

bulletin  
會員通訊

250

Winter 2018 ~ 冬



# HKBWS

香港觀鳥會  
The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society







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九龍灣

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Clement F.  
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# The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

A charitable organization incorporated in Hong Kong with limited liability by guarantee.

## bulletin 250

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- John Holmes

This is the 250<sup>th</sup> and last printed quarterly HKBWS bulletin, the end of a series going back to 1958.

Even in the early decades of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society when membership was smaller, there was always enough enthusiasm among a dedicated core of members to put a quarterly bulletin together.

Richard Lewthwaite's Bird News has maintained a tradition of reporting bird sightings of the recent past, and the bulletin is still a place to review forthcoming outings and activities.

Beside this, the various programmes reported on by the HKBWS office staff members have commanded more attention. As the society has grown the bulletin contents have naturally expanded to keep pace with progress on various issues. This, along with greater expenditure on printing and the availability of fine digital photos has made it what I hope has been "a good read" in the past few years.

Your bulletin hasn't gone away entirely, in the sense that an electronic form - probably as a PDF - will still be prepared on a quarterly basis.

Thanks are due especially to Ronley Lee (Co-ordinator), Henry Lui (Chinese Bulletin) and Cherry Wong (Photos) for their teamwork and consistent good humour.

FINALLY - I'd like to thank all our contributors - writers and photographers - we couldn't have done it without you.



Waders at Mai Po



# Bulletin 250 - farewell, thanks and looking forward

Ronley Lee, Co-ordinator

This issue is Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bulletin No. 250. A landmark, it will be the last edition to be printed. For this historical moment, we invited Mr. Lam Chiu Ying, Ms. Carrie Ma and Mr. Richard Lewthwaite to review the past and the three Editors to share their experiences. Besides, the three authors of "Take a Closer look", "Bird Drawing dot com" and "My Bird Watching Diary" (who have been away for a period of time) also promptly committed to enrich the final printed Bulletin contents.

Time has passed without my noticing since I started from Bulletin No. 181 as the co-ordinator, seventeen years up to now. My earliest contribution to the Bulletin was to write two or three small articles. In 1999, I began to help with typing work. The Membership Affairs Committee was established in 2001, and the bulletin was decided to be a membership matter. The biggest challenge of being the co-ordinator at first was to catch up with late publication. We made Bulletin No. 182 "Looking Beyond 2001" as a HKBWS work review in 2001. Bulletin No. 205 was about "China Bird Watching". Twice we also merged two bulletins into one, Bulletins No. 187 and 188 in 2003, and Bulletins No. 209 and 210 in 2008. In 2009, we finally caught up with the publication schedule.

Double Bulletin 209/210 was the first full colour publication. Colour in the bulletin had begun with Bulletin No. 162 in 1996; - a colour photocopy was hand-pasted on the cover. Bulletin No. 164 had front and back covers done in colour. Bulletin No. 165 further increased to 4 colour pages, namely inside and outside the front and back covers. Bulletin 187/188 added four extra colour centre pages. Bulletin No. 206 increased colour to twelve pages before Bulletin 209/210 marked the first full-scale colour printing. An e-copy option became available to members with Bulletin No. 212. The Bulletins have reflected progress in printing and electronic technology.

It remains to be seen how an e-bulletin will evolve in terms of format and content. I hope it will continue to have the support of members with comments, input and articles.

I would like to give a big thank you to everyone who has written articles, provided pictures, helped translate, edit, proof read, and type the Bulletins over the years. The physical stuffing of over 2,000 bulletins in two languages - sometimes with extra leaflets - into envelopes on a quarterly basis has also involved a lot of unseen work, both by volunteers and by HKBWS office staff. Without this support, the bulletin could not have been completed and distributed on schedule.

Special appreciation goes to Ex-Chairman Mr. Lam Chiu Ying, who invited me to set up the Membership Affairs Committee, and to take up the post of Bulletin Coordinator. Honoured to have the role of co-ordinator, I have fruitfully gained from the experience.

Subsequent Chairman Dr. Cheung Ho Fai directed bulletin progress and only his genuine efforts in support made all-colour publication possible. At the same period with me, Ms Puk Yuk Yin took over a heavy workload of typographic design and added various professional and pretty designs for Bulletins No. 181 to 200. Even though no longer responsible for Bulletin design, she often offers her help, such as with the yearly membership cards. At last I need to give my deep appreciation to my four comrades, Photo Editor Ms Cherry Wong, Chinese Editor Mr. Henry Lui, English Editor Mr. John Holmes and Designer Chau. Articles for each bulletin have been late all the time and caused her to work overtime frequently.

Seventeen years is not a short period of time, and I have been thinking of stepping down. The HKBWS custom is usually to find a successor, so I hereby sincerely invite aspirants to take up the coordination post, to add new elements and new impetus to future bulletins!





# The person who collects bird photos



08



Text/Photo: Cherry Wong, Photo Editor

How time flies, it's been 11 years since I first started collecting bird photos for this bulletin in 2007! Dr. Cheung Ho Fai, Chairman of HKBWS at the time, asked me to help with the job. I found this volunteer service quite special, plus it is useful to HKBWS quarterly bulletin, that's how I became the photo editor. Back then I only had about 5 years bird watching experience, and I was not familiar with the bulletin's editing system. Luckily our coordinator Ronley, English editor John, and Chinese editor Henry, were all very tolerant and positive in offering comments and assistance, and I was able to get acquainted with my duties gradually.

As photo editor, I need to invite submissions from birding photographers, many of whom I don't know personally. There are setbacks at times, but most of them are friendly and allowed us to publish their amazing work in the bulletin. I understand that it's not easy to get a great bird shot, it takes a lot of time, effort and energy, combined with a spell of good fortune to capture the magic moment; not to mention the acquisition and maintenance of equipment. That is why, we are very grateful for their generosity in letting us publish those fantastic bird photos. I was so attracted by these beautiful pictures that I started collecting the bulletins. I joined the society in 2002, and I have every issue of the bulletins from 2002 to 2018. After working as the photo editor, I came across many high-quality works, which also helped improve my own skills in photographing birds, what an unexpected bonus!







However, photo editing requires a lot of time in front of the computer, sometimes I can't even go birding and photographing although it's a holiday. At times when I am already quite busy, this volunteer work would put more stress on me, so I thought of quitting a few years after I took up the post. I wanted more time to rest. The reason why I didn't quit is because of Ronley, Henry and John. Their workload in the bulletin is much heavier than me, yet they have continued to volunteer all these years, their persistence earned great respect from me. This made me feel apologetic if I leave before they found my replacement.

The thought of quitting came up again when I learnt that the bulletin would only be published electronically after the 250th issue. I don't like working in front of the computer, I find it harmful to the eyes reading electronic books. Ongoing electronic has one merit though: more flexibility in number of pages, meaning much less photo editing work. I can't convince myself to stay on if not for this reason.

In future, the bulletin will contain a lot fewer bird photos, but I still hope that experienced bird photographers out there will continue to share their works generously, so our readers can enjoy the amazing beauty of birds captured for eternity.





# Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bulletins – A Historical Note

Lam Chiu Ying, Honorary President

This is the last issue of Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bulletin in printed form. From now on, the Bulletin will only be disseminated over the internet. This being a major change, I would like to jot down a few notes on the evolution of the Bulletin before my memory fails, to serve as a historical record.

The Bulletin initially appeared only in English. It was posted to members at quarterly intervals. It was normally a couple of pages, stapled together at the upper-left hand corner. The contents were rather basic: a few notes on society affairs, reports of bird-watching outings, birds recorded in the past quarter and a list of coming outings.

In the early 1980s, Albert Cheung, an enthusiastic member, started organising Cantonese-speaking outings. He started sending short letters in fine Chinese calligraphy to members with Chinese-sounding names. That of 3 August 1985 is a good example (fig. 1), which included his letter, a list of outings with beautiful maps of the assembly places, a plate showing bulbuls and drongos drawn by Albert as well as his notes on these birds. His dedication to the task was truly incredible.

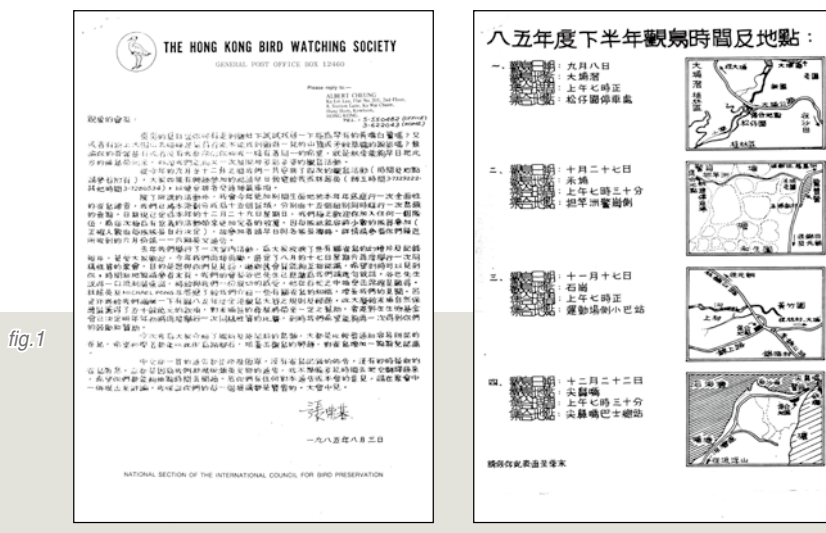


fig.1



fig.2

The September 1986 issue (vol. 121) was my first output after taking over the task. One page showed past activities while another listed coming ones. Another page presented an article from Chinese sources on bird migration in Beibu Wan (also known as Gulf of Tonkin).

One year later, I felt that for the society to develop further, we must treat Chinese and English equally and let all members receive the same information. Thus I decided that the Bulletin in both languages should carry the same contents. The Chinese edition could even include extra material to suit the taste of the different readership. The September 1987 Bulletin (vol. 125) (fig. 2) was the first issue to reflect this concept. It consisted of ten pages. In the list of outings, a new label "bilingual" was introduced where the outing leader is Chinese. It effectively removed the separation between Chinese- and English-speaking members of the Society. In modern parlance, we managed to mainstream local Chinese into the activities of the Society.



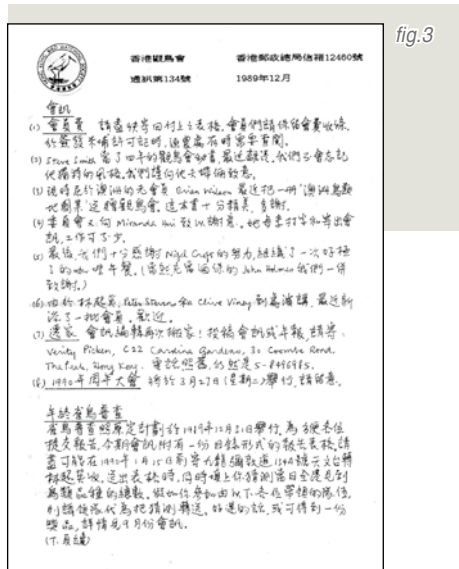


fig.3

The contents of the Bulletin grew very fast. For example, by 1989, the Bulletin in Chinese was typically more than 20 pages. Copying the text by hand was a tiring task that took two days. Thus every quarter I took two days of leave from work, for translation, copying, photocopying, stapling, writing addresses and posting. Sometimes my sons would help me, but sometimes I did it alone. Fortunately Simba Chan and others later came to my rescue, relieving some of my workload.

