watchful and observant for every bird that may appear, and be "all ears" to every sound that may resemble a bird call. Even when driving, the eyes are in search mode for birds. It is very stressful, and the tension remains even after the competition. And if there is a guiding job for a birdwatching tour scheduled the next day, the strain doubles. Apart from having a dinner party with close friends, the best thing to do after a bird race is to spend the whole of the next day sleeping. At least that's what I used to think.

On the morning of March 13th 2005, my cell phone rang and pulled me out from a dream full of birds back to reality. At the other end of the line was a fellow birder Tam Yip Sing who was doing an egret survey at Luk Keng. I admired him for his stamina in counting egrets after a 24-hour competition, but I also cursed him for his cruelty at waking me up.



Frankly I'm not a twitcher who chases after special species, and I'm not a photographer who will die for a particular shot. Some friends say I'm easy, some say I'm lazy, but I say this is the way to enjoy birding and nature photography. Even so, I couldn't let a new species go unrecorded when it was placed right outside my doorstep! Back then, I lived in Ping Che, Fanling, and Luk Keng was only a 15-minute drive away.

I summoned my will and pulled myself out of bed, eyes still half-closed, with no memory of how I packed my gear for watching and photographing, I drove to the site where the Red-throated Diver had been seen. Nobody was around when I arrived at the mangrove of Luk Keng. I searched the shore with my scope and found a greyish silhouette almost

MY BLACK KITE (1)

~ Peter CHAN

Three years ago, when I was new to birdwatching, I carried a camera and took pictures everywhere. Every weekend was spent in the countryside with my friends and afterwards I uploaded my photos onto internet discussion forums. To be honest, I was not much of an observer nor did I realize the true meaning of birdwatching. Then, I participated in a talk on 'Identification of Raptors' which was organized by HKBWS. The former chairman Dr. Cheung Ho Fai was the speaker. After this amazing and detailed two-hours lesson from Dr. Cheung, I found myself falling in love with raptors.

I became fascinated by the raptors' eyes and sharp claws and that's one reason why I decided to become a raptor observer. Raptors in Hong Kong are mainly winter birds or spring-summer migrating birds, and the total number of species to be seen is quite few. One day, we all went to Sai Kung pier to watch *Milvus migrans* - the Black Kite. The Black Kite is a skilled flier with its huge wings and slim, graceful body. I saw it fly at high speed, but suddenly slow, turning 90 degrees and catching its' target just one foot above the water with its sharp claws. It all happened in five seconds, and I was

stunned and impressed by its perfect movement. (The photos taken in those five seconds were all failures, it was just too fast for me.) I discovered my enthusiasm to be a real observer after I first saw Black Kites.

In October 2008 I joined the 'Nature Conservation for Long Valley Training programme' which was organized by HKBWS and the Conservancy Association. I was so pleased to meet one of the staff of HKBWS, Miss Vicky Yeung. Vicky was so helpful to teach me about Eco-Heritage, and I asked Vicky how can I be in the research team after the programme ended. It was a surprise to me that Vicky was the convener of Black Kite research team! Subsequently I joined the research team and began my life as a Black Kite observer. My full effort began with the three-month observer "probation".

In November that same year I went to Magazine Gap for the first time - the "headquarters" of the Black Kite, with many Black Kites spiralling in the tiny mountain valley above us. My team-mates Beta and Vicky showed me how to count and get an accurate total. There were six hundred Black Kites on that day. I realized Black Kite (Latin: *migrans*) is also a migrating bird, and I was excited by the challenge of counting them in their peak season.

I became a full member of the research team after my probation. Magazine Gap and Stonecutters Island have become my favorite spots to count Black Kites, and I have started to conduct a regular monthly survey of them Sai Kung, as well as studying breeding birds.

Please note that there will be a report about Black Kite breeding in the next bulletin.

