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237

Autumn 2015 ~ 秋



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陳土飛
白芒

White-capped Redstart
Thomas Chan
Pak Mong

01/03/2015

DSLR Camera, 350mm lens + two 1.4x teleconverter



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

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Contents

Editorial note	– John Holmes	06
Society News & Projects		06
Mai Po Update	– Bena Smith	10
The Starry sky of Maliau Basin	– Stanley Chan	11
Hong Kong Bird News	– Richard Lewthwaite	20
Coming activities & indoor meeting		22

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Editor's note

This bulletin marks the arrival of autumn. There should be cooler weather and better birds ahead of us. After a hot summer, we can all feel like we've earned a pleasant change.

But the potential of unpleasant change looms around Deep Bay. In the Conservation News section of this bulletin there is an instructive table with details of ongoing planning applications for developments in the Deep Bay Wetland Conservation and Buffer areas. Many of the applicant developers wish to build high-rise blocks on what are now fishponds.

More timely information on the progress of these cases will appear on the HKBWS website. When such news appears, as individuals we all have a responsibility to make our views known to the planning authorities. I urge everyone to do so, or the birds will lose what little habitat they have left.


John Holmes

Society News and Projects

Members

2015 Membership Renewal

Membership stood at around 1937 as at early September. Under the new membership renewal scheme, members are welcome to renew their membership anytime within the year. Renewal reminders will be posted about two months before membership expiry dates.

Bird Watching Course

A new Forest Bird Identification Workshop will be held in October and will be taught by Mr. Bond Shum, one of our experienced leaders. The workshop aims to prepare participants with necessary identification skills and deeper understanding of their behavior and habit which serves to enhance participant skills to spot and identify forest birds.

The 19th Elementary Bird Watching Course for Beginners is scheduled to start in November 2015. Please visit our Discussion Forum for details and registration.

2nd Leader Training Programme (2015-2016)

The 2nd programme started in early September with 14 trainees for 15 months intensive training. The Society would like to thank all the trainees, instructors and birders who have given their support to this program.



New Member Orientation 2015/2016

The first new member orientation for 2015/2016 was held at the end of August with 28 new members participating in both the talk and a Mai Po outing. Watch out for future orientations which are planned for January and May 2016. Details will be announced on the website Discussion Forum and the HKBWS "facebook" page.

The new member orientation aims at giving new members a deeper understanding of the work of the Society and enhancing communication between new members. At the same time, it serves to boost the awareness of proper conduct when birding in protected areas and private rural areas through introducing and visiting hotspots like Mai Po and Long Valley.

Overseas Activity ~ Sri Lanka Bird Watching Trip (13-20/11/2015)



This overseas trip was jointly organized with Eco-Travel Ltd, a subsidiary of HKTraveler.com Ltd. A very positive response was received and all seats were filled quickly.

The Society would like to extend our gratitude to Eco-Travel Ltd & HKTraveler.com Ltd for their initiative to donate the net income, after deduction of all necessary expenditure and administration fee, of this trip to the Society to support our conservation work.

Crested Bulbul Club

Early Morning Bird Watchers

No. of participants in Hong Kong Park from May-Aug 2015: 318

No. of participants in Kowloon Park from May-Aug 2015: 517

The 8th Bird Guide Training Scheme of the Crested Bulbul Club



In order to train up more senior volunteers to continue the services provided by the Crested Bulbul Club, the 8th training scheme has been completed with the support of the Club and volunteers. Fifty-one people enrolled in the scheme and passed through seven lectures and eight field trips, plus several self-initiated outings. At the end, all but one passed the written test, road test as well as a mini bird race. We very much hope they could help us to promote birdwatching to the general public. We would like to acknowledge those who helped during the training, especially Mr. TP Luk and Mr. Chan Chi Keung. The committee members of the Club also put a lot of effort to make the scheme a success.

New book – Birding Map of Hong Kong

After more than 2 years work, the new book is finally out, at a book shop near you, perhaps. Publisher: Wan Li Book Company
Pages: 208 paperback
Language: Chinese only
Price: Member \$70 / Non-member \$88



Special thanks to those volunteers who contributed their time in writing the contents, editing, proof-reading and providing pictures which make the book come true. As the chief coordinator of the book and responsible for writing most of the contents, we would like to express our greatest gratitude to Mr. Alan Lam.

Conservation News

Developments within the Deep Bay Wetland Conservation and Buffer Areas

In order to avoid the irreversible adverse impacts on the fishponds and wetlands, the Town Planning Board (TPB) published a guideline (TPB PG-No.12C) for developments within the Deep Bay area. Under this planning guideline, two zonings were designated within the Deep Bay area, namely Wetland Conservation Area (WCA) and Wetland Buffer Area (WBA), where the “precautionary approach” and the principle of “no-net-loss in wetland” are adopted. However, there is an increasing trend of proposed high-rise developments in the WCA/WBA. The Society is concerned that the surge in population and the high-rise development would lead to cumulative adverse impacts on the surroundings (e.g. increase in human disturbances, increase in light and noise pollution, blockage of bird flight path, loss of bird foraging and breeding habitats, etc.) and damage the ecological integrity of the Deep Bay area. Recent applications in the WCA/WBA are listed in the table below.



