

# THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1979



*Published by*

**THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY**

Price: Five Dollars

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**Published in 1981 by the  
HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY**

c/o Zoology Dept, University of Hong Kong  
(A registered society under the Societies Ordinance)

Records compiled by G.C.H. Cooper

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## Chairman's Report, 1979

Membership at the end of the year was 121 local and 41 overseas members, an overall decrease of one during the year.

The activities of the Society have repeated the pattern of previous years, with the following outings being held:—

January 1st	'Wild Goose Chase'
January 13th	Tai Long Wan
January 30th	Mai Po
February 17th	Wu Kau Tang
February 24-25th	Tung Chung, Lantau (Chinese speaking)
March 4th	Mai Po
March 24th	Lantau
April 14th	Mai Po
May 6th	Mai Po
May 27th	Woodlands
June 16th	Tai Mo Shan/Fanling
August 27th	Mai Po
September 16th	Mai Po
September 30th	Mai Po
October 6th	Tai Long Wan
October 21st	Mai Po (Chinese speaking)
October 28th	Mai Po
November 17th	Lam Tsuen Valley
December 9th	Mai Po
December 16th	Ho Chung (Chinese speaking)
December 26th	Mong Tseng

My comments in the 1977 Report about booking places on outings still seem to apply, and in general the number of participants in outings seems to have dropped. This has both advantages and disadvantages; we always like to see members getting out and meeting each other, but on the other hand a gang of 30 people is a bit much even at Mai Po, where distance is less important than in woodlands. The Chinese speaking outings continue, though numbers seem to be down on the previous year.

In April, one of our keenest younger members, Tim Garland, was killed in a car crash after spending the night out ringing. Our sympathy goes to his parents, and we shall all miss his enthusiasm and considerable knowledge.

Charles Payne, secretary for the past few years, left to take up an Assistant Headmastership in Ireland, and the job of secretary was subsequently split between Francis Batson, who handles most of the membership work, and Fraser Clark who edits and sends out the Bulletins. Francis is here on a second tour at B.M.H., while Fraser watches birds in the rare intervals between his work as headmaster of a secondary school and his efforts to evict the fire victims of Ma Chuk Hang from the school premises; he had offered them the hospitality of the school when their huts were burnt down, and they subsequently refused to move!



## REPORT ON THE BIRDS 1979

*Hon. Recorder: G.C.H. Cooper.*

The year 1979 in Hong Kong has been dominated by the influx of refugees from Vietnam, and illegal immigrants from China. The first did not affect us very much, but the illegal immigrants in many cases came across Deep Bay, and during the autumn it was a rare outing on which one did not see some on the marshes. Gurkhas patrolled the marshes at night, and helicopters swept low overhead during the day. This does not, I am glad to say, appear to have affected the birds in the least, and the Recorder will be able to produce as impressive a string of records as usual. But pressure of sheer numbers of people on the countryside is inevitably taking its toll. Forest and grass fires seem to increase, and autumn 1979 was very dry, so the increase was perhaps greater than usual. So-called village houses and Spanish-type villas are springing up all over the countryside, and because the Government totally lacks control over such development, much space is wasted, and land, our scarcest resource, is not being put to best utilisation. The Country Parks, too, may have opened up much of the countryside to the people, but they have tended to close it to the birds. There just is no way in which the large numbers of people visiting the countryside can be controlled without a vastly expanded parks service; rubbish proliferates, fires break out in many areas, and the suitable habitats for birds, and even for plants in some areas, are being destroyed.

This Society has been critical of Government's efforts at conservation of the countryside almost since it was founded, and we have seen little to make us change our opinion. It is perhaps ironic that if our proposals for an educational reserve at Mai Po had been heeded when they were first made, the resulting system of fences would have drastically reduced the number of illegal immigrants getting into Hongkong. It is still not too late to save Mai Po, and perhaps the influx of illegals may succeed in doing what conservationists have signally failed to do, secure a properly managed reserve on the border, which would be of even greater educational benefit as much of the rest of the countryside is destroyed.

From the number of records submitted this year there appears to have been a fall off in activity which has been steadily growing over the past few years. However, a very wide range of species was still recorded and after the normal careful vetting by the Records Committee the total number of species accepted was 262 excluding all those not specifically identified and all the suspected escapes under Category E. Four new species were added to Category A of the Hong Kong List one of them having previously been in Category 'F'. These comprised a Common Ringed Plover seen at San Tin in April, two Ruddy Shelduck at San Tin in November, a Yellow-throated Bunting at Ho Chung in December and a Tiger Shrike (from Category 'F'), these additions were not totally unexpected as the last three named at least are known to winter across South China, including the Hongkong area. Four species were also added to Category E, including three parrots, namely Grey-headed Parakeet, Alexandrine Parakeet and Cockatiel and a Black-rumped Waxbill.

Records for successful or suspected breeding were also lower this year, especially of the rarer species. Watercock were thought to have bred again in the same area as the previous year. Swinhoe's Egrets returned again to Yim Tso Ha and were seen to nest along with the commoner species. The egretty at Mai Po was well utilised again but both these egrettries suffered very seriously during Typhoon 'Hope' in early August with most nests being destroyed. However, by this time, the main breeding activity was over.

The year was made more memorable by the number of rarities seen. These included the return of a White Stork in the autumn, a male Common Pochard, Brown Hawk-owl, White-throated Needletails, Sooty and Black-naped Terns, Ancient Auk, Chinese Babax, increased sightings of Black Bazas, Hainan Blue Flycatchers and Black Vultures. Additionally there were also such seldom recorded species as Chinese Pitta, Water Rail and Orange-headed Ground-thrush. The spring wader passage was also extremely good with most species being recorded, however, the autumn was something of a disappointment, the high level of disturbance on the Mai Po Marshes due to the anti-illegal immigrant drive perhaps having something to do with this. An unusual number of wader species were also recorded in mid-summer this year. A monthly summary is given below:—

### JANUARY

Three Black Stork returned again this year in the first week of the month. The wintering flock of Black-winged Stilts remained in the San Tin/Lok Ma Chau area. The Slaty-legged Crake, discovered the previous



month at Pokfulam, remained in the area until the 4th. Three Yellow-bellied Tits were found at Ma Cheuk Leng, but this species was rare this year. Mong Tseng area of Deep Bay produced 33 Red-breasted Mergansers and a Great Crested Grebe. A co-ordinated water fowl count was made on the 14th and proved very successful with 45 species being identified.

## FEBRUARY

At least four pairs of Tufted Duck were found at San Tin and good numbers of Pintail, mainly males. A Common Gull was seen at Pak Nai, our third record only. Several Brown-headed Gulls were seen, always singly, and the second record only of an Ancient Auk off Lamma Island. Thrushes and flycatchers were not common with several surges of cold weather tending to disrupt the normal patterns.

## MARCH

Red-necked Phalaropes were seen in small flocks in West Lamma Channel. A Common Gull was again seen at Pak Nai. Thrushes and flycatchers became more common with an Orange-headed Ground-thrush being seen on Cheung Chau. A very successful Society Outing to Lantau produced a rare Brown Hawk-owl, a Grey-faced Buzzard-eagle, Blue and White Flycatchers, Oriental Pratincoles, a Water Rail and several other hard-to-find species. This visit proved that Lantau is very definitely under-researched and future outings to the island are being planned. A White-throated Needletail was seen at Sek Kong, this being the second record for Hongkong. The passage of a cold front in the middle of the month resulted in a small fall of migrant waders at Kai Tak.

## APRIL

The large, shallow ponds at San Tin were proving more favourable to our waders than those at Mai Po and during the month very large flocks, several thousand strong, could be found there. On the 14th., during a Society Outing, some 36 species of waders were recorded, including a single Common Ringed Plover, a first for Hongkong. On that day too several members recorded over 100 species each. There was a good variety of flycatchers to be found especially at Ho Sheung Heung, which held Japanese Paradise, Narcissus, Blue and White, Brown, and Robin Flycatchers. A Red-winged Crested Cuckoo was also recorded from this wood. There were two further records of White-throated Needletails during the month, seen during the onset of a cold front. Record numbers of Black-winged Stilts were recorded at San Tin with 73 there on the 7th. The passage of a severe cold front on the 2nd. resulted in a very heavy fall of migrant waders at Kai Tak and a number of waders were recorded elsewhere, Oriental Pratincoles being particularly widespread in urban Kowloon. Also at Kai Tak were unprecedented numbers of White Wagtails.

## MAY

39 Asiatic Dowitchers at San Tin was a new record high for this endangered species. Sand Martins were seen over Mai Po with a record number of 120 in mid-month. The Black Bazas and Large Hawk-cuckoos returned to the Tai Po Kau/Shing Mun areas. A flock of Blue-tailed Bee-Eaters was seen on Cheung Chau. Most regular wader migrants were seen including a Spoon-billed Sandpiper.

## JUNE

Single Chestnut Bitterns and three Pied Kingfishers were recorded at Luk Keng. Crested Buntings and a Jay were found on Tai Mo Shan but the high point of the month was the finding of two David's Hill-warblers and their nest, containing four very young nestlings, which was photographed. This was the first positive evidence of this species breeding in Hongkong.

## JULY

A Red-winged Crested Cuckoo was seen at Sek Kong, this being the second summer record of this species. Chinese Babax were found on Tai Mo Shan and a Slaty-backed Forktail seen in Tai Po Kau Forest. This is the second record of this species, both in the same area but the first sighting occurred in mid-winter! A Black Baza was seen in the Lam Tsuen valley in mid-month and at Lok Ma Chau waders such as Redshank, Little Ringed Plovers, Long-toed Stints, Common and Wood Sandpipers were found. Yellow-nib Ducks and an Osprey were seen at Mai Po Marsh at month's end.

## AUGUST

Generally a fairly quiet month but on the 6th. several Yellow-nib Ducks were on the Marshes together with a strange buzzard, a White Ibis and one Caspian Tern. On the same day a Red-winged Crested Cuckoo was seen at Ho Sheung Heung. Forest Wagtails were seen and wader records included Black-tailed Godwits, Redshank, Rufous-necked Stints, Watercock and Marsh Sandpipers.

## SEPTEMBER

Usually such a good month, was a disappointment this year, especially as regards wader migrants, until the last week when they started turning up again at San Tin in good numbers. The Mai Po Marshes were exceptionally poor, due to the previously mentioned disturbance plus the low flying activities of searching helicopters. Flycatchers, especially Brown, were found in good numbers at month's end. Large flocks of terns, generally not specifically identified, were seen in the West Lamma Channel and adjacent areas. A very heavy south-westerly movement of birds was recorded by Air-Traffic Control staff on the radar at Kai Tak on the night of 27/28th. and the following day a wide variety of species was recorded at Kai Tak and a considerable number of Brown Flycatchers were seen at Ho Man Tin.



## OCTOBER

A White's Thrush and four Red Turtle-doves were seen on Cheung Chau, an immature Herring Gull in Mirs Bay and three Japanese Quail on Ping Chau, Mirs Bay. A further Japanese Quail was recorded at Kowloon Tong. Several species of ducks and waders were to be found, especially at San Tin, but now also at Mai Po Marsh, by month's end.

## NOVEMBER

The month was highlighted by the sighting of two Ruddy Shelduck at San Tin which were seen by several members. This is the first record for Hongkong, although there is no reason why they should not turn up regularly. They only stayed a few days and this perhaps accounts for their not being seen before.

A White Stork over Mai Po was also memorable, being the second only confirmed sighting of the species. Wader species were generally poor but the numbers of Spotted Redshank grew up to 300. Teal and Coot numbers also increased dramatically and stayed high throughout the winter. Woodlands produced a few Treepies, Scarlet Minivets and Chestnut Buntings. A cold front passed through mid-month and with it the number of woodland species increased, with 51 species being found at She Shan and the adjacent areas on 17th.

## DECEMBER

A generally dry and warm month but bird species were plentiful. Cormorant numbers were very high over Deep Bay where at least 600 could be counted. Teal and Coot numbers were high but waders both in numbers and variety were poor. Thrushes were not numerous but were varied with Eye-browed and Dusky Thrushes being found. Scarlet and Grey-throated Minivets were seen in Tai Po Kau Forest in good numbers, together with Jays and a Red-tailed Robin. Red-flanked Bluetails and Daurian Redstarts were more common this autumn. At least three Black Vultures were in the Crest Hill area, together with up to four juvenile Imperial Eagles at month's end. San Tin produced our second Common Pochard record when a fully-plumaged male was seen here on the 9th. The 16th., during an outing to Ho Chung, produced another new species for Hongkong when a Yellow-throated Bunting was seen, again a bird which should be found here as it is known to winter across this part of South China. A single White Stork was seen several times during the month both on the Marshes and at Lok Ma Chau.

The Systematic List incorporates records from the following observers:—

H.G. Ackford; J.E. Baker; M.A. Barker; Dr. R.J. Barnes; E.A. Barnes; C.P. Barnes; I.D. Bell; D.P. Carthy; M.L. Chalmers; A. Cheung; K.K. Chiu; J.E.A. Cleary; M.J. Cleary; P.J. Coope; G.C.H. Cooper; B.W. Finch; C.M. Francis; Supt. D.J. Galloway; T.P. Garland; F.O.P. Hechtel; C.R. Huxley; P.R.A. Kelly; D.S. Melville; H.C. Ryker; R.M. Spowage; R. Tipper; C.A. Viney; WAN Yip-fat; H. Wat; M.A. Webster; C.D. Weidemann; B.D. Wilson; WONG Pak-hay and YAU Sui-kwan.



## SYSTEMATIC LIST FOR 1979

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

2. **Great Crested Grebe** (*Podiceps cristatus*)  
One in Deep Bay on 1 January, one there on 14 February and 14 off Tsim Bei Tsui, most of which were in summer plumage, on 4 March.
4. **Little Grebe** (*Podiceps ruficollis*)  
Up to ten at Plover Cove until end of February, six at Ho Pui Reservoir, in April and up to four at both San Tin and Mai Po up to early May. The only summer records came from Mai Po. In the second half of the year there were up to seven birds at Plover Cove from early December, at least seven at San Tin on 17 November and three on the Tsing Tam Reservoir on 21 November. Small numbers were also recorded from other widespread ponds and reservoirs during the year.
7. **Dalmatian Pelican** (*Pelecanus crispus*)  
Very small flocks reported from the Deep Bay area between 24 February and 24 March. Maximum count was only five on 25 February. All specifically identified pelicans were of this species.
8. **Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)  
Regularly recorded from the Deep Bay area in good numbers until 14 April, with a maximum count of about 700 over Mai Po on 28 February. Good numbers recorded again in the autumn from 28 October until the year's end, with counts regularly in excess of 500 birds, and a maximum count of 600 + on 31st December over Deep Bay. Smaller numbers were seen during the year from other areas including 35 at Hei Ling Chau on 3 January and about 60 at Plover Cove on 15 November.
12. **Yellow Bittern** (*Ixobrychus sinensis*)  
All but two records are from the Deep Bay Marshes. Numbers rising sharply from the third week in April until maximum counts of over 30 birds were made in July. Numbers fell sharply from the end of August and there were the usual reports of one or two wintering birds. On 18 May a single bird was seen at Little Sai Wan and it stayed there until 29 May. On 19 May a single bird was found at Yim Tso Ha near the Egretty.
13. **Chestnut Bittern** (*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*)  
One at Tai O on 24 March seen by several members during a Society 'Outing' to Lantau. One at Wu Kau Tang on 7 April, and one seen both at Mai Po and Tung Chung, Lantau on 29 April. On 1 May one was flushed in long grass near Little Sai Wan giving an unusual record for Hongkong Island. There was a summer record of a single bird at Mai Po on 28 July, and a later record of two there on 26 September, and there was a single bird at Wu Kau Tang on 6th August. One bird was seen near Sek Kong Village on both 18 September and 2 October.

