

THE HONG KONG  
BIRD REPORT 1989  
一九八九年香港鳥類報告



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# THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1989

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Report edited by V.B. Picken

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(1989)

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

The most obvious difference in this year's Report is the inclusion for the first time of colour photographs. These will, I feel sure, be appreciated by readers, authors and photographers alike. Generous sponsorship from Shiro Hong Kong Ltd, the Nikon distributor, Carl Zeiss Far East Co Ltd and Robert Lam Color as well as increased advertising has enabled us to cover the considerable costs involved. This sponsorship is very much appreciated.

A summary of the Big Bird Race is a new feature. As the Race is held during what is arguably the most exciting time of the Hong Kong birding year – the spring migration – it is of considerable interest. Members will now have the opportunity to compare the results of all four regular counts undertaken each year by the Society.

The Committee has decided to revert to the old system of including initials with records of particular interest in the Records Committee Report. It is hoped that this will encourage the recalcitrant to submit cards! A true picture of the year's birds can only be obtained through substantiated records.

Another small difference is the inclusion of records, previously held under review, in the relevant species entry in the Records Committee Report. They were formerly inserted as a separate addendum. Category E records appear in an abbreviated form this year as it was felt that they were previously given undue prominence. It has been decided not to publish the proposed updates to the *Annotated Checklist* to avoid duplication as most of the information can be obtained from this Report.

Lastly, a further step has been taken in the interests of our Chinese readers: the list of contents and a summary of the more noteworthy events of the birding year are printed in Chinese at the back of the Report. The title also appears in Chinese on the front cover.

As always, I should like to express my gratitude to the editorial board – Peter Kennerley, David Melville and Mike Chalmers – for their continued support. My thanks also go to Angus Lamont, to C Y Lam for the translations, to Lolinda Lee for typing services, and to those members who generously gave me the pick of their photographs.

VERITY PICKEN



## REPORT ON THE BIRDS 1989

M.L. Chalmers and M. Turnbull

The mid-January wildfowl count in Deep Bay produced over 36,000 birds but this was a slightly lower total than those recorded in the three previous years. Similarly, the Christmas count located only 170 species which, although seven more than in 1988, continued the gradual decline noted since 1985. These decreases in wintering birds are considered to be due to the continued high rate of loss of lowland habitat in the New Territories caused by the uncontrolled and widespread conversion of agricultural land, ponds and marshes to empty container depots and scrap vehicle dumps. In Deep Bay an additional special problem, which the Society is working with the World Wide Fund for Nature, Hong Kong to eliminate, is the spread of fishnets and increased disturbance from mudskipper fishermen.

Two migration events stand out for the year. These were the relatively large numbers of Black, Yellow and Von Schrenck's Little Bitterns reported after the unseasonally early Typhoon Brenda in late May, and the concentrated fall of winter visitors in early December. This included many Red-flanked Bluetails, Rubythroats and warblers, amongst which were two first records referred to below and several Mountain Bush Warblers, a species formerly regarded as a vagrant but now a regular winter visitor.

Each year is probably best remembered for the new species added to the Hong Kong List. In 1989 there were five additions to Category A — three of them from 1989 records, one from a 1987/88 record previously held under review, and one from an upgrading from Category D. One species was upgraded from Category E to D and there were nine additions to Category E.

The five new species for Category A were as follows:

1. Relict Gull. A first-winter bird seen in Deep Bay on 31 December 1987 and 2 January 1988.
2. Pied Wheatear. An immature seen at Wah Fu, Hong Kong Island on 24 and 25 September 1989.
3. Two-barred Greenish Warbler. One trapped, ringed and released at Kadoorie Farm on 27 September 1989.
4. Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler. One trapped, ringed and released at Mai Po on 8 December 1989.
5. Yellow-cheeked Tit. Upgraded from Category D due to regular and widespread records in 1989.

In addition there was an intriguing record of two white-rumped storm petrels in Tolo Channel on 19 March. Specific identification was not possible but the birds were probably either Leach's or Harcourt's Storm Petrels. Reports of a Blue-winged Pitta at Cheung Chau on 4 May and an Upland Buzzard at Lantau on 20 December remain under review. Other first records which are still under review from previous years are Ijima's Leaf Warbler, Russet Bush Warbler and Plain Flowerpecker.

The species upgraded from Category E to D based on a 1989 record was Bohemian Waxwing.

The nine Category E species were Chinese Bamboo Partridge, White-throated Fantail, Red-faced Liocichla, Red-tailed Minla, Long-tailed Tit, Marsh Tit, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Black-winged Starling and Pallas's Rosefinch.

Other interesting records included the first record for Hong Kong of the central Asian race *humei* of Yellow-browed Warbler at Kadoorie Farm, second records of Bar-tailed Cuckoo Dove at Hok Tau and Black-necked Grebe at Mai Po; a third record of Long-billed Dowitcher at Mai Po/Tsim Bei Tsui; a fourth record of Chestnut-crowned Warbler at Tai Po Kau, and adult Slaty-backed Gulls (the first definite adults for many years) in Deep Bay. The Purple Gallinule and at least one Brahminy Kite also continued to be seen at Mai Po.

Confirmed first-time breeding records included Black Bazas at Sha Tau Kok and Tai Mei Tuk, and Vinous-throated Parrotbills at Tai Mo Shan.

The Records Committee Report is based on written records from the following observers, whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged:

G.W.J. Ades, C. Andrews, J. Bale, M. Berlijn, S. O'Brien, D. and S. Bryan, E. van der Burg, J.E. Burton, S.R. Cameron, G.J. Carey, M.L. Chalmers, S. Chan, G.C.H. Cooper, N.J.G. Croft, E. Ebels, F. and S. Ebury, J.S.R. Edge, C. Fielding, N.S. Grimshaw, M. Hale, A. Ho, J. Holmes, P. Holt, K. Kazmierczak, P.R. Kennerley, C.Y. Lam, A.R. Lamont, M. Lau, N. Lau, P.J. Leader, F. Lee, N. Lethaby, R.W. Lewthwaite, W.K. Li, D. Lightfoot, A. van der Linden, A.D. Loynd, D.S. Melville, P. Ng, J. Pearse, K. Phillipps, V.B. Picken, W. Schofield, P. Schrijvershof, K.C. Searle, S.P. Smith, G.E. Stevens, R.D.E. Stott, M. Turnbull, G. Walthew, Y.F. Wan, M.A. Webster, M.D. Williams, P.F. and B. Williams, C.A. Viney, A. and W. Young, L. Young, Y.T. Yu.

Some of the records included in these monthly summaries, although believed to be accurate, are not substantiated by written notes and should therefore not be quoted in publications elsewhere. See Records Committee Report for details of authenticated records.



## January

New Year's Day produced a Robin Flycatcher and Red-tailed Robin at Mount Nicholson. On 2nd 18 Dalmatian Pelicans were observed in Deep Bay and this number remained fairly constant until at least early March. Other records on 2nd included two Ruddy Shelduck and one Great Reed Warbler at Mai Po and a Sulphur-breasted Warbler at Barker Road, the Peak. Red-rumped Swallows were reported widely the same day. Only one Brown Fish Owl remained at Discovery Bay and this was last seen on 3rd. On 7th singles of Yellow-checked Tit, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Ashy Drongo and Grey-headed Flycatcher were noted at Tai Po Kau, with two Yellow-checked Tits and several leafbirds being regularly observed there throughout January and February. On 7th a Northern Goshawk was recorded in the Lam Tsuen Valley and a Two-barred Greenish Warbler was claimed at the same site. This record is still under review. Other records on the same day included a Black Vulture, five Imperial and two Spotted Eagles, one Painted Snipe and 16 Long-toed Stints at Lok Ma Chau and 41 Black-faced Spoonbills, two European Spoonbills, a male Pied Harrier, 11 Marsh Harriers, a Japanese Sparrowhawk and two Australian Curlews at Mai Po. Also reported was a single Black Stork.

On 8th a Red-headed Tit was seen at Tai Po Kau, a Yellow-checked Tit turned up at Mount Cameron and there were four Robin Flycatchers at Mount Nicholson. On 13th an Orange-headed Ground Thrush and a Northern Goshawk were watched at Tai Po Kau and five Robin Flycatchers and at least one White's Thrush were also noted there. The next day a Brown Thrush was reported there. Despite these records thrushes generally remained very scarce.

The Waterfowl Count over the weekend 15th/16th produced new highs for many wader species and included a Ruff, three Great Knot, two Bar-tailed Godwits and several Whimbrel and Redshank. Sixty-one Saunders' Gulls were counted in Deep Bay and four Great Crested Grebes were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui. Many of the species seen earlier at Mai Po and Tai Po Kau continued to be seen throughout the month. On 28th a Chestnut-crowned Warbler (fourth for Hong Kong) was first seen at Tai Po Kau and was noted again on several occasions during February. A Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was also recorded there. The same day a new high count of 47 Black-faced and four European Spoonbills was made at Mai Po. On 29th a White-bellied Yuhina and several Chestnut-flanked White-eyes were seen at Tai Po Kau.

## February

Nine Intermediate Egrets were noted at Mai Po on 4th — surprisingly few birds were seen this year. A Siskin, the only record for the year, was located at Tai Po Kau on 5th. At least one Siberian Thrush was reported from the waterfalls above Ng Tung Chai, Lam Tsuen on 7th while an unidentified flycatcher which showed some of the characters of Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher *Muscicapa strophilata* was also seen there the same day. On 8th three Ruddy Shelduck and two Common Pochard were recorded at Mai Po, and the next day up to six Ruddy Shelduck were



1. Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*  
Mai Po, June 1989

(John Holmes)

counted. A Japanese Quail was found at Lok Ma Chau. A Two-barred Greenish Warbler was claimed at Tai Po Kau on 11th. On 12th a flock of Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrushes was seen above Ng Tung Chai and 67 Saunders' Gulls, 19 Dalmatian Pelicans, three Great Crested Grebes and two Pied Harriers were noted at Mai Po. Two Baer's Pochards were there on 16th together with a Ruff and a Lapwing, and on 17th a Long-billed Dowitcher was found amongst the Spotted Redshanks. The Purple Gallinule reappeared after a long absence of records, but this time on gei-wais 7 and 8. Mallard, Gadwall and Garganey were regular at Mai Po from mid-month. On 23rd a Black-shouldered Kite was observed at Mai Po, thus conforming to the pattern of the last few years' indicating a small passage in late February. A Glaucous-winged hybrid-type gull was also present in Deep Bay at this time. The month ended with a tantalising report of a red sunbird seen briefly at Tai Po Kau near the barrier. Could this have been the return of *Aethopyga gouldiae*?

## March

On 5th a Brown-headed Gull, an Australian Curlew and 20 Dalmatian Pelicans were reported from Mai Po together with the now regular Purple Gallinule and Brahminy Kite. The same day a possible Glaucous-winged Gull hybrid was seen at Tsim Bei Tsui. On 10th, 11th and 12th a 'zee-bit' *Bradypterus* warbler was heard at Lung Kwu Tan near Castle Peak Power Station. Whilst searching for this bird on the 12th, a Mountain Bush Warbler was clearly heard singing nearby. This was the first time that the

[The cost of reproduction of plate 1 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



distinctive song of this bird had been reported here, thus removing any doubt of this species' occurrence in Hong Kong. Other records around this time were a Wryneck at Tsim Bei Tsui and two Ruff at Mai Po on 11th, and a drake Baikal Teal and one Lapwing at Mai Po on 12th.

On 18th a flock of 100 Yellow-breasted Buntings was noted at Shek Kong, smaller numbers having been seen elsewhere. On 19th two unidentified white-rumped storm petrels were observed in Tolo Channel. This is the first record of any storm petrel other than Swinhoe's in Hong Kong. On 22nd a Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle and a Japanese Quail were seen at Lok Ma Chau while on 24th two Red-faced Liocichlas were found on the Peak. The next day a Black Bulbul was observed at Tai Po Kau and 18 Sand Martins and a Blue and White Flycatcher were found at Cheung Chau. At Mai Po wader numbers rose sharply after the scrape was drained with two Nordmann's Greenshanks, eight Great Knot and large numbers of Marsh Sandpipers and Greenshanks on 26th.

On the same day a Hoopoe was found at Clearwater Bay. Further migrants on 27th included Japanese Yellow Buntings at Cheung Chau and Mai Po, flocks of 70 Grey-faced Buzzard Eagles over Mount Davis, Stonecutters Island and Tai Po Kau, a Narcissus Flycatcher, 40 White-vented Needletails, three Blue and White Flycatchers and a Northern Goshawk at Tai Po Kau, and 20 White-vented Needletails at Sam A Tsuen. On 28th a flock of 12 Red Avadavats was first noted at Mai Po where they remained for over a week. On 30th a Japanese Sparrowhawk appeared at Hong Kong University and up to eight Penduline Tits took up short-term residence at Mai Po (one was subsequently trapped and proved to be heavy, indicating that it was probably about to migrate). The month ended with three Red-headed Tits at Jubilee Reservoir.

## April

As usual this month proved to be excellent for spring migrants with a wide range of waders and flycatchers, although some of the rarities expected from previous years did not appear. On 1st 200 Great Knot, one Spoon-billed Sandpiper and 12 Oriental Pratincoles were present at Mai Po. The wintering Long-billed Dowitcher was seen again at Tsim Bei Tsui and six Red-headed Tits and a Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher were watched in Tai Po Kau. The next day Mount Davis produced one Yellow-cheeked Tit while Tsim Bei Tsui yielded a Brambling. Other reports the same day included over three White-bellied Yuhinas at Tai Po Kau, and a late Spotted Eagle and two Vinous-throated Parrotbills at Mai Po. On 3rd further flycatcher records of one Verditer and two Blue and Whites were received from Stonecutters Island. On 5th a male Reed Bunting turned up at Shuen Wan and remained for several days, five White-vented Needletails were seen at Tai Po Kau and two Spoon-billed Sandpipers, three Nordmann's Greenshanks, and 5,000 other waders totalling 30 species were recorded at Mai Po. On 6th new flycatcher reports included single Asian Paradise and Ferruginous at Tai Po Kau.

The 8th was the day of the Big Bird Race. A total of 232 species was observed, the winning team, China Resources, scoring 154. Highlights

included up to five Spoon-billed Sandpipers and at least one Nordmann's Greenshank at Mai Po, the Reed Bunting and a Citrine Wagtail at Shuen Wan and a Lesser Frigatebird at Tai Po Kau. Eleven Nordmann's Greenshanks, 220 Great Knot, 3,500 Curlew Sandpipers, 900 Redshanks, 1,600 Spotted Redshanks, 650 Marsh Sandpipers, 450 Black-tailed Godwits, 2,700 Greater Sand Plovers and 110 Avocets were recorded at Mai Po the next day when a total of 10,839 waders were seen, the highest count of the year. An estimated 1,000 Red-necked Phalaropes were seen off the Cheung Chau ferry on 9th and over 1,250 were noted on 14th.

The first Japanese Paradise Flycatcher was reported at Hebe Haven on 10th. On 13th a Black-shouldered Kite was seen at Shuen Wan and a Japanese Yellow Bunting, Silver-eared Mesia (Category E), two Ruff and 14 Nordmann's Greenshanks were seen at Mai Po together with the Long-billed Dowitcher.



2. Japanese Yellow Bunting *Emberiza sulphurata*  
Mai Po, March 1989 (Peter Kennerley)

Reports of Asian Paradise, Narcissus, Japanese Paradise and Blue and White Flycatchers in widespread areas continued with several Robin Flycatchers also noted. Unusually for spring, a female Tricolour Flycatcher was reported from Pak Nai on 16th. Late winter visitors included three Bluethroats at Lok Ma Chau and three Red-tailed Robins at Tai Mei Tuk on 15th. A Hoopoe was also seen there while several Chinese Babax and two Large Grass Warblers were found at Tai Mo Shan on 15th, and a

[The cost of reproduction of plate 2 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



Velvet-fronted Nuthatch (Category E) was located at Tai Po Kau — a first record for Hong Kong. Another Spoon-billed Sandpiper appeared at Tsim Bei Tsui on 16th and a Collared Finchbill (Category E) was found at Wah Fu while a family of Vinous-throated Parrotbills at Tai Mo Shan represented the first breeding record. A Forest Wagtail and two Grey-headed Buntings were reported from Tsim Bei Tsui the same day. Pale-legged Leaf Warblers were widespread around this time.

On 17th a White-throated Needletail was seen at Mount Davis and Chestnut Buntings were reported in small numbers from several localities. On 19th four Yellow-cheeked Tits were recorded at Hong Kong University. Fifty-two Gull-billed Terns were counted at Mai Po the next day, followed by a Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle at Mount Davis on 21st while on the same day a Black Vulture was watched over Mid-Levels. On 22nd a single Little Stint, four Blue-tailed Bee-eaters and at least four Chestnut-cheeked Starlings were seen at Mai Po and at least ten needletails were watched over Tap Mun. On 23rd three Blue-tailed Bee-eaters were seen at Ha Tsuen. Three Category E species reported in April were a Marsh Tit at Tsim Bei Tsui, a Long-tailed Tit at Tai Po Kau and a Chinese Bamboo Partridge heard in the Aberdeen Country Park.

## May

Migrants continued to be numerous and widespread throughout most of the month. On 4th a Blue-winged Pitta was found at Cheung Chau — if accepted this will be a first for Hong Kong. Between 5th and 7th a fall of Arctic Warblers, Brown Shrikes and Grey-streaked Flycatchers occurred, with numerous reports. A late Dusky Thrush was seen at Mount Davis on 5th, with five Horsfield's Goshawks there the next day. A Von Schrenck's Little Bittern, Hobby and Watercock were found at Luk Keng on 7th and several Ashy Minivets were reported at Tai Tam and Deep Water Bay Road around this time. Also on 13th a Slaty-backed Forktail turned up on the stream at Tai Po Kau and remained for at least three weeks. The same day 11 Nordmann's Greenshanks and 60 Great Knot were present at Mai Po although wader numbers were by then decreasing.

Typhoon Brenda caused some ornithological excitement on 19th and 20th mainly with varied tern records and subsequent reports of bittern species. On 19th three Bridled, 14 Whiskered, 624 White-winged Black and 12 Common Terns were recorded at Cheung Chau. The next day two juvenile Sooty/Bridled Terns were seen there together with smaller numbers of the other tern species, one Horsfield's Goshawk and a single Von Schrenck's Little Bittern. Two Pechora Pipits were reported from Sandy Bay on 21st and 35 Whiskered, 200 White-winged Black, six Little and two Common Terns were seen at Ma Wan and Pearl Island together with three Sanderlings and one Swinhoe's Egret. Also on 21st a Black Bittern and Von Schrenck's Little Bittern were seen at Clearwater Bay and another Black Bittern was located at Mai Po on 22nd.

Interesting reports of Blue Rock Thrushes probably breeding were received from Mount Butler and Stonecutters Island. The Tai Po Kau

survey of breeding birds on 27th listed 46 species including at least three Orange-bellied Leafbirds, two pairs of Hainan Blue Flycatchers, White-bellied Yuhina, five Yellow-cheeked Tits including one young being fed (first breeding record), and two pairs of Silver-eared Mesias. The month ended with a total of five Von Schrenck's Little Bitterns, two Black Bitterns, two Watercock and a Lesser Frigatebird at Tai Long Wan on 27th/28th and a probable Slaty-legged Crake at Mount Butler on 28th.

## June

A Black Bittern was reported at Mui Wo on 2nd while on 7th a minimum of five Black-naped Terns was observed at the Soko Islands again, suggesting that there may be a breeding colony in that area. Two unidentified needletail swifts were seen over Tai Po Kau between 7th and 11th, an unusually late record. Nordmann's Greenshanks continued to be recorded at Mai Po with six on 8th and three on 10th. On the latter date over 20 Black-winged Stilts were still present. The Slaty-backed Forktail was seen again near the lay-by at Tai Po Kau on 10th. On 11th an Oriental Pratincole, Black-faced Spoonbill and two Chestnut Bitterns were reported from Mai Po and on 14th a Black Baza with nesting material was seen at Tai Mei Tuk. A single adult male Lesser Frigatebird was watched near the Ninepins on 18th while on 19th a dead Slaty-legged Crake was found on the road near Kadoorie Farm suggesting that this elusive species may breed in that area.

## July

The number and variety of summering waders continued the increasing trend observed over recent years since the construction of the wader scrape, and several new late dates were set. On 1st 20 wader species were recorded including singles of Ruff, Asiatic Dowitcher and Australian Curlew, two Great Knot, 61 Greenshanks, 42 Black-winged Stilts and 45 Grey-rumped Sandpipers. Further unusual summer records included Grey Heron, Garganey and Shoveler. The next day 185 birds of 18 wader species were counted including three Great Knot and two Red-necked Phalaropes.

On 5th an unusual summer record of Arctic Warbler was reported on the Peak. Positive proof of the breeding of Black Bazas was obtained on 11th with two adults and two fledglings seen next to Sha Tau Kok Police Station. With many observers on leave, reports for the rest of July and early August were lacking but included a Hoopoe at Route Twisk (Shek Kong side) on 22nd.

## August

Another Hoopoe turned up at Shek O on 10th. On 12th wader numbers had increased at Mai Po and included 240 Redshanks, 53 Marsh Sandpipers, 29 Curlew Sandpipers and two Australian Curlews. On 14th Tai Po Kau produced two surprises in the form of an early Asian Paradise Flycatcher and a Velvet-fronted Nuthatch. The latter is presumed to be the same bird as the one seen in April. On 15th eight Black Bazas and a Crested Goshawk were seen at Shek Kong Catchwater and the next day a large owl,



possibly an Eagle Owl, was reported at Bate Head, and another Asian Paradise Flycatcher, clearly a migrant, at Hole Island, Sai Kung. At least one Hainan Blue Flycatcher was still present at Tai Po Kau on 18th and a total of three Brahminy Kites was seen at Mai Po around this time. Other interesting reports from Mai Po included a single Sharp-tailed Sandpiper on 20th and three Asiatic Dowitchers on 26th. A visit to Tai Mo Shan on 20th produced at least eight Chinese Babax and several Large Grass Warblers. A Crimson-legged Crane was an unusual bird at Mui Wo on 31st.

## September

Wader netting at Mai Po on 1st/2nd produced a female Ruff (the first caught at Mai Po) and a control of a Grey-rumped Sandpiper first ringed in northwest Australia in March 1988. On 3rd at least one Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, an Eastern Crowned Warbler, a pair of Hainan Blue Flycatchers and four Yellow-cheeked Tits were located at Tai Po Kau whilst an early Black-tailed Hawfinch and 33 Grey-rumped Sandpipers were reported at Mai Po. On 5th one Tricolour and up to six Asian Paradise Flycatchers were recorded at Tai Po Kau. Passage of flycatchers (Tricolour, Brown, Grey-streaked, Asian Paradise and Japanese Paradise) and warblers (Arctic and Pale-legged) continued throughout the month and into early October with widespread sightings. Particularly high numbers of Arctic Warblers were noted at Mount Davis on 23rd when up to 40 were reported. On 10th many of the Arctic Warblers at Tai Po Kau were considered to be of the race *xanthodryas*. One Yellow-cheeked Tit and up to ten White-bellied Yuhinas were also seen there the same day. There were several other records of Eastern Crowned Warblers including single birds at Mount Nicholson on 6th, Tai Po Kau on 15th, the Chinese University on 16th and Mount Butler on 22nd. On 9th two Sooty Flycatchers were recorded at Mount Nicholson and a Brown Shrike was reported at Mount Davis.

The next day two Red-necked Phalaropes were seen at Shelter Cove. On 13th a Red-tailed Minla and a Yellow-cheeked Tit were found at Mount Nicholson while on 14th a Forest Wagtail was sighted at Tai Po Kau and on 16th up to three Velvet-fronted Nuthatches were estimated to be present there. The same day a Sparrowhawk was recorded at Mount Davis and on 17th six Black-throated Laughing Thrushes were seen there. Single Sooty Flycatchers were reported from Tai Po Kau on 15th and 18th and around this time two Red-headed Tits were also located there.

Waders at Mai Po on 17th included six Broad-billed Sandpipers and a Red-necked Phalarope. The adult Brahminy Kite was also present on the marshes. On 19th a roosting flock of 21 Black Bazas was observed at Shek Kong Catchwater followed on 22nd by a flock of 30 Black Bazas at Bride's Pool. A Hoopoe was reported at Pokfulam on the same day. The next day a Horsfield's Goshawk was sighted at Mount Nicholson and another Hoopoe was seen at Mong Tseng.

The rarity of the month was found at Pokfulam on 24th — an immature Pied Wheater — the first for Hong Kong. This bird was also seen the next day in the same locality. Also on 24th a Wryneck was recorded at Mount

Nicholson and four Vinous-throated Parrotbills were located at Tai Mo Shan. Up to two Broad-billed Rollers were seen on Route Twisk in the last week of the month and into early October while on 27th a leaf warbler trapped at Kadoorie Farm was identified as a Two-barred Greenish Warbler. On 30th two Ashy Drongos, four Silver-eared Mesias and a Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike were recorded at Mount Davis and a Black Baza was seen at Ting Kok.

## October

On 1st three Purple-backed Starlings and an Imperial Eagle were noted at Mai Po and a Red-headed Tit and Tricolour Flycatcher were observed at Cheung Chau. On 3rd a Broad-billed Roller was seen at Tai Po Kau and the next day 16 Black-naped Orioles were recorded on Tai Mo Shan. On 4th two Ashy Minivets were reported at Pak Nai, at least eight Purple-backed Starlings at Mai Po, and single Forest Wagtails at Shek Kong and Lam Tsuen. A Hobby, Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike, Brown Shrike, Wryneck and at least 12 Black-naped Orioles were noted at Mount Davis on 5th.

Heavy passage of Arctic Warblers and Black Drongos occurred at this time, with about 150 of the latter at Mount Davis on 5th. The following day the first of several Japanese Sparrowhawks was reported, a Woodcock was found in Tai Po Kau and over 14 Silver-eared Mesias were noted on the Peak. Another Hoopoe appeared on 7th, this time at Sai Kung, and one Chestnut and nine Yellow-breasted Buntings were recorded at Mai Po. Numbers of duck and Cormorants increased sharply around this time and large numbers of other winter visitors such as Stonechats, Rubythroats, White Wagtails and Dusky Warblers arrived in early October. Around mid-month a Hoopoe was recorded at Mai Po. The waterfowl collection at Mai Po proved very popular with wild duck which were attracted by the presence of the pinioned stock.

Three Ashy Minivets were seen at Shek Kong Catchwater on 12th and three Common Rosefinches on 13th. Other interesting reports from there during the month included at least two Japanese Sparrowhawks, up to two Grey-headed Flycatchers, a Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher and up to five Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrushes.

Fantail, Pintail and Swinhoe's Snipe were noted at Lok Ma Chau on 20th and two Japanese Quail were observed near Lau Fau Shan the same day. On 21st a large flock of 230 Black-winged Stilts was noted at Mai Po and a mixed flock of about 60 minivets (Scarlet, Grey-throated and two Ashy) was recorded at Tai Po Kau as well as two Yellow-cheeked Tits and three Yellow-bellied Tits. On 22nd Mount Davis produced a Pallas's Rosefinch (Category E), which remained until at least the next day. On 26th four Blue-tailed Bee-eaters were observed at Mai Po, a Northern Goshawk and Eastern Crowned Warbler were seen at Tai Po Kau and a Grey-headed Flycatcher was noted in the Zoological and Botanical Gardens. On the same day a dead Barred Button Quail was found at the bottom of Mount Stenhouse on Lamma Island. On 27th a female Bull-



headed Shrike was seen near the Chinese University and was still there the next day. Also on 28th a Japanese Nightjar and two Black-naped Monarch Flycatchers were found at Tai Mei Tuk, a Verditer Flycatcher was seen at Pak Nai and three European Starlings were present at Tsim Bei Tsui.

#### November

A Woodcock was picked up injured at the Jubilee Sports Centre on 3rd. The next day at least three Velvet-fronted Nuthatches and an Ashy Minivet were still present at Tai Po Kau while on 5th five Red-breasted Flycatchers and a Wryneck were found at Lam Tsuen. Rufous-necked Scimitar Babblers were heard in the Aberdeen Country Park around this time. On 8th two Water Pipits were noted at Lok Ma Chau and three Grey Bushchats were found at Junk Bay on 9th.

On 11th a Spoon-billed Sandpiper was seen at close quarters from the boardwalk hide at Mai Po — this was a new late date for this species which is very scarce in autumn. Other records at Mai Po the same day included a Ruff, a Great Knot, 12 Broad-billed Sandpipers, ten Saunders' Gulls, two Tufted Duck, 43 Black-faced Spoonbills and a Pheasant-tailed Jacana. The next day a Red-necked Stint, Australian Curlew and five Tufted Duck were seen there and the first of scattered Robin Flycatchers was reported from Lam Tsuen. On 12th several 'zeebit' *Bradypterus* warblers were heard and a Yellow-bellied Tit was seen at Hok Tau. A Hoopoe was found at Tai Wan To, Lamma on 17th and was regularly seen until 29th. On 18th a Blyth's Leaf Warbler was found at Tai Po Kau, a Pheasant-tailed Jacana at Lok Ma Chau and two more 'zeebit' *Bradypterus* warblers at Chek Keng/Tai Long. A Short-tailed Bush Warbler was netted at the unusual location of Mai Po on 19th.

On 24th several Eye-browed Thrushes and a Northern Goshawk were reported at Tai Po Kau. On 25th the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and the Ruff were seen again at Mai Po while numbers of Saunders' Gulls and Tufted Duck had risen to over 20 and 17 respectively. Two flocks of thrushes were heard migrating over Mai Po on the night of 25th and two Great Crested Grebes were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 26th. A Peregrine, which had resided in the Causeway Bay area since August, was seen to have taken a Budgerigar. Two Hoopoes were reported from Lamma and one from Ping Yeung (off the Shau Tau Kok Road) while a wild Mandarin and Scaup appeared amongst the captive birds at Mai Po.

#### December

Netting at Kadoorie Farm on 2nd produced a Chestnut-flanked White-eye, a Mountain Bush Warbler and the first record of the central Asian race *humei* of Yellow-browed Warbler. The same day a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler and at least six Robin Flycatchers were noted at Tai Po Kau, a Hoopoe at Shatin, three Mountain Bush Warblers, a Brown Thrush and an Imperial Eagle at Plover Cove and two Robin Flycatchers and two Plumbeous Water Redstarts at Bride's Pool. A Bohemian Waxwing, only the second for Hong Kong, was found on Mount Davis the following day.

Red-flanked Bluetails were numerous and widespread indicating a large arrival with, for example, over 30 at Bride's Pool. On 6th and 7th a Bar-tailed Cuckoo Dove, only the second record for Hong Kong, was found at Hok Tau Reservoir.

The first two Dalmatian Pelicans arrived in Deep Bay on 9th and a Japanese Quail, Spoon-billed Sandpiper and, surprisingly, a Plumbeous Water Redstart were all recorded at Mai Po the same day. A gull showing many of the characteristics of a first-winter Glaucous-winged Gull was seen off the Boardwalk, but doubts remain over hybridisation due to the presence of a secondary bar and a tail band. Two Black-necked Grebes were seen at Mai Po on 10th and 11th — this being only the second record for Hong Kong. At least one Black-tailed Gull was present in Deep Bay from this time. Twenty-two Black-faced Spoonbills were counted at Mai Po on 23rd. The Christmas Count the next day turned up 170 species including another Mountain Bush Warbler at Sai Kung. The year ended with a Ruddy Crake seen at Tsim Bei Tsui on 31 December.



## RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT 1989

M.L. Chalmers

CATEGORY A. SPECIES WHICH HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN AN APPARENTLY WILD STATE IN HONG KONG WITHIN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

### 3.1 Black-necked Grebe

*Podiceps nigricollis*

Two birds in non-breeding plumage on a pond through the fence next to the Rocky Outcrop at Mai Po on 10 and 11 December (PRK,RWL).

