

HONG KONG BIRD REPORT

1997

香 港 鳥 類 報 告



目錄

1997年鳥類報告：

記錄委員會報告 (G.J. Carey)	2
每月簡報 (E.M.S. Kilburn 及 林超英)	8
分類總覽 (G.J. Carey, P.R. Kennerley, 張浩輝, R.W. Lewthwaite 及 M.L. Chalmers)	15
1997-1998年度冬季水禽調查 (G.J. Carey)	93
1997年香港環志工作報告 (D.S. Melville 及 M.R. Leven)	100

香港新記錄品種：

太平洋潛鳥 (P.J. Leader)	114
小鷗 (P.J. Leader)	118
四川柳鶯 (M.R. Leven)	120

彩鷗在香港的居留狀況 (P.J. Leader)	128
--------------------------------	-----

米埔沼澤及內前海灣拉姆薩爾濕地對水禽的重要性

(G.J. Carey 及 楊路年)	141
--------------------------	-----

綠頭鴨和斑嘴鴨的可能混種 (D.S. Melville)	150
------------------------------------	-----

短文：

大麻鵝的遷徙及群體行為的觀察 (P.J. Leader)	156
鵠類溺殺獵物的觀察報告 (R. Clarke)	158
燕鷗在香港繁殖時的食物種類 (黃倫昌)	159

提交觀鳥記錄的指引	161
-----------------	-----

申請進入米埔自然保護區須知	165
---------------------	-----

香港觀鳥會入會申請表格	166
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記錄委員會報告

一九九七年錄得的雀鳥，計有 A 類 350 種、D 類 7 種。和前幾年相比，一九九三至九五年每年 A 類介乎 342 至 354 種，而一九九六年則以 362 種破歷來記錄，D 類則介乎 8 至 9 種之間。

本年 A 類增加了 3 種，總結如下：

1. 太平洋潛鳥 *Gavia pacifica*：二月十九日，龍鼓洲附近海面發現一隻。
2. 小鷗 *Larus minutus*：二月廿三日，米埔自然保護區外泥灘看見一隻。
3. 四川柳鶯 *Phylloscopus sichuanensis*：三月四日在嘉道理農場網獲一隻。

E 類增加了倉鵒 *Tyto alba*、藍額紅尾鳩 *Phoenicurus frontalis*、橙翅噪鵲 *Garrulax ellioti* 以及斑紋織布鳥 *Ploceus manyar*。

此外，值得重視的本年度記錄，有小太平鳥 *Bombycilla japonica* 的第二、三次記錄、紅腳鰹鳥 *Sula sula* 的第二至第四次記錄、烏燕鷗 *Sterna fuscata* 的第三次記錄、黑枕綠啄木鳥 *Picus canus* 的第四次記錄、灰雁 *Anser anser* 則有自七二年至今年才出現的第六次記錄。

經去年修改後，遞交觀鳥記錄時需要附加描述的鳥類名單決定維持不變。不過，待新版的香港鳥類名錄完成後，名單便會重新修訂。

三月至十一月間，冬季水禽調查每月都進行一次，結果已刊於本年報內。

觀鳥記錄方面，會員可以利用本會網址中設置的檔案，將記錄填寫，然後以電子郵件形式遞交。這個方法不但傳遞方便，連分析、以至編寫分類總覽，都可省回不少工夫。此外，本會亦可利用網頁上另一個檔案，將個人發現的稀有雀鳥、或罕有鳥類的狀況記錄下來，然後以電子郵件或紙張書寫形式遞交，這個檔案對雀鳥分類有適當的指引，使資料更加方便記錄和評估。會員亦可參考近年的首次記錄文章，作為填寫觀鳥記錄。

委員會希望會員繼續努力，不論多少，均將觀察所得，寫成報告。從編纂新的鳥類名錄經驗所得，會員提交的報告數量未如理想。另外，委員會希望儘快讓會員知道，何種報告形式，對委員會的工作幫助最大。不過，這方面的指引，也非待鳥類名錄這項首要工作完成後，才可出現會員眼前。

本年的委員會名單像去年一樣，分別為 Mike Chalmers (主席)、Geoff Carey、張浩輝、Paul Leader、Mike Leven 及 Richard Lewthwaite。

本期的分類總覽由以下人士編寫：G.J. Carey (1 至 56、88 至 153、B 至 E 類及罕有品種)、P.R. Kennerley (156 至 178 及 230 至 321)、張浩輝 (321.2 至結尾)、R.W. Lewthwaite (179 至 229)，與及 M.L. Chalmers (57 至 87)。



1 Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*
Tap Mun, Hong Kong, 23 August 1997

Henry T. H. Lui

CONTENTS

Report on the Birds 1997	
Records Committee Report (<i>G.J. Carey</i>)	6
Monthly Summaries (<i>E.M.S. Kilburn and C.Y. Lam</i>)	8
Systematic List (<i>G.J. Carey, P.R. Kennerley, H.F. Cheung,</i> <i>R.W. Lewthwaite and M.L. Chalmers</i>)	15
Winter Waterfowl Counts 1997-98 (<i>G.J. Carey</i>)	93
Report on Bird Ringing in Hong Kong in 1997 (<i>D.S. Melville and M.R. Leven</i>)	100
Birds new to Hong Kong	
Pacific Loon: the first record for Hong Kong (<i>P.J. Leader</i>)	114
Little Gull: the first record for Hong Kong (<i>P.J. Leader</i>)	118
Chinese Leaf Warbler: the first record for Hong Kong (<i>M.R. Leven</i>)	120
The status of Greater Painted-snipe in Hong Kong (<i>P.J. Leader</i>)	128
The importance to waterfowl of the Mai Po Marshes and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site (<i>G.J. Carey and L. Young</i>)	141
Apparent Hybrid Mallard x Spot-billed ducks (<i>D.S. Melville</i>)	150
Notes	
Social and migratory behaviour in Great Bittern (<i>P.J. Leader</i>)	156
Harriers drowning prey (<i>R. Clarke</i>)	158
Some observations on prey items of nesting terns in Hong Kong (<i>L.C. Wong</i>)	159
Guidelines for the submission of records	161
Notes for applicants wishing to visit Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve	165
The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Application for Membership	166

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Front cover: Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*
Tap Mun, Hong Kong. 23 August 1997 (*Henry T. H. Lui*)

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RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT

G.J. Carey

During 1997 the number of species recorded was 350 in Category A and seven in Category D. This compares with, for Category A, between 342 and 354 during 1993-95 and a record 362 in 1996, and for Category D eight or nine during each of the previous four years.

During 1997 three species were added to Category A. The changes are summarised below while the categories used are defined in the Systematic List.

Additions to Category A

Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica*. One near Lung Kwu Chau on 19 February.
Little Gull *Larus minutus* A first-winter seen from the boardwalk hide at Mai Po on 23 February.
Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus sichuanensis*. One trapped at Kadoorie on 4 March.

In addition, the first records of Barn Owl *Tyto alba*, Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*, Elliot's Laughingthrush *Garrulax ellioti* and Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar* were added to Category E.

Other notable records during the year included Hong Kong's second and third records of Japanese Waxwing *Bombycilla japonicus*, the second to fourth records of Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*, the third record of Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*, the fourth record of Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* and the sixth record, but only the second since 1972, of Greylag Goose *Anser anser*.

No further removals from or additions to the list of species requiring descriptions to be submitted have been made since last year. However, it is expected that upon completion of the next edition of the *Annotated Checklist*, a thorough review of this list will be undertaken.

The Winter Waterfowl Census continued monthly counts from March to November, and the results are presented, as usual, after the Systematic List.

The Records Committee has placed on the Society website two files for record submission. The first is an Excel file that can be used to submit a year's observations on disk or via e-mail. This not only facilitates easy submission, but also allows greater ease of analysis by those compiling the systematic list for the annual report, or others wishing to analyse the data. Perhaps most

importantly, it allows the extraction of records by site which will enable the Society to use its records more efficiently in providing data required for areas under threat of development. The second file is for submitting records of rare birds or unusual reports of commoner species; this also can be submitted electronically, or as a hard copy. A series of categories is provided on this form that act as guidance as to the kind of information that is useful in record assessment. These do not, however, replace detailed notes on the birds concerned, and those wishing to look at 'model' descriptions can consult the first papers in Hong Kong Bird Reports of recent years.

The Committee continues to encourage increased submission of records from all observers, whether in the field frequently or not. Work on the new Checklist in recent years has only served to emphasise both how useful such records are, but also how much more could be submitted. To that end the Committee is working on providing guidance with regard to the kind of records required, though this, like many other things including preparation of this Report, has unfortunately taken a back seat due to writing of the new *Annotated Checklist*.

The Records Committee remained unchanged during the year, comprising Mike Chalmers (Recorder), Geoff Carey, Chueng Ho Fai, Paul Leader, Mike Leven and Richard Lewthwaite.

The systematic list was compiled by G.J. Carey (1-56, 88-153, Cat. B-E and rarities), P.R. Kennerley (156-177 and 230-321), H.F. Cheung (321.2 to end), R.W. Lewthwaite (179-229) and M.L. Chalmers (57-87). Thanks are due to the following observers who submitted records for inclusion in this report:

G.J. Carey, G. Cederwall, M.L. Chalmers, H.F. Cheung, K.Y. Choi, C.Y. Chu, C.P. Chu, T.D. Dahmer, D.A. Diskin, J.S.R. Edge, R. Griffiths, M. Hale, P. Harris, J.G. & J. Holmes, P.J. Hopkin, G.D. & D.G. Jackson, R.C. Kendrick, P.R. Kennerley, E.M.S. Kilburn, H.K. Kwok, P.J. Leader, M. Lau, K.S. Lee, M.R. Leven, R.W. Lewthwaite, K.M. Lo, D.S. Melville, R. Messemaker, V.B. Picken, G. Reels, B. Short, N.H. So, U. Stahle, M. Turnbull, G.A. Walthew, M.D. Williams, C.Y. Wong, L.C. Wong, T.J. Woodward, L.C. Wong, H.K. Ying, L. Young, Y.T. Yu.

MONTHLY SUMMARIES

E.M.S. Kilburn and C.Y. Lam

January

It was on the whole warmer and wetter than normal. The only major cold front of the month crossed the Guangdong coast on 23rd. Temperatures dropped to 10.2°C on 24th and 25th. Other events included a weak cold front on 5th, a northerly replenishment on 8th, another weak cold front on 18th and an easterly surge on 22nd.

The year began with an unseasonal Nordmann's Greenshank off the boardwalk on 3rd, a Meadow Bunting at Mount Austin on 7th and a Plain Flowerpecker trapped at Kadoorie ARC the next day.

The waterfowl count on 11th recorded peak winter counts of Common Shelduck (2,972), Eurasian Wigeon (2,533), Falcated Duck (39) and Common Teal (5,184), and a female Baer's Pochard and a record count of 14 Common Pochards. In addition, a party of five Greylag Geese spent the afternoon on the mudflats in front of the boardwalk hide. Also on 11th a Water Rail and a Ruddy-breasted Crake were discovered a couple of fishponds apart at Mai Po, and a Watercock there the next day was unseasonal. One of the previous year's Eurasian Black Vultures was noted for the first time in 1997 over Mai Po, and nine Imperial Eagles at Ma Tso Lung reflected a good winter for this species. Two Great Black-headed Gulls were also present on 11-12th.

In the second half of the month widely distributed reports of Ancient Murrelets followed the pattern of 1996 records, with singles found south of Sha Chau on 14th and near Po Toi on 28th, with four in Mirs Bay on 19th. Hong Kong's fifth Black-legged Kittiwake was also south of Sha Chau on 14th. Passerine highlights included a Golden-spectacled Warbler at Hong Kong University from 17th, a Paddyfield Warbler trapped at Mai Po on 19th, a Bull-headed Shrike at Shuen Wan from 21st (until 25 March), two Citrine Wagtails at Lin Barn Tsuen on 25th and a Rustic Bunting near Lok Ma Chau on 27th. Finally, a Grass Owl was at Mai Po on the evening of 25th.

