

HKBWS

香港觀鳥會 The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society



bulletin
會員通訊

225

Autumn 2012 ~ 秋

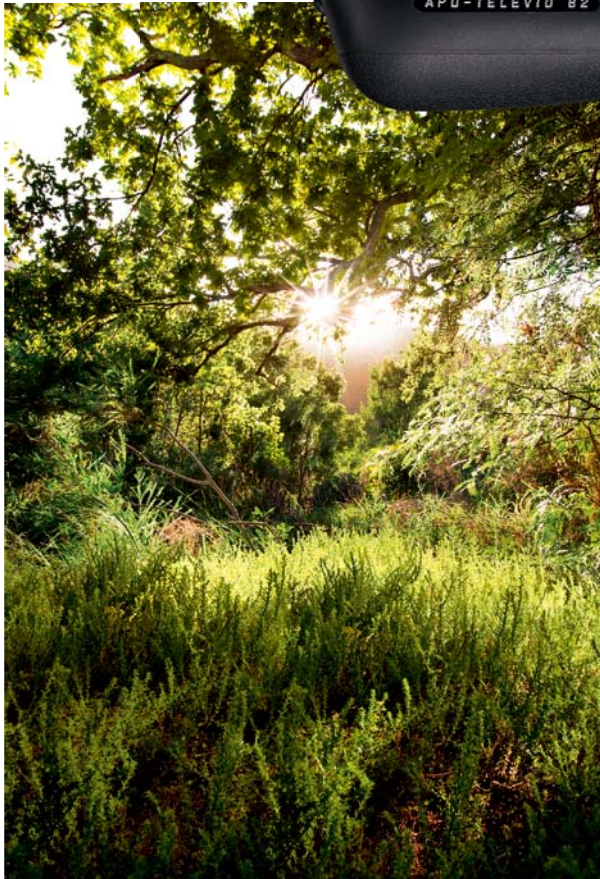


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The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

(Approved Charitable Institution of a Public Character)

Bulletin 225

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Editor's Note

In this Autumn issue, Samson So extols the glories of Kenya, and Stanley Chan explains how he got up-close-and-personal with a Giant Panda in Shaanxi Province.

Among the usual features, Richard Lewthwaite's Bird News reminds us of the variety of passage migrants we saw heading north in spring. Something perhaps, to encourage us to get out and look for the same birds returning south in these few weeks.



John Holmes

Society News and Projects ~ Lo Wai Yan

~ Bonnie Chan

New Membership Validity

Total number of valid members has just reached 1800. We would like to express our gratitude to all our members for their support. New membership validity, i.e. annual membership valid for one whole year from date of joining or renewal, was introduced in July in order to diversify a heavy year-end workload. (For more details, please take a look at the Membership section at our online Discussion Forum.)

Hong Kong Bird Report 2009-10

HKBR 2009-10 will be published very soon and will be posted to full members shortly. We would like to express our gratitude to the Records Committee, and all volunteers who have been involved in the translation, editing, publishing and even the mailing work, so that this report could be published and distributed so smoothly.

“Quiz for New Members”

In order to ensure that members understand proper attitudes and behaviour of birding, individual applicants who intend to become our member shall pass a quiz as a prerequisite for acceptance as a member. This Quiz is based on the 3 documents as follows:

1. “Code of Conduct for Birdwatching and Bird Photography” by HKBWS
2. “Important Note for Birding in Rural Areas” by HKBWS
3. “Codes of Entry to Mai Po” by WWF, HK

All the above-mentioned documents can be downloaded from Membership section at our online Discussion Forum.

13th Elementary Bird Watching Course for Beginners

The 13th Elementary Bird Watching Course will start in mid-November. Please refer to inserts for details of the course and registration form.

Members

Affairs

New Membership Cards

New membership cards, featuring images of Ancient Murrelet and Japanese Murrelet, will replace the existing ones in due course. Many thanks to the following volunteers for their design work and photos:

Designer: Puk Yuk Ying

Photo & photographers:

Ancient Murrelet - Brendan Klick

Japanese Murrelet - John and Jemi Holmes

Society News and Projects ~ (cont.)



HKBWS 55th Anniversary Dinner Celebration

Our 55th Anniversary Dinner Celebration was held on Sunday evening 16 September at CityTop Restaurant, City University of HK. A total of 167 members and non-members had attended. Please visit our discussion forum for photos sharing of this event.

55th Anniversary Souvenirs and Sales Items

To celebrate our 55th Anniversary, limited edition souvenirs and sales items were produced, such as a polo shirt with logo, windbreaker, towel, umbrella and Octopus Card cover. Many thanks to Wendy Yu and Reiko Ngai for allowing us to use their bird drawings for these souvenirs.

Product	Color	Size	Member HKD	Non-Member HKD
Swinhoe's Egret Polo Shirt	Grey	S to XL	\$100	\$125
55th Anniversary Logo Windbreaker	Grey	S to XL	\$200	\$250
Swinhoe's Egret Embroidered Towel	Brown	---	\$20	\$25
Common Kingfisher Octopus Cover	---	---	\$20	\$25
Red-whiskered Bulbul Umbrella	Yellow	---	\$50	\$60

Staff News

Ms Tinky Li has joined the Society as Administration Assistant in July 2012. She is mainly responsible for office daily operations, membership affairs and giving assistance to the execution of various projects.



Swinhoe's Egret drawing by Wendy Yu



Common Kingfisher drawing by Wendy Yu



Red-whiskered Bulbul drawing by Reiko Ngai

Crested Bulbul Club

1. Early Morning Bird Watchers
Number of participants in Hong Kong Park from Mar to April 2012: 228
Number of participants in Kowloon Park from Mar to April 2012: 402

The Crested Bulbul Club 7th Volunteer Training Programme has been completed. A total of 56 new volunteers joined the team. On the other hand, some of the earlier members withdrew due to personal reasons. The present number of members is about 160.

Education



Photo: Crested Bulbul Club



Society News and Projects ~ (cont.)

2012-2015 Nature Conservation Management for Long Valley

~ Vicky Yeung,
Assistant Project Manager

There is a group of youngsters who didn't go shopping at air-conditioned malls or played at the beach to pass the hot summer days but were harvesting in Long Valley under 36°C temperatures. Although it was hard and sweaty, everyone was smiling when watching the golden grain falling and filling up sack after sack. The 2nd round of paddy was planted right afterwards and finished by early August. Now, we just need to wait for the autumn migration and harvest.

