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The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



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222

Winter 2011 ~ 冬





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The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

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Bulletin 222

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Editor's Note

Richard Lewthwaite's Bird News is one of the highlights of every bulletin. In this issue, Richard mentions the recent splitting of the *phylloscopus* formerly known as "Arctic Warbler".

These taxonomic advances may seem a little – er – taxing for complacent birders set fast in their comfort zones. But, making this bulletin as topical as possible, Norman De Plume suggests how this and other listing changes can be taken in your stride. 

John Holmes

Society News and Projects ~ Lo Wai Yan

Members Affairs

Notice of Change of Name of HKBWS

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Limited has now been granted a license to omit the word "Limited" and having by special resolution changed its name, is a limited company and is now incorporated under the Companies Ordinance under the name "THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY".

As a result of the change of our official name, all correspondence and cheque payments to us should be addressed to "THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY" with immediate effect.

2012 Membership Renewal & New Membership Application

All applications received by the end of 2011 shall be processed promptly and new membership cards & official receipts posted back. For those who have sent us an application but have not heard from us, please contact us directly for our follow-up.

The Society is very grateful to the volunteers who supported us by helping to process membership applications and renewals. Without their support, we couldn't have managed to meet our deadline.

2012 Membership Card

The membership card for 2012 features images of Small Niltava.

Many thanks to :

Designer: Puk Yuk Yin

Photographers: Jacky Chan,
Michelle &
Peter Wong

Orientation Program for New Members

New orientation programs will be organized in the end of February in order to familiarize new members with the habitats of popular birding sites and code of conduct for bird watching & photography. These orientation programs are open for 2012 new members only. Eligible members will be informed of details soon.

Crested Bulbul Club

Early Morning Bird Watchers

No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from Sept - Nov 2011: 269

No. of participants in Kowloon Park from Sept - Nov 2011: 370

Bird watching interpretation in Hong Kong Wetland Park

A total of 98 participants from Oct - Nov 2011.

Bird watching services and activities

22 & 29 Oct 2011

Provided a talk and guided visit to wetland park for the families served by The Society for Community Organization

HKBWS Bird Shop

Code	Items for Sale	Member's Price(HK\$)	Non-member's Price(HK\$)
B0025	A Handbook of HK Waterside Birds (Chinese edition only) < New item >	\$70	\$88
B0026	A Handbook of HK Terrestrial Birds (Chinese edition only) < New item >	\$70	\$88

A Handbook of HK Terrestrial Birds (Chinese edition only)

This is the next series after the HK Waterside Birds written by the Society. Available in office and the bookshops now.



Urban Oasis Elderly Ambassador Scheme

Date: Mar – Dec 2011

The 3rd stage of the programme – “Green Fun Day in the Park” ran between Oct and Dec 2011. Thanks are due to our many elderly participants who shared the joy of appreciating wildlife in urban parks. To close this programme and to acknowledge all supporting parties, a closing ceremony was held on 15 Dec. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Miranda Chan for her contribution to the implementation of the project.

The 12th Inter-school Bird Race

Training : 5 Nov and 3 Dec 2011
Competition : 10 Dec 2011

The 12th Inter-school Bird Race was again co-organized by HK Wetland Park and the Society. A total of 40 teams entered the competition. Thanks to all volunteers who helped to provide training and adjudication.



The Second “Asian Bird Fair”

~ Wendy Yu & Alvin Hui

Birding is becoming more popular in Asia, together with ever-increasing social awareness of environmental and conservation issues.

The 2nd Asian Bird Fair was held at Tainan, Taiwan during 15th and 16th October 2011. The event was jointly organized by the Chinese Wild Bird Federation, the Thailand Society of Bird Conservation, the Malaysian Nature Society, Nature Society (Singapore), the Philippine Wild Bird Society and the Wild Bird Society of Taipei. Displays were organized to strengthen the relationship of the above organizations in the fields of birding, ecotourism and appreciation of natural history. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society was participating for the second year running.

Taijiang National Park, established in 2009 near historic Tainan city, plays host to Black-faced Spoonbills in winter, as well as many other waterbirds. Black-faced Spoonbills made an appealing focus for the event: - guests could find images of them on every promotional flyer and decoration.

“Happy Birding, Saving Nature” was the theme of this year’s fair, to emphasize the potential of bird watching in promoting environmental conservation.

Participating groups set up booths for two days, showing guests birding hotspots in their areas and selling souvenirs. The most popular souvenirs were birding guides and decorations. The host organization also invited famous ornithologists, representatives from birding organizations and conservation



institutes to give talks on birding tourism, conservation reports and scientific findings. Representing HKBWS, we spoke about Hong Kong’s birding sites and bird conservation issues.

To attract the general public, there were singers and dancers, and family-friendly booths to promote birding and nature conservation messages through games and drawing. Commercial exhibitors included travel agencies and stands promoting telescopes and cameras as well as other birding-related commodities.

Last but not least, we were happy to meet birders from different countries with the same hobby and aims. Once again, the Asian Bird Fair succeeded in bringing everyone together for the purpose of promoting birding activity and bird conservation.



Taipei International Bird Watching Fair

Bonnie Chan, Membership Officer, & Alan Lam, Member of Education and Publicity Committee, attended the Taipei International Bird Watching Fair on behalf of the HKBWS. The fair was held at Guandu Nature Park, Taipei from November 5 to 6, 2011. During the fair bird organizations from different countries in SE Asia shared their experience in bird watching activities and conservation work.

2010-2012 Nature Conservation Management for Long Valley

~ Vicky Yeung

Autumn migration has brought many different bird species to Long Valley. This year, there were several rare birds recorded in Long Valley, such as Amur Falcon, Chinese Penduline Tit, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Russet Sparrow etc. Many bird watchers and photographers were attracted to Long Valley. We would like to remind all bird watchers and photographers that to maintain good relationship with farmers and to avoid unhappy incidents, please follow the following important guidelines:

1. Long Valley is mostly owned by private landowner and managed by farmers, please respect local residents and farmers, do not damage anything and crops in the field;
2. Farmers plants crops around farmlands. So please be careful when you are walking in Long Valley. DO NOT step on the crops and DO NOT walk into farmlands. If the path is blocked, please use another path. To avoid unnecessary losses, don't try to pass through any barriers.
3. Protect the natural environment, do not litter or smoke. Please keep quiet.
4. For all drivers, please do not park your car near village houses. Leave your contact number in the front window of the car in case of any blockage.