February

A cold front arrived on 3rd. The month was wetter than normal, and generally cloudy and gloomy up to 18th. There was a short spell of strong easterlies on 6th and then another longer spell from 12th to 14th. The persistence of a northerly airstream between 15th and 18th eventually brought drier air to clear the weather, after which fine and sunny weather prevailed.

This traditionally good month for gulls began with the first of three Common Gulls seen off the boardwalk on 1st, with two others on 11th and 13th, Brown-headed Gulls on 2nd and 27th, and two Great Black-headed Gulls on 2nd, 12th and 15th, but the limelight was stolen by Hong Kong's first Little

Gull on 23rd. The boardwalk also produced a Common Ringed Plover on 4th which was seen sporadically until March 22nd, an unidentified Dowitcher on 11th, and a peak count of 18 Dalmatian Pelicans on 23rd.

The month's waterfowl count on 15th produced new highs of 8654 Pintail and 1745 Pied Avocet and winter peaks of 6625 Northern Shoveler and 1223 Eurasian Coot and another or the same Baer's Pochard was at Mai Po.

Away from Deep Bay, Tai Po Kau hosted a flock of 20 Eurasian Siskins during 2nd-26th, five Japanese Waxwings appeared at Shek Wu Wai on 7th, a Bright-capped Cisticola was there the next day, three Dusky Thrushes moved into Queens Hill Camp on 10th with at least one staying until 18 March, a Frigatebird sp. joined the Black Kite roost at Magazine Gap on 17th, and the year's second Plain Flowerpecker was trapped at Kadoorie ARC on 19th.

Offshore islands held two Brown Thrushes at Ngong Ping, Lantau on 7th, a Eurasian Eagle Owl on Po Toi on 14th, and a very rare winter record of Greater Sand Plover at Chek Lap Kok during 19th-20th. The surrounding waters continued to be productive, with further records of Ancient Murrelets off Po Toi on 21st and five birds south of Hong Kong Island on 27th. A Pacific Diver near Sha Chau on 18th was the first record for the territory.

March

It was sunnier and warmer than normal, and the weather was fine in the first half of the month. Cold fronts arrived on 2nd and 16th, the latter bringing an end to the fine spell. A northerly surge on 22nd evolved into an easterly surge on 24th, and two more easterly surges followed on 27th and 31st.

The final sighting of the winter influx of Eurasian Black Vultures was of two birds going to roost on 2nd at Chau Tau; an otherwise quiet start to the month was enlivened only by a Brown Crake at Ho Chung on 5th, a Chestnut-eared Bunting at Lin Barn Tsuen on 10th and five Great Bitterns at Mai Po on 12th. Records of Golden-spectacled Warbler at Hong Kong University on 14th and Baer's Pochard at Nam Sang Wai on 15th were thought to refer to individuals seen earlier in the year.

The first notable arrivals of the spring wader passage were of three Oriental Plovers at Chek Lap Kok on 17th, with one still present the next day and a different female on 24th. A Sanderling in flight over the waters north of Lantau on 19th was the earliest on record.

Passerine arrivals included a Brown Thrush on Po Toi on 21st and the distinctive *lugens* race of White Wagtail - 'Black-backed Wagtail' - at Lin Barn Tsuen the next day; on 25th Grey Nightjars were first found at Yung Shue O, with one to three birds seen and heard into May. A Russet Sparrow was at Mai Po on 27th and a Ferruginous Flycatcher was found on 29th at Tai Po Kau, the

same day Hong Kong's second Green-backed Flycatcher appeared at Ho Chung. The first Swinhoe's Egret and Spoon-billed Sandpiper of the spring were both seen at Mai Po on 31st.

April

The month was generally cloudy and misty and sunshine hours were some thirty percent less than normal. A weak cold front arrived on 4th, another one on 10th, the latter associated with more than 50 mm of rain, and two more surges of the northeast monsoon arrived on 16th and 23rd.

1,700 Red-necked Stints counted from the boardwalk on 1st was a new high for this species and followed a protracted period of poor weather resulting in a substantial build up of passage waders in Deep Bay. A Common Reed Bunting was found on Mai Po Village fishponds on 3rd and a Eurasian Sparrowhawk was there on 8th.

The 5th marked the first of a number of reports of Slaty-legged Crakes from widely scattered sites. While the bulk of records were restricted to April, reports of birds calling from Kau To Shan up to 27 June suggest breeding may have occurred. Three flocks of Chinese Bulbuls numbering 2,300 birds noted from the Dong Ping Chau ferry on 5th represented an unusually pronounced movement. On 9th two Ferruginous Flycatchers were on Po Toi, a Long Tailed Skua flew past the island, and a Yellow-browed Bunting was found at Mai Po.

Although Big Bird Race teams reported unusually low numbers of birds and species on 11th, the race produced several good records of owls, including a Brown Hawk Owl first seen at Shek Wu Wai on 8th, an Oriental Scops Owl at Robin's Nest and a Eurasian Eagle Owl at Mong Tseng. Other notable records included four Red Breasted Mergansers at Mai Po, a Ferruginous Flycatcher at Tai Po Kau and nine Japanese Grosbeaks in the Lam Tsuen Valley.

A junk trip south of Hong Kong Island on 14th produced the month's second Long-tailed Skua, four Greater Crested Terns (another was in the same area on 29th) and the earliest ever Aleutian Tern. The second of two Bramblings was at Mai Po on the same day, with the first on Mount Austin two days earlier on 12th.

On 20th two Little Stints were at Mai Po and three Japanese Waxwings were at Long Valley. A Baillon's Crake was found at the Mai Po Village fishponds on 22nd. More unusual still was a Lesser Frigatebird seen there the next day. The spring's highest count of Chinese Goshawks was made at Tsim Bei Tsui, where 216 birds passed north on 24th. The same day also brought a record count of 3054 Yellow Wagtails at Lin Barn Tsuen and a single Pechora Pipit at Long Valley. The month ended quietly with a Pheasant-tailed Jacana at Mong Tseng on 26th and a White throated Needletail at Tai Mo Shan on 27th.

May

On the whole near normal. A trough of low pressure brought more than 50mm of rain on 8th. This trough was slightly frontal in nature and easterlies strengthened on 9th and 10th after its passage. Another trough affected Hong Kong during 16th-17th, and an easterly surge arrived on 21st.

Hong Kong's fourth Grey-headed Woodpecker was found at Ho Sheung Heung on the 4th and a Pectoral Sandpiper was on a drained fishpond just north of Mai Po during 13th-16th. In an otherwise quiet month a count of six singing male Upland Pipits on Sunset Peak on Lantau was the highest for several years. Scarce late spring migrants included a Pheasant-tailed Jacana at San Tin on 20th, a Pechora Pipit at Chek Lap Kok on 23rd and a Schrenck's Bittern at Yung Shue O on 25th.

June

Rainfall was more than double the normal amount. Active troughs of low pressure affected the South China coast most of the month. Rainfall at the Observatory exceeded 100 mm on 3rd, 4th, 13th and 16th.

A Black Bittern was on Po Toi on 2nd, the year's high count of Greater Painted-Snipe was 15 at Long Valley on 12th, and a late Cinnamon Bittern was at Mui Wo on 29th.

July

746 mm of rain was recorded, the fourth highest for July since records began in 1884. Some forty percent of the rain fell in the first three days of the month. There was another spell of heavy rain between 15th and 19th

Three Crested Buntings on Tai Mo Shan on 13th and another on 20th suggested breeding was at least attempted. On 19th the first of the year's three Red-footed Boobies, and Hong Kong's second ever, was found at Discovery Bay, and the next day a Greater Crested Tern was noted close to Tap Mun.

August

Rainfall of 829 mm was the fourth highest on record for August. Severe Tropical Storm Victor scored a direct hit on Hong Kong on 2nd, the first such since 1983. The close approach of Typhoon Zita brought strong easterly winds on 21st and 22nd as well as some 200 mm of rain on 22nd.

The second adult Red-footed Booby was found at Cape D'Aguilar following the passage of Victor on 3rd, with another unidentified Booby seen there the same day. On 17th a flock of 50 Black Bazas over Aberdeen CP was a new high count. Counts of breeding Roseate Terns from two offshore islets revealed at least 20 fledged birds, making this year the most successful on record.

September

It was cloudier and cooler than normal. The first northeast monsoon of the winter arrived on 15th but had little effect. A northerly surge arrived on 21st and brought several days of strong winds, and a further replenishment followed on 26th.

The year's third Red-footed Booby flew past an observer's window at Ap Lei Chau on 5th, and a very good summer for seabirds concluded with a juvenile Sooty Tern, Hong Kong's third, south of Cheung Chau on 8th. A Black Bittern at Sha Lo Tung on 9th was an unusual record away from the coast. Another was at Mai Po on 24th and a Schrenck's Bittern was found at Long Valley on 22nd.

Siberian Blue Robins were found at Tai Mo Shan on 6th and one was trapped there on 26th, and yet another was at Kadoorie FBG on 22nd. Thick-billed Warblers were at Mai Po on 13th and Lin Barn Tsuen on 25th, when one was found in a fall of 300 Oriental Reed Warblers. In an extraordinary week for *Acrocephalus* warblers a Manchurian Reed Warbler was also at Lin Barn Tsuen on 25th and the same day another bird was found at Chek Lap Kok, with a third at Tin Shui Wai during 27-28th.

Crested Kingfishers were found at Nam Chung on 22nd and the next day at Lai Chi Wo. Intermittent records came from the latter site for the rest of the year. Other highlights in the final part of the month included two Yellow-legged Buttonquails at Chek Lap Kok on 24th, with an Oriental Plover there the following day; 34 Black-naped Orioles on Green Island on the same date was a new high. A Chestnut Munia was on Po Toi on 27th and the next day a Blue-tailed Bee-eater at Mai Po was the earliest autumn record by seven days.

October

It was the second warmest October on record, in terms of mean minimum temperature, reflecting the near absence of significant surges of the winter monsoon. The only event of note was the cold front on 26th, followed by prevailing northerlies till the end of the month.

The month began with a Purple-backed Starling and a Schrenck's Bittern at Mui Wo on 1st. Two Bright-capped Cisticolas were found at Sha Lo Tung on 4th, a Chestnut-checked Starling was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6th and three Pheasant-tailed Jacanas were near Lo Wu on 8th. The first of three Yellow-legged Buttonquails was at Long Valley on 1st, with other records coming from the same site on 25th and Robin's Nest on 18th. In addition, two Barred Buttonquails were trapped at Tin Shui Wai on 5th and another was on Cloudy Hill on 11th.

The highlight of the month's raptor passage was a fine male Pied Harrier at Long Valley on 10th, with an immature noted at Mai Po on 22nd. In addition four Crested Honey Buzzards were noted over Wong Chuk Yeung on 20th and another was at Mai Po on 30th.

Good passerine passage continued through the month with two early Golden Spectacled Warblers found at Shing Mun on 10th and another there on 18th, a Greenish Warbler trapped at Mai Po on 11th, another seen there on 22-23rd and a third bird on Tai Mo Shan on 29th. Siberian Thrushes were found at Kadoorie FBG on 11th and 20th, a second Purple-backed Starling was at Long Valley on 25-26th, and a record month for Plain Flowerpeckers resulted in records from Lung Fu Shan on 16th, Tai Po Kau on 25th and Mount Davis on 31st.

The month's major rarities were a grey phase Oriental Scops Owl trapped at Mai Po 11th and a Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo on Po Toi on 13th.

During the last week of the month a Black-headed Ibis arrived to winter in Deep Bay on 26th, and on the same day two Pacific Swifts at Kadoorie FBG were the latest on record, perhaps reflecting the generally warm weather. A White-throated Needletail flew over the same site the next day. On 30th a Black Stork was noted at Mai Po followed by a Black-/Red-headed Bunting there the next day and on 1st November.

November

It was the warmest November on record. The first major cold front of this winter only arrived on 16th. A weak replenishment of the monsoon occurred on 23rd and another weak cold front crossed the coast on 29th.