This autumn (Sep-Nov), we will have an activity called "The Big Bunting" (last year it was called "Make a Guess") so as to raise the conservation concern on bunting species, especially the globally vulnerable Yellow-breasted Bunting. Moreover, Long Valley Green Mooncakes will be ready for sale soon. Details of the activity will be posted on the HKBWS forum, here: <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/BBS/forumdisplay.php?fid=38>



Activity "Make a Guess" is back with a new name!

Education

- Beetle Cheng, Conservation Officer

Nature Conservation

Long Valley and NENT New Development Areas

The Government has now proposed the middle part of Long Valley to be a "Nature Park" and the north and south parts to remain as "Agriculture". The government's move is responding to the comments and photos submitted by you and other members/birders and HKBWS would like to express our BIG THANKS to members who helped in "save Long Valley with words and photos", objecting to the "CDNCEA (Comprehensive Development and Nature Conservation Enhancement Area)". HKBWS is still concerned about the future of Long Valley. We urge for extension of the Nature Park to the northern part of Long Valley, and the adoption of management strategies combining agriculture and biodiversity conservation. Long Valley is unique and unlike the Wetland Park, it is vulnerable to excessive human disturbance. The "NDAs" would also destroy many other habitats of conservation importance, particularly Hong Kong's remaining agricultural land. HKBWS will continue to express our opinions to the Government.

Lok Ma Chau Loop

HKBWS considers that the Lok Ma Chau Loop Development is unacceptable in both planning and environmental aspects. We feel that our previous comments have not been properly addressed by Government while the public consultation lacks transparency.

Sha Lo Tung

HKBWS objects to the development of a huge columbarium at Sha Lo Tung under the name of "Nature Conservation". After hard work by Mr. Lam Chiu Ying and a number of green groups, the Advisory Council on the Environment decided to ask for more information from the project proponent and will defer a decision. HKBWS is preparing the next stage of campaign, so please pay attention to further updates on this topic.

Fishpond Management Agreement Programme in Northwest New Territories

A total of 28 participants have completed the Fishpond Eco-tour Guide Training Course in the past few months. Public tours will be organized from September to November 2012. Some fishermen have also shared their knowledge and experience of fishpond operation and the fishery culture of Hong Kong with the participants.



A fisherman demonstrates how to cast a fishing net.

Conserving one of Asia's rarest birds—

Jankowski's Bunting

~ Vivian Fu, China Programme Officer

The China Programme recently worked with Beijing Bird Watching Society and BirdLife International on a new project to conserve Jankowski's (or Rufous-backed Bunting) *Emberiza jankowskii*, one of the rarest buntings in Asia. Jankowski's Bunting is a small grassland passerine which was once common in North East China, Far East Russia and North Korea. However, due to growing human population, their breeding habitat (mainly Siberian apricot shrub habitat) has been converted into agricultural land and pasture. Now the bird has vanished from most of its former distributional range, and is only recorded in several scattered sites at its breeding grounds in Inner Mongolia and Jilin, China. Estimated population of the bunting is less than 1,000 individuals. Because of its drastic decline in number, Jankowski's Bunting was listed as Vulnerable (VU) in 1994 and up-listed to Endangered (EN) in 2010 on the IUCN Red List.

With an urgent need to study the present status of the species, last year, a monitoring programme to study the breeding population of the bunting was carried out by Beijing Bird Watching Society, which was also aided by BirdLife International, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and supported by an Oriental Bird Club Conservation Grant. Although the area covered by the survey team was limited, the results of the survey still showed a worrying situation.



Jankowski's Bunting (Photo: Martin Hale)

In addition to acquiring basic ecological information, effort should be allocated to conserving the suitable habitat for the existing population. In order to advocate the government and the nature reserve management teams to the importance of conserving the bird, The first round-table meeting was organized in Tumuji National Nature Reserve, Inner Mongolia, between 6th and 8th June, 2012. Mr. Simba Chan from BirdLife International, Dr. Wang Hai Tao from the North-east Normal University, representative of National Bird Banding Centre and officials from Tumuju National Nature Reserve as well as Keerqin National Nature Reserve and other conservation bodies were invited to the meeting. We were also happy to meet keen local conservationists who spontaneously initiated work to protect this species.

During the meeting, a preliminary action plan was developed, which included establishing a communication network among the conservation organizations, research groups and the reserve management teams, producing promotional materials such as posters and booklets for the public and government officers. Research teams will keep monitoring and surveying potential sites for the bunting. Managing sites for conserving Jankowski's Bunting remains the biggest challenge, thus advocacy with the local government will be the next step and it is important to gain their support. In addition to that, more funding is needed to push things forward. With more attention drawn to this species, we hope its population will recover in the near future.



Round-table meeting for conservation of Jankowski's Bunting in Tumuji, Inner Mongolia (Photo: Vivian Fu)

Society News and Projects ~ (cont.)

Highlights

55th Anniversary Dinner on September 16, 2012



Some of our senior members



Opening ceremony - Popper playing



Have a toast !!



55th Anniversary Souvenir & Sales Item

Mai Po Update

~ John Allcock

Poor breeding success for Black-winged Stilts in 2012

Following a highly successful breeding season for Black-winged Stilts in 2011, when up to 58 nests were present at Mai Po, hopes were high for another successful year in 2012. Birds settled to breed early and by early May there were 26 active nests on the Scrape (Gei wai #16/17) and more birds settling to breed on Gei wai #21. A few early pairs had even managed to hatch chicks in early May.

Unfortunately, this early success was not continued. Two dogs managed to find their way onto the islands in the Scrape on several days in early May. Although they do not seem to have eaten the eggs, the adult stilts seem to have decided the risk was too high and abandoned their nests. Over the course of a week or two, all active nests on the Scrape were abandoned. Luckily the early broods of chicks survived and a few birds continued to nest on Gei wai #21, so there have been a few young stilts fledged on the reserve this year, but numbers are significantly down from recent years.

The incident has highlighted the problems that dogs can cause on the reserve, where they can disturb roosting or breeding birds and can kill wildlife. Of course, visitors are not permitted to bring dogs, but dogs still come into the reserve from nearby villages or fishpond areas. Some animals (including the two that caused problems this year) are trapped and taken away by the Animal Control Unit at AFCD. WWF is also trying to find other ways to reduce the number of dogs finding their way into the reserve.