No.	Application No.	Location	Within WCA/WBA	Proposed Development	Status
1	A/YL-NSW/242	Nam Sang Wai and Lut Chau	WCA	Comprehensive Development with Wetland Enhancement (Nam Sang Wai: 140 nos. of 3-storey houses, and 29 blocks of 19 to 25-storey residential towers)	Pending
2	A/YL-NSW/233	Nam Sang Wai	WBA	Residential Development (6 blocks of 6 to 12-storey residential towers)	Deadline for comments: 25 Sept 2015
3	Y/YL-NSW/1	Nam Sang Wai	WBA	Rezone to “Residential (Group D)1” (70 nos. of 3-storey houses)	Deferred

No.	Application No.	Location	Within WCA/WBA	Proposed Development	Status
4	Y/YL-NSW/3	South of Wing Kei Tsuen	WBA	Rezone to "Commercial" (10-storey hotel over a shopping mall podium)	Deferred
5	A/YL-NSW/241	Wing Kei Tsuen	WBA	Comprehensive Development of an Outlet Mall (12 blocks of 3-storey malls)	Pending
6	Y/YL-MP/3	East of Fairview Park	Partly within WBA	Residential Cum Recreation Development (106 nos. of 2-storey houses)	Deferred
7	EIA-227/2015	Near Yau Mei San Tsuen	WBA and WCA	Comprehensive Development and Wetland Protection (70 nos. of 3-storey houses)	Approved without conditions
8	Y/YL-MP/4	Chuk Yuen Tsuen	WBA	Rezone to "Residential (Group B)" (18 blocks of 5 to 14-storey residential towers)	Deadline for comments: 21 August 2015

Developments in the agriculture lands at Tsiu Keng



Agriculture land is a complex mosaic of wet and dry, active and fallow habitats, which provides shelter, roosting, breeding and foraging habitats for a wide range of birds and

animals at different times of the year. The good quality of agricultural lands in Tsiu Keng is well-recognized by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, and there are 41 Local Accredited Farms in the area. Earlier this year, however, an international school was proposed near Tsiu Keng Pang Uk (A/NE-KTS/390) and a large scale residential development was proposed next to Tsiu Keng Lo Wai (Y/NE-KTS/7). The Society is concerned these developments would lead to a direct permanent loss of agricultural land and adversely affect the ecology in the area. The approval of these applications would also set an undesirable precedent for future developments in the Tsiu Keng area.

Draft Outline Zoning Plans of Chek Keng, Yung Shue O, Pak Sha O and Yi O



The Society submitted comments to the TPB on the draft Outline Zoning Plans of Chek Keng and Yung Shue O, including the recommendation of designating important natural habitats with conservation

zonings. Both places are geographically and ecologically connected with the adjacent Country Parks. They have diverse natural habitats which supports a wide range of bird species, including the protected Brown Fish Owl (*Ketupa zeylonensis*).

The Outline Zoning Plans of Yi O and Pak Sha O will be gazetted before the end of this year. Bird records at these areas will be helpful to the Society in the upcoming planning process for these Country Park enclaves, especially in protecting ecologically sensitive areas. If you have any bird sightings at these two places, please send to wchuan@hkbws.org.hk (indicating the location and date of the record).

2015 - 2017 Nature Conservation Management for Long Valley

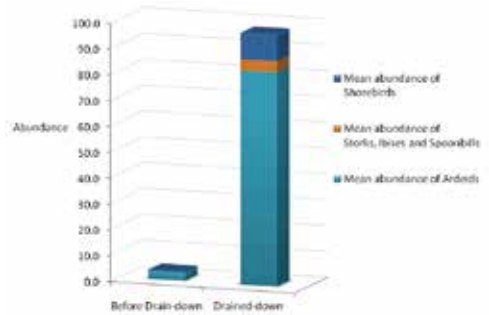
Less rainfall and no typhoon during the passing spring and early summer provided excellent condition for rice growth. The yield of the first season of paddy rice was estimated to be the highest among the past years. However, in July, when the fields were ready for harvest and just finished harvesting two farmlands, rainstorms began. Rainstorms stopped all harvest work and large piece of paddy rice collapsed. Moisture accelerated germination of rice grains and resulting crop failure in three paddy fields. No matter how much manpower and machines were equipped for the harvesting work, the project team still needs to follow the nature and weather cycle. Nevertheless, our farmers and the team had to finish up harvesting and prepare the farmland for the next season of paddy rice. The planting cycle has restarted with hopes of a fruitful autumn.



The unharvested rice grains germinated © Ann To

The new project has been starting over six months. Most of the fishermen of Northwest New Territories continue support our project. A total of 140 fishermen who cover 89% existing fishermen engaged in our project. A total of 650 ha. of fishponds engaged and covered 90% of fishpond in Deep Bay.

In the past three years, surveys were conducted to monitor and investigate the relationship between drain-down water level of fishponds and waterbirds. The result showed that the drained-down fishponds provided waterbirds with different kinds of feeding grounds, especially the Ardeids and Shorebirds. When the water level is very low, Ardeids and Black-faced Spoonbill were attracted by the small trash fishes and shrimps left at the fishponds. When the fishpond dried up, although Ardeids were fewer, small shorebirds with shorter legs still showed up to pick up the invertebrates for lunch. This result well illustrated that different water level of fishponds provide feeding grounds for different kinds of waterbird. Compare with fishpond with high water level the amount of waterbirds increased by 29 times in the drained-down ponds.



Comparison of the amount of waterbirds before drained-down to after drained-down



Abundance of Ardeids feeding at drained-down fishpond



Little Ringed Plover feeding at dry fishpond

In search of Jankowski's Bunting in eastern Mongolia

Our conservation work of Jankowski's Bunting (*Emberiza jankowskii*) in the first few years focused on researching the distribution of Jankowski's Bunting in northeastern China. In recent decades the bird was thought to be restricted to China only. However, a photo record of Jankowski's Bunting taken in southeastern Mongolia in September 2013 suggested a possible wider distribution and existing breeding population outside China. Thus a survey team was formed to search for JB in eastern Mongolia, between 29th May and 6th June, with the primary objective to find evidence of breeding JB in the area.