These sightings are only the second record for Hong Kong, the first being a single bird off Tsim Bei Tsui between 26 and 30 November 1986.

### [Storm Petrel

*Oceanodroma* sp.

Two white-rumped storm petrels seen in flight at the mouth of the Tolo Channel on 19 March (ARL). The descriptions are not conclusive for specific identification but it is possible that the birds were either Leach's or Harcourt's Storm Petrels *O. leucorhoa* or *O. castro*. This is the first record of any white-rumped storm petrels from Hong Kong. The main features noted are as follows:

About the same size as Swinhoe's Storm Petrel but more pigeon-chested. General colouration greyish-brown with a very obvious white rump. Flight, about 5m above the sea, was relaxed and casual but distinctly butterfly-like prior to 'paddling' near the sea surface. Wings long, dark, narrow and pointed with a very obvious angle at carpal joint. Tail forked. Legs long with dangling feet. Bill and legs dark.]

### 7 Dalmatian Pelican

*Pelecanus crispus*

Intermittently present in Deep Bay up to 19 March (RDES) and from 8 December (SC,DSM). Maximum numbers were 20 on 3 March and only two in December (SC,WY,CAV,ARL). The maximum of 20 represents a drop from 1988 when up to 37 were recorded and continues the decline observed in recent years.

### 9 Lesser Frigatebird

*Fregata ariel*

Single immatures, separated from Great Frigatebird *F. minor* by white axillaries, seen in Tolo Harbour from Tai Po Kau on 8 April during the Big Bird Race (JEB,DJG,NJGC,JH) and from the ferry to Cheung Chau on 9 April (MDW) and at Mai Po on 6 May (RWL,MDW,PJL). Single adult males, the first for Hong Kong, in Tolo Harbour on 27 May (MT) and near the Ninepins on 18 June (WS).

### 12 Von Schrenck's Little Bittern

*Ixobrychus eurhythmus*

An exceptional influx of passage migrants recorded in May and early June following Typhoon Brenda on 20 May, with up to 13 separate individuals as follows:

7 May	Female at Luk Keng (PRK,RWL)
21 May	Female at Clearwater Bay (RWL)
21 and 22 May	Female at Cheung Chau (MDW)
27 May — 5 June	Up to 5 females or immatures at Tai Long Wan, Sai Kung (MT) with up to 50 Yellow Bitterns <i>I. sinensis</i> and six Chestnut Bitterns <i>I. cinnamomeus</i>
2 June	Female at Pui O, Lantau (RWL,MDW)
2 and 3 June	Two at Mui Wo, Lantau (RWL,MDW,VBP <i>et al.</i> )
4 June	Two at Luk Keng (RWL,PRK,WY <i>et al.</i> )

1988: A male at Wah Fu on 1 April (SPS).

### 14 Black Bittern

*Ixobrychus flavicollis*

An exceptional influx of passage migrants recorded after Typhoon Brenda on 20 May. Large numbers of Yellow Bitterns *I. sinensis* with smaller numbers of Chestnut and Von Schrenck's Little Bitterns *I. cinnamomeus* and *I. eurhythmus* were also involved. All records are summarised below:

21 May	Adult male at Clearwater Bay (RWL)
22 May	Adult male at Mai Po (RWL)
24 May	One at Sandy Bay (JB)
27 and 28 May	A pair at Tai Long Wan (MT)
2 and 3 June	A male at Mui Wo, Lantau (RWL,MDW,VBP, WY)

### 20 Swinhoe's Egret

*Egretta eulophotes*

One at Pearl Island, So Kwun Wat on 21 May after Typhoon Brenda (MLC).

### 31 European Spoonbill

*Platalea leucorodia*

Recorded at Mai Po up to 6 May (WY), with a maximum of four on 28 January (RWL,PRK).

### 32 Black-faced Spoonbill

*Platalea minor*

Recorded at Mai Po up to 14 May (RDES) and from 23 October (RWL) except for one on 24 June (RWL,WY). Maximum counts were 47 on 28 January (PRK,RWL) and 50 on 11 November (RWL). These totals represent new high counts for Hong Kong.

### 36 Ruddy Shelduck

*Tadorna ferruginea*

Between one and seven at Mai Po up to 3 March (RWL,LWK,NL), and one at Pak Nai on 8 January (ADL).

### 39 Mandarin

*Aix galericulata*

A free-flying female in the waterfowl collection at Mai Po from 26 November (ML,RWL) remained into 1990.

### 41 Falcated Teal

*Anas falcata*

Regular at Mai Po with smaller numbers near Tsim Bei Tsui up to 19 May (RWL) and from 24 September (PRK). High counts were 130 on 28 January and 150 on 10 December (PRK).



**43 Baikal Teal** *Anas formosa*  
Single drakes at Mai Po on 22 January (SC), 9 and 12 March (RWL,PRK,RDES).

**50 Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*  
One drake at Mai Po on 8 January (SC), two drakes on 8 and 9 February (ARL,RWL), and a female on 25 November and 9 December (RWL,PRK). A drake at Tsim Bei Tsui on 29 January (PRK) and two females at Long Valley on 22 December (RWL,SPS).

**51 Baer's Pochard** *Aythya baeri*  
Two drakes at Mai Po on 16 February and one there on 17 and 23 February (RWL). One on 21 October (KCS) and a free-flying bird at the waterfowl collection on 28 October (CAV).

**53 Scaup** *Aythya marila*  
Free-flying duck present at Mai Po waterfowl collection from 26 November (ML).

**58 Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*  
One in Tai Po Kau on 15 January (RWL) and 21 March (PRK) was assumed to be the individual first reported there on 1 October 1988. Other reports of an unidentified raptor, possibly this species or Mountain Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis* in Tai Po Kau between 21 October and 14 November (RWL).

**59 Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*  
One perched in the mangroves at Mai Po on 23 February (RWL) and a single bird at Shuen Wan on 13 April (NGJC).  
These are the fifth and sixth records for Hong Kong. Four records have been between 14 and 28 February.

**60.1 Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus*  
The immature first recorded on 1 November 1988 was noted in every month and had moulted into adult plumage by August. From 2 July the adult and one immature were reported (RWL) and on 15 August the adult and two immatures were present (LY,ML,FC).

**62 Black Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*  
Single birds reported in the border areas between Lok Ma Chau and Lo Wu from 15 January (WYF) to 8 February (RWL) and on 10 and 12 December (RWL,PRK). Also one circling over Mid-Levels on 21 April (F&SE).

**66 Pied Harrier** *Circus melanoleucos*  
A distinctive male at Mai Po from 7 January (RWL) to 26 March (ARL) and on 19 and 29 October (SO'B,GCHC,WY). Female or immature ringtails probably of this species were recorded at Mai Po on 18 February, at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 April (MDW) and at Mai Po again from 7 October to 11 December (RWL).

**67 Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*  
One at Tai Po Kau on 11 January (RWL) and from 24 to 28 November (RWL). Also single birds at Lam Tsuen Valley on 7 January (RWL) and Lai Chi Wo on 14 January (MT,JSRE).

**[68 Japanese Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter gularis*  
Small accipiters, probably this species, were recorded at Mai Po on 7 January, 17 February, 5, 8 and 15 April, 24 and 29 October and 31 December. Also at Tai Po Kau on 15 April and at Shek Kong Catchwater on 28 September, 26, 30 and 31 October, and 5 and 13 November.]

**71 Horsfield's Goshawk** *Accipiter soloensis*  
One flying north at Mount Davis on 10 April (PRK). One at Cheung Chau on 24 April (MDW), and six at Tsim Bei Tsui (RWL) and one at Cheung Chau (MDW) on 25 April. Single birds also noted at San Tin on 18 May (RWL), Cheung Chau on 21 May (MDW), Mount Nicholson on 23 September (CAV), Tai Po Kau on 3 October (RWL), and Mai Po on 12 November (YYT).

**1988:** 134 birds flew north at Tsim Bei Tsui on 24 April between 0902h and 1105h (GJC).

**72 Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle** *Butastur indicus*  
One at Lok Ma Chau on 22 March (RWL), about 70 moving in from the south at Mount Davis (SPS) and Stonecutters Island on 27 March, one at Mai Po on 8 April (ARL,GCHC), 18 flying north over Mount Davis between 0700h and 0745h on 10 April and one there on 21 April (PRK).

**74 Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*  
Up to two in the Deep Bay area until 26 April (RWL,ARL), a new late date, and up to three from 24 October (DSM,WY).

**75 Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*  
Up to four in the Deep Bay and border area until 8 April (ARL). One at Mai Po on 1 October and up to nine there from 9 November (PRK,RWL). Elsewhere, three at Shek Kong Catchment on 29 January and two there on 11 November (GCHC) and one at Plover Cove on 2 December (CAV).

**85 Japanese Quail** *Coturnix japonica*  
Single birds at Mai Po on 18 January (SC) and Lok Ma Chau from 9 February to 14 April (RWL). Two at Lau Fau Shan on 20 October and up to three at Ping Yeung on 9 and 22 December (RWL,SPS).

**87 Barred Button Quail** *Turnix suscitator*  
The remains of a recently killed bird were found at Mount Stenhouse, Lamma Island on 26 October (JP).  
This is the first record of this species since October 1984 and only the second since 1973.



**88 Slaty-legged Crane** *Rallina eurizonoides*  
One in Pok Fu Lam Country Park on 25 April (P&BW) and one found dead at Kadoorie Farm on 19 June (ML).

**92 Ruddy Crane** *Porzana fusca*  
One watched feeding at the edge of a drained pond at Tsim Bei Tsui on 31 December (RWL,MT).

**94 Crimson-legged Crane** *Amaurornis akool*  
One seen swimming across a stream at Mui Wo on 31 August (GW).

**96.1 Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio porphyrio*  
The single bird found last year at Mai Po continued to be seen between 25 February and 17 March (PRK,SC *et al.*) and was noted again on 23 November on pond 12 (DL).

**100 Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*  
One at Lok Ma Chau between 18 November (MT) and 17 December (RWL).

**101 Painted Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*  
Up to two males and one female at Lok Ma Chau between 7 January and 29 April and a male there between 8 October and 3 December (ARL,RWL,SPS,WY). Elsewhere, a pair at Ha Tsuen on 16 April (CYL).

**111 Oriental Plover** *Charadrius veredus*  
One at Mai Po on 8 April (ARL, CAV), an adult female at Kai Tak on 17 April, singles on 20 and 23 April, one adult male and one immature on 25 April and an adult male on 27 and 28 April — all at Kai Tak (MB,EvdB, PRK,MT).

**116 Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris*  
Up to three birds present in Deep Bay until February. The first spring migrants were noted at Mai Po on 26 March and rapidly increased to a maximum of 220 on 9 April (PRK). Numbers declined thereafter to 130 by 22 April and 35 by the end of the month. Small numbers of first-summer birds were present throughout May, seven remained throughout June and two were still present on 1 July (CAV). Numbers in autumn were typically much smaller with a maximum of nine on 17 September (RWL).

**119.1 Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*  
Two at Mai Po scrape on 21 April (RWL), one there on 22 April (MT) and one on 26 April (RWL).

**125 Spoon-billed Sandpiper** *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*  
Relatively few recorded in spring as follows (PRK,RWL,MT,WY):

1 April	One at Mai Po
5 April	Two at Mai Po
8 April	Five at Mai Po
9 April	Two at Mai Po
15 April	One at Mai Po
16 April	One at Tsim Bei Tsui

In the late autumn a juvenile was recorded with the flocks of Dunlin *Calidris alpina* off the Mai Po Boardwalk between 11 November and 11 December (PRK,RWL,MT). This is only the second record of an autumn bird.

**127 Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*  
At Mai Po one reported between 15 January and 19 March, up to two males there between 11 March and 30 April, one on 1 July, a juvenile female trapped on 2 September and one there from 11 November until 9 December (PRK,CAV,RWL *et al.*). Also one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 8 April (RWL) and one at Ha Tsuen on 16 April (CYL).

**131 Swinhoe's Snipe** *Gallinago megala*  
At least one at Kai Tak on 23 April, one at Lok Ma Chau on 30 April, over four at Luk Keng on 7 May, and a minimum of 16 at Lok Ma Chau on 9 October (PRK).

**133 Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*  
One at Mai Po from 17 February to 20 April and, presumably the same bird, intermittently at Tsim Bei Tsui between 1 and 18 April (RWL,PH,PRK *et al.*). By early April the bird was moulting into breeding plumage and this was completed by mid-April.

**134 Asiatic Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus*  
The first migrants were noted on 6 April with 40 at Mai Po (RWL) increasing thereafter to a maximum of over 75 on 15 April (PRK). Numbers then declined to 28 on 29 April (SC), 18 on 6 May and small numbers until the end of May. Up to four at Mai Po in June and July was the first record of over-summering birds. In the autumn three juveniles on 28 August at Mai Po was the only record.

**141 Australian Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis*  
One wintered in the Deep Bay area and intermittent reports of single birds continued in all months except September and December. The maximum count was four on 22 April (PRK) and four from 19 to 22 May (RWL).

**146 Nordmann's Greenshank** *Tringa guttifer*  
Regularly reported at Mai Po between 26 March and 23 June, a new late date, with a maximum of 11 on 9 April (PRK) and 13 May (PJL). An estimated minimum of 23 individuals occurred during the spring.



**156.1 Relict Gull** *Larus relictus*

**1987/88:** A first-winter bird from Mai Po Boardwalk on 31 December 1987 and on 2 January 1988 (PRK,MT) (see separate paper in this Report). This is the first record for Hong Kong.

**157 Saunders' Gull** *Larus saundersi*

Numerous in Deep Bay up to 9 April and from 4 November. Maximum counts were 61 on 15 January (MDW), 67 on 12 February (CAV), c30 on 25 November and 25 on 10 December (PRK).

**159 Brown-headed Gull** *Larus brunnicephalus*

An adult at Mai Po Boardwalk on 5 March (MLC) and on 25 November (PRK).

**163 Slaty-backed Gull** *Larus schistisagus*

Two adult gulls at the Deep Bay Fence on 1 January (GW). The following description was submitted:

'Slaty-grey mantle and upper wing surface grading into black on the outer primaries. Colour similar to Lesser Black-backed Gull of Europe. A very broad white band along the trailing edge of the secondaries narrowing at the primaries. White rump and tail. Head heavily streaked. Herring Gull sized but yellow bill deeper (more like Great Black-backed Gull of Europe). Flight feathers dark on the underside of wing. Pink legs.'

This is the first accepted record of this species since 4 April 1970.

**[Gull]** *Larus* sp.

A large first-winter gull at Mai Po Boardwalk between 8 and 10 December appeared to be a possible Glaucous-winged Gull hybrid *L. glaucescens* X ? Although the structure appeared correct and the closed primaries and tertials were only marginally darker than the pale greyish sandy mantle, the primaries were darker than the wing coverts in flight and there was a darker secondary bar and tail band (PRK,CAV *et al.*)

**170 Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana*

Twelve in the Tolo Channel on 22 April (ARL) but none reported from the former island breeding sites in Mirs Bay. Elsewhere, at least five near the Soko Islands on 9 June (SPS) and at least four there on 2 July (MDW).

**172 Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

Five at Starling Inlet on 15 April (RWL,MT) and up to 12 between Tai Long Wan and the Ninpins from 21 August to 3 September (ARL).

**173 Bridled Tern** *Sterna anaethetus*

At least three at Cheung Chau on 20 May during Typhoon Brenda (MDW). The next day two dark immature terns (Sooty or Bridled *S. fuscata/anaethetus*) were also seen from Cheung Chau (MDW).

**182 Bar-tailed Cuckoo Dove** *Macropygia unchall*

A male at Hok Tau Reservoir between 6 and 12 December (RWL,ARL,WY *et al.*). This bird associated with Rufous Turtle Doves *Streptopelia orientalis* and on one occasion gave a two-note call as described in King's *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia* (1975).

This is only the second record for Hong Kong, the first being a single bird near Tai Po Kau in 1960.

**192 Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*

One at Lam Tsuen on 14 April (PJL), one at Tai Po Kau on 15 April (seen and heard) (RWL,WY *et al.*). Two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 May (PJL,RWL) and one immature at Mai Po on 16 September (netted, ringed and photographed) (PJL).

Other large cuckoos (*C. saturatus/canorus/poliocephalus*) were singles in widespread areas between 3 and 6 May and 24 September to 19 October.



3. Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*

Mai Po, September 1989

(Paul J. Leader)

**1988:** Single large cuckoos (*C. saturatus/canorus/poliocephalus*) at Mount Davis on 27 April and 1 May (SPS).

**[Owl]** *Bubo/Ketupa* sp.

A large owl seen at Bate Head, Mirs Bay on 16 April was probably either an Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* or Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* (ARL)]

[The cost of reproduction of plate 3 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]

**200 Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides*  
Two at Tai Po Kau on 8 April (GCHC), one at Lam Tsuen Valley on 14 May (SPS) and one at Tai Po Kau on 12 November (GCHC).

**204 Japanese Nightjar** *Caprimulgus indicus*  
A male seen perched on a palm frond and in flight at Stanley Cemetery on 5 April (GES, AY) and another single bird sitting along a pine branch at Tai Mei Tuk Catchwater on 29 October (MT, RWL).

**206 White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus*  
Up to six at Mai Po on 8 April (GCHC, PRK, ARL *et al.*), up to 12 there on 23 April (RDES) and one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 24 April (GJC).

**207 White-vented Needletail** *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*  
At least five at Tai Po Kau on 5 April (ARL, SPS).  
Other records of needletail swifts, not positively identified, were over 20 at Sam A Tsuen on 27 March (WY) and up to five between 28 March and 23 April in widespread areas. There was an unusual late record of two over Tai Po Kau between 8 and 11 June (RWL).

**1988:** At least two unidentified needletails at Wah Fu on 5 April (SPS).

**215 Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops philippinus*  
A group of four at Mai Po on 22 April (PRK, MT) and four again there on 26 October (RWL).

**228 Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica* ssp.  
At least three at Tsim Bei Tsui on 16 April had white underparts with long dark streaks (PRK). These resembled Striated Swallow *H. striolata* but their behaviour was more typical of *H. daurica*.

**233 Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi*  
Two at Sandy Bay after Typhoon Brenda on 21 May (PRK, VBP).

**235 Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*  
Single birds at Lok Ma Chau on 15 January (RWL, MDW) and 9 December (CAV, ARL), and at Ha Tsuen on 29 December (LWK).

**238 Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*  
A female at Shuen Wan pond on 8 April (PRK).

**251.1 Orange-bellied Leafbird** *Chloropsis hardwickii*  
Up to four in Tai Po Kau in most months, two in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 4 February, up to two at the Peak or Mid-Levels until April and one at Hong Kong University on 7 March (GCHC, RWL, AvdL *et al.*).

**1988:** An adult male at Tai Po Kau on 25 December (GW).

**264.1 Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka*  
An immature at Wah Fu on 24 and 25 September (SPS *et al.*) (see separate paper in this Report).  
This is a new species for Hong Kong.

**269 Orange-headed Ground Thrush** *Zoothera citrina*  
A female flushed from the Red Walk at Tai Po Kau on 13 January and a male there on 21 January (RWL, PJL).

**271 Siberian Thrush** *Zoothera sibirica*  
A male seen near Tai Om in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 7 February (MAW, JFSB). At least four other unidentified thrushes were present nearby.

**274 Brown Thrush** *Turdus chrysolaus*  
Single birds at Tai Po Kau on 14 January (RWL) and 20 November (MH).

**279 Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus schistaceus*  
One on the stream at Tai Po Kau near the main road lay-by between 13 May and 10 June (GES, PRS, SPS *et al.*).

**282 Mountain Bush Warbler** *Cettia fortipes*  
A single bird was heard singing on 12 March at Lung Kwu Tan near Castle Peak (MLC, PRK). This was the first occasion when the characteristic 'whiplash' song was heard in Hong Kong. This year was also exceptional for the number of records of this species in December. This may be due in part to observers' greater ability to locate and identify the species, but is also due to an apparent 'fall' in the first week of the month. A summary of records is given below:

1 December	One picked up dead after flying into a window at Borneo Lines, Shek Kong (GWJA)
2 December	At least three at Chung Pui picnic area, Plover Cove (CAV), and one trapped, ringed and photographed near Kadoorie Farm (PJL)
3 December	Two at Hok Tau (PJL) and two near Sha Lo Tung (RWL)
6 December	One at Hebe Haven (ARL)
7 December	One at Hok Tau (RWL)
12 December	One at Hok Tau (PRK)

Most records refer to the insistent 'tack, tack, tack' morse code call, the often cocked tail and the plain appearance with crown less rufous than that of Chinese Bush Warbler *C. diphone*.





4. Mountain Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes*  
Kadoorie Farm, December 1989

(Paul J. Leader)

**282.1 Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler** *Cettia acanthizoides*  
One trapped and ringed at Mai Po on 8 December (DSM) (see separate paper in this Report).  
This is a new species for Hong Kong.

**292 Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler** *Seicercus burkii*  
One at Tai Po Kau on 28 January (MLC), 2 December (SPS) and 30 December (RWL,MT).

**293 Chestnut-crowned Warbler** *Seicercus castaniceps*  
One at Tai Po Kau between 28 January and 19 February (RWL,GES,RDES).  
This is the fourth record for Hong Kong.

**295 Large Grass Warbler** *Graminicola bengalensis*  
Up to five at Tai Mo Shan between 20 April and 20 August (ARL,VBP,PRK). One at Hok Tau on 12 December (PRK).

**297 Sulphur-breasted Warbler** *Phylloscopus ricketti*  
One at Barker Road, the Peak on 2 January (SRC) and one at Tai Po Kau on 5 March (RWL).

**298 Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides*  
One at Lam Tsuen Valley on 7 January (RWL), between one and three at Tai Po Kau between 27 January and 4 February, and up to six from 18

[The cost of reproduction of plate 4 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]

November to 31 December (PRK,RWL,WY). All these reports referred to the crown stripe, orange or pinkish bill and distinctive nuthatch-like behaviour.

**299 Eastern Crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus coronatus*  
Single birds at Tai Po Kau on 3 September (PRK) and 15 September (MT,RWL), at the Chinese University on 16 September (MT,RWL), and at Tai Po Kau on 6 and 26 October (RWL).

**300 Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes*  
Widespread in small numbers between 9 and 18 April and 12 September to 20 October (PRK,RWL,MDW *et al.*). One caught at Kadoorie Farm on 10 December (PJL) represents an unusual winter occurrence.

**300.2 Two-barred Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*  
One trapped, ringed and released at Kadoorie Farm on 27 September (PJL) (see separate paper in this Report).  
This is the first accepted record for Hong Kong. Previous sight records of this species are under review.

**303 Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*  
A bird of the central Asian race *humei* was trapped, photographed, ringed and released at Kadoorie Farm on 2 December (PJL,ACG) (see separate paper in this Report).  
This is the first record of this race from Hong Kong. The bird was subsequently retrapped on 27 January 1990.

**311 Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica*  
A single bird at Cheung Chau on 27 April (MDW), and between one and three at Mount Nicholson from 9 to 23 September (CAV). Single birds at Tai Po Kau on 25 November and 2 December (PRK,WY).

**322 Chinese Babax** *Babax lanceolatus*  
Heard at Tai Mo Shan on 1 July. At least nine there on 17 August, a family party of eight on 20 August and two on 1 December (PRK,WY).

**331 Red-headed Tit** *Aegithalos concinnus*  
At least two at Tai Po Kau on 21 January (PRK,MT), one at Shing Mun Reservoir on 31 March (PN), one at Cheung Chau on 1 October (MDW), one at Tai Po Kau on 8 December (KK) and three there on 28 December (LWK).

**333.1 Yellow-cheeked Tit** *Parus spilonotus*  
Regularly recorded in Tai Po Kau throughout the year with at least six seen on 6 March and adults with juveniles observed on 27 May (CAV). This represents the first breeding record of this species for Hong Kong. Elsewhere, birds were recorded at Mount Davis on 2 April, Hong Kong University on 19 April, Mansfield Road on 17 May and 15 October and Shing Mun Country Park on 29 June. This species has been upgraded from



Category D (712.1) on the basis of the above regular and widespread records indicating an influx from China where it is a common resident in the hills of Guangdong Province.

**334 Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*  
Recorded at Mai Po with at least four on 16 March (MDW), two on 5 April (CYL,MT,PJL *et al.*). One trapped on 29 April and two trapped on 17 December (PJL).

**[Sunbird** *Aethopyga* sp.  
A male sunbird with red head and mantle, yellow rump and blue tail in Tai Po Kau on 24 February was either Gould's *A. gouldiae* or Crimson Sunbird *A. siparaja* (RWL).]

**338 Chestnut-flanked White-eye** *Zosterops erythroleura*  
Between one and three at Tai Po Kau between 29 January and 11 February and from 11 November to 30 December (PJL,RDES,YYT *et al.*). Also one trapped at Kadoorie Farm on 2 December (PJL), one seen near Wu Kau Tang on 16 December (PRK,PJL) and one seen at Magazine Gap Reservoir on 25 December (RDES).

**341.1 Bull-headed Shrike** *Lanius bucephalus*  
One female at Chek Nai Ping, Chinese University on 28 and 29 October (RWL).

**355 Purple-backed Starling** *Sturnus sturninus*  
Three at Mai Po on 1 October (PRK) and nine there on 4 October (WY).

**356 Chestnut-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus philippensis*  
At least four at Mai Po car park on 22 and 23 April (PRK,RDES) and at least two there on 30 April (PRK).

**358 European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*  
A single bird at Ha Tsuen on 21 October (WY) and three at Tsim Bei Tsui on 29 October (SPS).

**366.1 Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*  
One at Tsim Bei Tsui on 1 and 2 April (SPS,JSRE,ARL).

**368 Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*  
At least one adult male at Tai Po Kau on 5 February (ARL).

**372 Japanese Yellow Bunting** *Emberiza sulphurata*  
Single adult males at Mai Po on 27 March (PRK,JSRE) and also on Cheung Chau on the same date (MDW). One at Mai Po on 5 April (MT).

**379 Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*  
Single males at Shuen Wan between 5 and 9 April (JSRE,ARL,CAV *et al.*) and at Lok Ma Chau Police Station on 15 April (NJGC).

CATEGORY D. SPECIES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN AN APPARENTLY WILD STATE BUT FOR WHICH THE POSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE OR RELEASE FROM CAPTIVITY CANNOT BE SATISFACTORILY EXCLUDED

**704 Red-breasted Parakeet** *Psittacula alexandri*  
One at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens on 1 April (ARL).

**706 Bohemian Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*  
An adult female seen at Mount Davis in a fruiting tree between 3 and 11 December (PRK,KK).  
This is the second record for Hong Kong. Because of the bird's excellent condition and its arrival with a strong influx of winter visitors, this species has been upgraded from Category E (821.1) to Category D.

**707 Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*  
Single birds heard calling at Mount Nicholson on 25 February, 6 April, 23 September, 7 and 27 October (CAV,VBP). Also heard in the Aberdeen Country Park below Carolina Gardens between 9 November and 12 December (WY).

**710 Vinous-throated Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis webbianus*  
Two at Mai Po on 2 April (PRK). At least two birds seen feeding recently fledged juveniles between 16 and 28 April (PRK,RWL). Three calling on Tai Mo Shan on 20 August and four calling there on 24 September (RWL).

**711 Grey-headed Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis gularis*  
Three at Mount Nicholson on 4 June and six there on 25 September (CAV).

**713 Red Avadavat** *Amandava amandava*  
Up to 12 at Lok Ma Chau and Mai Po between 15 February and 27 August (SC,RDES,WY,SO'B). Also one at Bride's Pool on 23 August (SO'B).

CATEGORY E. SPECIES FOR WHICH ALL PUBLISHED RECORDS ARE SUSPECTED OF BEING BIRDS WHICH HAVE ESCAPED OR HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY

<b>801.15 Chinese Bamboo Partridge*</b>	<i>Bambusicola thoracica</i>
<b>805 Alexandrine Parakeet</b>	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>
<b>810.05 Collared Finchbill</b>	<i>Spizixos semitorques</i>
<b>813 Pied Bushchat</b>	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>
<b>814.1 White-throated Fantail*</b>	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>
<b>815 Rufous Laughing Thrush</b>	<i>Garrulax poecilorhynchus</i>
<b>815.3 Red-faced Liocichla*</b>	<i>Liocichla phoenicea</i>



816	Silver-eared Mesia	<i>Leiothrix argenteauris</i>
816.02	Red-tailed Minla*	<i>Minla ignotincta</i>
816.04	Long-tailed Tit*	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
816.06	Marsh Tit*	<i>Parus palustris</i>
816.08	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch*	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
818	Asian Pied Starling	<i>Sturnus contra</i>
818.2	Black-winged Starling*	<i>Sturnus melanopterus</i>
820	Bank Mynah	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>
821	White-vented Mynah	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
822	Indian Grackle	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
823.1	Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
824	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
825	Golden Bishop	<i>Euplectes afer</i>
829	White-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura maja</i>
830	Java Sparrow	<i>Padda oryzivora</i>
831	Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>
833.1	Pallas's Rosefinch*	<i>Carpodacus roseus</i>

\* first recorded in 1989

THE FOLLOWING RECORDS WERE SUBMITTED BUT NOT ACCEPTED BY THE RECORDS COMMITTEE

1989

**Black Bittern** *Ixobrychus flavicollis* Cheung Chau, 21/22 May  
**Swinhoe's Egret** *Egretta eulophotes* Mai Po, 14 September  
**Pied Harrier** *Circus melanoleucos* Mai Po, 23 and 28 March, 29 October  
**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* Tai Po Kau, 14 February, 27 March, 26 October, 1 December; Cheung Chau, 27 March; Mai Po, 11 November  
**Horsfield's Goshawk** *Accipiter soloensis* Cheung Chau, 10 April  
**Mountain Hawk Eagle** *Spizaetus nipalensis* Tai Po Kau, 16 November  
**Swinhoe's Snipe** *Gallinago megala* Ting Kok, 8 April  
**Little Whimbrel** *Numenius minutus* Mai Po, 30 April  
**Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus* Tsim Bei Tsui, four on 24 February  
**Brown Hawk Owl** *Ninox scutulata* Double Haven, 18 March (call record)  
**Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush** *Monticola rufiventris* Cheung Chau, 30 October  
**Large Grass Warbler** *Graminicola bengalensis* Keung Sha, Lantau, 13 September  
**Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides* Tai Po Kau, 1 February, 22 December  
**Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica* Tai Po Kau, 15 and 18 September  
**Collared Siva** *Yuhina castaniceps* Tai Po Kau, 13 January  
**Bull-headed Shrike** *Lanius bucephalus* Tai Mo Shan, 24 September  
**Purple-backed Starling** *Sturnus sturninus* Mai Po, 23 April  
**Yellow-throated Bunting** *Emberiza elegans* Tai Po Kau, 11 April  
**Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica* Pui O, Lantau, nine on 4 January; Sai Kung, 16 November; Lady Clementi's Path, two on 24 December

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus* Tsim Bei Tsui, 1 January  
**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris* Mai Po, 10 April  
**Two-barred Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* Pok Fu Lam, three on 3 January; Lam Tsuen Valley, 7 January  
**Shikra** *Accipiter badius* Cheung Chau, 30 December

1988

**Pied Harrier** *Circus melanoleucos* Tsim Bei Tsui, 24 December  
**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* Pok Fu Lam Country Park, 15 December  
**Japanese Quail** *Coturnix japonica* Sui A Chau, Soko Islands, 16 October  
**Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella certhiola* Lok Ma Chau, 10 September  
**Large Grass Warbler** *Graminicola bengalensis* She Shan, 18 December  
**Japanese Yellow Bunting** *Emberiza sulphurata* Wah Fu, 17 and 20 April  
**David's Hill Warbler** *Prinia polychroa* She Shan, 18 December



## SIGNIFICANT BREEDING RECORDS

*M.L. Chalmers*

- 60.1 Black Baza** *Aviceda leuphotes*  
A pair nest-building near Tai Po Kau on 13 May (PRS, GES) but nest subsequently destroyed by typhoon. A bird carrying nest material also noted at Tai Mei Tuk on 14 June (WY). A nest with two fully fledged young found at Sha Tau Kok on 12 July; young seen to have left nest on 16 July (NJGC).