© The Conservancy Association



We have harvested some of the paddy rice and the remainder will be reserved for birds so that they can have enough food during winter. On the other hand, the "Make a Guess" activity finished at the end of November. This autumn, 12 Yellow-breasted Buntings were counted and 7 bunting species (Yellow-browed, Yellow-breasted, Black-headed, Chestnut-eared, Little, Black-faced and Crested Bunting) were recorded in Long Valley. Did you make the right guess?

Nature Conservation

~ Cheng Nok Ming, Conservation Officer

The Government has put forward strategies for enhancing land supply, focusing on reclamation and rock caverns. In consultation meetings, HKBWS urged the government to make good use of "Brownfield sites" such as open storage sites in New Territories and redevelopment of industrial areas before considering reclamation. We also reiterated our objection to reclamation of the Tung Chung Estuary which has been proposed earlier.

The EIA report of the proposed Incinerator is open for public inspection again. HKBWS has been communicating with Environmental Protection Department regarding our concerns on the White-bellied Sea Eagle pair at Shek Kwu Chau. The EPD promised and made some minor improvements in the new EIA report. We appreciate EPD's effort in enhancing public engagement during the EIA process. However, HKBWS is still concerned that mitigation/compensation measures are not adequate and the Sea Eagle may abandon their nest due to the incinerator.

The government is speeding up the extension of planning control on "Country Park Enclaves" and has also suggested to include Tai Long Sai Wan as Country Park. HKBWS welcomes the measures taken by the government. We hope that planning controls can be extended to the remaining sites as soon as possible, and consideration given to including some of these areas with high ecological and landscape value as part of Country Parks.

This has been a bad winter already for baited hooks in fish ponds. Please look out for these hooks in fishponds, and for illegal mist nets near agricultural lands (especially in the Chinese New Year Period). You can report to the AFCD through 1823, and you may inform the Society for record purposes.

(© Henry Lui)



House Crow Eradication

The House Crow (*Corvus splendens*) is a notorious exotic bird species in Asia that came to Hong Kong as early as the 1990s and the peak population is thought to have been more than 300 in the mid 2000s. Since 2003, AFCD has implemented various approaches to control their population. Although the growth of population has been largely controlled (population now below 200), total elimination of the species from Hong Kong seems unlikely in the near future, and continued effort will be necessary. This year, HKBWS was commissioned by AFCD to carry out House Crow nest searching and removal work. From April to August, a total of 280 House Crow nests (including re-built nests) have been found and removed. The project involves a lot of logistical arrangement, technical work and professional judgment; it was successfully managed by Lo Wai Yan and Gary Chow, and executed by Jose Alberto Cheung and Alan Lam.

Curbing the House Crow population is a key action to conserve local biodiversity by removal of an unwanted exotic species; we believe removing their nests is the most efficient approach. We look forward to further co-operation with AFCD to keep the House Crow population in control for maintaining a healthy balance of local biodiversity.

China Projects


Spoon-billed Sandpiper Conservation Project – an update ~ Vivian Fu

In October, an exciting news about up to 103 Spoon-billed Sandpipers being observed in Xiao Yang Kou, Rudong, Jiangsu Province caught the attention of conservationists and birdwatchers. This record of nearly one-third of the world's known Spoon-billed Sandpiper population in Rudong was made on 12 October by Tong Menxiu, a member of the China Coastal Waterbird Census team. Although this news has proved Rudong to be an important stopover site for this critically endangered bird, the situation that Rudong is not protected and the rapid spread of the invasive spartina grass is worrying. What would make the situation worse is The future development in Rudong, which has been designated as one of the key sites in Jiangsu Province's Economic Development Plan.



A round-table meeting with government officers of Rudong county to discuss the importance of intertidal wetlands and possible sustainable development. (© Vivian Fu)

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society began sponsoring surveys for Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Rudong in 2010. In early 2011, a joint project with BirdLife International, Wild Bird Society of Shanghai and Fujian Bird Watching Society named "Saving Spoony's Chinese Wetlands" awarded funds by Disney's Friends for Change to conserve Spoon-

billed Sandpipers in Rudong, Jiangsu and Minjiang Estuary, Fujian Province. This August, we had organized training workshops about environmental education for local teachers at both project sites, and held a workshop on environmental interpretation at Rudong for local volunteers. The participants will later help promote how wetlands are important to Spoon-billed Sandpipers and other waterbirds. We invited Mr. Barrie Cooper, an expert in environmental education from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in the UK, Miss Fion Cheung, our former China Programme Officer and Mr. Yamme Leung, Education Manager of WWF-Hong Kong to help in running the workshops. Also, round-table meetings were organised with local politicians to tell them how internationally important the intertidal wetlands in Rudong and Minjiang Estuary are to Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other migratory birds, and we discussed the possibility of developing ecotourism focused on the intertidal wetlands at the project sites. 

An environmental education training workshop organized for local school teachers. (© Simba Chan)



Mai Po Update

~ Bena Smith

Rice paddy trial – results

The trial to grow rice at Mai Po had its fair share of ups-and-downs in 2011. What initially set out as an exciting new project to try to establish a 0.4 hectare rice paddy soon had our staff questioning if it could be done at all. Rice sourcing issues, compacted soils, and high water salinity were key factors, also the regular need to lower water-levels after heavy rain. However by the end of September we had managed to grow a small area of rice in the pond, giving us a glimmer of hope.