The survey was organized by our society with technical assistance by the Wildlife Science and Conservation Centre of Mongolia. Team members included Dr. Natsagdorjyn Tseveenmyadag (Mongolian Academy of Science), Baatargal Otgonbayar (Mongolia Bird Watching Club), Terry Townshend (Birding Beijing, BirdLife Species Champion), Lan Wu (China Birdwatching Society), Yann Muzika and Yu Yat Tung, our Research Manager and Vivian Fu, Assistant Manager (China Programme). Over eight days of surveys, we covered a large area of eastern Mongolia which has seldom been surveyed. Restricted by limited time, permit issues and habitat disturbance by recent bush fires, we could not successfully detect Jankowski's Bunting in our survey, yet we observed some birds of conservation interests: Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus*(CR), Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola*(EN), Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*(EN), Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides*(VU), Great Bustard *Otis tarda*(VU), White-naped Crane *Grus vipio*(VU), Hooded Crane *Grus monacha*(VU), Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*(VU) and Relict Gull *Larus relictus*(VU). During the survey, we were convinced that the most promising area for Jankowski's Buntings could be in the southeastern tip of Dornod Province where we could not explore this time.

Many Thanks to all the team mates, Nyambayar Batbayar from Wildlife Science and Conservation Centre of Mongolia for technical support and pre-trip preparation, and especially to Yann Muzika who sponsored the expedition. We also thank Birdfair/RSPB Research Fund for Endangered Birds for supporting part of the survey.



(left to right) Terry Townshend, Baatargal Otgonbayar, Vivian Fu, Driver, Lan Wu, Dr. Natsagdorjyn Tseveenmyadag, Yann Muzika, Yu Yat Tung

Joint Training Center of Bird Research

On 24th August, Mr. Lau Wai Man, Apache, represented the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society to sign an agreement with Guangxi Mangrove Research Center to establish a Joint Training Center of Bird Research. There was a simple unveiling ceremony afterwards. We hope this will help in promoting bird studies and conservation in the area.



Mai Po Update

Text: Bena Smith

Enhancement at Gei wai #18

Following the successful conversion of the landward end of Gei wai #19 from brackish to freshwater habitat in 2014, a similar project in the adjoining gei wai (#18) is to be undertaken this summer.

During normal operation as a brackish waterbody, the landward end of Gei wai #18 is not overly favoured by waterbirds. Vegetation extends over much of the former open water areas, and the interior's plant community indicates a declining wetland value. The project this summer will involve separating the landward and seaward ends of the gei wai at a location close to the existing wooden boardwalk. Back-hoes and a dozer will then set about de-silting central areas, clearing ditches and removing sections of internal bund for better viewing of the interior. Wetter reedbed – a habitat favoured by reedbed-dependent bird species such as Purple Heron, Yellow Bittern and Black-browed Reed Warbler - will be encouraged to establish in a portion of the enhanced gei wai.


The project has added importance because it is the final link in a chain to join up the freshwater habitats in southern Mai Po with those around the Education Centre. Once complete, there will be a contiguous 48.6 ha tract of freshwater habitat.

Mitigation against climate change

By the middle of this century it is predicted around one third of wildlife species on this planet could be pushed close to extinction by human-induced climate change and its impacts if no adaptation or mitigation measures are taken. Rising sea-level is one of the many impacts and this summer a small project is being undertaken at the Reserve to mitigate against it.

A high tide (>2.8m) in Deep Bay coinciding with a storm-induced tidal surge, can cause sea water to top perimeter bunds in southern Mai Po. This happened in September 2008 when Typhoon Hagupit swept through Hong Kong causing water in the channel between Mai Po and Fairview Park to breach the reserve's perimeter bund. A seawater influx raises salinity in affected freshwater ponds which can adversely affect their fauna and flora.

The project will involve transporting sediment to the perimeter bund and raising its height by around half a metre. A backhoe will then smooth the surface to reinstate the footpath and vegetation allowed to naturally colonize.

Birders venturing into southern Mai Po between September and the end of the rainy season, please be aware, you will get seriously muddy shoes. If a rare bird turns up this autumn and decides to hang out in Pond #24, I predict a mudbath! 



(Credit: John and Jemi Holmes)
Black-browed Reed Warbler –
potential benefactor of enhancement work this summer

The starry sky of Maliau Basin (Sabah East Malaysia)



Oriental Pied Hornbill

I returned from Sabah's rainforest, but left my heart behind. Home at last, I was relieved to take my heavy backpack off my shoulders, it was stuffed full with stinking clothes soaked in sweat. Sitting in my living room I fixed my eyes on the TV screen, but the noise in my head was that of gusty winds and pouring rain that came so often in the rainforest without warning. I missed the forest as soon as I left it.



Along the road from Kota Kinabalu, after passing a small town called Keningau, we began to see many big trucks loaded with logs and palm fruit. The view along both sides of the highway became boring and monotonous, being either palm plantation or cleared land.

Since 1990, half of the rain forest in Sabah has been developed into palm plantations. Palm oil produced from the palm fruit is now the second most important export product of Malaysia, and Malaysia is the second largest palm oil producer in the world ranking only after Indonesia. Many common things we use and eat in our daily lives contain palm oil, such as soap, ice cream, chocolate, cleaning agents and the like.