In the first few years of the Chinese edition, fewer than 20 copies were disseminated. If we considered only cost-effectiveness of the labour involved, that was not worth it. But I believed that persisting with this operation mode was the way to help local Chinese people appreciate bird-watching and realise that it was not the monopoly of English-speaking people. With the vague hope that the Bulletin in Chinese could be printed by computer one day, I purchased the earliest popular Chinese word-processing software "Yitian". Vol. 134 was the first issue to carry computer-generated Chinese characters (fig. 3), marking the arrival of the digital era.

Birder Chan Ming Ming took over as editor of the Chinese Bulletin in 1993. Under his leadership, the extent of computer-generated Chinese characters grew. Apart from information shared by both English and Chinese editions, he introduced new columns in the Chinese edition such as "Look at this page" (bird species) and "Happy birds" (reflections on bird-watching experiences). Such articles suited the taste and style of local bird-watching and served well to promote bird-watching among the Chinese community. The cover page of the December 1995 Bulletin was completely in computer-generated Chinese characters (fig. 4), and showed a big-size bird pattern. It was the precursor of the rapid changes in the next two years.

This issue had 19 pages and only two had hand-written script. A growing number of members received the Bulletins in Chinese and the workload also increased. Luckily more members joined me in producing the Bulletin. The posting of the Bulletin became a happy gathering at my home. We would work like busy bees round a big table, stapling pieces of paper and inserting them into envelopes like the production line of a factory. Stacks of paper turned in no time into Bulletins waiting to be sent to the post office. We all enjoyed the sense of achievement. Occasionally my wife would serve tasty dessert for the volunteers, which constituted another form of enjoyment.

fig.4

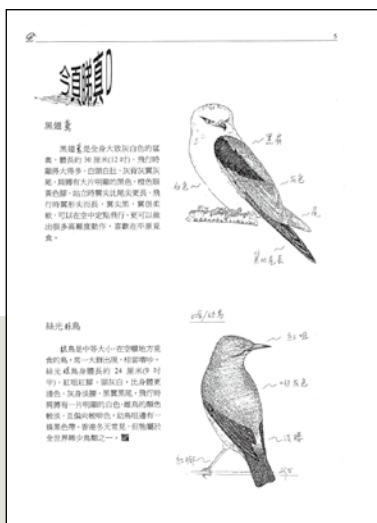
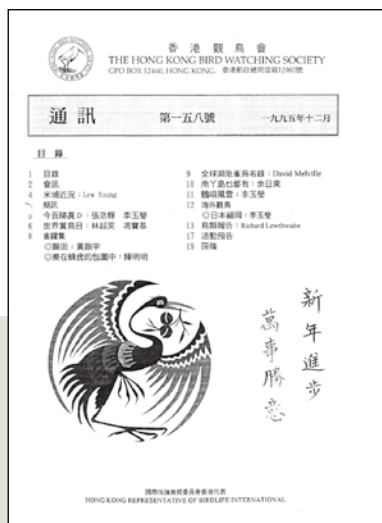






fig.5



In 1996, the Bulletin was stapled at the middle and folded to form a single-section book, with a size close to the present bulletin. This marked the beginning of the transition towards magazine format. The issue I cherish most is the June 1996 issue (vol. 160). The cover showed the Northern Boobook Owl in front of the Mitsui bakery at Taikoo Shing, alongside a nice little poem (fig. 5). Other contents included: Yu Yat Tung on winning the Big Bird Race, Carrie Ma and Stanley Ng talking about their participation in the Race, Jemi Wong and Lee Yuk Ying describing their overseas birding trips, Cheung Ho Fai writing about bird identification, Ho Man Fai and the Chu's on local bird-watching and Jennifer Lee on the story of bird names. The issue also contained black and white photographs. Apart from Jennifer who has settled overseas, the others all spent much time with the Society and became the early core of Chinese bird-watchers. From that issue onwards, hand-written script disappeared completely from the Chinese Bulletin.

The December 1996 Bulletin (vol. 162) saw another breakthrough. The colour photograph of Collared Scops Owl printed by computer was pasted onto the front page. I still remember vividly how I and birder friends together carried out the tedious cut-and-paste task in a jovial mood. We were excited to add colour to the Bulletin. The June 1997 Bulletin (vol. 164) had colour photographs printed directly on the cover and we skipped cut-and-paste. The December

vol.162



vol.164







vol.166

1997 Bulletin (vol. 166) had a properly-printed cover in colour for the first time. From then onwards, the Bulletin took on its present look and used the same cover in both Chinese and English editions. During this period of dramatic changes, the editorial board comprised Chan Ming Ming, Carrie Ma, Yu Yat Tung, Chan Ka Lai and Lee Kwok Shing.

In the history of the Society, two issues of the Bulletin were exceptional in that they did not serve the normal bulletin function. Vol. 174 and vol. 177 recorded in detail the two stages of the campaign to protect the wetland of Long Valley. The campaign achieved the rare feat of stopping the railway line from running into the ecologically-important wetland of Long Valley. It marked a major breakthrough of Hong Kong Bird Watching Society in conservation. Newcomers to the Society should get hold of these issues and take a good look to understand the evolution of the whole campaign during 2000 – 2001. The Society from then onwards enhanced its conservation efforts and also expanded its efforts in education and community outreach. The Bulletin became the vehicle for the Society to report progress in such activities to its membership.



vol.174



vol.177

As we entered the 2000s, the design of the Bulletin became more and more professional and eye-catching. It was largely due to the dedicated effort of Puk Yuk Yin and Chan Kam Wai. From 2005 onwards, as digital photography started to become popular, the centre page of the Bulletin carried colour bird photographs like the cover, showing birds of interest. Subsequently quantum leaps in printing technology enabled the transition of the Bulletin to a fully coloured magazine, bringing more and more high-quality bird photographs to the readership. The Bulletin became an eagerly awaited item in the post every quarter of the year. It also helped motivate many people to join the Society.

In 2006, about 750 copies of the Bulletin in Chinese were printed. As membership grew, the peak number reached nearly 1,100, a far cry from less than 20 in the good old days. As we entered the 2010s, the internet achieved a high degree of penetration into society. It has led to a major change in the reading habits of Hong Kong people who are increasingly drawn to the screens of PCs and mobile phones. The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society has responded by making electronic copies of the Bulletin available to members. In the name of environmental protection, many members have elected not to receive printed copies of the Bulletin. The Executive Committee has decided to go completely electronic in 2019. This issue is the last issue of the Bulletin in paper form and will close one chapter in the history of the Bulletin.

In the thirty years since the 1980s, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bulletin has evolved from stapled pages delivering information in words to a full-scale illustrated magazine. It will move on to become a digital existence on the internet. This was well beyond my imagination in the period I produced the bulletin by tediously hand-writing and copying. The change has not happened by accident. It was the result of the cumulative effort of numerous enthusiastic bird-watching friends over many years. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all the people who have helped in one way or another in producing the Bulletin.



# A ten-year time slot in the 60 years of HKBWS

Carrie Ma

Same as many members, my first contact with HKBWS was via the bulletins. In all, I spent ten years time connected to HKBWS, starting from the role of a facilitator, followed by core duties on education and publicity, as well as conservation campaigns and setting up an office to become a full-time staff. This article shares my memories between 1996 and 2006.

## Bulletin

I started bird watching in 1995 and my first HKBWS bulletin was No. 158 (Dec 1995), received at the beginning of 1996. It was an A4-size photocopied document with staples at the left hand corner, printed separately in Chinese and English. It contained details of field trips, bird surveys, as well as coming seminars on identification of difficult species, Christmas count, methods of record submission, guidelines on contribution of articles to the Hong Kong Bird Report, as well as updates of the Island House library. All information was clearly presented and encouraged members' participation.

Chinese Bulletin  
No. 158



English Bulletin  
No. 158





To view from today's printing standard, those bulletins looked like school handouts with different formats mixed together, such as MS word, typing, hand-writing, bilingual, cut-and-paste graphics. It was in fact that, the Chinese typing software Eten / Guokiu, Cangjie or the said "WYSIWYG". MS Windows had been popular for a few years only.

During the 1990s, "personal privacy" was not considered an important issue by HKBWS members. Information such as home address and telephone number of a volunteer guide or survey coordinator could be easily found in the bulletins. When I first contacted the society secretary Ms. Jemi Wong<sup>[1]</sup> on how to obtain a Mai Po Marshes Entry Permit, her email reply contained her office details, which made me aware that key members of HKBWS were volunteers. When I contacted Mr. Chan Ming Ming at his home number to enrol for a society outing at Tsim Bei Tsui. He replied seriously that "We shall depart on time without waiting for late comers!" - showing me that bird watching requires discipline as well as good coordination. I found it was an activity of people who really respect nature. Mr Chan's reply changed my outlook in the following years.

Having participated in a number of outings, I got in touch with several birding partners who were available to twitch on weekends - Yu Yat Tung, Robin Fung, Jemi Wong, Lee Yuk Ying, Jennifer Lee and Cheung Ho Fai. I remember on one occasion, a Pheasant-tailed Jacana was reported at Long Valley, and several bird ringers trapped the bird immediately. With personal anger, I published a webpage to criticise bird ringing activities. The web links was later on discovered by Dr. Cheung Ho Fai<sup>[2]</sup> who sent me a three-pages email which explained reasons of bird ringing, how to acquire personal knowledge, and provide direct support to nature conservation.

Chinese Bulletin  
No. 133



Chinese Bulletin  
No. 159



The quarterly HKBWS Bulletin was originally published only in English, a Chinese Bulletin was added in 1989 to reach more Chinese-speaking readers. Between 1989 and 1992, we could still easily find manuscripts by Lam Chiu Ying<sup>[3]</sup>. Starting from 1993, Chan Ming Ming took over Chinese bulletin editorial work by the use of Chinese typing.

[1] Ms. Jemi Wong served as HKBWS Secretary from 1995 to 98, followed by Ms. Ada Chow (1998 to 2000), Ms. Jimmy Chim (2000 to 04), Mr. Henry Lui (2004 to 06) and Mr. Alan Chan (2006 until today) .

[2] Dr. Cheung Ho Fai was the HKBWS Chairman from 2005 to 2010.

[3] Mr. Lam Chiu Ying was committee member of HKBWS, he became the Vice-Chairman from 1996 to 1996, and serve as Chairman from 1997 to 2005. He is now the Hon. President of HKBWS.



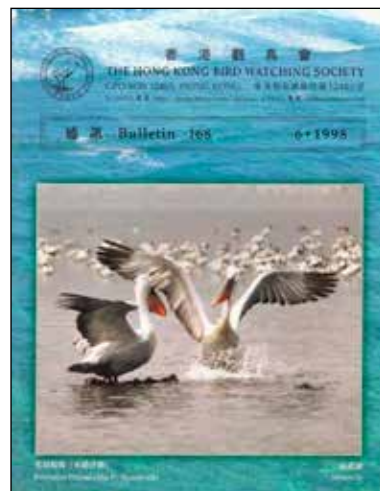
Before 1997, the number of expatriate members gradually reduced, and the proportion of locals increased. I remember after the 1996 Bird Race, Chan Ming Ming asked me to assist in bulletin production, and my first issue was No. 159 (March 1996). Starting from this issue, we encouraged members to submit articles for different columns by the use of simple and interesting wording to promote bird watching activities. These columns included bird identification (by Yu Yat Tung), illustrative description of individual species (Cheung Ho Fai, Lee Yuk Ying), ecology of birds (Henry Lui, Samson So and Captain Wong), as well as overseas birding and irregular articles on personal twitching etc.