14. **Black Bittern** (*Dupetor flavicollis*)  
Single birds seen over the Mai Po Marshes on 26 and 27 May.
16. **Bittern** (*Botaurus stellaris*)  
One at Mai Po on 14 January and up to two seen regularly until 14 April. Up to three birds on the Marshes from 28 October.
17. **Night Heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)  
Breeding occurred at Yim Tso Ha Egretty with birds present from 19 April, when about ten birds were seen but numbers rose during the summer and on 18 October there were still some 50 birds in the area and over 80 there on 11 November. There were also good numbers at Mai Po through the year with 153 counted on 14 January, over 100 there on 21 July and again on 28 October.
18. **Chinese Pond Heron** (*Ardeola bacchus*)  
Common throughout the year in marshy or low-lying areas of the New Territories and along muddy shorelines. Also recorded singly from Kowloon and Cheung Chau. Good numbers were also reported nesting at Yim Tso Ha Egretty although no proper count was made. A leucistic bird was again noted at San Tin/Lok Ma Chau during January and again on 5 November.
19. **Cattle Egret** (*Bubulcus ibis*)  
Commonly seen throughout the year especially across the northern part of the New Territories. Very much more common in the summer months with at least 850 flying in to roost in the mangroves at the top of the Mai Po Marshes on 24 July. Bred in good numbers at Yim Tso Ha again although no exact tally was made. Odd birds were also recorded at Kai Tak between April and November.
20. **Little Green Heron** (*Butorides striatus*)  
Recorded at Mai Po from 14 April to 27 October with a maximum of at least seven birds on 29 April. On 6 January two birds seen near Brides Pool and throughout the year up to two birds were regularly seen both at Sek Kong Village and on the Tsing Tam Reservoir. There were three birds at Ho Chung on 2 June and one there on 16 December. One at Kai Tak on 28 September. Five birds seen at Shing Mun on 8 April, one at Ting Kau on 3 May and one at Shing Mun again on 6 December.
21. **Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*)  
Common throughout the year in the northern New Territories, particularly in the Deep Bay area. Good numbers again bred at the egretty at Mai Po wood but no proper tally was made. A smaller number also nested at Yim Tso Ha. A 'grey-phase' bird was again seen this year, on 6 August.
22. **Lesser Egret** (*Egretta intermedia*)  
Four at Lok Ma Chau on 6 January and one at Mai Po Marsh on both 11 February and 14 April (GCHC). One at San Tin on 11 December (CDW).



- 23. Swinhoe's Egret** (*Egretta eulophotes*)  
Two adult birds seen at Yim Tso Ho Egrettry between 19 April and 8 June. On the first sighting one bird was seen carrying nesting material and on 26 May the birds were seen at the nest.
- (21/23. Egret Sp.** (*Egretta garzetta/intermedia/eulophotes*)  
One egret, not specifically identified, was recorded at Kai Tak on 6 May).
- 24. Reef Egret** (*Egretta sacra*)  
Single birds and small groups of up to three birds seen around rocky shorelines through the year. Most records come from the outlying islands, Kai Tak, the southern shore of Hongkong and Starling Inlet.
- 25. Great Egret** (*Egretta alba*)  
At least 70 recorded in Deep Bay area up to 27 May and up to 60 from 21 July, although generally smaller numbers were seen. Three nests were seen at Yim Tso Ha, one of which held three nestlings.
- 26. Grey Heron** (*Ardea cinerea*)  
Present in the Deep Bay area up to 6 May and from 6 August with maximum numbers of over 70 on 25 February and 140+ on 12 November. One at Luk Keng on 6 January.
- 27. Purple Heron** (*Ardea purpurea*)  
Up to five at Mai Po until 6 May and similar numbers there from early August until the end of the year, but with maximum counts of about ten on 6 May and nine on 26 September. On 24 July towards dusk there was a movement down the Shum Chun River from the east, of about 25 birds moving singly or in small groups.
- 28. White Stork** (*Ciconia ciconia*)  
One at Mai Po on 27 October, (RMS/MAB), and one at Lok Ma Chau on 16 December, (GCHC). The birds seen were of the sub-species *C.c. boyciana*, the 'black-billed' race, an endangered sub-species. This is the first record of the species since 1967 and only the second fully documented record for Hongkong.
- 29. Black Stork** (*Ciconia nigra*)  
At least two and possibly three birds over the Shum Chun river on 1 January and three birds soaring over Lok Ma Chau on 6 January.
- 30. White Ibis** (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*)  
Up to two at Mai Po until 29 April and one from 21 July, but three birds seen on 2 December.
- 31. European Spoonbill** (*Platalea leucorodia*)  
Only one record of one bird at Mai Po on 14 January.

- 32. Lesser Spoonbill** (*Platalea minor*)  
Four at Mai Po on 14 January and single birds in the Deep Bay area until 14 March and from 27 October to 2 December.
- (31/32. Spoonbill Sp.** (*Platalea leucorodia/minor*)  
Spoonbills which were not specifically identified were all seen at Mai Po. Four there on 11 February, and five there on 15 February, which were probably Lessers. One there on 14 April and two on 21 April which were also possibly Lessers).
- 34. Yellow-nib Duck** (*Anas poecilorhyncha*)  
All records are from Mai Po. 15 there on 14 January, 8 on 28 February and one on 6 May. Seen again from 21 July and in increasingly large numbers up to a maximum count of 66 on 31 December.
- 35. Gadwall** (*Anas strepera*)  
One male and two females at San Tin on 30 January and two there on 4 February. Four female/immatures at Mai Po on 30 October.
- 36. Falcated Teal** (*Anas falcata*)  
Two males and a female at Mai Po on 28 February, six on 29 April and 13 on 6 May. Both the two latter dates are new late dates for the species. The only record for the second half of the year was of a flock of 11 females and one male at San Tin on 11 December.
- 37. Teal** (*Anas crecca*)  
Common in the Deep Bay area up to 6 May and from 27 October, with an early record for 27 August. Maximum numbers were 1000+ at Mai Po on 14 January with a further 800+ at San Tin on the same day and about 1000 at San Tin on 6 November.
- 39. Garganey** (*Anas querquedula*)  
Recorded from the Deep Bay area from 14 April to 19 May, but with earlier records of three at San Tin on 14 January, two there on 14 March and seven in flight near Ping Chau Island, Lantau on 24 March. Also on 5 & 14 April flocks of about 60 were seen over the sea. Again seen in the Deep Bay area from 8 September until 25 November. Between 12 and 15 October a flock of about 20 was seen in Tolo Harbour near Tai Po Kau. Maximum number seen was 410 at San Tin on 7 April. There was one summer record of a single bird at Kai Tak on 1 June.
- 40. Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*)  
Up to three in the Deep Bay area from 24 February until 6 May, a new late date, including at least two full males. There were 14 birds at Mai Po on 28 February. A flock returned to Mai Po from 28 October and this numbered 17 by 31 December and included 3 full males.
- 41. Pintail** (*Anas acuta*)  
Commonly recorded in the Deep Bay area up to 25 February with a maximum number of over 120 at San Tin on 30 January of which at least 70



were males. There were two females there on 7 April, a new late date and a most unusual record of 13 birds at Mai Po on 6 May. Not so commonly recorded in the following autumn but small numbers of up to 10 birds were seen in the Deep Bay area from 28 October until the end of the year.

**42. Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*)

Fairly common this year in the Deep Bay area up to 21 April with high counts of about 150 birds between 10 and 25 February. Again commonly noted from 28 October with a high count of 100 on 10 November.

**46. Tufted Duck** (*Aythya fuligula*)

Four males and four females seen together on the ponds at San Tin on 30 January. On 4 February at least five and possibly six pairs at San Tin but only three birds seen there on 11 February. The only autumn sighting was of one male and two females on Deep Bay off Tsim Bei Tsui.

**47. Common Pochard** (*Aythya ferina*)

One full-plumaged male well seen on the ponds at San Tin on 9 December, (GCHC, PRAK et al). This is only the second record of this species for Hongkong, the previous sighting, also of a male, occurring in 1970.

**49. Red-breasted Merganser** (*Mergus serrator*)

33 on Deep Bay off Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 January, about 60 there on 25 February and about 14 there on 10 March. Three females were at Lo So Shing, Lamma Island on 20 February and one at Tung Chung, Lantau on 25 February. There were two birds recorded at San Tin on 24 November which is also a new early date for the species. On 31 December, there were about 80 near Tsim Bei Tsui, of which less than ten were adult males.

**50. Shelduck** (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Regularly recorded from the Deep Bay area and San Tin up to 28 April, with a maximum count of about 90 off Tsim Bei Tsui on 10 February. Recorded again in good numbers from 28 October, a new early date, with maximum counts of up to 250 on Deep Bay in early December.

**50.1. Ruddy Shelduck** (*Tadorna ferruginea*)

Two birds were seen swimming on a pond at San Tin on 5 and 6 November (GCHC, DSM, RT, CAV). This is the first record for Hongkong.

The following description was noted:— "Very large ducks, their size and colour making them conspicuous at a distance. Plumage was generally bright and very conspicuous orangey-buff, their heads and upper necks were whitish, one being more sullied brown than the other, flight feathers and tail were black, wing lining white. The bill and eye was black. They were only seen swimming."

This species has a very wide range from Europe through Asia including the west and north of China. Its wintering grounds are known to cover most of China south of the Yangtse River to the South China Sea.

**55. Black Kite** (*Milvus migrans*)

Common and widespread in all months with increased numbers during the winter months, particularly at traditional roosting sites such as Luen Yick, near Plover Cove where up to 100 birds were counted in December. Kai Tak airport had a high count of 26 on 12 February.

**56. Black Baza** (*Aviceda leuphotes*)

Up to three at Shing Mun between 4 May and 2 July and one at Ng Tung Chai, Lam Tsuen Valley on 14 July.

**57. Buzzard** (*Buteo buteo*)

Regularly recorded, mostly single birds, until 14 April and from 26 November. Unusual records are of a single bird at Tai Po after T.S. Hope on August and over ten, in variable plumage and mostly perched in trees, at Lo Wu on 17 November, prior to the passage of a cold front. A buzzard seen at Mai Po on 6 August, at close range, could not positively be identified as this species. Other records were of one at Mid-Levels 9 November and two at Mai Po 25 October.

**58. Sparrowhawk** (*Accipiter nisus*)

Single birds reported from Mong Tseng, Tsing Lung Tau and the Fan Ling Golf Course up to 14 April and one at Sek Kong on 28 October. All were probably *A. nisus* but the possibility of *A. gularis/virgatus/badius* cannot be ruled out.

**(61. Horsfield's Goshawk** (*Accipiter soloensis*)

One bird probably this species at Cheung Chau on 24 September (CDW).)

**63. Imperial Eagle** (*Aquila heliaca*)

Fairly well recorded with at least two adults and four immatures in the Lok Ma Chau, Long Valley, Fan Ling area during January, one adult at Mong Tseng on 25 February and two immatures at Long Valley on 4 March. One immature at Mai Po on 30 October and two, possibly four, immatures in the Mai Po/Crest Hill area throughout December.

**64. Steppe Eagle** (*Aquila rapax*)

One immature at San Tin on 14 March.

**66. Bonelli's Eagle** (*Hieraetus fasciatus*)

Recorded regularly from widespread areas up to 14 April and again from 1 December, usually in pairs but occasionally with immatures present. The only sightings outside these periods were of one at Tai Mo Shan on 2 June and one at Kai Tak on 18 September.

**67. White-bellied Sea-Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*)

Single birds or pairs and single immatures reported throughout the year from offshore islands, Tolo Harbour, Mirs Point, Hongkong Island, Victoria Harbour, Ting Kau and Ho Chung.



- 68. Grey-faced Buzzard-Eagle** (*Butastur indicus*)  
One adult bird well seen in flight and at rest at Pui O, Lantau on 24 March, during a Society 'Outing'. Three also reported from Clearwater Bay on 6 October.
- 69. Serpent Eagle** (*Spilornis cheela*)  
An immature at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 6 January, one adult at Ho Chung on 3 March, one at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 13 October and two at Wong Chuk Yueng on 16 December.
- 70. Marsh Harrier** (*Circus aeruginosus*)  
Several wintered at Mai Po up to 16 April and from 27 October with a maximum count of three birds being seen at any one time. All records were of females or immatures.
- 71. Pied Harrier** (*Circus melanoleucos*)  
One male at Mai Po on 25 February.
- 73. Black Vulture** (*Aegypius monachus*)  
Up to three in the Lok Ma Chau/Crest Hill area between 23 and 31 December.
- 74. Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*)  
Up to two in the Deep Bay area until 27 May and again from 6 October, with a summer record of one bird there on 21 July. One at Plover Cove Reservoir until 24 March and from 1 September. One at Hei Ling Chau on 6 May.
- 75. Hobby** (*Falco subbuteo*)  
One at Cheung Chau on 15 September and one at Kowloon, K.G. V School, on 11 October.
- 76. Peregrine Falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*)  
Records, mostly of single birds, up to 18 April and again from 21 October, from widespread areas. There were no summer records.
- 78. Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*)  
Up to three birds recorded regularly from widespread areas until 11 May. One at Fan Lau Point, Lantau on 16 September and up to four from widespread areas from 2 October. In November, at Mount Nicholson, a pair were heard calling and seen displaying.
- 79. Chinese Francolin** (*Francolinus pintadeanus*)  
Recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories, and Hongkong Island in the Mt. Nicholson area. Often heard but seldom actually seen. Was conspicuously absent from the Fan Ling Golf Course where it is normally to be found in good numbers. A female with two young at Tai Mo Shan on 30 June.