This is the first definite breeding record for Hong Kong (see separate note in this Report).

- 106 Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*  
One giving wing-trailing display at Sai Kung reclamation on 11 June indicated probable breeding (SPS).

- 196 Collared Scops Owl** *Otus bakkamoena*  
Adults feeding three well-grown juveniles with a Black-faced Laughing Thrush *Garrulax perspicillatus* and large rat *Rattus* sp. between 2200h and 2300h at Sassoon Road, Pok Fu Lam on 29 April (PRK).

- 230 Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*  
Adult carrying food on 13 and 14 May near the summit of Tai Mo Shan (GES,SPS).

- 240 White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*  
A recently fledged juvenile at Mai Po on 1 July indicated breeding may have taken place nearby (CAV).

- 245 Grey-throated Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris*  
A pair gathering cobwebs at Tai Po Kau on 13 May were assumed to be nest-building (GES).

- 246 Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*  
A male carrying food at Tai Po Kau on 27 May (GCHC).

- 250 Chestnut Bulbul** *Hypsipetes castanonotus*  
Recently fledged young noted at Tai Po Kau with up to four on 30 August (RWL) and one on 10 September (CAV).

- 307 Hainan Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis hainana*  
At least four singing males holding territory at Tai Po Kau on 17 June (RWL).

- 322 Chinese Babax** *Babax lanceolatus*  
A family of eight including adults feeding juveniles at Tai Mo Shan on 20 August (PRK).

- 330 White-bellied Yuhina** *Yuhina zantholeuca*  
A pair feeding two young at the picnic area on the Red Walk at Tai Po Kau on 22 April (LWK).

- 710 Vinous-throated Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis webbianus*  
At least two feeding recently fledged young at Tai Mo Shan on 16 April was the first definite breeding record (PRK), although breeding was suspected there previously in 1980.



## INTERNATIONAL WATERFOWL COUNT IN DEEP BAY, HONG KONG 1989

*M.L. Chalmers*

The tenth annual co-ordinated waterfowl count, organised by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, was held in the Deep Bay area on Saturday 14 January and Sunday 15 January 1989. The main count was made on the Sunday afternoon, but supplementary counts made the previous day were used if totals that day were higher.

The results are given in Table 1 under each of the main areas within Deep Bay. As before, counts for the intertidal part of Deep Bay include observations from Tsim Bei Tsui, the adjacent border fence road and the floating hide at Mai Po. Observations from the north side of the bay at Fu Tien, Shenzhen, People's Republic of China are also given. Because of the active filling of fish ponds at Tin Shui Wai for new town development, no counts were made in that area. Large numbers of duck, which in former years congregated in Deep Bay between Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long Creeks, were reduced, probably due to the disturbance from the construction works, but appeared to be compensated for by increased numbers further north off Mai Po. However, Shelduck were an exception to this generalisation and overall numbers fell to about half of last year's total. The degraded habitats at San Tin, Lok Ma Chau and Ma Tso Lung were included again but only contributed relatively small numbers to the totals.

The results showed that a total of 36,454 birds of 60 species were present. Sub-totals by major groups were as follows:

Group	Number	Species
Cormorants	1,844	1
Hérons, egrets etc.	3,145	10
Duck	9,226	11
Rails, Coot, Moorhen and others	1,521	6
Waders	4,332	28
Gulls and terns	16,386	4
Total	36,454	60

The overall total represents a slight drop from the totals for the last three years, which have ranged between 37,000 and 39,000. This was mainly due to reductions in numbers of Black-headed Gulls, the most numerous species in the area, and the lack of records for small wader flocks in addition to the drop in Shelduck mentioned above. However, given the fluctuations in individual species, the general numbers in each of the main

groups were in the same order as recent years. New individual high mid-winter counts were established for many species, particularly waders, as follows: Cormorant (1,844), Grey Heron (1,278), Pintail (2,530), Avocet (327), Asiatic Golden Plover (84), Grey Plover (117), Great Knot (3), Black-tailed Godwit (92), Bar-tailed Godwit (2), Whimbrel (10), Curlew (357), Australian Curlew (2), Redshank (56), Marsh Sandpiper (302) and Greenshank (185). Many of these are species which normally occur as passage migrants, but which have also tended to over-winter in increasing numbers in recent years.

Other records of note around this time, although not on the count dates, were a maximum of 41 Black-faced Spoonbills and two Ruddy Shelduck at Mai Po on 7 January and three Painted Snipe at Lok Ma Chau on 12 January:

The count results are based on records from the following observers: J.E. Burton, N.J.G. Croft, M.L. Chalmers, G.C.H. Cooper, J.S.R. Edge, J. Holmes, A.R. Lamont, M. Lau, R.W. Lewthwaite, D. Munns, P.R. and P. Stevens, M. Turnbull, Y.F. Wan, M.D. Williams and C.A. Viney.

一九八九年一月十四日及十五日在后海灣進行的國際水禽調查錄得鳥類60種，共36,454頭。雖然總數比過去三年稍低，但各個主要類別的鳥數跟最近幾年大致相若。



TABLE 1. Results of 1989 Waterfowl Count

Species	14.1.89	15.1.89								14/15.1.89
	Sub-total	Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung	Lok Ma Chau San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Ha Tsuen Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan-Tsim Bei Tsui	Sub-total	Total
Little Grebe	12	2	2	3	33	-	-	-	40	40
Great Crested Grebe	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	6	6
Cormorant	1,720	400	8	58	378	1,000	-	*	1,844	1,844
Dalmatian Pelican	15	17	-	-	-	*	-	-	17	17
Chinese Pond Heron	75	6	10	26	114	65	-	79	300	300
Cattle Egret	16	-	35	6	20	-	16	12	89	89
Little Egret	1,130	51	80	51	572	310	-	84	1,148	1,148
Intermediate Egret	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Great Egret	305	50	3	2	127	115	-	2	299	305
Grey Heron	615	20	2	3	497	755	-	1	1,278	1,278
Purple Heron	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	3
White Ibis	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	2
European Spoonbill	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	2
Black-faced Spoonbill	8	10	-	-	7	-	-	-	17	17
Shelduck	1,360	700	-	-	-	1,405	-	-	2,105	2,105
Wigeon	420	1	3	-	25	30	-	178	237	420
Falcated Teal	150	-	-	-	123	95	-	-	218	218
Gadwall	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	4
Teal	1,714	350	120	10	194	1,093	8	30	1,805	1,805
Mallard	5	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	5	5
Yellow-nib Duck	122	30	-	-	65	140	-	-	235	235
Pintail	1,180	1,050	-	-	21	1,424	-	35	2,530	2,530
Garganey	-	1	6	-	5	-	-	-	12	12

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	14.1.89	15.1.89								14/15.1.89
	Sub-total	Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung	Lok Ma Chau San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Ha Tsuen Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan-Tsim Bei Tsui	Sub-total	total
Shoveler	1,750	200	-	-	22	1,610	-	-	1,832	1,832
Tufted Duck	48	-	-	-	2	-	-	58	60	60
White-breasted Waterhen	2	-	4	-	12	4	-	-	20	20
Moorhen	56	-	12	27	63	8	3	8	121	121
Coot	1,026	-	183	200	117	27	-	790	1,317	1,317
Black-winged Stilt	-	-	-	40	105	-	-	-	145	145
Avocet	-	326	-	-	1	-	-	-	327	327
Little Ringed Plover	43	12	1	20	53	-	37	-	123	123
Kentish Plover	-	500	-	-	27	-	-	178	705	705
Greater Sand Plover	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	4
Asiatic Golden Plover	5	-	-	-	84	-	-	-	84	84
Grey Plover	92	*	-	-	-	110	-	7	117	117
Grey-headed Lapwing	4	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	4
Lapwing	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	5
Great Knot	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Temminck's Stint	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	4
Long-toed Stint	7	-	-	33	-	-	11	-	44	44
Dunlin	-	25	-	-	1	-	-	76	102	102
Small wader sp.	-	10	-	-	-	250	-	-	260	260
Medium wader sp.	-	160	-	-	-	-	-	-	160	160
Ruff	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Fantail Snipe	16	3	2	50	14	2	9	2	82	82
Pintail Snipe	1	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	5	5

Continued ...



TABLE 1 continued

Species	14.1.89			15.1.89					14/15.1.89	
	Sub-total	Fu Tien	Ma Tso Lung	Lok Ma Chau San Tin	Mai Po	Deep Bay	Ha Tsuen Tin Shui Wai	Nim Wan Tsim Bei Tsui	Sub-total	total
Snipe sp.	-	-	1	-	-	8	-	-	9	9
Black-tailed Godwit	82	-	-	-	52	40	-	-	92	92
Bar-tailed Godwit	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Whimbrel	-	1	-	-	9	-	-	-	10	10
Curllew	350	*	-	-	-	357	-	-	357	357
Australian Curlew	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	2
Spotted Redshank	611	50	-	-	914	27	-	-	991	991
Redshank	35	17	-	-	39	-	-	-	56	56
Marsh Sandpiper	105	30	-	-	264	8	-	-	302	302
Greenshank	118	28	-	-	78	70	-	9	185	185
Green Sandpiper	11	2	4	8	8	1	4	6	33	33
Wood Sandpiper	17	-	1	49	10	2	24	-	86	86
Common Sandpiper	9	5	6	5	7	4	-	5	32	32
Saunders' Gull	7	3	3	-	-	61	-	-	67	67
Black-headed Gull	3,800	900	8,500	630	1,019	4,424	-	487	15,960	15,960
Herring Gull	100	5	16	21	-	284	-	2	328	328
Gull sp.	-	-	8	1	-	-	-	-	9	9
Caspian Tern	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	21	22	22

\* Indicates total deleted because of possible overlap with other areas

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## SUMMARY OF THE 1989 BIG BIRD RACE

J.S.R. Edge

The sixth annual Big Bird Race was held on 8 April 1989 and, as in previous years, it was timed to make the best use of tides and to coincide with the optimum mix of late-staying winter visitors, passage migrants and early-arriving summer visitors. After the record-breaking scores achieved in 1988, none of the teams expected to set a new record in 1989, and so it was to be. Indeed because of the scarcity of winter visitors in the weeks leading up to the Race, some were even predicting lower-than-average scores. However, the weather came to the rescue and heavy rain with strong easterlies in the week before the Race caused many spring migrants to be grounded. As it turned out, the winning team, China Resources (sponsored by the company of the same name) recorded 154 species, the second-highest total ever achieved, though that was some way behind the amazing score of 164 recorded in 1988. The total number of species seen by all teams was 232, surprisingly high and approaching the record of 237, also set in 1988. Eighteen species were added to the Race list, bringing the total seen in all six Races to date to 271. Table 1 lists all species seen during the six Races and indicates whether the bird was observed in 1989 as well as the number of years/Races in which the species was recorded.

The 'bird of the day' was considered to be the Lesser Frigatebird seen, rather oddly, over Tai Po Kau which is Hong Kong's best-established area of woodland. Other interesting species claimed included a Swinhoe's Egret in Tolo Harbour, Crested Honey Buzzard and Mountain Hawk Eagle at Tai Po Kau, up to five Spoon-billed Sandpipers, several Nordmann's Greenshanks and the wintering Brahminy Kite at the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, and an adult male Reed Bunting (third record for Hong Kong) at Shuen Wan.

Deep Bay, onto which the Mai Po Marshes abut, is becoming world-famous for the variety and quality of shorebirds which pass through each spring en route for their breeding grounds in north Asia, and during the 1989 Race 45 species of wader were recorded, almost all within the immediate vicinity of Deep Bay; the pick of these were of course the rare Nordmann's Greenshanks and Spoon-billed Sandpipers mentioned earlier. Generally, the spread of waders has remained consistent over the six years of the Race and they, together with the other waterbirds which abound in Deep Bay, form the core of all teams' lists. Oriental Plovers, however, were recorded at Mai Po only in 1988 and 1989, interesting records of a species which is better known as a bird of grassy habitats; it is more regularly recorded on passage at Kai Tak Airport. The sheer number of waders on the managed area at Mai Po can be overwhelming, particularly when one is trying to identify them in a hurry, but is nevertheless a birdwatcher's feast, as well as emphasising the importance of Deep Bay as a spring migration stopover. In 1989 there were in excess of 10,800 waders on the marsh.

1989 was also a good year for raptors, with 17 species recorded on the



day, amply justifying the choice of date for the Race. Late winter visitors included Spotted and Imperial Eagles and Kestrel, and migrants included Japanese Sparrowhawk, Horsfield's Goshawk and Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle. Black Baza, our only regular summer-visitor bird of prey, was not seen this time but was recorded in the previous two years; Crested Honey Buzzard and Mountain Hawk Eagle were mentioned earlier and the Brahminy Kite was an exciting addition to the Race list.

Apart from Deep Bay, Tai Po Kau is the other site which all teams visit without fail as it offers the best chance of woodland birds and most teams would hope to add at least ten species which they would not find elsewhere. If there should happen to be a fall of migrant flycatchers, so much the better. Eight species of flycatcher were seen this year (not necessarily all in Tai Po Kau), including Hainan Blue, Blue and White, Ferruginous, Robin, Narcissus and Asian and Japanese Paradise; this reflects the diligence of the teams, rather than abundance, as no one species was logged by more than six of the fourteen teams. *Turdus* thrushes were even more thinly scattered, apart from Grey-backed, but both Scarlet and Grey-throated Minivets, Chestnut Bulbul, Ashy Drongo and Great Barbet were logged by most teams. All in all, Tai Po Kau was reasonably productive in terms of the overall total, but the birds did rather have to be winkled out.

An examination of the table below shows that some winter visitors which had been recorded in previous Races, and which might reasonably be expected, were absent this year — in some cases, no doubt, for reasons other than natural early departure. Examples are Dalmatian Pelican (disturbed from their Deep Bay quarters by mud-scooters), Tufted Duck, Buzzard, Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike, Blue Rock Thrush, Blackbird, Pale Thrush and Short-tailed Bush Warbler. To balance this, some species stayed on later than usual, giving a good spread of raptors, duck, robins (including Daurian Redstart), starlings, finches and buntings. Of the summer visitors, Yellow Bittern, Watercock, Black-naped Oriole and Black Drongo had arrived, but the Black Baza and the distinctive call of the Red-winged Crested Cuckoo were missing.

The table is, in the event, full of both quality and quantity. In spite of our worst fears, a splendid total was achieved, and HK\$1,178,144 was raised; this was used to buy another 'gei-wai' (tidal shrimp pond) as an addition to the core area of Mai Po managed by the World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong. The Race was, I believe, enjoyed by everyone, even though some would have preferred to be able to linger longer over, for example, the fabulous spectacle at Mai Po which, apart from the waders, is probably the best place in the world to see the Black-faced Spoonbill, now an endangered species with an estimated world population of only 288. It is encouraging that such a great variety of species can be recorded on one day in Hong Kong, a place popularly conceived of as consisting of concrete and little else. This fosters a determination that the remaining suitable habitat must be preserved as far as possible. Such habitat, once acquired, has to be properly managed and it seems likely that the Big Bird Race will continue for some years yet, the proceeds going to WWF HK principally for management and educational purposes.

**TABLE 1. Species recorded in all Big Bird Races between 1984 and 1989. The first column indicates whether the bird was seen in 1989 while the second column shows the number of years/Races in which the species was recorded.**

Little Grebe	• 6	Peregrine Falcon	• 4
Cormorant	• 6	Chinese Francolin	• 5
Dalmatian Pelican	3	Japanese Quail	• 4
Lesser Frigatebird	• 1	Water Rail	• 1
Bittern	1	Banded Rail	• 4
Yellow Bittern	• 5	White-breasted Waterhen	• 6
Chestnut Bittern	• 2	Moorhen	• 6
Night Heron	• 6	Watercock	• 2
Little Green Heron	• 6	Coot	• 6
Chinese Pond Heron	• 6	Painted Snipe	• 3
Cattle Egret	• 6	Black-winged Stilt	• 5
Swinhoe's Egret	• 4	Avocet	• 5
Reef Egret	• 4	Oriental Pratincole	• 5
Little Egret	• 6	Little Ringed Plover	• 6
Intermediate Egret	• 6	Kentish Plover	• 6
Great Egret	• 6	Mongolian Sand Plover	• 6
Grey Heron	• 6	Greater Sand Plover	• 6
Purple Heron	• 6	Oriental Plover	• 2
White Ibis	• 6	Asiatic Golden Plover	• 6
European Spoonbill	• 5	Grey Plover	• 6
Black-faced Spoonbill	• 6	Grey-headed Lapwing	• 4
Ruddy Shelduck	2	Lapwing	• 1
Shelduck	• 6	Great Knot	• 6
Wigeon	• 6	Knot	• 5
Falcated Teal	• 4	Sanderling	• 5
Gadwall	• 2	Red-necked Stint	• 6
Teal	• 6	Temminck's Stint	• 6
Mallard	• 3	Long-toed Stint	• 6
Yellow-nib Duck	• 6	Pectoral Sandpiper	• 1
Pintail	• 5	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	• 6
Garganey	• 6	Curlew Sandpiper	• 6
Shoveler	• 6	Dunlin	• 4
Tufted Duck	2	Spoon-billed Sandpiper	• 4
Black Baza	2	Broad-billed Sandpiper	• 5
Crested Honey Buzzard	• 2	Ruff	• 3
Black Kite	• 6	Fantail Snipe	• 6
Brahminy Kite	• 1	Pintail Snipe	• 6
White-bellied Sea Eagle	• 3	Swinhoe's Snipe	• 4
Serpent Eagle	• 5	Asiatic Dowitcher	• 5
Marsh Harrier	• 6	Black-tailed Godwit	• 5
Japanese Sparrowhawk	• 2	Bar-tailed Godwit	• 6
Sparrowhawk	2	Little Whimbrel	• 1
Crested Goshawk	• 5	Whimbrel	• 6
Horsfield's Goshawk	• 1	Curlew	• 6
Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle	• 4	Australian Curlew	• 5
Buzzard	2	Spotted Redshank	• 6
Spotted Eagle	• 3	Redshank	• 6
Imperial Eagle	• 2	Marsh Sandpiper	• 6
Bonelli's Eagle	• 4	Greenshank	• 6
Mountain Hawk Eagle	• 1	Nordmann's Greenshank	• 4
Osprey	• 6	Green Sandpiper	• 6
Kestrel	• 3	Wood Sandpiper	• 6



Terek Sandpiper	• 6	Ashy Minivet	• 4
Common Sandpiper	• 6	Grey-throated Minivet	• 5
Grey-rumped Sandpiper	• 4	Scarlet Minivet	• 6
Turnstone	• 5	Crested Bulbul	• 6
Red-necked Phalarope	• 4	Chinese Bulbul	• 6
Saunders' Gull	• 4	Red-vented Bulbul	• 6
Black-headed Gull	• 6	Chestnut Bulbul	• 3
Brown-headed Gull	1	Black Bulbul	• 3
Herring Gull	• 5	Orange-bellied Leafbird	• 4
Gull-billed Tern	• 6	Red-tailed Robin	• 3
Caspian Tern	• 6	Rubythroat	• 6
Common Tern	• 2	Bluethroat	• 5
Little Tern	3	Daurian Redstart	• 2
Whiskered Tern	1	Magpie Robin	• 6
Red Turtle Dove	• 5	Stonechat	• 6
Rufous Turtle Dove	• 6	Blue Rock Thrush	3
Spotted Dove	• 6	Violet Whistling Thrush	• 6
Emerald Dove	• 5	Orange-headed Ground	
Red-winged Crested Cuckoo	4	Thrush	1
Large Hawk Cuckoo	• 6	White's Thrush	• 2
Plaintive Cuckoo	• 6	Siberian Thrush	1
Indian Cuckoo	• 4	Grey Thrush	• 3
Common Cuckoo	• 2	Blackbird	3
Oriental Cuckoo	• 3	Brown Thrush	1
Koel	• 6	Grey-backed Thrush	• 5
Greater Coucal	• 6	Pale Thrush	3
Lesser Coucal	• 5	Eye-browed Thrush	2
Collared Scops Owl	• 6	Dusky Thrush	• 3
Barred Owlet	• 5	Short-tailed Bush Warbler	2
Brown Hawk Owl	1	Chinese Bush Warbler	• 6
Savannah Nightjar	• 5	Fantail Warbler	• 6
White-throated Needletail	• 3	Brown Wren-warbler	• 6
White-vented Needletail	• 2	Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler	• 6
Large White-rumped Swift	• 6	Von Schrenck's Reed Warbler	• 6
House Swift	• 6	Great Reed Warbler	• 6
White-breasted Kingfisher	• 6	Long-tailed Tailorbird	• 6
Black-capped Kingfisher	• 6	Eastern Crowned Warbler	1
Common Kingfisher	• 6	Pale-legged Leaf Warbler	2
Pied Kingfisher	• 6	Arctic Warbler	• 3
Broad-billed Roller	• 1	Pallas's Warbler	• 2
Great Barbet	• 6	Yellow-browed Warbler	• 6
Wryneck	• 1	Dusky Warbler	• 6
Small Skylark	• 1	Hainan Blue Flycatcher	• 5
Sand Martin	• 2	Blue and White Flycatcher	• 4
Swallow	• 6	Ferruginous Flycatcher	• 3
Red-rumped Swallow	• 2	Grey-streaked Flycatcher	1
Asian House Martin	• 2	Brown Flycatcher	• 6
Richard's Pipit	• 6	Red-breasted Flycatcher	2
Olive-backed Pipit	• 6	Robin Flycatcher	• 2
Red-throated Pipit	• 6	Narcissus Flycatcher	• 3
Water Pipit	• 2	Asian Paradise Flycatcher	• 4
Yellow Wagtail	• 6	Japanese Paradise Flycatcher	• 3
Grey Wagtail	• 6	Black-naped Monarch	
White Wagtail	• 6	Flycatcher	1
Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike	2	Greater Necklaced Laughing	
Rosy Minivet	1	Thrush	• 6

Black-throated Laughing		Grey Starling	• 5
Thrush	• 5	Black-necked Starling	• 6
Hwamei	• 6	Crested Mynah	• 6
White-cheeked Laughing		Tree Sparrow	• 6
Thrush	• 6	White-backed Munia	• 5
Black-faced Laughing		Spotted Munia	• 6
Thrush	• 6	Chestnut Munia	1
Pekin Robin	• 3	Brambling	2
White-bellied Yuhina	1	Chinese Greenfinch	• 3
Yellow-bellied Tit	2	Common Rosefinch	• 4
Great Tit	• 6	Black-tailed Hawfinch	• 3
Penduline Tit	1	Masked Bunting	• 6
Fork-tailed Sunbird	• 6	Japanese Yellow Bunting	2
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	• 2	Grey-headed Bunting	• 2
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	• 6	Tristram's Bunting	• 5
White-eye	• 6	Little Bunting	• 6
Black-naped Oriole	• 5	Chestnut Bunting	• 3
Brown Shrike	• 4	Yellow-breasted Bunting	• 6
Rufous-backed Shrike	• 6	Reed Bunting	• 1
Black Drongo	• 6	Crested Bunting	3
Ashy Drongo	• 4	Ring-necked Pheasant	1
Hair-crested Drongo	• 5	Feral Pigeon	• 6
Jay	• 3	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	• 6
Blue Magpie	• 6	Rose-ringed Parakeet	• 6
Treepie	3	Common Mynah	• 5
Magpie	• 6	Azure-winged Magpie	• 6
Jungle Crow	• 6	Red-breasted Parakeet	• 5
Collared Crow	• 6	Red Avadavat	• 2
Silky Starling	• 6	Yellow-cheeked Tit	• 1
Chinese Starling	• 5	Indian Grackle	• 1
Rosy Starling	1		

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Number of species seen in 1989: 232

Total number of species seen in all six Races to date: 271

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本文是一九八九年四月八日第六屆觀鳥大賽的簡報。表列歷屆錄得的鳥類品種和錄得的年份。今屆共錄得 232 種，包括涉禽45種、猛禽17種和鵪8種。

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# TAI PO KAU, HONG KONG, BREEDING BIRDS SURVEY, MAY 1989

Clive Viney

The second survey of breeding birds in Tai Po Kau Forest took place on 27 May 1989. A description of the reserve and an outline of the objectives of these surveys can be found in *The Hong Kong Bird Report* 1988 (Viney 1989).

## METHOD

Six observers took part (Gavin Cooper, John Edge, Robert Ferguson, Christina Jimenez, Mark Nunns, Clive Viney). Three Walks (Red, Blue, Brown) and the forestry road were covered on foot. Observers worked as three pairs. The survey was conducted between 0600h and 1230h. The coverage was less than satisfactory.

## WEATHER

Cloudy and overcast with periods of light rain, especially at higher levels. Low cloud base (250-300m above sea level). Cool (20-24°C). Light winds.

## RESULTS

The variety of breeding species was much as anticipated but the poor coverage meant that certain likely breeding species were not recorded (for example: Black Baza, Crested Goshawk, Collared Scops Owl, Blue Magpie). One exciting addition to the breeding species was Yellow-cheeked Tit and it seems likely that Silver-eared Mesia now breeds although its origins are in question. The presence of a Slaty-backed Forktail suggests that this species may become established in the reserve (only single birds have been seen but records are up to 1km apart on the same stream where intermediate access is difficult).

The results have been tabulated below. Nomenclature corresponds to Chalmers (1986); for abundance the 'order of magnitude' method was used, as follows:

Number	'Order'
1—9	1
10—99	2
100—999	3

Breeding status is given by the following codes in accordance with the recommendations of the European Ornithological Atlas Committee (Sharrock 1976) and also used by Chalmers (1986):

- A — present
- B — possible breeding
- C — probable breeding
- D — confirmed breeding

TABLE 1. Results of Tai Po Kau Breeding Birds Survey 1989

Species	'Order'	Breeding status	Remarks
Chinese Pond Heron	1	A	2-3 birds
Black Kite	1	B	2 birds
Serpent Eagle	1	C	1 calling
Chinese Francolin	1	B	
Spotted Dove	2	C	
Emerald Dove	1	C	2 birds
Red-winged Crested Cuckoo	1	C	2 birds
Large Hawk Cuckoo	1	B	1-2 birds
Koel	1	C	
Greater Coucal	1	B	1 bird
Lesser Coucal	1	B	1 bird
Large White-rumped Swift	1	A	1 bird
House Swift	1	A	
Great Barbet	2	D	juvenile
Swallow	1	A	1 bird
Grey-throated Minivet	2	D	
Scarlet Minivet	1	D	
Crested Bulbul	3	D	
Chinese Bulbul	2	D	
Chestnut Bulbul	1	D	juvenile
Magpie Robin	1	D	
Violet Whistling Thrush	1	C	2 birds
Slaty-backed Forktail	1	B	1 bird
Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler	2	D	
Long-tailed Tailorbird	2	D	
Arctic Warbler	1	A	new late date
Hainan Blue Flycatcher	1	D	2 pairs
Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush	1	C	
Hwamei	2	D	
Black-faced Laughing Thrush	1	C	
Pekin Robin	2	D	
White-bellied Yuhina	1	B	1 bird
Great Tit	2	D	
Fork-tailed Sunbird	2	D	
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	1	C	
White-eye	2	C	
Black Drongo	1	B	1 bird
Hair-crested Drongo	1	C	

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	'Order'	Breeding status	Remarks
Treepie	1	B	
Jungle Crow	1	B	
Crested Mynah	1	B	3 birds
Tree Sparrow	1	C	
White-backed Munia	1	D	
Orange-bellied Leafbird	1	C	3+ birds
Silver-eared Mesia	1	C	2+ pairs
Yellow-cheeked Tit	1	D	5 birds, juvenile
<hr/>			
	<b>1988</b>	<b>1989</b>	
Totals: Present	5	5	
Breeding possible	15	11	
Breeding probable	25	14	
Breeding confirmed	12	16	
Total number of species	57	46	

第二屆大埔郊鳥類繁殖調查於一九八九年五月廿七日舉行，結果16種肯定繁殖、14種頗有可能繁殖和11種或有可能繁殖。此外，又錄得5個其他品種，即共錄得46種。跟去年的57種比較，少了11種，相信是因爲調查覆蓋的面積較小。

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## HONG KONG CHRISTMAS COUNT 1989

C. Y. Lam

## INTRODUCTION

Following established practice, a territory-wide survey of birds in Hong Kong was mounted on 31 December 1989. The objectives were:

- to survey all species occurring within Hong Kong on the selected day
- to estimate the abundance of the species recorded

This is the fifth survey of its kind. On previous occasions, the 'selected day' was either a Sunday or a public holiday shortly after Christmas, hence the name 'Christmas Count'. Results of these previous surveys are reported in Viney (1987) and Lam (1987, 1988 and 1989).

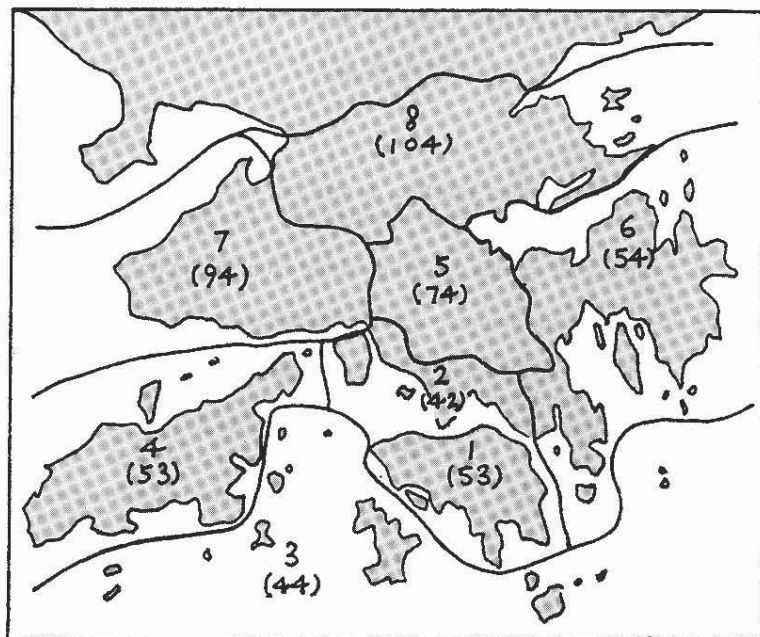
## METHOD

In organising the survey, Hong Kong was divided into 16 areas, Shing Mun being added this year to enhance the coverage of 'Central New Territories' (see below). A co-ordinator was appointed to cover each area, either alone or with the help of other birdwatchers. The co-ordinators then submitted a return on the counts made. Reports from individual observers were also separately received. All returns gave the estimated number of birds seen.