Island Enhancement at Education Centre ponds

Visitors to the Education Centre this summer have probably noticed that one of the ponds (Pond #15a) has been drained for most of the summer. This is to allow work to be carried out to enhance the islands in this pond. These islands were originally created using old tyres to demonstrate environmentally-friendly reuse of materials. Over time, however, some tyres came loose and the islands started to look untidy. To improve the appearance of these islands, work was carried out on one island in 2011 and on the other two islands in 2012. The old tyres are again reused as the core structure of the island, but these are now contained within a solid concrete wall and a covered so are no longer visible. It is hoped that the islands will not only provide a roosting site for ducks visiting the Education Centre ponds, but hopefully will also provide an alternative nesting site for Black-winged Stilts in future years.

Oriental Stork at Mai Po

One of the most surprising events of the summer at Mai Po was the appearance of an Oriental Stork on 12th July. Not only was this the first sighting of the species in Hong Kong since 2004, but the mid-summer date was also completely unprecedented - all previous Hong Kong records have occurred in winter. Most of the global population breeds in northeast China or eastern Russia, with tiny populations also in Jiangxi and in Japan, so the appearance as far south as Hong Kong in mid-summer was totally unexpected. It certainly added interest to the quiet summer months.



"Island in Education Centre pond before and after enhancement works" (Credit: WWF-Hong Kong)



My fond memories of Kenya

In April 2001, work took me to Kenya, the destination of my dreams – truly an Animal Kingdom.

Kenya has a total area of 582,646 sq km straddling the equator. Kenya's image as a "Wild Animal Kingdom" is well established with its many national parks and a multitude of wild animals living there. In television documentaries, we have seen so many stunning images such as a pride of lions hunting a zebra, or breath-taking scenes of wildebeests suddenly caught by crocodiles while crossing a river, or the amazing speed and agility of a cheetah chasing down a gazelle, or the strength of the predator exhibited by a leopard skillfully lifting its kill up into a tree. However, in real life, these are really precious moments rarely witnessed, even for the wildlife researchers who are stationed there. It is not unusual for spoilt tourists to visit Kenya on one occasion and expect to see a live show of all the spectacular moments captured in documentaries. In fact, there is a lesser documented spectacle in Kenya one can reasonably expect – the richness of bird species.

~ Text and photos by Samson So

There are over 1,100 bird species recorded in Kenya, more than one tenth of the world's total of about 10,000, and almost twice as many as the number of mammal species found in East Africa. The birds are distributed across various habitats. Some can be found in wide open savannahs amongst lions and antelope, some in wetlands enjoying reflections of the open sky, some even in cities, bringing a bit of nature to urban life. That means when visiting Kenya, there are definitely more chances of seeing birds than other wild animals.

Birding in Kenya can be really exciting. Apart from the high number of species and their diverse habitats, the birds are also quite "approachable". The local tribespeople display great respect and awe towards wild animals, so they will not hunt and kill animals excessively. And with the set up of conservation areas and other protective policies, there is little pressure from hunters, so the birds are more willing to get closer to humans. At breakfast on the Masai Mara plains, we have had bulbuls, starlings and weaver birds coming to share the warmth of the early sun and the sumptuous food on our dining table. Even a spurfowl showed its curiosity and lingered around showing interest in our food. And at Lake Naivasha, we waited quietly with the Goliath Heron for its prey while the sun gradually sank to the west.



Birding in Kenya can be done in a relaxed pleasurable manner. Outside a hotel in Nairobi, the capital city, while waiting for the film crew to prepare for artist make-up and equipment setting, I took a coffee break and enjoyed Kenya's special blend watching sunbirds gathering nectar in a flowering bush. I was amused by this contrasting picture of a leisurely me against the busy tiny birds. Looking at the golden reflections on Lake Nakuru, we welcomed the dawning of a new day together with five hundred thousand Lesser Flamingoes by the lake side; it was the most vivacious sunrise ever in my life. On a cold and rainy morning, in the dawning hours at Lake Naivasha, an African Fish Eagle stood proudly on a tree overlooking its territory, its majestic look alone was enough to make me forget the coldness in the air. On the open grassland in Masai Mara, I watched a flock of White Storks storing up energy for their long and challenging migration. Quietly, I saluted their adventurous spirit. Everything I saw and felt carried a lot more emotional weight than just the sight records for me as a natural ecologist and nature lover. I totally forgot about work; while listening to the melodious bird songs, I sighed with awe at the beauty of nature; seeing the brilliant colours of the birds, I trembled at the spectacle of life.

A trip to Kenya, in whatever nature and style, can always give one a brand new experience, thanks to the birds. On this trip, our driver was a guy called Simon (pronounced as si-mone); he was also a veteran birder. When we talked about Kenya's eco-travel activities, he said that most first-time visitors were only interested in mammals, and didn't know much about the big variety of birds there. I believe most tour organizers only emphasize the 'Big Five' (i.e. Elephants, Rhinoceros, Hippos, Lions and Leopards), thus encouraging a misconception amongst tourists that not much else is worth seeing.



There were a dozen of us in the Kenyan business trip I did eleven years ago, and only I had a particular interest in wildlife. So all the experience and joy I gained from various sightings could only be shared after the trip with friends through slide pictures, and the number of pictures was quite limited. On top of that, I was there on business and not wildlife observation and photography, so work came first. We travelled long hours on the road and there wasn't much free time. In order to gain as much time as possible for wildlife, I could only squeeze out some 'off-business' hours by giving up rest time, doing without lunch, and declining invitations to tea. Other members of our tour found my behaviour incomprehensible, but I still think to this day that the precious time I spent experiencing nature was worth a lot more than the fine food I missed on that trip.

Eleven years later in 2012, I have been glad to be able to lead tours to Kenya for 35 days, and experienced the joy with over forty friends who share the same interests. I hope that through gaining first-hand experience in the field, and with the exchange and interflow between instructors and students, more people will become curious in birds and ecology, and begin to care about the conservation issues around them in daily life.

Note: Photos shown here were taken on slide film long ago. Some detail may also be lost during digitization, so my apologies for the quality. Later this year I may be able to share better pictures, please follow this column.



"Records 215" - the 2012 Bird Race - "Greenest Team of All"



Competitors of This Year's game

After a few years in the HKBWS Bird Race I knew that the biggest challenge was transportation. We would need to use a private car and I was concerned about potential carbon emissions. Suddenly, I thought: Why can't we use bicycles in the Race? To make it come true, I needed to have a team of competitors who were also willing to take up the challenge. Since there are

limitations in travelling by bicycle, we needed to concentrate our birding to only a few sites. These included Mai Po, Lui Kung Tin, Kam Tin and Tai Tong, all of which are in the northwest NT. We considered Long Valley, but travelling on the road to get there looked too dangerous. Even so, total travelling distance on our chosen route over the two days of the Race reached 77 miles !