A Yellow-streaked Warbler trapped at Mount Davis on 1st and another trapped at Kadoorie FBG on 4th opened the month, with other good records



2 Grey-headed Lapwings *Vanellus cinereus*
Hong Kong, 1997

J.G. Holmes

coming from Long Valley, where a Northern Lapwing and two Citrine Wagtails were found on 2nd.

On 8th a Common Rosefinch was found at Sha Lo Tung and the first of three Bramblings was at Mai Po the same day. Two more were on Po Toi on 11th and at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15th. Interesting bunting records included Chestnut-eared at Chek Lap Kok on 14th and Kadoorie FBG on 19th and a Rustic at Sha Lo Tung on 22nd. A new high count of 171 Eye-browed Thrushes flew over Kadoorie FBG on 20th.

All other significant records came from Mai Po and the boardwalk, with a Brown-headed Gull during 15-16th, a Common Ringed Plover during 16-18th, a Northern Lapwing on 18th and a new high count of 138 Black-faced Spoonbills on 21st.

December

It was again warmer than normal. A strong northerly surge prevailed during 2-3rd. A cold front arrived on 7th followed by two days of strong northerlies. A weak cold front on 22nd was followed by a replenishment from the east on 31st.

The month began with two Yellow-bellied Tits at Kadoorie FBG on 2nd, a Hume's Leaf Warbler at Shek Wu Wai the next day and a Citrine Wagtail at Long Valley on 5th.

Brown-headed Thrushes were found in Tai Po Kau on 9th and 14th, and a swiftlet sp. was over San Tin on 10th. A female Bull-headed Shrike took up winter quarters in Tai Po Kau from 12th and another female was noted at Long Valley on 27th. Other mid-month passerines include a Common Rosefinch at Mount Davis on 13th, a flock of 30 Striated Yuhinas on 14th and the sixth Plain Flowerpecker of the year on Green Island on 16th.

The monthly waterfowl count on 13th delivered a new high count of 423 Tufted Ducks in Deep Bay, nine Northern Lapwings at Tsim Bei Tsui and a Red-breasted Merganser was noted at the same site and again on 20th. The year closed with a Ruddy-breasted Crake at Lok Ma Chau on 26th, a Dusky Thrush and a Bull-headed Shrike at Long Valley on 27th and a flock of 23 Striated Yuhinas on the Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 28th.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

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In the interests of brevity, records for species that are generally common and widespread in appropriate habitat throughout the year are not listed unless significant reports were received. The dates of Deep Bay waterfowl counts referred to are 11 January, 15 February, 15 March, 15 November and 13 December, although it should be noted that these may include counts made up to a week either side. Species listed in Collar *et al.* (1994) are indicated by the appropriate categories in parentheses: C = critical, E = endangered, V = vulnerable, N = near-threatened. Other abbreviations used: HK = Hong Kong, KARC = Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre, KFBG = Kadoorie and Botanical Gardens, CP = Country Park, NT = New Territories, ZBG = Zoological and Botanical Gardens, HKU = Hong Kong University.

Category A

*Species which have been recorded in an apparently wild state
in Hong Kong in the last 50 years*

0.9 Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica*

太平洋潛鳥

One was near Lung Kwu Chau on 19 February (PJL). This is the first record for Hong Kong (see Leader 1999a).

1 Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

小鵝鶯

In the Deep Bay area during waterfowl counts 116 were recorded in January, 93 in February and 140 in March; few other records were received. Away from Deep Bay, records were received from Shuen Wan (up to three in the first winter period), Plover Cove (up to four in the first winter period and one on 9 December), Luk Keng and Nam Chung (up to three during November and December), Yung Shue O (one on 30 December), Long Valley (one on 7 October) and the Shenzhen River near Liu Pok (one on 31 October). Breeding was reported from fish ponds at San Tin (22 July to 18 September), Shan Pui and at Kau Sai Chau where the species is now present all year.

2 Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

鳳頭鸕鶿

From Tsim Bei Tsui in the early winter period 179 were recorded on 16 January and 164 were noted on 23 February; 24 were noted in the March waterfowl count, 29 were present on 29 March and the final record of the spring was of six on 2 April. During the second winter period the earliest record concerned seven during the November waterfowl count; this was followed by 48 on 30 November and 92 on 13 December.

5.3 Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

紅腳鰐鳥

An adult was seen near Discovery Bay on 19 July (PIH), an immature was seen from Cape D'Aguilar during Typhoon Victor on 3 August (MLC *et al.*) and a white-tailed brown morph was at Ap Lei Chau on 5 September (EMSK).

These are the second to fourth Hong Kong records.

An unidentified adult booby, either Red-footed or Masked *S. dactylatra*, was seen from Cape D'Aguilar during Typhoon Victor on 3 August (RWL, GJC,MLC).

6 Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* 鸕鶿

In the Deep Bay area during waterfowl counts 5984 were recorded in January, 5579 in February and 2553 in March. About 500 were noted on 23 March, counts subsequently declining to 45 on 1 April, 15 during 3-4th and on 10th, two on 16th and, finally, one on 20 April. Away from Deep Bay one was at Kam Tin on 5 January, 550 were noted leaving Plover Cove reservoir at dusk on 22 March, perhaps to a roost in the Tolo Harbour area, one was at the latter locality on 5 April, one was at Shuen Wan on 14th and 21st and, finally for the spring, one was at Stonecutters on 28 April.

In the second winter period one on 25 September was the earliest record. Numbers at the Mai Po roost subsequently built up to 500 on 21 October, 2570 during the November waterfowl count and 4500 during the December count. Away from Deep Bay about 50 were noted roosting at A Chau at the end of November and beginning of December and 161 were noted in the bay at Shuen Wan on 10 December.

7 Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* (N) 卷羽鵜鶘

In the first winter period numbers rose from ten until at least 18 January, through 12 until 11 February to 18 from 23 February to at least 2 March. Withdrawal occurred after this date with nine remaining on 24 March and two on 29 March. The earliest record in the latter part of the year concerned four on 7 December, increasing to seven on 18th and 11 on 21st. All records were from Inner Deep Bay.

9 Lesser Frigatebird *Frigata ariel* 白斑軍艦鳥

A first-stage juvenile was at Mai Po Village fish ponds on 23 April (PJL). An unidentified frigatebird was present at Magazine Gap, HK Island, on 17 February (EMSK).

10 Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* 大麻鵞

Single wintering birds were noted at Mai Po on 12th, 21st, 23rd and 27 January and 12 February, with two present on 1st and 8 February. Passage birds were present on 12 March (five) and 7 April.

11 Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* 黃斑葦鵞

One at Mai Po on 15 March was either a wintering bird or an early migrant. Spring passage was certainly noted from 31 March; in April singles were noted at Mai Po on seven dates with two present on 22nd; the only May record there concerned ten on 24th, though this is likely due to a lack of observer coverage. Away from Mai Po also in May, one was at Kam Tin on 18th, single females were at HKU on 23rd and Cape D'Aguilar on 24th, with a male at the

latter locality the following day, five were at Tai O and two were at Mui Wo on 26th and one was on Po Toi on 30th. June saw six on Po Toi on 2nd with eight there two days later, and one at Luk Keng on 9th. The only summer record was of a female at Mui Wo on 19 July.

In Deep Bay autumn passage was noted from 18 August to 25 October, the peak count being five at Lin Barn Tsuen on 25 September, with four present at Mai Po on 18 August and 7th and 12 October. Elsewhere, one was at Long Valley on 22 September, and in October singles were at Nam Chung on 3rd, Yim Tso Ha, Ho Sheung Heung and Ngam Pin (near Lo Wu) on 8th, Shuen Wan on 16th, Ngam Pin on 17th (with two there on 19th) and Kam Tin on 26th.

12 Schrenck's Bittern *Ixobrychus eurhythmus* (N) 紫背葦鵞

In spring singles were at Yung Shue O on 25 May, at Tai O the following day and at Po Toi on 2nd and 4 June. In autumn, one was at Long Valley on 22 September, a male was at Mui Wo on 1 October and a juvenile was there the following day.

13 Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* 栗葦鵞

There were four spring records, all in April: singles at Mai Po on 4th and 22nd and two on 16th, and one at Long Valley on 10th. An unusual summer record concerned a male at Mui Wo on 29 June. In autumn singles were noted at Mui Wo on 14 September and 1 October, at Long Valley on 22nd, 26th and 29 September and 19 October. The final record of the year concerned a male at Luk Keng on 24 December.

14 Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis* 黑鵞

Singles were at Po Toi on 2 June (MRL,PJL), Sha Lo Tung on 9 September (LCW,THL) and Mai Po (trapped) on 24 September (MRL). These records fit the established pattern of migrants in late spring and early autumn.



3 Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* juvenile
Hong Kong, 1997

J. & J. Holmes

16 Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* 夜鷺

In the Deep Bay area during waterfowl counts 14 were recorded in January, 222 in February and 86 in March; waterfowl count totals depend very much on whether the wintering flock is found or is accessible. Breeding was confirmed at A Chau (100 nests), Mong Tseng (two nests), Stonecutters (13 nests) and Mai Po Village (five nests). Elsewhere, birds were present at Kau Sai Chau during June and September, and generally up to six were noted at Shuen Wan up to 17 March and from 11 October, apart from up to 60 during 27-28 November; one was at Po Toi on 11 November.

17 Striated Heron *Butorides striatus* 綠鷺

Up to three were present at Shum Chung (Sai Kung West CP) from 28 January to 10 February. Noted in spring from 25 March to early June, though there were only two reports before 10 April. Most records concerned one or two birds, though five were present at Mai Po on 24 April. During summer, two were at Shuen Wan on 11 June and 6 July. Return passage was primarily noted from 21 July to the end of October, though there were six records of singles at four localities during November and December. The highest autumn count was also five, this time on 18 August at Mai Po. Most records of migrants came from Mai Po and Deep Bay and, due to regular observations, the northeast NT.

18 Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* 池鷺

In the Deep Bay area during waterfowl counts 231 were recorded in January, 241 in February and 221 in March. Breeding was confirmed at A Chau (two nests), Pak Nai (two nests), Ho Sheung Heung (45 nests), Mai Po Village (63 nests) and Mai Po Lo Wai (20 nests). One was present in the egretty at Penfold Park on 7 March and 18 April, and birds were noted breeding at Kau Sai Chau. Apparent migrants were noted over the sea south of HK Island on 14 April and on Cheung Chau on 9 April (two birds). During the November and December waterfowl counts 200 and 82 were recorded respectively.

19 Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* 牛背鷺

In the Deep Bay area during waterfowl counts five were recorded in January, 31 in February and 88 in March. Five apparent migrants were noted over the sea southwest of Cheung Chau on 14 April and one was on Castle Rock, Po Toi, on 29 April, with three on Po Toi on 30 May. Breeding was confirmed at A Chau (40 nests), Mong Tseng (three nests), Stonecutters (one nest) and Mai Po Village (seven nests); this compares with a 1995 minimum of 104 nests in Hong Kong. In the second winter period 191 were noted at Tsim Bei Tsui on 23 September and 75 were there on 28 November. Elsewhere, up to 20 were at Kam Tin in the first winter period with 24 there on 21 August; records of migrants included four at Chek Lap Kok during 10-11 September with 12 there on 25 September, up to two at Penfold Park during 7-28 October, one at Po Toi on 23 October and two at Aberdeen on 26 October. At Long Valley the highest counts were 35 on 1 May and 65 on 22 September; at Ho Sheung Heung the highest count was 46 on 17 October; at Ho Pui 91 were noted during 18-19 June; at Kau Sai Chau birds were present in June and September.

20 Swinhoe's Egret *Egretta eulophotes* (E) 黃嘴白鷺

Singles were noted at Mai Po on 31 March and 13th and 23 April. One was present at Castle Rock, Po Toi, on 14 April.

21 Pacific Reef Egret *Egretta sacra* 岩鷺

Up to five birds were reported from Tung Chung, Tai Ho Wan, The Brothers, Lamma Island, Po Toi, Kau Sai Chau and Shek Ngau Chau. At Po Toi four to six pairs were estimated as breeding. Fewer records than usual were received.