Chinese Bulletin No. 162



No. 166



No. 168

In those days HKBWS was a membership-based organisation, its income and expenditure totally reliant on membership fees. One of the important considerations was to save cost while figuring out ways to present the good bird photos at lower cost. During the preparation for the No. 162 (December 1996) bulletin, an idea came to my mind. I borrowed John Holmes's Collared Scops Owl photo, made colour photocopies, and cut them to size. The inner pages were produced by A3 photocopies with staple binding to A4 booklets. The "colour photos" were stuck on the booklet covers. To my surprise, this idea attracted lots of members to join in putting the bulletins together and they enjoyed the work at Lam Chiu Ying's home at the Hong Kong Observatory. After that, bulletin stuffing and packaging work became a regular activity among members. When Mike Kilburn took over the English editorial work from No. 166 (December 1997), we started to figure out ways for design and production of a colour cover. From No. 168 (June 1998), we secured design and typesetting of inner pages by a commercial production house, at a reasonable cost.

Editorship of the English bulletin was later taken over by Lawrence Johnstone and Steve Burrows. John Holmes took over in 2004 until today. For the Chinese bulletin, Henry Lui took over the editorial role from 1999 until today. The production process is facilitated by Ronley Lee. She manages the printing and production tasks quarterly and later on the bulletins attracted income from commercial advertisements.

There were editions which required special arrangement. For example, special issues No. 174 (Winter 1999) and No. 177 (Autumn 2000) on the "Save Long Valley Campaign" which were a collection of all the documents in chronological order throughout the campaign from 1999 to 2000, including the latest information, comments on the planning application, different types of letters (from HKBWS members, letters to government department, correspondence with green groups, international experts, etc), media releases, news reports, cost statements and relevant information. These two issues had a total of 130 pages, but they were produced in less than 20 days. I can't explain how we found the energy to complete such a complicated task.

Members can download most of the previous issues from the HKBWS website at <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/>



No. 174



No. 177



## Website and Birdwatching Classes

Having some “experience” on the bird ringing website, I produced the first HKBWS website in 1997 and an upgraded version in 2001. The websites had bulletin boards for members to share photos and bird news. Also published was information on different topics or projects<sup>[4]</sup>. After the website was established, I become a committee member responsible for publicity and publication. I also helped Geoff Carey and Mike Turnbull in the production work of “Hong Kong Bird Report” in 1998, 1999 and 2000.



Website (2001)



Website (2001 Chinese)



Website (1997 English)

I have not attended any of the HKBWS bird watching classes. I believe that they were conducted in the form of slide shows using a projector by experienced members. However, the slide projector sometimes got stuck or slides were scratched. On one occasion, when Samson So and I were requested to give an evening lecture in Central, we used PowerPoint for presentation. Since then, all bird watching classes adopted this convenient way of presentation.

[4] Forrest Fong took up the role on IT management and support, he arranged website revamp and enhanced security measures.



## Project Office

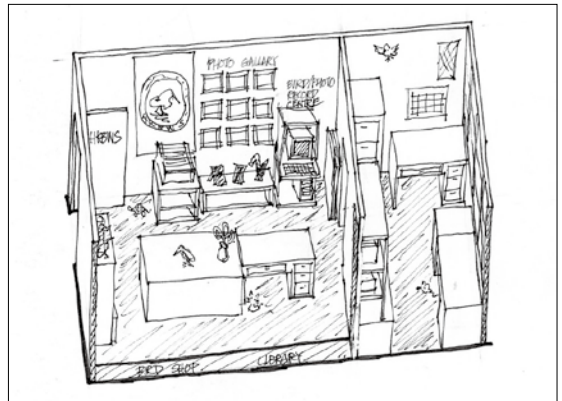
In 1999, I asked Lam Chiu Ying this question, “HKBWS has coordinated waterbird monitoring since 1979. Now project funding is available, but why do we keep assisting other NGOs but not do it by ourselves?” He replied to me that “We can open an office if we have one million dollars”. After that, we submitted a number of funding application<sup>[5]</sup> proposals. At the beginning of 2000, we received approval from Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for the “Waterbird Monitoring at Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site” at HK\$400,000, and later from the Government’s Quality Education Fund (QEF) to “Promote bird watching as an extra-curricular activity in secondary schools” at HK\$600,000. We had the money, and urgently needed to co-ordinate the projects in a dedicated and responsible fashion.

The next question was how to get the support of the Executive Committee and members of HKBWS about the funded projects. It was the right time to push this button, as from late 1999 to the beginning of 2000, HKBWS was involved in providing comments on KCRC East Rail’s gazetted “Sheung Shui and Lok Ma Chau Spurline” alignment across Long Valley via the “Railway Ordinance”, and the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Report. Project funding made a good opportunity to employ a full time staff member to assist in the “Save Long Valley Campaign” in addition to project execution. So then I became the HKBWS’s first staff member.

The HKBWS work (co-ordinating objections to the LMC Spurline Plan) started from my home office. I connected my personal computer to telephone line and fax machine. Over a thousand letters were sent to schools and institutions, and the home telephone kept ringing all day. Later on, a small office was rented at the Kimberley Centre, Tsim Sha Tsui which allowed me to focus on working. Occasionally, I went to Lam Chiu Ying’s home for document signatures or various discussions on project operations.



*The first HKBWS office*



*Office design layout  
(Architect design manuscript by Forrest Fong)*

The “Save Long Valley Campaign” was one of the longest periods of time in my career. It felt like working on two jobs everyday;- projects at daytime, HKBWS affairs and/or Long Valley issues in the evening. In fact many HKBWS core members were working in the same pattern with e-mails arriving until midnight, they were Lam Chiu Ying and the Conservation Committee including Mike Kilburn, Dr. Ng Cho Nam, Judith Fruin-Ball, Forrest Fong, Dr. Yip Chi Lap, and Lawrence Johnstone.

The campaign gradually attracted more people to participate. Some helped us to write papers, some assisted in sending emails to government departments. Judith<sup>[6]</sup> was the one who impressed me most. She gave us voluntary legal advice and helped us to draft documents. We started as a minor group in late 1999, until by April 2000, there were increasing concerns from various parties. In May 2000, HKBWS provided

[5] Thanks for Mr. Lam’s trust to let me use his name for funding application on behalf of HKBWS.

[6] Sadly, Judith passed away in March 2007, Mike Kilburn’s memorial article is in Bulletin 204



suggestions of other railway alignment alternatives. In June, HKBWS worked with nine other local green groups to form an alliance. From July to September, the “Save Long Valley Campaign” became an international conservation issue which called for providing comments to Environmental Protection Department on the EIA Report. In mid-October, the campaign reached a climax. We prepared for answering journalists’ questions and issued media releases every day. In the end, the Director of Environmental Protection rejected the EIA report based on ecological grounds. In 2001, the KCR appealed and ended in failure. The railway spurline was built underground, and Long Valley wetland thus escaped from the risk of habitat fragmentation (For details please refer to Bulletin Nos. 174 and 177).

HKBWS office supported the operation of the Executive Committee<sup>[7]</sup>. Whenever there was any special idea or new projects, HKBWS Office used to send letters to inform members, asking for their support or encouraging participation.



*Gathering after “Long Valley campaign”. From the left, Ng Cho Nam, Carrie Ma, Judith Fruin-Ball, Lawrence Johnstone, Mr. and Mrs. Lam Chiu Ying.*



*A press conference at HKBWS the office, the first two people sit on the right hand side is Mike Kilburn and Ng Cho Nam.*

After the Long Valley campaign, in order to learn more about the operation of NGOs, project design, fund raising, conservation activity and management works, Mike Kilburn and I made use of the \$70,000 contributed by members to participate in a “Building on Experience” training workshop organised by BirdLife International and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Each of us went to two places (Jordan, Argentina, South Africa and India) to attend training courses, and then worked together on projects, held HKBWS development workshops, published press releases and newspaper reports. The whole training course took nearly one year (2001 to 2002) to finish.

## Education, Publicity and Research

To collect more advice on education and publicity work, we formed an “Education and Promotion Committee”<sup>[8]</sup> and generated a number of interesting projects.

In the first year (2000-2001 academic year) of the QEF secondary school project, Chan Ming Ming provided us an office at his school several days in a week to interact with students. This school project attracted support from 30 schools and 5 of them set up bird watching clubs. In the same year, we assisted AFCD to organise the first Inter-school Bird Race<sup>[9]</sup> (it was named “junior bird race”). We also set up roadshow exhibitions at various places, published books and articles in newspapers. With more experience accumulated, we got QEF support for a second project (2001-2002 academic year) to promote bird watching in primary schools, and held workshops for teachers while providing educational material.

[7] With the establishment of office and project funding, we need to be more careful on the use of funding legally, and to report to members and funding organisations. HKBWS Limited took over HKBWS in August 2002, and became a registered charitable organisation.

[8] Members of the committee include Chan Ming Ming, Henry Lui, Hung Wai Ming and Apache Lau.

[9] The first Inter-school Bird Race was organised at Mai Po Nature Reserve, and later on at Hong Kong Wetland Park. It has been organised for 17 years.





*At his school, Teacher Chan Ming Ming (2nd from left) and his students share birding experiences*



*At Hong Kong Cultural Centre, a drawing competition prize-giving ceremony*

One of the greatest challenges was to promote bird watching among senior citizens. In 2001, an experienced member, Dr. Chan Wai Man suggested to encourage elderly who are "hidden" or "living alone" to get in touch with nature. This concept also crystallised establishment of projects such as "Bird Watching – Learn from Nature (2001-2003)" and "Elderly leads the Elderly to Watch Birds (2003-2005)" funded by Elderly Commission under the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau. I remember the first interview by the Elderly Commission. The Committee members considered that I was wasting their time with such a project application. Lam Chiu Ying attended the second meeting, replying to the same questions whereas the result was completely different. The fund application was successful. I told one of the senior birders - Mr. Chen Chi Po - about this experience, and he immediately offered help to write letters on a regular basis to update project status to the Chairman of the Elderly Commission. Aged people proved to be reliable partners, their consistent effort and experience were vital to the projects. There were also monthly meetings to discuss schedules to provide service to other senior citizens. These competent elderly friends developed the "Elderly Nature Interpreter Group (Crested Bulbul Club)" and organised a committee in 2003. Today, they continue to provide training to senior citizens and support the weekly "Early Morning Bird Watching Activity" in two major urban parks.