For more information of the Black Kite research team, please visit:

<http://www.hkbws.org.hk/web/chi/kite.htm>



Identification of easily confused bird species (1) - Crested Goshawk and Besra

~ Gary Chow

Crested Goshawk and Besra are both quite common raptors in Hong Kong. They are different in both their physical appearance and their habits. It is not too difficult to distinguish them in the field, but it is hard to differentiate between them by looking at photos alone. Therefore very often we have to depend on other features for confirming the species.



Besra adult male
(Photographer: James Lam)



Crested Goshawk adult male
(Photographer: Lee Yat Ming)

Crested Goshawk is 20% larger than Besra in body size. Crested Goshawk has a sturdy body and proportionally smaller head, while Besra has a relatively slender body with its head proportionally larger. Breeding Crested Goshawk shows fluffy undertail coverts clearly in flight, making it easily identified. The erect crest is noticeable only under ideal conditions. In Hong Kong, Crested Goshawk prefers dense woodland and sometimes soars over wooded areas, while Besra prefers woodland edge or appears in shrubs at the edges of open fields.

Crested Goshawk and Besra in flight are obviously different in the shape of their wings. With the former, the edge of its primaries and secondaries is smoothly bulged and there is no prominent notch at the connection between its 'fingers' (i.e. protruding primaries) and the secondaries edge. In contrast, for Besra the secondaries edge is relatively flat and its 'fingers' clearly protrude. Reliably, for identification, Crested Goshawk has six 'fingers', while Besra has five.

If you can master the above features, in normal circumstances you will be able to distinguish between Crested Goshawk and



Besra sub-adult. Note the tarsus is thinner than Crested Goshawk
(Photographer: mbs)



Crested Goshawk sub-adult
(Photographer: Cyrus Liu)

Besra. With photos, however, it is not easy to sense the proportion of body size and it is very difficult to distinguish between Crested Goshawk and Besra (and between other Accipiters) by plumage colour alone, since their plumage varies with age and sex. Different species can have the similar plumage colour, which can be very confusing. For both Crested Goshawk and Besra adults, there are brown vertical stripes at their breast and upper belly, and horizontal stripes at their lower belly. The sub-adults both have a variety of plumage colours on the belly, being mainly streaks or teardrop-shaped vertical stripes, with fewer horizontal stripes at their lower belly. Crested Goshawk juvenile seen in summer shows a white belly with thin stripes, and the stripes gradually become denser with time. In Hong Kong it is rare to see Besra juveniles in summer. But by autumn, juveniles or sub-adults will appear.

One method for identifying them through photos can be estimating the thickness of the tarsus. Crested Goshawk has thicker tarsi, while Besra and other Accipiter species have thinner tarsi. Of course you must have the sense of "thickness" before making judgment. Furthermore the shape of bill can also be useful - Crested Goshawk's is thicker and bigger, while Besra's is smaller and shorter. When they are in flight, the spotted underwing covert patterns can differ - Crested Goshawk is sparsely spotted while Besra is densely spotted.



Besra in flight. Note the five protruded primaries (Photographer PWMK)



Crested Goshawk in flight. Note the bird is moulting; the notch in the remiges edge is not a usual feature (Photographer: Ken Fung)



Besra in flight (Photographer: Martin Hale)



Crested Goshawk in flight (Photographer: PWMK)

Other factors are required to distinguish between other Accipiter species, such as Besra, Japanese Sparrowhawk, Chinese Goshawk and Northern Goshawk. Identification of these will be discussed in a future article.

Comparison of the features between Crested Goshawk and Besra

	Crested Goshawk	Besra
Body form	Relatively sturdy	Relatively slim
Remiges edge (in flight)	Primary not prominently protruded	Primary prominently protruded
Protruded primaries (in flight)	Six	Five
Tarsus	Thicker	Thinner
Bill	Larger and sturdy	Smaller
Under-wing covert	Less densely spotted	Densely spotted

Thanks to Cheung Mok Jose Alberto and Martin Hale for providing their observations on the species identification.