22 Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* 小白鷺

In the Deep Bay area during waterfowl counts 1075 were recorded in January, 694 in February and 627 in March. Three apparent migrants were noted over the sea southwest of Cheung Chau on 14 April and one was at Po Toi on 30 May. Breeding was confirmed at A Chau (ten nests), Pak Nai (15 nests), Mong Tseng (35 nests), Ho Sheung Heung (15 nests), Stonecutters (four nests) and Mai Po Village (49 nests). Up to 44 were noted at Tung Chung during August to October, up to 44 were noted at Shuen Wan during the first winter period with up to 72 there during the second winter period, and up to 50 were seen at Kau Sai Chau during June, September and December; 30 birds were seen flying south in company with Great Egrets at Po Toi on 6 October (such records of obvious migrants are unusual). During waterfowl counts in November and December 808 and 303 were recorded respectively.

23 Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* 中白鷺

In Deep Bay the highest count in the first winter period was 15 on 11 January; eight were noted during the February waterfowl count with five still present on 1 March. Spring numbers peaked at six on 12 April, and the latest spring record concerned one on 30 April. Autumn passage was noted from 6 September with the highest counts being eight on 11 October and five recorded during the November waterfowl count. There was a greater than usual number of records away from Deep Bay reflecting widespread observer coverage. Singles were at Nam Chung on 14 July, Ho Sheung Heung on 16th and 22 July and Ngam Pin during 22-23 July. At Shuen Wan one was noted during the first week of January, on 13th and 29 March, 20 April, 13th and 16 May and 11 June; autumn passage was recorded from 1 August to the year end, the highest count being three on 10 October. Sixteen were at Starling Inlet on 8 October, singles were at Long Valley on 26 October and Kam Tin on 1 November and two were at Kuk Po from mid November to the end of the year.

24 Great Egret *Egretta alba* 大白鷺

In the Deep Bay area during waterfowl counts 468 were recorded in January, 306 in February and 344 in March. Breeding was confirmed at A Chau (30 nests) and Mong Tseng (12 nests). At Penfold Park a pair raised two young and there were two other adults in breeding condition in the egretty. At Shuen Wan up to 94 were noted in the first winter period, with up to 61 present

in the second winter period. Elsewhere, single birds were seen at Tsuen Wan harbour on 5 February, Tai Po Kau village on 8 February, Stonecutters on 28 April and at Kau Sai Chau during June, with five at Kei Ling Ha on 28 February. Fifty were seen flying south in company with Little Egrets at Po Toi on 6 October; scarce away from Deep Bay, such records of obvious migrants are exceptional.



4 Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*
Mai Po, Hong Kong, October 1996

G.J. Carey



5 Great Egret *Egretta alba*
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 28 September, 1996

G.J. Carey

25 Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* 蒼鷺

During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year, 1333 were recorded in January, 1100 were noted in February and 745 in March. Numbers declined at Mai Po to 107 on 31 March and 50 on 22 April. No birds were reported during the summer in Deep Bay and the first autumn record there concerned four on 18 August. Numbers there increased to 20 on 13 September and 130 on 4 October; during the November and December waterfowl counts 969 and 815 were recorded respectively. Away from Deep Bay, one was at Starling Inlet on 21 July and 5th, 11th and 25 August, with 25 there on 22 September, 58 on 21 October, 85 on 24 November and 95 on 9 December, and at Shuen Wan up to 41 were noted in the first winter period with up to 47 present during the second winter period. Elsewhere, one was at Long Valley on 5 January with two there from 27 September to 1 October and one nearby at Ho Sheung Heung on 8th and 17 October, one was at Chung Mei on 22 January, singles were at Ho Pui on 26 February and 7 October, two were at The Brothers on 21 March, one was at Tai Po Kau Village from 30 March to 30 April, one was at Tung Chung on 24 September, 30 were at Kam Tin on 27 October, the same day that four flew over KFBG, and an adult was at Green Island the following day.

26 Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* 草鷺

Numbers in the first part of the year were apparently relatively low with, apart from three adults on 12 February, only up to two (one adult and one immature) noted at Mai Po up to 13 April and one present on 16 May and 14 June. Autumn passage occurred from 9 September, the highest count being two adults and four juveniles on 12 October and six on 18 October. Three were present during the November waterfowl count and two were noted in the December count. Away from Deep Bay singles were noted at Yung She Au (near Starling Inlet) on 29 July, Kam Tin on 10 October and Long Valley on 17th and 25 October and 2 November.

27 Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* 黑鹳

One was at Mai Po on 30 October.

30 Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* (V) 白鷺

An adult was present in Deep Bay from 26 October to 2 November, and what was presumably the same bird was again seen on 30 November and 30 December.

31 Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* 白琵鷺

Singles were at Mai Po on 31 March, 12 April and from 14 November to the year end. This is the worst year since 1987.

32 Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor* (C) 黑臉琵鷺

During the January waterfowl count the wintering population numbered 101. The number of spring migrants increased during early March peaking at

113 on 14th, subsequently declining to 64 on 24th, 41 on 5 April, 31 on 17th, 16 on 26th and, finally, three on 30 April. The only summer record concerned one on 30 July. The first autumn record concerned an adult and a juvenile on 19 October. Numbers subsequently built up to 31 on 31 October, 113 on 14 November and a new high of 138 on 21 November (RWL); 116 on 29 November appeared to mark a fall in the number of migrants, although the final record of the year concerned 134 on 30 December. The count of 138 represents 22.5% of the world population of this species during winter 1997-98 as calculated by Dahmer and Felley (1998), although Deep Bay possibly hosts a larger proportion during the whole winter due to the presence of migrants.

35 Greylag Goose *Anser anser* 灰雁
Five were seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 11 January 1997 (MRL *et al.*). This is the sixth Hong Kong record, and only the second since 1972.

37 Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* 翹鼻麻鴨
During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 2972 were recorded in January, 2650 were noted in February and 361 were present in March; numbers subsequently declined to 303 during 22-23 March, 28 on 30 March, 27 on 1 April, 20 on 2 April and two during 5-12 April. Noted in the second part of the year from 9 November when 12 were at Tsim Bei Tsui; 560 were recorded on 13 December and 1350 were present on 21st. All records from the Deep Bay area.

[39 Mandarin *Aix galericulata* 鴛鴦
Free-flying birds were noted at Mai Po on 21 January (a pair), 15 February (female) and 18 November. Given the existence of free-flying birds in the captive waterfowl collection at Mai Po, these birds are not considered to have been wild.]

40 Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* 赤頸鴨
During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 2533 were recorded in January, 2165 were noted in February and 1536 were present in March; counts subsequently declined to 200 during 22-23 March, 180 on 31st, 141 on 1 April, 50 on 12 April and two during 26-28 April. Noted in the second half of the year from 18 October when at least 30 were present; the November and December waterfowl counts recorded 756 and 70 respectively. Apart from two at Starling Inlet on 8 November, all records were from the Deep Bay area.

41 Falcated Duck *Anas falcata* 羅紋鴨
During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 39 were recorded in January, 23 were noted in February and eight were present in March; eight seem to have remained until the end of that month, numbers subsequently declining to six on 12 April, the final spring record. Two at Long Valley on 27 September was the earliest record in the second half of the year; there are only two previous records away from the area immediately surrounding Deep Bay,

the last in 1974. The only other records at this time concerned up to 41 birds at Mai Po during 18-21 December. The decline in numbers of recent winters continues: 1996-97 was the worst winter for this species since 1979-80.

42 Gadwall *Anas strepera* 赤膀鴨
Four records were received for the first part of the year: a pair on 5 January, 11 on 23 February, six on 15 March and a pair on 31 March. In the second winter period one was noted on 1 November, two were present on 16 November and a pair were at Tsim Bei Tsui during 14-21 December.

44 Common Teal *Anas crecca* 綠翅鴨
During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 5184 were recorded in January, 4088 were noted in February and 3903 were present in March; the January count is close to the high established during the February 1996 count. Numbers then declined to 265 on 1 April and 120 on 12th, the latest spring report. In Deep Bay during the second half of the year present from 6 September, though no more than seven were noted up to 18 October. During the November and December waterfowl counts 978 and 915 were recorded respectively. Away from Deep Bay up to 32 were at Shuen Wan up to 25 March when 30 were noted, numbers then declining to the final spring record of two on 8 April; in the second winter period up to 17 were present from 14 October. Elsewhere, reported from Long Valley (highest count 11 on 26 October), Kam Tin (highest count 50 on 26 October), Shing Mun Reservoir (ten on 6 January), Penfold Park (up to two during 4-11 November) and Kau Sai Chau (maximum of six during March and December).

45 Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* 綠頭鴨
The highest January count was 14 on 11th, and the highest February count was 29 on 15th; up to two were noted during 1-4 March. Noted in the second winter period from 18 November when two were present; 13 were recorded on 13 December. All records from Tsim Bei Tsui and Mai Po.

46 Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* 斑嘴鴨
Birds of the form *haringtoni* were present in relatively constant numbers throughout the year with no more than eight reported on one date. All reports received were from the Mai Po area apart from one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15 February. Although no juveniles were reported, a pair was seen copulating on the rather late date of 6 September.

Birds of the form *zonorhyncha* were primarily noted in winter, as usual, with small numbers presumably present during the summer though the only reports after 26 April and before 18 August concerned one on the Kam Tin river near Shui Tau on 29th and 31 July. During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 132 were recorded in January, 152 were noted in February (along with 32 unassigned as to form) and 31 were present in March; totals for November and December were seven and 46 respectively. Three unassigned birds were present at Luk Keng on 4 November.

47 Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* 針尾鴨

During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 1329 were recorded in January, 8654 (a new high) were noted in February and 68 were present in March. Sixty were still present on 23 March and numbers subsequently declined to three on 1 April, four on 12th and two on 15 April, the final spring record. Noted in autumn from 18 October when 25 were at Mai Po; numbers subsequently increased to 2113 during the November waterfowl count with 784 present during the December count. Apart from up to eight at Shuen Wan during 1-2 November and on 17 December, all records were from the Deep Bay area.

48 Garganey *Anas querquedula* 白眉鴨

During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 25 were recorded in January, 51 were noted in February and 47 were present in March. The only subsequent spring reports concerned up to two at Shuen Wan during 22-29 March and 21 over the sea south of HK Island on 14 April. Noted in autumn from 6 September when 11 were at Mai Po. Subsequently numbers built up to 500 on 23 September, with 96 present on 4 October, 40 on 15 October and 88 during the November waterfowl count. The only subsequent records were of single birds at Tsim Bei Tsui and Nam Sang Wai on 13 December. The only other records away from the Deep Bay area concerned singles at Shuen Wan on 3 January and Long Valley on 22 September, and seven at Starling Inlet on 8 November.

49 Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* 琵嘴鴨

During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 1749 were recorded in January and 6625 were noted in February; 1220 were present on 22 March. Numbers subsequently declined to 48 on 1 April six on 12th and two on 15 April, the final record of the spring. Noted in the second part of the year from 23 September when ten were present at Tsim Bei Tsui. Numbers subsequently increased to 100 on 18 October, 7944 in the November waterfowl count and 7484 during the December count.

50 Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* 紅頭潛鴨

Fourteen at Mai Po on 11 January (GJC) is a new high. One was recorded during the February waterfowl count, five were noted in the November count and three were present during the December count.

51 Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri* (V) 青頭潛鴨

A female, seen flying strongly above the waterfowl collection at Mai Po and so presumed wild, was seen on 11 January; what was presumably the same bird was seen on 15 February. It or another female was at Nam Sang Wai on 15 March. These are the first records of birds considered to be wild since 1994.

52 Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* 鳳頭潛鴨

During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 56 were recorded in January, 70 were noted in February and two were present during the March

count. Noted in the second part of the year from 30 November when 231 were present at Tsim Bei Tsui. Numbers subsequently increased to 423 on 13 December (RWL), a new high. The only records away from Inner Deep Bay concerned one on a fish pond at San Tin on 10 December, and a male and female on a fish pond at Yim Tso Ha on 6 November, with a male there on 9th and 13 December.

56 Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* 紅胸秋沙鴨

Four females or immatures were at Mai Po on 11 April and a female was present in the Tsim Bei Tsui area during 13-20 December.