The returns were analysed and the numbers merged in eight regions with boundaries as defined in Viney (1987). The boundaries of these regions are shown in Figure 1. In this report, these regions are referred to as:

Region	Name
1	Hong Kong Island
2	Kowloon
3	Offshore Islands
4	Lantau
5	Central New Territories
6	Eastern New Territories
7	Western New Territories
8	Northern New Territories





**Figure 1.** Christmas count regions. The number of bird species recorded in each region is indicated in brackets.

## COVERAGE

About fifty people were in the field watching birds on 31 December 1989. For logistic reasons, Cheung Chau was covered on 1 January 1990, one day later than the scheduled date. The places visited by birdwatchers included:

*Hong Kong Island* — the west side of the island from Mount Davis to Wah Fu, Shouson Hill, Stanley, Tai Tam, Shek O, Mount Nicholson, May Road to Magazine Gap Reservoir

*Kowloon* — Kowloon Park, Royal Observatory, Kowloon Reservoir, Stonecutters Island

*Offshore Islands* — Cheung Chau, Lamma Island

*Lantau* — Discovery Bay, Mui Wo, Pui O, Tung Chung

*Central NT* — Lam Tsuen Valley, Tai Po Kau, Shing Mun

*Eastern NT* — Ho Chung, Sai Kung, Tai Wan, Tai Mong Tsai, Pak Tam Chung, Wong Shek, Hoi Ha, High Island Reservoir, Yung Shue O, Kei Ling Ha, Nai Chung, Wu Kai Sha, Tolo Harbour

*Western NT* — Shek Kong, Tsim Bei Tsui, Wang Chau (Yuen Long), Nim Wan, Pak Nai, Lau Fau Shan, Ha Tsuen, Castle Peak Monastery, Siu Lam, Tai Lam Reservoir, Kadoorie Beach

*Northern NT* — Mai Po, San Tin, Lok Ma Chau, Chau Tau, Ma Cho Ling, Starling Inlet, Luk Keng, Bride's Pool, Plover Cove

Tai Long was not visited but this was to a large extent offset by a fairly comprehensive coverage of the foothills of Ma On Shan and the Sai Kung West Country Park. The Castle Peak area and places south of Lau Fau Shan Road, which were missed in the 1988 survey, were covered this time.

## WEATHER

It was windy and rainy on 31 December 1989. This was the first time a Christmas count took place in practically continuous rain. A total of 16.5 mm of rainfall was recorded at the Royal Observatory. Winds were easterly and strong. It was overcast without any bright sunshine throughout the day. Temperatures were in the range of 13.3° – 15.0°C. The mean relative humidity was 95%.

## TRENDS

In conformity with the practice adopted since the 1987 count, only bird species in Categories A-D in the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong* (Chalmers 1986) were counted. Birds suspected of being escapes or released from captivity (Category E) were excluded.

A total of 170 species was recorded in this survey. This represents a slight increase when compared with last year, which was somewhat surprising in the light of the awful weather on 31 December 1989. The numbers of species recorded in all the Christmas counts to date with breakdown figures for individual regions are given in Table 1. In this table and elsewhere in this report, figures for 1985 and 1986 have been adjusted to remove Category E species.

**TABLE 1. Number of species recorded in the various regions in the five Christmas counts**

Region	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
1 Hong Kong Island	61	36	69	60	53
2 Kowloon	35	23	59	64	42
3 Offshore Islands	34	43	58	48	44
4 Lantau	75	63	66	51	53
5 Central NT	74	74	64	67	74
6 Eastern NT	68	55	55	43	54
7 Western NT	109	117	122	90	94
8 Northern NT	125	104	98	123	104
<b>All</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>170</b>



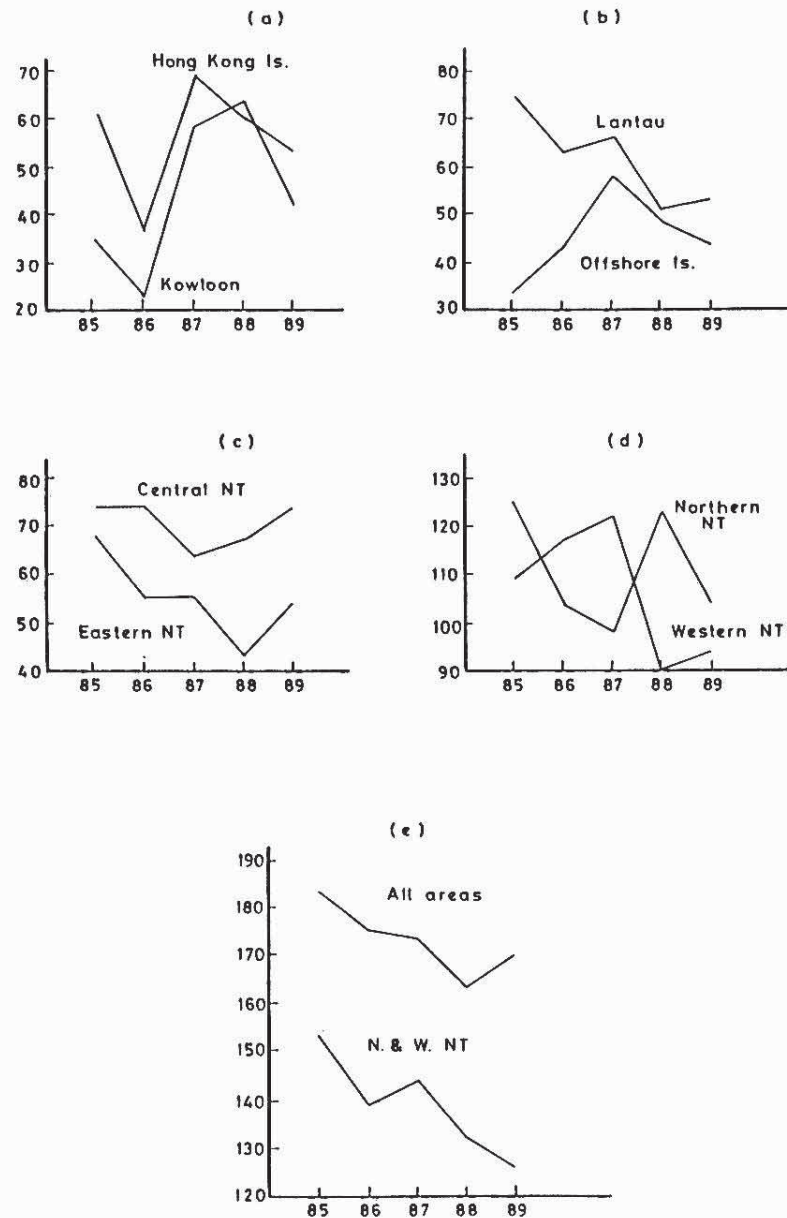


Figure 2. Number of species recorded in Christmas counts 1985-89

The numbers given in Table 1 are portrayed in graphical form in Figure 2 to facilitate the visualisation of trends. While the decreasing trend in the total number of species recorded in each Christmas count has been slightly reversed in 1989, the overall impression of a decreasing trend over the 1985-1989 period is still inescapable when one looks at the graph in Figure 2(e). It should also be noted that the 1989 figure of 170 species is seven per cent below the corresponding figure in 1985.

The curve for Hong Kong Island in Figure 2(a) shows considerable fluctuations: the dip in 1986 was due to incomplete coverage (Lam 1987) and the drop in 1988 and 1989 might reflect some real trend. The high values for Kowloon in 1987 and 1988 arose from the inclusion of Stonecutters Island. However, reclamation work and disturbances associated with Vietnamese boat people have caused the desertion of many birds from the island. This accounted for the plummeting of the Kowloon total in 1989.

Birdwatchers covering Lantau Island and other offshore islands in the past two years have remarked on the increasing human disturbance in these areas. Deterioration in the environment has taken its toll and this is reflected in the general decline in the number of species recorded, as shown in Figure 2(b). Lantau Island has received the consistent attention of the same birdwatcher in all five counts to date. The downward trend for Lantau Island is therefore particularly noteworthy.

Central and Eastern New Territories appear to be holding ground (Figure 2(c)). The dip in the curve for the latter region in 1988 was probably related to the fact that Sai Kung West Country Park was not covered in that year. The increasing number in Central New Territories in the last three counts might be associated with the higher 'productivity' of Tai Po Kau in the last few years, thanks to the protected status of Tai Po Kau and the conservation work of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department.

The picture for Northern and Western New Territories, Figure 2(d), looks confusing at first sight. However, it can be seen that the two curves have opposite rising and falling trends in inter-annual fluctuations. Fall in one region is 'compensated' by rise in the other. Noting that Deep Bay is shared by the two regions, it may be conjectured that the same bird population in Deep Bay is seen in one year more on the Tsim Bei Tsui side and in another year more on the Mai Po side, thus bringing about the out-of-phase fluctuations. To overcome this problem, the count data have been re-analysed to produce a total species count for the two regions combined together — see Figure 2(e). After this has been done, a clear downward trend emerges. The number of species recorded decreased from 153 in 1985 to 126 in 1989, which is a fall of 27 species or about 18% of the 1985 figure. This is a not insignificant figure and speaks for the disruptions brought by urbanisation in the New Territories and the attrition of natural habitat by disorderly container depots, open storage or dumping ground.



## SPECIES RECORDED

The estimated numbers of birds recorded are tabulated by species and by region in Table 3. The checklist numbers (in the first column) and species names correspond to those used by Chalmers (1986). In the table, the estimates are represented by an 'order of magnitude' number as follows:

Number	'Order'
1—9	1
10—99	2
100—999	3
1,000—9,999	4
10,000+	5

For each species, the number of times it has been recorded in all five Christmas counts (i.e. 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989) is also indicated in the last column in Table 3.

Eight species were recorded for the first time in a Christmas count. They were:

39	Mandarin
92	Ruddy Crane
134	Asiatic Dowitcher
143	Redshank
217	Hoopoe
298	Blyth's Leaf Warbler
323	Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush
330	White-bellied Yuhina

Following established practice, species seen in all eight regions are labelled as 'common and widespread'. Table 2 lists such species in all the five counts to date. Jungle Crow joined the list for the first time. Only ten species managed to be common and widespread in all five counts and might be considered to be the commonest birds in Hong Kong, at least around this time of the year. They are:

60	Black Kite
181	Spotted Dove
247	Crested Bulbul
248	Chinese Bulbul
296	Long-tailed Tailorbird
303	Yellow-browed Warbler
339	White-eye
351	Magpie
362	Crested Mynah
363	Tree Sparrow

Black-faced Laughing Thrush was on the list last year but failed to make it this time because it was not recorded from Offshore Islands.

Some interesting records are given below:

39	Mandarin	vagrant, attracted by captive waterfowl collection at Mai Po
60.1	Brahminy Kite	Mai Po, vagrant
69	Water Rail	Mai Po, scarce winter visitor
92	Ruddy Crane	Tsim Bei Tsui, scarce winter visitor
134	Asiatic Dowitcher	Mai Po, first record in December
157	Saunders' Gull	large wintering flock of 16 at Mai Po
217	Hoopoe	two on Lamma Island, scarce
298	Blyth's Leaf Warbler	Tai Po Kau, scarce winter visitor

## CONCLUSIONS

Taking together all the five counts so far, the total number of species recorded is 227. Over the five-year period 1985-1989 there was an overall decreasing trend in the total number of species recorded over the territory in each count.

Apart from Central and Eastern New Territories, there are indications of a downward trend in the number of species recorded in the various regions over the same period. In this regard, Western and Northern New Territories have to be combined together for the trend to be revealed.

It is apparent that birds flourish where efforts have been spent in conservation e.g. Tai Po Kau and the country parks. On the other hand, birds suffer where disruptions are caused to the natural habitat.

While urbanisation in the form of new towns has to be accepted as a fact of life, the attrition of woodland, farmland and wetland by uncontrolled proliferation of container depots etc. should be brought under control. The need for immediate action is particularly acute in Western and Northern New Territories where the decline in the number of bird species recorded in Christmas counts has been most noticeable.

Another region of great concern is Lantau Island. A decline in the bird population is already taking place according to the counts. In the face of even greater pressure from major development viz. Chek Lap Kok airport, more thought and action will be required to rescue the remaining bird population.

TABLE 2. Common and widespread species in the five Christmas counts

Species	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
60 Black Kite	+	+	+	+	+
95 White-breasted Waterhen			+		
150 Common Sandpiper			+		
181 Spotted Dove	+	+	+	+	+
194 Greater Coucal			+	+	+
210 White-breasted Kingfisher			+		+
212 Common Kingfisher			+		
232 Olive-backed Pipit	+			+	+
239 Grey Wagtail	+				
240 White Wagtail	+		+		+
247 Crested Bulbul	+	+	+	+	+
248 Chinese Bulbul	+	+	+	+	+
249 Red-vented Bulbul				+	
262 Magpie Robin	+		+	+	+
273 Blackbird	+		+	+	
285 Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler	+		+	+	
296 Long-tailed Tailorbird	+	+	+	+	+
303 Yellow-browed Warbler	+	+	+	+	+
305 Dusky Warbler	+				
327 Black-faced Laughing Thrush	+	+	+	+	
333 Great Tit			+		
339 White-eye	+	+	+	+	+
343 Rufous-backed Shrike			+	+	+
351 Magpie	+	+	+	+	+
352 Jungle Crow					+
362 Crested Mynah	+	+	+	+	+
363 Tree Sparrow	+	+	+	+	+
371 Masked Bunting	+		+	+	
601 Feral Pigeon				+	
<b>Number of species</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>

TABLE 3. Number of birds by species and by region in the 1989 Christmas count. The number of times a species has been recorded in all five counts to date is given in the last column.

<div> <div>1 - 9      order 1</div> <div>10 - 99    order 2</div> <div>100 - 999   order 3</div> <div>1,000 - 9,999   order 4</div> <div>10,000 +    order 5</div> </div>		Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT	No. of years
1	Little Grebe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5
2	Great Crested Grebe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
6	Cormorant	-	2	-	1	-	-	3	3	5
7	Dalmatian Pelican	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5
[8,9]	Frigatebird sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
10	Bittern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
11	Yellow Bittern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
13	Chestnut Bittern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
16	Night Heron	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	5
17	Little Green Heron	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	5
18	Chinese Pond Heron	-	-	-	1	2	1	3	2	5
19	Cattle Egret	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	5
21	Reef Egret	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	5
22	Little Egret	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	3	5
23	Intermediate Egret	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
24	Great Egret	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	3	5
25	Grey Heron	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	5
26	Purple Heron	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5
27	Black Stork	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
30	White Ibis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
31	European Spoonbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
32	Black-faced Spoonbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	5
34	Bean Goose	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
36	Ruddy Shelduck	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Continued ...



TABLE 3 continued

		Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT	No. of years
37	Shelduck	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	5
39	Mandarin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
40	Wigeon	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	5
41	Falcated Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5
42	Gadwall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
44	Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	5
45	Mallard	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	5
46	Yellow-nib Duck	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	5
47	Pintail	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	5
48	Garganey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
49	Shoveler	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	5
50	Common Pochard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5
51	Baer's Pochard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
52	Tufted Duck	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5
53	Scaup	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
56	Red-breasted Merganser	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
60	Black Kite	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	2	5
60.1	Brahminy Kite	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
61	White-bellied Sea Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
62	Black Vulture	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
63	Serpent Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
64	Marsh Harrier	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5
68	Japanese Sparrowhawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
69	Sparrowhawk	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
70	Crested Goshawk	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4
73	Buzzard	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	5
74	Spotted Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	4
75	Imperial Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5

Continued ...

TABLE 3 continued

		Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT	No. of years
76	Bonelli's Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
77	Osprey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5
79	Kestrel	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	5
83	Peregrine Falcon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5
84	Chinese Francolin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
85	Japanese Quail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
89	Water Rail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
90	Banded Rail	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4
92	Ruddy Crake	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
95	White-breasted Waterhen	1	-	1	1	2	1	2	1	5
96	Moorhen	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	5
97	Watercock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
98	Coot	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	5
101	Painted Snipe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
103	Black-winged Stilt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
104	Avocet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4
106	Little Ringed Plover	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	1	5
108	Kentish Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	5
110	Greater Sand Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
112	Asiatic Golden Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	4
113	Grey Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5
114	Grey-headed Lapwing	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5
116	Great Knot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
119	Red-necked Stint	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
120	Temminck's Stint	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
121	Long-toed Stint	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
124	Dunlin	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	5
127	Ruff	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Continued ...

TABLE 3 continued

		Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT	No. of years
129	Fantail Snipe	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	2	5
130	Pintail Snipe	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	5
134	Asiatic Dowitcher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
135	Woodcock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
136	Black-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
140	Curlew	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	5
142	Spotted Redshank	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	5
143	Redshank	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
144	Marsh Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5
145	Greenshank	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	5
147	Green Sandpiper	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	1	5
148	Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	5
150	Common Sandpiper	1	1	1	1	-	1	2	2	5
153	Red-necked Phalarope	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
157	Saunders' Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
158	Black-headed Gull	1	4	-	2	2	3	4	4	5
160	Black-tailed Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
162	Herring Gull	2	1	-	-	-	-	3	1	5
168	Caspian Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
179	Red Turtle Dove	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	4
180	Rufous Turtle Dove	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	2	5
181	Spotted Dove	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	5
183	Emerald Dove	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
189	Plaintive Cuckoo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
193	Koel	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	5
194	Greater Coucal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	5
195	Lesser Coucal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
196	Collared Scops Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

Continued...

TABLE 3 continued

		Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT	No. of years
209	House Swift	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	5
210	White-breasted Kingfisher	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	5
211	Black-capped Kingfisher	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	5
212	Common Kingfisher	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	5
213	Pied Kingfisher	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5
217	Hoopoe	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
218	Great Barbet	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	5
219	Wryneck	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
225	Oriental Skylark	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
227	Swallow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
228	Red-rumped Swallow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
229	Asian House Martin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
230	Richard's Pipit	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	5
231	Upland Pipit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
232	Olive-backed Pipit	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	5
234	Red-throated Pipit	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5
235	Water Pipit	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
237	Yellow Wagtail	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	5
239	Grey Wagtail	1	-	1	-	2	1	1	2	5
240	White Wagtail	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	5
242	Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
245	Grey-throated Minivet	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	3
246	Scarlet Minivet	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	4
247	Crested Bulbul	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	5
248	Chinese Bulbul	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	5
249	Red-vented Bulbul	2	-	1	2	-	1	2	-	5
250	Chestnut Bulbul	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	5
251	Black Bulbul	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Continued ...



TABLE 3 continued

		Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT	No. of years
251.1	Orange-bellied Leafbird	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
255	Red-tailed Robin	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
256	Rubythroat	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	5
257	Bluethroat	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5
259	Red-flanked Bluetail	1	-	1	1	2	1	1	-	5
260	Daurian Redstart	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	5
261	Plumbeous Water Redstart	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
262	Magpie Robin	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	5
263	Stonechat	-	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	5
264	Grey Bushchat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
267	Blue Rock Thrush	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	5
268	Violet Whistling Thrush	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	5
269	Orange-headed Ground Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
270	White's Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
272	Grey Thrush	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3
273	Blackbird	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	-	5
275	Grey-backed Thrush	1	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	5
276	Pale Thrush	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
277	Eye-browed Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
278	Dusky Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
280	Short-tailed Bush Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	5
281	Chinese Bush Warbler	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	5
282	Mountain Bush Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
283	Fantail Warbler	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	5
284	Brown Wren-warbler	-	2	-	1	-	-	1	2	5
285	Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler	1	-	1	2	2	-	1	2	5
290	Great Reed Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
292	Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Continued ...

TABLE 3 continued

		Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Offshore Islands	Lantau	Central NT	Eastern NT	Western NT	Northern NT	No. of years
296	Long-tailed Tailorbird	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	5
297	Sulphur-breasted Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
298	Blyth's Leaf Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
302	Pallas's Warbler	1	-	1	-	2	1	1	1	5
303	Yellow-browed Warbler	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	5
305	Dusky Warbler	1	-	1	2	1	1	1	2	5
309	Verditer Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4
313	Brown Flycatcher	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	5
314	Red-breasted Flycatcher	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	4
315	Robin Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
318	Grey-headed Flycatcher	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4
321	Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
323	Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
324	Black-throated Laughing Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5
325	Hwamei	1	1	-	-	2	1	1	-	5
326	White-cheeked Laughing Thrush	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
327	Black-faced Laughing Thrush	2	1	-	2	2	2	2	1	5
328	Pekin Robin	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	5
330	White-bellied Yuhina	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
331	Red-headed Tit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
332	Yellow-bellied Tit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
333	Great Tit	1	1	-	-	2	2	1	2	5
335	Fork-tailed Sunbird	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	5
336	Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	4
337	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5
339	White-eye	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	5
340	Black-naped Oriole	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
342	Brown Shrike	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4

Continued ...

TABLE 3 continued

[illegible]

Continued ...



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all those people who braved the wind and rain on 31 December 1989 to contribute to the count. They were:

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I would like to apologise to anyone who has been inadvertently overlooked.

I would also like to thank Mike Chalmers, the Society's Recorder, who is always ready to help with his advice.

第五屆香港聖誕雀鳥普查於一九八九年十二月卅一日舉行。當日天氣惡劣，但共錄得 170 個品種，比上屆略多。累積五屆的紀錄，則共有 227 種。首次在普查中錄得的品種有鴛鴦、紅胸田雞、半蹼鶉、紅腳鵒、戴勝、冠紋柳鶯、黑領噪鵲和白腹鳳鵒。資料分析顯示在香港大部份地區，每次普查錄得的品種數目都有下降的趨勢。

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## REPORT ON BIRD RINGING IN HONG KONG IN 1989

*David S. Melville*

Ringling activities during 1989 were concentrated at the WWF Hong Kong Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, but with three ringers active in the Territory by the end of the year it was possible to conduct limited ringling at six other sites. The most notable of these was the University of Hong Kong Kadoorie Agricultural Research Station at Shek Kong, where several hundred birds were caught during the autumn and winter. The total number of birds ringed during 1989 was 2,526, 76 less than in 1988, but the number of species increased from 86 to 114. Species totals are given in Table 1, together with totals for previous years. Previous ringling reports have been given by McClure and Leclavir (1972) and Melville (1981, 1987, 1988, 1989).

Captures during the year included two species new to Hong Kong: Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler (Melville 1990) and Two-barred Greenish Warbler (Leader 1990a). A Yellow-browed Warbler showing characteristics of the race *humei* was also trapped (Leader 1990b). Other captures of interest included two Japanese Sparrowhawks, and singles of Ruff, Oriental Cuckoo, and Mountain Bush Warbler. The three Penduline Tits provided a foretaste of things to come in 1990.

It is pleasing to report that detailed studies are underway on both Dusky Warblers (A.C. Galsworthy) and Masked Buntings (P.J. Leader). The large number of Chinese Pond Herons ringed during the year is due to the efforts of Lew Young, who is studying this species for his doctoral thesis at the University of Hong Kong. We have also been cooperating with the University of Hong Kong in studies of seed dispersal by birds (R. Corlett, Department of Botany) and avian influenza viruses (K. Shortridge, Department of Microbiology). A two-week ringling training course was held in the autumn for four staff of the Jiangxi Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve.

Three overseas movements of birds were recorded during the year (Table 2). The Grey-rumped Sandpiper is the second record of this species ringed in Australia and recovered in southern China, the previous one being from near Zhanjiang, western Guangdong Province in 1982. Other records of this species moving between Australia and East Asia (or vice versa) have involved Taiwan, Japan and the Siberian coast of the Bering Sea (Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes *in litt.*). There is one previous record of a Great Reed Warbler ringed at Mai Po being controlled in Japan.

As ringling activities spread to areas other than Mai Po we look forward to generating information on local movements of birds. The first such record is of a wintering Fantail Snipe moving between Lok Ma Chau and Mai Po (Table 3).

As the number of birds carrying rings increases each year so does the number of following-season recaptures of known migrant species (Table 4). We are now obtaining some interesting longevity data. For example, Dusky Warbler 1K2944 was recaptured 45 months after ringing — the previous record for the species was 36 months (McClure 1974).

I wish to thank the Ringing Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology for permission to use their rings in Hong Kong. Trapping of birds is carried out under permits issued by the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries. Fellow ringers Paul Leader and Tony Galsworthy have greatly assisted with the smooth running of the project during the year and I am most grateful for their very active support and encouragement. Many others have helped with ringing during the year and I thank them all, especially Mark Bezuijen, Simba Chan, Sue Earle, Jan Galsworthy, Mary Ketterer, Michael Lau, Vicky Melville and Lew Young.

TABLE 2. Overseas movements of ringed birds during 1989

<b>Grey-rumped Sandpiper</b> <i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>				
061-70054	ringed	29 March 1988	80 Mile Beach, Western Australia	
			19°15'S 121°20'E	
	controlled	2 September 1989	Mai Po, Hong Kong	
	(distance*	4,684 km	NNW)	
<b>Great Reed Warbler</b> <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>				
VB46864	ringed	23 April 1989	Mai Po, Hong Kong	
	controlled	14 May 1989	Hino Riverbed, Yonago-shi, Tottori, Japan 35°26'N 133°22'E	
	(distance*	2,362 km	NE)	
<b>Great Reed Warbler</b> <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>				
VB46883	ringed	29 April 1989	Mai Po, Hong Kong	
	controlled	3 July 1989	Chikuma Riverbed, Nagano-shi, Japan 36°37'N 138°13'E	
	(distance*	2,808 km	NE)	

\* minimum great circle distance between ringing and control sites

TABLE 3. Movements within Hong Kong of more than 1 km

<b>Fantail Snipe</b> <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			
XS31492	ringed	2 January 1989	Lok Ma Chau
	recaptured	25 March 1989	Mai Po
	(distance	4 km)	

TABLE 1. Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966 – 1989

Species	MAPS*	1975–1988	1989	Total
Little Grebe				1
Cormorant				1
Bittern			1	1
Yellow Bittern				55
Chestnut Bittern	15	27	13	3
Night Heron	1	2	1	3
Little Green Heron		2	2	2
Chinese Pond Heron			79	79
Cattle Egret			1	1
Little Egret			3	3
Teal		18		18
Yellow-nib Duck			1	1
Garganey		3	1	4
Black Kite		37		37
Japanese Sparrowhawk		1	2	4
Imperial Eagle				1
Kestrel	1			5
Chinese Francolin	1**		1	1
Japanese Quail	4**			7
Yellow-legged Button Quail	7**			1
Barred Button Quail	1**			1
Baillon's Crane	1**			1
White-breasted Waterhen	1			1
Moorhen	1			1
Painted Snipe		3	2	6
Black-winged Stilt			2	2
Avocet			1	1
Oriental Pratincole		1	1	2
		2		2

Continued ...



TABLE 1 continued

Species		MAPS*	1975-1988	1989	Total
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		2		2
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>		22		22
Lesser Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>		22	1	23
Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>		96	39	135
Asiatic Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>		34	11	45
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		35	1	36
Great Knot	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>		24	2	26
Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>		14	3	17
Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	6	166	4	176
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>			1	1
Long-toed Stint	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>		17		17
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>		31	1	32
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>		1		1
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1	262	144	407
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		185	110	295
Spoon-billed Sandpiper	<i>Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus</i>		2		2
Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>		49	14	63
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>			1	1
Fantail Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	1	37	24	62
Pintail Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>		1	2	3
Swinhoe's Snipe	<i>Gallinago megala</i>		8		8
Asiatic Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>		10	3	13
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		14	2	16
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>		50		50
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		184	44	228
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		9		9
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>		6		6
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		384	284	668

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species		MAPS*	1975-1988	1989	Total
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>		22	11	33
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		5	7	12
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>			1	1
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		55	13	68
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>		204	63	267
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	4	62	8	74
Grey-rumped Sandpiper	<i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>		25	18	43
Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		17	2	19
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>		7		7
Rufous Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>		2	1	3
Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	2	18	17	37
Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>			1	1
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	1			1
Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>			1	1
Oriental Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus saturatus</i>			1	1
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>		8		8
Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>	2			2
Oriental Scops Owl	<i>Otus (scops) sunia</i>	2			2
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	2**	1		3
House Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>			1	1
White-breasted Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	24	8	7	39
Black-capped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon pileata</i>	5	5	2	12
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	104	235	107	446
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>		1	1	2
Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	21	5	4	30
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	1			1
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	11	53	17	81
Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	13			13

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species		MAPS*	1975–1988	1989	Total
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	86	2	11	99
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	6	1	1	8
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	18	8	5	31
Crested Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	80	40	49	169
Chinese Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>	895	369	222	1,486
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus aurigaster</i>	95	3	3	101
Chestnut Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes castanonotus</i>	2			2
Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>	1			1
Red-tailed Robin	<i>Luscinia sibilans</i>	6		3	9
Rubythroat	<i>Luscinia calliope</i>	95	15	12	122
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	9	10	3	22
Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	30	3	12	45
Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>	16			16
Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	2	4	3	9
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	48	25	6	79
Grey Bushchat	<i>Saxicola ferrea</i>	1			1
Violet Whistling Thrush	<i>Myiophonus caeruleus</i>	11			11
White's Thrush	<i>Zoothera dauma</i>	2			2
Grey Thrush	<i>Turdus cardis</i>	53	1	3	57
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	1		1	2
Brown Thrush	<i>Turdus chrysolaus</i>	1			1
Grey-backed Thrush	<i>Turdus hortulorum</i>	209	10	5	224
Pale Thrush	<i>Turdus pallidus</i>	15			15
Dusky Thrush	<i>Turdus naumanni</i>	3			3
Short-tailed Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia squameiceps</i>	1		1	2
Chinese Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia diphone</i>	19	63	32	114
Mountain Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia fortipes</i>			1	1
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia acanthizoides</i>			1	1

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species		MAPS*	1975–1988	1989	Total
Fantail Warbler	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		1		1
Brown Wren-warbler	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	12	165	67	244
Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>	39	246	92	377
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella certhiola</i>	5			5
Styan's Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella pleskei</i>	8	4		12
Von Schrenck's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus bistrigiceps</i>	21	104	12	137
Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	251	579	183	1,013
Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>		1		1
Long-tailed Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	11	4	16	31
Pale-legged Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus tenellipes</i>			1	1
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	12	27	5	44
Pallas's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	5		1	6
Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	19	7	18	44
Dusky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	104	290	137	531
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		2		2
Two-barred Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus</i>			1	1
Ijima Willow Warbler?	<i>Phylloscopus ijimae?</i>		1		1
Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa latirostris</i>	6	7	2	15
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	1			1
Robin Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula mugimaki</i>			1	1
Tricolour Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula zanthopygia</i>	2	1	3	6
Narcissus Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula narcissina</i>			1	1
Grey-headed Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	1			1
Asian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>		1		1
Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	1		1	2
Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush	<i>Garrulax pectoralis</i>			1	1
Black-throated Laughing Thrush	<i>Garrulax chinensis</i>	2			2
Hwamei	<i>Garrulax canorus</i>	7**		7	14

Continued ...



TABLE 1 continued

Species		MAPS*	1975–1988	1989	Total
Black-faced Laughing Thrush	<i>Garrulax perspicillatus</i>	18		2	20
Pekin Robin	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>	9**		3	12
Vinous-throated Parrotbill	<i>Paradoxornis webbiana</i>		1		1
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	34		5	39
Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>			3	3
Fork-tailed Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga christinae</i>	1	1		2
Chestnut-flanked White-eye	<i>Zosterops erythroleura</i>		1	1	2
White-eye	<i>Zosterops japonica</i>	217	809	351	1,377
(Bull-headed Shrike)***	<i>(Lanius bucephalus)***</i>	1			1
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	6	2		8
Rufous-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>	39	11	7	57
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>		3	2	5
Hair-crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>	1		1	2
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		1		1
Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>	4			4
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	2**		1	3
Silky Starling	<i>Sturnus sericeus</i>			2	2
Chinese Starling	<i>Sturnus sinensis</i>	2	1	2	5
Crested Mynah	<i>Acridotheres cristatellus</i>	2		2	4
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	92**	82	23	197
Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>		4		4
White-backed Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>			3	3
Spotted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	34	224	34	292
Chestnut Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>	1	5		6
White-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura maja</i>		1		1
Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>	5			5
Chinese Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis sinica</i>	1			1
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	12		1	13

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species		MAPS*	1975–1988	1989	Total
Black-tailed Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes migratorius</i>	9			9
Masked Bunting	<i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>	219	286	54	559
Grey-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza fucata</i>	1	1		2
Tristram's Bunting	<i>Emberiza tristrami</i>	4		1	5
Little Bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	2	39	14	55
Chestnut Bunting	<i>Emberiza rutila</i>		5	3	8
Yellow-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza aureola</i>	28	5	1	34
<b>Total</b>		3,190	5,972	2,526	11,688

\* The Migratory Animals Pathological Survey (MAPS) programme ran from 1964–1971. Ringing was done in Hong Kong between 1965 and 1968. Details of MAPS birds are from McClure and Leelavit (1972) and from F.O.P. Hechtel's personal records. In the few cases where there is a discrepancy the higher figure has been taken.