The forest tracts that remain on the island of Borneo still comprise the world's third biggest rainforest. It is said that 6% of total species on this earth can be found here.

Six hours bus ride from Kota Kinabalu we arrived at the Maliau Reserve entrance in mid-afternoon. A few days before, some elephants had rampaged through Agathis Camp, our planned accommodation, so we were moved to the Studies Centre. We rested for a while and moved on, switching into a four wheel drive vehicle.

It was a muddy road and the ride was very bumpy. After about twenty minutes, we passed a shallow stream on our way and saw a herd of more than ten Asian Pygmy Elephants beginning to cross. Mother led the way into the stream, but she seemed a bit scared, and to our surprise, she turned around and entered the water with hind legs first. Following her lead but not her way, the young elephants went straight ahead and slipped into the water smoothly.



Olive-Backed-Sunbird





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Lesser Frigatebird
Ng Lin Yau
Sai Kung

04/07/2015
DSLR Camera, 100 - 400mm zoom lens



黃嘴栗啄木鳥
潘士強
大埔滘

Bay Woodpecker
Jason Pun
Tai Po Kau

15/01/2015
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens



斑姬啄木鳥
何建業
大埔滘

Speckled Piculet
Kinni Ho Kin Yip
Tai Po Kau

19/04/2014

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



白斑軍艦鳥
駱正華
西貢

Lesser Frigatebird
Lok Ching Wa Kevin
Sai Kung

04/07/2015
DSLR Camera, 400mm f/2.8 lens + 2x teleconverter

The starry sky of Maliau Basin (Sabah East Malaysia)

The herd was about seventy meters away from us. These are the largest mammals in Asia, and the sound of their cries and trumpeting rumbled throughout the entire forest. I raised my camera in excitement, but soon realised that the card slot was empty. Luckily the herd moved quite slowly, allowing me time to get a SD card from my backpack stuffed in the car trunk.

According to studies, there are only 1,000 to 1,500 Pygmy Elephants remaining in the wild as the rainforests diminish, will we still hear their majestic roars in future? Although the Sabah government has promised to prohibit any further rainforest destruction for new palm plantations, the future for the Pygmy Elephants is still uncertain.

After countless skids and spins, the four wheel drive arrived at the Studies Centre. I didn't expect to see such a large wooden compound so deep inside the rain forest. The buildings are raised high above the ground, comprising of a conference room, a mini theatre, a spacious dining hall, research room, guest rooms of different sizes, and a separate building of VIP guest rooms, all of them connected by wooden bridges.

By the time we had finished some simple check-in procedures, it was already five o'clock. We raced to shower, make our beds and prepare our things for the following day.

After dinner, we watched an introductory video of Maliau Basin at the mini theatre. Maliau Basin was hidden from man because of its dense forest. The area was not discovered until 1947 when a pilot flying a small plane flew across the area and almost crash-landed at the basin. The Basin has a total area of 588 square kilometres, at an elevation of about 600 metres. The highest point is Gunung Lotung, at the north-eastern rim of the Basin at 1,600 metres. The only lake in Sabah, Lake Linumunsut, is also located here. There are over a thousand species of orchids recorded and more than fifty plant species on the IUCN "RED List". Over ten species of pitcher plant and 290 species of birds can also be found here. Some of the mammals here include Borneo Pygmy Elephants, the native exclusive Orangutans, some small primates, Clouded Leopard, Malayan Sun Bear, wild bulls found only in Asia called Banteng and Sumatran Rhinoceros. According to our guide Mr. Ho, the Malaysian government has officially announced that Sumatran Rhinos are extinct in the wild.

Although we had to be up at 6 the next morning, we kept walking around the wooden bridges, and were rewarded with sightings of 3-4 wild boars hanging around beneath the raised building. Though hairy and bulky, they looked quite harmless. Close to our living quarters we saw a huge Brown Wood Owl standing on a tree branch, and a Kinabalu Angle-toed Gecko with beautiful patterns.



Rhinoceros Hornbill



Camel Camp



Malay civet cat



Bushy-Crested Hornbill

There were some showers during the night, and our first morning in the rain forest was greeted by a chorus of bird calls. On the bridge leading to the dining hall, we saw a Rhinoceros Hornbill on a distant tree top. There was also a large flock of Yellow-vented Bulbuls having breakfast, and some Pacific Swallows standing on a rooftop boasting their attractive red throats.

We hired a local guide, two strong, youthful porters and a cook to go with us into the jungle.

The distance between Agathis Camp and Camel Camp is about seven kilometres, but it starts with an uphill walk that climbs 700 meters, with four vertical ladders on the way. By the time we reached the basin rim it was already two in the afternoon. At the rim we were greeted by a gust of wind followed by a heavy rainstorm.

The soil of Maliau Basin is highly acidic so microorganisms are not abundant. Leaves falling from the trees in the forest cannot decompose in time, so a thick layer of dry leaves accumulates on the path and water is trapped when it rains. We had to walk in these ankle-high puddles, and in no time our shoes were all wet, inside and out.

It looked like the rain would last for some time, so we put away our cameras and walked faster. We arrived at Camel Camp around four o'clock, completely soaked.

At dinner time the rain finally began to slow down. Some fireflies danced around our table as if to celebrate our first dinner in the rainforest. There's no electric lighting at Camel Camp, we dined in the light of two candles and our own head lamps. After a while we heard some noise outside the patio. With our torch lights, we saw a couple of Malay Civet Cats scavenging in the kitchen trash. We threw them leftovers from our plates such as chicken bones and took many photographs.