Of interest, despite failing to attract a single Munia or Bunting – the expected benefactors of the trial - the shallow water habitat quickly became a favoured high-tide roost for autumn shorebirds, particularly Eurasian Curlew, a variety of Tringa species, Wood Sandpiper and Golden Plover. Catching the beady eyes of researchers, it then quickly became a new ringing site for shorebirds at the Reserve.

Certainly a lot has been learned through the trial and a decision will be made over the winter on how to take the project forward into and - I very much hope - beyond 2012.

Hide ventilation improvements

Over the summer and autumn months, the ventilation system inside five bird-watching hides was upgraded. Next time you visit one of them (Hide #1, #3, #5, #7 or #8), you will notice metal gratings on the floor to draw in cooler air, metal louvers high on the back wall to expel hot air, and a layer of plywood underneath the roof to act as a heat barrier from the sun (similar to fishermen's huts in Deep Bay). Despite being simple "low-tech" solutions, they are effective and also "green" because they utilize the natural heat gradient inside the hides.

Freshwater Trial at Gei wai #23

Back in November 2008 I wrote a short update on a trial to convert Gei wai #23 from a brackish water pond into a freshwater pond. That trial unfortunately had to be abandoned due a typhoon-related tidal surge in very late autumn 2008. We are however attempting the trial one more time over this winter period and into spring 2012. Bird usage and water quality will be monitored. Unknown at this stage is whether or not the quantity of rainwater captured over the summer is sufficient to last through to the start of the 2012 wet season.

Once complete, the trial will feed information into our longer-term plan to convert a number of gei wai and ponds in the southern portion of Mai Po into freshwater marshes. There are a number of reasons to create more freshwater habitats, the more important being to diversify habitat types at the Reserve, and to reduce dependence upon water from the Bay which, as shown by the latest EPD water quality report, is extremely poor.



A Promise made at Deep Bay

~ Photo/Writer Samson So

One early morning, when most people were still fast asleep in bed, I was already in a birdwatching hide in Mai Po Nature Reserve. Being as quiet as possible, I held my breath and opened the window shutter with great care; outside there was one of the world's greatest natural wonders – the seasonal migration of birds. Inside the hide, a group of birding enthusiasts was already set and ready, well 'armed' with binoculars on their necks, telescopes on tripods by their side, field guides and notebooks in front of their seats. Some among them had come all the way across the oceans for the birds. Looking through the window, in the dim light before dawn, there on the mudflat were numerous tiny black dots. Before the tide came in, birds were still standing well beyond the tideline. Looking from afar, they appeared as tiny as sesame seeds. My eyes were fixed on these tiny dots while setting up my telescope. I waited in great anticipation.

As the clock ticked away, the fog gradually cleared as the sun rose above the horizon. As the tide began to rise and flooded the mudflat inch by inch, my excitement also climbed with it. As the tide continued to close in on the birds at the far end of the mudflat, all of a sudden, without any sign or warning, the birds took off, tens of thousands of wings spread at the same time. In a chorus of calls and wing-flaps, waterbirds of different sizes and shapes flew in the golden light of dawn. The flock swarmed in from the edge of the mudflat towards the mangrove and landed on the shore right in front of our hide. Suddenly I found myself within a hundred meters of the birds, not close enough to count their feathers, but what had been only black dots several

minutes before were now be clearly identifiable: the Curlews with sickle-shaped beaks,

the Black-headed Gulls looked like they had put on red lip-color, the monochrome

Avocets and their signature bills, all identifiable just with my naked eye. As the

tide rose, the rare and endangered Black-faced Spoonbills and the monolithic

Dalmatian Pelicans could be seen busy feeding themselves on tiny fish and

shrimps. In this bird flock of ten thousand, a tiny one caught my eye: the

Kentish Plover. It had a short bill, fat legs, and a body like it had put on

a white-collared shirt. With its head swinging and bobbing, the Kentish

Plover ran and hopped around the mudflat looking for food, focused

and busy as though there was no time to lose, it brought to mind the

image of a hard working salary man.



Black-faced Spoonbill and Shoveler

As the tide continued to rise, the mudflat shrunk accordingly and the bay area could no longer accommodate as many birds, so they began to fly inland to rest in the shallow water zone. I gathered my gear and moved with these long distance travellers so that I could continue to track and observe them. Back in those days, Mai Po's 'gei wai' no. 16 & 17 (generally known as the 'Scrape') was an ideal resting spots for these waterbirds, and for birdwatchers. It was the place for observation when the tide was high in Deep Bay. On the man-made sandbanks, the birds stood in organized groups as though they had an unspoken agreement: Black-winged Stilts and Greenshanks lined up on either side, well ordered, as if to welcome in the crowd that came to have a glimpse of their looks; while the Black-faced Spoonbills took advantage of the alertness of others, and had a nap to build up energy for their forthcoming long journey. Birders knew very well not to disturb the birds' resting hours, simply observing through their telescopes, and maintained a respectful distance.




Cormorant

I observed and photographed the migratory birds, and at the same time I also recorded their numbers for posterity. After a day's watching and tracking, soon dusk began to fall. In preparation for the night that was to come, large numbers of Cormorants had already taken their position in trees around the reserve, covering rows and rows of them. Seen in the sunset, the black feathers of the Cormorants gleamed and reflected, adding some mysterious colors. For me, the enchanting sunset made a perfect finale to a fruitful birding trip.

The scenery at Deep Bay has seen enormous change in recent years, and the wetland environment continues to shrink and deteriorate. Although the global population of Black-faced Spoonbills has increased compared with that of 20 years ago, and a good number are wintering in Hong Kong, the number of Dalmatian Pelicans here has dwindled to zero. The magnificent view of a wide and open mangrove mudflat extending all the way to the horizon is now history; in its place are clusters of tall buildings and waste dumps of construction materials eating into the wetland boundary.

Faced with such challenges in the environment, migratory birds continue with their journey of life, year after year, flying over continents and oceans, not restricted by any boundary. These long-distance travellers need suitable, safe sites as rest stops during their journey. Hong Kong is internationally renowned as a metropolitan city. Living here, I feel lucky to be able to enjoy a date with Nature at Deep Bay, where I can share the same space with tens of thousands of migratory birds and feel from them the enormous power of life. I have great admiration and respect for the strength and stamina shown by the birds in their migration.