57 Black Baza *Aviceda leucophotes* 鳳頭鵲隼

Recorded between 18 April and 22 October from Lower Shing Mun, Tai Lam CP, Fung Yuen, Fanling, Nam Chung, Kuk Po, Tsim Bei Tsui, Tin Shui Wai and Aberdeen CP. Most reports were of single birds except for two at Tai Lam CP during 18-19 June, three at Nam Chung on 21 July, 11 flying north over Tuen Mun on 5 August, 50 flying west over Aberdeen CP on 17 August (LKS), six at Fanling on 5 September and two there on 22 October, and 11 at Tin Shui Wai on 5 October. As usual the high late summer and autumn counts were considered to be migrants. The group of 50 on 17 August is a new maximum count.

58 Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* 鳳頭蜂鷹

Four were at Wong Chuk Yeung on 20 October (MRL) and one was at Mai Po on 30 October (MRL).

60 Black Kite *Milvus migrans* 黑鳶

Widespread records as usual with the continued large concentration of c. 1000 at the Magazine Gap winter roost. Elsewhere over 100 were noted at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15 March.

61 White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* 白腹海鵟

One or two adults or immatures were recorded at the usual coastal localities throughout year including Cape D'Aguilar, eastern Victoria Harbour, north of Lantau, Green Island, Port Shelter, Bluff Island, Port Island, Shek Ngau Chau, Nam Chung, Tai Tam CP, Lai Chi Wo, Shuen Wan and the Yung Shue O area, where one was sighted carrying nesting material on 27 January. Also single adults and immatures were intermittently seen throughout year in the Deep Bay area. Unusual reports at the head of Tolo Harbour concerned an adult fishing off Island House on 5 October and an immature over the Shing Mun River at Sha Tin on 28 October. An immature seen from the Mai Po Boardwalk on 18 November persistently chased a Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*.

62 Eurasian Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus* (N) 禿鷲

All records were from the border area between Mai Po and Ma Tso Lung. Single birds were recorded at Ma Tso Lung on 11 January, Chau Tau on 18 January, the Mai Po access road on 18 February, and two were seen flying

to roost at dusk at Chau Tau on 2 March. These are presumed to be the same birds that arrived at the end of 1996.

63 Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* 蛇鵟

Between one and three were recorded at widespread wooded areas in the NT throughout the year. Localities included KFBG, Kap Lung Forest, Kam Tin, Wong Chuk Yeung, Shing Mun, Tai Po Kau, Mong Tseng, Shek Wu Wai, Ngam Pin, Ho Chung, Shum Chung, Ho Pui, Shuen Wan, Tai Mo Shan and Lam Tsuen Valley. Calling or displaying birds were noted between 18 February and 15 April, in addition to one heard on 18 November. At Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April one was noted moving northwest with Grey-faced Buzzards *Butastur indicus*.

64 Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* 白頭鵟

Up to three were noted until 23 April and again from 27 September. As usual few males were recorded and these were immatures on 4th and 12 October at Mai Po. On 8 February an adult female was seen to take an injured Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* and on 23 March a first-year female drowned another injured gull of the same species. All reports were from the Deep Bay area.

66 Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos* 鵟鵒

A male was at Long Valley on 10 October (LKM,PH) and a juvenile was at Mai Po on 22 October (PJL).



6 Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos*
Long Valley, Hong Kong, 10 October, 1997

Lo Kar Man

68 Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* 日本松雀鷹

Apart from four flying north at Tsim Bei Tsui on 24 April, all reports are of single birds from widespread areas including HK Island and Lantau as well as the NT. Spring passage was recorded between 22 March and 25 April, and autumn passage between 1 October and 3 December. There were also two winter records: at Mai Po on 11 January and KARC on 23 December. Reports of dead or stunned birds included an adult female at Conduit Road, HK Island on 25 April and a juvenile at HKU on 19 October. The total of records each month were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	-	2	8	-	-	-	-	-	8	9	2

1996: a second calendar-year male was picked up at Sha Tau Kok on 15 January and taken into care at KFBG

68.1 Besra *Accipiter virgatus* 松雀鷹

Single birds were recorded in all months except January and February from widespread wooded areas including Mai Po, KFBG, KARC, Yung Shue O, Ho Chung, Tai Po Kau, Sha Lo Tung, Hok Tau, Wong Chuk Yeung, Mong Tseng, Mount Davis, Cape D'Aguilar, Mui Wo, Cheung Chau and Soko Islands. Display flight was noted at Tai Po Kau on 11 April and Sha Lo Tung on 15 April.

1996: an adult female was at KFBG on 28 March and a juvenile female was there on 20 August (both RG).

1995: a second calendar-year female was at KFBG on 20 April and a juvenile male was there on 11 July (both RG).

69 Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* 雀鷹

A female was at Mai Po village fish ponds on 8 April (GJC,PJL).

Sparrowhawk sp. *Accipiter gularis/virgatus/nisus* 雀鷹類

Records of unidentified accipiters comprising one or two birds were widespread with the numbers of sightings each month as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	5	4	-	-	-	-	1	8	8	5	3

70 Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* 鳳頭鷹

Apart from three at KFBG on 17 April, all other records refer to one or two birds from widespread wooded areas throughout the year, with frequent reports of display flight. Localities include ZBG, Pok Fu Lam, Mount Davis, Mount Austin, KFBG, Wong Chuk Yeung, Tai Mei Tuk, Kap Lung Forest Trail, Tai Po Kau, Fanling, To Fung Shan, Ho Chung, Sha Lo Tung, Ting Kok, Hok Tau, Sam A Tsuen, Mui Wo, Chek Lap Kok, Ng Tung Chai, Lam Tsuen Valley, Fo Tan, Shing Mun, Kowloon Hills, Mong Tseng and Mai Po.

71 Chinese Goshawk *Accipiter soloensis* 赤腹鷹

Single birds were recorded in spring between 12th and 29 April at Tai Po Kau, Ng Tung Chai, KFBG, Hok Tau, Sha Lo Tung and near The Ninepins, followed by a late bird at Cape D'Aguilar on 25 May. Peak passage was noted as usual during the latter half of April with nine at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12th, eight there on 17th, 216 flying north there between 0745h and 1130h on 24th, and 16 flying north west at Mount Davis the same day. In autumn all records were in October with one at Chek Lap Kok on 7th, one at KFBG on 20th, five there on 27th, and five at Tai Po Kau on 30th.

72 Grey-faced Buzzard *Butastur indicus* 灰臉鵟鷹

The only records were during spring passage between 27 March and 12 April. No large numbers were noted this year, the highest count being eight at Mai Po on 28 March, three at Shek Wu Wai the same day, and six at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April. Other reports of one or two birds came from Tsim Bei Tsui, Mai Po, Tai Po Kau, Kap Lung Trail and Long Valley.

73 Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* 普通鵟

Up to four were recorded until 1 April and from 21 October. Most reports were from the Deep Bay area but other localities included Fanling, Sha Tin, KFBG, Kam Tin, Long Valley/Lo Wu, Chinese University, Shum Chung, Shek Wu Wai, Shuen Wan, Victoria Park, Chai Wan, Mount Davis, Po Toi, Chek Lap Kok and Tai Ho Wan (Lantau).

74 Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* (V) 烏鵂

All records were in the area from Tsim Bei Tsui to Long Valley and at Kam Tin. Up to three were noted until 9 March and up to two were present from 26 October. Eleven birds were adults or near-adults, 13 immatures and 14 not aged.

75 Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* (V) 白肩鵂

All records are from the Deep Bay area and border hills between Tsim Bei Tsui and Crest Hill. Most reports refer to up to three until 1 April, except for nine on 11 January at Ma Tso Lung, and only single birds from 25 October. Analysis of individual sightings gives 14 adults or near-adults, 16 immatures and 38 not aged.

76 Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus* 白腹山鵂

One or two were reported in most months except summer from widespread areas including Mai Po, Lin Barn Tsuen, Chau Tau, Long Valley, Luk Keng, Nam Chung, Hok Tau, Wu Kau Tang, Shuen Wan, Sha Tin, Yung Shue O, and Sha Lo Wan (Lantau). As usual many reports refer to adult pairs or single immatures. An adult was seen in rolling display flight at Wu Kau Tang on 25 March, and at Mai Po an immature was harrying herons and ducks on 18 October and an optimistic juvenile seized a Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* by the neck but subsequently dropped it still alive.

77 Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* 鵟

Several were present in the Deep Bay area until 28 April and from 23 September, with a maximum count of ten at Tsim Bei Tsui on 11 January. Elsewhere, single birds were reported at The Brothers on 10th and 21 February, Tai Ho Wan (Lantau) on 10 December, Starling Inlet on 15 March, Shing Mun Reservoir on 28 April, Shuen Wan on 8 November, Crooked Harbour on 15 November and Lai Chi Wo on 29 November. In addition, one was regularly seen at Starling Inlet from August to December and up to three were present at Shuen Wan on various dates in December.

79 Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* 紅隼

Between one and three were recorded from widespread parts of the NT until 1 April and from 20 September. Singles were also seen at Mount Davis and Cape D'Aguilar in October and Po Toi in November. The highest count was five or six flying south at Mai Po on 1 October. A sharp increase in the number of sightings per month in October indicates passage; monthly sightings were as follows.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	8	27	10	7

82 Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* 燕隼

Successful breeding appears to have occurred again near Ho Sheung Heung with sightings there between 12 April and 15 October including two adults feeding two dependant young on 21 August. The only other summer record was of an adult taking a Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* at dusk in front of the Tower Hide at Mai Po on 7 June. One or two were reported on passage in both spring and autumn from widespread locations in the NT with isolated records from Lantau and HK Island. The few other reports in spring were all from the northern NT between 30 April and 11 May and may have been locally breeding birds. One at Mai Po on 30 April had caught a Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. Clearly defined passage was however noted in autumn between 20 September and 27 October. Numbers of sightings each month, including those seen at Ho Sheung Heung, are given below:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-	-	-	2	3	1	-	2	14	28	-	-

83 Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* 游隼

Single birds were recorded in most months from widespread areas including the Deep Bay area, Plover Cove, Dong Ping Chau, Shing Mun, Luk Keng, Shuen Wan, Kowloon, Pok Fu Lam, Mount Davis, Cape D'Aguilar, Po Toi, Cheung Chau and Mui Wo. Frequently seen at Mai Po chasing shorebirds and gulls. On one occasion a juvenile determinedly chased a Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* and forced it underwater. Other prey species noted included Saunders's Gull *Larus saundersi*, Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* and a probable Common Greenshank *T. nebularia*.

- 84 Chinese Francolin** *Francolinus pintadeanus* 鵓
Up to three were seen but mostly heard calling between 7 March and 4 October at Pok Fu Lam, Cape D'Aguilar, Kowloon Peak, Kam Tin, Shek Wu Wai, Yung Shue O, Kau Sai Chau, Sha Lo Tung, Starling Inlet, Mong Tseng and Chek Lap Kok.
- 85 Japanese Quail** *Coturnix japonica* 鵓
One or two were at Long Valley between 4 January and 12 April, with late records on 1st and 15 May, and from 18 October to 2 November. Two at Lower Shing Mun on 6 January were probably released. Elsewhere, singles were at Shum Chung on 27 January, the Brothers on 7 April (with two there on 23 April), Shuen Wan on 20 April, Tin Shui Wai on 1 October, Chek Lap Kok on 13 November and Sha Lo Tung on 12 and 25 November. Records of one at Long Valley on 12 June and two at Tin Shui Wai during 25-26 June are considered to involve escaped or released birds.
- 86 Yellow-legged Buttonquail** *Turnix tanki* 黃腳三趾鵓
Two were at Chek Lap Kok on 24 September (GJC), one was at Long Valley on 1 October (GJC), one was at Robin's Nest (Hung Fa Leng) on 18 October (JH,JW) and one was at Long Valley on 25 October.
- 87 Barred Buttonquail** *Turnix suscitator* 棕三趾鵓
Two birds, a male and a female on the basis of size, were trapped at Tin Shui Wai on 5 October (PIL,MRL), one was photographed at Cloudy Hill on 11 October (CCY,CCP - see *HKBWS Bulletin No. 166*) and a female was trapped at Tin Shui Wai on 23 November (MRL).
- [**Buttonquail sp.** *Turnix tanki/suscitator* 三趾鵓類
Single unidentified buttonquails were present at Po Toi on 19 September, Tin Shui Wai on 20th, 21st, 27th and 28 September, Long Valley and Tin Shui Wai on 1 October, Sha Lo Tung on 4th, Tin Shui Wai on 5th and Long Valley on 26 October.]
- 88 Slaty-legged Crake** *Rallina eurizonoides* 白喉斑秧雞
The double-note call attributed to this species was heard regularly at Kau To Shan from 5 April to 27 June (MLC), at KARC on 9th and 11 April (MRL), Mong Tseng, Yung Shue O and Shuen Wan on 11 April (RWL), Yung Shue O on 26 April (RWL) and Hok Tau on 29 April (RWL).
- 89 Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus* 普通秧雞
One was at Mai Po on 11 January (EMSK,GJC).
- 90 Slaty-breasted Rail** *Rallus striatus* 藍胸秧雞
Up to three birds were recorded in Deep Bay during the year. Elsewhere, singles were seen at Nam Chung and Kuk Po.