However, we enjoyed the trip and competition and we were able to observe raptors easily. For example, we found Besra and Japanese Sparrowhawk near Shek Kong, and Common Magpie near Tam Kon Chau, as well as a Hoopoe near Hung Mo Kiu. Right after the competition ended, we saw Red-vented Bulbuls near Pok Wai.

Here again, I need to thank my crazy team members and all our sponsors and supporters.

ALAN

People always said we were crazy when they knew we are going to take part in the HKBWS Bird Race using bicycles as transport. Even before the competition started, we never thought we would win and we estimated that travelling by bike within the limited time allowed would mean we could not get far. Also, we did not have time to stay for long at any site to enjoy observing birds, which was a big regret. At the end of the competition, after the excitement had faded, we soon felt exhausted. But it was worth it, even though we didn't win the competition.

We were satisfied, even proud of our own efforts stopping and observing birds on our bicycles. The happiest thing is that the whole team shared the same will and finished the competition in a "low carbon" way. And we certainly appreciated the support and encouragement of our birding friends. Their encouragement became our energizer, and we are looking forward to seeing more birding teams riding bicycles.

YAU

I heard about last years' competition and route and I became ambitious to join this year's bicycle team. During the competition, we needed to ride uphill, we got flat tyres, and we needed to carry heavy items. Despite this, we found that every team member still had enough energy to find birds. We may have had sore legs afterwards, but we did enjoy the competition, with mutual support as well as the sharing of ideas and tips from each other. I do hope that there will be more bicycle teams next year.

SANG

Competitors of last Year's game

Route for This year's competition

bicycles are mainly for leisure use. In a busy city like Hong Kong, people have got used to better technology and to cope with busy careers. But I longed to go back to the past, to live slowly, and be able to appreciate nature and seek happiness gained from a simple life.

Joining the bicycle team, I aimed at reducing pollution as well as proving that slow didn't mean low efficiency. Although we moved slower than vehicles, our birding results were good. Efficiency means not only speed, but knowledge of birds, route planning, observation and bird sound listening, as well as strong will. I say "Thank you" to our team leader and the other team members for their help. And to you, dear readers.... "Join Us!"

LEE



My Bird Watching Diary

~ Text and Illustrations: Wendy Yu

Common Kestrel - *Falco tinnunculus*

20th July 2012

I chose the Common Kestrel in its wing-spreading position because of its beautiful style. Although it does not have the commanding presence of other raptors, it does display a beauty of light and rapid movement. Once, when birding in Long Valley, I witnessed a Common Kestrel catching a small rat, which was so cool to see.





普通燕鴒
盧嘉孟
米埔

Oriental Pratincole
Lo Kar Man
Mai Po

03/03/2012
DSLR Camera, 800mm f/5.6 lens



黃葦鶉
Clement F.
青衣公園

Yellow Bittern
Clement F.
Tsing Yi Park

05/06/2012

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

紫背葦鶉-雌鳥
陳土飛
青衣公園

Von Schrenck's Bittern - female
Thomas Chan
Tsing Yi Park

30/05/2012

DSLR Camera, 500mm lens + 1.4x teleconverter



紫背葦鶉 - 雄鳥
陳佳瑋
青衣公園

Von Schrenck's Bittern - male
Chan Kai Wai
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29/05/2011
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彩鷸
何建業
米埔

Greater Painted-snipe
Kinni Ho Kin Yip
Mai Po

20/05/2012
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter

My Black-eared Kite Story (4A)

~ by Peter Chan

Photo Credits : Peter Chan / Alfred



January marks the beginning of the breeding season of Black-eared Kite. They get busy as shown by their aerial courtship flights. Carrying twigs and sticks and getting a bill full of napkins can be just part of their usual courtship behaviour. Their purpose is very simple – to produce the next generation.



Courtship flight



With a mouthful of napkin he declares his territory

They also snatch the food of other kites. Some do it just for fun but for others it has the meaning of finding a life-long partner. For those who have already mated successfully last year, they will mate again with the same partner this year. Kites are mostly monogamous, but some females do have more than one partner.



A trio appeared in the nest

Most of the Black-eared Kites re-use their old nests for breeding. They will only build a new nest if the old ones are badly damaged or have been occupied by others. It seems that they love to build their nests in those trees with stronger trunks and dense leaves like *Ficus microcarpa*, *Acacia confusa*, *Terminalia catappa* and *Cinnamomum camphora*. Sometimes they even nest on buildings, iron frames, walls and vacant air conditioner sills.



*Black-eared Kites like to nest in tree with dense leaves like *Ficus microcarpa**



*Nest covered with white colour nesting materials **



Foam board as the nesting material

Nesting materials are in fact very diverse. Most birds use only twigs, tree leaves and feathers but Black-eared Kites also use newspapers, paper, napkins, towels, foam boards, unused fishing nets, sponges, plastic bags, gloves, clothes, even coat hangers. All the abovementioned nesting materials have one thing in common – their light colour. Studies in foreign countries also suggest that the light colour of the materials has the purpose of declaring a territory.

Late January to early March marks the peak season for mating. When the female is ready to mate, her cloaca will become swollen. The female will give short and gentle, high-pitched calls signaling she is ready to mate. The male will give titbits of food to the female in order to be accepted. As mating occurs, the male will fly to the female's back and call rapidly. It takes about ten seconds but they can mate a few dozen times a day. If mating is successful, the female will lay eggs in 7-14 days. Even after the eggs are laid, the female will continue to mate so that she may have more eggs later. A female will lay 1-3 eggs every year and the eggs are whitish with brownish spots.



*2 Black-eared Kites' eggs **



the female incubates the eggs in the nest

After laying eggs, a pair of kites will enter into a cooling-off period. The female will stay in the nest to hatch the eggs while the male is responsible for providing food to the female. The female will only leave the nest when she feels the temperature of the eggs is too high or she is tired; then she will fly off to scratch her feet nearby. However, she will return to the nest and continue to incubate the eggs within minutes. If the temperature is too high, the female may leave the nest for 30 minutes or so. The male may take the role of incubation if he finds the female is away from the nest. Normally it takes about 30-40 days to incubate the eggs but this varies according to the weather conditions and the timing of the incubation of individual birds.



*my gratitude to Alfred for providing the photos

The beauty of Qinling captured in a 500mm long lens

~ Stanley Chan

The huge main building of Xian airport was only a month old when we arrived in July 2012. Everything seemed brand new, advanced and modern, contrasting with over a thousand years of history for this ancient capital.