A photo story of bird ringing

~ Christina CHAN

(licensed for scientific study
by AFCD)



01

Set up and check the mist nets



02

Release the bird caught in the mist nets



03

Put the caught bird in the bag



04

Prepare ring



05

Put the ring on



06

Measure feathers



08

Measure total head length & moult score



07

Measure fat, age, sex



10

Release



09


Measure weight



My Bird Watching Diary

~ Text and Illustrations: Wendy Yu

27 March 2011 (Sunday)

Milvus migrans is the first raptor that I came to know. My heart follows it every time I see it wandering across the sky. When I was small, I was frightened by Milvus migrans because of a traditional board game. At that time, I wondered if Black Kites would catch the chickens of my neighbors. When I learnt birding, I eventually understood that this strong-looking raptor is not as fierce as it looks. After knowing it for years, I started drawing it now and discovered that its feathers are so beautiful. 



~ Richard Lewthwaite

These are unchecked records and members are reminded to submit all records on cards or electronically to the Records Committee.

(Your place in ornithological history depends on this! -Ed.)

January

- ▶ Highlights of the month, the coldest January since 1977 according to the Hong Kong Observatory, were a possible **Gansu Leaf Warbler** trapped at Pak Sha O, Sai Kung on 17th (PJL), which if proven would be a very unexpected addition to the Hong Kong list, and a **Japanese Swamp Warbler** seen in rank grass at a private site at Sai Sha, Sai Kung on 18th (PJL) - the three previous records dating back to 2007 all involved trapped birds at Mai Po. It was also a fine month for thrushes, especially **Pale** and **Grey-backed Thrushes**, which were unusually widespread, and rarer flycatchers such as **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher**, **Small Niltava** and **Fujian Niltava**. By contrast, **Pallas's Leaf Warblers**, **Yellow-browed Warblers** and **Grey-headed Flycatchers** were all much scarcer than usual.
- ▶ High counts were reported for two shorebird species in Deep Bay on 16th (YYT): 1592 Eurasian Curlews, the highest count in any season, and 782 **Pacific Golden Plovers**, the highest ever winter count.
- ▶ Among birds which had been reported in December and were seen again this month were the two over-wintering **Middendorff's Bean Geese** and the **Smew** at Mai Po throughout the month, the male **Small Niltava** at Lung Fu Shan throughout the month (PW, MK, BK), the **Chestnut-crowned Warbler** and flock of 50 **Eurasian Siskins** in Tai Po Kau from 1st (KPK), the **Orange-headed Thrush** at Tai Po Kau Headland on 8th (RB) and the **Forest Wagtail** in Shing Mun on 12th (SLT).
- ▶ Other notable birds reported in the first two weeks of the month included a **Large Hawk Cuckoo** singing near Tsuen Wan on 8th (LC), by about a month the earliest date, a **Sulphur-breasted Warbler** in Tai Po Kau on 8th (KPK), a **Japanese Grosbeak** at Airfield Road on 9th (RB), a male **Fujian Niltava** at Lung Fu Shan from 10th (HL) (it was subsequently felt that two males, possibly even three, were present there), up to 100 **Black Bulbuls** at Wonderland Villas, Kwai Chung from 11th (TJW), a **Brown-headed Thrush** at Po Toi on 11th (GW), one or two **Eastern Water Rails** and **Ruddy Crakes** at Long Valley from 11th (KJ), and a **Slaty-backed Forktail** at Shing Mun on 12th (SLT).
- ▶ The mid-month period brought reports of single **Fujian Niltavas** at Ng Tung Chai on 15th and Tai Po Kau (a male) on 18th (CYW), a female **Small Niltava** joining the male at Lung Fu Shan from 15th (PW, MK, BK), a male **Greater Scaup** and a female **Common Pochard** at Tsim Bei Tsui (RWL, RB), 30 **Red-rumped Swallows** and two **Asian House Martins** at Ma Tso Lung (GJC), and an **Orange-headed Thrush** at Lam Tsuen (KL), all on 16th, a **Ruddy Crane** and two **Citrine Wagtails** at Ho Sheung Heung on 17th (MRL), three **Pale-legged Leaf Warblers** at Pak Sha O on 17th (PJL), up to 10 **White's Thrushes** at Pak Sha O during 15th-17th (PJL), and a **Brown Wood Owl** calling at Lam Tsuen on 19th (DT).
- ▶ **Pale Thrushes** and **Grey-backed Thrushes** were very widespread at this time, and one or two **Dusky Thrushes** were reported at Lam Tsuen, Chi Ma Wan, Sam A Tsuen, Mai Po and Nam Sang Wai. **Japanese Thrushes** and **Eyebrowed Thrushes**, however, were unusually scarce.
- ▶ As the month came to an end, a **Crested Serpent Eagle** was seen over Po Toi on 28th (GW), a rarity over this island, and there were reports of single **Orange-headed Thrushes** at Tai Po Kau on 28th (KJ) and Hong Kong University on 31st (SYK), a mystery warbler at Cheung Chau on 29th which was later identified as a Blyth's Reed Warbler (MDW), the first record of this species away from Deep Bay, single **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatchers** at Lamma on 29th (GM) and Brides Pool from 30th (per YYT), a **Japanese Robin** at Lung Fu Shan from 30th (Kam), a **Japanese Grosbeak** at Fung Yuen on 30th (per YYT), and a female **Fujian Niltava** at Tai Po Kau on 31st (CKM).
- ▶ A long-staying **Eurasian Hoopoe** seen at Victoria Park, Hong Kong Island on 29th was thought to have been there since early September.