\*\* Some or all of these birds released from captivity by the ringer.

\*\*\* The identification of all pre-1986 records of Bull-headed Shrike *Lanius bucephalus* has been questioned by Chalmers (1986).

TABLE 4. Following-season recaptures of known migrants 1989\*

<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b> <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>		
NB19663	ringed	26 April 1987/recaptured 4 May 1989
<b>Dunlin</b> <i>Calidris alpina</i>		
NS14650	ringed	12 November 1988/recaptured 11 November 1989
<b>Broad-billed Sandpiper</b> <i>Limicola falcinellus</i>		
NS14645	ringed	12 November 1988/recaptured 11 November 1989
<b>Redshank</b> <i>Tringa totanus</i>		
DK09090	ringed	20 August 1988/recaptured 4 May 1989
DK09119	ringed	20 August 1988/recaptured 9 August 1989
DK09170	ringed	20 August 1988/recaptured 21 August 1989
DK09179	ringed	31 August 1988/recaptured 9 August 1989
DK09216	ringed	12 September 1988/recaptured 9 August 1989
<b>Rubythroat</b> <i>Luscinia calliope</i>		
F145032	ringed	19 November 1988/recaptured 15 April 1989, 17 December 1989
<b>Bluethroat</b> <i>Luscinia svecica</i>		
F145067	ringed	24 December 1988/recaptured 8 December 1989
<b>Chinese Bush Warbler</b> <i>Cettia diphone</i>		
C995187	ringed	5 December 1987/recaptured 8 December 1989, 17 December 1989
F145043	ringed	26 November 1988/recaptured 8 December 1989
F145062	ringed	10 December 1988/recaptured 25 November 1989
<b>Great Reed Warbler</b> <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>		
VA23250	ringed	21 April 1986/recaptured 10 December 1988, 8 December 1989
VA23382	ringed	7 March 1987/recaptured 8 March 1987, 17 April 1987, 15 April 1989
VA23384	ringed	14 March 1987/recaptured 21 March 1987, 8 December 1989
VB32652	ringed	12 September 1987/recaptured 13 May 1989
VB32692	ringed	26 September 1987/recaptured 13 May 1989
VB32796	ringed	23 April 1988/recaptured 29 April 1989
VC76218	ringed	1 May 1988/recaptured 23 April 1989
VC76225	ringed	1 May 1988/recaptured 28 August 1989
VC76348	ringed	17 September 1988/recaptured 25 September 1988, 5 September 1989

Continued ...

TABLE 4 continued

<b>Dusky Warbler</b> <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>		
1K2944	ringed	16 March 1986/recaptured 30 December 1989
1K2961	ringed	16 March 1986/recaptured 8 December 1989
1K2994	ringed	30 April 1986/recaptured 5 May 1986, 26 November 1988, 28 October 1989
5N7041	ringed	7 March 1987/recaptured 4 March 1989
6N3502	ringed	13 December 1987/recaptured 19 November 1989
9R0095	ringed	26 November 1988/recaptured 29 April 1989, 8 December 1989
9R0099	ringed	26 November 1988/recaptured 10 December 1988, 27 March 1989
9R0125	ringed	3 December 1988/recaptured 4 November 1989, 24 December 1989
9R0166	ringed	24 December 1988/recaptured 17 December 1989
9R0187	ringed	2 January 1989/recaptured 24 December 1989
9R0224	ringed	15 April 1989/recaptured 17 December 1989, 24 December 1989
<b>Masked Bunting</b> <i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>		
C405137	ringed	19 March 1986/recaptured 23 April 1988, 2 January 1989
C405223	ringed	2 May 1986/recaptured 4 March 1989
C995008	ringed	17 April 1987/recaptured 25 April 1987, 27 March 1989
E051003	ringed	26 December 1987/recaptured 23 April 1988, 27 March 1989
E051008	ringed	26 December 1987/recaptured 4 March 1989
E051062	ringed	1 May 1988/recaptured 15 April 1989
F145047	ringed	26 November 1988/recaptured 2 January 1989, 17 December 1989

\* All birds ringed and recaptured at Mai Po.

一九八九年内，香港一共環志了 2,526 頭雀鳥，比一九八八年少 76 頭。涉及的品種由一九八八年的 86 種增至一九八九年的 114 種。網捕的雀鳥包括兩個香港的新紀錄品種：黃腹樹鶯 *Cettia acanthizoides* 和暗綠柳鶯 *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*。附表列出環志鳥類的詳情，以及在香港境內和海外的移動情況。



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5. White-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*  
Nam Chung, October 1986 (John Holmes)

[The cost of reproduction of plate 5 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]

## BIRDS RELEASED BY AFD IN HONG KONG, 1986-89

M.L. Chalmers

In response to requests from the World Wide Fund for Nature, Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, the Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) has kindly provided data on the numbers, species and locations of bird releases by their staff. This information is presented in Table 1 for each year from 1986 to 1989. Most of the releases were of birds confiscated from illegal traders.

The list is striking for the number and variety of birds of prey and owls, many of which were released at Tai Po Kau. Of particular interest are the Golden Eagle, Collared Pygmy Owlets and Little Owls, none of which are on the Hong Kong List, and the large number of Short-eared Owls, none of which has been reported by birdwatchers. However, it is possible that some sight records of Northern Goshawk and possibly Mountain Hawk Eagle and Crested Honey Buzzard may be attributable to some of the other releases. Other birds of special interest were the three Japanese Night Herons released at Mai Po in 1986.

Whilst some of the identifications may be suspect (until recently no photographs were taken of the captive birds), the data does provide an insight into the continued illegal trade in birds of prey and owls, and reinforces the need for the conservative view taken when assessing the status of new or rare species reported in the wild.

本文詳細介紹一九八六至一九八九年間漁農處放生的雀鳥。這些雀鳥充公自非法商人手中。其中猛禽和貓頭鷹種類繁多，數目亦不少，很是突出。

TABLE 1. Releases of birds by AFD, 1986-89

Species	1986	1987	1988	1989
Japanese Night Heron <i>Gorsachius goisagi</i>	3 Mai Po			
Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	3 Mai Po	8 Yim Tso Ha 1 Tai Po	1 Mai Po	
Chinese Pond Heron <i>Ardeola bacchus</i>				
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1 Mai Po			
Bean Goose <i>Anser fabalis</i>		2 Mai Po		
Mandarin <i>Aix galericulata</i>		1 Tai Po		
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	8 Mai Po	6 Tai Po		
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>	2 Tai Po Kau		1 Shatin Pass 3 Sheung Shui 1 Kowloon Hills 2 Mai Po	
Serpent Eagle <i>Spilornis cheela</i>	2 Tai Po Kau			
Northern Goshawk <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	4 Tai Po Kau			
Japanese Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter gularis</i>		1 Tai Po Kau	1 Sheung Shui	
Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>		1 Tai Po Kau		
Golden Eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	1 Tai Po Kau			
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	6 Tai Po Kau 1 Sheung Shui	2 Tai Po Kau 1 Luk Keng	1 Kowloon 3 Tai Po Kau 3 Sheung Shui	
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>		1 Tai Po Kau		
Unid. raptor <i>Falconiformes</i> sp.		1 Tai Po Kau		
Golden Pheasant <i>Chrysolophus pictus</i>	2 Mai Po			
Ring-necked Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		1 Tai Po Kau		
White-breasted Waterhen <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>		1 Tai Po Kau		
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>		7 Mai Po		
Spotted Dove <i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>			1 Sheung Shui	
Greater Coucal <i>Centropus sinensis</i>	1 Kowloon Hills	1 Tai Po		
Lesser Coucal <i>Centropus bengalensis</i>			1 Kowloon Hills	1 Tai Po Kau
Grass Owl <i>Tyto capensis</i>	1 Tai Po Kau			1 Tai Po Kau

Continued ...

TABLE 1 continued

Species	1986	1987	1988	1989
Collared Scops Owl <i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	1 Tai Po Kau	8 Tai Po Kau	2 Kowloon Hills	2 Tai Po Kau
Scops Owl <i>Otus scops</i>	1 Tai Po Kau			
Eagle Owl <i>Bubo bubo</i>	1 Tai Po Kau	1 Tai Po Kau	1 Tai Po Kau	2 Kowloon Hills
Brown Fish Owl <i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	1 Tai Po Kau			
Barred Owlet <i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>		1 Tai Mo Shan 6 Tai Po Kau		2 Tai Po Kau
Collared Pygmy Owlet <i>Glaucidium brodei</i>	2 Mai Po			
Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i>	2 Tai Po Kau 1 Plover Cove			
Brown Hawk Owl <i>Ninox scutulata</i>	1 Tai Po Kau	1 Tai Po Kau		
Long-eared Owl <i>Asio otus</i>	1 Mai Po			
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	4 Tai Po Kau	14 Tai Po Kau	4 Tai Po Kau	4 Lantau 2 Ping Chau
Unid. owl <i>Strigiformes</i> sp.	1 Tai Po Kau			
Hwamei <i>Garrulax canorus</i>		1 Sheung Shui		
White-eye <i>Zosterops japonica</i>		6 Sheung Shui		
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>			1 Mai Po	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>

Source: Agriculture and Fisheries Department, Hong Kong Government

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## BIRDS NEW TO HONG KONG

### RELICT GULL AT MAI PO THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

*Peter R. Kennerley*

While Mike Turnbull and I were watching gulls *Larus* sp. from the boardwalk hide at Mai Po on 31 December 1987, I noticed an unusually plumaged gull flying from left to right past the hide. It landed directly in front of us at a distance of approximately 60 metres, where it remained for about five minutes before taking flight and landing once again about 250 metres away. We then watched it for approximately 30 minutes before it flew off and was eventually lost to view as it headed towards Tsim Bei Tsui Police Post. It was subsequently seen again at the same place by MT on 2 January 1988.

#### DISCUSSION

When we found the bird on 31 December, we strongly suspected it to be a first-winter Relict Gull *Larus relictus* but our lack of experience with the species in this plumage, which at the time of observation remained undescribed, ensured that a cautious approach was made to establishing its correct identity.

During the course of the next two days, we researched the field characters of Relict and other immature gulls in the available literature, which was rather limited and somewhat confusing. We also held discussions with observers familiar with the species in the autumn at Beidaihe, China. These discussions strongly pointed to the bird being a Relict Gull in first-winter plumage. When MT located the bird again on 2 January, he was able to confirm the presence of some of the features which we had overlooked during the original sighting, thus confirming its identity as a Relict Gull.

Subsequent to the observation of this individual, a detailed identification paper has been published (Bakewell *et al.* 1989). Reference to this paper indicates that the plumage details noted correspond to those of Relict Gull in first-winter plumage.

When first noticed in flight, it was the distinctive upperwing pattern which caught my attention. The upperwing between the carpal joint and the primary tips showed a dark wedge and there were no obvious white sub-terminal spots or 'mirrors' on the primaries. The wing coverts were grey and apparently unmarked with no carpal bar visible across the secondaries, while the trailing edge of the wing was white, merging into the grey wing coverts. The tail showed a sharply demarcated terminal band. This band was quite narrow and was unusual in that it did not extend onto the outer rectrices which remained white.



6. First-winter Relict Gull *Larus relictus*  
Honshu, Japan, January 1985

(Susumu Ishie)

At rest, the bird was noticeably larger than a Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus*, yet smaller than any of the Herring Gulls *L. argentatus* of the races *vegae* or *mongolicus* present. In size, it must therefore have been very similar to a Common Gull *L. canus* but differed from that species in several plumage and structural features.

#### STRUCTURE

The structure of the bird was very distinctive. It possessed an upright stance with a long bulbous neck held vertically above the body. The head was rather angular with a long, gently sloping forehead and an almost flat crown which was noticeably angled where it met the nape. In this respect, it was rather similar in shape to a Great Black-headed Gull *L. ichthyæetus*, but the forehead was rather steeper, and the bill smaller than shown by that species. The breast was very full and deep and the belly was also heavy, which added to its solid appearance. The closed wings extended well beyond the tip of the tail, thus attenuating the length of the bird.



## PLUMAGE DETAILS

### At Rest

The head, neck and underparts were white with some very indistinct darker feathering around the rear of the head. There was no dark ear spot.

The mantle colour looked pale grey in the overcast conditions and appeared slightly duller than that of a Black-headed Gull. However, when he saw the bird again on 2 January, MT considered that the mantle colour was the same tone or possibly slightly paler than that of the accompanying Black-headed Gulls. On the closed wing, the median wing coverts were fringed with brown. The visible tertials were a pale brown colour, broadly fringed with white, which gave the appearance of a broad white tertial crescent between the brown centres of the tertials and the entirely black primary feathers of the closed wing. The plumage details of the tail were not visible at rest.

### In Flight

In flight the mantle saddle and wings appeared uniform pale grey while the primary coverts and outer primaries were blackish. This gave the appearance of a dark wedge across the leading edge of the outer wing which contrasted with the apparently unmarked secondaries and wing coverts. When MT saw the bird again on 2 January, he considered that a very indistinct bar was present across the tips of the secondaries.

The underwing was white, apart from an indeterminate amount of black on the underside of the primaries. This appeared to be quite extensive but the exact amount could not be clearly ascertained during the brief period when the bird was in flight.

The tail was white with a narrow black terminal band. This terminal band did not extend onto the outer tail feathers which remained entirely white.

### Soft Parts

The legs were conspicuously thicker than those of a Black-headed Gull and appeared to be entirely black. The upper leg was concealed by the belly feathers but the tarsus appeared as long or longer than that of a Black-headed Gull.

The bill was also an unusual shape and rather reminiscent of that of a Saunders' Gull *L. saundersi* although deeper i.e. the upper mandible was noticeably decurved towards the tip and the lower mandible was deep at the gonys, thus giving it a blob-tipped appearance. Proportionately, the bill was longer than that of a Saunders' Gull and deeper than that of a Black-headed Gull. It appeared entirely dark at all distances and in all lights. The bird had conspicuous thick white eye-lids which were even noticeable against the white head feathering.



7. First-winter Relict Gull *Larus relictus*  
Honshu, Japan, January 1985

(Susumu Ishie)

## BEHAVIOUR

The Relict Gull was not seen to associate closely with any other species of gull during either of the sightings. On 31 December it was largely inactive and was not seen to feed. On 2 January MT observed it feeding in the manner of a Saunders' Gull: flying over the mudflats and dropping quickly to snatch unwary crabs from the surface of the mud.

## SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES

In the breeding season, adult Relict Gull exhibits a black hood which is a feature common to many of the smaller members of the genus. Outside the breeding season, however, Relict Gulls lose their hoods and then display plumage features rather more reminiscent of the larger *Larus* species.

Size alone is usually sufficient to eliminate most of the species of gull which occur within the eastern Palearctic region. Those species which are of a similar size or appearance to Relict Gull and are likely to occur in Hong Kong are Common Gull of the race *kamschatschensis*, Brown-headed Gull *L. brunnicephalus* and the much larger Great Black-headed Gull. Of these likely confusion species, Common Gull is considered to be a vagrant to Hong Kong with five records up to 1985 (Chalmers 1986). However, it occurs more abundantly during the winter in northern China, South Korea and Japan. Brown-headed and Great Black-headed Gulls are scarce winter visitors to Hong Kong with a few birds usually being seen annually during the winter months (pers. obs.).



When identifying gulls, it is important to understand the plumages associated with each age and how long each species takes to attain maturity. Generally speaking, the smaller species such as Black-headed and Brown-headed Gulls take two years to reach maturity but their second-winter plumages are virtually identical to those of adult breeding plumage with the exception of the nuptial hood which is attained during a body moult in the spring months. Medium-sized gulls such as Common Gull normally take three years to mature and have distinct first- and second-winter plumages which differ from those of adult plumages. The larger gulls including Great Black-headed and Herring Gulls take four years before they lose all traces of immaturity from their plumage (Grant 1982).

The Mai Po Relict Gull was clearly not in adult plumage and the extent of black on the outer wing strongly suggested it was in first-winter plumage. It is believed that Relict Gull takes three years to attain adult plumage but it should be noted that second-winter plumage has not yet been fully described. One bird believed to be of this age has been recorded at Beidaihe. This individual appeared to be similar to adult Relict Gull but retained dark centred tertials as in first-winter plumage and the white tips to the primaries of the folded wing were more prominent than those of an adult (Bakewell *et al.* 1989).

The details listed below therefore deal only with the immature plumages of the three potential confusion species mentioned above.

#### **Common Gull** *Larus canus*

Firstly, it should be emphasised that Common Gull of the race *kamtschatschensis* is a much larger bird than the race *canus* which occurs in western Europe. Measurements given by Cramp *et al.* (1983) show this race to be the largest of the four subspecies of Common Gull and overlapping in size with the similar Ring-billed Gull *L. delawarensis* of North America. Likewise, the immature plumages of *kamtschatschensis* differ from those of the European and North American races with which observers may be more familiar. The discussion below refers only to the *kamtschatschensis* form.

In size, Relict and Common Gulls are very similar, both being medium-sized gulls noticeably smaller than Herring Gulls yet larger than Brown-headed Gulls. Structurally, Common Gull has a steep forehead which rises abruptly from the base of the bill. The head therefore is quite rounded which gives a more gentle appearance to the bird, very different from the flat-crowned, angular-headed and thus more aggressive appearance of Relict Gull.

In first-winter plumage, the similarity of Relict Gull to Common Gull is rather striking. It was comparison with Common Gull which was the catalyst leading to the identity of the strangely plumaged Common Gulls at Beidaihe eventually being correctly identified as Relict Gulls (D.N. Bakewell, pers. comm.). Common Gull is therefore the most similarly plumaged of the possible confusion species likely to be seen in Hong Kong.

Common Gull in first-winter plumage, differs from Relict Gull by exhibiting extensive grey-brown mottling across the lesser, median and greater coverts which contrast with the pale grey saddle. In Relict Gull, the coverts remain the same colour as the saddle apart from the darker lesser coverts which produce a line of dark feathers (carpal bar) across the inner wing from the body to the carpal joint. An additional difference lies in the patterning of the tips to the inner primaries. In Common Gull, these feathers are pale grey and tipped white while in Relict Gull they are dark tipped and form an extension to the secondary bar which then merges into the black outer primaries.



8. First-winter Common Gull *Larus canus kamtschatschensis*  
Choshi, Japan, February 1987 (Kaoru Ishie)

Many of the plumage features of Common Gull are, however, also shared with Relict Gull. These include an indistinct secondary bar which, in both species, is typically limited to a dark subterminal spot on each, otherwise white, secondary. Both species also share dark speckling on the hind-neck but in the case of Common Gull this typically extends onto the sides of the breast. Both species also share a similar tail pattern with a narrow dark subterminal band not extending onto the outer two pairs of rectrices which remain entirely white. In Common Gull, the width of the white tips to the rectrices is usually wider than that exhibited by Relict Gull but this feature is variable.



Second-winter Common Gull lacks the black terminal band on the tail and the mantle/upperwing is blue-grey, much darker than the mantle colour of a Black-headed Gull. Second-winter birds also exhibit an extensive area of black on the outer wing from the carpal joint across the primary coverts to the outer primary tips and in this respect can appear rather similar to first-winter Relict Gull. However, Common Gull at this age also shows large white spots on the outer two primaries which are almost as conspicuous as those of adult birds.

The colour of the legs and bill of Common Gull never appear entirely dark. First-winter Common Gull exhibits pale grey legs and a narrow, pale-based bill with a sharply demarcated black tip and dark line running back along the cutting edge of the bill towards the gape. Again, these features differ from the entirely black legs and dark bill (occasionally with a slightly paler base to the lower mandible, particularly later into the winter months) which Relict Gull possesses in first-winter plumage.

During Common Gull's second winter, its soft parts are similar to those of an adult bird. The legs are then yellowish-green while the bill becomes yellowish with a pale red spot on the lower mandible at the gonys, similar but less conspicuous than that of a Herring Gull. This spot is lost in breeding plumage.

#### **Brown-headed Gull** *Larus brunnicephalus*

While the differences between Relict and Brown-headed Gull are obvious when known, confusion is possible if the observers lack familiarity with Brown-headed Gull in first-winter plumage. Indeed, several skins of first-winter Relict Gull have recently been found in the collection of the Zoological Institute, Academia Sinica, Beijing, having been erroneously labelled as Brown-headed Gull (M.D. Williams pers. comm.).

At rest, Brown-headed Gull appears marginally larger than the largest Black-headed Gull but smaller than a Common Gull. In a flock of resting Black-headed Gulls, a Brown-headed Gull usually does not stand out as being conspicuously larger than its congeners due to size variation within Black-headed Gull and can be exceptionally difficult to locate, even in a loosely packed flock. At rest therefore, birds in first-winter plumage are particularly difficult to separate from Black-headed Gulls of a similar age. Close attention must be paid to the thicker legs and longer, deeper bill proportions which are features that consistently differ from the more delicately built Black-headed Gulls.

In flight however, Brown-headed Gull is longer- and broader-winged than Black-headed Gull, giving the wing a rather paddle-shaped appearance. Its flight is leisurely and in many ways similar to that of a Common Gull. When plumage features are considered, separation of Brown-headed Gull from Relict Gull (and Black-headed Gull) is relatively straightforward.

In first-winter plumage, Brown-headed Gull exhibits dark outer

primaries with white bases which, in the field, are usually covered by the white primary coverts. By contrast, the basal two thirds of each inner primary are white and the dark area is restricted to the distal third of each feather. The secondaries are also dark and the width of the band across the trailing edge of the wing is much broader than shown by either Relict or Black-headed Gull. The effect produced is that of a broad dark band across the trailing edge of the wing from the inner secondaries to the outer primaries with a pale intrusion into the inner primaries from the primary coverts. The tips of the secondaries and inner primaries are narrowly edged white, although this is difficult to see in the field, while the outer primaries are dark tipped. Thus, the entire outer and trailing edge to the wing appears much darker in Brown-headed Gull than in Relict Gull.



9. First-winter Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*  
Bangpoo, Thailand, February 1990 (Ted Hoogendoorn)

When in flight, Brown-headed Gull exhibits a fairly broad dark terminal band across the tail which, as in Black-headed Gull, usually reaches to the edges of the tail, but may on occasion show a white outer web to the outer tail feathers.

#### **Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus*

Great Black-headed Gull is one of the largest species of gull and



certainly the largest of the group which develop a dark hood during the breeding season. In size, it is similar to or slightly larger than the largest Herring Gull and therefore conspicuously larger than both Common and Relict Gulls. Structurally, it is rather reminiscent of a Relict Gull with the forehead gradually rising above the bill to the rear crown where the crown is markedly angled onto the nape. The body of Great Black-headed Gull appears rather elongated, much more so than in a Herring Gull, due to the feathers of the closed wing extending well beyond the tip of the tail combined with a rather flat-chested appearance — a feature atypical of the other larger *Larus* species.

The bill of Great Black-headed Gull is much more massive than that of a Relict Gull and thus gives the bird its characteristic snouted appearance. The bill of first-winter Great Black-headed Gull is always pale, usually yellowish, with a clearly demarcated black tip. Relict Gull at this age displays an entirely dark bill, perhaps lightening gradually towards the base of the lower mandible.



10. First-winter Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*  
Maagan Mikhael, Israel, December 1987 (Paul Doherty)

In first-winter plumage, Great Black-headed Gull exhibits several plumage characters which differ from Relict Gull. The head of Great Black-headed Gull usually shows dusky markings around the eye; these form a patch behind the eye and may extend more diffusely over the crown. By contrast, Relict Gull typically has a white, unmarked head at this age. Both species show white eye-lids which are readily visible, even on birds in immature and non-breeding plumages. At rest, the pale grey mantle of first-winter Great Black-headed Gull contrasts with the brown-fringed wing coverts. In this respect it differs from all other species of large *Larus* which normally do not show any grey in the mantle until they are in their second winter or older. However, most of the smaller species, which take two or three years to reach maturity, do exhibit a grey tone to the mantle in first-winter plumage, with contrasting brown-fringed wing coverts, and in this respect Relict, Common and Great Black-headed Gulls display similarity.

The differences between Great Black-headed Gull and Relict Gull in flight are more obvious, with Great Black-headed Gull appearing very long-winged and showing across the secondaries a well-defined dark band which contrasts with the pale grey panel created by the wing coverts across the centre of the wing. The inner primaries are also paler than the outer primaries and secondaries, thus producing a pale patch in the outer wing. This appearance differs from that of Relict Gull which displays an almost complete lack of secondary bar and a relatively uniform pale grey upper-wing pattern.

The dark tail band of Great Black-headed Gull is quite broad and well demarcated from the white tail and rump. In fact, Great Black-headed Gull is the only large gull to display this type of tail pattern. The tail band differs from that of Relict Gull by being broader and extending across the entire tip of the tail including the outer tail feathers.

#### STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF RELICT GULL

The type specimen of Relict Gull was an adult in breeding plumage obtained at Tsondolon on the Etsin river in northern Inner Mongolia (now Gansu Province) on 24 April 1924 by Soderbom. Lonnberg (1931) described this specimen and believed it to be a relict subspecies of the Mediterranean Gull *L. melanocephalus* while Vaurie (1962) considered it to be a hybrid between Great Black-headed and Brown-headed Gull. The discovery of a breeding colony of gulls identical to the type specimen at Lake Alakul, Kazakstan in 1968 finally solved the mystery when it became apparent that the birds were a species new to science (Auezov 1971).

As a breeding species, Relict Gull is now known from the Kazakstan and Transbaikalia regions of the Soviet Union and also from Outer Mongolia, where it frequents saline lakes in the arid-steppe zone including several remote and isolated lakes in the Gobi Desert (Kitson 1980). Outside the breeding season, its movements were until recently unknown with the only records listed by Kitson (1980) being a specimen from Tanggu,



Hebei Province, China on 9 April 1935 and a juvenile recovered on 30 September 1971 at Lake Bai-ti-Long, Kuangnin Province, Vietnam. This latter bird had been ringed as a chick on 3 June of the same year at Sredni island in Lake Alakul, Kazakstan. Melville (1984) details two further specimens discovered in the collection of the Zoological Institute, Academy of Sciences, Leningrad. Both specimens came from Tangu and were collected on 29 October 1934 and 8 April 1935.

Several Relict Gulls were found at Beidaihe, Hebei Province, China in the autumn of 1986 before the sea froze (Bakewell *et al.* 1989). It is not known where these birds move to during the winter months but it would be expected that they would remain in unfrozen coastal areas of eastern Asia. Recent records from Japan and South Korea (K. Sonobe pers. comm.) indicate possible wintering areas there.

Relict Gull has been suspected of occurring in Hong Kong on at least one previous occasion (Viney and Philips 1983). However, the available description of this individual is rather inconclusive and may relate to a Great Black-headed Gull. Until fairly recently, it was not appreciated that Relict Gull differs markedly from Great Black-headed Gull and only since the publication of authoritative texts such as Grant (1982) and Bakewell *et al.* (1989), have the field characters of Great Black-headed and Relict Gulls in anything other than adult plumage been widely appreciated.

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一九八七年十二月卅一日和一九八八年一月二日在米埔錄得一隻身披首季冬羽的遺鷗 *Larus relictus*，是香港的首次紀錄。由於辨認這個品種不易，可能混淆的品種，如海鷗 *L. Canus*、棕頭鷗 *L. brunnicapillus* 和漁鷗 *L. ichthyaetus* 等的未成年鳥的羽毛特徵亦一併討論。

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## PIED WHEATEAR AT WAH FU THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Stewart Smith

On 24 and 25 September 1989 an immature Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* was found on an open stony area at Wah Fu at the southwestern corner of Hong Kong Island; the land there is exposed rock and open earth with very little grass or other cover. This species had not previously been recorded from Hong Kong.

My first sightings were on 24 September 1989 at about 0730h and again at 1700h, in each case for 10 minutes or so. The light was good. On 25 September I returned with Peter Kennerley, Steve Smith and Verity Picken and we watched the bird from 0630h for about an hour, again in good conditions.

On the first morning I saw the bird 30 metres away at rest on the corner of two concrete abutments, standing rather like a Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitaria*. Perched on these abutments, it was alert and upright with its tail nearly touching the ground but on the rock faces it adopted a more horizontal stance. It was in regular movement from different bases on the small cliff and its flight was seen to be short and buoyant. It fed both by catching insects (presumably) on the ground, descending from vantage points up to 10 metres high to do so, and also by flycatching upwards from a perch to a height of about 20 metres. On occasions it scampered over the flat rocky terrain, apparently in pursuit of insects.

It was clear from the white rump and base of the outer tail feathers together with the prominent black inverted T that the bird was a wheatear *Oenanthe* sp. The overall impression was of an earthy-brown wheatear with pale underparts — a dark-looking bird when seen against rock or ground.

There was a faint buffy-brown supercilium and even fainter moustachial stripe, and a darkening of colour around the ear coverts, darker at the top than the bottom. No dark loreal area was noted. The chin and throat were pale grey-brown, with the same colour forming a thin half-collar extending below and behind the ear coverts. In general the bird appeared 'open-faced'.

Above, the crown, nape, mantle and back were a consistent mid-brown, lacking warmth. Very faint pale fringes to the mantle gave a scalloped effect, not readily seen in the field but apparent in photographs. The wings generally appeared concolourous with the back, but at close range the wing coverts were seen to have pale tips which produced two wing bars. The visible primaries and secondaries were likewise pale buff-edged, giving, in some lights, the effect of a pale (at times orangey) panel. Seen from the rear, the pale fringes to the tertials met to produce V-shaped zebra markings across the lower back. The tail generally appeared black at rest

but in flight (and on occasions when active on the ground) it was clear that the white of the rump and basal outer tail feathers was more extensive than the black of the inverted T.

Below, the breast was washed a uniform pale dull brown. The belly was paler and the undertail coverts were buffy-white. From the side, a light rufous tinge to the flanks could be seen, especially above the legs. The underwing coverts appeared uniformly dark in flight.

The bill, eyes and legs were black; the bill was quite short and fine, the upper mandible appearing straighter and the lower one slightly upcurved.



11. Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*  
Wah Fu, September 1989

(Peter Kennerley)

On 24 and to some extent on 25 September I was inclined to think the bird was a Northern Wheatear *O. oenanthe*, based partly on the wider breeding distribution (Cramp *et al.* 1988) — and thus likelihood of vagrancy — and on the existing extralimital records in the Philippines and Borneo (Clement and Harris 1987). My principal doubt was that the bird was too dark and not warm enough; I had also then not seen clearly the extent of white in the tail. Later, in particular after conversation with Peter Kennerley and reference to the photograph in British Birds 80:200 plate 91 (1987), I was inclined to the view that the bird was a first-winter Pied Wheatear.

On 25 September Peter Kennerley took photographs of the bird, which were submitted without comment to Peter Clement, co-author of the identification paper in British Birds (1987). This is the bulk of his reply:

[The cost of reproduction of plate 11 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



'From the photographs you enclosed I would say that this is a first-winter Pied Wheatear. The photographs are generally good though some vary a bit in portraying the plumage tones of the upperparts and some are clearly taken in a very bright light. From those taken in the shade (or at least not in very bright light) it is possible to see that there is quite a lot of pale buff edges and tips to the feathers of the mantle, scapulars, median and greater coverts. These pale edges, as you will have seen from Fig.2 of the paper in 'BB' April 1987, are a key feature in separating Pied from the other possibility (in Europe and around the Mediterranean anyway) – Black-eared Wheatear.

Other Pied features shown by this bird are:

- 1) the small and rather rounded head with an almost disproportionately large dark eye;
- 2) there is only a very faint supercilium confined to just over the eye (some birds when seen in the field appear to lack this and it only becomes apparent in photographs afterwards);
- 3) the general dull earth-brown tone to the upperparts which is washed with a cold grey tinge would be much paler or tawny brown in Black-eared;
- 4) the edges to the secondaries and the lower tertials are pale buff, not sandy as in Northern or Black-eared Wheatears;
- 5) the wings of this bird are very long as one would expect of a long-distance migrant – it has a much longer primary projection than Black-eared and a shorter one than Northern;
- 6) one of the photographs shows a black underwing; Pied is the only wheatear to show such a feature – black in males and dark brown in females;
- 7) the throat and breast are sandy and one or two photos show the breast as tinged darker brown – again, this is too dark for either Northern or Black-eared.