- 91 Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla* 小田雞
One was at Mai Po village fish ponds on 22 April (VBP).
1991: one was at Mai Po on 4 October (MH). This is the sixth Hong Kong record.
- 92 Ruddy-breasted Crake** *Porzana fusca* 紅胸田雞
Singles were at Mai Po during 11-18 January and at Lok Ma Chau on 26 December.
- 94 Brown Crake** *Amaurornis akool* 紅腳苦惡鳥
One was at Ho Chung on 5 March (MH).
- 95 White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* 白胸苦惡鳥
During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 19 were recorded in January, 44 were noted in February and 46 were present in March. Breeding was reported from Sha Po. During the November and December waterfowl counts 19 and nine were recorded respectively.
- 96 Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* 黑水雞
During Deep Bay waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 58 were recorded in January, 113 were noted in February and 102 were present in March. During the November and December waterfowl counts 68 and 76 were recorded respectively. Also reported from Starling Inlet, Long Valley, Ho Sheung Heung, Ho Pui, Shuen Wan and Kau Sai Chau.
- [96.1 Purple Swamp-hen** *Porphyrio porphyrio* 紫水雞
At Mai Po two were seen on 12 February, 12th and 24 March (PIL), and one was seen on 15 March, 30 April and 18th and 30 August (MLC,GJC). These probably concern the birds that escaped from Fairview Park in late 1992.]
- 97 Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea* 董雞
An unusual winter record concerned a female or immature at Mai Po on 12 January and 23 February. A female was at Long Valley on 12 June, a female or immature was at Lin Barn Tsuen and one was at San Tin on 12 September, and singles were at Mai Po and Tin Shui Wai on 1 October, at Long Valley on 19 October and at Lin Barn Tsuen the following day.
- 98 Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* 白骨頂
During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 939 were recorded in January, 1223 were noted in February and 76 were present in March. Subsequent spring counts did not exceed four up to the final record on 15 April. Noted in the second part of the year from 18 August when four were at Mai Po; during the November and December waterfowl counts 81 and 37 were recorded respectively. Away from Deep Bay also noted at Shuen Wan (up to six in the first winter period) and at sea near Sha Chau (one on 14 January).

100 Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* 水雉

In spring singles were at Mong Tseng on 26 April and at San Tin on 20 May. In autumn three were at Ngam Pin (near Lo Wu) on 8 October with one still there on 17th, and one was at Long Valley from 29 September to 19 October, with another sighting there, possibly of a different bird, on 26 October.

101 Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* 彩鹬

Recorded at Long Valley from 29 March to 14 December, the highest count being 15 on 12 June, though most records were of four or fewer. At Kam Tin noted during 1-20 April and 21 August to 16 November, mostly three birds or fewer though the highest counts occurred in October with 12 on 10th and ten on 2nd and 30th. An adult was seen with four downy young at Kam Tin on 1 April.

103 Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* 黑翅長腳鹬

The wintering flock peaked at 170 on 15 March, though it was rarely seen as it was in the Frontier Closed Area at Ma Tso Lung. Subsequent spring records in the Deep Bay area involved singles on four dates to 23 April, followed by four at Long Valley on 28 May and at San Tin on 4 June. Noted in autumn from 20 August when four were at Mai Po. Numbers subsequently increased to 126 on 17 September and 263 on 27th; 200 remained on 12 October and 80 were noted on 1 November. Away from Deep Bay 32 were at Long Valley on 6 September with smaller numbers intermittently present there and at Ma Tso Lung until 8 November. Elsewhere, nine flying northeast past Cheung Chau on 6 September was the first record for the island, four were at Chek Lap Kok during 24-25 September and six were at Shuen Wan on 16 October.

104 Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* 反嘴鹬

A count of 1745 made during the February waterfowl count is a new high for Hong Kong and continues the sharp rise in wintering numbers of this species seen since 1993. Numbers subsequently declined to 1114 during the March count, 1070 on 28th, 675 two days later, 328 on 31 March, 260 on 5 April, 174 on 12th, 85 on 20th, 39 on 26th, ten on 28th, four on 30th and, finally, one on 11 May. Recorded in the second part of the year from 18 October when four were at Mai Po; numbers increased to 71 on 31 October, 223 on 18 November and 1070 on 13 December.

105 Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* 普通燕鴒

Recorded in spring from 5 February to 1 May with six or fewer birds per day apart from eight on 3 April and eleven three days later on 6th. An initial pulse of records during February was followed by the main passage period from 17 March to 6 April, and then a less marked passage during 11-15 April; subsequently noted on four dates from 23rd. There were three autumn records: 17 at Long Valley on 1 September, three at Mai Po on 10 October and two there on 12 October. Apart from up to three at Chek Lap Kok during 17-18 March and two there on 25 April, singles at Kam Tin on 4th and 12 April and one south of HK Island on 14 April, all records were from Deep Bay and Long Valley.

106 Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* 金眶鸻

During Deep Bay waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 47 were recorded in January, 94 were noted in February and 31 were present in March. Subsequent spring counts in the Deep Bay area included 45 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 22 March and 30 there on 2 April. There were only three records at Long Valley or Deep Bay from May to August. Autumn passage was apparent from early September and the highest counts were 33 at Long Valley on 6 September, 45 at Lin Barn Tsuen three days later on 9th, 180 at Lin Barn Tsuen on 18 October and 114 at Ma Tso Lung on 31 October.

Away from the Deep Bay and Ma Tso Lung area, at Shuen Wan up to 45 were noted in the first winter period, spring passage peaked at 28 on 22 March with at least 20 remaining until 8 April, autumn passage was evident from mid July peaking in September at 20 on 14th and wintering birds were present from November with numbers reaching 52 on 17 December. Also recorded at Chek Lap Kok, Starling Inlet and Kam Tin, though only in single figures apart from 17 at Kam Tin on 1 April. There were no records of confirmed breeding though about three to four pairs were estimated to have probably bred at Chek Lap Kok.

107 Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* 劍鸻

Single birds were seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 4th and 23 February and 22 March (PJJ *et al.*) and on 16th and 18 November (YYT,RWL). The sightings in recent winters could all relate to the same individual.

108 Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* 環頸鸻

During Deep Bay waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 1800 were recorded in January, 1000 were noted in February and 75 were present in March; subsequently numbers declined to 500 on 22 March and 258 on 28th. Spring passage saw small influxes that brought 20 birds on 5 April and 16 on 20 April; the final spring record concerned one on 30 April, though there was a lack of observer coverage in May. The earliest record in the second part of the year in Deep Bay was on 13 September when ten were at Mai Po; by 16 November 3600 were present. Elsewhere, one at Cheung Chau on 19 March was probably the first record for the island, up to 76 were noted at Chek Lap Kok during the first winter period with singles noted on 4 April and 11 September, and 57 present at nearby East Brother on 19 November, one was at Dong Ping Chau on 12 April, at least three were at Kai Tak on 30 January, one was at Lai Chi Wo on 29 November, one was at Long Valley on 22 September, and at Shuen Wan up to 22 were noted up to 25 March and up to 46 were noted from 1 November.

109 Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* 蒙古沙鸻

In Deep Bay up to seven birds were reported in the first winter period, and spring migration was first noted on 24 March when 15 were present. Influxes brought 40 on 1 April, 60 on 6th and 130 on 10th, sixty on 20th and 150, the highest count of the spring, on 23rd. There were no spring records after four

on 30 April due to a lack of observer coverage. First noted in the second part of the year on 31 October when two were at Mai Po. Six were noted during the November waterfowl count, 25 were present on 2 December, six were recorded during the December waterfowl count and the final record of the year concerned three on 30th.

110 Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii* 鐵嘴沙撈

Winter records of this species are very rare and so one at Chek Lap Kok during 19-20 February, presumably the same individual as recorded there in February 1996, is of note. Passage was first noted on 19 March when eight were seen flying east over the sea north of Lantau. Numbers in Deep Bay increased from 28 on 22 March to 162 on 31st, 250 on 1 April and 1070, the peak spring count, on 6 April, with apparently a sharp decline thereafter. An influx later in the month resulted in a count of 250 on 23rd, and the final record of the spring concerned two on 30 April. A lack of observer coverage resulted in no records during May. There were only two autumn records: 11 at Mai Po on 30 August and three at The Brothers on 2 September. Apart from those mentioned, the only other records away from Deep Bay all occurred during April and concerned two at Chek Lap Kok on 4th, one at The Brothers on 7th with three there on 23rd, ten at Shuen Wan on 8th and four at Dong Ping Chau on 12th.

111 Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus* 紅胸鵐

The only records during the year came from Chek Lap Kok where substantial areas of open grass provide the favoured habitat for this species. Three males were recorded on 17 March with one present the next day, and a female flew northeast on 24 March; in autumn one was present on 25 September. The latter is the first autumn record since 1979, which occurred at the former airport of Kai Tak.

112 Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* 太平洋金斑鵐

The wintering flock numbered 137 (counted on 8 February), though 126 were noted on both 2nd and 23 March. At the end of March and during early April up to 60 were noted and an influx brought 190 on 8th, followed by another arrival that saw 280 present on 22nd, the highest count of the spring. On 30 April 131 were still present but this was the final record of the spring due to a lack of observer coverage in May. First noted in the second half of the year on 24 August when eight were at Mai Po, numbers increased to 84 on 6 September (consisting of 76 adults and eight juveniles), the highest autumn count. Subsequent counts saw a decline to 43 on 17 September and up to five in the first half of October before the arrival of the wintering flock which numbered 150 on 18 October. Away from Deep Bay one was at Shuen Wan on 10 January, up to two were there during 25-29 March and singles were noted on 8th, 9th and 15 April; at Kau Sai Chau two were noted on 31 March, at Chek Lap Kok three were present during 24-25 April and at Long Valley three were noted on 6 September.



7 Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*
Long Valley, Hong Kong, 26 October, 1996

G.J. Carey



8 Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*
Hong Kong, February 1997

J. & J. Holmes

113 Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* 灰斑鵐

The wintering flock in the first winter period numbered 502 (on 11 January and 2 February), numbers declining to 456 during the February waterfowl count, 291 on 1 March, 43 on 22nd, 19 on 1 April and 16 on 5th. Subsequent April numbers were generally ten or less apart from 20 on 16th which marked

an arrival of passage birds. The final spring record concerned six on 24 May. Noted in autumn from 6 September when two were present; subsequently, one was recorded on 13 September, ten were noted on 18 October, 45 on 31st, 151 on 18 November and 270 during the December waterfowl count. All records were from Deep Bay.