- 80. Japanese Quail** (*Coturnix japonica*)  
One at Kai Tak on 19 and 20 May and two there on 23 May. One at Kai Tak on 5 October, up to three on Ping Chau Island, Mirs Bay on 12 and 13 October and one in Kowloon Tong on 17 October. This latter bird hit the side of the observer's house at 11:30 p.m. and was then taken and killed by his dog. He was thus able to view it in the hand.
- 84. Water Rail** (*Rallus aquaticus*)  
One at Tai O, Lantau on 24 March, seen during a Society Outing.
- 85. Banded Rail** (*Rallus striatus*)  
Up to two at Mai Po until 6 May. Two in the Ho Sheung Heung area on 18 April and one at San Tin on 20 April. One at Tung Chung, Lantau on 29 April. Thereafter there were no records other than of one bird at Mai Po on 28 October and three separate birds there on 31 December.
- 85.1 Slaty-legged Crake** (*Rallina eurizonoides*)  
The bird that first appeared in late December, 1978, was again seen on 3 and 4 January.
- 88. Crimson-legged Crake** (*Amaurornis akool*)  
Two seen near Wu Kau Tang on 3 March.
- 89. White-breasted Waterhen** (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*)  
Commonly recorded throughout the year from widespread areas of the New Territories with occasional records from the outlying islands.
- 90. Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*)  
Recorded regularly throughout the year, mainly from the northern New Territories, but with some records from the outlying islands. Over 17 were counted at San Tin on 21 April and about 20 there in the autumn.
- 91. Watercock** (*Gallicrex cinerea*)  
Two males at Lok Ma Chau on 27 May, one male seen there on 7 July, 2 female/immatures in the same area on 27 August and one female/immature there on 2 September. Two males and a female at Luk Keng on 6 August and one male with two females there on 8 August.
- 92. Coot** (*Fulica atra*)  
Single birds seen during the summer again, at San Tin and Mai Po on 14 and 21 July. Otherwise regularly recorded in good numbers up until 6 May and from 27 October, in the Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau areas, with maximum counts of about 800 on 24 February and 350 plus by the end of December, which are very much higher figures than in 1978. Also up to 14 at Plover Cove until end of February and up to ten there from 9 December.
- 93. Pheasant-tailed Jacana** (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*)  
Up to two at Lok Ma Chau/San Tin until 22 April and up to three there from 10 November. There were no summer records.



**96. Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)  
Two at Mai Po on 6 February.

**97. Grey-headed Lapwing** (*Vanellus cinereus*)  
Up to two birds at Lok Ma Chau until 13 April and again from 16 December, but a flock of 13 was reported there on 28 December. One at Kai Tak on 9 November, 19 at Long Valley on 8 December and three there on 29 December. Two at Mong Tseng on 26 December.

**98.1 Common Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius hiaticula*)  
One bird seen at San Tin, during a Society Outing, on 14 April (GCHC, TPG, HGA). This is the first record for Hongkong.

The following description was noted: — “Similar to Little Ringed Plover but appeared bigger and better looking, standing out well from the many waders present. Underparts were white with a solid black breast band which was noticeably thicker at its outer, lower wedges, the black continued in a ring around the back of the neck, above which was a white collar. A black line went from the base of the bill through and to the rear of the eye. Forehead was white with a black line above it. The brown of the crown then met this black line. There was no intervening white line as in the Little Ringed Plover. The wings and mantle were brown. When flushed into a short flight the wing bar was clearly seen. The bill was orange, tipped black and the legs were orange.

This species has a very wide range including Africa, Eurasia and West Pakistan. In S.E. Asia known as a rare migrant to West Burma and Malaya. Could occur in Hongkong though rarely. Has been netted in Korea (King).

**99. Little Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius dubius*)  
Regularly recorded from the Deep Bay area until 10 May and again from 27 August. Numbers were generally below 30 but 82 were counted on 14 January. There was also a summer record of 14 birds at Lok Ma Chau on 14 July. Also seen in all months, except December, at Kai Tak with a high count of 18 on 3 April.

**100. Kentish Plover** (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)  
Regularly recorded from Kai Tak and widespread areas of the New Territories, particularly in the Deep Bay area, until 18 May and from 21 September. Flocks of about 500 were seen at Mai Po on 14 January, 115 on 2 November at Pak Nai and 257 near Lau Fau Shan on 31 December. Regular counts at Kai Tak gave maximum numbers of 131 on 12 January and 97 on 16 November.

**101. Greater Sand-plover** (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)  
Reported from the Mai Po/San Tin areas between 10 April and 6 May, generally in small numbers but with a high count of about 150 at San Tin on 10 April. Also recorded in small numbers from Kai Tak between 27 March and 3 August with a high count of 11 on 3 May. The only autumn records were of about ten birds at Mai Po on 1 September and one there on 9 and 10 September.

**102. Mongolian Sand-plover** (*Charadrius mongolus*)  
Seen in small numbers at Mai Po and San Tin between 10 April and 6 May, the highest count of about 60 being noted on the latter date. In the autumn, up to four at Mai Po on 1 September and one at Lau Fau Shan on 31 December, 5 at Pak Nai on 2 November. Regular counts were made at Kai Tak of sightings between 27 March and 14 May, with a high of 18 on 28 March. Four were seen there also on 28 September.

**(101/102. Sand-plover Sp.** (*Charadrius leschenaultii/mongolus*)  
Records for sand-plovers, not specifically identified, fell between 7 April and 19 May for San Tin and Pak Nai and between 6 and 9 April for Kai Tak. There was also a single autumn record of five birds there on 19 September).

**103. Oriental Plover** (*Charadrius veredus*)  
Regularly recorded at Kai Tak between 20 March and 8 May and between 1 September and 26 October. Maximum counts were 11 on 28 March and 28 on 24 September when an additional 20 were killed by aircraft.

**104. Grey Plover** (*Pluvialis squatarola*)  
Recorded at Kai Tak in ones and twos between 27 March and 11 April. Otherwise only recorded from the Deep Bay area, where it was regularly seen until 6 May, with a maximum count of 70 in one flock on 27 February. Only two autumn records of two birds at Mai Po on 25 November and 27 birds on the mud off Tsim Bei Tsui on 26 December.

**105. Asiatic Golden Plover** (*Pluvialis dominicus*)  
One at Tung Chung, Lantau, on 24 March. Recorded in small numbers at Mai Po and San Tin between 10 April and 27 May with a high of six at Mai Po on 21 April. Autumn birds were seen between 26 September and 25 November with a high count of three on 18 November. Regular counts were made at Kai Tak with records occurring 9 March to 22 May and from 7 September to 12 October. Maximum numbers were 45 on 6 April and eight on 21 September.

**106. Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*)  
Recorded in small numbers at Mai Po and San Tin between 14 April and 6 May with a high count of about 15 at San Tin on 5 May. Recorded at Kai Tak between 6 April and 11 May and between 3 August and 28 September. Maximum numbers seen were seven on 4 May and three on 24 September.

**107. Fantail Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*)  
Recorded from widespread areas of the northern New Territories but mainly the Mai Po/San Tin and Lok Ma Chau area. Also recorded in small numbers at Kai Tak in late March and early April. Extreme dates were until 6 May, a new late date, and from 16 September. Maximum counts were over 20 at Lok Ma Chau on 6 January and 25 February and over 30 at Long Valley on 29 December. A bird seen at KGV School in Kowloon on two dates in April is somewhat unusual.



**108. Pintail Snipe** (*Gallinago stenura*)  
Single birds recorded at Kai Tak on 28 March and 3 and 6 April.

**109. Swinhoe's Snipe** (*Gallinago megala*)  
Single birds recorded at Kai Tak on 27 March and on the 1, 18 and 28 September.

**(107/108/109. Snipe Sp.** (*Gallinago gallinago/stenura/megala*)  
Snipe, not specifically identified but which could have been any of the above three species, were recorded San Tin on 14 April and at Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau between 27 August and 16 December, all such records being of one or two birds. Also two at Mong Tseng on 26 December. An exceptionally large group of 74 at Kai Tak on 6 April.)

**112. Woodcock** (*Scolopax rusticola*)  
Two at Tai Po Kau on 6 January and single birds at Ho Sheung Heung and Sek Kong between 6 January and 25 February. In the autumn single birds were recorded from 3 November onwards at Fan Ling, Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, Sek Kong, Beas River and Mong Tseng.

**113. Curlew** (*Numenius arquata*)  
Recorded regularly in fairly small numbers until 29 April and again from 8 August in the Deep Bay area. Maximum numbers were about 20 on 10 January and over 40 on 10 November.

**114. Australian Curlew** (*Numenius madagascariensis*)  
Two at Mai Po Marsh on 21 April.

**115. Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*)  
One at Kai Tak on 4 May and up to six there between 5 September and 5 October. One at Starling Inlet on 24 February and three at Mai Po on 14 April. Up to seven regularly at Mai Po between 8 August and 16 September, but 18 there on 8 September.

**116. Little Whimbrel** (*Numenius minutus*)  
Two at Kai Tak on 4 May.

**117. Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*)  
One near Tai Mei Tuk on 29 March. Flocks of up to 16 reported at Mai Po and up to 65 at San Tin between 10 April and 19 May with maximum numbers on 14 April. Up to seven at Lok Ma Chau and five at Mai Po between 8 August and 24 November.

**118. Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*)  
One at Mai Po on 14 April. Seen in small numbers at San Tin between 7 and 20 April with 20 there on the latter date. Four at Mai Po on 26 August and one at San Tin on 30 September, the former date being a new early date for the species.

**119. Asiatic Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*)  
Up to three at Mai Po between 14 and 21 April. Also recorded in good numbers at San Tin between 4 April and 16 May with a maximum count of 39 on 5 May; this is also a new high count for Hongkong. One at Mai Po on 8 August and one there on 10 September.

**120. Green Sandpiper** (*Tringa ochropus*)  
Widespread throughout the New Territories up to 27 April and from 6 August. Usually seen singly or in small numbers, but over ten at Long Valley in late December.

**121. Wood Sandpiper** (*Tringa glareola*)  
Commonly recorded from marshy areas in the New Territories and on Lantau up to 6 May and from 14 July, a new early date for the species. Generally numbers appeared smaller this year, perhaps due to the destruction of the marshy land at Lok Ma Chau, but 'several hundred' were estimated to be at San Tin on 30 September. Regular counts kept at Kai Tak and was recorded between 2 April and 14 May and between 10 August and 24 September. The highest count of 164 was made on 4 April, following the passage of a severe cold front.

**122. Redshank** (*Tringa totanus*)  
Regularly recorded at Mai Po, San Tin and Lok Ma Chau on spring passage between 7 April and 27 May and rather less frequently in autumn from 6 August to 30 September. There was also one summer record of a flock of 14 at Lok Ma Chau on 21 July. Numbers had increased to about 200 by 5 May and about 100 by 30 September. Regular counts made at Kai Tak between 20 March and 3 May with a high of 4 on 6 April. The only autumn record was of two there on 24 August.

**123. Spotted Redshank** (*Tringa erythropus*)  
Common in the Deep Bay area up to 27 May and from 9 September with flocks in excess of 100 regularly seen. Maximum numbers were about 660 at San Tin on 14 January and about 300 on 17 November. One was recorded at Kai Tak on 14 November.

**124. Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*)  
Up to 20 regularly recorded in the Deep Bay area until 31 May with 28 recorded on 28 February and 45 at Mai Po on 14 April. Rather less common in the autumn being recorded between 9 September and 26 December with about 20 in the Mai Po/San Tin area on 18 November. There is a record of four birds at Lantau on 25 March. Single birds were seen at Kai Tak in early April and late September.

**126. Marsh Sandpiper** (*Tringa stagnatilis*)  
Recorded in high numbers between 30 January and 19 May with maximum numbers reaching about 150 at San Tin on 10 April, which is very much higher than any previously recorded. There were fewer records in the autumn but recorded from San Tin between 27 August and 25 November with maximum numbers reaching about 30 on 30 September. One recorded at Kai Tak on 4 April.



- 127. Common Sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*)  
Common and widespread up to 6 May and from 15 August. There were, however, several summer records throughout July of up to three birds at Yim Tso Ha, San Tin and Mai Po Marsh. Also recorded throughout the year at Kai Tak with a maximum count of 39 on 4 May.
- 128. Grey-rumped Sandpiper** (*Heteroscelus brevipes*)  
One at San Tin, one at Mai Po, two at Chek Lap Kok and two at Sha Tau Kok on 6 May. One at Ma Wan on 4 August and one at Cheung Chau on 24 September. Recorded at Kai Tak between 27 April and 18 May with a high of eight on 4 May. Also between 21 August and 2 November with a high count of nine on 28 September.
- 129. Terek Sandpiper** (*Xenus cinereus*)  
Up to 18 regularly recorded between 10 April and 19 May at San Tin and Mai Po but with a high count of 61 at San Tin on 28 April. Also two at Mai Po on 26 August and one at Lok Ma Chau on 9 September.
- 130. Knot** (*Calidris canutus*)  
Up to 10 regularly seen at San Tin and Lok Ma Chau between 28 April and 27 May, but with a high of 62 at San Tin on 28 April and 22 there on 19 May.
- 131. Great Knot** (*Calidris tenuirostris*)  
One at Kai Tak on 6 April, and up to three at San Tin between 14 and 29 April.
- 132. Eastern Little Stint** (*Calidris ruficollis*)  
Large flocks were reported at San Tin and smaller ones at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau between 7 April and 27 May with numbers reaching about 1,500 by 6 May. Autumn records were of seven at Lok Ma Chau on 27 August and about 30 at San Tin on 30 September. Recorded at Kai Tak between 28 March and 4 May with a high count of 41 on 6 April. Also five birds on 11 September and one there on 21 September.
- 133. Long-toed Stint** (*Calidris subminuta*)  
Recorded from Mai Po, San Tin and Lok Ma Chau until 6 May and from 4 September. However there were two unusual summer records of about ten at Lok Ma Chau on 14 July and one there on 21 July. Flocks of over 20 were seen on the spring passage and over 50 on the autumn passage.
- 134. Temminck's Stint** (*Calidris temminckii*)  
Mainly recorded in small numbers from the Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau areas up to 10 April but with an exceptionally high count of 118 on 14 January at San Tin. Also seen in small numbers from 30 September but with high counts of 27 on 6 November and 30 on 18 December, both flocks seen at San Tin. Two also seen at Kai Tak on 3 April.