Northern is also eliminated by the dark-grey plumage tones of the upperparts and the lack of a well-pronounced supercilium. Size, shape and structure suggest a fairly delicate-looking wheatear, not something of a more substantial build.

The only other possibility is female or immature *capistrata* race of Eastern Pied which is generally grey above but lacks the pale buff tips and edges of the mantle, scapulars and coverts and the underparts are much whiter and lack the rich sandy tones on the throat or the dark-brown on the breast.

All in all it looks a fairly clear-cut first-winter Pied Wheatear to me.'

Pied Wheatear is a central Asian species, with Cheng (1987) giving its breeding range as extending south to mid-Shaanxi and northern Henan Provinces, and east to Hebei and Liaoning. Wilder and Hubbard (1938) state that it is common during the breeding season in the hills west of Beijing into Shanxi and Mongolia. Migration is recorded as being toward the southwest as far as Tanzania (Clement and Harris 1987). It is a vagrant at Beidaihe, northeastern China, with four records of single birds during the spring (M.D. Williams pers. comm.) and it has also been recorded as a vagrant to Japan (Wild Bird Society of Japan 1982). I have not traced any relevant extra-limital records in southeast Asia although the species is a known long-distance migrant in western Europe.

The bird has been accepted into Category A as a first-winter Pied Wheatear.

I am very appreciative of the interest shown and guidance given by Peter Kennerley and, through him, Peter Clement.

一九八九年九月廿四日在華富錄得一隻斑鵒 *Oenanthe pleschanka* 的未成年鳥，是香港的首次紀錄。本文給出今次觀察的詳情和斑鵒的分布。又附一位海外專家對這個紀錄的意見。

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**YELLOW-BELLIED BUSH WARBLER  
A SPECIES NEW TO HONG KONG**

David S. Melville

On 8 December 1989 I was mist-netting birds at the WWF Hong Kong Mai Po Nature Reserve, together with a group of Japanese bird ringers under the leadership of Mr Masashi Yoshii, when an unusual bird was brought back from the nets. Its chunky structure, strong legs and feet, and white wing lining visible at the 'bend' of the wing immediately suggested that the bird was a *Cettia* warbler. Unfortunately the tail was missing, apparently having been lost at the time of capture, thus preventing a count of the number of rectrices (*Cettia* warblers have only 10, rather than the usual 12 of most birds). However it was unlike any *Cettia* species previously caught in Hong Kong, viz. Short-tailed Bush Warbler *C. squameiceps*, Chinese Bush Warbler *C. diphone* and Mountain Bush Warbler *C. fortipes*.



12. Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler *Cettia acanthizoides*  
Mai Po, December 1989 (Michael Lau)

The upperparts were brown, washed rufous, the head being con-colourous with the back. There was a broad, well-defined supercilium, washed buff. The breast was marked by a quite broad, clear-cut milky coffee/grey-brown band, below which the belly was a pale sulphur yellow, similar to that of better-marked Dusky Warblers *Phylloscopus fuscatus*.

[The cost of reproduction of plate 12 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]

The iris was dark brown, the legs and feet a dark pinkish-brown. The bill was horn above with a straw-coloured cutting edge, the lower mandible being pinkish. Measurement and wing formula details are given below.

wing (maximum chord)	50 mm
bill (to skull)	11.5mm
tarsus	20 mm
weight	7.5g
fat score (after Anon 1984)	2
wing point primary 5=6, 7,4=8,9,10,2,1	
emarginated primary 3,4,5,6	
1st primary = longest primary covert + 11.5mm	

Reference in the field to King *et al.* (1975) and Etchécopar and Hüe (1983) indicated that the bird was a Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler *Cettia acanthizoides*, and this was confirmed by subsequent reference to additional literature (La Touche 1925-30, Delacour 1942, 1943, Ali and Ripley 1983, de Schauensee 1984, Inskipp and Inskipp 1985). The pale yellow underparts with darkish breast, together with the rufous wash to the upperparts are diagnostic.

The bird was ringed and released.

Watson *et al.* (1986), who regard *acanthizoides* as a race of *Cettia robustipes*, record it as occurring across central China. Cheng (1987), who accords it full specific status, records it as a resident in Shaanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, southern Anhui and northwest Fujian, the breeding habitat being 'dense bamboo thickets and scrub in open forests up to 3,500m or more'. Elsewhere in its range it is also a montane bird (Ali and Ripley 1983, Inskipp and Inskipp 1985). Watson *et al.* (1986) state that it 'descends to lower altitudes in winter', and La Touche (1925-30) notes it descending from 1,850-3,500m to 760-200m in winter. However its occurrence at sea level is apparently without precedent.

On the evening of 27 November an intense surge of the winter monsoon reached the coastal areas of Guangdong Province. North-north-east winds with a mean speed of 55.7 km/h were recorded at Waglan Island. The arrival of the cold and dry continental air resulted in clear skies and a marked drop in temperature (minimum 20.5°C on 27 November, 12.3°C on 29 November). The first week in December was characterised by clear skies and bright sun with light winds and minimum temperatures ranging from 13.7 to 17.4°C (Anon 1989, Anon 1990).

There had been a considerable movement of passerines into/through Hong Kong in the preceding week with, for example, relatively large numbers of Red-flanked Bluetails *Tarsiger cyanurus* present (and netted) at the Kadoorie Agricultural Experimental Station, Shek Kong on 2 December. There were considerable numbers of Chinese Bush Warblers at Mai Po on 8 December. However there was an apparent marked reduction in numbers on 9 December (one caught against nine the previous day over a similar time period).



*Cettia* warblers are not common in trade. None was recorded by Melville (1982) and S.Wong formerly of the China Wild Animal Trading Co. Ltd. the largest importing company in Hong Kong, advises (pers. comm.) that no Yellow-bellied Bush Warblers have been imported in recent years. Apart from the missing tail, which had not started to regrow, the bird was in good condition with slightly worn primaries (to be expected in December). Had the bird been a recent escape/release it is very unlikely that it would have been carrying any fat. It is considered likely that the bird had got caught up in a cold weather movement southwards associated with the monsoon surge in late November.

一九八九年十二月八日，在野生生物基金會米埔自然保護區內以霧網捕得一隻黃腹樹鶯 *Cettia acanthizoides*。這是這個品種在香港的首次紀錄。本文形容牠的外觀，給出牠的尺寸、羽翼方程式和分布情況。

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## HUME'S YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER A NEW SUBSPECIES FOR HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader

On 2 December 1989 A.C. Galsworthy, D.S. Melville and I were mist-netting birds at the Kadoorie Agricultural Experimental Station, Shek Kong when a very distinctive grey and white plumaged Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* was trapped. It was so unlike any other Yellow-browed I had seen that I immediately suspected it to be of the race *P. i. humei* known as Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler.

The crown, mantle and rump were grey-green, greyest and darkest on the crown, and the underparts were grey-white. The anterior supercilium tapered sharply and was pale buff while the remainder of the supercilium was off-white. It had an eyestripe which was slightly darker than the crown and contrasted with the light grey cheeks. There were two wing bars formed by white tips to the greater and median coverts, while the fringes to the tertials were off-white and very thin, particularly on the outer web. Its iris was dark, and it had a buff lower eyering. The upper mandible was black with a horn-coloured cutting edge and the lower mandible was black with a horn-coloured base. It had dark olive-brown legs.

The following measurements were taken:

wing (maximum chord)	61.0mm
bill (to skull)	11.5mm
tarsus	17.5mm
weight	6.0g
fat score	1 (i.e. no fat deposits)
wing formula	2 = -6.0mm, 3,4,5 = longest (wing point),
(measurements show	6 = -2.5mm, 7 = -7.0mm, 8 = -9.0mm
differences in primary	9 = -10.0mm, 10 = -12.0mm
length from wing point)	
emarginated primaries	3, 4, 5, 6
notch on 2nd primary	17.5mm
1st primary = longest primary covert + 4mm	

The bird was photographed, ringed and released.

On 27 January 1990 it was retrapped in almost exactly the same place. Its weight on this occasion was 6.4g. By this time, presumably due to wear, the median covert wing bar was reduced, and the upperparts appeared even greyer, especially when compared to a typical *inornatus* trapped at the same time. This time the bird was also viewed in the field when released. At a distance of about 20 metres it appeared entirely grey on the upperparts without any green whatsoever; the supercilium, wing bars, and tertial fringes appeared white while the underparts appeared grey-white. The legs and bill looked black.

[The cost of reproduction of plates 13-16 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]





13. Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus humei*  
Kadoorie Farm, December 1989 (Paul J. Leader)



15. Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus inornatus*  
Mai Po, October 1989 (Paul J. Leader)



14. Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus humei*  
Kadoorie Farm, December 1989 (Paul J. Leader)



16. Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus mandellii*  
Thailand, November 1987 (Philip D. Round)

Other than *P. i. inornatus* there are two subspecies which occur in the region: *P. i. mandellii* and *P. i. humei*. Reference made in the field to Williamson (1967) and subsequent reference to Svensson (1984), Ticehurst (1938), and McLoughlin and Butler (1990) confirmed that the bird was of the race *humei* for the following reasons:

**Wing formula.** The length of the second primary was almost equal in length to the seventh. In *inornatus* the second primary is longer, and usually falls approximately mid-way between the sixth and seventh primaries. In *mandellii* the second primary usually falls between the ninth and tenth primaries, and occasionally between the seventh and eighth (Williamson 1967).

**Plumage.** The greyer upperparts and dirtier white underparts are typical of *humei*. *Inornatus* has greener upperparts and whiter underparts. Birds of the race *mandellii* personally observed in Yunnan Province, China in March 1990 showed dull brown upperparts contrasting with brighter green fringes to the flight feathers and displayed a very broad lateral crown stripe. Ticehurst (1938) states that the race *mandellii* is similar to *inornatus* but is browner, darker and duller on the upperparts, has dirty yellowish-white underparts and a yellowish centre to the belly, darker lateral crown stripes and a more distinct central crown stripe. Its general similarity in colouration to *inornatus* makes confusion with *humei* unlikely.

It should be noted that recent correspondence in 'British Birds' (Alström and Olsson 1988) has suggested that *mandellii* is very similar to *humei* in some of the plumage characters as well as the wing formula. However, personal experience of *mandellii* in Yunnan Province indicates that this is incorrect. P.R. Kennerley who also has experience of *mandellii* in Yunnan noted that this race bore only a superficial resemblance to birds of the race *humei* previously observed in India (pers comm.). Misleading descriptions of *humei* in Ali and Ripley (1983) and Baker (1924) have also clouded what both Ticehurst and Williamson saw as two relatively straightforward subspecies.

**Bare parts.** *Humei* has a darker bill and darker legs than both *inornatus* and *mandellii*.

**Wing bars.** Typically the median covert wing bar of *humei* is narrower than that of *inornatus* and is white, not yellow. Whilst the median covert wing bar in *mandellii* is less distinct than in *inornatus*, it is also yellow.

**Supercilium.** In *inornatus* and *mandellii* the supercilium is white tinged yellow, not white tinged buff as in this individual. The reduced supercilium in front of the eye is more indicative of *humei*, as the anterior supercilium in *inornatus* is generally bolder.

Unfortunately the bird was not heard to call. The call of *humei* is considered to be diagnostic, and has been variously described as 'a loud disyllabic "sweetlou"' (McLoughlin and Butler 1990), a 'loud ringing "tiss

yip"' (Ticehurst 1938), and 'veelju' (Alström and Olsson 1988). This is very different from the equally distinctive 'tswee-eeep' of *inornatus* (Alström and Olsson 1988).

Ticehurst (1938) gives the breeding range of *humei* as northwest Mongolia to northern India, and the wintering range as northern, central and eastern India. Cheng (1987) records *humei* as breeding in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and as a migrant to Xizang Autonomous Region.

The bird's arrival was probably part of a large movement of passerines brought about by an intense surge of the winter monsoon reaching the coastal areas of Hong Kong on 27 November. Other birds trapped the same day included nine Red-flanked Bluetails *Tarsiger cyanurus*, a Mountain Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes* and a Chestnut-flanked White-eye *Zosterops erythroleura*.

This is the first record of this distinctive subspecies for Hong Kong. The occurrence of a Hume's Yellow-Browed Warbler wintering in Hong Kong fits in well with an emerging pattern of birds that usually winter in India but which have been recorded in winter in Hong Kong; it is worth noting the occurrence of a Chiffchaff *P. collybita* of the race *tristis* at Mai Po during the same winter (1989/90). Other similar, but earlier, records have included Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* (Melville 1987) and Chiffchaff *P. collybita* (Melville 1987, Melville and Viney 1989).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank Philip Round for providing me with the photograph of *P. i. mandellii*.

一九八九年十二月二日在石崗嘉道理農業研究所以霧網捕得一隻黃眉柳鶯 *Phylloscopus inornatus* 的新疆亞種 *humei*。這個亞種以前從未在香港錄得。本文介紹辨認的要點，以及跟另外兩個亞種 *P.i. inornatus* 和 *P.i. mandellii* 的分別。

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## TWO-BARRED GREENISH WARBLER A SPECIES NEW TO HONG KONG

*Paul J. Leader*

On 27 September 1989 I was at the Kadoorie Agricultural Experimental Station, Shek Kong mist-netting birds with M. Bezuijen, R. Corlett and D. Thomas when I caught an unusual *Phylloscopus* warbler, superficially like a small Arctic Warbler *P. borealis*. The presence of a distinct median covert wing bar, the differently shaped supercilium and the dark-coloured legs indicated that it was Two-barred Greenish Warbler *P. plumbeitarsus*.

The upperparts were dark green, slightly darker on the crown. The supercilium was creamy yellow and long, reaching onto the nape, and was broadest just behind the eye. In front of the eye it formed a slight arc and reached the base of the bill. The eyestripe was dark green, the cheeks pale cream and indistinctly mottled. There were two obvious wing bars formed by pale yellow tips to the outer five greater coverts and the outer three median coverts. The primaries, secondaries, tertials and tail were colourous with the upperparts but with brighter green fringes.

The underparts were white except for a grey wash to the sides of the breast, merging on the upper breast to form an indistinct breast band. The undertail coverts had a cream tinge.

The iris was dark. The upper mandible was dark brown, the lower orange with a dark brown tip. The legs were dark grey and the feet dark grey-pink. It was smaller than Arctic, about the size of a Dusky Warbler *P. fuscatus*. Structurally it was more compact, lacking the typically elongated appearance of Arctic Warbler.

The following measurements were taken:

wing (maximum chord)	61.0mm
tail	43.0mm
bill (to skull)	13.0mm
(to feathering)	7.7mm
tarsus	19.0mm
weight	7.4g
wing formula	2 = -8.5mm, 3 = -1mm, 4 = longest
(measurements	(wing point), 5 = -1mm,
show differences	6 = -3mm, 7 = -5mm, 8 = -6.5mm,
in primary length	9 = -10mm, 10 = -11mm
from wing point)	
emarginated primaries	3,4,5,6
notch on 2nd primary	16.5mm
1st primary = longest primary covert + 8mm	



17. Two-barred Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*  
Kadoorie Farm, September 1989 (Paul J. Leader)



18. Two-barred Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*  
Kadoorie Farm, September 1989 (Paul J. Leader)

[The cost of reproduction of plates 17 and 18 in colour has been subsidised by Zeiss Far East Co Ltd]

It was aged as a first-year bird on the basis of the freshness of its plumage. Adults moult in the winter quarters (Williamson 1967) and would have much more feather abrasion in late September. The bird was ringed, photographed and released.

Reference in the field to Williamson (1967) confirmed it as a Two-barred Greenish Warbler. The two distinct wing bars, long first primary, emargination on the 6th primary and dark legs all rule out Arctic Warbler. Furthermore Alström and Olsson (1987) state that the supercilium reaches the base of the bill on all 'Greenish' Warblers (including *plumbeitarsus*) and is a distinguishing feature from Arctic Warbler.

Other possible confusion species are Pale-legged Leaf Warbler *P. tenellipes* and Yellow-browed Warbler *P. inornatus* (particularly worn adults). Pale-legged Leaf Warbler can be discounted due to its greyish cast to the nape and crown, contrasting with the dull olive or brown mantle, and its very pale legs. Yellow-browed Warbler can be eliminated because of its pale-fringed tertials and secondaries. In autumn, both adult and first-year Yellow-browed Warblers have obvious yellow fringes to the tertials and inner secondaries and even with these fringes abraded the smaller and finer bill and smaller body size would help to distinguish Yellow-browed from Two-barred Greenish Warbler.

Williamson (1967) states that *plumbeitarsus* breeds in Siberia to about 63-64°N and migrates through Manchuria, Korea and China to winter from Indo-China south to peninsular Thailand.

Although La Touche (1925-30) considered that *plumbeitarsus* did not occur in southeast China, Cheng (1987) considers it to be a migrant to Guangdong Province, and Ticehurst (1938), who considered it to be a subspecies of Greenish Warbler *P. trochiloides*, gives two undated records from Guangdong Province and considers it to be rare there. It was therefore considered that Two-barred Greenish Warbler was likely to be recorded in Hong Kong and indeed there have been previous occasions when its occurrence has been suspected.

一九八九年九月廿七日在石崗嘉道理農業研究所以霧網捕得一隻暗綠柳鶯 *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*。本文詳述牠的外觀、尺寸和羽翼方程式。這是香港的一個新品種。

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## THE IDENTIFICATION OF PECHORA PIPIT AND ITS STATUS IN HONG KONG

*Geoff Carey*

The aim of this paper is to alert observers to the field appearance and behaviour of Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi* and its occurrence in Hong Kong. An exhaustive analysis of its identification will not be undertaken as this has been covered more than adequately elsewhere (Heard and Walbridge 1988, Alström and Mild 1989) and readers are directed to these works for further details. Instead, I hope to provide sufficient information regarding its appearance to facilitate positive identification based on my experience of the species in China and Hong Kong and on the literature available.

### WORLD DISTRIBUTION AND STATUS IN HONG KONG

Pechora Pipit breeds in northern Russia from the western fringe of the west Palearctic along a mainly subarctic band across to Kamchatka. There are also breeding records from the extreme southeast of Russia and north-east Heilongjiang, China; it possibly breeds as far south as Hebei Province. It winters in the Philippines and the East Indies to the Moluccas but is rarely recorded elsewhere (Cramp and Simmons 1988, de Schauensee 1984, Williams 1986, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences 1989). Hong Kong, then, would seem well placed to receive passage birds but, as of spring 1990, only 15 definite individuals have been recorded. The species has been recorded almost annually since the first accepted record in 1984, usually in spring, between 17 April and 24 May, but there is also one autumn record. A full list of all accepted Hong Kong records is given in Table. 1.

**TABLE 1. Records of Pechora Pipit in Hong Kong**

Date	Number	Locality
28 April 1984	1	Mai Po
4 May 1985	1	Tsim Bei Tsui
17-18 May 1985	2-3 plus 7 probable	Mount Davis
27 October 1985	1	Ha Tsuen
24 May 1986	1	Tsim Bei Tsui
17 April 1988	5 (1 until 23rd)	Tsim Bei Tsui
21 May 1989	2	Sandy Bay
12 May 1990	1 (trapped)	Mai Po
13 May 1990	1 (trapped)	Mai Po

This slightly surprising paucity of records is almost certainly due to lack of observer awareness of its behavioural characteristics and its identification features. The fact that most have been found by the same observers who are familiar with the species serves to add weight to this conclusion, as does the multiple record in 1985 and the trapping of separate birds on consecutive days at the same locality in 1990.



## BEHAVIOUR

Typically the Pechora Pipit is a very skulking species that shows a preference for overgrown grassy areas, such as paddy fields or the bunds between fishponds, from which it can be difficult to flush. In addition, once flushed, its immediate reaction is often to fly low into a nearby, equally overgrown area, perhaps circling a few times beforehand, and usually without calling, the latter meaning that observers are prevented from appreciating one of its more distinctive field characteristics. Up to eight individuals were present in May 1985 at Beidaihe, China, holding territory and singing, and it was very difficult to get any kind of prolonged or unobscured views in the area of both dry and damp paddy fields being frequented. Similar comments have been made to me regarding its behaviour on Fair Isle, Great Britain. However, a passage individual seen on 11 May 1985 at Beidaihe was extremely obliging, but that bird seems to be very much the exception that proves the rule. Observers are therefore encouraged to be alert to such behaviour in suitable habitat at likely times of year.

## IDENTIFICATION

When seen well Pechora Pipit does not present great problems in identification as it has a number of distinctive features and its appearance varies little during the course of the year. The main confusion species in Hong Kong is Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*, which is a common winter visitor and passage migrant in the Territory and comparisons in the text will refer to this species in its non-breeding plumage. In breeding plumage Red-throated Pipit is unmistakable; in non-breeding plumage this is not the case. Both are small pipits, well-streaked above and below and both can show prominent pale mantle lines; in addition, they have pale wing bars and a similar head pattern.

### Head

As mentioned above the crown and nape are heavily streaked dark but the nape is usually slightly less so; this contrast is more marked on Red-throated due to the paler ground colour. The gingery ground colour to the upperparts of Pechora Pipit is quite often strongest on the crown and nape. On Pechora there is usually a short, dark loreal streak; on Red-throated this mark is usually absent. Red-throated has rather plain ear coverts whereas on Pechora these are finely streaked.

### Upperparts

On both species the upperpart feathers from crown to uppertail coverts are boldly streaked dark, but on Pechora the feather edges are a slightly richer, more gingery or reddish-brown, not possessing the somewhat colder, brown or greyish tinge of Red-throated. In addition, Pechora Pipit shows long, broad mantle 'braces' that are white or cream in spring and buff in fresh autumn plumage. These braces are present also on Red-throated but are rarely as long or as broad. The result is a more contrasting, more strongly striped appearance to the mantle.

## Tail

In flight Red-throated almost invariably shows white in the outer tail feathers. Pechora shows either white or whitish outer tail feathers and only with very good views is it possible to discern that the actual colour is off-white or pale buff.

Generally, Red-throated Pipit executes a gentle, but almost constant, up and down tail wagging in normal walking and feeding, with the tail rising slightly above its normal stationary position and falling to a greater degree below. In my experience, Pechora Pipit is noticeable for the almost complete absence of tail-wagging.

## Wings

Both Pechora and Red-throated Pipits have pale fringes to the greater and median coverts with the tips forming wing bars, but on Pechora these are more obvious: they are broad, well defined and white or whitish, though the tips to the median coverts may be tinged cream or buff in autumn and the innermost greater coverts are usually browner at the tips. The brightness of the tips contrasts noticeably with very dark feather centres to produce, at certain angles, the effect of a broad, dark panel in the wing bordered above and below by broad, white bars. This effect is most obvious when the bird is side- or three-quarters-on.

The tertials are also rather darkly centred, at times almost blackish-looking in the field. In fresh autumn plumage the fringes are distinct and buff to white; in the spring feather wear can reduce these so as to make them much less visible, imparting a generally dark appearance to the lower back. A crucial feature of Pechora Pipit is the extension of the primaries beyond the longest tertial, with two or three primary tips visible in the closed wing. However, care is sometimes needed as on more than one individual I have seen in spring, the combination of narrow, worn tertial fringes and very dark centres to the feathers has made it difficult to see the relative extent of the tertials vis-à-vis the primary tips. Red-throated Pipit has little or no primary projection beyond the longest tertial, although observers should beware of individuals with severely worn tertials (especially in spring) which would produce a projection of the primaries.

## Underparts

Pechora Pipit has brighter underparts than Red-throated with a purer white belly and lower breast and often with a yellowish-buff wash across the upper breast. Red-throated Pipit in non-breeding plumage never approaches the brightness and cleanness in underpart coloration of Pechora and instead is uniformly washed pale, dull buffish or whitish.

The chest and flanks of both species are boldly streaked black, though they are more outstanding on Pechora due to the cleanness of the underparts.





19. Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi*  
Beidaihe, China, May 1985

(Geoff Carey)



21. Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*  
Mai Po, October 1987

(Ray Tipper)



20. Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi*  
Beidaihe, China, May 1985

(Geoff Carey)



22. Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*  
Mai Po, October 1987

(Ray Tipper)

[The cost of reproduction of plates 19-22 in colour has been subsidised by Zeiss Far East Co Ltd]

## Bare Parts

The bill of Pechora is slightly longer and more thickly based and can be a surprisingly distinctive field character if an observer is familiar with Red-throated Pipit. Most of the lower mandible and the cutting edges of the upper are pinkish; the rest of the upper mandible and the extreme tip of both mandibles are dark. The bill of Red-throated is finer but shorter, more extensively dark and the pale area on the lower mandible is usually more yellowish.

The legs and feet of Pechora are pale pink, usually brighter than most Red-throateds, whose leg colour varies from pink to yellowish.

## Call

Red-throated almost invariably calls when flushed whereas this is certainly not the case for Pechora which can be frustratingly silent. However, when it does call the sound is quite distinctive. The commonest call seems to be a hard 'pit' or 'pwit'. At Beidaihe, the only call heard was a single note that sounded rather like a distant or subdued Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*. Many of the birds at Mount Davis on 18 May 1985 were giving this call. This seems to correspond with call C noted by Riddiford and Ellis (1988), though theirs was generally a three-note call.

I have heard two calls from Red-throated Pipits in Hong Kong. Firstly, a high pitched, penetrating 'psssp' or 'tsssp'; secondly, a less common, insistent, occasionally broken call, uttered on take-off, similar to one of the common flight calls of Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonica*.

## CONCLUSION

Observers are encouraged to acquire as great a degree of familiarity with the appearance of Red-throated Pipit in non-breeding plumage as possible, as they should then have less difficulty identifying Pechora Pipit if it is seen at all well. Shy, well-marked, bright pipits, either silent or giving an unfamiliar call, flushed from suitable habitat, should be paid special attention. Given reasonable views, the dark wing panel bordered by broad and bright wing bars, the rather richly toned, well-streaked upperparts with prominent, long, pale lines down the side of the mantle, the clean, bright underparts boldly streaked black and the projection of the primaries beyond the tertials will be visible, serving to clinch identification.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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本文評論北鵲 *Anthus gustavi* 在香港的情況，指出牠的紀錄可能因忽視而偏少。文章介紹牠的行為習性和辨認的要點。又給出混淆品種紅喉鵲 *Anthus cervinus* 的詳情。

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## A REVIEW OF THE STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BLACK-FACED SPOONBILL

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Of the world's six species of spoonbill *Platalea* the Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor* is the most restricted in its distribution. It is confined to the eastern coast of Asia, occurring between its breeding grounds in North Korea and migrating to winter quarters in Hong Kong, southern China, Taiwan and Vietnam, and occasionally in southern Japan and South Korea. Within this region, it is both rare and localized and the most readily accessible site where the species can be regularly observed is the Mai Po Marshes and the adjacent intertidal inner Deep Bay in Hong Kong. Here, it is a winter visitor in increasing numbers between October and April with over 40 birds being recorded each winter.

It had until recently generally been considered that the Black-faced Spoonbill was a common winter visitor to the coast of southeastern China. La Touche (1931-1934) suspected it bred somewhere in east Fohkien (Fujian) and obtained specimens there throughout the year. However, in the 50 years since the publication of that work, the Black-faced Spoonbill has undergone a dramatic decline in population to a level where its continued viability appears to be dependent upon just three known wintering localities.

During the last ten years, the known world populations of several large migratory wetland species, including the Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* and Oriental White Stork *Ciconia (ciconia) boyciana*, have been revised upwards as a result of surveys undertaken during migration and winter within China. However, such surveys have failed to locate a single site on the entire coast of China where the Black-faced Spoonbill can be regularly found during the winter months with the exception of the population on the inner Deep Bay marshes on the border between Hong Kong and China. Furthermore, surveys of inland wetlands such as Poyang Lake, Jiangxi Province, where large numbers of the more numerous Eurasian Spoonbill *P. leucorodia* spend the winter have failed to produce anything other than a handful of individuals. Undiscovered wintering areas may, of course, exist as witnessed by the recent discovery of 140+ birds in southern Taiwan in 1985 and 60+ on the Red River estuary in Vietnam in 1988.

Eurasian Spoonbills are fairly widespread and numerous winter visitors to China, both to coastal and inland marshes and it is likely that small numbers of Black-faced Spoonbills winter unnoticed in the flocks of its larger relative. However until further flocks are discovered within China or elsewhere the currently known population should be assumed to be the maximum world population.

## POPULATION

Due to ignorance of the distribution of the Black-faced Spoonbill on its breeding grounds, the estimates of the known world population need to be based upon the counts made on the wintering grounds. At present, there are three sites which are known to hold significant numbers in the winter but other sites in Japan, South Korea, China and Taiwan occasionally hold small numbers in winter and are probably also important as staging posts during migration. An estimate of the known world population is detailed in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Estimate of the known world population of the Black-Faced Spoonbill based upon maximum winter counts between 1988 and 1990

Country	Count
Taiwan	150
Vietnam	62
Hong Kong	50
China	c15
South Korea	6
Japan	< 5
Total	288

Birds have also been recorded as vagrants in Thailand (P.D. Round pers. comm.), the Philippines (du Pont 1971) and Brunei (Mann 1989).

## SUMMARY OF RECENT OCCURRENCES

### Hong Kong

The Black-faced Spoonbill is a regular winter visitor to Mai Po and the inner Deep Bay marshes. Numbers have increased in recent years, a feature probably associated with the cessation of hunting on the marshes in the 1970s and the construction of the security fence which has greatly restricted access to the intertidal areas. The creation of the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve has secured the roosting area and disturbance to the site is now low.

The numbers of Black-faced Spoonbills wintering in the late 1950s and early 1960s were erratic and typically concerned single birds or small flocks recorded on single dates. In 1968 three birds wintered at Mai Po for the first time and departed in early April, while flocks of 11 on 23 March and 8 on 31 March of the same year probably related to passage migrants.

Since 1969 there has been a steady build-up in the numbers wintering at Mai Po. Prior to 1982 the maximum number recorded was 20 birds but since that date there has been a further increase with maxima of 25 in 1983 and 33 in 1984 (Chalmers 1986). A further increase to 42 occurred in 1988 (Chalmers and Kennerley 1989) and a maximum of 50 was recorded on 11 November 1989 which to date remains the highest count from Hong Kong.



Numbers remained at or over 40 for the remainder of the winter 1988/89



23. Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*  
Mai Po, April 1990

(Peter Kennerley)

#### Taiwan

Until very recently, Black-faced Spoonbills were believed to be regular winter visitors to Taiwan in small and fluctuating numbers. This species is not mentioned as occurring at any of the twelve wetlands of international importance listed by Scott (1989) for Taiwan. Severinghaus (1989) summarized occurrences of this species within Taiwan between 1985-89, during which time the largest flock recorded was 21 individuals and she estimated the maximum wintering population throughout the country to be 35 in 1986. It therefore came as a surprise that a large group of Black-faced Spoonbills, numbering 145 in the winter of 1989/90, had been discovered wintering on the estuary of Tsen-Wen River near Tainan in southwest Taiwan. This flock was originally discovered in 1985 and has returned each subsequent winter. (Mei Hua Tsou pers. comm.). To date, this remains the largest known wintering flock of Black-faced Spoonbills.

#### Vietnam

The only recent observation of this species in Vietnam concerns a group of 62 found by Le Dien Duc and his colleagues in the Red River

estuary in mid-winter 1987/88 (Scott 1989). Derek Scott visited the area between 10 and 12 March 1988 and observed 32 birds there (D.A. Scott pers. comm.). The area was visited again between 17 and 31 March 1989 when 27 birds were counted (Scott and Howes 1989). This is believed to be a regular wintering site and is the only site listed for this species by Scott (1989) in Vietnam. No other wintering flocks have been located but the discovery of additional groups within Vietnam remains a possibility.