114 Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* (N) 灰頭麥雞

In the first winter period at Kam Tin eleven were noted on 5 January and five were present on 22 March; there were only four other records in the first part of the year: three at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15 February, one at Lin Barn Tsuen on 7 April and presumably the same individual at nearby San Tin the following day, and one at Mai Po on 14 April. Noted in autumn from 20 September when two were at Kam Tin; subsequent records there peaked at 13 during 26-27 October and again on 6 December. Elsewhere, singles were at Mai Po on six dates from 24 September to 25 October, with seven present on 29 November, and at Tsim Bei Tsui on 26 October, 23 November and 23 December; these records of one bird could have related to the same individual. Singles were also at Long Valley on 9 October, and 16th and 30 November, with seven near there on 27 October.

115 Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* 鳳頭麥雞

Singles were at Long Valley on 2 November and at Mai Po on 18 November, and nine were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 December.

116 Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* 細嘴濱鷸

Wintering birds numbered nine and were last noted on 10 March. Migrants were first noted on 22 March when 12 were present, increasing to 37 on 28 March, 123 on 1 April and 200, the highest count of the spring, on 6th. Subsequent numbers declined to 140 on 10th and 34 on 13th, with a small influx bringing 30 on 21st. The final spring record concerned eight on 24 May. Noted in autumn on six dates from 18 August to 18 October, the highest count being 13 on 13 September; up to two were then present from 1 November to 2 December. All records were from Deep Bay.

117 Red Knot *Calidris canutus* 紅腹濱鷸

A single wintering bird was recorded up to 31 March, though two were present on 18 January. Numbers remained at three or less until 26 April when 44 were noted, increasing to 55 on 30th, the highest count and the latest record of the spring. Noted in autumn as follows: nine on 13 September, six on 1 October, and singles on 18 October, 15th and 18 November and 2 December.

118 Sanderling *Calidris alba* 三趾鷸

In a poor year for this species one was seen in flight over the sea north of Lantau on 19 March (PJL), up to two were at Mai Po during 1-2 April, two were present there on 21 April, three were there on 30 April and, in autumn, a juvenile was there on 18 November. The 19 March record is the earliest spring record, the previous earliest concerning one on 26 March 1977.

119 Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* 紅胸濱鷸

Up to 35 wintering birds were noted in the first winter period, somewhat higher than in most years. Spring passage was first recorded on 19 March when 18 flew east over the sea north of Lantau. Numbers in Deep Bay built up to 750 at the end of March and 1700 on 1 April (GJC,PJL), a new high for Hong Kong. Subsequent counts included 1051 on 6 April, 900 three days later and again on 23 April. The final record of the spring, presumably due to a lack of observer coverage during May, concerned one on 4 May. There were three early autumn records of up four birds from 16 August to 20 September. Subsequent counts included 35 on 15 November and 49 on 2 December. Away from Deep Bay at Shuen Wan up to three were present during 6-9 April, one was noted on 24th, and six were present on 27 April and again on 7 May.

119.1 Little Stint *Calidris minuta* 小濱鷸

Two were at Mai Po on 20 April.

120 Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* 烏腳濱鷸

The highest count in the first winter period was 64 on 11 January. Spring numbers reached 30 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 2 April with 25 remaining on 11 April; two there the following day was the last spring record. Recorded in autumn from 17 September with four or less on five dates to 18 October when 152 were present at Lin Barn Tsuen (PJL), a new high for Hong Kong; 62 remained there on 23 October but subsequent counts in the Deep Bay area involved one or two birds on three dates. Away from Deep Bay one was at Long Valley on 30 November.

121 Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* 長趾濱鷸

Up to four birds were recorded on six dates in the first winter period up to 15 February apart from 15 on 3 January. Spring passage in Deep Bay was noted during 1-28 April with the highest counts being 79 on 27th, 29 on 23rd and 20 on 11th. Seen there in the second part of the year from 1 September with most records occurring before 26 September, the highest count during this time being 12 on 17th. Subsequently, 27 were noted on 9 October, three were present on 25th and one was noted on 15 November. Away from Deep Bay one was at Shuen Wan during 8-9 April and on 15th, with up to six present during 24-27 April and four on 13 September; at Chek Lap Kok one was seen during 27-28 August.

121.1 Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* 斑胸濱鷸

One was on a fish pond just north of Mai Po on 13th and 16 May (PJL).

122 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* 尖尾濱鷸

Recorded in spring from 29 March to 24 May, though the small number of records in May is probably due to a lack of observer activity. There were five double-figure counts during this time, all in April: 12 on 2nd, 30 on 6th, 20 on 8th and 26th, and 41 on 30th. In autumn one was at Mai Po on 20 August. Not a good year for this species.

123 Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* 彎嘴濱鷸

A wintering individual was noted on 12 January. The first passage birds were recorded on 22 March when 176 were present. Influxes occurred at the end of March (3000 being counted on 1 April), possibly also on 6th (2000), on 10th (4000) and on 20th (2190). A conservative estimate of 8000 birds passed through Deep Bay to the end of April. May reports were few due to a lack of observer coverage, and the final spring record concerned 41 on 24 May. Autumn passage was weak with only up to four birds noted on six dates from 24 August to 18 October, with a further, possibly wintering, individual on 30 November. The only records away from Deep Bay all occurred in April and concerned one at Chek Lap Kok on 4th, one at Shuen Wan on 8th, eight at sea south of HK Island on 14th and one at Long Valley during 17-18th.

124 Dunlin *Calidris alpina* 黑腹濱鷸

During the first-winter period up to 1000 were recorded in January and the first half of February, but the wintering flock seems to have left soon after then. Presumed passage birds were first noted on 22 March and from then until 30 April up to four birds were seen on ten dates. The sole autumn record concerned three on 13 September. The wintering flock was first noted on 31 October when 317 were present; numbers increased to 1200 on 18 November and 3400 during the December waterfowl count.

125 Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus* (V) 勺嘴鷸

A minimum of seven individuals was recorded in spring from 31 March to 12 April and during 20-27 April. Birds were noted on 15 dates as follows: four on 20th, three on 1st and 21st, two on 31st, 2nd and 23rd and singles on all other dates. There was one autumn record on 17 September. All records from Deep Bay.

126 Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* 闊嘴鷸

There was only one winter record, that of a single bird on 8 February. Spring passage was noted from 22 March to 24 May though a lack of observer coverage in the latter month meant this was the only May record. Numbers built up to 25 by the end of March, 60 by 2 April and 110 by 8th, the highest count of the year. Subsequently, 50 were seen on 10th and again on 20th and ten were present during 26-28th. Noted in autumn on three dates during 5-20 September (two on 13th being the highest count), and a presumed wintering bird was present from 31 October to the end of the year.

127 Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* 流蘇鷸

Up to two males (with a third unsexed bird on 27 February) were present in the first part of the year up to 3 April; three males were seen on 5 April but only singles were present until 15 April. Reports of a female on 6th and 8th are of interest as rather few are reported in Hong Kong. The only one autumn record was of one at Mai Po on 1 October.

129 Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* 扇尾沙錐

The highest number recorded in the first winter period was 41 in Deep Bay during the February waterfowl count. The highest counts during spring passage were 35 at Kam Tin on 4 April, 28 at Lin Barn Tsuen on 22 March and 20 at Long Valley on 23 March and 7 April. The number of records declined considerably after the middle of the month although final spring records of up to 16 at Long Valley from 28 April to 1 May suggests that this dearth in early May was due to a lack of observer coverage. Recorded in autumn from 11 September when four were at Long Valley; the highest counts of passage birds at this time came from Long Valley with up to 35 there during 29-30 September and 18 on 9 October. Single figures only were noted after this date apart from the final record of the year, 13 at Chau Tau on 13 December. Recorded primarily at Long Valley, the Mai Po area, Kam Tin and Shuen Wan.

130 Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura* 針尾沙錐

Up to six birds were recorded on four dates to 20 February. Spring passage was noted from 22 March to 1 May, the highest counts being 15 at Kam Tin on 4 April and 11 at Mai Po village fish ponds on 6 April. Recorded in autumn from 27 August when one was at Chek Lap Kok. Main passage occurred during September and numbers reached 50 at Long Valley on 14th, 25th and 29 September. The final record of the year concerned one at Ma Tso Lung on 31 October. Primarily noted at Long Valley, but also in the Deep Bay area, at Kam Tin, Shuen Wan, Chek Lap Kok and Penfold Park.

131 Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala* 大沙錐

Recorded on six dates in spring during 4-29 April with singles noted on four dates and three at Long Valley on 17th and 29th. Seen on eight dates in autumn, all at Long Valley, from 6 September to 9 October with singles on four dates, two on two dates, three on 25th and four on the latest date. Away from Long Valley recorded at Kam Tin (twice) and Chek Lap Kok (once).

[Dowitcher sp.] *Limnodromus* sp. 半蹼鷸類

One seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 11 February (RWL) was not Asian Dowitcher.]

134 Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus* (N) 半蹼鷸

Recorded in spring from 31 March to 24 May. Numbers increased from two on the earliest date to 18 on 4th, 49 on 10th, 60 on 14th and 168 on 26th, the highest count of the spring. Subsequently declined to 94 on 28th, 53 on 30th; after this there were no more records (probably due to a lack of observer activity) until 22nd and 24 May when one was seen. Noted in autumn on five dates with a single juvenile recorded on 16th and 18 August, another on 6 September, three birds on 20 August and one on 17 September.

135 Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* 丘鷸

Singles were at Ho Chung on 12 January, KFBG on 8 October, Cloudy Hill and Robin's Nest on 24th, Fanling Golf Course on 5 November, Ng Tung

Tsai on 7th and Tai Ho Wan (Lantau) on 26 November; two were at Tai Po Kau on 22 October.

136 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* 黑尾塍鹬

During Deep Bay waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 130 were recorded in January and 215 were noted in February remaining into early March. Spring passage was first noted in the middle of March and influxes brought 813 on 31 March (with 1000 present on 5 April) and 1250 on 20 April. Subsequently there was a swift decrease to 101 on 23rd, followed by 68 on 26th and 62 on 30th; the final record of the spring concerned ten on 24 May, though a lack of observer coverage was no doubt responsible for the absence of records between these dates. Autumn passage was noted from 18 August when four birds were present, peaking at 91 on 17 September. Wintering birds appear to have begun arriving in late September with 182 present on 1st and 4 October, 238 on 18 October and 244 on 1 November. One at Long Valley on 9th and 11 April is only the sixth record away from Deep Bay.

137 Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* 斑尾塍鹬

Up to three birds were noted during the first winter period until 10 March. Spring migrants were first recorded on 22 March, numbers increasing to 35 during 5-6 April; subsequent counts included 24 on 13th, 15 on 23rd and one on 26th and 30 April, the final records of the spring. Recorded in autumn from 6 September when seven were noted; five were present a week later and eight were noted on 1 October with two present on 4th. Subsequently one bird remained to the end of the year. All records from Deep Bay.

139 Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* 中杓鹬

Winter records are unusual so the presence of up to two birds until 24 March is of interest. Spring migrants were first noted on 28 March when six were present but subsequently no more than ten were counted until 21 April when 28 were noted. Numbers peaked at 75 on 22 April and the final record of the spring was of two on 24 May. Noted in autumn from 18 August when 73 were present, which proved to be the highest count at that time, numbers declining to 59 on 30th and 32 on 13 September. Subsequently, apart from ten on 1 October, no more than three were noted until the end of passage on 18 October. Apart from two at Cape D'Aguilar on 22 August, six at The Brothers on 2 September, one at Sha Tau Kok on 22 September and two at Luk Keng on 8 October, all records were from Deep Bay.

140 Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquatus* 白腰杓鹬

During the January waterfowl count 432 were recorded; numbers increased to 750 on 15 February, with 635 remaining on 1 March, 137 during that month's waterfowl count, 119 on 23rd, 33 on 28th, 30 on 2 April and 22 on 8th; during the middle of the month up to 16 birds were present. The final spring record concerned six on 24 May. Noted in autumn from 18 August when 30 were present, autumn passage peaking at 50 in Deep Bay on 27 August and 56 at Starling Inlet on 8 September; the latter is the highest ever count away from

Deep Bay. Wintering birds seemed to have started arriving by mid October, with 280 recorded during the December waterfowl count. Up to three were present at Kau Sai Chau during 15-16 September.