- 135. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** (*Calidris acuminata*)  
Recorded regularly on the Deep Bay Marshes between 13 April and 27 May. Maximum numbers were about 25 on 6 May, at San Tin. One at Kai Tak on 4 and 6 there on 6 April. One seen at Kai Tak on 25 September was the only autumn record.
- 136. Dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*)  
Recorded in generally small numbers between 11 February and 6 May, but with a high count of about 50 on 14 March. In the autumn recorded from 30 September, again in small numbers but on 2 December a flock of about 300 was reported, at Mai Po. 17 at Tai Po on December.
- 137. Curlew Sandpiper** (*Calidris ferruginea*)  
Regularly recorded from the Deep Bay Marshes, during the spring passage, between 7 April and 27 May, with numbers rising to about 500 at San Tin on 10 April. In the autumn only seen on 30 September and 24-25 November when over 30 were reported at San Tin. Up to 14 recorded at Kai Tak between 3 and 6 April.
- 138. Sanderling** (*Crocethia alba*)  
One at San Tin between 28 April and 6 May. One at Kai Tak on 4 May.
- 139. Spoon-billed Sandpiper** (*Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*)  
One at San Tin on 29 April and one seen there again on 19 May.
- 140. Broad-billed Sandpiper** (*Limicola falcinellus*)  
Recorded from 7 April to 19 May at Mai Po and San Tin with numbers reaching about 50 by 6 May, in one flock at the latter location. Two at San Tin on 30 September was the only autumn record.
- 141. Ruff** (*Philomachus pugnax*)  
The only spring records came from Kai Tak where one was seen on 20 and 21 March. Seen at Lok Ma Chau and San Tin between 31 August and 30 September, the former being a new early date. Numbers had risen to five by the latter date.
- 142. Red-necked Phalarope** (*Phalaropus lobatus*)  
A flock of about 30 near Green Island on 8 March is a new early date. One seen there again on 24 March, and about 13 in the harbour on 12 April. More generally seen in the Mai Po/San Tin area between 10 April and 20 May with up to 25 being recorded at Mai Po by the game wardens on the former date. There were 24 in West Lamma Channel on 23 April and about 150 there on 7 May. A flock of about 30 was seen over the sea at Hei Ling Chau on 19 August and up to three were at San Tin between 31 August and 30 September. One was recorded at Kai Tak on 3 April.
- 143. Black-winged Stilt** (*Himantopus himantopus*)  
The wintering flock remained at San Tin/Lok Ma Chau until 19 May. This flock, which normally numbered between 15 and 20 reached a new



high count of 73 on 7 April. Birds started returning to this area from 27 August reaching a high of 32 on 30 September and remained there in good numbers until the end of the year. There were occasional spring and autumn sightings at Mai Po Marsh.

**144. Avocet** (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

Up to ten birds at San Tin from 18 February until 14 April and up to 13 there between 17 November and 16 December. Over 30 on Deep Bay near Tsim Bei Tsui on 26 December.

**145. Oriental Pratincole** (*Glareola maldivarum*)

Four at Aberdeen on the playing fields on 17 March, 2 at Pui O and about 15 at Tung Chung, Lantau on 24 March, 3 on Sek Kong runway on 27 March. Up to 60 seen over Kowloon in early April and one there in early May. One at Sek Kong again on 9 April and one at Ho Sheung Heung on 13 April. Regularly seen at Mai Po from mid-April until 5 May with a high count of about 200 on 14 April. One on the beach at Ting Kau on 15 May after heavy rain. Regularly recorded at Kai Tak from 9 March through to 5 October with the highest count of 155 occurring on 4 April.

**146. Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*)

Regularly recorded from Victoria Harbour, Deep Bay, Tolo Harbour and the offshore areas up to 12 April and from 13 October. The highest count at the beach roost at Pak Nai was 292 on 10 February and the maximum at Kai Tak was 51 on 23 March.

**147. Common Gull** (*Larus canus*)

One at Pak Nai between 8 February and 20 March. Recorded on three occasions during this period. (MLC, DSM).

**151. Brown-headed Gull** (*Larus brunnicephalus*)

One at Kai Tak on 14 February and one off Stonecutters Island on 8 March. On this last date also an immature was seen off Cheung Chau and an adult in West Lamma Channel.

**152. Black-tailed Gull** (*Larus crassirostris*)

Recorded from widespread areas up to 4 April and from 26 December. Most records were of immatures and the maximum number occurred at Kai Tak on 28 December when 12 were recorded.

**153. Black-headed Gull** (*Larus ridibundus*)

Very common and widespread during the winter months. Extreme dates were until 6 May and from 22 October. An estimated 2,500 were at Tai Po Hoi on 1 February and a similar number at Kai Tak on 28 December.

**154. Saunders' Gull** (*Larus saundersi*)

One in Victoria Harbour on 24 February and two in breeding plumage in Deep Bay on the same day. There were about ten at Mai Po on 14 March.

**156. White-winged Black Tern** (*Chlidonias leucoptera*)

Recorded from widespread areas between 10 March and 21 May with the highest count, of 175, occurring on 20 May in West Lamma Channel. At least one adult occurred off Ting Kau during the passage of S.T.S. Hope, on 2 August giving a new early date for the species. This was the only autumn record.

**157. Whiskered Tern** (*Chlidonias hybrida*)

Two at San Tin from 7 April to 6 May, but with six there on 10 April. Up to four in the Mai Po to San Tin area between 26 August and 30 September. One marsh tern off Ting Kau on 2 August, during S.T.S. Hope.

**158. Gull-billed Tern** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)

Recorded from widespread areas in generally small numbers up to 7 May, but with over 30 reported at Mai Po on 14 April. Some 15 were seen in West Lamma Channel on 4 June and 12 terns in Tolo Harbour on 23 June were probably of this species. The only autumn records were of one at Kai Tak on 3 August and two there on 25 September.

**159. Caspian Tern** (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

Recorded regularly and in good numbers through the spring until late May. On 14 April a large movement was noted across the Mai Po Marshes going generally from west to east, during the forenoon. An accurate count was not possible but there were certainly more than 200 birds present and this represents a new high count for the species. There were no unusual weather conditions. One juvenile seen at Ting Kau on 2 August during S.T.S. Hope and one at Mai Po on 6 August. There were three sightings during November from Pak Nai and San Tin of up to four birds.

**160. Common Tern** (*Sterna hirundo*)

One at Pak Nai on 7 April (MLC). "Commic" terns (*S. hirundo/paradisaea/dougalli*), not specifically identified, were reported as follows: — 38 off Chek Lap Kok on 6 May, up to 160 in West Lamma Channel in the first weeks of August and September and up to 20 there in late September.

**(161. Black-naped Tern** (*Sterna sumatrana*)

A tern, probably this species, was seen during the passage of S.T.S. Hope at Ting Kau on 2 August. (MLC.)

**161.1 Sooty Tern** (*Sterna fuscata*)

Up to 19 seen off Ting Kau on 2 August during the passage of S.T.S. Hope (MLC). This is only the second record for Hongkong, the previous one also occurring in the same area and under similar weather conditions.

**162. Little Tern** (*Sterna albifrons*)

Up to 36 in the Deep Bay and Mai Po Marsh areas between 7 April and 6 May, though figures were generally much lower. Sightings came from



widespread areas including Kai Tak where single birds were seen on 4 and 6 March. One seen at Ting Kau on 2 August during S.T.S. Hope was a new early date. Otherwise only a few records from widespread areas but mainly San Tin between 22 August and 6 November.

**164. Ancient Auk** (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*)

One on 18 February at Lo So Shing, Lamma Island (CAV). This is the second record of this species for Hongkong.

**166. Rufous Turtle-dove** (*Streptopelia orientalis*)

Frequently recorded from widespread areas of New Territories, Lantau and with odd reports from Kowloon and Hongkong Island, up to a new late date of 31 May. The stronghold of the species continued to be at Beas River where a flock of ten was commonly found but a maximum count of 35 noted on 18 April. Autumn records included one in Kowloon on 30 October, about ten at Beas River from 24 November and two at Ho Sheung Heung from 29 December.

**167. Spotted Dove** (*Streptopelia chinensis*)

Common and widespread.

**168. Red Turtle-Dove** (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*)

Six at Mong Tseng on 14 January, two at Lau Fau Shan on 11 March, one at Fan Ling Golf Course on 14 April, one at Kai Tak on 27 April, two at Mai Po on 29 April and one at Cheung Chau on 20 May. In the autumn, one at Cheung Chau on 20 August, three at Mai Po on 10 September, one at Kai Tak on 28 September, 1 at the same place on 5 October, four on Cheung Chau on 11 October and two in Kowloon on 25 October.

**(169/170 Cuckoo/Himalayan Cuckoo)** (*Cuculus canorus/saturatus*)

A bird at Pak Nai on 4 and 10 April could not be specifically identified despite comprehensive field notes.)

**171. Indian Cuckoo** (*Cuculus micropterus*)

Recorded regularly, either singly or in twos, from widespread areas of the New Territories, Cheung Chau, Lantau and Hongkong Island, from 18 April until 16 June. Many records are based on call only. Most records still come from the general Fan Ling area and Golf Course.

**(169/170/171 Cuckoo Sp.)** (*Cuculus canorus/saturatus/micropterus*)

Cuckoos, not specifically identified, were seen from widespread areas of the New Territories, Kowloon and Cheung Chau, between 10 March and 20 May and on 16 September.

**172. Large Hawk-cuckoo** (*Cuculus sparverioides*)

Fairly well recorded again this year, but mainly on call, between 27 April and 7 July with all records coming from the Shing Mun, Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve areas. An estimated four birds were present in this area during May.

**174. Plaintive Cuckoo** (*Cacomantis merulinus*)

Commonly seen or heard in the first seven months of the year but less common thereafter. Recorded from very widespread areas of the New Territories, Kowloon and Mount Nicholson on Hongkong Island. Hepatic females were occasionally seen and to reinforce the point that hepatic birds are female, on 21 April at Ta Kwo Leng a normal plumaged male was seen to mate with an hepatic bird. Immatures were seen on several occasions and on 10 July in the Tai Po Kau Forest one was seen being attended by a Long-tailed Tailor-bird (*Orthotomus sutorius*).

**175. Red-Winged Crested Cuckoo** (*Clamator coromandus*)

One at Ho Sheung Heung wood on 14 April, one in the Sek Kong Woods on 4 July, a probable at Ng Tung Chai in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 14 July and a further record from Ho Sheung Heung on 6 August.

**177. Koel** (*Eudynamis scolopacea*)

Fairly commonly recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories, Kowloon and Mount Nicholson on Hongkong Island, throughout the year, but most commonly noted between March and September.

**178. Greater Coucal** (*Centropus sinensis*)

Quite common and widespread throughout the year. First young seen out of the nest at Bride's Pool on 8 May.

**179. Lesser Coucal** (*Centropus bengalensis*)

Recorded fairly commonly this year, in almost every month, from widespread areas of the New Territories and Lantau. An unusual record was of an immature being picked up dead outside the Lee Gardens Hotel having apparently been hit by a car.

**180. Barred Owlet** (*Glaucidium cuculoides*)

One at Sek Kong Woods on 30 January and one at Tai Lam Chung Reservoir on 30 July. A bird found at the Tai Lung Farm on 7 September was considered an escape.

**182. Collared Scops Owl** (*Otus bakkamoena*)

Two heard and seen throughout the year on Mount Nicholson, but mainly between February and May. Birds also heard calling during January and February on Victoria Peak. One picked up near Bride's Pool on 8 February and later died.

**186. Brown Hawk-owl** (*Ninox scutulata*)

One bird well seen, on a Society Outing, at a wood at Sek Kap Mun, near Tung Chung, Lantau, on 24 March. This was only the fifth sighting of this species for Hongkong. On 5 April an apparently wild bird was picked up at Mei Foo Sun Tsuen with a broken wing and subsequently died. (DSM). On 20 September one bird was seen in a garden at Fan Ling being mobbed by small birds. This appears to be only the second 'autumn' record (GCHC).



**188. Japanese Nightjar** (*Caprimulgus indicus*)

On 15 October one female was handed in to the RSPCA and was released at Tai Po Kau on the following day. Was considered to be a wild bird. (DSM).

**(188/189. Japanese/Savannah Nightjar** (*Caprimulgus indicus/affinis*)

One nightjar, not specifically identified seen at Ho Man Tin, Kowloon, on 7 July).

**189.1 White-throated Needletail** (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)

One at Sek Kong on 18 March, four seen at Ho Sheung Heung on 13 April and one bird with four others which were probably this species over Mai Po Marsh on 21 April. This was exactly two years since the species was first discovered in Hongkong in 1977. It was not seen in 1978.

**190. Large White-rumped Swift** (*Apus pacificus*)

Recorded in small numbers from widespread areas of the New Territories and Lantau between 30 January and 2 June. The largest flock recorded was of about 30 birds at Sek Kong on 26 March.

**191. House Swift** (*Apus affinis*)

Recorded regularly in every month up to October, from widespread areas with occasional large flocks seen. There were 300 plus at Fan Ling on 21 October. Several breeding sites seen in Kowloon, Tai Po and Yuen Long.

**192. Pied Kingfisher** (*Ceryle rudis*)

Recorded from the Deep Bay Marshes and Starling Inlet areas in January to February, April and July through early September. Usually seen in ones and twos but five at Luk Keng on 21 August.

**194. Common Kingfisher** (*Alcedo atthis*)

Locally common and widespread until early May and again from 10 July, becoming increasingly numerous after late October. One in Kowloon Park on 16 August and one at Kai Tak on 28 August.

**195. White-breasted Kingfisher** (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)

Recorded regularly in every month of the year but rather scarcer during June and July becoming very common in some areas by December. Seen at very widespread areas throughout Hongkong.

**196. Black-capped Kingfisher** (*Halcyon pileata*)

Regularly recorded up to mid-May and from mid-July from widespread areas of the New Territories, Kowloon and Pokfulam. In winter months as many as four could be found in any one locality.

**197. Blue-tailed Bee-eater** (*Merops philippinus*)

Over 16 at Cheung Chau on 17 May and one there on 19 May. These two sightings represent the fifth and sixth records for Hongkong. On 29 April over 20 Bee-eater sp., were seen at Mai Po but not specifically identified.

**198. Broad-billed Roller** (*Eurystomus orientalis*)

Two at Tai Po Kau/Shing Mun from 4 May to 12 May, one at Sek Kong on 11 April and one at Cheung Chau up to 21 May, a new late date. One at Tai Po Kau on 13 August, a new early date, one at Tai Mo Shan on 4 October and one at Tai Po Kau on 13 October. The two latter sightings were of immatures.

**200. Great Barbet** (*Megalaima virens*)

Regularly recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories up to 21 May and from 7 July. There were no records for the intervening period? Still most commonly recorded from the Tai Po Kau area and also She Shan, but up to 12 recorded from the Chung Chi College area in the spring.

**203. Wryneck** (*Jynx torquilla*)

Single birds reported from widespread areas, especially the northern part, of the New Territories, up to 31 March on which date one was seen on Lamma Island. Noted again from 14 October in similar area.

**204. Chinese Pitta** (*Pitta nympha*)

One at the Botanical Gardens on 10 September was an apparently wild bird. This is only the third record for Hongkong, the first since 1967 and the first autumn record (HW).

**205. Small Skylark** (*Alauda gulgula*)

One at Mount Nicholson, Hongkong Island on 14 January, one at Mai Po on 31 March and one there again on 7 December. Regularly recorded throughout the year at Kai Tak with numbers reaching 52 on 20 May and with 23 there on 7 December, (DSM/KKC). Single bird at K.G. V School on 11 January, 31 March and 1 April.

**206. Swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*)

Recorded from widespread areas throughout the year but much less common in January and December.

**207. Red-rumped Swallow** (*Hirundo daurica*)

Another very poor year for the species. All records are for the northern New Territories where they were recorded in very small numbers of under 5 between 7 and 13 April with an isolated record of two at San Tin on 3 January. One was seen at Mai Po on 26 August and one there on 26 September.