#### China

Recent records of the Black-faced Spoonbill from China are few and far between. This may be due to a number of reasons including scarcity of observers, confusion with the Eurasian Spoonbill and a lack of published observations by Chinese ornithologists. Alternatively, it may be due to the species being extremely rare within China. It is only mentioned as occurring at one locality in the Asian Wetland Directory (Scott 1989) and that relates to the Fu Tien Nature Reserve in inner Deep Bay, Guangdong Province. Fu Tien lies adjacent to the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve in Hong Kong, separated only by the Shen Zhen river, and this reference relates to the population which winters in inner Deep Bay and spends most of the time at Mai Po.

Black-faced Spoonbills are noted by Cheng (1987) as wintering in Guizhou, Hunan, Fujian and Guangdong Provinces including Hainan Island, but much of this data is probably historical. The only recent winter records in China away from the Fu Tien Reserve concern birds at Poyang Lake Nature Reserve, Jiangxi Province where at least two were recorded in December 1985 and January 1986 (Kennerley 1987), and where two single birds were located amongst flocks totalling over 1,000 Eurasian Spoonbills in December 1989 (M.L. Chalmers pers. comm.).

Intriguingly, an entry in the Directory of Asian Wetlands (Scott 1989) concerns a record of 11 unidentified spoonbills in mid-January 1988 in the Dongzhaigang Nature Reserve near Haikou, Hainan Island. This reserve contains extensive intertidal mudflats and mangrove forests, rather similar to the Deep Bay marshes and it is therefore possible that this record may refer to the Black-faced Spoonbill.

Records of birds on migration are also rather limited and confined to the Shanghai/Yangtze estuary area plus coastal regions of Jiangsu and Shandong Provinces (Cui Zhixing pers. comm.). The largest numbers recently recorded during the autumn include a group of between 11 and 17 at Yencheng Nature Reserve, Jiangsu Province from 13 to 19 October 1989 (Bakewell and Young 1989), and 27 in the Yangtze estuary on 23 October 1989 (Wang Tianhou *et al.*). In the spring, recent records include groups of 11 and five at east Chongming Dao in the Yangtze estuary on 13/14 April and 2 May 1990 respectively (Wang Tianhou *et al.*). Intensive migration studies have taken place at Beidaihe, Hebei Province each spring and autumn since 1985, and during this period, there have been no records of any Black-faced Spoonbills (M.D. Williams pers. comm.). This suggests that the Black-faced Spoonbill does not follow a coastal route north of Shandong Province to its breeding or wintering grounds.



### South Korea

Black-faced Spoonbills are regular passage migrants and scarce winter visitors to South Korea. Up to three birds have wintered regularly at Songsanp'o, Cheju Island on an area of fish ponds/salt pans (Won Pyong On and Park Jin Young via C.M. Poole), and during the winter 1988/1989 up to six individuals were present at this site. The Nakdong estuary near Pusan was formerly a regular autumn passage site and occasionally used as a wintering area. However, the reclamation of much of this wetland following the completion of the barrage has reduced its attractiveness and the most recent record is that of four birds there on 19 September 1987.

During autumn migration, large numbers have been recorded at Yocha-ri, south Kanghwa-do, presumably moving south from their known breeding grounds in North Korea. Counts were made there between 27 August and 30 September 1989 by M.I. Eldridge, C.M. Poole, K. Swennen, Dr. P.O. Won and J.Y. Park on an area of artificial lagoons and fish ponds. A maximum of 46 birds was recorded on 5 September 1989, declining thereafter to 22 by the end of the month and 20 on 14 October (C.M. Poole pers. comm.). The only recent record during spring migration concerns that of a single bird in immature plumage on 6 June 1988 at Sonduri, south Kanghwa-do, Kyonggi Province (Long *et al.* 1988). This was presumably a non-breeding bird as breeding birds would be expected to be on their breeding grounds by this date.

### North Korea

North Korea holds the only known breeding populations of Black-faced Spoonbill. It is currently known to breed on four islands off the west coast of the country, namely Sogam-do, Tegam-do plus adjacent small islands and Unmu-do in Pyonganbuk Province and also Tok-do in Pyonganam Province (Chung 1987). In addition, the Chongchon-Gang estuary is mentioned by Scott (1989) as a passage site. The total population within North Korea during the breeding season is estimated to be less than 30 individuals (Chung 1987).

### Japan

The Black-faced Spoonbill is listed as occurring at four sites by Scott (1989), these being Hakata Bay and the Zubaiji River, Ariake Bay and Izumi, all in Kyu-Shu and also for the Manko tidal mudflat in Okinawa. Wintering is known to be irregular but specific details regarding the total numbers recorded on migration or wintering are not available. However, Japan is a relatively well-watched country and it is unlikely that more than five individuals spend the winter months in the country in any one year (K. Sonobe pers. comm.).

### Thailand

The first record of Black-faced Spoonbill in Thailand occurred at Pattani Bay, southern Thailand where a single immature was seen and photographed in late February and early March 1988. The following

winter, three immatures were seen at Bangpoo from 27 January to at least 2 March 1989. (P.D. Round pers. comm.). There were no observations of this species in Thailand in the winter of 1989/90.

### Brunei

The only record from Brunei is that of a single bird at Seria between 6 January and the end of April 1985 (Mann 1989). However, details of the Brunei record are lacking and may possibly refer to the very similar Royal Spoonbill *P. regia* of Australia which has been recorded from Java and north Sulawesi and which sporadically breeds in north Seram and Timor, Indonesia (White and Bruce 1986).

### BEHAVIOUR ON THE WINTERING GROUNDS

In Hong Kong the first birds usually appear in late October but the main arrival does not occur until late November or early December when there is typically a marked influx. Numbers then remain fairly static until late March when most of the adult birds depart for their breeding grounds. By the time the adult birds leave Hong Kong, they are usually in nuptial plumage which generally begins to develop from mid-February onwards. In recent years there has been a trend for immature birds to remain at Mai Po after the adults have departed rather than leaving with them which was previously the normal behaviour. Up to 26 immatures remained at Mai Po throughout April 1990 and 15 birds were still present even into early May. Probably also associated with this trend is the tendency for immature birds to over-summer at Mai Po. This habit became established in 1987 when two birds spent the summer there (Chalmers 1988) and four birds over-summered in 1990, increasing to five in early September (pers. obs.). The reasons for this change in behaviour are unknown but may be linked to the increased protection and reduced disturbance at Mai Po and Deep Bay.

Within Hong Kong, the Black-faced Spoonbill is generally a social bird, typically being recorded in groups of 4-25 when feeding but, when roosting, the entire flock usually comes together. The preferred roosting sites are the undisturbed bunds between the gei-wais (shrimp ponds) at Mai Po; the birds roost out of the water in areas where the ground vegetation is short. Here, they are often found in the company of Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, Great Egret *E. alba*, Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* and White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*.

### BREEDING STATUS

Very little is known about the Black-faced Spoonbill on its breeding grounds. It formerly bred on small rocky islands off the west coast of South Korea but this has not been recorded since the Korean War (Gore and Won 1971). The only known breeding sites are small rocky islands off the west coast of North Korea where it nests on cliff ledges. It shares this habitat with Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*, Temminck's Cormorant *Phalacrocorax filamentosus*, Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes*, Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris* and Rhinoceros Auklet *Cerorhinca*



*monocerata*. Since the number in North Korea is not known to exceed 30 individuals it seems almost certain that undiscovered breeding populations exist elsewhere.

Within North Korea, the population is believed to be reasonably secure. The offshore breeding islands have been declared a Breeding Seabird Protection Area (Scott 1989) and it is understood that access to these islands is restricted.

Although breeding has not been reported in China (Cheng 1987), it is possible that undiscovered breeding sites exist in the northern provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia (Nei Mongol Autonomous Region). Breeding seems likely to occur on offshore islands in Liaoning Province adjacent to the known breeding areas in North Korea but as far as is known, these islands have not been recently explored.

### THREATS

Pollution, habitat destruction, reclamation and increased disturbance all threaten the continued existence of the Black-faced Spoonbill. Probably the greatest of these threats is reclamation of intertidal mudflats for agriculture, conversion to shrimp ponds or industrial uses which may reduce the availability of suitable roosting and feeding areas. This is known to be a problem within the Red River estuary in Vietnam (Scott 1989) and may become a problem at the Tseng-Wen River site in Taiwan where the demand for reclaimed land for industrial and agricultural use is great (Mei Hua Tsou pers. comm.).

Disturbance by fishermen and shellfish collectors can be serious if their numbers are high, as recently witnessed in the inner Deep Bay intertidal areas in Hong Kong. Their presence in large numbers effectively prevented birds from feeding over wide sections of the intertidal area of the Bay during periods of low water.

Pollution is likely to become an increasing problem with the continued expansion of the human population in eastern Asia and the subsequent increase in agricultural and industrial waste products and effluents associated with development. In particular, dredging can present serious consequences to intertidal areas where industrial pollutants, pesticides, heavy metals etc deposited in the sediment are stirred up only to resettle in the upper layers of the mud. The direct and indirect effects of this may have serious effects upon the entire ecosystem of an intertidal area. Pollution of inner Deep Bay from the Hong Kong side of the catchment is, however, expected to decrease in the future when the opening of the Northwest New Territories sewage disposal scheme comes into operation and the bulk of the sewage and other pollutants are deposited by pipeline several kilometres offshore. On the debit side though is an expected increase in pollution from the Shen Zhen Special Economic Zone on the north side of the Bay. Pollution therefore probably presents the single greatest threat to the continued viability of the Hong Kong population.



24. Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*  
Mai Po, April 1990

(Peter Kennerley)

### CONSERVATION

Any wetland which regularly holds over 1% of the world population of any species of waterfowl can be proposed for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. In the case of the Black-faced Spoonbill therefore, any wetland holding three or more individuals can be considered to be internationally important. Within the range of the Black-faced Spoonbill, only Vietnam and Japan are signatories to the Ramsar Convention although Hong Kong is also covered by the Convention since the U.K. Government has extended its ratification to cover the Territory.

Vietnam has recently designated the Xuan Thuy reserve which covers more than 6,500ha in the Red River estuary as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention (Scott and Howes 1989). This to date remains the only site where the Black-faced Spoonbill regularly occurs to be designated under the convention. The Government of Hong Kong has been unwilling to take the step of listing Mai Po and inner Deep Bay under the Ramsar Convention despite having declared the area to be a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Mai Po Marshes have been managed as a Nature Reserve and Wildlife Education Centre by the World Wide Fund for Nature, Hong Kong since 1983. In Hong Kong, hunting is illegal and the Black-faced Spoonbill enjoys complete protection.



Throughout the remainder of the region, the establishment of Nature Reserves, Environmental Protection Areas and No Hunting Areas is made at National or Local Government level. All countries have the legislation in place to establish such areas but vary in their willingness to do so and in the actual degree of protection afforded to them. Some nature reserves in China permit or at least condone the hunting of birds, including internationally endangered species, within the reserve boundaries, while in other countries protection is complete. In the case of Taiwan hunting is illegal throughout the country but despite this, it still takes place in many areas.

Indeed, conservation organizations within Taiwan may find themselves in a dilemma in that if they publicise the location and rarity of the Black-faced Spoonbill to attempt to obtain Government protection for the species and prevent future development of the site, they could also attract illegal hunters to the area; this may have a detrimental effect upon the population (Mei Hua Tsou pers. comm.).

## THE FUTURE

The continued existence of the Black-faced Spoonbill is totally dependent upon the species being given complete protection throughout its range. The apparent reliance of the bulk of the population on just three known sites in the winter months makes these of crucial importance and efforts must be made to ensure that reclamation and pollution at these sites is minimized. Equally, total protection and freedom from disturbance on the offshore breeding islands are essential to ensure successful breeding. In order to attract wider international attention to the species it should be included in Appendix I of the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

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本文討論黑臉琵鷺 *Platalea minor* 目前在世界各地的情況，包括最近有紀錄的國家境內的簡述。根據手上資料，估計全球已知族群共有約 288 頭，遷徙過冬的大部份成員倚靠三個主要的越冬地：香港、越南和台灣。本文討論危害這個品種生存的因素和進行中的保護措施。在越冬地和繁殖地的行為習性亦有提及。

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## A COMPARISON OF MIGRANTS AT BEIDAIHE, NORTHEAST CHINA WITH THOSE OF HONG KONG

Martin Williams

Beidaihe (39°47'N, 119°27'E), a seaside resort in Hebei Province 280km east of Beijing, is one of the world's best places for observing bird migration. Approximately 400 species have been recorded, of which only 15 are resident at the town.

The diversity of migrants, and especially the paucity of residents, partly results from the climate. In winter, temperatures may drop below -20°C and there may be extensive sea ice; the minimum temperature in July and August tends to be above 20°C. Winter visitors thus include some northern Palearctic species, such as Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* and Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponica* – yet Beidaihe is near 40°N, a similar latitude to Madrid. In summer, the avifauna is more Oriental in character: Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*, Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* and Asian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* breed at, or north of, the town, and Chinese Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis* has recently shown signs of breeding (perhaps expanding its range in response to milder winters).

Topography also helps produce the diversity. Beidaihe lies on a coast running southeast – northwest; between a mountain range a few kilometres inland and the coast there is a narrow plain which serves as a 'funnel' for migrants. Outcrops of granite at Beidaihe produce low hills and small headlands. These features probably serve as landmarks for migrants (the coast is otherwise flat), and help 'catch' birds heading in from over the sea, especially as Beidaihe is on a triangle of land which protrudes around six kilometres eastwards into the Bay of Bohai. There is a good variety of habitats: woods (all planted), orchards, fields, estuaries (small), coastal gullies and a small reservoir.

### MIGRATION PATHS

The diversity also results from several flyways converging in the area. Amur Falcons *Falco amurensis*, wintering in east Africa, waders such as Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea*, which winter in south Australia, Arctic Warblers *Phylloscopus borealis* from southeast Asia and Speckled Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus sorghophilus*, which winter in the Philippines, are examples of birds using the more far-flung flyways passing through the area, while from much closer are birds such as Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* which winters at Poyang Lake in central China.

The Hong Kong flyway which leads from southeast Asia towards Japan and, perhaps, Korea does not run through Beidaihe, as Japanese Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* and Grey Thrush *Turdus cardis* have not been recorded while Narcissus Flycatcher *Ficedula narcissina* and Blue and White Flycatcher *F. cyanomelana* are scarce.

There are, though, flyways which do not touch Hong Kong and so several species which are rare, or not recorded, in the Territory occur in some numbers at Beidaihe. The Amur Falcon was mentioned above; others which winter to the south and west of Hong Kong (but in Thailand/Indo-China/Malaysia rather than Africa) include Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*, Eastern Crowned Warbler *P. coronatus* and Siberian Blue Robin *Erithacus cyane*.

Though Far-eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* and Little Whimbrel *N. minuta* winter well to the south of Hong Kong, the large numbers occurring at Beidaihe suggest their main routes pass to the east of the Territory, where they are uncommon or scarce.

Several species which pass Beidaihe do not winter as far south as Hong Kong, though they may be rare winter visitors to the Territory. These include Oriental White Stork *Ciconia boyciana*, Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*, Common Crane *Grus grus*, Water (Buff-bellied) Pipit *Anthus spinoletta japonica* and Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*. Some, such as Lapland Bunting and Pallas's Rosefinch *Carpodacus roseus*, do not winter much further south than Beidaihe.

### PASSAGE PERIODS

Since Beidaihe is about 2,400 km (a difference of around 18 degrees of latitude) to the north of Hong Kong, there are marked differences in the passage periods of migrants passing through both places. Birds pass later in spring, earlier in autumn; it seems the typical time delay is about three to four weeks, which is roughly the interval between the peak migrations of such species as Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*, Arctic Warbler and Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta* passing Hong Kong and Beidaihe in spring. The Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* is especially late in spring, passing in greatest numbers in late May, some four to six weeks after its peak passage in Hong Kong.

Several freshwater marsh birds are among the last spring migrants to pass Beidaihe. They include Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* which is also a late spring migrant in Hong Kong, arriving in the Territory mainly in late April and early May, and in Beidaihe in the last ten days of May and early June, and the Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*, which arrives in the Territory in early April, remains to early May (mainly in Mai Po reedbeds), and occurs at Beidaihe from mid-May, mainly passing late in the month, with a few pairs probably remaining to breed.

### CHANGES IN STATUS THIS CENTURY

La Touche (1920, 1921) studied migrants at nearby Qinhuangdao from 1910 to 1917, and Hemmingsen (1951, Hemmingsen and Guildal 1968) made a more detailed study of birds at Beidaihe from 1942 to 1945. Comparison of recent work with these studies suggests that several species have declined considerably this century. The most dramatic decline is probably



that of the Baikal Teal *Anas formosa*. La Touche (1921) described it as 'extremely abundant on passage' and Hemmingsen and Guildal (1968) reported flocks of up to 2,000, yet only six have been recorded at Beidaihe in the past five years. This accords with evidence from elsewhere (C. Poole *in litt.* 1990), which has led to this once-abundant duck being regarded as threatened with extinction, as are a further 18 birds on the Beidaihe list.

Most of these threatened species are wetland birds, reflecting the losses of wetlands in east Asia, and especially China (though the reasons for the Baikal Teal's decline, which is severe even compared to other ducks, are not known). The Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri* was rated as extremely abundant by La Touche (1921), but is now scarce; data on other endangered species is generally insufficient to draw conclusions on population changes, though it seems the Oriental White Stork and the Siberian Crane have declined since the 1940s.

The Black Kite *Milvus migrans* appears to have declined substantially, from a migrant which Hemmingsen and Guildal (1968) recorded passing in flocks to uncommon or scarce. Egrets are also scarce; La Touche (1925-1934) wrote of the Great Egret *Egretta alba*: 'Previous to the destruction of the egrets in China, which has almost amounted to extermination, and which began about 1898, these beautiful birds were abundant in spring everywhere in swamps, on paddyfields and on other suitable ground.' Numbers may have recovered a little, but by no means as fully as in Hong Kong, where the relative abundance of egrets and Black Kites contrasts markedly with numbers in Beidaihe and other parts of northeast China, presumably reflecting the generally lower impact of the Territory's human population on wildlife.

Other species which appear to have declined include Bean Goose, Pintail *Anas acuta*, Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, Great Bustard *Otis tarda*, Rook *Corvus frugilegus*, Siberian Blue Robin, Dusky Thrush *Turdus naumanni eunomus* and Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*.

Against these, there have been only a few apparent increases in numbers. Some increases, such as Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis webbianus* and Chinese Warbler *Rhopophilus pekinensis*, which are resident in the mountains, are perhaps attributable to milder winters in recent years. Among migrants, only the Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* has shown a substantial increase, from scarce to abundant, with several thousand passing each spring and autumn. It seems this increase has also been reflected in Hong Kong, where there has been an upsurge in records in the past few years.

## BEST VISITING TIMES

The best times of year to visit Beidaihe for birdwatching are as follows:

**May.** The overall spring migration peaks around the second week of May. There is an excellent variety of birds, and there may be falls of

grounded migrants. Birds of interest include Japanese Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Picoides hyperythrus*, Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi*, Siberian Blue Robin, Eastern Crowned Warbler, Tricolour Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia*, Penduline Tit and Yellow-browed Bunting *Emberiza chrysophrys*.

In the third and fourth weeks, freshwater marsh birds include Von Schrenck's Little Bittern *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*, Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*, Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*, Lanceolated Warbler *L. lanceolata* and Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon*. White-throated Rock Thrush *Monticola gularis*, Siberian Thrush *Zoothera sibirica*, Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica* and Chestnut-flanked White-eye *Zosterops erythroleura* also pass mainly during this period.

**First half of September.** Especially for visible migration: there may be over 2,000 Pied Harriers *Circus melanoleucos* in a day, as well as substantial numbers of Japanese Sparrowhawks *Accipiter gularis* and Oriental Pratincoles *Glareola maldivarum*; early mornings may produce several hundred, or thousand, actively migrating passerines, including Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*, Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* and Black-tailed Hawfinch *Eophona migratorius*. There is a good variety of waders, with Grey-rumped Sandpiper *Heteroscelus brevipes* in numbers (there may be 100 or more on some days), and the songbird variety increasing, with Siberian Blue Robin fairly common. Relict Gull *Larus relictus* may occur; up to seven have been seen in September, and birds have been observed to late November – they appear to be somewhat erratic in occurrence, but more likely in autumn than spring.

**First half of October.** This is the best time of the autumn for passerines, including Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*, Water (Buff-bellied) Pipit, Radde's Warbler, Penduline Tit, Japanese Reed Bunting *Emberiza yessoensis* and Yellow-browed Bunting. There is also a good variety of passing migrants: Common Buzzard and Amur Falcon may occur in numbers, and there may be early Oriental White Storks, cranes and Great Bustards.

**Last week of October and first ten days of November.** In recent years, this period has proved the best for Oriental White Stork, Bean Goose, White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*, Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*, Common Crane, Red-crowned Crane *Grus japonensis*, Siberian Crane, Hooded Crane *G. monacha*, White-naped Crane *G. vipio* (mainly in October) and Great Bustard; other than a few individuals, all have been seen passing south rather than landing at Beidaihe. The variety and overall numbers of migrants decline during this period, though there are some interesting winter birds such as Northern Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, Siberian Accentor *Prunella montanella*, Pallas's Rosefinch, Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephala* and Lapland Bunting.



## RESERVE ESTABLISHMENT AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

A reserve was established at the town in spring 1990. At the time of writing, this comprises fields and a marshy area beside the reservoir which will be transformed into a lagoon to attract wetland birds. A visitor centre overlooking the lagoon is also planned. If successful, the reserve will be expanded; it is hoped it will help stimulate more, much-needed, 'flyway' reserves in China.

Beidaihe is an 'open' town with good tourist facilities, within easy reach of Beijing. Birdwatchers visiting the town to date have helped provide the impetus for conservation efforts; more visitors would be welcome — the author can supply information to anyone who is interested in a trip or in membership of the Beidaihe Birdwatching Society.

本文比較了在香港和在中國東北的北戴河錄得的遷徙鳥。北戴河的遷徙鳥種類繁多源自幾個因素的配合：氣候、地形和幾條遷徙途徑在該處匯合。本文討論北戴河遷徙鳥的過境日期、本世紀內各品種情況的變遷和每年造訪北戴河的最佳日子。

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## SEABIRD PASSAGE IN THE STRAIT OF TAIWAN, MAY 1989

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On 4 May 1989 I boarded the MV Jin Jiang in Shanghai for the 72-hour journey to Hong Kong. Although we spent the night anchored in the mouth of the River Yangtze (Chang Jiang), dawn on 5 May saw the vessel heading southwest down the Chinese coast, which was just visible at a distance of about 30km. The weather was grey and overcast, and the sea flat with a gentle southeasterly wind. A steady trickle of seabirds was encountered, notably Streaked Shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas*, Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus* and Common Terns *Sterna hirundo*, heading northwest. Three single pale-phase adult Pomarine Skuas *Stercorarius pomarinus* passed during the day, and three Ancient Auks *Synthliboramphus antiquus* were observed, sitting on the sea but diving at the ship's close approach. During the late afternoon and until dusk, thick fog made birdwatching difficult but many Streaked Shearwaters could still be glimpsed.

By contrast, 6 May was brilliantly sunny and warm, with gentle southerly winds. The ship was passing through the Taiwan Strait, and the rocky islets of Fujian Province were visible during the day. Until 1845h (China time) similar numbers of seabirds were observed as on the previous day; three flocks each of White-winged Black Terns *Chlidonias leucopterus* and Little Terns *Sterna albifrons* were the only additions. These terns were heading northwest, across the ship's bows. Another three pale-phase adult Pomarine Skuas were also seen, heading northeast.

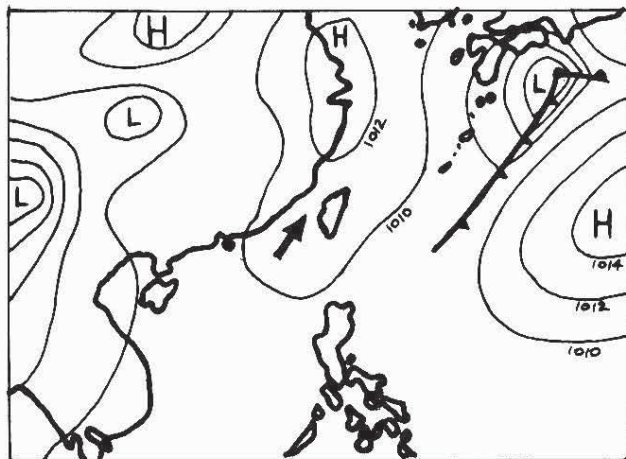
Dusk, at the southern end of the Strait, produced a memorable skua passage. During the final hour of observation, from 1850h to 2000h (China time), 21 Long-tailed Skuas *Stercorarius longicaudus*, 32 Pomarine Skuas, one adult Arctic Skua *S. parasiticus* and three unidentified skuas passed northeast. All were pale-phase adult birds, and they were flying in characteristically loose flocks at an altitude of about 10 metres. The last birds were located, in near darkness, by their distinctive mewing calls, described in Cramp and Simmons (1983) as 'long calls' and 'descending calls'. The spectacle of one flock, containing 13 Long-tailed Skuas and one Pomarine, flying out of a dramatic sunset, was very exciting.

At dawn on the following morning, the vessel was in Hong Kong waters, and not a single seabird was seen.

This observation comprises the second record of Long-tailed Skua in China, the first being an adult at Mai Po, Hong Kong on 9 May 1976 (Melville 1977, Chalmers 1986, Cheng 1987).

The isobaric chart for 6 May 1989 (Figure 1) shows an ideal situation for seabird movements: high pressure with clear skies and a gentle crosswind. This onshore wind tends to create a 'leading line' of moving birds.



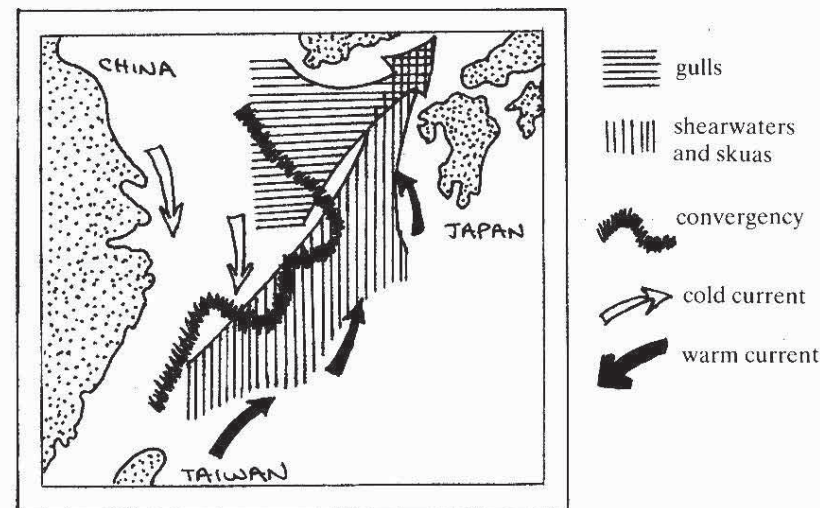


**Figure 1.** Weather chart for 8 p.m. (Hong Kong time) 6 May 1989 showing position and direction of skua passage Royal Observatory, Hong Kong

In the northeast Atlantic, spring migration of the three small *Stercorarius* species occurs in May, and recent observations of Long-tailed Skuas have shown the movement to be rapid and concentrated over a relatively few days, between 9 and 24 May (Cramp and Simmons 1983, Davenport 1984, 1987, Hopkin 1989). Long-tailed Skuas migrate in loose flocks, sometimes stretching over several kilometres at sea (Wynne-Edwards 1935), but only in flocks of up to 82 birds at coastal sites (Davenport 1987). Their nearest breeding sites are on the Kamchatka Peninsular (Iyichev and Zubakin 1988) but their distribution outside the nesting season is poorly known (Harrison 1983). It is frequently described as the 'south central Pacific' on the basis of only meagre evidence; Melville (1985) describes a wreck of 16 definite and 19 probable Long-tails in New Zealand, and lists about 20 other records, scattered across the Pacific from Chile to the Philippines, between 1896 and 1981. The Checklist of Japanese Birds (Anon 1974) describes the species as a regular but uncommon spring passage migrant; there was one Long-tailed Skua seen in the Gulf of Thailand in April 1989 (T. and C. Inskipp pers. comm.) and four Pomarines.

In Asia, Pomarine Skuas breed almost exclusively on the Siberian shores of the Arctic Ocean, and have an extensive winter distribution, from Japanese waters to Indonesia.

Arctic Skuas have a breeding range similar to that of Long-tailed Skuas: according to Shuntov (1972) they winter mainly to the north of Taiwan. In the western Palearctic region they breed further south, and thus the spring migration is one or two weeks earlier, and more dispersed, than that of the other species. Shuntov (1972) thoroughly describes the avian seasonal distribution in the East China Sea, relating the pattern of different species to the variations of sea temperature and hence biological productivity. Skuas and shearwaters are attracted to the convergence zone between the cold Yellow Sea current and the warm Kuroshiwo current; this sharp frontal boundary stretches northeast from Taiwan to Japan (Figure 2). It is apparently used as a migration route by Streaked Shearwaters (comprising 93% of the birds noted by Shuntov) and skuas (no specific mention, 1%). The exact route of this spring movement will be dependent on the weather and position of the convergence, and the skuas would probably pass in a short timescale, as in the North Atlantic. Clearly, the birds observed on 5 and 6 May were on course to reach the southernmost extent of this mixing zone, and thus reach Japanese waters a day or two later. This discovery of a spring migration route for Long-tailed Skuas nonetheless leaves the problems of their winter quarters unsolved.



**Figure 2.** Main paths and directions of spring migrations in the East China Sea in relation to the cold and warm currents Adapted from Shuntov 1972

## FULL SPECIES LIST

**Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas*  
Several large rafts of about 200 birds were seen, with up to 20 birds continuously in view. Probably more than 1,000 in total.

**Little Green Heron** *Butorides striatus*  
Two on board on 5th, one immature on 6th.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*  
One on the ship on 6 May stayed for three hours.

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*  
Many flocks of up to ten birds, totalling about 300.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*  
Thirty-seven pale-phase adults, all passing northeast, in flocks of two, three, seven, eight and nine birds, with eight singles. All except three on 6 May.

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*  
Two single birds: one pale-phase adult on 5 May, one dark-phase on 6 May.

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*  
Twenty-one in flocks of two, four and thirteen, with two single birds. All in the last hour of daylight on 6 May.

**[Skua** *Stercorarius* sp.  
Three on 6 May too distant for certain identification were probably Long-tailed Skuas. It was not possible to observe whether the birds were of the American pale-bellied *pallens* or Eurasian dark-bellied *longicaudus* race.]

**White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*  
Seven flying northwest, in groups of one, two and four, on 6 May.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*  
Thirty-four northwest, all except one on 5 May. Seen in small flocks; one party of nine was perched on flotsam and weed rafts.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*  
Fifty birds passing northwest, in flocks of two, eighteen and thirty, on 6 May.

**Ancient Auk** *Synthliboramphus antiquus*  
Three on sea, 5 May.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
Five on 5 May, eight on 6 May, all passing southwest.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*  
Two on board on 6 May.

**Tiger Shrike** *Lanius tigrinus*  
One on board at dusk on 6 May.

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitaria*  
Two on board on 6 May. Departed northwest towards a small rocky island about 10km away.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Mr D. Davenport and Mr D.S. Melville for reading and commenting on the first draft.