Camel Camp is situated at an elevation of 1000m, which means that the temperature falls steeply at night. My sleeping bag was too thin for the cold and I didn't get any sleep. But when we got up, the rain had already stopped.

Our next stop was Ginseng Camp, another seven kilometres, about a six-hour walk for us. If we were to go to the famous Maliau Fall, we would have to turn left a few hundred metres short of Ginseng Camp and trudge a round trip of eleven kilometres. We were not sure if we would have the strength by then, so we deferred our choice until we arrive at the detour junction.

After a short ascent, the surroundings began to change as though we had entered into a magical forest: everything was covered with moss, with colourful pitcher plants, exotic orchids and fungi everywhere.



Ginseng Fall



Ginseng Camp





Brown-capped Woodpecker



Yellow-rumped Flowerpecker

We busied ourselves taking pictures for record and naturally our pace slowed down. By the time we arrived at the junction for the Maliau Fall, it was already three in the afternoon. Our guide Mr. Ho didn't think we could make it to Ginseng Camp before dark if we detoured to Maliau Fall, there were some rock climbing required on the way and the path was much steeper. Among the four members of this trip, only our young guy Simon looked hopeful.

We decided there and then that Simon would go to the fall with a local guide while the rest of the team would go to Ginseng Camp for the night.

The final descent to the camp was a continual downhill path that was extremely steep, it took us 45 minutes to complete and when finally we arrived at Ginseng Camp, it was almost four pm. We walked onto the camp wooden boardwalks and began to take off our "leech socks". On my socks I found over twenty leeches squirming around, and while I was busy cleaning my right leg, two tiny ones were enjoying a feast on my left leg.


About half an hour away from the camp is a fall called the Ginseng Fall. We rested for a while and went there for a look.

Just after dark, Simon arrived at the camp, he looked exhausted but excited. We helped him take off his leech protection and removed the leeches dangling from his body and legs.

The diesel generator was working well at Ginseng Camp, at 10 pm it was turned off. Simon was totally worn out and already in bed. We stood on the wooden bridge waiting to see the starry sky after lights out. Mr Ho lit a rolled cigarette a little distance from us, perhaps this was the only light in the tropical rain forest that symbolised civilisation on this night.

I set my camera at 30 sec shutter speed, full aperture, and recorded my first photo of the rainforest and night sky. The other two members Helen and Carrie were both busy with their own cameras, making funny noises in the heart of the rainforest.

By 11 pm, the other members finished shooting and went back to their room. From afar, head lights on bunkers went off one after the other. We would be walking back to Agathis Camp the following day.

I sat down alone under the star-filled sky, and let myself submerge in the dark. Looking at the last of the rainforest and the stars, it brought to my mind the extinction of Sumatran Rhinoceros and our part in it. Hearing only rustles in the woods, how I wished I could hear that primitive roar of the wild. 



Collared Kingfisher



Yellow-vented Bulbul



Bornean Falconet

Text: Richard Lewthwaite

Initials of observers whose reports/photographs helped in preparation of HK Bird News have been standardised. For Chinese and non-Chinese names alike, the surname is given last.

Please note that this account does not include outcomes of RC decisions and is not the "official" record, you'll have to read the 2015 Annual report for that. - Ed.