The leader of our trip, Da Gong, flew from Beijing to meet us. First, we headed for lunch. Though we ordered some plain oily noodles, typically for north China they were covered with chilli oil when they arrived. Afterwards we began our 6-hour trip through the Qinling Mountains. Spread across 1,500 miles, this range forms the watershed that separates the Yangtse from the Yellow River and the division of south China from north.

The Xihan highway snakes southwards into the mountains along a gigantic valley, above a river channel. The whole of the four-lane aerial highway is supported by bridge columns standing in a river bed. This massive and complicated construction may be an engineering achievement, but it has sacrificed the ecology of the whole river channel and the river banks. China's uprising is like Dionysus or a lost beast, dashing and bumping around crazily.

We needed to pass 76 tunnels. Each of them has its own name. At first everyone was in the mood to count together the tunnels we went through; but I gave up after number twenty-something and just sat by the window, musing on the historic place names on the highway signboards.... Xianyang, Wuhou Tomb, Hanzhong, Tongguan. After four hours we got to Yangxian. While Da Gong applied for entry to the Changqing Nature Reserve, everyone took the chance to get off the truck to stretch. Onward to Huayang Ancient Town, all the roads were steep and narrow, so it took 2 hours to cover 70 miles. Huayang Ancient Town is

in the south of Qinling mountain range. It has been an important staging post for the past thousand years and is said to be the only way to get to Hanzhong from Changan in ancient times. The current preserved appearance can be traced back to the Qing Dynasty. A renovation project in 2010 was aimed at the general tourism market and put a gloss on all the age-old walls and pillars, making the whole place lose much of its original character. Da Gong told us that a flood in July 2011 destroyed the newly completed area. Since the town is a focal attraction of tourism of the Provincial Government, it was soon repaired. We found a hotel right on the main street, close to a memorial arch for the "Danglou Ancient Trail". There were just a few passers-by and all apparently locals. We got up early the next day and started to walk along the lane beside the river banks. Rubble, sand and mud all washed down in the 2010 flood was still around, we imagined how shocking the flood would have been. Beyond open fields on the right, different layers of the mountain ranges of the Qinling were cast in mist. A lot of Plumbeous Water Redstarts stood on boulders in the river channel, usually both male and females together. On various utility poles were Crested Kingfisher, Black-capped Kingfisher and Common Kingfisher. Collared Finchbill, Yellow-Vented Bulbul and Brown Shrikes occupied the cedar branches at the road sides. Crested Ibises could be seen in the fields far away from time to time, but we planned to look for wild Giant Panda in the Changqing Nature Reserve on our first full day, so we did not go after the Ibises. We found a fire engine parked by the road. The crew were acquaintances of Da Gong and had come to



Black-faced Bunting



Giant Panda

watch birds; these bird-watching firemen even told us that a Common Moorhen on the opposite bank was a new record for the area. Qinling has 4 types of first-grade state protection animals, namely Crested Ibis, Giant Panda, Golden Snub-nosed Monkey and Golden Takin.

Along the way we recorded Grey-Capped Greenfinch, Common Pheasant, Grey-backed Shrike, and Black-faced Bunting. We arrived at the entrance of Changqing Nature Reserve after nine o'clock. Our reserve guide, Ding Qian, turned out to be a quiet veteran of the area. For more than twenty years, he has been taking and recording numerous priceless photos, including Giant Pandas, birds, other wild animals, plants, and insects. Da Gong is senior to Ding Qian and an Associate Professor of Beijing University; his wide exposure gives him an easy-going and funny disposition; in contrast to Ding Qian's more conservative outlook. A straight and wide mountain road led into the reserve. Da Gong told us that this was built years ago by the Bureau of Forestry for logging. Professor Pan Wen Shi and Da Gong, allied with more than forty other scientists petitioned (then) Premier Zhu Rong Ji to stop the destruction. Da Gong joked that he was worried for his safety at that time, but luckily Premier Zhu made final decision to set up the Changqing Nature Reserve as it is now. It is possible that since then, the

relationship between Professor Pan and some powerful local people turned sour; anyway, there is always change out there. Later, Professor Pan made up his mind to start from zero again to research another similar endangered animal unique to China, the White-headed Langur at Chongzuo in Guangxi. Walking after Ding Qian I lost sight of our leader Ken. I felt sorry for him as he showed complete dedication to carry his heavy 500 mm lens. Dense arrow bamboo jungle lined the mountain trails. We found panda faeces all along the way. Ding Qian said

the droppings were fresh, the panda should have been here that morning. He wanted us to keep quiet to hear if there were any movements inside the bamboo jungle. Along the trail uphill the air got even more refreshing and sweet. Fir, cedar and other trees looked upright and handsome. Along the trail, we recorded Green-backed Tit, Coal Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Minivet, Dusky Warbler, and Yellow-rumped Warbler among others. We come to a couple of simple huts at a height of 2,100 meters, the former research base of Professor Pan. There was still a wooden plate in the front door declaring "The research base of Beijing University". After a short recess, Ding Qian suggested we go back downhill to the entrance to have lunch and then decide what to do next. It is just one o'clock when we start our noodles.



Golden monkey

It seemed that the morning walk had consumed the physical power of our team members, but we had not found any Giant Pandas. Da Gong recommended most to take a longer rest, while I and Ding Qian went back along the trail to search inside the bamboo jungle.

Ding Qian soon disappeared into the dense bamboo jungle to the left of the path. I followed him but thrashing through the bamboo, I found fine bamboo sticks just kept hooking my bag; wet and slippery fallen bamboo leaves on the ground subsided underfoot. We lost contact, found each other, and carried on several times. Obviously Ding Qian was following the panda droppings. I didn't realize we had been in the bamboo jungle for an hour until I looked at my watch. Even though I was soaked thoroughly, elevated adrenaline kept me going. Finding yet another pile of Panda droppings, I took out a plastic bag from my knapsack to get a consolation souvenir. At that moment, Ding Qian returned and whispered excitedly in my ear. I was totally disoriented at first and thought he did not agree with me to collect the droppings which I put back right away. Instead he pointed to a "boulder" in front and then gave me a hand signal to detour to the opposite direction. Finally I fixed my eyes on the up-and-down movement of the "boulder" and realized that it was a wild Giant Panda having a noon-time nap. So we quietly moved away together.

Back on the main path, Ding Qian left me behind to keep an eye on the situation, then he ran downhill to inform all the other team members. There I was, alone in the forest, with a slumbering Giant Panda just thirty feet away.