Books and illustrative guides are important tools to promote bird watching. In those early office years, we made use of numerous channels for promotion to our target audience. For example, we cooperated with Hong Kong Tourism Association to publish a "Hong Kong Bird Watching Travel Map" for free distribution at border crossing areas including the Hong Kong International Airport. We got funding support from Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for the "My favourite Hong Kong Bird Election" which attracted over 25,000 participants. When the "Avifauna of Hong Kong" was published, we donated record cards dated before 1970 to the Hong Kong History Museum to promote awareness of the natural history of Hong Kong. In addition, we produced "A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Hong Kong" and various publications including "Bird watching - Start from city", books on the life of birds, and articles for newspaper columns. Thanks to a number of members who contributed their time editing, translating, proof reading (they are Cheung Ho Fai, Chan Ming Ming, Dickson Wong, Yu Yat Tung, Henry Lui, Alan Chan, Robin Fung, etc..) There were also many voluntary photographers who contributed their stunning photos.

In addition to the Waterbird survey project, HKBWS submitted various project applications including Breeding Tern survey and Black-faced Spoonbill age structure survey. Among the surveyors and coordinators, Yu Yat Tung became one of the well-experienced and



*On 16 August 2003, the "Crested Bulbul Club" established, from the right is Chen Chi Po, Lam Chiu Ying, Chairman of Elderly Commission Wan Man Yi, and Leung Kwok Wah*



*On 23 July 2004, "A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Hong Kong" (1<sup>st</sup> edition) was published*



competent full-time staff today. It was in fact that many projects were initiated by HKBWS members for collecting baseline information for future conservation work. The HKBWS office established and supported a number of research groups. These included the “Black Kite ...”, “Egret and Heron...”, “White-Bellied Sea Eagle..”, “Tern...”, “Black-Faced Spoonbill...”, “Swift and Swallow...” Research Groups, as well as a HKBWS Bird Ringing Team.

## International and Mainland initiatives

In a secretarial role, HKBWS office had increasing chances to exchange information with international NGOs, participating in different conservation and education projects. After Tom Dahmer stepped down, HKBWS took over the coordination role for the “International Black-faced Spoonbill Census”, as well as inviting experts from Wetland International to review the methodology of the waterbird monitoring programme.

In those years, the number of bird watching societies and bird watchers in Mainland China steadily increased. HKBWS facilitated the China Ornithological Society to publish the “China Bird Report” in 2003, and assisted in establishing an online database. Suggestions were offered about how to set up and operate bird watching societies, and bird survey methodology.

## Full-time staff

Without involvement of a full-time staff member, it would have been impossible to handle all the many projects mentioned above, not to mention the complicated accounting work. My thanks to many colleagues who actively got involved, they are Yam Wing Yiu (2001-2002), Shirley Lam (2001-2002), Lee Hei (2003-2004), Chan Choi Yee (2003), Ng Cheung Fai (2004-2005)

Close to the end of 2004, I resigned from the work. On the same day, I learnt about a previous colleague Lo Wai Yan who had also resigned his work from a local NGO. Mr. Lo was the best possible successor, he had been working in environmental NGOs for many years. He was well-experienced in community development and had a good personal network. He brought proactive changes for the upcoming HKBWS project office, and facilitated more in-depth conservation work including outreach to work with farmers and fishermen on habitat protection.

## China Programme

HKBWS members have supported promotion of bird watching or conservation work in various ways. They did surveys, made donations, provided reference material and optical instruments. Highlights included establishment of the “HKBWS China Conservation Fund”<sup>[10]</sup> in 1999. Having such an excellent historical foundation, planning for China Programme started in 2002. In July 2002, HKBWS conducted a workshop with representatives from Singapore, the Philippines, Japan, Taiwan and staff of BirdLife International Asia Division. In January 2005, HKBWS sent a letter to Darwin Initiative of the UK Government to support BirdLife International’s funding application to promote bird watching and conservation work in Mainland China.



*In July 2002, the workshop to discuss project in China mainland. From the left, Lim Kim Keang (Singapore), Cristi Nozawa (Indonesia), Ichita Noritaka (Japan), Lam Chiu Ying. From the right is Cheung Ho Fai.*

[10] The fund was established by regular donation from Dr. Cheung Ho Fai.



In the middle of 2005, I returned to work in HKBWS and hired an office in Admiralty for the Darwin Initiative funded “BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme”<sup>[11]</sup>. I had chances to visit various bird watching societies in China and to develop necessary networks. Although some people have a political viewpoint towards BirdLife International and Taiwan, we approached them several times for explanation before collaboration started. A “China Bird Network Website” ([www.chinabirdnet.org](http://www.chinabirdnet.org)) was set up, and handbooks included “Methods for Bird Surveys – a practical handbook” and “Bird Conservation Project Management - a practical handbook” were published.

I discussed with Wen Bo, coordinator of Global Greengrants Fund to take over his printing and editorial work of “China Bird Watch”. In the beginning, Global Greengrants Fund and Darwin Initiative co-supported the publication, and they gradually faded out when publications became self-sustaining. Nowadays “China Bird Watch” is coordinated and printed by “China Birdwatching Association” under the control of Ms. Zhong jia. It has become Mainland China’s most important bird watching magazine.



*In March 2006 “Coastal Waterbird Monitoring Training” workshop*

On bird survey aspect, Dr. Cheung Ho Fai financed Xiamen Bird Watching Society to launch the first “Coastal Waterbird Survey” in September 2005. It was the first synchronised monthly coastal survey which attracted a number of volunteers from over 20 survey areas. To enhance the participation we worked together to organise the “Coastal Waterbird Monitoring Training” workshop in March 2006 to share experience on waterbird surveys, records management and project design.

I formally resigned from HKBWS in 2006. Right before my last day, I was on a duty visit to Italy to collect donations to the China Programme. The office then moved back to the HKBWS office. Fion Cheung (2006-2010), Dong Jiantian (2007-2008), Vivian Fu (2011-2018) and Lai Ngai Yee (2018 to now) continue the effort for the “BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme”. They have moved the China programme to another stage, with more training work, and front-line conservation work on conservation of threatened species.

## A “members-oriented” society

When I look back after many years, the voluntary and full time jobs gave me lots of motivation for learning with full enjoyment. Thanks to my mentor Lam Chiu Ying who gave me lots of guidance in those 10 years.

Now it is the era of citizen science and big data, I am confident that the current generation of HKBWS Office staff can continue to keep up the effort, listen to members’ feedback, create opportunities for member participation in conservation activities, collect more baseline information, outreach to schools and communities, and do more habitat conservation work.



[11] This project was overseen by a Steering Committee on resource management, monitoring and review of project effectiveness. Members of the committee include Lam Chiu Ying, Dr. Cheung Ho Fai, Dr. Ng Cho Nam, Simba Chan, Richard Grimmett and Mike Crosby from BirdLife International.





黑眉柳鶯  
何建業  
何文田

Sulphur-breasted Warbler  
Kinni Ho Kin Yip  
Ho Man Tin

28/03/2018  
DSLR Camera, 200-500mm f/5.6 lens





黑枕燕鷗  
路人乙  
西貢大灘海

Black-naped Tern  
passerby-b  
Long Harbour, Sai Kung

24/06/2018  
Mirrorless DC, 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 lens

鷗嘴噪鷗  
韓德明  
米埔

Gull-billed Tern  
Derek Hon  
Mai Po

12/07/2018  
Mirrorless DC, 300mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter







白額燕鷗  
薛國華  
吐露港

Little Tern  
Sit Kwok Wa Leo  
Tolo Harbour

07/08/2018

DSLR Camera, 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 lens







黑枕王鵯, 雌鳥  
何建業  
何文田

Black-naped Monarch, female  
Kinni Ho Kin Yip  
Ho Man Tin

01/10/2018  
DSLR Camera, 200-500mm f/5.6 lens



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# Hong Kong since the mid 1980s

Richard Lewthwaite



028

By sheer good fortune I came to live in Hong Kong in the mid 1980s, when Mai Po was emerging as the best site for shorebirds in Asia, if not the world, and the local birdwatching scene was entering a golden age. HKBWS was then in its third decade and very active and welcoming under the genial chairmanship of Gavin Cooper. There were regular society outings, frequent opportunities to learn from more experienced members, and impressive local publications to read, with new editions of *Hong Kong Birds* by Clive Viney and Karen Phillipps and the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong* by Mike Chalmers about to come out. The annual *Hong Kong Bird Report* under the editorship of Verity Picken also contained some superb papers. If I had to highlight one on shorebirds, it would be Peter Kennerley and David Bakewell's ground-breaking ID paper on Nordmann's Greenshank in the 1986 Report.

Events at Mai Po, though, were the key factors in making this era so good. Following the designation of Mai Po as a nature reserve in 1983, two bold projects were carried through by reserve manager David Melville – the creation of “the scrape”, a high-tide shorebird roost with viewing hides on Pond 16/17, and the construction of “the boardwalk”, a floating walkway connecting the reserve with a hide overlooking the Deep Bay mudflats. These momentous projects provided a magnificent spectacle and gave birdwatchers the opportunity to study shorebirds in all their plumages. This was a time when the acclaimed Helm identification guide *Shorebirds* had just come out and interest in shorebirds was particularly high amongst birdwatchers around the world. The spring of 1987 saw roosts of up to 7,000 shorebirds of 43 species on the scrape, putting Mai Po on the map as probably the best site in Asia for viewing shorebirds. The focus on shorebirds saw Pectoral Sandpiper, Little Stint, Lesser Yellowlegs and Long-billed Dowitcher added to the Hong Kong list in 1986 and 1987, all also new to China.

Another factor was the bird races of the time. From 1984, HKBWS members formed teams to raise funds for Mai Po by competing in the annual WWF HK Big Bird Races. These were fun to take part in and generated a lot of media coverage which raised awareness that Hong Kong was guardian to wetlands of international importance.

China was also opening up after decades of isolation, with Hong Kong as its main gateway, creating opportunities for HKBWS members to explore and make discoveries. Birds of the coast were now well known from Mai Po, so the focus was on forest birds and freshwater wetland birds. Some inspiring papers appeared in *Hong Kong Bird Reports* of the 1980s, notably Clive Viney's on hill forests in Guangdong and Peter Kennerley's on the immense winter flocks of swans, geese, storks and cranes at Poyang Lake.

The good times of the 1980s continued into the 1990s, with 130 species added to the Hong Kong list in these two decades. After the publication of a Chinese-language edition of *Birds of Hong Kong* in 1994, with C.Y. Lam joining the other authors, the number of local birdwatchers rapidly increased. Improvements in camera design also led to a big increase in the number of photographers. Recent decades have seen Po Toi emerge as a great site for migrants (given suitable weather conditions), and maturing wooded habitats in the Country Parks have attracted colonising Guangdong forest birds, but the number of additions has slowed down, with 90 new species since 2000, though the total has included some spectacular and totally unpredicted birds.

Throughout my time in Hong Kong, local and international green groups including HKBWS have constantly urged government to protect Hong Kong's biodiversity and stop the illegal trade in wild animals, but rarely to good effect, especially in recent decades. Previous governments, however, were not afraid to adopt bold conservation measures. The Maclehoose administration of the 1970s established the Country Park system, banned hunting, and enacted the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance. The Youde administration of the early 1980s set up the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, though not before time.

I take a lot of heart from the greening of the hills. When I arrived in the mid 1980s, the Country Parks were mostly covered by grass and scrub, which got burnt down by massive hill fires every few years and supported a limited range of bird species. In the succeeding decades, as a result of successful fire control measures, the vegetation has matured in rapid stages to the point where rich shrubland and secondary forest are now dominant habitats over large areas and support a great diversity of birds. This is an outcome I couldn't have even dreamed of in the 1980s.