I truly hope that our rendezvous with the migratory birds can continue on, year after year. Promised, at Deep Bay. 



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Your "Hong Kong List" – an alternative viewpoint

~ Norm De Plume

For many years ornithologists have been scornful of listers, or twitchers, to use a more pejorative label, which is odd since it was ornithologists who invented listing in the first place. However, is it possible that this attitude is now changing?

The latest findings, based on in-depth research in naming theory and advanced avian sociocultural neosystematics, tells us that:

the encrypting of the nominalisation of "lister" as Object, in light of the enduring critique of positivism and the defetishisation of the concrete, is a discursive production involving the axiomatics of imperialism, and thus a deconstructive politics of reading would acknowledge the determination as well as the imperialism and see if the magisterial texts can now be our servants, as the new magisterium constructs itself in the name of the Other. Hence, the parasubjective matrix, cross-hatched with heterogeneity, surreptitiously ushers in the unnamed Subject, allowing for the reinscription of "lister" devoid of negating cognomenticalities. (*Jrnl Linn. Soc. Neophylogenies & Neophyletics* Sum 2011, 1:24, p.803)

To cut through the gobbledegook, in other words, **listing is good!** In fact, **really good.** And, the bigger your list the better it is. The researchers also found that no matter how big your list is, there is always some other self-proclaimed expert who has a bigger one, and that their list always involves some totally dodgy identifications. We all know this, but what we didn't know was the science behind it, for it turns out, that the precise number of dodgy IDs is equivalent to the number needed to outdo your list:

$$\text{YourList} = \text{HisList}^{+1} - \text{IDs (Dodgy)}$$

In other words, when you remove the dodgy calls from the list of the bloke who has a bigger list than you, you find that your list is bigger than his by **one bird.** Owing to the distressing nature of these findings, the researchers have been experimenting with cross-disciplinary methods of list augmentation that are not reliant on dodginess of identification, and it is to the first of these new listing methodologies that we will now turn.

The **Historico-Semantic** approach (see Olde, Kobla and Kobla 2011). Semantics is the study of meaning in words, and so it must perforce be intimately associated with birding, for surely no field of human endeavour is so obsessed with names. As we all know, bird names change over time, and

at an alarming rate. And it is not only a case of taxonomists changing the biological nomenclature, but increasingly also the common names of birds are altered. But, don't despair, this can work **for** you rather than **against** you. One intriguing paper recently noted that by using a historico-semantic perspective, you can turn one bird on your list into as many as **four**, possibly even more! The logic behind this rests on the fact that birds are what we (humans) define them to be. No more, no less.

Take for example the Chiffchaff / Willow Warbler. British naturalist Gilbert White was the first person to separate these similar-looking birds, in his *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* in 1789. Prior to this, both birds were simply called Chiffchaff. Semantically speaking, that means that before White, the actual meaning of the word "Chiffchaff" included both *Phylloscopus collybita* and *P. trochilus*, whereas after 1789 it was restricted to *collybita* only. In other words, the meaning of Chiffchaff has changed. Now, if a birder who saw both birds and who had a life list of 300 had unfortunately died in 1788, then his list would be one shorter than if he had died in, or after, 1790, when his list would have been 301. This is what most people normally understand as the consequence of "splitting".

Yet, what this ignores is the actual fact that the two different meanings of Chiffchaff are significant. Remember, birds are only what we define them to be. Thus, there are in fact three birds possible:

1. Chiffchaff (pre-1789) *Phylloscopus collybita* + *P. trochilus*
2. Chiffchaff (post-1789) *Phylloscopus collybita*
3. Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Thus, any birder dying (*Or giving up birding!* – Ed.) before 1789 can only list the first one; any birder active from 1790 or after can only list the last two; but **any birder bridging the period can list all three.** Thus, our hypothetical birder who died in 1790 would have a list of not 301, but rather 302.

To bring this back to Hong Kong, the recent three-way split of Arctic Warbler now offers the possibility of getting not **two** more, but **three** more birds on your Hong Kong list. That is, the "lumped" entity that was pre-2011 "Arctic Warbler", and the three new "splits". Anyone taking up birding tomorrow can only go for the new species, but you, dear reader, can go for all four.

In Part II we'll be dealing with the science of the "**Temporal/Geo-spatial**" approach.....

(End of Part I) 

Bird Watching in South Thailand

25-29 May 2011

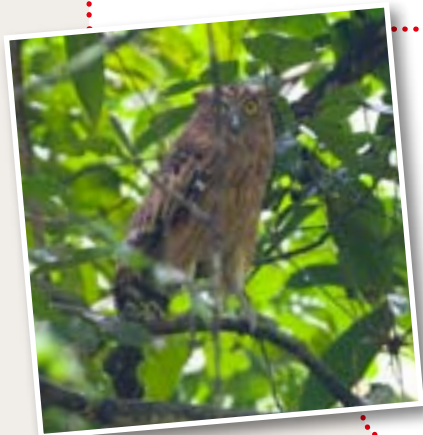
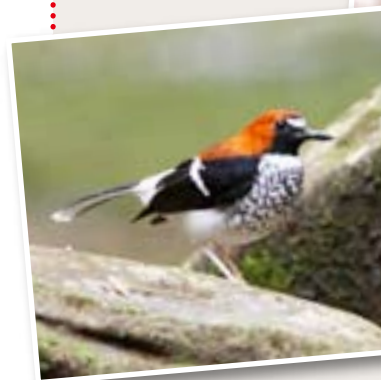
~ Christina Chan

This trip to South Thailand was my third birding visit there. I love to go bird watching in Thailand because it is cheap, convenient and also the national parks are well-managed. The most important reason is because I can see many colourful woodland birds in Thailand. I hired a bird guide, Par, to lead me. Both Par and I are Christians, so we are brother and sister in the Lord. So, I visit my good friend every time I go. In addition, the other three trip mates were also “play hard” friends that made it a joyful and fruitful bird watching trip.