April

- ▶ As unusually sunny and dry conditions for the time of year prevailed almost throughout the month, conditions were perfect for coastal migrants to fly past Hong Kong without stopping. As a result, passage of migrant passerines was much weaker than usual. The month was not to be denied its moments, though, and the highlight was a long-awaited addition to the Hong Kong list (and also apparently the first for continental China) - a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** photographed on the Mai Po scrape on 19th (CFL).
- ▶ There was only one other true rarity, a **Short-eared Owl** found at Tai Shang Wai on 4th by birdwatchers who had come to enjoy the eclipse of the moon (per GW), a 6th record for Hong Kong and the first in spring (all previous records falling in the period 13 November-30 January).
- ▶ Two other rarities remained from March, the **Chinese Barbet** at Tai Po Kau until 1st (JM) and the **Ijima's Leaf Warbler** at Po Toi until 4th (KH), and two sub-rarities were reported, single **Fairy Pittas** at Hong Kong University on 22nd (per GW) and Tai Po Kau on 29th (MK) and a **Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo** at Tai Po Kau on 30th (PKK).
- ▶ Record numbers were reported for three species - 1,121 **Gull-billed Terns** in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 11th (RWL, JAA), 15 **Hainan Blue Flycatchers** at Tai Po Kau on 30th (MLT), both all-time high counts, and 235 Bar-tailed Godwits on the Mai Po scrape on 11th (JAA), the highest ever count in spring. The Gull-billed Tern count was also the first ever four-figure count of the species in Hong Kong.
- ▶ Assuming acceptance, the following were all reported on earliest or latest dates - a **Parasitic Jaeger** seen from the Po Toi ferry on 3rd (IT) and a **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** at Tai Po Kau on 11th (PKK), both on earliest spring dates by a single day, a **Hume's Leaf Warbler** singing at Tai Po Kau on 8th (DAD), the latest by over 2 months and the first ever spring record, a first-winter **Common Gull**, a pale individual, possibly of the subspecies *heinei*, in front of the Mai Po boardwalk on 14th (WKC), the latest by 16 days, a **Crested Honey Buzzard** at Tai Po Kau on 24th (DAD), the latest by 4 days, and a Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher at Po Toi on 27th (P&MW), the latest by one day.
- ▶ In addition, a **Goodson's Leaf Warbler** singing at Pak Sha O on 4th (GJC) and a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** at Po Toi on 27th (P&MW) both equalled the respective latest spring dates. Though not on earliest or latest dates, other unusual reports of warblers in song were an **Eastern Crowned Warbler** at Pak Sha O on 14th (GJC), three **Two-barred Warblers** at Fanling Golf Course on 29th (JAA) and a **Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** at Cheung Chau on the same day (MDW).
- ▶ Other notable reports from the Deep Bay area (Mai Po NR or Mai Po boardwalk unless otherwise indicated) included two **Pallas's Gulls** on 1st (RWL), 30 **Chinese Grosbeaks** on 2nd (DAD), a **Long-billed Dowitcher** on 2nd and 18th (WWF, IT), a **Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** on 5th (JGH), one or two **Little Stints** from 7th to at least 22nd (JAA, IT), 1-2 **Oriental Plovers** at Tai Shang Wai from 9th to 12th (web, CFL), 1,980 **Black-tailed Godwits** and a **Japanese Yellow Bunting** on 11th (JAA), a **Crested Honey Buzzard** at Tai Shang Wai on 12th (CFL), single **Spoon-billed Sandpipers** on 12th-14th and 17th-22nd (IT, DAD, JGH et al.), the first **Swinhoe's Egret** of the spring on 12th (JGH).
- ▶ Up to 10 **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters** were noted on 12th and 20th (IT, HL), the only reports of the spring, 18 **Nordmann's Greenshanks**, the peak count of a moderate spring for the species, on 13th (JAA), a **Pectoral Sandpiper** on 16th and 22nd (MH, IT), and 1-2 **Styan's Grasshopper Warblers** singing from mangroves near the new boardwalk hide between 20th and 30th (JAA, GT, RWL).
- ▶ In addition to birds mentioned above, best sightings of landbirds at Po Toi (all GW except as indicated) were six **Savanna Nightjars** on 5th, three **Grey-faced Buzzards**, a **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** and a **Himalayan Swiftlet** on 6th, a **Narcissus**, a **Mugimaki** and four **Ferruginous Flycatchers** on 8th, 14 **Chinese Sparrowhawk** and a **Japanese Sparrowhawk** on 12th, two **Ashy Minivets**, two **Verditer Flycatchers** and a **Japanese Yellow Bunting** on 14th (FC), single **Northern Boobooks** on 16th and 27th (GW, HKBWS), two **Japanese Paradise Flycatchers** and three **Blue-and-white Flycatchers** on 21st (GW, JAA, JC), single **Bramblings** on 23rd and 27th (GW, HKBWS), an adult **Malayan Night Heron**, a **Tristram's Bunting** and a small influx of warblers (**Dusky**, **Yellow-browed**, **Two-barred** and **Arctic**) on 25th (CFL), three **Grey-streaked** and one **Red-throated Flycatcher** on 27th (HKBWS outing), and an **Oriental Dollarbird**, the only individual of the month, on 29th.




- ▶ Among birds seen at sea off Po Toi were single **Ancient Murrelets** on 2nd and 16th (IT, GW), up to 24 **Greater Crested Terns** on 5th-7th (GW) and an **Western Osprey** on 16th (GW).
- ▶ Elsewhere, **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo** was perhaps more widespread than in any previous spring, with reports of 1-2 singing at Tai Po Kau (PKK), Yung Shue O (DT), Pak Sha O (GJC), Wun Yiu (MLT), Uk Tau (RM), Kadoorie FBG (RB), Tai Po Kau Headland (RB), Kap Lung (DAD) and Plover Cove (RWL).
- ▶ A **Brown Wood Owl** was again noted at Lam Tsuen on 7th and 8th (DT) and three **Grey Nightjars** were present there on 27th (DT).
- ▶ Other notable reports included a **Bay Woodpecker** at Ng Tung Chai on 8th (JAA), seven **Grey-faced Buzzards** at Tai Po Kau on 8th (DAD), three **Japanese Yellow Buntings** at Penfold Park on 9th (DAD), 40 **Grey-faced Buzzards** at Long Valley (JAA) on 12th, an **Orange-headed Thrush** and a **Japanese Yellow Bunting** at Ho Man Tin on 14th (KPC), six **Chinese Grosbeaks** at Kowloon Tong the same day (KB), a **Black Baza** at Long Valley on 18th (VC), the only report of the month, one or two **Eyebrowed Thrushes** at Ng Tung Chai and Chek Lap Kok (JAA, EMSK), 31 **Chinese Grosbeaks** at Ng Tung Chai (JAA) and a late **Daurian Redstart** at Cheung Chau (MDW), all on 24th, nine **Chinese Sparrowhawks**, two **Japanese Sparrowhawks** and six **Grey-streaked Flycatchers** at Shek Kong Catchment on 27th (JC), and finally a **Speckled Piculet** at Kap Lung on 30th (DAD).