# Take a closer look

Text: Cheung Ho Fai

Photo: Cheung Ho Fai, Lee Yuk Ying

In IOC v8.2 that was released in July 2018, Eurasian Magpie in China was split into three species:

1. Black-rumped Magpie *Pica bottanensis*
2. Oriental Magpie *Pica serica*
3. Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

According to Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive, Black-rumped Magpie (Qinghai and W Sichuan S to S & E Xizang) is very distinctive, having black rump, relatively short tail, stout bill and very little gloss in plumage; Oriental Magpie (E & S China, Taiwan, Hainan, also extreme NE China) is small and dark, having black rump, remarkably similar to *Eurasian Magpie* but with relatively shorter tail and *greener gloss on secondaries*; Eurasian Magpie (Inner Mongolia, NW Heilongjiang, Xinjiang, Xizang) has black rump, longer tail, more extensive white in primaries, ssp *leucoptera* (NW China) has tail gloss yellowish brass-green.



Oriental Magpie, Hong Kong, 2004, HF Cheung



Oriental Magpie, Hong Kong, 2009-4-10, YY Lee





## Fire-tailed Myzornis





# My Bird Watching Diary

Wendy Yu

## Asian Barred Owlet



Wendy 14.10.2018



031





## Saving Chinese Crested Tern from extinction



©Dan Roby



Chinese Crested Tern *Thalasseus bernsteini* is one of the rarest seabirds in the world which was previously assumed to be extinct. Last seen in 1937 we thought we would never see this species again! In the year 2000, a mere four pairs were rediscovered and found nesting on an islet in the Matsu Islands, off the coast of Fujian. This great news shocked the world. There are fewer than 100 Chinese Crested Terns left at present. As a result, this species is now listed as Critically Endangered by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) because of its extremely small population.

Chinese Crested Tern is a migratory bird and is often found in the company of Greater Crested Terns. They have similar behaviour and share similar sites and habitats. Since the Chinese Crested Tern “reappeared”, we ought to understand the biology of the species so that we could formulate a conservation plan to safeguard them. Lately, more individuals have been found breeding in Korea, transiting in Japan and the Philippines, and wintering in Indonesia.

### Protect them by knowing them

As Chinese Crested Tern was missing for over 60 years, scientists know very little about it. Therefore, to find their migratory route is extremely important in order to protect them effectively.

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society has followed the Chinese Crested Tern closely since its re-discovery. We have been working

with international and local conservation bodies, e.g. BirdLife International, Ocean Park Conservation Foundation and the Oregon State University since 2012. Working together with overseas experts, 25 pairs were successfully attracted to breed on Jiushan Islands National Nature Reserve in Zhejiang Province in 2015. In 2016, one Chinese Crested Tern was found wintering in eastern Indonesia. An international team of tern experts and seabird researchers from US, Japan, Hong Kong and Indonesia was formed to start studying the terns in Indonesia. It also included the first trial study of satellite-tracking in Greater Crested Tern in early 2018, which might lead to conducting the same study on the critically endangered Chinese Crested Tern which was also found in the same area.

### To save them through scientific data

To accurately track the Chinese Crested Tern, the research team is planning to put a satellite-tracking transmitter on a Chinese Crested Tern in Indonesia this coming winter. Conducting satellite tracking at wintering sites is considered to be safer and more effective. It will not disturb the breeding birds and young birds on the breeding grounds might not reach a body size that fits to this kind of study. Also the bird found in the wintering ground proved it is strong enough to complete its migration. Therefore, we take this bold and unprecedented effort on planning a satellite-tracking study of Chinese Crested Tern.

Your Support is critical

JOIN US!!! We need your support to launch this important study.



## Eco fish underground

We are glad to have the MTR Corporation to sponsor Eco-fishes advertisement on MTR network, have you seen it?

Eco fish is ready to go by the end of December, if you would like to try this healthy, eco-friendly and 100% local fish, order at HKBWS website.



## The Postman Kingfisher take us to know the biodiversity of Hong Kong

The Postman Kingfisher is now working hard by visiting different kindergartens to share its story, play with kids and find its friends in nature.

“The Postman Kingfisher” is the latest picture storybook by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. The story is about a local citizen Kingfisher who helps distributing letters to Barn Swallow. It visits different habitats in order to look for animal friends. Children get the idea of Hong Kong’s biodiversity through assisting the Kingfisher on its journey.

This storybook has been a part of the “Nature Education Diversity in School Programme” since 2016. The story is designed for teachers and kids to understand and appreciate the biodiversity of Hong Kong. Accordingly, native species are chosen in the storybook, for instance, Chinese White Dolphin which is a familiar marine animal, and even fruit bats which are rarely heard but are living close to us. Thus, we invited local illustrator, Carmen Ng, to engage in designing and drawing the storybook. We are exceedingly grateful for the support from Environmental and Conservation Fund and Carmen Ng.

In future, the Postman Kingfisher will fly over Hong Kong to convey biodiversity and conservation messages to the public. The first stopover site will be West Kowloon Cultural District on 8th and 9th December. All are welcome to join the Postman Kingfisher story-telling session!

If you would like to invite the Postman Kingfisher to visit your school, or get more information about school education activities or teacher training workshops, please contact the Education Team of Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. Tel: 2377 4387





## Pitfalls in the land supply discussion Environment and the society are sacrificed

### Overview

Hong Kong is facing the problem of unaffordable housing and inadequate public housing supply, causing the general public to suffer from increasingly expensive housing rental prices, a heavy burden of home mortgage repayments, long waiting times for public rental housing, or increasing numbers of people being forced to live in cramped and tiny sub-divided flats.

The consultation document clearly admits the presence of all these problems but simplifies and blames it on the shortage of land supply, creating an illusion that increasing land supply is the ultimate solution. The Government irresponsibly delegated this highly sensitive issue to the Task Force on Land Supply (the Task Force) and encouraged the general public to “discuss” the issue, which has furthered fuelled the divisions and disaffection in our community. Yet, without fixing the loopholes and injustice in the current housing, economy and planning system, the urgent need for public and affordable problems will not be solved; but instead will intensify the unnecessary dilemma between social needs and nature conservation, damaging both the public interest and the natural environment.

As an environmental NGO with a vision of “*people and birds living in harmony as nature continues to thrive*”, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) is particularly concerned with the environmental and ecological sustainability of the proposed land supply options. The strategic planning “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” (released in 2016) stated an aim to achieve the vision of Hong Kong becoming “a liveable, competitive and sustainable Asian’s World City” with a planning goal to “champion sustainable development with a view to meeting our present and future social, environmental and economic needs and aspirations”<sup>[1]</sup>. We consider the priority in the use of land should follow such principles to protect and respect our environment and for the sustainable development of our city.

However, among the proposed 18 land supply options, there are a handful of choices which would bring irreversible impacts to the natural environment, such as development of Country Parks, reclamation of marine habitats and reservoirs, and development of agricultural land. We are concerned that these land supply options will inevitably accelerate the rate of ecological loss and other ecosystem services that provide public benefit to the whole community. This runs directly contrary not only to the intent of Hong Kong’s own planning laws and Hong Kong’s Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, but also to the national direction under the Greater Bay Area initiative for a “green and healthy living environment” and the Ecological Protection Red Line system for conservation and the Convention on Biological Diversity at the international scale.

### Misleading concepts in the development of Country Parks

In the January 2017 Policy Address the Government had already proposed to develop “a small proportion of land on the periphery of country parks with relatively low ecological and public enjoyment value for purposes other than real estate development, such as public housing and non-profit-making elderly homes”<sup>[2]</sup>. The current public consultation document echoed with the Government’s proposal and included options to develop two sites at the “periphery” of Country Parks and even additional areas of the Country Parks in the future. Yet, the development of Country Parks completely undermines and challenges the good intentions of the Country Parks Ordinance (Cap. 208) for conservation and public enjoyment.

Moreover, the term “periphery” is misleading as it obscures whether the sites are inside or outside the Country Park boundary. It should be made clear the sites are in fact fully located within the boundary<sup>[3]</sup>. The Government’s track record in rezoning vegetated Green Belts of “relatively low conservation value” for development, which has led to a loss of well-wooded Green Belts with high or medium ecological value and buffering effect (please refer to our reports of “Hong Kong

[1] Page 20 of the consultation document for the “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030”

[2] HKSAR Government. (2017, January 18). *Paragraph 117 of 2017 Policy Address*. Retrieved from <https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/jan2017/eng/p116.html>

[3] HKSAR Government. (2017, June 28). *LCQ21: Study on two sites on the periphery of country parks* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201706/28/P2017062800421.htm>





Headline Indicators for Biodiversity and Conservation<sup>[4]</sup>), gives the public no cause for confidence that the Government's stated intention to develop the Country Parks would be limited to areas with "relatively low" ecological and public enjoyment value. Development of the Country Parks should be adopted as the solution of last resort only when all other options can be shown to have been exhausted, a public consensus is reached, and under rigorous application of all relevant legislation and international best practice.

### Pitfalls in the use of agricultural lands and public-private partnership

Agricultural lands not only bring income to farmers by selling their produce and secure food source and safety for Hong Kong consumers, they can also have ecological, landscape and cultural values within a city. Take Long Valley as an example. The HKBWS and The Conservancy Association has been carrying out a management agreement project there, which includes growing rice and wetland management. This has provided shelter, roosting, breeding and foraging habitats for a wide range of wildlife and enhancing the biodiversity in the area, even the globally critically endangered Yellow-breasted Bunting now regularly appears in Long Valley during the migration period. Besides, agricultural land can act as a buffer zone between urban and rural areas, streams, woodlands and conservation areas. Agricultural areas can form wildlife corridors allowing movement of wildlife between fragmented habitats or between separated conservation areas/Country Parks, so as to enhance the integrity of the ecosystem within this highly urbanised city. In addition, fishponds are regarded as a type of agricultural land, where those in the Deep Bay area are of high conservation value. Together with the adjacent wetland habitats, they are important foraging, roosting and breeding habitats for birds and form part of the ecosystem of the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site.

However, agricultural land is not well-protected and has been under imminent development threat, leading to an ongoing incremental loss of arable agricultural land (please refer to our reports of "Hong Kong

Headline Indicators for Biodiversity and Conservation<sup>[4]</sup>). In the past five years, the average approval rate of planning applications in AGR zone is over 60%<sup>[5]</sup>. Under the fear of land shortage in recent years, agricultural land is regarded as of high development and investment potential with paved agricultural land selling at a price five times higher than arable farmland<sup>[6]</sup>. This creates a perverse incentive for more dumping, fly-tipping activities and site formation to facilitate development in the hope of securing this higher value.