**208.1 Asian House-martin** (*Delichon dasypus*)

On 27 February, one seen at Ma Tseuk Leng and one at Luk Keng nearby. This is the second record of the species only for Hongkong.

**(208/208.1 House-martin Sp.** (*Delichon urbica/dasypus*)

One at Mai Po on 30 January. Up to ten house-martins which were not specifically identified were seen at San Tin on 24 November and over 60 flying very high over Hongkong Island on 25 November.)



**209. Sand Martin** (*Riparia riparia*)

Up to six regularly seen in the Mai Po Marsh and San Tin areas between 5 and 19 May, but with a flock of about 120 at San Tin on 16 May. Two at Luk Keng on 19 May. In the autumn one seen at Sek Kong on 4 September and up to five at San Tin on 30 September.

**211. Rufous-backed Shrike** (*Lanius schach*)

Common and very widespread throughout the rural areas and outlying islands, in all months of the year. Two September records from Kai Tak and regular spring and autumn records of one bird in Kowloon Park. First young noted out of the nest on 31 May.

**213. Brown Shrike** (*Lanius cristatus*)

Fairly well recorded from widespread areas, mainly in the New Territories but also from Kowloon and Hongkong Island, until 21 May and from 27 August. Generally seen in ones and twos but up to 15 recorded at Kai Tak on 5 May.

**213.1. Tiger Shrike** (*Lanius tigrinus*)

A female of this species was recorded on Cheung Chau Island on 5 September. A description, taken from the comprehensive field notes, is:—Pale/light brown head, back and tail brown with a hint of reddish colouring in it and not bright chestnut, marked with wavy lines. The breast was pale whitish to light brown with dark barring from the upper breast to the under tail coverts. The lores were whitish as were the sides of the head; there was no eye-stripe and no eyebrow. The eye was black with a complete white ring giving the appearance of an extremely large eye. The bill was whitish, tipped black and there was a thin black line extending from the sides of the lower mandible across the face under the eye. The bill gave an impression of being too large. The legs were grey. The size was estimated at between 7 and 8 inches. The observer (CDS) found the bird in thick bushes in a wood and watched it flying to the ground to take its prey and then returning to the bushes about 8 feet above the ground level where it would eat its food. It was very active. This species was previously recorded in Category 'F'.

**214. Black-naped Oriole** (*Oriolus chinensis*)

Recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories, in almost every month of the year, but the stronghold still remains the Fan Ling Golf Course area from which most records come. Other records came from Mong Tseng, Tai Po, Ho Sheung Heung, Pat Sin and Sek Kong. On 1 September a flock of 19 individual birds, consisting of both sexes and immatures, was noted on the Golf Course, such flocking not having been seen before. The numbers on the Course, generally, did not exceed six.

**215. Black Drongo** (*Dicrurus macrocercus*)

Quite common and widespread from mid-April until the first week of October, but with several records in the early part of the year especially from Mong Tseng where at least five birds were seen. Also two December records from Mong Tseng and Lok Ma Chau. On 2 July, on Tai Ah Chau in the Sokos group, young birds were seen being fed by adults. On Cheung

Chau on 20 May over 20 birds were recorded, the highest count of the year, but no records were forthcoming from Stonecutters Island.

**216. Ashy Drongo** (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*)

Two at Ha Tsuen on 10 February and one there on 20 March. One at Ho Man Tin between 20 and 22 April and one there again on 13 and 14 September. One at Tsim Bei Tsui on 17 October, one at She Shan on 24 December and one in Kowloon at St. Andrew's Church between that date and 27 December. The 13 September record is a new early date.

**217. Hair-crested Drongo** (*Dicrurus hottentottus*)

Commonly recorded from widespread areas, including Kowloon and Hongkong Island, generally from mid-April until early October. Two on Lantau on 24 March, was the only early record. There were two in Tai Po Kau Forest on 9 November and five at She Shan on 17 November.

**218. Chinese Starling** (*Sturnus sinensis*)

Recorded in all months of the year except July, mainly from the New Territories but with a few records from Kowloon and Lantau. Usually seen in small numbers but a flock of at least 12 was seen at Lok Ma Chau in January and again in September.

**219. Silky Starling** (*Sturnus sericeus*)

Quite common and widespread during both winters, including odd records from Ma Wan, Kowloon and Hongkong Island. Largest spring flock was of over 100 at Lok Ma Chau on 30 January and the largest in the autumn was one of about 30 at She Shan on 17 November. Extreme dates were until 23 March and from 17 November.

**220. Grey Starling** (*Sturnus cineraceus*)

Two at Mong Tseng on 14 January and 25 February and four at Beas River on 27 February. Up to three at Kowloon Park between 4 and 21 June which were presumably escapes. The only autumn record was of one at Mong Tseng on 26 December.

**221. Common Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

One on 1 and 6 January, two there on 3 January at Lok Ma Chau and three at Mong Tseng on 7 January, were the only records this year. These small numbers are a substantial reduction on the dozen or so birds normally seen each year and also mark a location other than Lok Ma Chau for the first time.

**222. Black-necked Starling** (*Sturnus nigricollis*)

Locally common throughout the year in New Territories, some outlying islands and with reports from Hongkong Island, although not recorded at Stanley this year. First young seen out of the nest on 27 May. Up to three recorded daily at Little Sai Wan between 30 July and 15 September. One or more at Victoria Barracks on 5 October. Over 50 on Cheung Chau on 15 December.



- 223. Crested Mynah** (*Acridotheres cristatellus*)  
Common and widespread in flocks in some areas of over 70 birds. Regularly recorded at Kai Tak with 20 there on 5 October being the highest count.
- 224. Jay** (*Garrulus glandarius*)  
There were unusually large numbers of records this year. Up to nine birds recorded from widespread areas of the northern New Territories from 5 January until 12 May. One was seen on Tai Mo Shan on 2 June and one at Tai Lam Chung Reservoir on 30 July. Regularly recorded again from 29 September but with most of the sightings occurring in December, which were almost all of small numbers of ones and twos, but with four at She Shan on 17 November.
- 225. Blue Magpie** (*Urocissa erythrorhyncha*)  
Common on Hongkong Island where flocks of up to ten were regularly seen and locally common in the New Territories where flocks of up to seven were occasionally seen. Odd records from Lantau and several from Ho Man Tin and Kowloon Park.
- 226. Magpie** (*Pica pica*)  
Common and widespread. Up to 25 regularly seen feeding around Sek Kong Village. Nesting activity noted in January and December.
- 227. Treepie** (*Crypsirina formosae*)  
One at Tsung Pak Long on 30 January was the only spring record. In the autumn one seen at Tai Mei Tuk on 28 October, two at Tai Po Kau Forest on 10 November and four on Cheung Chau on 21 November.
- 228. Jungle Crow** (*Corvus macrorhynchos*)  
Locally common in the New Territories and Hongkong Island with occasional records from Lantau, Kowloon Park, Kowloon Tong and Kai Tak. Usually recorded in small groups but on 23 December over 25 birds seen flocking west to east at dusk, at Tsung Pak Long.
- 229. Collared Crow** (*Corvus torquatus*)  
Regularly recorded throughout the year from favoured areas mainly at Mai Po and around Tolo Harbour. Over 20 at Mai Po on 31 December.
- 230. Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina melaschistos*)  
One at Tung Chung, Lantau on 26 February, one at Tsung Pak Long on 11 March, and one at Beas River on 6 May, one at Sek Kong on 14 and 30 September and on 28 October.
- 233. Ashy Minivet** (*Pericrocotus divaricatus*)  
Three at Cheung Chau on 28 March, seven at Ho Man Tin on 5 April, about ten at Ho Sheung Heung woods on 7 April and a pair on Cheung Chau on 12 April.

- 234. Grey-throated Minivet** (*Pericrocotus solaris*)  
Six birds at Tai Po Kau on 1 January, a pair on 15 January and a female/immature there on 23 February. A male and four females at the same location on 21 December and one male and at least six females or immatures there on 22 December.
- 235. Scarlet Minivet** (*Pericrocotus flammeus*)  
Recorded in good numbers from fairly widespread areas of the New Territories up to 3 June and from 13 October. Generally seen singly or in small groups but a flock of over 20 seen on 17 February at Wu Kai Tang and one of over 30 at She Shan on 17 November.
- 238. Crested Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus jocosus*)  
Common and widespread.
- 239. Chinese Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus sinensis*)  
Very common and widespread. Flock of over 150 at Mai Po on 28 October.
- 240. Red-vented Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*)  
Common and widespread but tends to be more localised than the above two species.
- 241. Black-faced Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax perspicillatus*)  
Common and widespread. First young seen out of the nest on 13 April.
- 242. Black-throated Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax chinensis*)  
Recorded regularly throughout the year from Mount Nicholson, Mount Butler and Bowen Road, although more often heard than seen. One at Tai Tam on 27 October and one at Aberdeen on 21 November.
- 243. Hwamei** (*Garrulax canorus*)  
Quite common on Hongkong Island and localised wooded areas of the New Territories. Also recorded from some of the outlying islands. The only Kowloon records came from Kowloon Park where at least three birds remained throughout the year.
- 244. Greater Necklaced Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax pectoralis*)  
Small flocks of up to ten seen regularly in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve until 19 May, a new late date, with a high count of about 25 on 23 February. Recorded at this location again in similar numbers from 13 October.
- 245. Chinese Babax** (*Babax lanceolatus*)  
Up to four on Tai Mo Shan seen on 7 July and one or two heard calling there on 26 August.
- 248. Asian/Ince's Paradise Flycatcher** (*Terpsiphone paradisi*)  
An apparently wild male in the Botanical gardens on 18 January, one at Cheung Chau on 4 April and one in Sek Kong woods on 26 April. Single



birds recorded between 15 and 30 September from the Botanical Gardens, Tai Po Kau Forest, and Sek Kong Woods. Four seen in Tai Po Kau Forest on 13 October.

**249. Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** (*Terpsiphone atrocaudata*)

One and possibly two at Ho Sheung Heung between 7 and 15 April, one of which had long central tail feathers. One at Ho Man Tin on 11 April and one at Chung Chi College on 13 and 14 April. One on the Peak on 1 September and one male at Tai O, Lantau on 22 September.

**250. Grey-headed Flycatcher** (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*)

Two or three at Sek Kong woods until 19 March and again from 22 October. One in Stanley Wood on 20 January, and one in the She Shan area between 13 and 21 March. Two at Tai Po Kau Forest on 22 December.

**251. Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher** (*Hypothymis azurea*)

Up to two female/immatures at Ho Sheung Heung between 27 February and 11 April. A male and a female at Sek Kong Woods from 21 October. One male at Tai Long Wan on 6 October and one at Wu Kwai Sha on 10 November.

**252. Brown Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa latirostris*)

Quite common and widespread throughout the whole of Hongkong until 28 April and from 1 September. Appeared to be somewhat more common in the autumn months with a high count of at least ten in Sek Kong Woods on 30 September.

**253. Grey-spotted Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa griseisticta*)

One at Hongkong University on 28 April, one at Shing Mun on 4 May and one at Eagle's Nest on the same day. Single birds at Mount Nicholson on Hongkong Island between 17 April and 4 May. At least four at Ho Sheung Heung on 5 May and one at Cheung Chau on 19 May. One at She Shan on 30 September, two at Tai Po Kau on 6 October, one at Sek Kong on 10 October, one at Ho Man Tin on the 13 and 14 October and one on Lamma Island on 21 October. Single birds at Mount Nicholson again between 4 and 10 October.

**256. Verditer Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa thalassina*)

A male at Ho Sheung Heung on 1 January, one at Hongkong University on 4 January and one bird at She Shan on 18 February.

**257. Red-breasted Flycatcher** (*Ficedula parva*)

Apparently not quite so common as in previous years and more often recorded in the autumn than the spring. Up to two in Sek Kong Woods until 8 April. One at Shing Mun on 30 January, and single birds at other widespread areas of the New Territories until 7 April. More regularly recorded from 16 September usually in ones and twos but with four together at Sek Kong Village on 10 October. There were also two October records of single birds in Kowloon.

**258. Robin Flycatcher** (*Ficedula mugimaki*)

One male in Kowloon Tong between 1 and 5 April and a female at Ho Sheung Heung on 14 and 15 April. On this latter date also an immature male at H.K.U.

**259. Narcissus Flycatcher** (*Ficedula narcissina*)

A male at Cheung Chau on 28 March and 11 April. One at Ho Sheung Heung between 11 and 15 April, and one at H.K.U. on 15 April also.

**260. Tricolour Flycatcher** (*Ficedula zanthopygia*)

One at Shing Mun on 27 August, a female/immature at Sek Kong woods on 16 September and an immature male at Ho Man Tin on 30 September.

**261. Hainan Blue Flycatcher** (*Cyornis hainana*)

An unusually large number of records this year are given here in full. A male at Ha Tsuen, in song, on 4 March, two males and a female in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 27 April and a pair there on 29 April. A male in song at Tai Po Kau on 4 May, a male seen there on 7 May and a pair there on 19 May, with the male in song. A pair at Tai Po Kau on 8 July. A male at Harlech Road, the Peak on 12 October.

**262. Blue and White Flycatcher** (*Cyanoptila cyanomelana*)

Fairly well recorded again this year from widespread areas including Ho Sheung Heung, Tung Chung and Tai O on Lantau and in Kowloon. Most birds seen were males and all were spring records. Extreme dates were from 24 March until 15 April.

**263. Chinese Bush Warbler** (*Cettia diphone*)

Quite common and widespread in the New Territories and some of the outlying islands with three spring records from H.K.U. and with two autumn records from Kowloon Park. Extreme dates were until 14 April and from 30 September, although this latter record appeared to be an isolated one as all other records started from the first week in November.

**264. Short-tailed Bush Warbler** (*Cettia squameiceps*)

One at Po Shan Road, on 18 February was the only spring record. One at Tai Long Wan on 6 October and at Cheung Chau on 5 November, two at Tai Po Kau Forest on 10 November and two at Ho Sheung Heung on 11 November. One at Hok Tau on 31 December.

**267. Von Schrenck's Reed-warbler** (*Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*)

Recorded in small numbers from the Mai Po Marshes between 14 April and 6 May but 30 there on 14 April. Regularly recorded at Kai Tak in the autumn between 1 September and 19 October with a high count of eight on 7 September. One at Tai Long Wan on 6 October and two at Mai Po on 30 October.