May

- ▶ The Hong Kong Observatory described this as the fourth hottest May since records began in 1884; the second half was also very rainy, with active troughs of low pressure bringing flooding to some parts of Hong Kong. The month saw one potential addition to the Hong Kong list - an **Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher** at Tai Po Kau on 7th (per WD).
- ▶ Other rarities were a **Purple Swamphen**, potentially the 7th record and the third individual of the year, at Lok Ma Chau on 5th (PJJ), a **Japanese Leaf Warbler**, a potential 3rd record, at Po Toi on 8th (MLT), a male **Cotton Pygmy Goose**, a potential 7th record, at Lok Ma Chau on 16th-18th (per GW), and a juvenile **Sooty Tern**, a potential 7th record and the latest in spring by 22 days, at the Soko Islands on 24th (CFL).
- ▶ A count of eight **Emerald Doves** between Kuk Po and Luk Keng on 31st (JAA) is the highest on record. A **Lesser Cuckoo** at Ng Tung Chai on 15th (JAA) was on the earliest spring date by 3 days, and a **Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** at Chek Lap Kok on 13th (EMSK) and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** at Ho Man Tin on 22nd (KPC) were on latest spring dates by 8 and 9 days, respectively.
- ▶ The first week of the month brought reports of the **Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo** again at Tai Po Kau (CFL), a **Bay Woodpecker** at Yung Shue O (DT) and a singing **Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** at Pak Sha O (GJC), all on 1st, a **Parasitic Jaeger** and 12 **Aleutian Terns** in southern waters (GT), a sighting of two adult **Pacific Reef Egrets** with three nearly-fledged young near Aberdeen (GT), another **Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo**, this time at Shek Kong Catchment (JC), and a **Common Rosefinch** at Tai Po Kau Headland (RB), all on 2nd, a **Little Curlew** at Mai Po (IT) and a singing **Two-barred Warbler** at Hok Tau (JAA) on 3rd, a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Lok Ma Chau on 5th (PJJ), and a **Short-tailed Shearwater** off Po Toi on 7th (GW).
- ▶ A quiet period then followed, after which there were reports of four **Red Turtle Doves**, a **Swinhoe's Minivet** and seven **Grey-streaked Flycatchers** at Po Toi on 12th (GW), a **Yellow-browed Warbler** there on 13th (per GW), a **Malayan Night Heron** at Ng Tung Chai on 15th (JAA), a **Swinhoe's Egret**, two atrifrons **Lesser Sand Plovers** and two **Nordmann's Greenshanks** at Mai Po also on 15th (JAA), two **Lesser Cuckoos** in song at Ng Tung Chai on 17th (JAA), a **Speckled Piculet** at Kowloon Hills Catchment on 18th (DAD), and a **Lesser Cuckoo** at Yung Shue O on 19th (DT).
- ▶ Passage of small bitterns was noted during 20th-26th, with single **Black Bitterns** at Ho Man Tin on 20th (KPC) and Po Toi on 26th (JC) and two **Von Schrenck's** and six **Yellow Bitterns** at Po Toi on 24th (AP).
- ▶ Also reported at this time were a **Himalayan Swiftlet** at Po Toi on 21st (GW), seven **Hainan Blue Flycatchers** at Shek Kong Catchment on 22nd (JC), 297 **Terek Sandpipers** and at least 1500 **Pied Avocets**, large numbers for the time year, at Mai Po on 22nd (RWL), a **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** and at least 400 **White-winged Terns** (JAA) there on 23rd, a **Lesser Cuckoo** at Pak Sha O on 24th (GJC), a **Lesser Frigatebird** at Po Toi on 24th-25th (AP, GW) and a male **Orange-headed Thrush** at Tai Po Kau on 26th (KWS).
- ▶ The month ended with **Black-winged Stilts** and **Greater Painted Snipes** raising young at Mai Po, **Pied Avocets** attempting to breed, and sightings of two late **Little Terns** and an adult **Oriental Pratincole** at Mai Po on 29th-30th (JAA, WKC).
- ▶ For the second successive year, the Wong Shek ferry hosted a nesting pair of **Barn Swallows** (RM).

June

- ▶ In the hottest June since records began in 1884 (HK Observatory), the biggest surprise was a juvenile **Malayan Night Heron** which walked into an office at the Kwai Chung container terminal on 11th and was subsequently released (per GW). Otherwise, the main attention-grabbers were cuckoos - a **Lesser Cuckoo** at Tai Po Kau on 6th (PKK), a **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo** at Yung Shue O on 7th (DT) and a **Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo** in song at Lam Tsuen on 25th (LCW), the latest in spring/early summer by 39 days.
- ▶ Mai Po held a reasonable assortment of waders and waterbirds on 2nd, including 744 **Pied Avocets**, 14 **Black-tailed Godwits**, 21 **Eurasian Curlews**, 23 **Whimbrel**, 109 **Terek Sandpipers** and four **Black-headed Gulls** (RWL). Among birds subsequently found on the reserve were nine **Black-faced Spoonbills** and a **Northern Shoveler** on 5th (WKC) and a juvenile **Oriental Pratincole** (not necessarily locally bred) on 11th (WKC). Nearby, at Wo Shang Wai, a **Watercock** was noted on 24th (LCW).
- ▶ A visit to Tai Mo Shan on 20th led to the detection of 10 **Vinous-throated Parrotbills**, two juvenile **Brown-flanked Bush Warblers**, four **Russet Bush Warblers** and a **Lesser Shortwing** (MK).
- ▶ A **Golden Babbler** found at Tai Po Kau on 19th (DAD) was a new record for Hong Kong. However, since it is sedentary within its range, which lies far from Hong Kong, and there is no evidence that it is expanding its range across South China, it seems destined to be added to Cat III on the Hong Kong list (species of ex-captive origins). 