One of the land supply options is to use the mechanism of public-private partnership (PPP) to "unlock the potential of large-scale private agricultural land". However, little did the consultation document mention about the activities and business on agricultural land, or the current situation of hoarding of farmland. The economic, social and ecological value of agricultural lands and their functions in a city were not even mentioned. Instead, the report focused on how to use the PPP mechanism for the development of agricultural land. Such presentation approach not only hinders the public's basic understanding of agricultural land and its value, but also further commercialises agricultural land. As stated in the consultation document, PPP is still required to go through the existing statutory procedure to gain approval from Town Planning Board for rezoning the agricultural lots to development zonings and some may need to increase the development intensity as well. We are concerned PPP would rationalise the developers' development proposal on farmland and fishponds, leading to more destruction and development of the farmlands and fishponds. As in the case of GB rezoning proposed by the Government, even though environmental NGOs have strongly opposed development of several sites due to their ecological/conservation value and the inconsistency with the Government's GB review criteria, the Town Planning Board would still consider "to meet the acute housing demand" and approved the rezoning sites<sup>[7]</sup>. We are concerned that similar situation would occur for rezoning agricultural land to facilitate PPP.

[4] Hong Kong Headline Indicators for Biodiversity and Conservation 2011 - 2017 reports. Retrieved from <https://www.hkbws.org.hk/cms/index.php/reports>

[5] From 2012 to 2016, the average (i) number of planning application received in GB and AGR, (ii) number of planning application approved in GB and AGR, and (iii) approval rate in GB and AGR are: (i) 100 and 225, (ii) 48 and 138, (iii) 48% and 61%. All numbers are calculated from the data collected from TPB Portal 2.

[6] The price of agricultural land can range from HK\$250 per square foot for high quality arable farmland to HK\$1,309 per square foot for formed and paved farmland ready for development. Data retrieved from [www.28hse.com](http://www.28hse.com)

[7] Town Planning Board meeting held on 21 June 2018 for the rezoning of GB sites in Tseung Kwan O. Retrieved from [https://www.info.gov.hk/tpb/en/meetings/TPB/Minutes/m1171tpb\\_e1.pdf](https://www.info.gov.hk/tpb/en/meetings/TPB/Minutes/m1171tpb_e1.pdf)



## Brownfield first and loopholes plugged

As in both the discussion paper for the Task Force prepared by the Development Bureau and the consultation document, it is frequently mentioned that the brownfields in Hong Kong are different from the ones in other countries, as they are not idle and have business operations which contribute to the society. As such, it is said that the process would be lengthy and challenging. From our perspective, brownfields in Hong Kong are caused by inappropriate use of land and inadequate land/planning enforcement. The Government should have the responsibility to fix these inappropriate and inefficient uses of land. If there are industries which are beneficial to the society (e.g. recycling), the Government should consider relocate them in proper locations with facilities to avoid environmental degradation and subsidies to assist the businesses to survive. At the same time, loopholes in the planning and land system should be plugged to avoid further encroachment of brownfields to other areas of conservation concern.

## Conclusion

Hong Kong is indeed a unique city in China and as well as in

the world, with such a high population density but yet also with a large number of country parks that are easily accessible from every part of the city. This is increasingly valued by a community living in confined spaces and concerned about declining quality of life and opportunity. The HKBWS considers that the current land supply public consultation cannot address the current severe housing problem in Hong Kong, but instead has encouraged more conflicts between different levels of the society and unnecessary dilemma between social needs and nature conservation.

We consider the Government needs to recognise and secure housing as a basic necessity of Hong Kong people, rather than an investment asset. Determination to change the current system, legislation and practice is also needed, such that development of the city would not be at the expense of the environment and social needs and the harmony in the society can be restored. In this way, there is hope that our vision of becoming a liveable, competitive and sustainable Asia's World City could be reached.

[Further readings]

The Society's detailed response to land supply public consultation: [https://cms.hkbws.org.hk/cms/attachments/article/447/20180926\\_LandSupply\\_consultation\\_HKBWS\(final\).pdf](https://cms.hkbws.org.hk/cms/attachments/article/447/20180926_LandSupply_consultation_HKBWS(final).pdf)

## The hidden damage

Construction in one place, causes ecological destruction in two places.

News media recently reported<sup>[1]</sup> that Hong Kong is planning to import sea sand from Guangxi for reclamation of HKIA third runway. Reclamation not only directly destroys the local marine ecology, but if the sea sand for reclamation is taken from the coast of Guangxi, it may also affect or even reduce the coastal wetland habitats such as tidal mudflats and sandbars in the region. In recent years, the Society together with other international and mainland conservation organisations have conducted bird surveys in the intertidal wetlands at the coast of Guangxi and recorded individuals of the globally critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper, as well as other species. A satellite tracking study also found that migratory birds would stopover in one or more places at the coast of South China including Guangxi during their migration.

Spoon-billed Sandpiper is a small wader with a spatulate bill and its body size is slightly larger than a tree sparrow. Every year, it leaves its breeding ground in the Russian Far East, migrates through Japan, Korea, China and Hong Kong to winter in the coastal wetlands of Southern China, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand. This migration journey can be as far as 8,000 km. Spoon-billed Sandpiper is currently listed as "Critically Endangered" by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), with an estimated declining global population of 240 to 456 individuals. Therefore, the sand mining in Guangxi may bring direct adverse impacts on the stopover sites and wintering grounds of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, further threatening the survival of this Critically Endangered migratory bird.

[1] <https://www.factwire.org/single-post/2018/10/22/三跑填海擬向廣西購海砂-市價達165億元勢超支-料明日大嶼須買砂近500億元>



## Oppose the sacrifice of "Wetland Buffer Area" (WBA) for wetland conservation in Deep Bay

During the public consultation period for the land supply in the past five months, some people pointed out that the fishponds and wetlands in the Deep Bay area have potential for development. Some even considered that many fishponds in the Deep Bay "Wetland Conservation Area" (WCA) are abandoned with land or pond filling happening from time to time, causing their ecological value to decline. As such, they suggested to relax the plot ratio in WBA and increase its residential development density to attract developers to transfer their development projects from WCA to WBA via land exchange, and take part of the profit to conserve and manage the abandoned fishponds.

The Society rejects this suggestion because it will increase the development pressure of the WBA, which is contrary to its buffering function and its planning intention to protect the WCA. We are concerned about the adverse off-site ecological impacts on WCA caused by the increase in development intensity in WBA, thus WBA is an inappropriate site to exchange for the land in WCA. The proposed suggestion runs directly contrary to the intent of Hong Kong's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the Convention on Biological Diversity at the international scale. The Society also does not agree with the idea of "there must be real estate development to support natural conservation".

Since 2012, the Society has been carrying out a management agreement (MA) project funded by the Environment and Conservation Fund in Deep Bay, covering an area of over 600 hectares of fishponds. The MA project encourages fish farmers to maintain traditional fish pond management and operation, especially to lower the water level when harvesting the fish, so as to provide suitable foraging habitat for birds. This habitat

management and monitoring program aims to achieve a win-win situation for both fish farming and bird conservation.

It also conserves the economic, ecological, landscape, cultural and educational value of the fishponds and its function in flood prevention. Up to now, there are seven sites with ecological conservation value which are

managed under the MA scheme in Hong Kong. However, there have been no successful cases of private-public partnership for conservation over the past 10 or more years. Hence, the MA scheme is a more practical measure for the conservation wetlands other than fishponds under the existing policy and mechanism.

In addition, the Government has only formulated a management plan for the "Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site". The Society urges the Government to extend the management plan to wetlands outside the Ramsar site and to establish a long-term and comprehensive conservation policy for the conservation of wetlands in the Deep Bay area, so as to ensure there is a safe stop-over and wintering site with ample food for the tens of thousands of migratory birds passing through Hong Kong each year.

[Further readings]

- >> Green Groups call for Government to lead conservation efforts (2 May 2018): <https://bit.ly/2R6fuCq>
- >> Green Groups response to the allegations made by the Nam Sang Wai developer (19 May 2016): <https://bit.ly/2DEadn>



### Reinforce vision of bird conservation

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society has entered its 61st year. It has evolved from an interest group to an ecological conservation organisation. In order to spread the beauty of birds so that more people will join us in concerning about birds and its' habitat, we will conduct more educational activities and public awareness programmes, despite very limited resources. In addition, we have formed a task force, which works on public communication, especially between members and their Society.

The task force has been working on redefining the mission and vision of HKBWS, so that every stakeholder of the organisation will have a clear direction. We have the following reframe:

**Mission:** HKBWS promotes appreciation and protection of birds and their habitats through education, research, habitat management and conservation advocacy.

**Vision:** People and birds living in harmony as nature continues to thrive.

Nevertheless, we continue to enhance our website, providing latest birding news to members and supporters, as well communicating through social media.





## The Sixteenth Annual General Meeting

The Sixteenth Annual General Meeting was held in the Scout Association of Hong Kong on 25 Oct 2018. Many thanks to your support in the past year. The members of the executive committee were also elected during the meeting. They are:

Chairman	Mr. Lau Wai Man, Apache
Vice-chairman	Dr. Ng Cho Nam
Vice-chairman	Mr. Michael Kilburn
Hon. Secretary	Mr. Chan Hing Lun, Alan
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. Lau Wai Man, Apache
Committee members	Mr. Fong Kin Wa, Forrest
	Mr. John Allcock
	Ms. Au Chun Yan, Joanne
	Mr. So Ngai Hung, Samson
	Ms. Yu Sau Ling, Wendy
	Mr. Jor Chi Keung, George
	Mr. Wong Chi Chun, Dickson
	Mr. Man Kuen Yat, Bill
	Mr. Yau Hon Kwong



Honorary Auditor K.Y. Ng & Company Limited  
Honorary Legal Advisor Ms. Lee Pui Ling, Eling

We would like to express our gratitude to all executive committee members, Honorary Auditor K.Y. Ng & Company Limited and Honorary Legal Advisor Ms. Lee Pui Ling, Eling for their contribution to the society.

## New individual membership Type

HKBWS is committed to promoting bird watching activities to the public from different classes and categories. Special membership fees are offered to selected categories to allow more people joining together to share all about birds. In addition to the elderly, student and family membership types, "Adult Student Member" is introduced for adults who have yet to finish their education.

Adult Student Member (Category T) is suitable for full time day course students studying in a recognised institution in HK who are aged 18 or above and are residing in HK. Copy of student card is required upon application or renewal of membership.

## Update your email address

Our Bulletin will go fully digital from next issue. As we will keep you posted of the links for online reading platform and downloadable bulletin via EMAIL, please let us have your updated email address if you did not give us one in the past or if you have changed it. Our contact email for membership is [membership@hkbws.org.hk](mailto:membership@hkbws.org.hk).

## 2019 Membership Card

Membership cards for 2019 features images of Chestnut-crowned warbler & Rufous-faced warbler. The Society would like to extend our gratitude to the following volunteers & members for their design work and photos:

Designer: Ms. Puk Yuk Yin  
Photographer: Mr. Ho Kam Wing (Front) & Mr. Pun Si Keung, Jason (Back)

2019 Membership card - front & back







## Major Habitat work completed in 2018 summer

The perimeter water channels of Gei Wai #3, #4 and #10 have been de-silted as planned in the summer of 2018. In order to facilitate water exchange in Gei Wai #4, a gap with 3metre widths between Gei Wais #3 and #4 was created. Furthermore, vegetation on the landward side of Gei Wai #10 was cleared and the pond floor was also lowered to restore the area to wet reedbeds.

However, storm surge of Typhoon Mangkhut washed a lot of the soils of some bunds along FCA road into the Gei Wai . The maintenance work will be conducted next summer since there is not enough time to complete the work before November 2018, the start of the winter bird season.