All our team members arrived after about thirty minutes and we re-entered the dwarf bamboo nervously, Ken with his 500mm lens. We spread out in a semi-circle and kept ten feet away from the panda which was still in its sweet dreams. But our noises woke it up, and it instantly flipped over to stand up and then turned to face us clearly, before strutting off to our right. We followed it.



Crested Kingfisher

On catching up with Ding Qian again we found the panda sitting a few feet ahead of him. I was prepared and took out an automatic camera to get close-up shots. Ken utterly cannot believe this type of exceptional encounter, he was just holding the 500mm lens uselessly. Then, a team member lent him a mini-sized automatic camera, and he made himself busy. More than ten minutes later, Da Gong let us know that it was time to leave as we should not stay too long. When we got back to the path, we couldn't subside our emotions and shouted out loudly. Da Gong urged us to keep calm as the sound may disturb the Giant Panda again. Qinling Giant Panda was first found in Fo Ping County in the winter of 1959. According to DNA verification, Qinling Giant Panda separated from the common type of "Sichuan nominate subspecies" Giant Panda (including Giant Panda with breeding grounds in Sichuan and Gansu) some 12,000 years ago in different distributional areas. Discrepancies are found in their respective evolutionary histories and hereditary genes. Genetically speaking, Qinling Giant Panda (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*) is closer to primal panda (*Ailuvarctos lufengensis*), while Sichuan Giant Panda has a faster evolutionary pace. Back to the town in the late afternoon, we went straight to the fields nearby to find Crested Ibis. The scientific name of Crested Ibis is *Nipponia nippon*, and it is called "Toki" in Japan. It was once believed extinct in China. But in 1981, seven wild Crested Ibises were found in Yangxian. Rescue and conservation action was taken immediately; now there are around 200 of them living



Crested Ibis



Crested Ibis



Collared Finchbill

in the wild and are named by scientists “Qinling Crested Ibis group No.1”. We walked slowly along the field banks passing some houses. The farmers did not seem to worry about us as we carried cameras and binoculars with us. Crested Ibises appeared in twos and threes, and we spent three hours photographing them. The sun did not set until eight o’clock. Though we were quite exhausted, when all of us sat down to have dinner, the

day’s wonderful experiences maintained our spirits and energy. At night Da Gong wanted to discuss with us how to develop ecological tourism in Huayang. In fact Huayang exhibits problems typical among cities and villages - all the young people would like to go to the cities and were reluctant to stay behind. Just like some researchers from the cities only spending two or three years in the field before returning to their institutions.

Ding Qian and those other researchers staying in Huayang for long periods of time also face a succession problem. It seemed that local officials only knew about mass tourism practices and were newcomers to the concept of conservation and ecological tourism. Zoo-like parks for Golden Snub-nosed Monkey, Golden Takin and Crested Ibis in the areas close by the county have already been completed. In order to attract tourists, the county government might erect an additional “park” for the Giant Panda in future. As outsiders, it was not easy for us to understand the situation there. We suggested conducting more ecology-tour groups on bird or panda watching, at the same time, field trip activities could be promoted at local primary and secondary schools to inspire the interest of children and to nurture them to become successors. All these steps are easier said than done.



Giant Panda



White-browed Laughingthrush



Eurasian Hoopoe



Brown Shrike



Common Pheasant

In the morning of the third day, a downpour held us back from making a repeated trip to Changqing, so we instead went to the Golden Snub-nosed Monkey Park nearby once the rain eased. We stopped to take bird photos along the way. Grey-headed Lapwing, Eurasian Jay, Black Baza, Grey Bushchat, Chinese Goshawk, White-browed Laughingthrush, Yellow-rumped Flycatcher and Russet Sparrow were further added to our records, but it was raining all day.

At six o'clock on our fourth morning I tapped on Ken's door. He replied and came out in ten minutes, but all others answered me with steady snoring sounds. We went to some nests of Crested Ibis in the tree tops besides the road. We just stood by the road side to observe and take photos; the 500 mm lens habitually carried by Ken became the focal point of passers by. Soon Ding Qing and Da Gong arrived. Since everyone was having fun, I lent my binoculars to the gathered locals and children. They were all familiar with Crested Ibises, but this was the very first time they could have a close up look at them. Their excited expressions were just the same as we had when we come across the Giant Panda, all smiles. Some of them are impatient and turn to Ding Qian to use his binoculars; but he is not used to that kind of public interaction and looked bit embarrassed to turn them down. It is already nine o'clock when we got back to the hotel, everyone was full of energy after breakfast. Ken decided to

lead everyone again to take photos of the nests of the Crested Ibises. We left Hua Yang Ancient Town at noon and while passing thorough Yangxian took the opportunity to visit the tomb of Cai Lun, a paper-making pioneer. The tomb area is not large, but there were several ancient trees on the site over a thousand years old. During this visit, to our surprise we found Asian Paradise-Flycatcher and Brown Hawk Owl in the trees. I was so miserable to have nothing with me and just admired Ken manipulating his 500 mm lens up and down around the Cai Lun tomb like an ancient sword. We finally returned to Xian in the evening. The next morning, tourists packed like sardines in the Terracotta Army Museum confused me, and more than that their tour guides were shouting at the top of their voices to fill up every corner of the exhibition rooms. I quickly tried to get away from the crowd. It was just like getting through the dense arrow bamboo jungle back in Changqing Nature Reserve, the splashing sound replaced by thundering voices. The only things staying calm were those 2,000 year-old warrior statues. We returned to Xian airport at one o'clock. In three-and-a-half days we had recorded 57 bird species. 338 species have been recorded in the Qinling Mountains and there should be much more to be discovered there. But the daunting task of developing a public attitude of nature appreciation in our country will take a century.





~ Richard Lewthwaite

(This is not an official record, and observers are reminded of the importance of submitting all their records (preferably electronically) to the Records Committee. Contact Geoff Welch <geoffwelch46@yahoo.co.uk> for details – Ed.)