We flew from Hong Kong to Phuket directly and arrived there in afternoon. We then drove to our destination – Si Phang Nga National Park. The scenery from the airport to the national park was very beautiful. We stopped at the coral beach and searched for shorebirds, species common in Hong Kong such as Curlew, Sandpipers and Stints. After that, we entered the National Park directly and searched for Chestnut-naped Forktail. The park staff led us to cross four rivers and paused at a riverbank. They said Forktails love to appear at that area. While I was waiting for the Forktail, a leech attached itself to me! Finally, the Forktail appeared and let me take a good picture of it.

In the late afternoon, we went back to the entrance area and stayed at the grassland, searching for birds in the treetops. While we were enjoying the appearance of Great Hornbill and Orange-bellied Flowerpecker, Par called loudly and said a Bat Hawk was coming! The Bat Hawk came out from the forest and hunted before dark. It hovered and hunted several times. Par said he worked as bird guide for so many years and this was only the fourth time that he had seen a Bat Hawk! We were so lucky!

After enjoying a good Thai dinner, night safari time started. We walked around our bungalow and found a Brown Wood Owl. It stayed at an open place for me to take pictures! What a fruitful day!



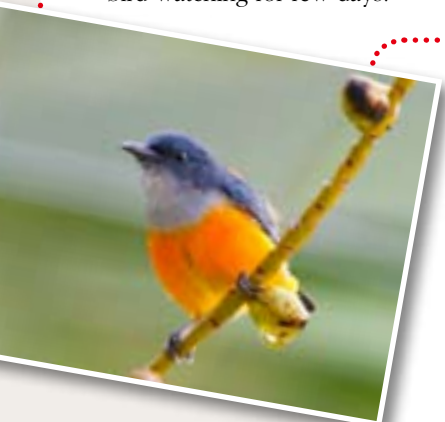
We spent the whole day in Si Phang Nga national park on our second day. We woke up in the early morning and searched for Blue-winged Pitta at the dining area. But the space was too open and I can't take any good pictures of them. Then, we went back to the national park and looked for birds at the trees next to the grassland. At this area, we can see Banded Kingfisher, Black and Yellow Broadbill and Hooded Pitta. The Broadbill stayed at a branch for over 20 minutes and let me take very good pictures. After that, heavy downpours occurred that made us go back to the bungalow. Thanks to the heavy rain, we can see Buffy Fish Owl and Dark-necked Tailorbird afterwards. What a wonderful day again!



On the third morning, we birded the car park of Si Phang Nga and walked from the car park to the bungalow. During the walk, we found Maroon Woodpecker, Green broadbill, Little Spiderhunter, a long tailed Asian Paradise Flycatcher, and a Mountain Hawk Eagle. We then left Si Phang Nga in mid-afternoon and drove to Khao Sok National Park. During the drive, Red-wattled Lapwing and River Lapwing were found along the river. We arrived at Khao Sok National Park at around 3pm, and then walked from the car park to the hiking trail. We found no birds, but many leeches! Then, we went back to the accommodation, Art's Riverview Lodge. This special lodge was built inside rain forest with river view and the bungalow features an open bathroom. It felt like showering in the rain forest! During the stay, there were more than ten monkeys playing at the rooftop and on the wall of the bathroom in the morning. They also stole my friend's Watermelon shower gel! What a wild experience!



On the fourth day, we explored Khao Sok again and prepared well against the leeches. Par said his friend mentioned the bird amount dropped in Khao Sok and he believed that after this visit. It was real that the bird species and amount was not good in Khao Sok. During the morning safari, we found Chestnut-naped Forktail, Banded Kingfisher, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, Black and Red Broadbill. The two Broadbills always flew around us and let us observe them for over an hour. We also saw several Otters going from forest to the river. The weather in Thailand was very hot so we went tubing after lunch. In the afternoon, we continued our exploration of the woodland area outside the park. Hainan Blue Flycatcher and Red-bearded Bee-eater were found that afternoon. Because of birds, we travelled around the Thai national parks and felt very tired. So, enjoying a Thai massage should be a good choice for relaxation after bird watching for few days.



In the early morning of the last day of the trip, we left the lodge and drove to Phang Nga Mangrove Forest. Mangrove Pittas and their chicks can be found within this 1 km square mangrove area. In the beginning, the bird felt quite nervous in our presence and always stayed among the tree roots when searching for food. After a while, it got used to us and stood on an eye-level branch calling and preening. It gave us a good view for over an hour and we took many photos. After taking a rest, we found Coppersmith Barbet at a nearby public park and it was our last tick for this wonderful trip.