本文詳述一九八九年五月一次自上海至香港海上旅途中錄得的海鳥。其中包括白額鸕 *Calonectris leucomelas*、賊鷗科 *Stercorarius* 的三個品種、浮鷗屬 *Chlidonias* 和燕鷗屬 *Sterna* 的品種和扁咀海雀 *Synthliboramphus antiquus*。在台灣海峽通過的賊鷗包括有長尾賊鷗 *S. longicaudus* 的中國第二次紀錄。本文給出賊鷗的繁殖地域，又列出繁殖期以外的已知紀錄。

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## NOTES ON THE SEABIRDS OBSERVED DURING A VOYAGE FROM THE PHILIPPINES TO HONG KONG, APRIL 1990

Angus Lamont

These notes were made while crewing on the yacht 'Gypsy' while returning after the South China Sea Race from Manila, the Philippines, to Hong Kong between 22 April and 28 April 1990. The route from Manila Bay headed north along the western coast of Luzon until the island of Hermana Mayor was reached. After a 24-hour break there, 'Gypsy' headed directly towards Hong Kong in a northwesterly direction, following the rhumb line as closely as possible. The weather was generally sunny and hot, becoming overcast on 27 April as the South China coast was approached. Wind directions varied initially but settled to northeast for the latter half of the passage. Wind speeds averaged between 10 and 15 knots and at no time exceeded 28 knots. The state of sea varied from smooth to moderate and was slight for long periods of time. Visibility was excellent most of the time although the weather became misty about 90km from Hong Kong and stayed so for the remainder of the trip.

While crossing Manila Bay on 22 April, Whiskered Terns *Chlidonias hybridus* and a few White-winged Black Terns *Chlidonias leucopterus* were seen. Also noted was a brown storm petrel *Oceanodroma* sp. and a larger tern with a white rump. Dawn the following day found 'Gypsy' off Capones Island where a raft of about 75 Brown Noddies *Anous stolidus* was put up from the water; noddies have occasionally been noted roosting on water in dense flocks (Harrison 1983). Later the same day Hermana Mayor was reached and a brief walk on the island the following morning revealed over 100 Black-naped Terns *Sterna sumatrana*, a few Whiskered Terns, and a pair of Roseate Terns *S. dougallii* on a sandbar.

The 25th produced several Streaked Shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas* and dark shearwaters *Puffinus* sp. 663km from Hong Kong. These dark shearwaters were wholly brown except for the upperwing coverts, which formed slightly paler bands across the inner wing, and the silvery white shafts of the primaries, which showed clearly on the upperwing. The bill was dark. A more definite identification was not possible given the lack of observer experience with dark shearwaters. According to Harrison (1983) the most likely species of dark shearwater to occur in this area is the Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* and previous observations (Chalmers 1978, Melville 1984) also referred to this species in the northern part of the South China Sea. Du Pont (1971) records it from Philippine waters.

On 26 April a large concentration of about 100 seabirds was seen fishing 506km from Hong Kong; the group consisted mostly of dark shearwaters, but also included Streaked Shearwaters, one Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*, several Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster*, and one white, chunky, tern-like bird plunge-diving from about 10 metres. This was pro-

bably a tropicbird *Phaethon* sp., the most likely species being White-tailed *P. lepturus*. Two Brown Boobies were later seen 433km from Hong Kong. Melville and Webster (1978) stated that a similar variety of seabird species could be seen in these waters.

At 0600h on 27th a Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* was seen flying by the masthead presumably enjoying a wind lift from the sail. Three more were observed at 0750h flying acrobatically and one of them followed some surface lures that were being trolled behind the yacht for about five minutes, allowing excellent views. This was 254km from Hong Kong (20°35'N, 115°49'E). A further bird was seen at 1710h the same day, 141km from Hong Kong. All the birds were brightly plumaged pale-phase adults with elongated central tail feathers. The yellow and white neck band was a very obvious feature, as were the pale underparts.

The observations of Long-tailed Skuas are of particular interest in view of the paucity of records from this area (it has not been recorded from the Philippines). The wintering quarters of this species in the Pacific region are largely unknown (Melville 1985, Furness 1978); however, the dates are within two weeks of those recorded for passage birds in early May 1989 in the Taiwan Strait (Hopkin 1990) and the single Hong Kong record (Chalmers 1986). Considering the number of skuas seen from a boat covering a relatively small area of sea, it is possible that this species is not uncommon in the northern part of the South China Sea at this time of year and that there is a regular passage along the coast of east Asia. It is noteworthy that about 275km south of Hong Kong the tropical sea conditions gave way to cooler northern waters. Fish species and water colour together with temperature changed considerably and all the skua sightings were north of the convergence zone.

The last seabirds seen were two all-brown storm petrels which were flushed from the water and may have been Swinhoe's *Oceanodroma monorhis*. A final point of interest was a Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* which landed on 'Gypsy' for a short break during its northern migration to China.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Mike Chalmers, David Melville and Peter Kennerley for their valuable comments on an earlier draft and especially Verity Picken for her assistance and the use of her word processor.

本文簡述一九九〇年五月一次自菲律賓往香港海上旅途中錄得的海鳥。其中以在北部較涼水域見到的五隻長尾賊鷗 *Stercorarius longicaudus* 令人最感興趣。



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## NOTES

### THE LEECH AND THE YELLOW BITTERN

*Llewellyn Young*

In July 1989 the RSPCA gave a Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* which they had received to the staff at the WWF Hong Kong Mai Po Nature Reserve to be released. The bird had been picked up earlier and was deemed sufficiently healthy to be let loose again. There were no details as to where it had come from originally.

Since the bird was still rather thin, it was thought best to keep it for a while at Mai Po until it became heavier. At that stage there were no outward signs that the bird was ill, but after five days it died. The only unusual sign at the beginning was a small growth under the skin on the left side of the bill, between the nares and the eye; this had grown to a size of about 5 to 6mm in diameter by the time the bird eventually died.

When the growth was opened up, there was an engorged leech underneath, still alive, attached to the inner side of the lower eyelid of the bird. Such leech infection of waterbirds is apparently quite common. In North America the main culprits are three to five species of leech from the genus *Theromyzon* which mainly affects swans and ducks. Infection is usually fatal in cygnets and ducklings, while in adults with many leeches attached, the bird will become weak; secondary bacterial infections then break out, eventually causing death (Friend 1987, Trauger and Bartonek 1977). In our case with the Yellow Bittern, opening up the head and the neck of the bird did not reveal any more leeches so it seemed very unlikely that the one leech could have been the main cause of death. When the rib cage was opened, however, there were small yellow tumours and red blotches over the surface of the lungs — a sign of pneumonia. This side effect of the leech infection would most likely have been the ultimate cause of death (S. Wong pers. comm.).

It is possible that when the Yellow Bittern was still in the wild, the leech entered its nares when the bird was drinking from infected water, this being a usual route for such infections.

Unlike the North American leech *Theromyzon*, the leech found in the Yellow Bittern was *Myxobdella annandalei*, a very little known species which was originally found in Hong Kong on the Peak. There are more records from small streams in hilly areas but it is quite possible that the leech also occurs in streams and freshwater lakes in lower lying areas i.e. Yellow Bittern habitat.

Another interesting point about this leech is that it is also capable of free living, feeding off amphibians and invertebrates such as snails although its jaws are too weak to penetrate mammalian skin. However, they can



pierce the thin membranes of the nasal passage. Also, unlike the leeches normally associated with leech parasitism which feed for an hour or so before falling from their host, leeches such as *Myxobdella* enter the host when small, and then feed and enlarge inside the host for days or weeks before leaving as a mature leech, usually dropping back into the water.

I am very grateful to Mr F.O.P. Hechtel for identification of the leech and information on its biology.

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#### CATTLE EGRETS AND CHINESE POND HERONS FEEDING IN TREES

David S. Melville

On 14 June 1988 at about 1830h I saw a group of eight adult (breeding plumage) and two subadult (non-breeding plumage) Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis*, and one adult Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* in a stand of swamp mahogany *Eucalyptus robusta* trees which were growing to a height of about 10m at Shek Wu Wai, Hong Kong. Considerable numbers of flies (probably *Calliphora/Lucilia/Chrysomya* spp.) were attracted to the flowers of the trees, which are noted for an abundance of nectar (Thrower 1988). The birds were standing on the branches, about 5-8m above ground level, and feeding on flies, picking them off the flowers, twigs and leaves. Three adult Cattle Egrets were seen to take five, seven and eight flies each during one minute of observation, and two subadults took four and seven flies. The Chinese Pond Heron was seen to feed successfully but the feeding rate was not recorded. All of the birds were feeding on the sheltered side of the wood, there apparently being very few flies on the windward side where movement of the branches in the light breeze also would have made feeding difficult.

I have been unable to trace other records of these species feeding in trees and this appears to be only the second record of the Chinese Pond Heron feeding on flies (Melville 1987).

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#### NESTING BLACK BAZAS AT SHA TAU KOK THE FIRST BREEDING RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Nigel Croft

I was posted to Sha Tau Kok Police Station on 6 July 1989 and on the next day the station was inspected by a senior officer. During the inspection we went onto the roof from which we saw two Crested Goshawks *Accipiter trivirgatus* circling over woodland adjacent to the station compound. The birds were probably a male and female as there was an obvious size difference. After this incident I resolved to pay a little more attention to the woodland area and over the next few days regularly heard and saw Crested Goshawks quite close to the station.

On 12 July I was on the roof looking for a Crested Goshawk which was calling, when I saw a Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* fly into a tree about 40 metres away. The baza flew off quite quickly and a Crested Goshawk appeared, only to be chased off by the baza. Out came the telescope and from the rooftop I could see a nest in the fork of a pine tree; this held two young bazas almost fully fledged. The tree was about 10 metres outside the station compound and only 15 metres from the station access road.

On 16 July both young birds had moved a short distance away from the nest and in the afternoon one of the young was seen to fly. On Sunday 17 July the whole family was seen circling higher and higher up the hillside behind the station. It was a clear hot summer's day and the calling of the bazas to each other high up was a moment to savour — and probably not to be forgotten.

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[Note: This is the first confirmed successful breeding record of Black Bazas in Hong Kong, although breeding has been suspected over the last ten years — Recorder.]

## CRESTED GOSHAWK WITH SUPERCILIUM

M.L. Chalmers

On 28 October 1989 a juvenile Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* was caught inside Mrs Gloria Barretto's house at Tai Po Kau. The bird was photographed by Mr Ruy Barretto and released. The most interesting feature, which initially caused confusion over its identification, was a well-defined white supercilium extending from the large white loreal area back over the eye and then curving down onto the sides of the nape, where it was paralleled by other white streaks on the nape. The photographs also show a broad dark brown mesial stripe on the white throat and dark brown moustachial stripes bordering the brown cheeks.



25. Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*  
Tai Po Kau, October 1989

(Ruy Barretto)

[The cost of reproduction of plate 25 in colour has been subsidised by Zeiss Far East Co Ltd]

None of the standard texts refer to prominent supercilia on this species, except Ali and Ripley who refer to a broad fulvous supercilium in young. Birds with white supercilia could be confused with either the smaller Northern Sparrowhawk *A. nisus* or more likely the larger Northern Goshawk *A. gentilis*. Observers are therefore cautioned to check other features before relying on the presence of a white supercilium to identify these species.

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## INTERACTION BETWEEN CRESTED GOSHAWK AND JUNGLE CROW

Anthony Galsworthy

On the morning of 20 May 1990, while walking along a hillside path on the south side of Mount Cameron, my wife noticed a Jungle Crow *Corvus macrorhynchus* behaving in an unusual way. The bird was inside the canopy of a small tree, giving a loud single-note call at frequent intervals, stretching its wings, and breaking off and dropping small twigs and pieces of foliage. After a short while a Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* flew out of a neighbouring bush and settled in a tree on the far side of a ravine. The crow immediately followed it and perched higher in the same tree, continuing with the same behaviour as before. Since it was perched almost directly above the goshawk some of the sticks being dropped appeared to fall very close to the latter, though this was presumably accidental.

After a few minutes the goshawk flew at the crow, which fled immediately. The goshawk pursued it for about 30 metres, approaching it closely and making what looked like a rather half-hearted attempt to roll over and strike with its talons. It then turned and flew back to the same tree. As soon as it broke off the chase, the crow also turned and pursued it closely back to the tree, taking up position, as before, higher in the tree. This sequence was repeated twice in the next ten minutes or so, following which the goshawk flew to a tree some distance away, the crow on this occasion remaining where it was.

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## NOTES ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF ADULT SLATY-BACKED GULLS

David S. Melville

The taxonomic status of the Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus* Stejneger has been a matter of debate since its first description in 1884. Although Bent (1921), Dwight (1925) and Peters (1934) all regarded this form as a distinct species, Stegmann (1934) considered it to be a form of the Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*, while Portenko (1963) regarded it as a race of the Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*. However Vaurie (1965), who had seen some of Portenko's material, retained it as a distinct species and Firsova (1986) regarded it as a full species. Nonetheless Voous (1973), whilst still retaining it as a species, noted it was 'probably conspecific' with the Herring Gull.

In view of the foregoing it is not surprising that the status of the Slaty-backed Gull in Hong Kong is uncertain. Webster (1975) listed four records, but Chalmers (1986) stated 'Possibly regular winter visitor in small numbers, but there are no satisfactory recent records due to difficulty of separation from dark-backed *argentatus*'. Two races of Herring Gull are considered to occur in Hong Kong, viz. *vegae* (with pink legs and paler mantle) and *mongolicus* (with yellow legs and darker mantle). However it should be noted that these identifications are unsupported by critical examination of specimens.

One of the problems associated with field identification of the Slaty-backed Gull has been the lack of adequate descriptions in local guides (Herklots 1967, Webster and Phillipps 1976, Viney and Phillipps 1988), which generally note the upperparts as dark slate, but in the case of Viney and Phillipps (1988) the bird illustrated has virtually black upperparts. Illustrations in Harrison (1983) and Tuck and Heinzel (1978) also show the mantle being near black. Etchécopar and Hüe (1978, plate 13) erroneously show the bird lacking any white on the primaries, secondaries and scapulars. The best illustration known to me is that in National Geographic Society (1983).

Plate 26 shows the primaries of an adult Slaty-backed Gull collected in June 1985 at Kiritappu, Hokkaido, Japan — the bird apparently having been predated by a Fox *Vulpes vulpes*. It can be seen that the outer primaries are not truly black (as in the eastern races of the Herring Gull) but are a dark charcoal grey, which grades into a dark grey on the rest of the wing. The nearest equivalents in Smithe's (1975) guide are Color 82 'Blackish neutral gray' for the dark primaries, and between Color 83 'Dark neutral gray' and Color 84 'Medium neutral gray' but with a touch of brown for the rest of the remiges and coverts. Hence, when the wing is open, the mantle appears to be of similar colour to the wing tips due to the gradation of greys, rather than the mantle being black(ish) similar to the primaries (as in the Great Black-backed Gull), as implied by some authors.



26. Wing of adult Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus*  
Hokkaido, Japan, June 1985 (D.S. Melville)

Another feature shown in Plate 26 is the broad white trailing edge (about 25mm wide) which extends from the inner primaries along the secondaries. This is considerably broader than that in both the *vegae* and *mongolicus* races of the Herring Gull and is conspicuous in flight (Plate 27). When the bird is at rest the broad white tips of the secondaries and tertials separate the primary tips from the mantle, which thus appears paler since the gradation of greys is not apparent. Also the broad white tips to the large rear scapulars result in a broader 'scapular crescent' (Grant 1982) than in either race of the Herring Gull occurring in Hong Kong (Plate 28).

The leg colour of all adult Slaty-backed Gulls seen in Hokkaido was deep pink, quite unlike the leg colour of any adult Herring Gull of any race which I have seen in Eurasia and North America. This appears to be a good field character and is also noted by Roberson (1980), de Schauensee (1984), and National Geographic Society (1983). The orbital ring of the adult Slaty-backed Gull is reddish, as is that of the *mongolicus* race of Herring Gull, whereas that of *vegae* is more yellow/orange (Cramp and Simmons 1982). However orbital ring colour must be used with caution for identification since it can vary considerably with age and season, and full details of colours of eastern forms of the Herring Gull have yet to be determined.





27. Adult Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus*  
Note broad white trailing edge to secondaries  
Hokkaido, Japan, February 1986

(Peter Kennerley)



28. Adult Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus*  
Note broad white scapular crescent and heavy bill  
Hokkaido, Japan, June 1985

(D.S. Melville)

The birds seen in Hokkaido had quite heavy bills, but there were no Herring Gulls present for direct comparison. In this respect it is of interest that Yamamoto (1963) shows the bill of the Herring Gull (presumably *vegae*, this being the most abundant race in Japan (Ornithological Society of Japan 1975, Brazil 1983)) being heavier than that of the Slaty-backed. However the illustration in Kobayashi (1965) shows Slaty-backed with a heavier bill than Herring and Flint *et al.* (1984) also note the bill of Slaty-backed as being 'short and massive'. Measurements given by Dwight (1925) and Iyichev and Zubakin (1988) show that, on average, Slaty-backed has a longer culmen than any race of the Herring Gull in Asia, but there is considerable overlap, especially between large male Herring Gulls and small female Slaty-backed Gulls. Dwight's (1925) measurements on bill depth (at base and gonys) demonstrate that whereas the bill of the Herring Gull deepens noticeably at the gonys the difference in the Slaty-backed is much less marked (Table 1), which would result in the impression of a massive bill (Plate 28).

The immature plumages of the Slaty-backed Gull, together with those of the eastern races of Herring Gull, remain poorly known. Firsova (1986) has detailed annual plumage changes up to fifth breeding plumage but gives no comparisons with plumages of Herring Gulls. Thus her account, whilst valuable in determining the age of a known Slaty-backed Gull, is less helpful in distinguishing between Herring and Slaty-backed Gulls.

The Slaty-backed Gull breeds around the shores of the Sea of Okhotsk from the Kamchatka Peninsula south to Hokkaido (Flint *et al.* 1984, Ornithological Society of Japan 1975). Cheng (1987) records the species in winter from the northeast provinces (midpart Harbin, southern part of Liaoning), Shandong, Fujian, Guangdong and Yunnan. He states that it is 'Quite common along the coast in winter'. De Schauensee (1984) notes that it 'Winters casually on the coast of China from Liaoning to Hainan, and in Taiwan'. Shuntov (1974) notes Slaty-backed Gulls in the East China Sea in winter but his limited data suggest that the species is not common. However this may result from his observations being offshore and the gulls being inshore. Etchécopar and Hüe (1978) also note it as a regular winter visitor in the south of Korea and all along the coast of China.

Clearly much remains to be learned regarding the status of the Slaty-backed Gull in Hong Kong and nearby areas. However this will be dependent upon more information becoming available regarding the identification of immature birds since these generally winter further south than adults (Shuntov 1974, Figure 41), and thus are more likely to occur in Hong Kong.

I am grateful to Peter Kennerley for commenting on a draft of this note.



TABLE 1. Bill measurements in mm of Slaty-backed and Herring Gulls

	sex	sample size	Culmen length		Bill depth at base		Bill depth at gonys	
			range	average	range	average	range	average
<i>vegae</i> (I&Z)	m	17	54.0-61.0	57.9				
	f	23	50.0-58.0	52.9				
<i>vegae</i> (D)	m	17	51.0-60.0	55.9	16.5-21.0	19.1	17.0-22.0	19.7
	f	5	49.0-52.0	51.0	16.5-19.0	17.5	16.5-20.0	18.5
<i>mongolicus</i> (I&Z)	m	16	50.0-59.0	55.7				
	f	6	50.0-55.0	53.0				
<i>schistisagus</i> (I&Z)	m	46	53.7-64.1	62.0				
	f	31	48.0-59.4	53.8				
<i>schistisagus</i> (D)	m	8	56.0-60.0	58.7	19.0-22.0	20.5	19.0-22.0	20.6
	f	11	49.0-55.0	52.4	18.0-20.0	18.6	18.0-20.0	18.8

(D) = Dwight (1925)  
(I&Z) = Iyichev and Zubakin (1988)

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### THICK-BILLED PIGEON IN HONG KONG NOTES ON MOULT

David S. Melville

Viney (1987) reported a specimen record of the Thick-billed Pigeon *Treron curvirostra* from Hong Kong in November 1986. He noted that the bird had 'absolutely no sign of feather abrasion'. Subsequent examination of this specimen, which is held in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History), Tring (Catalogue No. 1988-4-1) revealed that the bird was in suspended/arrested moult with the outer primary (number 10) on both wings being retained. The inner nine primaries are all fresh and fully grown (number 9 showing no sign of a waxy sheath at the base), but the old outer one is moderately worn and faded.

Since pigeons and doves undergo a complete post-juvenile moult i.e. including remiges and rectrices (Goodwin 1967) it would appear that the Hong Kong bird was a juvenile (hatched in 1986). If it were an adult, one would expect the retained feathers to be very worn since they would be about one year old, rather than only a few months old as in a juvenile.

Very little information is available regarding moult in *Treron curvirostra* (Goodwin 1967) but four specimens in the British Museum (Natural History) are in active moult. Two birds (a male and a female) of the race *hainana* collected from the Seven Finger Range, Hainan on 12 November 1906 are just completing primary moult with the outermost primary at growth stage 4 (Ginn and Melville 1983), the other nine being fully grown. A male of the race *nipalensis* collected at Quangtri, Vietnam on 12 July 1925 has replaced the inner seven, the eighth being at stage 4 and the outer two old. A male of the race *curvirostra* from Johore, West Malaysia collected on 7 August 1879 has replaced the inner five primaries, the sixth is at stage 4 and the outer four are old. It is notable that these latter two birds are moulting slowly with only one actively growing feather in the wing.

Goodwin (1967) notes that moult may be halted temporarily during the winter months in temperate regions, however it is also recorded in Hong Kong in the case of the Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* (Melville unpublished). It is likely to occur in late-fledged young which then

encounter a shortage of food. Incomplete or interrupted post-juvenile moult has previously been recorded in several pigeons of the genera *Columba* and *Streptopelia* (Ginn and Melville 1983, Melville unpublished), but this appears to be the first recorded instance in the genus *Treron*.

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### BIRDS FEEDING ON TERMITES

Anthony Galsworthy

On 10 April 1990 we noticed some unusual behaviour among the bulbuls behind our house in Peak Road. They were rising in ones and twos from perches along the hedge, flying vigorously upwards before gliding and stalling to return to their perches. On closer inspection we were able to see that a considerable hatch of winged termites (possibly *Macrotermes barneyi*) were passing over the house at a height of about 15 metres. The birds, both Chinese Bulbuls *Pycnonotus sinensis* and Crested Bulbuls *P. jocosus*, were intercepting them as they came over, rather like a battery of SAMs: the acceleration, glide and stall technique looked well practiced, the stall nearly always coinciding with capture of the insect, though every now and then a bird would mistime and stall out of reach of its prey. Since the termites were flying slowly like miniature helicopters, a second attempt was usually possible, and normally resulted in capture. We never saw two birds pursue the same insect.

A little further down the hillside we noticed a flock of Blue Magpies *Urocissa erythrorhyncha* also feeding on the termites. Their technique was rather different, involving the use of their long tails to swerve rapidly and capture their prey in level flight.

Finally to our surprise we saw four or five Black Kites *Milvus migrans* wheeling around the hillside above, taking termites in their talons and then transferring them in flight to their beaks. This would seem a very small prey for a bird of this size, and hardly energy-efficient, but Herklots (1951), who also recorded this behaviour, says that the winged adult termites contain large reserves of oil and are probably highly nutritious.



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## CRESTED MYNAHS FEEDING ON CHIRONOMIDS

David S. Melville

At 1750h on 27 March 1987 I noticed seven Crested Mynahs *Acridotheres cristatellus* in a clump of bamboo at Mai Po Village, Hong Kong. The birds were standing at the tallest point of the bamboo, some 9m above ground level, around which was a smoky cloud of several thousand Chironomid midges *Chironomus* spp.. The midge cloud 'danced' somewhat but as it moved over/around the mynahs the birds would reach out, peck and eat the midges. Once the midges had moved out of pecking range the mynahs remained standing in the bamboos until the midges moved back. At no time were the birds seen to jump up to take midges nor did they make flycatching sallies.

I have been unable to find any previous reference to such feeding behaviour on midges by Crested Mynahs elsewhere, or even by other members of the genus (Ali and Ripley 1983, Hails and Jarvis 1987, La Touche 1925-34, Long 1981, Watling 1982). Crested Mynahs are recorded as omnivores (Cheng 1963), their principal food being various insects and plant material (Cheng 1963, Caldwell and Caldwell 1931). They usually feed by running or hopping on the ground, but occasionally feed in association with grazing cattle, perching on the back of a beast and then dropping down to feed on disturbed insects.

Chironomids may be a valuable food source for birds, especially young ducklings (Hill 1983). However the difficulty of catching imagoes (handling time) probably makes them 'uneconomic' except in exceptional circumstances.

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## GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF RECORDS

### Recording

One of the most important functions of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society is the publication of the Hong Kong Bird Report. The value of this publication depends on members submitting records and all are encouraged to submit records at the end of each year.

The Society provides 152 × 106mm record cards to facilitate analysis and storage and these are available from the Recorder. Completed cards are stored in a species-indexed filing system and members wishing to look at past records are asked to contact the Recorder. It is hoped that the ease with which records can be retrieved will result in interested people analysing migration patterns and population trends and undertaking other studies.

Nest Record Cards are also available from the Recorder for reporting breeding data.

The Society also maintains a collection of reports of birds recorded during members' visits to other parts of Southeast Asia and China to assist others in planning overseas trips.

### Rarities

While the birds of Hong Kong are better known than those of many other areas of the Far East, new species are continually being added to the Hong Kong List and the status of many other species is uncertain.

Field identification techniques for species in the area still need refining and the Society has a Records Committee to assist the Recorder in the unenviable task of assessing records and ensuring that a high standard of observation is maintained. A list of species considered by the Committee is given below. The list may seem dauntingly long and to include some unmistakable species such as Oystercatcher. However, all members are requested to submit field descriptions of the birds listed.

Ideally field notes of a rarity should cover the following points:

- a) Date, time and location of sighting.
- b) Power of binoculars/telescope used, distance of bird from observer, weather and light conditions.
- c) Description of habitat and what other birds, if any, it was associating with.
- d) Whether you saw it from different angles; at rest, in light, swimming etc.; from above or below. The more varied the conditions the better.

- e) Its actions and the character of its flight compared with other birds.
- f) Its general shape and structure as compared with other birds e.g. size and shape of bill, length of legs, shape of wing, length of tail.
- g) Colour of bill, legs, feet and iris.
- h) As far as possible, an exact description of the whole plumage of the bird, not only those parts which you think may help in identifying it. A rough sketch or diagram is a great help.
- i) Any calls, indicating especially the quality of the sound (harsh, rattling, shrill, hoarse, liquid etc.) and comparison with calls of other species.
- j) Notes on previous experience with the species or species with which it may be confused.

If possible try to get someone else to see the bird as two descriptions are better than one. *Make sure that you take full field notes on the spot* — it is all too easy to imagine field marks after consulting a book!

Even if you do not know what the bird is please send in the description as it may be possible for the Committee to identify it for you. It should be remembered that many species of cage birds have been recorded as escapes in Hong Kong and they may not be included in any of the local books.

The increasing number of field guides on the market often make positive identification appear all too easy, but it must be remembered that there are still many difficult species and groups of birds and it is only by careful, painstaking observation that such species can be identified.

### Species for which written descriptions of all sightings must be submitted to the Recorder for consideration by the Records Committee.

The following list is based on the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong* (Chalmers 1986) plus additions detailed in the annual *Hong Kong Bird Reports* from 1984/85 onwards. In many cases brief notes added to the record cards describing the salient features, ranges and viewing conditions will suffice. However, full descriptions are required for the rarer or more difficult species, or any new species not yet on the Hong Kong List. In addition the Recorder may request descriptions of other species under unusual circumstances. Records submitted without descriptions may not be considered.



## CATEGORY A

Red-necked Grebe  
Black-necked Grebe  
Streaked Shearwater  
Swinhoe's Storm Petrel  
Dalmatian Pelican  
all frigatebirds  
Von Schrenck's Little Bittern  
Black Bittern  
Japanese Night Heron  
Swinhoe's Egret  
Black Stork  
White Stork  
Glossy Ibis  
European Spoonbill  
Black-faced Spoonbill  
Lesser Treeduck  
all geese  
Ruddy Shelduck  
Cotton Teal  
Mandarin  
Falcated Teal  
Baikal Teal  
Common Pochard  
Baer's Pochard  
Scaup  
Velvet Scoter  
Goldeneye  
Crested Honey Buzzard  
Black-shouldered Kite  
Brahminy Kite  
Hen Harrier  
Pied Harrier  
Northern Goshawk  
Japanese Sparrowhawk  
Besra  
Horsfield's Goshawk  
Grey-faced Buzzard Eagle  
Upland Buzzard  
Spotted Eagle  
Imperial Eagle  
Mountain Hawk Eagle  
White-legged Falconet  
Amur Falcon  
Merlin  
all button quails  
all crakes  
Purple Gallinule  
Common Crane  
Pheasant-tailed Jacana  
Painted Snipe  
Oystercatcher  
Ringed Plover  
Oriental Plover  
Great Knot

Little Stint  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Spoon-billed Sandpiper  
Ruff  
Jack Snipe  
Swinhoe's Snipe  
Solitary Snipe  
Long-billed Dowitcher  
Asiatic Dowitcher  
Little Whimbrel  
Australian Curlew  
Nordmann's Greenshank  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
all skuas  
Great Black-headed Gull  
Relict Gull  
Saunders' Gull  
Brown-headed Gull  
Common Gull  
Slaty-backed Gull  
Glaucous-winged Gull  
Glaucous Gull  
Kittiwake  
Greater Crested Tern  
Black-naped Tern  
Roseate Tern  
Common Tern  
Bridled Tern  
Sooty Tern  
Ancient Auk  
Bar-tailed Cuckoo Dove  
White-bellied Green Pigeon  
Thick-billed Pigeon  
Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo  
Emerald Cuckoo  
Common Cuckoo  
Oriental Cuckoo  
all owls except Collared Scops Owl  
Japanese Nightjar  
White-throated Needletail  
White-vented Needletail  
Crested Kingfisher  
Blue-tailed Bee-eater  
all woodpeckers  
Chinese Pitta  
all larks  
Pechora Pipit  
Water Pipit  
Citrine Wagtail  
White Wagtail (all races other than  
*leucopsis* and *ocularis*)  
Greater Cuckoo Shrike  
Rosy Minivet  
Orange-bellied Leafbird

Brown Dipper  
Wren  
Japanese Robin  
Siberian Blue Robin  
Pied Wheatear  
White-capped Redstart  
Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush  
Orange-headed Ground Thrush  
Siberian Thrush  
Brown Thrush  
Slaty-backed Forktail  
Mountain Bush Warbler  
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler  
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler  
Styan's Grasshopper Warbler  
Lanceolated Warbler  
Blyth's Reed Warbler  
Thick-billed Warbler  
Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler  
Chestnut-crowned Warbler  
Fulvous-faced Flycatcher Warbler  
Large Grass Warbler  
Sulphur-breasted Warbler  
Blyth's Leaf Warbler  
Eastern Crowned Warbler  
Pale-legged Leaf Warbler

Two-barred Greenish Warbler  
Radde's Warbler  
Chiffchaff  
Fukien Niltava  
Sooty Flycatcher  
Chinese Babax  
Chestnut-flanked White-eye  
Red-headed Tit  
Penduline Tit  
Gould's Sunbird  
Tiger Shrike  
Bull-headed Shrike  
Chinese Great Grey Shrike  
Daurian Jackdaw  
Purple-backed Starling  
Chestnut-cheeked Starling  
European Starling  
Rosy Starling  
Brambling  
Siskin  
Japanese Grosbeak  
Japanese Yellow Bunting  
Yellow-throated Bunting  
Rustic Bunting  
Reed Bunting

## CATEGORY B

all (one!)

## CATEGORY D

all

## CATEGORY F

all

## CATEGORY C

none

## CATEGORY E

all, other than most obvious escapes