- 268. Great Reed-warbler** (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*)  
Common at Mai Po during both spring and autumn passages. First record was a new early date of 25 February and then regularly seen until 6 May, then from 1 September until 11 November. Also recorded at San Tin and Lok Ma Chau. There were also three records for Kowloon Park:— 25 May, 16 October and 24 November.
- 269. Dusky Warbler** (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*)  
Common and widespread until 6 May and from 9 September.
- 270. Yellow-browed Warbler** (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)  
Fairly common and widespread until 20 April and from 30 September.
- 271. Pallas's Warbler** (*Phylloscopus proregulus*)  
Very sparsely recorded this year from wooded areas in widespread areas of the New Territories and outlying islands. Extreme dates were until 14 April and from 30 September.
- 272. Arctic Warbler** (*Phylloscopus borealis*)  
Recorded in generally small numbers from widespread areas but with over 20 recorded at Eagle's Nest on 4 May and about eight at Sek Kong on 30 September. Spring dates were from 8 April until 20 May. Autumn records were from a new early date of 29 August in Kowloon and one on the Peak on 1 September until 1 November.
- 273. Pale-legged Willow-warbler** (*Phylloscopus tenellipes*)  
One at Cheung Chau on 12 April (CDW/HGA).
- 279. Long-tailed Tailor-bird** (*Orthotomus sutorius*)  
Common and widespread. First young out of the nest on 6 May.
- 280. David's Hill-warbler** (*Prinia polychroa*)  
Two adult birds seen on 16 June at the same spot on Tai Mo Shan where it has been recorded over the last several years. Eventually a nest containing four unfledged young was located and photographed. This is the first real evidence of breeding in Hongkong of this species although it had been strongly suspected before.
- 281. Brown Wren-warbler** (*Prinia subflava*)  
Common on the Mai Po Marshes throughout the year with a few records from San Tin and Lok Ma Chau and one record each from Pak Noi and Long Valley. First young seen out of the nest on 29 April.
- 282. Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler** (*Prinia flaviventris*)  
Common and widespread throughout the year. Over 100 pairs recorded on Mai Po on 14 April (TRE).
- 283. Fantail Warbler** (*Cisticola juncidis*)  
Locally common throughout the Northern New Territories in all

months of the year except June, but apparently slightly more numerous in the winter months. Was also recorded at Kai Tak in February and from September through December.

- 285. Red-tailed Robin** (*Erithacus sibilans*)  
Two at Eagle's Nest on 6 February, one at Sek Kong woods on 24 March and one on Cheung Chau on 25 March. On 12 April four were seen on Cheung Chau, including two singing males, the song being recorded. One at Kowloon Tong on 9 November and one in Tai Po Kau Forest on 22 December.
- 286. Bluethroat** (*Erithacus svecica*)  
One at Ma Tso Lung on both 14 January and 13 February was recorded by the Game Warden, a male at Mai Po on 14 March. The only autumn record was of a female at Mai Po Marsh on 31 December.
- 288. Rubythroat** (*Erithacus calliope*)  
Fairly common and widespread until 31 March. Much more commonly recorded in the autumn months with many records occurring before the previous earliest date of 27 November. One reported at Mai Po on 26 September, one at Sek Kong on 26 October and one on Mai Po Marshes on 28 October. Thereafter, commonly recorded from 11 November.
- 289. Red-flanked Bluetail** (*Tarsiger cyanurus*)  
Uncommon in the spring months but common and widespread in the autumn. Extreme dates were until 20 March and from 17 November.
- 290. Magpie-robin** (*Copsychus saularis*)  
Fairly common and widespread throughout the year with the first young noted out of the nest on 8 June.
- 291. Daurian Redstart** (*Phoenicurus aureus*)  
Quite common and widespread, but probably rather better recorded in the autumn months. Extreme dates were until 13 April and from 23 October.
- 292. Plumbeous Water-redstart** (*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*)  
On various dates between 5 January and 3 March at Bride's Pool as many as three males and four female/immatures were recorded. On a new early date of 5 October one female/immature seen a Little Sai Wan, an unusual record for Hongkong Island. A male at Shing Mun on 6 December and one at Ho Chung on 16 December. A female/immature stayed there between 19 and 30 December. A male was at Bride's Pool on 15 December and a young bird there on the 24th.
- 293.1. Slaty-Backed Forktail** (*Enicurus schistaceus*)  
One at Tai Po Kau on 7 July (CPB, EAB).
- 294. Stonechat** (*Saxicola schistaceus*)  
Common and widespread until 21 April and from 28 September, with a single record of a male bird on Tai Mo Shan on 26 August.



- 295. Grey Bushchat** (*Saxicola ferrea*)  
Pairs at Tai Long Wan and Tung Chung, Lantau on 13 January and 24 March respectively. A pair on Volunteer Slopes, Fan Ling, on 20 October and two males and a female there on 16 December.
- 296. Blue Rock-thrush** (*Monticola solitaria*)  
Recorded from widespread areas including several of the outlying islands and urban localities, until 19 May and from 28 August.
- 298. Violet Whistling Thrush** (*Myiophonus caeruleus*)  
Locally common throughout the year in suitable areas of the New Territories, Lantau and Cheung Chau, but especially the northern side of Hongkong Island where breeding was noted in June. There were two records from Kowloon Tong area, one from Stonecutters' Island and several from Ho Man Tin.
- 299. Pale Thrush** (*Turdus pallidus*)  
One at H.K.U. on 15 January and one at Mount Nicholson on Hongkong Island from 7 to 11 February. One at Mong Tseng on 27 November, three at Cheung Chau on 7 December, a male at Sek Kong on 23 and one at Bride's Pool on 24 December. One at Sek Kong on 30 December.
- 300. Eye-browed Thrush** (*Turdus obscurus*)  
A male at Sek Kong from 31 March until 13 April. On 4 May a flock of about ten birds, presumably on migration, were well seen at Shing Mun and two were seen there on the 5th. A female at Ho Man Tin on 3 and 5 May, a new late date. An immature at Beas River on 24 November and another at Mount Nicholson on 3 December. Two on Cheung Chau on 7 and one there on 10 December. Recorded at H.K.U. on 21 and 26 March, 15 April, 27 November and 6 December.
- 302. Grey-backed Thrush** (*Turdus hortulorum*)  
Regularly recorded from widespread areas up to 14 April and from 17 November.
- 303. Dusky Thrush** (*Turdus naumanni*)  
Three at Beas River on 27 February, one at Sek Kong on 11 March and one in Kowloon on 16 March. Autumn records included one at Lok Ma Chau on a new early date of 24 November. Four at Mai Po and one at Fan Ling on 2 December and two at Ta Kwu Ling on 24 December.
- 304. Blackbird** (*Turdus merula*)  
Common and widespread until 31 March and from 10 November. Not very large flocks reported but there were eight birds at Ma Tseuk Leng on 17 February and about ten at She Shan on 17 November.
- 305. Grey Thrush** (*Turdus cardis*)  
Fairly well recorded until 14 April and from 15 November, but rather

- fewer records in the autumn. Generally recorded singly but five on Cheung Chau on 8 January and six there on 20 December.
- 307. Orange-headed Ground-thrush** (*Zoothera citrinus*)  
A male on Cheung Chau between 19 and 22 March (CDW) and a male in Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 5 May (MAB, RMS).
- 308. White's Thrush** (*Zoothera dauma*)  
Recorded at H.K.U. on 1 February and 16 March. One at Tai Po Kau on 5 January, one at Tai Long Wan on 13th, and two at Tung Chung, Lantau on 21 January. One at Tai Po Kau on 4th and one at Fan Ling Golf Course on 27 February. One on Cheung Chau on 10 and 11 October, which is a new early date.
- 310. Great Tit** (*Parus major*)  
Locally common and widespread throughout the year. First young seen out of the nest on 19 May.
- 311. Yellow-bellied Tit** (*Parus venustus*)  
Three at Ma Tseuk Leng on 6 January, over ten there on 17 February and about 15 on 24 February. One autumn record of two at Kowloon Tong on 20 October.
- 313. Richards Pipit** (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*)  
Locally common and widespread until 16 June and from 30 September. One on Tai Mo Shan on 7 July and about ten on Kowloon Peak on 12 July. Recorded at Kai Tak in very good numbers in all months except July, with figures falling to ones and twos during June, August and early September. Highest counts were 93 on 4 May and 102 on 12 September.
- 314. Indian Tree Pipit** (*Anthus hodgsoni*)  
Common and widespread until 4 May and from 30 September.
- 315. Red-throated Pipit** (*Anthus cervinus*)  
Recorded in small numbers from the Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau area until 25 February and from 29 October. Up to three in Kowloon Tong in the first week of April with records also from Sek Kong and Lantau. Several were seen on the Sha Tin race course on 16 December. Well recorded at Kai Tak again between 9 March and 4 May and between 5 October and 16 November. High counts were 115 on 4 April and 11 on 16 December.
- 318. Upland Pipit** (*Anthus sylvanus*)  
Recorded on four separate dates from Tai Mo Shan between 8 February and 26 August in small numbers but with over six there on 19 May. Two at Kowloon Peak on 12 July and one record from Clearwater Bay on 6 October.
- 319. Forest Wagtail** (*Dendronanthus indicus*)  
Rare in the spring but fairly well recorded during the autumn months.



One at Sek Kong woods on 5 and 7 February, an exceptionally early date, and one there on 13 April. One at the Chinese University on 30 August and one at Ma Tseuk Leng on the following day. Single birds seen in Sek Kong woods throughout September and two on Cheung Chau between 17 and 20 September. One at Tai Mei Tuk on 1 September and one at over 1000 metres in the Pat Sin Range on 2 September and one at Ho Sheung Heung on 5 October.

**320. White Wagtail** (*Motacilla alba*)

Common and widespread until 18 May and from 30 September. A high count of 65 at Kai Tak on 3 April. Hundreds of birds were noted roosting in Statue Square in winter months.

**321. Grey Wagtail** (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Quite common and widespread until 12 May and from 2 August.

**322. Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava*)

Well recorded from the northern New Territories, Lantau and Kai Tak. Maximum numbers at Kai Tak was 25 on 5 May and about 100 on 11 September. Extreme dates were until 18 May and from 22 August.

**324. Fork-tailed Sunbird** (*Aethopyga christinae*)

Recorded in small numbers from widespread areas including Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, Lam Tsuen Valley, Lai Chi Wo, Fan Ling, Sek Kong, Kowloon and Hongkong Island. All records were of birds in ones & twos.

**325. White-eye** (*Zosterops japonica*)

Common and widespread.

**326. Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker** (*Dicaeum cruentatum*)

Recorded throughout the year from widespread areas of the New Territories and Kowloon. At least four pairs nesting at the Chinese University and one pair bred again in a garden at Fan Ling. First young seen out of the nest on 10 August.

**327. Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** (*Dicaeum ignipectus*)

A male at Mount Nicholson on Hongkong Island on 1 and 9 January. Single females at both Bride's Pool and Fung Yuen on 27 Feb. Two males at Tai Po Kau on 22 December.

**328. Black-tailed Hawfinch** (*Coccothraustes migratoria*)

Recorded in flocks of up to ten in widespread areas of the New Territories, Hongkong and Kowloon until 24 April, but most sightings were in ones and twos. Scarce in the autumn months, from 17 November, but with a flock of 18 on that date at She Shan.

**329. Chinese Greenfinch** (*Carduelis sinica*)

Reported from widespread areas throughout Hongkong in most

months of the year in generally small numbers, but over ten recorded at Mong Tseng on 14 January and about 20 at Jardine's Lookout on 11 February.

**331. Common Rosefinch** (*Carpodacus erythrinus*)

Recorded in generally small numbers from widespread areas of Hongkong Island and the New Territories up to 17 February and from 17 November. Maximum counts were of over 20 at Sek Kong on 4 February and up to 15 at She Shan on 17 November.

**332. Masked Bunting** (*Emberiza spodocephala*)

Common and widespread until 6 May and from 30 September. Heaviest numbers noted at Mai Po Marsh between 21 and 29 April. Numbers generally smaller in the autumn months this year.

**332.1. Yellow-browed Bunting** (*Emberiza chrysophrys*)

A male in full breeding plumage seen on the top of Tai Mo Shan on 25 June (HGA, MC). Full field notes were submitted and accepted by the Records Committee. This is a very unusual date for a bunting of Genus *Emberiza* and one must presume that this was an escape. It is the second record for this species since being returned to Category 'A' in 1975.

**333. Tristram's Bunting** (*Emberiza tristrami*)

Generally recorded only in ones and twos from several areas of New Territories and two areas of Hongkong Island and with one spring record of a single bird on Hei Ling Chau, but up to eight seen in Tai Po Kau Forest on 6 January, four at Hok Tau Reservoir on 5 February and six at Eagle's Nest on 6 February. A male at H.K.U. on 29 November, records are of one or two at Tai Po Kau on 5 and 6 December, and a male there on 19 December.

**334. Chestnut Bunting** (*Emberiza rutila*)

Two spring records, both new late dates, were of about five birds, including four males, moving through the Shing Mun area apparently on migration on 4/5 May and a full-plumaged male at Mount Nicholson on 20 May. The only autumn record was over 12 female/immatures at Kowloon Park on 24 November.

**335. Yellow-breasted Bunting** (*Emberiza aureola*)

Two spring records, 49 at Kai Tak on 4 May and one male and three female/immatures at Mai Po Marsh on 5 May. In the autumn over 50 seen at Mong Tseng on 21 October and one female/immature at Kowloon Park on 24 November.

**336. Grey-headed Bunting** (*Emberiza fucata*)

Two at Tung Chung on 24 February and a male at Tai O on 24 March. It is perhaps revealing that the only records should come from Lantau now that this species has virtually forsaken the mainland New Territories.



**337. Little Bunting** (*Emberiza pusilla*)

Recorded in generally small numbers from widespread areas of the New Territories, the outlying islands and with one record each from Kowloon and Hongkong Island. Extreme dates were until 14 April and from 12 October although most autumn sightings were in December. Maximum counts were of about 30 at Tung Chung and the same number at Tai O, Lantau on 24 March and over ten at She Shan on 24 December.

**337.1. Yellow-throated Bunting** (*Emberiza elegans*)

One bird seen in the Ho Chung Valley on 16 December. A description taken from the field notes included the following points:— 'crest and cheek patch black, lemon yellow superciliary joining with greyish-white feathers of lower crest feathers. The upperparts were rich brown streaked with black and its size estimated at about 6 inches. The observer (MAW) was leading a Society outing at the time and noted the bird in pine trees adjacent to some vegetable fields. This is a new record for Hongkong but not totally unexpected as its wintering range covers our area of South China. Its normal breeding area is Manchuria northwards.

**339. Crested Bunting** (*Melophus lathami*)

Recorded in most months of the year in small numbers from several areas of the New Territories but mainly the Tai Mo Shan, Lam Tsuen Valley area, with a few records from Lantau. Maximum numbers were only up to five at any one time.

**340. Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*)

Common and widespread throughout the year although generally associated with habitation. First young seen out of the nest on 8 June at Fan Ling. One observer found that the island of Tai Ah Chau in the Sokos group had now been colonised by this species when previously it could not be found there. (2 July — CAV).

**341. Chestnut Munia** (*Lonchura malacca*)

Recorded only from the Mai Po Marshes, all records falling between 24 February and 21 April and from 28 October to 25 November. Three birds seen on 25 February appeared to be a mixture of race *malacca* and *atricapilla*. Of the three one had black underparts and two had sandy colouring replacing the normal white of the underparts. One of the latter birds was carrying nesting material. Maximum numbers in spring were about ten on 14 April and in autumn all records were of a flock of about eight birds.