April

- ▶ Although initially full of promise, this was one of the poorest Aprils in recent memory, with migrants coming through in small numbers and low diversity. Only one Chinese **Sparrowhawk** and a couple of **Grey-faced Buzzards** were reported, and Po Toi was thought to host 20-30 species fewer than usual (GW).
- ▶ All the same, this being the top month of the year, some birds of note did turn up. Highlights were a **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** of the distinctive, soon-to-be-split subspecies *cumatilis* at Tai Po Kau on 7th (KPK), a **Grey-necked Bunting** at Long Ke, Sai Kung on 10th (Lalan) and a **Japanese Murrelet** in southern waters on 21st (JGH, AF), all potential second records for Hong Kong.
- ▶ The month produced new high counts for four species: **Red-necked Phalarope** (2490 off Po Toi on 5th, GW), **Caspian Tern** (170 on the Mai Po scrape on 7th, JGH), **Ashy Minivet** (55 at Tai Po Kau Headland on 9th, RB) and **Whimbrel** (320 passing Po Toi on 25th, GW).
- ▶ Ten **Parasitic Jaegers** off Po Toi on 1st (BK) were the earliest ever in spring by three days, and a Rufous-tailed Robin at Po Toi on 28th (BK) was the latest ever in spring by 5 days. There were also first ever spring reports of two species previously unrecorded in this season: **Yellow-streaked Warbler** (one singing at Ping Che on 9th-11th, JAA) and **Red-throated Loon** (one off Po Toi on 28th, BK).
- ▶ In Deep Bay, one or two **Spoon-billed Sandpipers** were noted on 4th-6th and 18th, (AF, RWL, JGH). Other waterbird counts included 540 **Greater Sand Plovers** on 4th (AF), 24 **Nordmann's Greenshanks** on 5th (YYT), 6000 **Curlew Sandpipers** on 6th (AF), 42 **Long-toed Stints** on 18th (JAA) and 310 **Gull-billed Terns** on 20th (RWL). Rarer waterbirds included one or two **Little Stints** from 1st, one or two **Swinhoe's Egrets** from 5th (RWL), a **Pectoral Sandpiper** on 14th (YYT) and two **Lesser Frigatebirds** on 21st (KJ). Among very few passerine reports of note at Mai Po were a **Chestnut-cheeked Starling** on 9th (JAA), a male **Siberian Blue Robin** on 11th (DAD), a **Citrine Wagtail** on 13th (DS) and a singing **Styan's Grasshopper Warbler** on 20th and 28th (PW, MK).
- ▶ Kam Tin and Long Valley were likewise quiet. The former held a **Two-barred Warbler** on 4th (JAA), and the latter a **Chestnut-eared Bunting** on 6th (GT), a **Ruddy-breasted Crake** and **Eurasian Wryneck** on 9th and an **Eastern Water Rail** on 14th (Inca).

- ▶ Elsewhere in the NT, there were reports of the first **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** of the year at Lead Mine Pass on 4th (SLT), a late **Chestnut-flanked White-eye** at Tai Po Kau Headland on 7th (RB) and a **Bay Woodpecker** there on 12th (RB). Towards the middle of the month a freshly dead **Orange-headed Thrush**, a window-strike victim, was found on a high ledge at CUHK campus on 13th (RWL) and three males and a female of this fine thrush species were noted at Tai Po Kau the next day (GJC). Notable reports from the Brides Pool Road area were a **Brown Fish Owl** on 8th (KJ), 12 **Ashy Minivets** on 9th and a **Ferruginous Flycatcher** and (rarely heard in HK) a singing **Olive-backed Pipit** on 19th (GJC). **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoos**, already reported in late March, were singing away at Tai Long Wan on 9th (EMSK) and Fei Ngo Shan on 14th (RB), both possibly new sites, and also at Lead Mine Pass (SLT) and Lam Tsuen (EMSK, DT, MH).
- ▶ Po Toi hosted a variety of migrants on a few days early in the month, including four **Narcissus Flycatchers** on 5th-6th (GW), three **Northern Boobooks**, 14 **Rufous-tailed Robins** and a **Japanese Yellow Bunting** on 6th (EMSK, BK) and two **Grey-faced Buzzards** on 7th (PW, MK). Later in the month, reports tended to dry up, notable exceptions being two **Yellow-browed Buntings** on 15th (PW, MK), a **Chinese Sparrowhawk** on 21st (PW, MK) and a late **Narcissus Flycatcher** and five **Japanese Leaf Warblers** on 29th (HKBWS).
- ▶ Seawatching from Po Toi was often more productive of rarities than birding on the island itself. Seabirds seen off Po Toi or from boats in southern waters (mainly BK, GW, JGH, HKBWS) included up to 10 **Parasitic Jaeger** on 1st-14th, up to five **Long-tailed Jaeger** on 6th-14th, a **Pomarine Skua** on 14th, up to 11 **Great Crested Terns** on 3rd-28th, up to seven **Aleutian Terns** on 4th and 21st and 108 on 28th, up to 13 **Streaked Shearwaters** on 7th-8th, up to nine **Short-tailed Shearwaters** on 25th-28th, a **Lesser Frigatebird** on 8th and 29th, two **Ancient Murrelets** on 10th and 21st and the **Japanese Murrelet** on 21st.
- ▶ Away from Po Toi, few reports were received from other offshore islands. Cheung Chau hosted a **Ferruginous Flycatcher** on 6th and an unidentified frigatebird on 17th (MDW), whilst a **Two-barred Warbler** and single **Narcissus** and **Hainan Blue Flycatchers** were at Dong Ping Chau on 9th (JAA) and a **Northern Boobook** at Lamma on 21st (JAA).
- ▶ The only reports of note from Hong Kong Island concerned a **Narcissus Flycatcher** and a **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** at Po Shan Road on 5th (BK).

May

- ▶ Periods of sustained easterly winds led to a good variety of seabirds being found off Po Toi from 11th to 13th and again from 26th to 30th, the highlight being a **Swinhoe's Storm Petrel** on 30th (GW), a potential 1st for Hong Kong.
- ▶ At Po Toi, notable birds reported on the island itself up to the middle of the month (GW, BK) were a **Northern Boobook** on 11th, one or two **Von Schrenck's Bitterns** on 11th-16th, a **Cinammon Bittern** on 11th, a **Yellow Bittern** on 12th, a late (migrant) **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** on 13th, and two **Himalayan Swiftlets**, a late **Blue-tailed Bee-eater** and a very late **Little Bunting**, all on 16th. Seen at sea from the island in this period (GW, BK) were up to nine **Short-tailed Shearwaters** on 11th-13th and one **White-winged**, three **Greater Crested**, four **Roseate** and eight **Aleutian Terns**, all on 12th.