My Bird Watching Diary

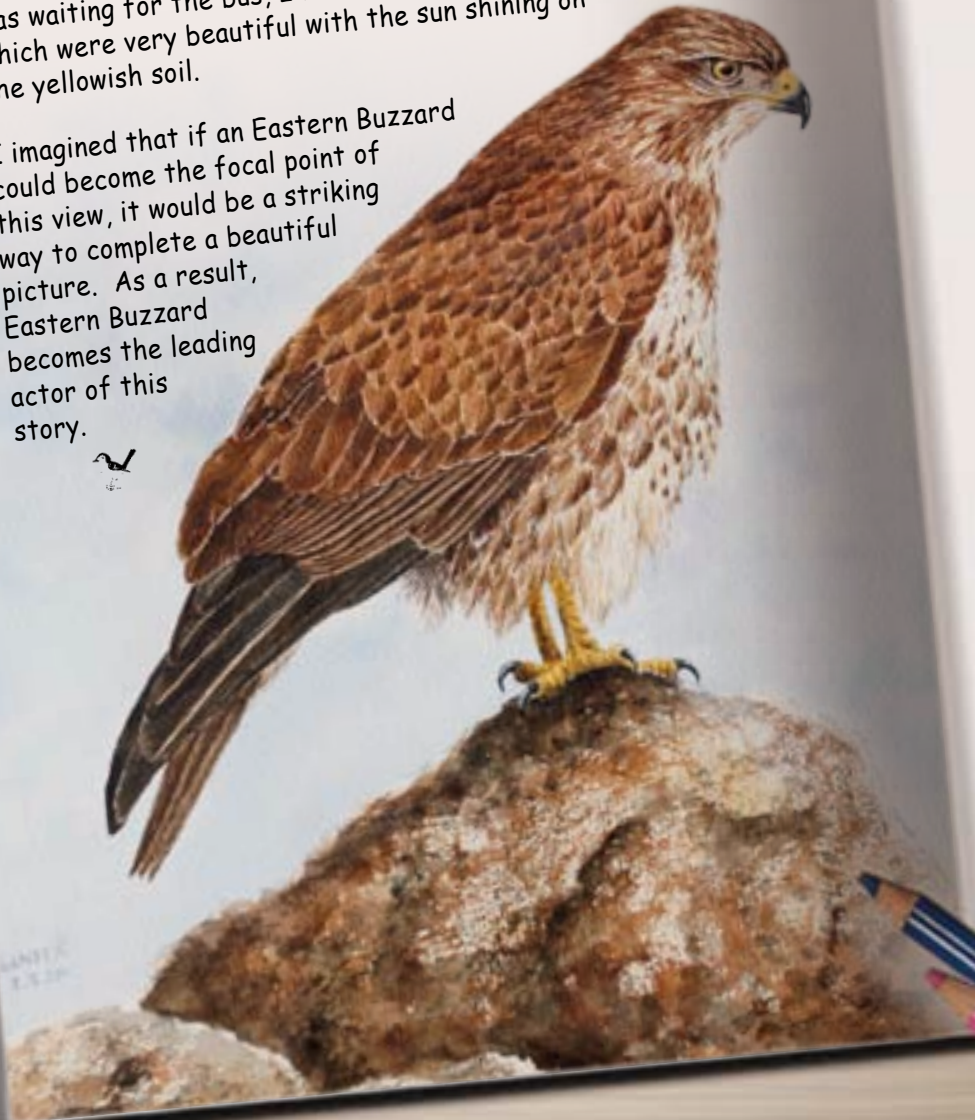
~ Text and Illustrations: Wendy Yu


Eastern Buzzard

2 August 2011

This picture was inspired by a landscape. One day when I was waiting for the bus, I looked up into the nearby hills, which were very beautiful with the sun shining on the yellowish soil.

I imagined that if an Eastern Buzzard could become the focal point of this view, it would be a striking way to complete a beautiful picture. As a result, Eastern Buzzard becomes the leading actor of this story.





~ Richard Lewthwaite

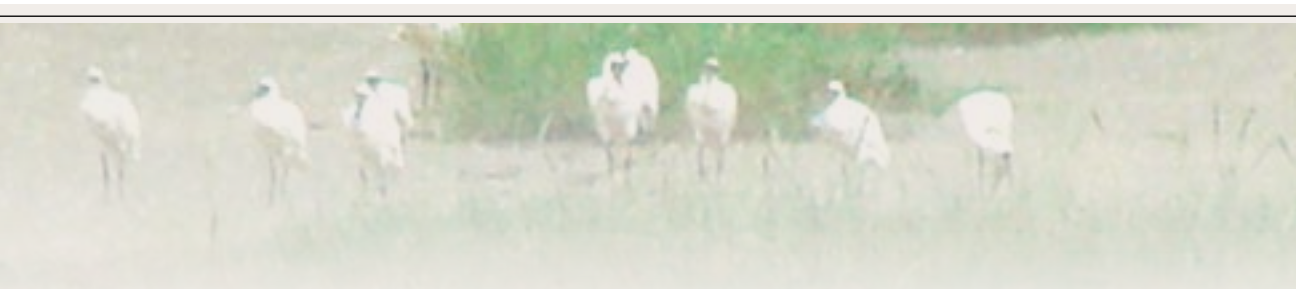
(These are unchecked records and observers are reminded of the importance of submitting all bird records on cards or electronically- Ed.)

July

- ▶ Though generally a very quiet month, July was not completely without surprises. At Mai Po NR, a single **Chestnut-tailed Starling** was among a mixed flock of about 60 **White-shouldered** and **Silky Starlings** on 2nd (BS) and a **Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** turned up on 9th (WWF).
- ▶ Other reports of interest from Mai Po during the month included a **Red-necked Phalarope** on 6th (BS), a rarity for the time of year, and five **Black-faced Spoonbills**, a **Caspian Tern**, two **Chinese Blackbirds** and eight **Chinese Grosbeaks**, all on 12th (WWF).
- ▶ A visit with a botanical focus to Fei Ngo Shan on 7th found a **Bay Woodpecker** just above Ho Chung and an **Upland Pipit** and **Mountain Bush Warbler** at higher elevations (KB, RB). A **Black Baza**, now something of a rarity, was noted by the same observers at Sha Lo Tung on 17th.
- ▶ A **Lesser Frigatebird** was found at Sai Kung on 11th, and counts of **terns** in southern waters on 20th were as follows: 292 **Black-naped**, 167 **Roseate** and 85 **Bridled** (JAA). Smaller numbers of terns were also noted off Cheung Chau and near the Soko Islands towards the end of the month (MDW).