**342. Spotted Munia** (*Lonchura punctulata*)

Common and widespread throughout the year in flocks of varying sizes up to about 60 in number, but usually much smaller.

**343. White-backed Munia** (*Lonchura striata*)

Recorded from widespread areas throughout the year usually in fairly small numbers but with about 80 at Lai Chi Kok on 20 January and about 20 on 17 November; nesting activity noted at HKU on 20 April. Nest and young seen at Chung Chi College on 2 October.

**C SPECIES WHICH ALTHOUGH ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED BY MAN, HAVE NOW ESTABLISHED A FERAL BREEDING STOCK WHICH APPARENTLY MAINTAINS ITSELF WITHOUT NECESSARY RECOURSE TO FURTHER INTRODUCTION.**

**501. Emerald Dove** (*Chalcophaps indica*)

Two birds recorded at Sek Kong Woods between 2 February and 2 July and from 1 September. One at Tai Po Kau on 1 January and odd birds there and at Shing Mun from 13 March until 10 July and from 6 December. Records of one or two birds also come from Chi Ma Wan, Lantau, Mong Tseng, Hok Tau, Shing Mun, She Shan and Bride's Pool.

**502. Rose-ringed Parakeet** (*Psittacula krameri*)

Recorded from widespread areas of Hongkong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories with one record from Cheung Chau. A large flock of at least 25 birds appeared to be roosting regularly at She Shan, about 30 seen at Sek Kong on 30 September, a flock of 26 seen at Tai Mei Tuk and upwards of 50 at Victoria Barracks, in the spring. Up to 50 regularly in the Ho Man Tin area at the end of the year.

**503. Common Mynah** (*Acridotheres tristis*)

Recorded only from the New Territories. At least one pair appears to be established in the Dill's Corner area being recorded regularly between 11 April, when up to seven were seen including at least three young birds, and 24 September. Others are established around the R.A.F. Quarters at Sek Kong being noted almost daily between February and December, with young birds seen in June. Odd birds also recorded at Bride's Pool, Mai Po, Wu Kwai Sha, Ha Tsuen, Mong Tseng and Lok Ma Chau.

**504. White-cheeked Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax sannio*)

Regularly recorded from widespread areas throughout the year. Flocks were seen in most months of the year at Mount Nicholson, the Botanical Gardens, Mount Butler and on Cheung Chau. Also regularly seen in Kowloon Park. Other records occurred at Ho Sheung Heung, Ma Tseuk Leng, the Sek Kong catchment area, Ho Man Tin and Little Sai Wan on Hongkong Island.

**505. Red Avadavat** (*Amandava amandava*)

Only one record this year, of two birds at Mai Po on 28 February.

**D. SPECIES INTRODUCED BY MAN, OF WHICH THE FERAL POPULATIONS MAY OR MAY NOT BE SELF-SUPPORTING.**

**601. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** (*Cacatua sulphurea*)

Recorded regularly from the north side of Hongkong Island, especially Victoria Barracks where up to 30 were seen in February. The only other records were of one in flight over Tsim Sha Tsui on 16 April and one at Mong Tseng on 10 February.



- 602. Indian Grackle** (*Gracula religiosa*)  
One bird at King George V School in Kowloon on 16 March and one at H.K.U. on 11 May.
- E. SPECIES OF WHICH ALL PUBLISHED RECORDS ARE SUSPECTED OF BEING OF BIRDS ESCAPED OR RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY.
- 707. Vinous-throated Parrotbill** (*Paradoxornis webbiana*)  
Two recorded at King George V School on 31 March.
- 708. Pekin Robin** (*Leiothrix lutea*)  
An apparently wild male at Eagle's Nest on 6 February. Two birds near the summit of Tai Mo Shan on 7 May and two at Ho Man Tin on 18 June.
- 710. Java Sparrow** (*Padda oryzivora*)  
One at Mount Nicholson on 17 January and 7 February. Two at Kowloon Tong Park on 19 April and one at Kowloon Park on 20 September.
- 711. White-headed Munia** (*Lonchura major*)  
One in Kowloon Park on 12 October.
- 721. Rustic Bunting** (*Emberiza rustica*)  
Single birds at Kai Tak seen on three occasions between 29 April and 8 May.
- 723. Rainbow Lorikeet** (*Trichoglossus haematodus*)  
Recorded several times between 9 July and 19 November from Victoria Barracks and Mount Nicholson with at least five at the Barracks on 10 October and eight there on the 19 November.
- 725. Azure-winged Magpie** (*Cyanopica cyanus*)  
At least seven birds are now resident in the Botanical Gardens.
- 727. Yellow-fronted Canary** (*Serinus mozambicus*)  
One at Tai Mo Shan on 26 August.
- 731. Blossom-headed Parakeet** (*Psittacula roseata*)  
A pair at Ho Man Tin on 21 October and a male seen there on 24 November.
- 732. Grey-headed Parrotbill** (*Paradoxornis gularis*)  
At least two seen at Mount Nicholson on 15 February and heard there again on 30 April.
- 733. Red Bishop** (*Euplectes orix*)  
A male at the Botanical Gardens on 18 January.

- 735. White-vented Mynah** (*Acridotheres javanicus*)  
Five at Mong Tseng on 14 January, one on 24 February and one on 26 December.
- 736. Grey-headed Parakeet** (*Psittacula finschii*)  
One at Ho Man Tin on 29 January with two Rose-ringed Parakeets (*P. krameri*).
- 737. Alexandrine Parakeet** (*Psittacula eupatria*)  
A female at Ho Man Tin on 30 August and one there again on 1 December.
- 738. Cockatiel** (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)  
One at Mount Nicholson, Hongkong Island, on 23 December.
- 739. Black-rumped Waxbill** (*Estrilada troglodytes*)  
One at Mount Nicholson on 4 July.



## BIRD RINGING IN HONG KONG\*

David Melville

Bird ringing in Hong Kong started in December 1965 when F.O.P. Hechtel received financial support through a grant to the Department of Zoology, University of Malaya from the Migratory Animals Pathological Survey (M.A.P.S.). The project continued until 1968 when it had to be abandoned. During this period 2,959 birds of 98 species were ringed, the most numerous species being *Pycnonotus sinensis* (895), *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* (251) and *Turdus hortulorum* (209). There were no recoveries or controls of locally ringed birds outside Hong Kong or of birds ringed elsewhere from within Hong Kong. Data from this project have been presented in various M.A.P.S. reports (e.g. McClure 1974, McClure and Leelavit 1972, McClure and Ratanaworabhan 1973, McClure *et al.* 1978) and Nisbet and Medway (1972).

A limited amount of ringing started again in 1975, using rings provided by the British Trust for Ornithology, and continued until June 1980. Ringing activity concentrated on *Milvus migrans lineatus* and shorebirds; these studies related to projects on the birdstrike hazard at Kai Tak Airport and conservation of the Mai Po area respectively. A list of species ringed is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1

List of birds ringed in Hong Kong 1975 – 1980

Species	Total
<i>Anas crecca</i>	2
<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>	37
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	2
<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	20
<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	13
<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	6
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1
<i>Pluvialis dominicus</i>	3
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	33
<i>Gallinago megala</i>	4
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	3
<i>Limosa limosa</i>	1
<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	1
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	5
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	29
<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	4
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	6
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	19
<i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>	1

\* This is a revised and updated version of a report presented at the 9th Regional Conference of the I.C.B.P. Asian Section, Chiang Mai, 26-29 February 1980.

<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	9
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	2
<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	149
<i>Calidris subminuta</i>	4
<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	9
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	66
<i>Eurynorhynchus pygmeus</i>	2
<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	9
<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	7
<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	2

The recent studies have resulted in three recoveries and two controls, as detailed in Table 2 (additional data on movements of *Milvus migrans lineatus* are given by Melville, in press).

The Ringing and Migration Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology very kindly allowed the use of their rings and F.O.P. Hechtel generously donated equipment. I should like to thank all those people who assisted with the ringing, especially K. K. Chiu, L. and A. Howell and the late T. P. Garland.

TABLE 2

List of birds recovered/controlled 1975 – 1980

### *Milvus migrans lineatus*

GK07009 Ringed 2.5.77 Tang Lung Chau, pullus  
Recovered 5.8.77 Kai Tak Airport, injured (hit by aircraft, destroyed)

GK07023 Ringed 11.5.78 Stonecutters Island, pullus  
Controlled 8.4.79 Kai Tak Airport, knocked down by aircraft slip-stream, released alive

GK07031 Ringed 7.5.79 Little Green Island, pullus  
Recovered 3.9.79 Kai Tak Airport, killed by aircraft

### *Tringa totanus*

DR44060 Ringed 5.5.79 San Tin, first summer  
Recovered 27.4.80 Taishan Xian, Guangdong Province, CHINA, 22°15'N 112°47'E, "Alive captive, sick at first, now OK".  
Movement 136km 258°

### *Calidris ferruginea*

CSIRO 040 – 95458 Ringed 24.3.79 The Spit, Werribee, Victoria, AUSTRALIA, 38°03'S 114°32'E, adult  
Controlled 11.4.80 San Tin, released alive  
Movement 7200km NNW



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## NOTES ON THE STONECHAT IN HONG KONG

Tim P. Garland\* and David Melville

### Introduction

The Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* is a common winter visitor to Kwangtung and Hong Kong (Swinhoe 1861, Kershaw 1904, La Touche 1925, Hutson 1931, Webster 1975). In Hong Kong it is most frequently recorded from the New Territories in grassland/scrub areas and around vegetable plots. Migrants are regularly recorded from the Mai Po Marshes and there are occasional records from the 'urban areas (e.g. Hung Hom and Kowloon Bay reclamation areas and Kai Tak Airport).

### PART I

#### Migration in Hong Kong — methods

Stonechat records collected by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society for the years 1958–1976 are examined below, based on an analysis by T.P.G. The Stonechat was chosen for study since it is widespread in occurrence and conspicuous (perching on tops of bushes, fences etc.), thus opportunities for recording are good.

The number of observers in Hong Kong varied considerably (the number of contributors to the Hong Kong Bird Report ranging from 15 to 36), however this should not affect the pattern of occurrence given by their records. In Hong Kong, as in many other areas, most birdwatching is done at the weekends and on public holidays and this may well introduce biases (Sharrock 1970). Public holidays which fall within the Stonechat 'season' are detailed in Table 1. In 1968 several changes were made with regard to

TABLE 1 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN HONG KONG 1958–1976

Holiday	Years	Date
1st weekday following mid-Autumn Festival	1958-76	9 Sept. – 12 Oct.
3rd Monday in October	1958-67	15 Oct. – 21 Oct.
Cheung Yeung Festival	1968-76	8 Oct. – 1 Nov.
Monday following Remembrance Sunday	1958-67	9 Nov. – 15 Nov.
Christmas Day	1958-76	25 Dec.
1st weekday following Christmas Day	1958-76	26 Dec. – 27 Dec.
1st weekday in January	1958-76	1 Jan. – 2 Jan.
Lunar New Year's Day	1958-76	21 Jan. – 18 Feb.
2nd day of Lunar New Year	1958-76	22 Jan. – 19 Feb.
3rd day of Lunar New Year	1968-76	25 Jan. – 21 Feb.
Good Friday	1958-76	24 March – 20 April
Easter Monday	1958-76	27 March – 23 April

\* Sadly T.P.G. died following a car accident on 18 April 1979 before he was able to complete writing up this study.



public holidays, new holidays were made for the third day of the Lunar New Year, and the Ching Ming and Cheung Yeung Festivals while the holidays on the third Monday in October and the Monday following Remembrance Sunday were cancelled.

Records submitted to the Society vary in their exactness. For the purposes of this study categories of abundance were given the following values:—

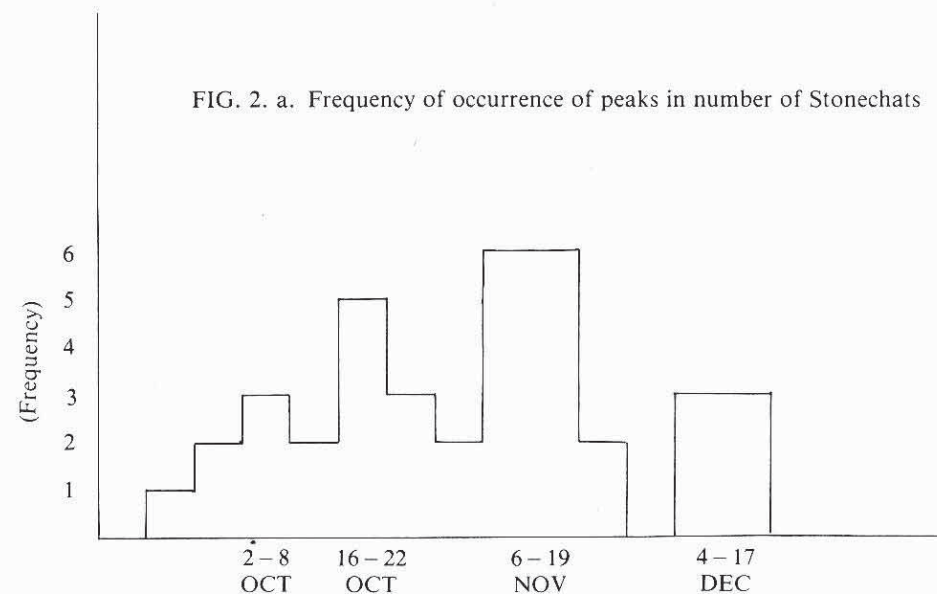
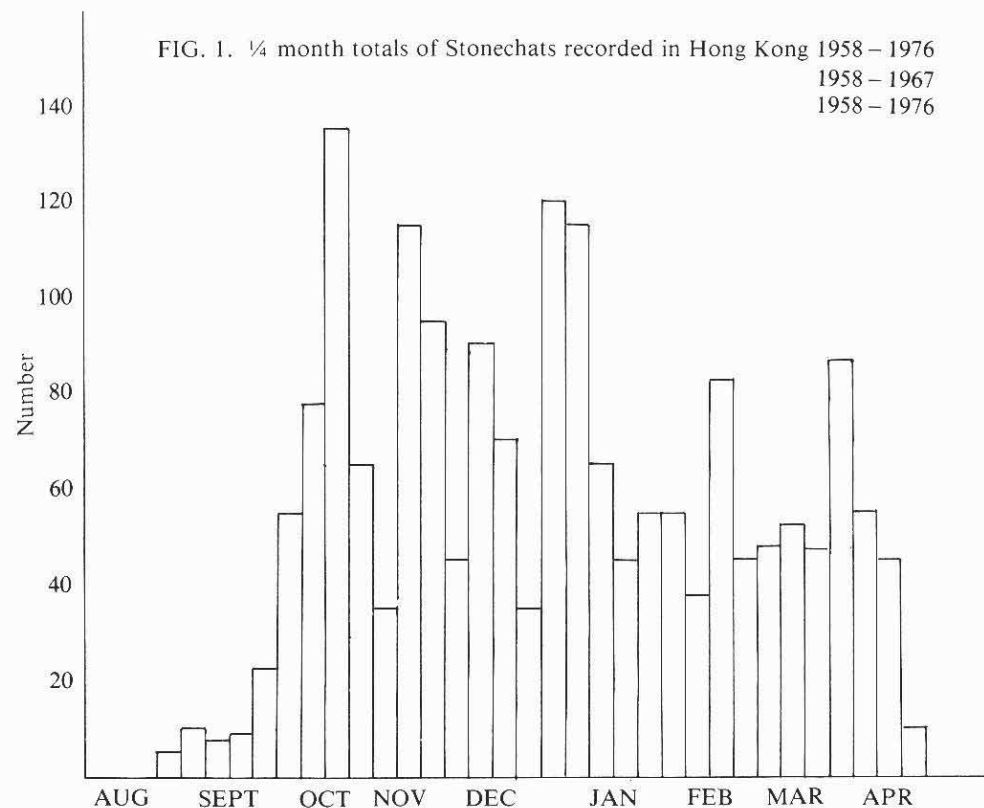
<i>Recorded abundance</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Recorded abundance</i>	<i>Number</i>
	= 1	widespread	)
		)	)
present	= 2	in quantity	)
		)=	7
a few	)	common	)
		)	)
a number	)= 3	many	)
	)		)
several	)	very many	)
		)=	9
fairly common	= 5	very numerous	)
			)
numerous	= 6	5+	= 6 etc.