February

- ▶ As the cold weather continued, the highlight of the month was a drake **Green-winged Teal** in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 20th and 21st (YYT, PW, MK). This is only the 3rd Hong Kong record, following single drakes at Mai Po during the period 23 February-23 March 1986 and on 7 February 1997, thus all initially found in February.
- ▶ Rarer flycatchers, such as **Fujian Niltava**, **Small Niltava** and **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher**, continued to turn up, one or two **Japanese Grosbeaks** were seen or photographed at Lam Tsuen on 1st, 11th and 20th (EMSK) and at Fung Yuen on 26th (GHO), whilst **Pale** and **Grey-backed Thrushes** remained widespread.
- ▶ Rarities reported in January which remained into February were the two **Middendorff's Bean Geese** at Mai Po NR until 20th (WWF), the **Smew** at Mai Po (WWF), with perhaps the same individual showing up briefly at Pui O on 28th (Beetle), the **Ruddy-breasted Crane** and **Eastern Water Rail** at Long Valley throughout the month, the **Japanese Robin** at Lung Fu Shan until 7th (BK, HL), the **Blyth's Reed Warbler** at Cheung Chau until 14th (MDW), the first record of this species outside the Deep Bay area, the **Small Niltava** male at Lung Fu Shan until 3rd (SLT), the female into March, and the male at Tai Po Kau until 20th (KPK), the **Fujian Niltava** female at Lung Fu Shan on 2nd, the male intermittently throughout the month, and finally the **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** at Brides Pool until 12th.