- ▶ The next reports of note were at Mai Po: a **Swinhoe's Egret**, 22 **Black-faced Spoonbills** and a **Nordmann's Greenshank** on 17th (WWF), a **Himalayan Swiftlet** on 20th (PW, MK), 750 **Pied Avocets** and 175 **Terek Sandpipers** on 23rd (RWL, WWF), quite impressive numbers for the time of year, and a very late **Black-winged Cuckooshrike** on 24th (JAA).
- ▶ Back at Po Toi, birds seen on the island in the last week of the month were a **Cinnamon Bittern** on 26th, single **Von Schrenck's** and up to five **Yellow Bitterns** on 26th and 30th (BK, GW), a **Red-billed Starling** and an **Grey-capped Greenfinch** on 27th (BK), and a **Savanna Nightjar** on 30th (GW). In addition to the **Swinhoe's Storm Petrel**, birds seen at sea at this time (GW, BK) were up to nine **Short-tailed Shearwaters** on 26th-30th, two **Gull-billed Terns** on 26th, up to 22 **White-winged** and 20 **Common Terns** on 26th-27th, a **Little Tern** and a **Pomarine Skua** on 27th, the latter on the latest spring date by 11 days, and up to 14 **Greater Crested** and 27 **Aleutian Terns** on 27th and 30th.
- ▶ By contrast, the first ten days of the month were exceptionally quiet, except that a pair of **Eurasian Jays**, not long ago feared extinct in Hong Kong, were found nesting at Kat O on 1st (KJ).

June

- ▶ Seawatching from Po Toi continued to be productive in the first days of the month, with a **Bulwer's Petrel** on 3rd (BK), potentially a 2nd record for Hong Kong following the moribund individual found at Cheung Sha Wan in June 2011, and up to five **Short-tailed Shearwaters** on 2nd-3rd (BK), the first records in June. Also noted off Po Toi on 2nd-3rd (BK) were a **Black-tailed Gull**, three **Long-tailed Jaegers**, the latest in spring by 19 days, 32 **Aleutian**, five **Greater Crested**, two **Gull-billed** and three **Little Terns**.
- ▶ Reports of waterbirds in the Mai Po area during the month included one or two **Swinhoe's Egrets** on 1st and 11th, up to nine **Black-faced Spoonbills**, a **Northern Shoveler** on 22nd, 109 **Pied Avocets** and a **Red-necked Phalarope** on 15th, up to 21 **Oriental Pratincoles**, up to 166 **Terek Sandpipers**, single **White-winged Terns** on 5th and again on 27th-29th, three **Gull-billed Terns** on 23rd and a **Whiskered Tern** on 27th (WWF).
- ▶ **Black-winged Stilts** again nested at MPNR in good numbers, but had no defence against feral dogs which invaded the area, causing many nests to be abandoned (EMSK).
- ▶ **Common Blackbirds** (two juveniles on 10th) and **White-cheeked Starlings** (juveniles on 11th) both bred at or near Mai Po, and there were also reports of up to 40 **Red-billed Starlings** and up to 13 Chinese Grosbeaks (WWF). Also unusual were nine **Alexandrine Parakeets** at Mai Po on 1st and 7th (WWF).
- ▶ Elsewhere, a **Speckled Piculet** at Long Valley on 7th (CAZY) was a big surprise and there were reports of a **Eurasian Hobby** at San Tin on 2nd, three **White-throated Kingfishers** including a juvenile at Tsing Yi Park on 26th (CWC) and a **Lesser Cuckoo** and **Brown Wood Owl** both calling at Lam Tsuen pre-dawn on 28th (EMSK).



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours Jan - Mar 2013

Outings				
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
1/1/2013 (Tue)	0800 - 1200	Long Valley (08:00 Pavilion beside public toilet at Yin Kong Village)	☆☆	Farmland birds & waterbirds
5/1/2013 (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
6/1/2013 (Sun)	Full day	Haifeng Bird Provincial Nature Reserve, Guangdong (Details will be announced on Discussion Forum)	☆☆	Waterbirds
13/1/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	☆☆	Waterbirds
20/1/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆☆	Forest birds
27/1/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shek Kong (08:00 Exit C, Kam Sheung Road West Rail Station)	☆☆	Forest & farmland birds
2/2/2013 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Nam Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 V Cuisine Restaurant, Exit G2, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	☆	Waterbirds
13/2/2013 (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
17/2/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shing Mun (08:00 Exit B near Hang Seng Bank, Tsuen Wan MTR Station)	☆☆	Forest birds
24/2/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Nam Chung and Luk Keng (08:00 Exit C, Fanling MTR, i.e. MTR exit near minibus terminal station)	☆☆	Forest birds
2/3/2013 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tai Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 outside Hang Heung Cake Shop, Yuen Long)	☆	Waterbirds
3/3/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on 1 Mar on Discussion Forum)		
10/3/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	☆☆☆	Forest birds
17/3/2013 (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
24/3/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on 22 Mar on Discussion Forum)		
31/3/2013 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (Ferry Pier to Po Toi Island)) <i>Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, participants can decide their own returning time.</i>	☆☆	Migrants

Member: Free of Charge

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

Member: Free of Charge

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

Member: HK\$60 (Student Member: HK\$30)

Non-member: HK\$120 (registration required)

Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Activity Booking Slip

I would like to register the following HKBWS outings: (Please as appropriate)

Mai Po Outing : 13 Jan, 2013 13 Feb, 2013 17 Mar, 2013

Mai Po Outing Fee	Meeting Point at Mai Po	Meeting Point at Kowloon Tong
Member	HK\$30-	HK\$60-
Student Member	HK\$15-	HK\$30-
Non-Member	HK\$120-	

Participants below age of 12 yrs will not be accepted for Mai Po Outing visiting floating boardwalks.

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 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	Outing	Name (First one will be considered contact person)	Membership No.	Mobile Phone	Outing Fee*	Mai Po Outing Meeting Point Kln MTR or MP

* Activities are processed individually, please use separate cheque.

Enclosed please find a Cheque of HK\$_____ Contact person's email : _____

(Payable to The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society)

Applicant : _____ 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, registration 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 ("the HKBWS") assumes no responsibility, liability or obligations, whether financial or otherwise, for losses, injuries, death, damages, whether to the person or property, arising or occurring in the course or as a result from the activities, outings or training courses ("the Activities") organized by the HKBWS. Persons who participate in the Activities must ensure that they are medically fit to do so. If in doubt, they should consult qualified medical practitioners before participating. Participants are recommended to purchase relevant insurance for their own protection. By participating in the Activities, the participants impliedly agree that they will not hold the HKBWS, its Executive Committee members, other committee members, its officers, employees, volunteers, agents or subcontractors responsible or liable for any losses, injuries, death damages arising or occurring in the course or as a result from the Activities.

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