The facilities and wildlife area enhancement under “Nature With No Barriers”, a project funded by HSBC, have successfully been completed. To provide opportunities for special needs groups to experience nature, facilities upgraded include a major repairing of bird hide #1, and enhancement of the ramp at the entrance to hide #8. In order to facilitate wheelchair users, kerbs has been installed on both sides of the boardwalk at Gei wai #13, #14 and 16b.



## Internal renovation of Education Centre

The Education centre inside of Mai Po Nature Reserve was opened to the public in 1986. After serving visitors and as reserve staff office for over 30 years, the education exhibition panels, multi-function room and workshop as well as toilet are showing signs of age. The internal renovation of the education centre started in mid-October 2018. The study areas which include multi-function rooms and workshop are expected to be completed in April 2019. During the renovation period, the toilet inside the Centre remains open to visitors, while all other parts are closed.





(Readers are reminded that this Bulletin Bird News account is not part of the Society's official record, and reports and/or URFs may need to be submitted regarding some species - URFs are required for those species highlighted in yellow on the list that can be downloaded from the BWS website - Ed.)



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## July

- ▶ Though this was a hot and wet month, in which no rarities were reported, a number of good birds were found, including single **Malayan Night Herons** at Tai Tong on 2<sup>nd</sup> (KPC) and Nan Shan campsite, Lantau on 6<sup>th</sup> (JAA), single **Brown-breasted Flycatchers** at Ng Tung Chai on 7<sup>th</sup> (JAA) and Hok Tau on 30<sup>th</sup> (MK), both new sites for the species, a **Black Baza** at Sheung Shui on 8<sup>th</sup> (KCWL), and two **Swinhoe's Egrets** at Shek Ngau Chau on 18<sup>th</sup> (web), the latter rare in July.
- ▶ A juvenile **Long-toed Stint** at Mai Po on 15<sup>th</sup> (RWL) was by 9 days the earliest ever in autumn. Other shorebirds and waterbirds reported at Mai Po on 4<sup>th</sup> (DAD), 12<sup>th</sup> (JGH) and 15<sup>th</sup> (RWL), all apparently over-summering, included a **Caspian / Mongolian Gull** on 4<sup>th</sup>, five **Black-faced Spoonbills** and up to four **Gull-billed Terns** on 4<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, a **Curlew Sandpiper** on 4<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, and 245 **Greater Sand Plovers**, a **Broad-billed Sandpiper**, two **Terek Sandpipers** and two **Little Terns** on 15<sup>th</sup>.
- ▶ The **Lesser Whistling Duck** found at Mai Po at the end of June was again seen there up to 5<sup>th</sup> (MK) and also at Lok Ma Chau on 17<sup>th</sup> (PJJ), and a **Green Sandpiper** and four **Wood Sandpipers** were noted at San Tin on 7<sup>th</sup> (EMSK), whilst a **Green Sandpiper** (rare in summer) was also present at Hang Tau on 2<sup>nd</sup> (JGH).
- ▶ A **Cinnamon Bittern** nest containing a hatchling and three eggs was found at HK Wetland park on 9<sup>th</sup> (CM), and **Black-winged Stilts** again bred successfully, with at least eight young at San Tin on 7<sup>th</sup> (EMSK) and 13 at Mai Po on 15<sup>th</sup> (RWL).
- ▶ Among other birds reported in the Deep Bay area were a **Eurasian Hobby** and two singing **Oriental Reed Warblers** at Mai Po on 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> (JAA) and four **Red-rumped Swallows** at San Tin on 7<sup>th</sup> (EMSK).
- ▶ Rather few reports from forest/shrubland sites were received, but these included a **Chestnut-collared Yuhina** nest at Ng Tung Chai on 7<sup>th</sup> (JAA), two **Bonelli's Eagles** at Sh Lo Tung on 11<sup>th</sup> (RB) and a series of **Indochinese Green Magpie** (Cat III) sightings, with two near Ting Kok village on 1<sup>st</sup> (MK) and up to four in the Hok Tau area on 8<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (AK, MK).
- ▶ Finally, an AFCD/HKBWS boat-based survey from Ma Liu Shui to Wong Shek on 8<sup>th</sup> recorded 177 **Bridled Terns**, mostly at Shek Ngau Chau, 175 **Black-naped Terns**, and 75 **Roseate Terns** (RWL, AN, LW).

## August

- ▶ Passage of shorebirds was fairly strong at various times in the month, with 996 **Common Redshank** among 22 species present at Mai Po on 9<sup>th</sup> (DAD) and 336 **Whimbrel** at Mai Po on 26<sup>th</sup> (DAD), the highest count on record. Two **Temminck's Stint** at San Tin on 18<sup>th</sup> (EMSK), set a new earliest autumn date by 4 days.  
Other reports of waterbirds at Mai Po included the over-summering adult **Vega Gull** ssp *mongolicus* (formerly known as "Yellow-legged Gull", "Mongolian Gull" and "Caspian Gull") on 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> (DAD), a **Grey-headed Lapwing** on 17<sup>th</sup> (DH), quite an early date, a **Black-tailed Gull** on 25<sup>th</sup> (KCWL), and a **White-winged Tern** on 26<sup>th</sup> (DAD).
- ▶ Two over-summering ducks were reported: a **Common Pochard** at San Tin on 4<sup>th</sup> (DAD) and subsequently through the month – the bird had apparently been present in Deep Bay since late June - and a **Lesser Whistling Duck** at Lok Ma Chau on 6<sup>th</sup> (PJJ), presumably the individual found at Mai Po in late May.





At Ho Man Tin, which was well covered during the month, there were reports of a **Tiger Shrike** and a **Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** on 24<sup>th</sup> (KPC, PH) the earliest autumn records by 6 and 3 days, respectively, the first **Arctic Warbler** of the season on 24<sup>th</sup> (M&PW) and the only **Black Bittern** of the month on 25<sup>th</sup> (RLo).

First reports of the autumn for other migrant passerines were **Grey Wagtail** at Discovery Bay on 11<sup>th</sup> (EMSK),

**Amur Paradise Flycatcher** at Shek Kong Catchwater on 14<sup>th</sup> (JC),

**Eastern Crowned Warbler** at Shing Mun on 15<sup>th</sup> (per DAD),

**Stejneger's Stonechat** at Mai Po and San Tin on 18<sup>th</sup> (KCWL, EMSK),

**Forest Wagtail** at Po Toi on 23<sup>rd</sup> (LS),

**Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** at Tai Po Kau and Ho Man Tin on 24<sup>th</sup> (DAD, PH),

**Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** at Tsing Yi on 25<sup>th</sup> (AP),

**Brown-chested Jungle Flycatcher** at HK Wetland Park on 26<sup>th</sup> (CFL),

**Sand Martin** (formerly listed as Pale Martin *R. diluta*) at Mai Po on 27<sup>th</sup> (per DAD),

**Daurian Starling** at Po Toi on 28<sup>th</sup> (WHY), equalling the earliest autumn date,

and **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** at Lok Ma Chau on 30<sup>th</sup> (PJL).

Among over-summering or resident birds reported were a **Speckled Piculet** and a **Chestnut-collared Yuhina** at Ng Tung Chai on 3<sup>rd</sup> (JAA), a **Brown Wood Owl** at Wong Chuk Yeung on 4<sup>th</sup> (JAA), two **Chinese Barbets** and up to five **Black Bulbuls** at Kap Lung between 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> (JC, PH), two **Eurasian Hobbies** at Lam Tsuen on 13<sup>th</sup> (JAA), three **Orange-headed Thrushes** including two juveniles at Shek Kong Catchwater on 14<sup>th</sup> (JC), single **Western Ospreys** at Mai Po and Tai Tong on 16<sup>th</sup> (DH, PH), and one or two **Plain Flowerpeckers** at Tai Tong between 17<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> (KPC, PH).

## September

A month with a good variety of migrants produced three high counts and the earliest ever autumn sightings of **Amur Falcon**, with single birds at Nam Sang Wai on 21<sup>st</sup> (MRL) and Long Valley on 30<sup>th</sup> (BdS). These compare to the previous earliest autumn date of 3 October.

Of the high counts, seven **Himalayan Swiftlets** at HK Wetland Park on 12<sup>th</sup> (CFL) is the highest in any season, whilst 18 "**atrifrons-group**" **Lesser Sand Plovers** at Mai Po on 1<sup>st</sup> (per DAD) and 2,000 **Red-necked Phalaropes** off Clear Water Bay during the approach of Typhoon Mangkhut on 16<sup>th</sup> (GT) are the highest in autumn.

Mangkhut, the most powerful storm of recent decades, passed within 100 km of Hong Kong on 16<sup>th</sup>. With sustained wind speeds of 100-160 kmh and gusts up to 250 kmh, it shredded hillsides and toppled an estimated 46,000 trees. It must surely have had a severe impact on local birds, but the extent of this is unknown, though at least one dead **Streaked Shearwater** was found (per KB).

Totally three **Fairy Pittas** were found, possibly a record for September – single birds at Route Twisk on 10<sup>th</sup> (per DAD), Ho Man Tin on 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> (KPC, MK, KCL) and Po Toi on 27<sup>th</sup> (KKC).

Other reports of scarcer autumn migrants included one or two **Siberian Blue Robins** at Tai Po Kau (PH), HK Wetland Park (CFL), Ho Man Tin (KPC, RLo, M&PW et al), Shek Kong Catchwater (JC) and Cheung Chau (MDW) between 7<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, single **Tiger Shrikes** at Ho Man Tin from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> (ESFL, KPC, FC), HK Wetland Park on 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> (CFL) and Ho Man Tin again from 21<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> (MK), single **Brown-chested Jungle Flycatchers** at Ho Man Tin on 12<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> (MK, KH, LS, KPK, KPC), a **Chinese Sparrowhawk** at Po Toi on 13<sup>th</sup> (PH), a **Little Curlew** at Mai Po on 27<sup>th</sup> (JGH), a **Yellow-legged Buttonquail** at San Tin on 29<sup>th</sup> (EMSK) and a **Baillon's Crake** there the next day (DAD).

Ho Man Tin was again a well-covered and productive site. In addition to the species above, it also accounted for first reports of the autumn of the following regularly-occurring migrants: **Asian Brown Flycatcher** on 2<sup>nd</sup> (LCW), **Oriental Cuckoo** on 4<sup>th</sup> (per KPC), **Brown Shrike** and **Grey-streaked Flycatcher** on 10<sup>th</sup> (RLo), **Yellow-browed Warbler** and **Red-throated Flycatcher** on 14<sup>th</sup> (LS), **Black-naped Monarch** on 20<sup>th</sup> (per KPC), and **Two-barred Warbler** on 29<sup>th</sup> (RLo).