- ▶ A male **Fujian Niltava** was also present at Tai Po Kau on 2nd (KPK). This, a **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** at Yuen Long Park on 5th (KYS) and a **Small Niltava** at Kowloon Reservoir on the same day (KL) were all thought to be new discoveries.
- ▶ Other notable reports in the first ten days of the month included a **Crested Honey Buzzard** at Tai Po Kau on 2nd (KPK), a **Ruddy Turnstone** (a winter rarity) and 58 **Saunders's Gulls** (peak count of the winter) in front of the boardwalk on 6th (RWL), an **Orange-headed Thrush** at Chuen Lung on the same day (MWK), a **Plumbeous Redstart** at Chung Mei and a **Grey Bushchat** at Shan Liu, both from 6th (DT), two **Mountain Bulbuls** at Pak Sha O on 8th (GJC), a **Yellow-browed Bunting** at Long Valley from 9th (GW) and a **Common Rosefinch** at Airfield Road on 9th (SLT).
- ▶ Reports around the time of the WWF Big Bird Race included a pale first-winter **Common Gull** of the subspecies *kamtschatschensis* (RWL) in Deep Bay and 50 **Chinese Grosbeaks** at Lam Tsuen (EMSK) on 11th and a **Baer's Pochard** at Mai Po NR (TJW), a first-winter **Vega Gull** and a **Slaty-backed Gull** (a very rare adult) in Deep Bay, a **Sulphur-breasted Warbler** in Tai Po Kau (BS) and a **Eurasian Siskin** there (PJJ), all on 12th.
- ▶ During the mid-month period, which remained cold, **Pale Thrushes** were unusually numerous on Cheung Chau (MDW), 18 **Black Bulbuls** and 11 **Common Rosefinches** were found near Au Tau on 18th (DS) and **Black Bulbuls** were noted at North Point, Hong Kong Island the next day.
- ▶ On 20th, a visiting birdwatcher mentioned seeing a **Rufous Woodpecker** at Mai Po NR (per MH).
- ▶ As the month came to an end, there were reports of a drake **Baikal Teal** in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 24th (KJ), a **Dusky Thrush** at Stonecutters Island on the same day (DS), four **Eurasian Siskins** at Cheung Chau on 25th (MDW), a **Brown Fish Owl** there the next day (MDW) and also a **Crested Honey Buzzard** at Fung Yuen (GHO), also on 26th.
- ▶ Two other species created a lot of interest in February: a **Bohemian Waxwing** initially found at Palm Springs on 4th (MRL), then photographed at Airfield Road on 6th and 8th (IT) and last seen at Mai Po NR on 22nd (WWF) – the same individual is thought to account for all reports; and one or two **Hawfinches** seen or photographed at Yuen Long Park on 21st and 22nd (KK) and at Lam Tsuen on 24th (EMSK). There were also sightings of one or two Hawfinches at Yuen Long Park and Lam Tsuen through to 6 March (HL, SLT, BK, EMSK). Scrutiny of photographs, however, revealed damage to the tail of the waxwing and the nostril of one of the hawfinches, which strongly suggested captive origins.

March

- ▶ This being a month of transition, a fairly wide variety of wintering species were still present in the first part of the month, which remained cool, and the arrival of passage migrants was more evident towards the end of the month. The rarest bird found was a male **White Wagtail** of the subspecies *personata* at Kam Tin on 20th-21st (JAA), only the 4th for Hong Kong.
- ▶ Among rarities from earlier in the winter which were reported in March were the **Smew** at Mai Po NR on 4th (GJC) and 9th (GT), the **Ruddy-breasted Crake** at Long Valley up to 13th (JL), the **Eastern Water Rail** at the same place throughout the month (JL, JGH) and into April, the male **Fujian Niltava** at Lung Fu Shan up to 21st (BK), the female **Small Niltava** there up to 3rd (BK), the latest ever winter date, up to five **Eurasian Siskins** at Cheung Chau until 7th (MDW), and one or two **Japanese Grosbeaks** at Yuen Long Park and Lam Tsuen until 12th (EMSK, BK, GT).
- ▶ Other notable records in the first half of the month included one or two **Brown-headed Gulls** in Deep Bay on 9th and 11th (GJC, DS), three **Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes** in Tai Po Kau on 12th (KPK), the first **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** of the year at Kap Lung on the same day (TJW), and five **Red-breasted Mergansers** migrating past Po Toi on 15th (GW).
- ▶ First signs of return shorebird passage were noted on 19th when at least 100 **Curlew Sandpipers** were at Mai Po NR (EMSK). The next days brought reports of a **Little Stint** at Mai Po (JAA), the *personata* **White Wagtail** at Kam Tin and three **Northern Skylarks** at Pui O (MDW), the latest in winter by 18 days, a **Citrine Wagtail** at Lut Chau on 23rd (JAA), a **White Wagtail lugens** and a **Citrine Wagtail** hybrid at San Tin fishponds on 24th (JAA), and a **Brambling** and **Oriental Cuckoo** at Po Toi on 23rd and 24th (GW). Two other **Citrine Wagtails** were found at Ho Sheung Heung on 26th (JAA).
- ▶ Coverage of Po Toi at the end of the month led to sightings of a **Narcissus Flycatcher** and an **Oriental Greenfinch** on 27th (JAA, PMW), a **Black-billed Kittiwake** in southern waters on the same date, a **Greater Crested Tern** on 29th (GW), the earliest record by 8 days, five **Red-breasted Mergansers** on 30th (GW) and a **Japanese Yellow Bunting** on 31st (GW).
- ▶ The last day of the month also brought reports of 5800 **Curlew Sandpipers** and the first **Spoon-billed Sandpiper** of the spring (YYT).