August

- ▶ A visit to Tai Mo Shan on 1st was highly productive with sightings of a singing **Lesser Shortwing**, four **Chinese Grassbirds**, three **Chinese Babaxes**, two **Vinous-throated Parrotbills**, six **Red-billed Leiothrixes**, 14 **Brown-flanked Bush Warblers**, including four juveniles, and two **Upland Pipits** (ML).
- ▶ Early migrants were in evidence by 20th when a **Grey Wagtail** was at Sai Kung (PJL). The next day an **Eastern Crowned Warbler** was at Yung Shue O (BK) and on the next the first **Yellow Wagtail** of the autumn was at Mai Po (PJL).
- ▶ A **Lesser Frigatebird** was found at Magazine Gap on 22nd (PTH) and subsequently seen most days to 26th.
- ▶ On 24th, a **Eurasian Wryneck** was at Mai Po (BS), the earliest autumn date for this species by 4 days, and a **Plain Flowerpecker** was found at Sai Kung (PJL).
- ▶ Also on 24th, the first "**Arctic Warbler**" of the autumn was reported (BS). In a recent *Ibis* paper entitled "The Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* – three anciently separated cryptic species revealed", Per Alstrom and others propose treating the former Arctic Warbler complex as three species: (1) **Arctic Warbler** *P. borealis* breeding on mainland Eurasia (except southern Kamchatka) and Alaska; (2) **Kamchatka Leaf Warbler** *P. examinandus* breeding in southern Kamchatka, Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands and Hokkaido; and (3) **Japanese Leaf Warbler** *P. xanthodyras* breeding in Japan (except Hokkaido). As the title of their paper suggests, the three species are very similar to each other in appearance, but differ genetically; they can, however, also be separated on differences in song and call and on certain measurements. At present both **Arctic Warbler** (in the new sense) and **Japanese Leaf Warbler** are on the Hong Kong list. Field identification will surely evolve, but the challenge for birders for now is to become familiar with their vocalisations.



August

- ▶ On 27th, the first **Asian** and **Japanese Paradise Flycatchers** of the autumn were at Tai Po Kau (FC) and the first **Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** at Mai Po (KJ). Also at Mai Po on this day were a **Black Bittern** and a very early **Common Kestrel** (KJ, BS). The last days of the month turned up single **Forest Wagtails** at Luk Keng on 28th, Leadmine Pass on 29th and Po Toi on 30th (DT, SLT, GW). Among other sightings at Mai Po at this time were a **Black-naped Oriole** on 28th (WWF), a **Richard's Pipit** and a **Stejneger's Stonechat** (new name for the Stonechat taxon that is widespread in Southeast China on passage and in winter) on 29th and a **Western Osprey** on 31st (all WWF).

September

- ▶ Rarest birds found in this month were an **Asian Lesser Cuckoo** at Po Toi from 2nd to 10th (CNM, GW, BK), a **Baikal Bush Warbler** at Mai Po on 6th (PJL) and a **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** near Tai Po Kau on an unknown date in the first half of the month, (HKBWS web-site, per EMSK). Also, an adult male **Brown Shrike** of the previously unrecorded subspecies *confusus* was found at Mai Po on 27th (PJL).
- ▶ It was a good month for **Manchurian Reed Warblers** (at least 12 at Mai Po, Kam Tin and Long Valley, 6th-30th), **Siberian Blue Robins** (at least seven in total at Tai Po Kau, Mai Po and Po Toi, 4th-23rd) and **Pechora Pipits** (at least nine at Long Valley and Mai Po, 26th-30th).
- ▶ The month brought reports of new high counts of **Eurasian Collared Dove** (25 at Lok Ma Chau on 21st, PJL) and **Pied Harrier** (four at Mai Po on 28th, PJL), and earliest autumn dates of **Black-naped Monarch** (Tai Po Kau on 2nd, PW/MK, the earliest by 3 days), **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** (Mai Po on 27th, PJL, earliest by 13 days) and **Siberian Rubythroat** (Mai Po on 28th, PJL, earliest by 11 days).
- ▶ The above birds excepted, notable reports in the first half of the month included two **Great Crested Grebes** at Lok Ma Chau on 2nd (PJL) - these following the first over-summering bird of 2010 - five **Asian Paradise Flycatchers** at Lung Fu Shan on 3rd (AB), 60 **Whiskered Terns** at Tai Shang Wai the same day (EMSK, RWL), three **Greater Crested Terns** off Po Toi (GW) and a **Bay Woodpecker** at Tai Po Kau (CNM) on 4th, 10 **Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers** at Mai Po on 6th (PJL), four **Dollarbirds** at Mount Davis (BK) and a **Grey Nightjar** at Po Toi (GW) on 7th, a **Large Hawk Cuckoo**, an autumn rarity, at Kam Tin on 9th (JAA), a **Lesser Tree Duck** at Mai Po on 12th (PW, MK), eight **Black-naped Orioles** at Po Toi on 14th (GW) and a **Baillon's Crake**, **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** and **Whimbrel** at Long Valley on 15th (BK).
- ▶ Among a wide variety of shorebirds noted at Mai Po were 41 **Great Knot**, three **Red Knot** and an **Eastern Curlew** on the scrape and the adjacent newly created paddyfield area on 13th (EMSK, RWL).
- ▶ With the exception of a **Crested Honey Buzzard** and **Orange-headed Thrush** at Tai Po Kau on 18th (JAA) and a **Baillon's Crake** at Po Toi on 21st (GW), a new record for the island, nearly all significant reports in the second half of the month were at Mai Po. These included an **Oriental Plover** on 22nd (PJL), an **Oriental/Himalayan Cuckoo** and a **Tiger Shrike** on 23rd (KJ), a **Ruddy Crake**, three **Eurasian Wrynecks** and 15 **Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers** on 27th (PJL) and a **Little Curlew** (BS) and seven **Lanceolated Warblers** (PJL) on 28th. Elsewhere in the Deep Bay area, a **Baillon's Crake** (BK) was at Long Valley on 21st (KJ), up to 10 **Daurian Starlings** were there on 21st and 26th (KJ, JAA) and an **Oriental Plover** was at San Tin on 30th (DS).
- ▶ A **Eurasian Eagle Owl** found at mid-day beside Yuen Long Highway on 22nd (JGH) was thought to have collided with the translucent noise-barriers beside the highway. Miles and miles of these barriers are currently being erected beside highways in the New Territories, including the Tai Po-Fanling Highway. Much remains to be done to improve their design so that they do not kill or injure birds.