First of the autumn reports involving other sites were as follows:

**Thick-billed Warbler** and **Dark-sided Flycatcher** at HK Wetland Park on 4<sup>th</sup> (CFL),

**Blue Rock Thrush** at Plover Cove Reservoir on 5<sup>th</sup> (MLT),

**Dollarbird** and **Black-winged Cuckooshrike** at Po Toi on 6<sup>th</sup> (LS),

**Eurasian Wryneck** at Long Valley on 9<sup>th</sup> (CFL),

**Black-naped Oriole** at Sha Lo Tung on 10<sup>th</sup> (RWL),

**Dusky Warbler** at Cheung Chau (MDW) on 12<sup>th</sup>,

**Blue-and-white Flycatcher** at Po Toi on 13<sup>th</sup> (PH),

**Pechora Pipit** on 14<sup>th</sup> (DJS), **Yellow-breasted Bunting** on 18<sup>th</sup> (DAD)

and **Blue-tailed Bee-eater** on 20<sup>th</sup> (JAA), all at Mai Po,

**Ashy Drongo** at Shek Kong Catchwater and Tai Po Kau Headland on 26<sup>th</sup> (JC, RB),

**Verditer Flycatcher** at Tai Tong and **Little Bunting** at San Tin (DAD) on 27<sup>th</sup>, and **Golden-headed Cisticola** at Shek Kong Catchwater on 28<sup>th</sup> (JC).

▶ The over-summering **Lesser Whistling Duck** and **Common Pochard** remained at San Tin throughout the month (EMSK, DAD). Among other reports of scarcer resident or over-summering birds were a **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** at Shek Kong Catchwater on 1<sup>st</sup> (per DAD), one or two **Bay Woodpeckers** at Tai Po Kau Headland, Pak Sha O and Shek Kong Catchwater between 5<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> (RB, GJC, JC), a **Slaty-legged Crake** at Hoi Ha on 8<sup>th</sup> (RM), six **Mountain Bulbuls** at Tai Tong on 9<sup>th</sup> (KPC), possibly the first at this locality, and 30 **Chestnut-collared Yuhinas** at Shek Kong Catchwater on 25<sup>th</sup> (DAD), an early date for a flock of this size.

## List of observers & initials 2018

*Initials of observers whose reports/messages/photographs helped in preparation of HK Bird News for the period are as follows:*

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department staff (AFCD), John Allcock (JAA), Paul Aston (PA), Fion Au (FA), Abdel Bizid (AB), Karen Barretto (KB), Ruy Barretto (RB), Chris Campion (CC), Geoff Carey (GJC), Alan Chan (AC), Isaac Chan (IC), K.F. Chan (KFC), S.Y. Chan (SYC), Thomas Chan (TC), K.K. Chang (KKC), Esther Chau (EC), J.A.M. "Kwok-Jai" Cheung (JAMC), Louis Cheung (LC), T.M. Cheung (TMC), Vivian Cheung (VC), Owen Chiang (OC), Kenneth Chiu (KC), Gary Chow (GKLC), John Chow (KPC), Francis Chu (FC), W.K. Chung (WKC), Y.T. Chung (YTC), John Clough (JC), David Diskin (DAD), Wilson Dring (WD), Y.W. Fong (YWF), Ken Fung (KF), Martin Hale (MH), Andrew Hardacre (AH), Carla van Hasselt (CvH), C.Y. Ho (CYH), Kinni Ho (KH), Peter Ho (PH), Tiffany Ho (TH), Jemi Holmes (JH), John Holmes (JGH), Derek Hon (DH), unknown Hong Kong Bird Watching Society members (HKBWS), Hermann Ip (HI), Kadoorie Farm and Botanical Garden staff (KFBG), E. Hui (EH), Samuel Hung (SH), Mike Kilburn (EMSK), Ashkat Khirwal (AK), Koel Ko (KK), K.C. Kong (KCK), Matthew Kwan (MK), P.K. Kwan (PKK), C.T. Kwok (CTK), T.K. Kwok (TKK), Kenneth Lam (KCL), Eva Lau (ESFL), Paul Leader (PJL), H.L. Lee (HLL), Kenny Lee (KHL), Louis Lee (LL), S.Y. Lee (SYL), Thomas Legg (TJL), Jennifer Leung (JL), Katherine Leung (KL), Mike Leven (MRL), Richard Lewthwaite (RWL), Benjiman Li (BLi), Tom Li (TL), T.C. Li (TCL), Morten Lisse (ML), Yang Liu (YL), Aaron Lo (AL), C.F. Lo (CFL), Brenda Lo (BLo), Roman Lo (RLo), Kevin Lok (KCWL), Henry Lui (HL), Kent Luo (KLuo), Carrie Ma (CM), Jonathan Martinez (JM), Guy Miller (GM), Harry Miller (HM), Roger Muscroft (RM), Yann Muzika (YM), Aaron S.O. Ng (SON), Austin Ng (AN), Benjamin Ng (BN), L.Y. Ng (LYN), W.K. Nip (WKN), Roger Ping (RP), Alan Pong (AP), Jason Pun (JP), Bart de Schutter (BdS), Leo Sit (LS), Ken So (KS), Dave Stanton (DJS), Y.H. Sun (YHS), Swallows and Swifts Research Group members (SSRG), Graham Talbot (GT), C.S. Tam (CST), Meiling Tang (MLT), Wing-sze Tang (WST), Dylan Thomas (DT), Hugo To (HT), Ivan Tse (IT), Mike Turnbull (MT), Lag Wan (LW), Geoff Welch (GW), Martin Williams (MDW), C.Y. Wong (CYW), Dickson Wong (DW), H.S. Wong (HSW), K. Wong (KW), Kenneth Wong (KWMW), L.C. Wong (LCW), Michelle & Peter Wong (M&PW), Ondy Wong (OW), Chuan Woo (CW), Thelma Woodward (TW), Tim Woodward (TJW), World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong staff (WWF), W.Y. Yam (WYY), James Yau (JY), Sherman Yeung (SY), H.K. Ying (HKY), W.H. Yip (WHY), John Yu (JY), Y.T. Yu (YTY).



## Outings

Date	Duration	Site, Meeting Time & Place	Fee (HK\$) & Registration	Difficulties (1<2<3)	Target species
5/1/2019 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	<b>Shing Mun</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 Kiosk at Pineapple Dam, Shing Mun Reservoir)	Free <i>Registration NOT required</i>	☆☆	Forest birds
13/1/2019 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Shek Kong</b> (08:00 Exit C, Kam Sheung Road West Rail Station)	Member: free Non-member: \$30 (Aged <18yrs: \$10) <i>Registration NOT required</i>	☆☆	Forest & farmland birds
20/1/2019 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Long Valley</b> (08:00 Pavilion by the public toilet at Yin Kong Village)		☆☆	Farmland & water birds
27/1/2019 (Sun)	TBC	<b>Wild Card Day</b> (Details will be announced online on Jan 25 on HKBWS Forum)		TBC	TBC
2/2/2019 (Sat)	0800 - 1300	<b>Nam Sang Wai</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (08:00 V Cuisine Restaurant, Exit G2, Yuen Long West Rail Station)	Free <i>Registration NOT required</i>	☆☆	Waterbirds
10/2/2019 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Nam Chung and Luk Keng</b> (08:00 Pavilion at junction of Nam Chung Rd & Luk Keng Rd)	Member: free Non-member: \$30 (Aged <18yrs: \$10) <i>Registration NOT required</i>	☆☆	Farmland & water birds
16/2/2019 (Sat)	TBC	<b>Wild Card Day</b> (Details will be announced online on Feb 14 on HKBWS Forum)		TBC	TBC
24/2/2019 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	<b>Mai Po Nature Reserve</b> (12yrs old & above only) (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road Exit F), OR 09:00 Mai Po Carpark, ends 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	Member meeting at Mai Po: \$30 Kln Tong: \$60 Non-member: \$120 <i>Registration Required</i>	☆☆	Waterbirds
2/3/2019 (Sat)	0900 - 1300	<b>Lui Kung Tin</b> (Crested Bulbul Club Activity) (09:00 Entrance to Lui Kung Tin (#72 Green mini bus terminus))	Free <i>Registration NOT required</i>	☆☆	Forest birds
10/3/2019 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	<b>Mai Po Nature Reserve</b> (12yrs old & above only) (08:00 Kowloon Tong MTR Station (Kent Road Exit F), OR 09:00 Mai Po Carpark, ends 15:00 Mai Po, 16:00 Kowloon Tong)	Member meeting at Mai Po: \$30 Kln Tong: \$60 Non-member: \$120 <i>Registration Required</i>	☆☆	Waterbirds
17/3/2019 (Sun)	0800 - 1200	<b>Tai Po Kau</b> (08:00 Tai Po Kau Carpark)	Member: free Non-member: \$30 (Aged <18yrs: \$10) <i>Registration NOT required</i>	☆☆☆	Forest birds
24/3/2019 (Sun)	TBC	<b>Wild Card Day</b> (Details will be announced online on Mar 22 on HKBWS Forum)		TBC	TBC
31/3/2019 (Sun)	0800 - 1600	<b>Po Toi Island</b> (08:00 Aberdeen Pier - Public Ferry Pier to Po Toi Island) <i>Note: The group will take the 08:15 ferry to Po Toi &amp; returning time is open. Participants have to take care of their own ferry tickets.</i>		☆☆	Migrants





# Outing Booking Slip

I would like to register the following HKBWS outings:

\*\* HKBWS will re-confirm with contact person of their attendance 2 weeks before the outing by email or by phone. 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 overseas 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 Amber, 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 3.** 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.





海南藍仙鶯  
黃永文  
大埔滘

Hainan Blue Flycatcher  
Wong Wing Man Kenneth  
Tai Po Kau

06/07/2018  
Mirrorless DC, 300mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



小仙鶯, 雌鳥  
薛國華  
嘉道理農場暨植物園

Small Niltava, female  
Sit Kwok Wa Leo  
Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden

03/02/2018  
DSLR Camera, 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 lens





紅喉歌鵲  
陳巨輝  
西貢北潭涌

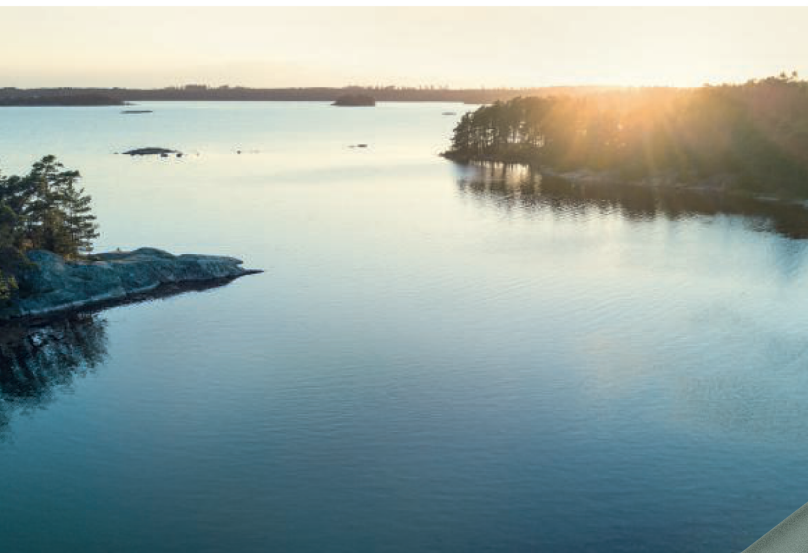
Siberian Rubythroat  
Sam Chan  
Pak Tam Chung, Sai Kung

03/02/2018  
DSLR Camera, 600mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter



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紅頭長尾山雀  
何文顯  
何文田

Black-throated Tit  
Ho Man Hin Peter  
Ho Man Tin

20/03/2018  
DSLR Camera, 300mm f/4 lens + 1.4x teleconverter