It is appreciated that the allocation of such values could affect the results quite seriously since about ¼ of the records give categories of abundance rather than numbers. The above values were based on T.P.G.'s knowledge of both Stonechats and observers in Hong Kong, and in some cases could be checked when two observers had visited an area at the same time, one recording numbers and the other abundance.

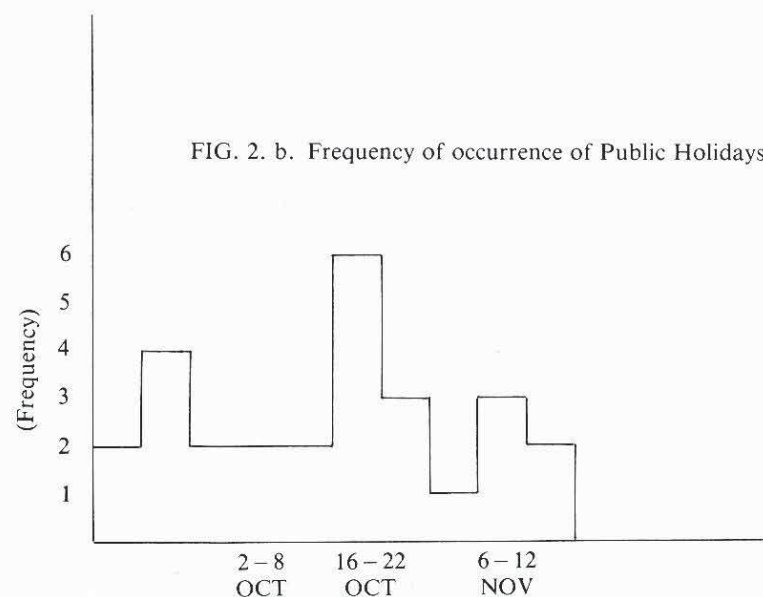
## Results

Stonechats have been recorded in Hong Kong between 26 August and 5 May. The autumn arrival dates were scored as 'first arrivals' if there was more than one record in the next fifteen days, thus eliminating exceptionally early wanderers (e.g. that on 26 August). Using this method the median and modal 'first arrival' dates were both 27 September, with a range of 14 September to 6 October. Spring departure dates are more difficult to record but taking the available records of 'last' sightings the median is 20 April and the mode 21 April.

Figure 1 shows the ¼ month totals of Stonechats recorded in Hong Kong for the periods 1958–1967, 1968–1976 and the total for 1958–1976. A number of 'peaks' are evident. When autumn data were examined on an annual basis there were insufficient records to reveal any peaks in 1958, 1960–1962, 1966, 1968 and 1973, but data on the occurrence of peaks in the other years are shown in Fig 2a — thus a peak was recorded during the period 2–8 October in three of the possible twelve years, five times in the period 16–22 October etc. The frequency of occurrence of public holidays in the same periods are shown in Fig 2b.







(For explanation see text)

It is tempting to suggest a relationship between some of the peaks in occurrence and the number of public holidays, thus indicating that the records may reflect increased bird watching activity at certain times rather than actual changes in the numbers of birds present. There appears to be a good relationship between the two in the period 16–22 October ( $X^2 = 0.166$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), but the peak in the period 6–19 November is unlikely to be related directly to the occurrence of public holidays in this period ( $X^2 = 9.8$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Another way of testing the data is to compare it with data obtained during regular weekly counts at Kai Tak airport during the years 1974–1979 (Table 2). Although one male remained at Kai Tak from 6 December 1960 to 27 March 1961, all records since 1974 have been of migrants, the majority of autumn records being in October. It is interesting to note that although the double peak in Fig 1 at the end of December and early January could be related to increased observer activity over the holiday period, the Kai Tak records indicate that there is a certain amount of movement at this time. Also, for example, on 26 December 1979 Stonechats were widespread and numerous in the Tsim Bei Tsui/Mong Tseng area, whereas they had been much less common earlier in the winter (D.M. pers. obs.).

TABLE 2 STONECHAT RECORDS FROM KAI TAK AIRPORT

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Jan.	N.C.	—	1, 2nd	1, 14th; 1, 22nd	—	—
Feb.	N.C.	—	1, 6th	—	—	—
March	—	—	—	1, 7th; 2, 11th	1, 10th	1, 9th
April	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sept.	—	—	—	—	—	4, 28th
Oct.	1, 8th; 7, 11th; 1, 14th, 22nd 24th, 25th	—	—	—	7, 6th; 1, 23 rd, 26th	2, 1st, 12th
Nov.	—	—	—	—	1, 3rd	—
Dec.	1, 30th	—	—	1, 9th,	—	1, 28th

N.C. No Count

Webster's (1975) statement that "Spring migrants generally pass through ten days to two weeks after the winter visitors have left" was based on many years of field experience, but this pattern is not reflected in Fig 1. It is possible that if weather conditions play an important role in controlling migration, annual variations in weather conditions could obscure this pattern.

## Discussion

From the foregoing it is apparent that the use of existing H.K.B.W.S. records in attempting to determine migration patterns of a widespread species such as the Stonechat is of dubious value, there being a wide range of variables which are difficult to quantify and to take into account. Whilst it is not suggested that the H.K.B.W.S. should stop collecting records from members it is recommended that members be encouraged to make regular observations at a particular site, the accumulated data giving a far better idea of movements and population changes than random observations from widely scattered localities (see Melville 1978 and in prep.).

## PART II

### Migration in East Asia

There is little information concerning Stonechat movements in East Asia, there being no recoveries of the 132 birds ringed during M.A.P.S. (McClure 1974).



In autumn Japanese breeding birds leave "in late September but a few individuals may remain through October" (Austin & Kuroda 1953) and the latest specimen record from Korea is on 10 September (Austin 1948). Birds leave the Shantar Islands (Santarskije Ostrova) in early September, Yakutia in late August and Transbaikalia in late September and early October, while migrants were noted in mid-September in the Lesser Khingan Mountains (48° N, 129° E) (Dement'ev & Gladkov 1968). The earliest record for Peninsula Malaysia is 12 October (Medway & Wells 1976).

Autumn and spring records from Pei-tai-ho (Hemmingsen & Guildal 1968) are:—

	Autumn	Spring
1942	9.IX one, 21.IX two	13.V one male
1943	28.VIII – 30.IX two dates, 21.X probably migrating overhead	22.IV – 14.V six dates
1944	31.VIII – 28.X nineteen dates	21.IV – 12.V eight dates
1945	8.IX two?, 10.IV several	19.IV – 19.V nine dates

In spring the latest record for Peninsula Malaysia is 11 April (Medway & Wells 1976). The earliest specimen record from Korea is 21 March (Austin 1948) and in Japan "It arrives on its breeding grounds in late April and early May" (Austin & Kuroda 1953). It is recorded arriving at Lake Khanka on 24 April, Sakhalin the last two thirds of May and the Baikal area in early May (Dement'ev & Gladkov 1968).

### PART III

#### Taxonomy and distribution

Three races of the Stonechat occur in China (Cheng 1976).

*S.t. maura* breeds in northwest Sinkiang and winters in northern India westwards into the Iranian region (Hüe & Etchecopar 1970). There is one record of a migrant taken in northern Shensi (Cheng 1976).

*S.t. przwalskii* breeds in west/central China from Tibet and Kansu to Yunnan, Kwangsi Chuang, Shensi and Chinghai. It winters throughout eastern India, Assam, Burma and Thailand (Baker 1924, Vaurie 1959). Although Cheng (1976) now regards *S.t. yunnanensis* as synonymous with *S.t. przwalskii* he previously (Cheng et al. 1973) considered *yunnanensis* to be a valid race (characterised by shorter wing and darker underparts).

*S.t. stejnegeri* breeds in eastern Siberia, Japan, (probably Korea, Austin 1948) and northeastern China (Heilung Kiang, Chilin, Liaoning). It winters in southeast China (Kwangtung, Hunan, Kwangsi, Fukien and Chekiang), and throughout Indo-China, Thailand, peninsula Malaya and the Philippines (Medway & Wells 1976, Vaurie 1959) and is a rare vagrant to Borneo (Smythies 1957).

In conformity with the above *stejnegeri* is the only race recorded from Hong Kong (Hutson 1931, Macfarlane & Macdonald 1960, Herklots 1967), but it is uncertain how many specimens have been examined from Hong Kong or Kwangtung.

Between 1965 and 1967 F.O.P. Hechtel caught 48 Stonechats in Hong Kong of which 21 were measured. Wing lengths of the Hong Kong birds are compared with published measurements from elsewhere in Table 3. Although *maura* tends to be smaller than *stejnegeri* (Robertson 1977) there is an overlap in wing measurements and the Hong Kong birds could be either race. Weights of the Hong Kong birds (g) were 12.55 – 15.4, x 13.53 (8 males) and 11.9 – 15.85, x 13.77 (10 females). Dement'ev & Gladkov (1968) give weights for *stejnegeri* males as 13.3, 15.45, 14.05 and females 14.4, 13.39, and for *maura* 12 – 13.4, x 12.6 (13 males) and 12 – 12.7, x 12.4 (3 females). These weights are not directly comparable since the Russian data presumably come from breeding birds and the Hong Kong data come from wintering birds or migrants, but suggest that the Hong Kong birds are *stejnegeri*.

Viney & Phillipps (1977) note that "Most birds seen in Hong Kong are immatures and females which are very variable".

Plumage characters of *maura* and *stejnegeri* have been described in detail by Robertson (1977). The separation of these two races in the field is very difficult, even with adult males, however in the hand the 2nd primary is generally longer than the 7th in *stejnegeri* (Dement'ev & Gladkov 1968). "Males of *maura* have a little white (not more than 5 mm) at the base of the tail feathers, but it is obscured in the field by the upper tail coverts. Females show less white or no white at all", whereas in *stejnegeri* "there is no white in the base of the tail" (Robertson 1977). Vaurie (1959) describes *przwalskii* as being "Similar to *stejnegeri* in general colouration but considerably darker and more richly coloured below with the pigment reaching farther down, to the tail coverts". Both Dement'ev & Gladkov (1968) and Robertson (1977) record *stejnegeri* as having a longer, broader bill than *maura*, but Baker (1924) found that differences in bill width and depth were not easy to see.



TABLE 3

Wing lengths of *Saxicola torquata* (mm) — range, mean, sample size (in parentheses)

	<i>steinegeri</i>	<i>maura</i>	Hong Kong birds	<i>przewalskii</i>	<i>yunnanensis</i>
♂	66.5 – 69.5, (n = 4) <sup>a</sup>	64 – 73, × 67.76 (n = 90) <sup>b</sup>	65 – 71, × 67.9 (n = 8) <sup>c</sup>	70 – 77, × 73 (n = 10) <sup>a</sup>	68 – 74, × 71 (n = 24) <sup>a</sup>
♀	62 – 67.5 (n = 5) <sup>a</sup>	64 – 71, × 67 (n = 30) <sup>b</sup>	63 – 67, × 64.9 (n = 11) <sup>c</sup>	69 – 79, × 74.6 (n = 39) <sup>d</sup>	
♂	67 – 70, × 68 (n = 22) <sup>b</sup>			67 – 76, × 71.7 (n = 27) <sup>d</sup>	
♀	64 – 68, × 67.5 (n = 14) <sup>b</sup>				
♂	66 – 71 <sup>c</sup>				
♀	65 – 68 <sup>c</sup>				
♂	67 – 71 <sup>f</sup>			72 – 77 <sup>f</sup>	
♀				72 – 77, × 74 (n = 10) <sup>g</sup>	69 – 74, × 71.5 (n = 10) <sup>g</sup>

## References

- a Cheng *et al.* 1973  
b Dement'ev & Gladkov 1968 (N.B. the means for ♂ and ♀ *stejnegeri* appear to have been transposed in the translation and have been corrected here)  
c M.A.P.S. (Hong Kong Bird Ringing Project) unpublished records per. F.O.P. Hechtel  
d Vaurie 1972 (specimens from Tribet, presumably *przewalskii*)  
e LaTouche 1925  
f Baker 1924  
g Vaurie 1959

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## HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

(To be sent to the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society,  
c/o Zoology Dept., University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.)

Introduced by .....  
(if applicable)

I/We support the objects of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society as listed below and wish to become (a) member(s).

I/We enclose \$30.00 single member or  
\$40.00 husband & wife or  
\$15.00 single member age between 16 & 20  
\$ 5.00 child member when parents are not members,

or half these fees if joining after 30th June as my/our subscription for the current year. Children aged 7-16 one of whose parents is already a member need pay no subscription. All children are permitted to be members provided they are accompanied on Society Outings by a responsible adult and parents should sign below absolving the Society from any responsibility in case of accident or mishap on Outings.

Date..... Signature.....

Name & Address (block letters).....

Tel. No. ....(home) ....(Office)

The objects of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society are:

- (a) To facilitate and encourage the study of birds in Hong Kong;
- (b) To provide information and assistance to all persons, either visitors to Hong Kong or residents, who are interested in birds;
- (c) To correlate and publish from time to time the field records of all bird watchers in the Hong Kong;
- (d) To publish and keep up-to-date a check-list of the birds of Hong Kong;
- (e) To assist in the enforcement of the law relating to the protection of birds (The Wild Animals Protection Ordinance, No. 5 of 1976);
- (f) To maintain a library of books on birds;
- (g) To exchange information among members and with ornithological societies in other countries.