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours Oct - Dec 2011

Outings

Outings				
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
1/10/2011 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Aberdeen Reservoir (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Hang Seng Bank near Exit B, Central MTR Station)	★	Forest birds
9/10/2011 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on 7 Oct on Discussion Forum)	★★	Migrants
16/10/2011 (Sun)	0700 - 1500	Mai Po Nature Reserve (07:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road exit), OR 08:00 Mai Po carpark, end 14:00 Mai Po, 15:00 Kowloon Tong)	★★	Waterbirds
23/10/2011 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (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
5/11/2011 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tsim Bei Tsui (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
6/11/2011 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on 4 Nov on Discussion Forum)	★★	Migrants
13/11/2011 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (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
20/11/2011 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	★★★	Forest birds
27/11/2011 (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
3/12/2011 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Luk Keng (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 56K minibus station, near Exit C, Fanling MTR Station)	★	Waterbirds
11/12/2011 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Pui O (08:00 Exit B, Tung Chung MTR Station)	★	Wintering forest and farmland birds
18/12/2011 (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
25/12/2011 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (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

Indoor Meetings				
Date	Time	Topic	Speakers	Venue
16/8/2011* (Tue)	1900 - 2100	Raptors in Hong Kong and Basic Identification (Cantonese)	Mr. Gary Chow	Rm. 924, Scout Asso of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon
14/9/2011 (Wed)	1900 - 2100	Trends on Bird at Mai Po Nature Reserve - Summary on WWF's Bird Monitoring 2005-10	Miss Katherine Leung	Rm. 1101, Scout Asso of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon
19/10/2011 (Wed)	1900 - 2100	China Coastal Waterbird Census: An overview of census result 2005-10 (Cantonese with English powerpoint)	Mr. Yu Yat Tung	Rm. 1107, Scout Asso of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon

* Please note that the date of talk is wrong in Bulletin #219 (English version only).

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.)

- 16 Oct 2011 (Sun) (_____ member(s), _____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is _____)
- 27 Nov 2011 (Sun) (_____ member(s), _____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is _____)
- 18 Dec 2011 (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.

** 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	Destination	Name	Membership No.	Mobile Phone	Email Address	Fare*

* Activities are processed individually, please use separate cheque.

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 :

- HKBWS members have a high priority to join four weeks before the activity. Thereafter, application will be made on first come first serve basis.
- 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 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.



赭紅尾鶇
黃理沛 江敏兒
蒲台

Black Redstart
Michelle & Peter Wong
Po Toi

10.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 800mm f/5.6 lens



鷹鴞
沈冠宇
荔枝角公園

Brown Hawk Owl
K Y Shum
Lai Chi Kok Park

02.05.2011
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens

栗鷀
陳巨輝
壟原

Chestnut Bunting
Sam Chan
Long Valley

07.04.2011
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



黃胸鷀
馮漢城
壟原

Yellow-breasted Bunting
Ken Fung
Long Valley

03.05.2011
DSLR Camera, 400mm f/5.6 lens





Nikon D700 + EDG 單筒望遠鏡 + FSA-L2
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Po Toi

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teleconverter