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours Oct 2015 – Mar 2016

Outings				
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
3/10/2015 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Aberdeen Reservoir (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Bus #7 Bus-stop at Connaught Road Central outside Hang Seng Bank Head Office)	★	Forest birds
11/10/2015 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (Public Ferry Pier to Po Toi Island)) Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, so participants may decide their own returning time.	★★	Migrants
18/10/2015 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Long Valley (08:00 Pavilion beside public toilet at Yin Kong Village)	★★	Farmland and water birds
25/10/2015 (Sun)	TBC	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on Oct 23 on Discussion Forum)		
31/10/2015 (Sat)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (12yrs old & above only) (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road /F Exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	★★	Waterbirds
7/11/2015 (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
8/11/2015 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (Ferry pier to Po Toi Island)) Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, participants can decide their own returning time.	★★	Migrants
15/11/2015 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	★★★	Forest birds
21/11/2015 (Sat)	TBC	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on Nov 19 on Discussion Forum)		
29/11/2015 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (12yrs old & above only) (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road /F Exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	★★	Waterbirds
5/12/2015 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Long Valley (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Outside Maxim's MX, Sheng Shui Rail Station)	★★	Farmland and water birds

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bird Watching Tours Oct 2015 – Mar 2016

Outings				
Date	Duration	Time and site	Difficulties (1...3)	Target species
13/12/2015 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Pui O (08:00 Exit B, Tung Chung MTR Station)	★	Wintering forest & farmland birds
19/12/2015 (Sat)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	★★★	Forest birds
27/12/2015 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (12yrs old & above only) (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road /F Exit), OR 09:00 Mai Po carpark, end 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	★★	Waterbirds
2/1/2016 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tsim Bei Tsui (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Tin Chak Estate Shopping Centre Exit, near Tin Yat Light Rail Station, Tin Shui Wai)	★	Waterbirds
3/1/2016 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)		Forest birds
10/1/2016 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Long Valley (14:30 Pavilion beside public toilet at Yin Kong Village)	★★	Farmland birds & waterbirds
17/1/2016 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shek Kong (08:00 Exit C, Kam Sheung Road West Rail Station)	★★	Forest & farmland birds
24/1/2016 (Sun)	TBC	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on Jan 22 on Discussion Forum)		
31/1/2016 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Shing Mun (08:00 Kiosk at Pineapple Dam, Shing Mun Reservoir)	★★	Forest birds
6/2/2016 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Nam Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 V Cuisine Restaurant, Exit G2, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	★	Waterbirds
14/2/2016 (Sun)	0900 - 1700	Mai Po Nature Reserve (12yrs old & above only) (09:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road Exit), OR 10:00 Mai Po carpark, end 16:00 Mai Po, 17:00 Kowloon Tong)	★★	Waterbirds
20/2/2016 (Sat)	TBC	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on Feb 18 on Discussion Forum)		
28/2/2016 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Nam Chung and Luk Keng (08:00 Pavilion at junction of Nam Chung Rd & Luk Keng Rd)	★★	Forest birds & Waterbirds
5/3/2016 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	Tai Sang Wai (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 V Cuisine Restaurant, Exit G2, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	★	Waterbirds
6/3/2016 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	Tai Po Kau (08:00 Tai Po Kau carpark)	★★★	Forest birds
13/3/2016 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Mai Po Nature Reserve (12yrs old & above only) (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
20/3/2016 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	Po Toi Island (08:00 Aberdeen Pier (Ferry Pier to Po Toi Island)) Note: Participants have to pay for their own ferry fee. The returning time is not fixed, participants can decide their own returning time.	★★	Migrants
27/3/2016 (Sun)	TBC	Wild Card Day (Details will be announced on Mar 23 on Discussion Forum)		

<input type="checkbox"/> Member: Free of Charge	Non-member: Free of Charge	(Registration not required)
<input type="checkbox"/> Member: Free of Charge	Non-member: HK\$30 (HK\$10 for age under 19 student)	(Registration not required)
<input type="checkbox"/> Member: HK\$60 (Student Member: HK\$30)	Non-member: HK\$120	(Registration required)

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Indoor Meetings Oct 2015

Indoor Meetings				
Date	Time	Topic	Speakers	Venue
23/10/2015 (Fri)	1915-2115	China Coastal Development – an essential overview for HK Birders (Cantonese with Chinese powerpoint)	Ms. Fion Cheung -Senior Conservation Officer (South China Wetlands), WWF-Hong Kong -Former China Programme Officer, HKBWS	HKBWS office

HKBWS office : 7C, V Ga Building, 532 Castle Peak Road, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon

Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Outing Booking Slip

I would like to register the following HKBWS outings:

** 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*	Required information for Mai Po Outing only	
						Meeting Point (Kln Tong/MP)	Age Group (✓ where appropriate)
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs
							<input type="checkbox"/> 12 yrs & above <input type="checkbox"/> Below 12 yrs

** Activity payment are processed individually. Please use separate cheques for different outings.

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: **7C, V Ga Building, 532 Castle Peak Road, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon.**

Notes for Mai Po Outing:

- **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.

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-	

Other 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 on our Discussion Forum: <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 7:00am on the event day, the activity will be cancelled. If Thunderstorm Warning is announced during the activity, Team Leader will decide whether the activity should be continued or cancelled. You can contact the outing 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. Participants 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.


黃頭鵲鶉
陳志達
塋原

Citrine Wagtail
Chan Chi Tat
Long Valley

12/04/2015

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



A photograph of an Orange-headed Thrush standing on a sandy ground. The bird has a bright orange head and neck, a greyish-blue back and wings, and a white patch on its wing. It is facing left and looking upwards.

橙頭地鸚
薛國華
大埔滘

Orange-headed Thrush
Sit Kwok Wah, Leo
Tai Po Kau

27/05/2015
DSLR Camera, 50 - 500mm f/4.5-6.3 lens



翻石鵲

John Clough

蒲台

Ruddy Turnstone

John Clough

Po Toi

12/04/2015

DSLR Camera, 300mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



翻石鹬
余伯全
米埔

Ruddy Turnstone (flying)
Ractis John
Mai Po

18/04/2015
DSLR Camera, 400mm f/2.8 lens + 2x teleconverter