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours Apr - Jun 2012

Outings

Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
1/4/2012 (Sun)	1430 - 1830	Long Valley (14:30 Pavilion beside public toilet at Yin Kong Village)	☆☆	Farmland and water birds
4/4/2012 (Wed)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on 2 April on Discussion Forum)		Migrants
7/4/2012 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tsim Bei Tsui (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tin Chak Estate Shopping Centre, Exit near Tin Yat Light Rail Station, Tin Shui Wai)	☆	Waterbirds
8-9/4/2012 (Sun-Mon)		Record 215 (HKBWS Bird Watching Competition 2012) (Details will be announced later)		
15/4/2012 (Sun)	0730 - 1600	Po Toi and HK South Waters (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
22/4/2012 (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
29/4/2012 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi and HK South Waters (08:00 Hang Seng Bank, Sai Wan Ho MTR Station) Note: This will be a long trip on open waters. The ride could be quite rough and some people may be seasick.	☆☆☆	Seabirds and migrants
5/5/2012 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Aberdeen Reservoir (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Hang Seng Bank near Exit B, Central MTR Station)	☆	Forest birds
6/5/2012 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Mo Shan (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Tsuen Wan MTR Station)	☆☆☆	Grassland birds
12/5/2012 (Sat)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on 10 May on Discussion Forum)		Migrants
20/5/2012 (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
2/6/2012 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Shing Mun (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Tsuen Wan MTR Station)	☆	Forest birds
3/6/2012 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Nam Chung and Luk Keng (08:00 Exit C, Fanling MTR, i.e. MTR exit near minibus terminal station)	☆☆	Waterbirds

Member: Free of Charge

Member: Free of Charge

Member: HK\$40 (Student Member: HK\$20)

Member: HK\$160

Non-member: Free of Charge (registration not required)

Non-member: HK\$30 (HK\$10 for age under 19 student) (registration not required)

Non-member: HK\$70 (registration required)

Non-member: HK\$200 (registration required)

Indoor Meetings

Date	Time	Topic	Speakers	Venue
11/1/2012 (Wed)	1900 - 2100	Planning an overseas trip for bird photography: from Norway to Ecuador (Cantonese)	Mr. Felix Ng	Rm. 1105, Scout Assn of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon
15/2/2012 (Wed)	1900 - 2100	Environmental Quality of Deep Bay (Cantonese with English powerpoint)	Dr. Richard Cheung	Rm. 901, Scout Assn of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon
7/3/2012 (Wed)	1900 - 2100	Sea-birding in two islands of the UK : Isle of May & Shetland Islands (Cantonese)	Mr. Kwan Tze Hoi Mr. Matthew Kwan Mr. Koel Ko	Rm. 1101, Scout Assn of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon
29/3/2012 (Thu)	1900 - 2100	Waterbird Monitoring Programme Public Lecture & HKBWS Research Groups Report (Cantonese, Free of Charge)	Mr. Yu Yat Tung Bird Research Groups	Rm. 924, Scout Assn of HK, Austin Road, Kowloon
13/4/2012 (Fri)	1900 - 2100	Identification of Sea birds (Cantonese with bilingual powerpoint)	Mr. Yu Yat Tung	Rm. 1107 Scout Assn 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.)

22 Apr 2012 (Sun) (____ member(s), ____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is _____)

20 May 2012 (Sun) (____ member(s), ____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) using the coach is _____)

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

* Please note that the gathering place and time are different for the 2 activities.

15 Apr 2011 (Sun) (____ member(s), ____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) is _____)

29 Apr 2011 (Sun) (____ member(s), ____ non-member(s)) No. of person(s) is _____)

** We will confirm the participants whether their application is accepted or not about 1 week before the outing. Once confirmed, no refund will be made no matter they can attend the outing or not. Refund will be made only if the outing is cancelled officially due to inclement weather or special reason.

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.

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)

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.



北鷓
葉紀江
塋原

Pechora Pipit
Herman Ip Kee Kong
Long Valley

27/09/2011
DSLR Camera, 300mm f/2.8 lens+
1.4x teleconverter



山麻雀
葉紀江
塋原

Russet Sparrows
Herman Ip Kee Kong
Long Valley

01/11/2011
DSLR Camera, 300mm f/2.8 lens+
1.4x teleconverter

栗樹鴨
黃理沛 江敏兒
米埔

Lesser Whistling Duck
Michelle & Peter Wong
Mai Po

12/09/2011
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens +
1.4x teleconverter



藍歌鵲
黃理沛 江敏兒
蒲台

Siberian Blue Robin
Michelle & Peter Wong
Po Toi

18/09/2011
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



清晰、堅固、手感 鼎足而立 SLC 42 HD 完美升級

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更時尚美觀外型絲毫不減堅固耐用的特質；
人體工學設計神奇地分散重量，舉重若輕，
是陪你克服最惡劣環境的可靠伙伴。



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防霧并防水達四米深。

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SLC 10×42 HD

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具有獨特對焦系統，最近對焦1.9米，
使對焦特別順暢、自如。

人體工學設計

手感一流，分散重量
有效減輕“感覺”重量，
長時間使用依然輕鬆自如。

易潔塗層 SWAROCLEAN

水滴不留痕，鏡面隨時保持最佳狀態
鏡面表面加上易潔塗層後，
因水漬風乾殘留下的水印、蠟燭或樹脂等，
輕輕一擦便無影無踪。

出眾光學表現

高清HD鏡片及優化镀膜
加入含氟化物HD鏡片有效減低色散，
大大提高亮度與銳度，使影像更清晰銳利，
色彩更自然真實；
優化镀膜提高透視性，使畫面乾淨舒適。

SEE THE UNSEEN
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SWAROVSKI
OPTIK

阿穆爾隼
孔思義、黃亞萍
尖鼻咀

Amur Falcon
John and Jemi Holmes
Tsim Bei Tsui

24/10/2011
DSLR Camera, 800mm f/5.6 lens



阿穆爾隼
許志文
米埔

Amur Falcon
Stanley Hui
Mai Po

28/10/2011
DSLR Camera, 500mm f/4 lens + 1.7x teleconverter