141 Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* (N) 紅腰杓鹬

A wintering bird was noted until 12 February. The same or a passage bird was seen on 15th and 28 March, and eight passage individuals were present on 31 March, a count exceeded only by ten on 8 April. Up to three were noted during the rest of the spring passage period, apart from five on 6th and on the latest date of 26 April. There was only one autumn record: one on 12 October. All records were from Deep Bay.

142 Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* 鶴鷸

Numbers in the first winter period peaked at 713 during the February waterfowl count. Spring passage brought counts of 1600 on 2 March, 1313 on 23 March, 2000 on 3 April and 1200 during 11-15 April. A total of 1100 on 21 April was the last four-figure count of the spring, and 178 on 30 April was the final count of the season, though this was presumably due to a lack of observer activity during May. Noted in autumn from 24 August when two adults were at Mai Po, passage continued until 18 September and involved a maximum of 16 on the latter date. Wintering birds apparently arrived during the first half of October, and 271 noted on 1 November. All records were in the Deep Bay area.

143 Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* 紅腳鷸

The highest count in the first part of the year was 556 during the February waterfowl count, with 258 present during the March waterfowl count. Spring passage saw 400 in the first week of April rising to 1000 on 11th, with further influxes bringing 800 on 21st and 1389 on 30 April. A lack of observer coverage in May resulted in only one record during that month, 103 on 24 May. Autumn passage was noted from 15 July. Numbers in Deep Bay were highest on 18 August when 288 were present, with 203 still present on 30th. On 13 September 54 were noted, with subsequent counts being 115 on 4 October, 41 on 18th, 20 during the November waterfowl count and 75 during the December count. Other records away from Deep Bay concerned one at Dong Ping Chau on 12 April, up to two at Shuen Wan during 24-27 April, four at Nam Chung on 17 April with singles there on 15th and 21 July, and 14 at Island House on 23 July.

144 Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* 澤鷸

The highest counts in the first part of the year were 592 on 8 February and 650 on 2 March, though the latter may have included passage migrants as the 1486 recorded on 15 March certainly included migrants. Subsequent spring counts included 1625 on 28 March, 1485 on 6 April and 1170 on 11 April. A fall in numbers occurred subsequently with 200 on 21 April being the last three-figure count. Twelve at Mai Po on 30th were followed by two there on



9 Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 24 November 1996

G.J. Carey



10 Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 28 October, 1996

G.J. Carey

24 May. In autumn noted from 24 August but numbers never exceeded 87 until 4 October when 390 were counted, followed by 516 on 18 October. The final Deep Bay record of the year concerned 24 on 13 December. Away from Deep Bay up to three were at Shuen Wan during 24-27 April, with singles noted there on 7 May and 7 September, and one was at Long Valley on 28 April.

145 Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

青脚鷸

During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 430 were recorded in January, 213 were noted in February and 388 in March, though 655 were present on 3 March. Influxes during spring passage saw counts of 760 on 1 April, 1200 on 11 April and 720 on 20 April. Due to a lack of observer coverage a count of 583 on 30 April was the final Deep Bay record of the spring. During autumn, noted from 18 August with 478 present on 20th, 442 on 5 September and 698 on 17 September. Subsequent to this, the only three-figure counts were of 375 on 18 October and 134 on 1 November. Away from Deep Bay singles were at Shuen Wan on 24 April and 7 May, Long Valley on 24 August and Chek Lap Kok on 27 August.



11 Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 24 November, 1996

G.J. Carey

146 Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* (E)

小青脚鷸

The year began with one from the boardwalk on 3 January (RWL), a rare winter record of this species. In spring recorded from 4 April to 24 May, though the maximum count was a relatively low five on 6th, 8th and 11 April. There were only two May records, probably due to a lack of observer coverage.

147 Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

白腰草鷸

During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year, 21 were recorded in January, 36 in February and 20 in March. The highest spring passage counts were 20 at Long Valley and nine at Mai Po on 9 April, and 11 at Long Valley and five in the Mai Po area two days later. The final record of the spring concerned five at Long Valley on 1 May. Recorded in autumn from 22 July with the highest counts being 33 at Long Valley on 7 October, 25 at Sha Po on 7 November and up to 14 at Long Valley during 11-18 September. During the November and December waterfowl counts 18 and 20 were recorded respectively.

148 Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* 林鷸

During waterfowl counts in the first part of the year, 12 were recorded in January, 45 in February and 10 in March. In addition, up to 25 were noted at Long Valley during this period. The highest spring passage counts were 106 at Sha Po and 14 at Ho Sheung Heung on 12 March, 125 at Mai Po, 25 at Long Valley and three at Shuen Wan on 8 April, and 70 at Mai Po and 39 at Ho Sheung Heung on 18 April. The final record of the spring concerned 14 at Mai Po on 30 April. Recorded in autumn from 15 July with the highest counts being 190 at Lin Barn Tsuen on 18 October, and 95 at Mai Po and 34 at Long Valley on 6 September. During the November and December waterfowl counts 36 and 33 were recorded respectively. Seen in widespread lowlying areas of the NT.

149 Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* 翹嘴鷸

Recorded in spring from 22 March (one day later than the earliest records in 1974 and 1987) to 24 May, the highest counts being 342 on 30 April, 250 on 23 April and 245 on 24 May. There were no three-figure counts until 21 April. There were only two autumn records: one on 30 August and two on 13 September. The only record away from Deep Bay concerned one at Shuen Wan during 9-10 April, the third record at this site.

150 Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* 磯鷸

During Deep Bay waterfowl counts in the first part of the year 37 were recorded in January, 55 in February and 32 in March; the only other double-figure count at this time was 17 at Sha Po on 12 March. Recorded in spring up to 24 May with the highest day counts being 13 on 11 April and 11 on 17th; the highest site count was eight at Nam Sang Wai on 28 April. There was an unusual midsummer record of one in Victoria Harbour in the early hours of the morning of 1 July (the first record of any species in the Hong Kong SAR!). Passage birds were noted from 19 July with the highest counts being 17 at The Brothers on 7 August, 12 there on 2 September and ten at Lin Barn Tsuen on 6 September and at Shuen Wan on 22 September. During the November and December waterfowl counts 39 and 21 were recorded respectively in Deep Bay. Recorded at widespread locations throughout Hong Kong.

151 Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes* 灰尾鷸

Recorded during 20-30 April when three birds were at Mai Po on four dates and 12 were at The Brothers on 23rd; subsequently, 36 were at Shuen Wan on 26 May. Rather few spring records but this was probably due to a lack of observer coverage during May. In autumn noted on five dates: ten at The Brothers on 7 August with four in eastern waters the following day, two at Mai Po on 30 August with one there on 6 September, and seven at The Brothers on 2 September.

152 Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* 翻石鷸

Recorded in spring from 28 March to 30 April though the lack of records in May was probably due to a lack of observer coverage. Six or fewer birds were noted until 20 April when 40 were present; 100 on 23rd was the highest

count of the spring, with 41 still present on 26th and 17 on 30th. There was one autumn migrant south of HK Island on 8 August, with a late migrant or perhaps a wintering bird at Mai Po on 14 November.

153 Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* 紅頸瓣蹼鷸

In a rather poor year for this species up to 20 birds (though generally only one or two) were recorded at Mai Po from 22 March to 30 April; elsewhere, 588 were noted in waters south of HK Island on 14 April and 100 were there on 29 April. There were only two autumn records: three in Mirs Bay on 23 August and five in the West Lamma Channel the following day.

155 Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* 長尾賊鷸

One flew east past Po Toi on 9 April (PJL) and two were south of HK Island on 14 April (PRK *et al.*).

156 Great Black-headed Gull *Larus icthyaetus* 魚鷸

Up to two winter-plumaged adults present during 11-12 January was the first record for the year and is the first occasion on which more than one individual has occurred in January. Compared with previous years there were rather few February and March records with just a single breeding plumage adult on 2nd and up to two on 12th and 15 February. Single adults in breeding plumage were noted during 1-2nd and on 15 March. Just two adults could account for all winter 1996/97 records (also including the adult seen on 15 December 1996), but based upon the long gaps between several of the sightings it is possible that five individuals occurred in 1997. All records were from Deep Bay.

156.5 Little Gull *Larus minutus* 小鷸

A first-winter was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 23 February (PJL *et al.*). This is the first Hong Kong record (see Leader 1999b).

157 Saunders's Gull *Larus saundersi* (E) 黑嘴鷸

The wintering population always proves rather difficult to establish accurately but has remained fairly stable in recent years at 80-100. This year's maximum January count was 98 on the 3rd. As usual, numbers increased in early February as northbound migrants passed through, reaching 121 by the 16th and a maximum of 127 on 23rd, comprising 87 adults and 40 first-winters. These counts represent the highest counts of both adults and first-winters during the year. Numbers declined throughout March from 47 on 1st to ten on 24th. By 30th only seven remained at Mai Po and this was reduced further to six the following day when one was taken by a Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*. Two first-winters remained at Mai Po until 8 April, the last sighting of the spring. The first record away from Deep Bay concerned an adult in breeding plumage at Chek Lap Kok on 17 March (GJC). The first returning bird appeared in Deep Bay at Mai Po on 1 November, after which numbers increased to 16 on 16th. The highest count in the early winter was 59 on 2 December, of which at least 46 were adults and nine were first-winters.

158 Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* 紅嘴鷗

During Deep Bay waterfowl counts in the first winter period 16,000 were recorded in January and 14,820 in February; by the March count numbers had dropped to 1539; just 184 remained on 23 March compared with over 8000 there in the same week in 1995. Numbers declined further to five on 4 April and the last record of the spring was of an adult and a first-winter on 12 April. The first returning birds were reported on 31 October when 400 were counted; 1940 were noted on 15 November. Away from Deep Bay, the most significant counts were 800 in Tolo Harbour on 4 January, 317 at sea to the north of Lantau on 18 February and 422 there on 19 November.

159 Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus* 棕頭鷗

Another poor year for this species with just three records. A winter-plumaged adult was seen from the boardwalk hide at Mai Po on 2 February, a first-winter was there on 27 February and another adult was there during 15-16 November. The fortunes of Brown-headed Gull in Hong Kong are not improving despite the increasing number of man-hours spent scrutinizing the wintering gull population. These two records are a far cry from the species former regular occurrence prior to 1993.

160 Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris* 黑尾鷗

The only reports in January concern three on 11th and a first-winter on 12 January. Appearances then became more regular in February with regular sightings of at least one first-winter on most suitable tides throughout the month. The peak count of the year concerned two adults and four first-winters on 28 February. Up to two first-winters during 1-2nd and one on 31st were the only March records; what is presumed to be this last bird remained at Mai Po until 5 April. Away from Deep Bay, two first-winters flew east past Po Toi on 9 April. There were no records in the latter half of the year. These records represent the poorest showing of this species in Hong Kong since 1989.

161 Common Gull *Larus canus* 東方海鷗

A first-winter *kamtschatschensis* was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 1 February (PJL). Single first-winters, different birds, either *kamtschatschensis* or *heinei*, were seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 11th and 13 February (RWL). In view of the occurrence of two forms of *L. canus* in Hong Kong, the identification criteria for which will no doubt be become better known in the future, observers are urged to take detailed notes on all birds seen.

1996: a second-winter *L.c. kamtschatschensis* or *heinei* was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 22 February (PRK,MRL).

161.5 Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini* 烏灰銀鷗

All records were considered to be of the subspecies *L.h. taimyrensis* and, as always, adults predominated and outnumbered immatures of all ages by approximately 10:1. The January waterfowl count located 274 in Deep Bay; the highest count of the winter was 684 on 12 February. By 23 February, 132 remained of which at least 125 were adults. In March, numbers fluctuated

daily as migrants moved through the Deep Bay area but a core population of 40-60 remained until the third week of the month, peaking at 114 on 11th and 15th. Thereafter, numbers declined to six on 30 March but a small arrival over the next few days boosted numbers to 14 on 31st and 25 on 1 April. These quickly moved through and the last sighting of the spring was of a single bird on 4 April. In the second half of the year the first returning birds appeared in Deep Bay on 14 November and increased to seven by the end of the month. The peak count in the second winter period was 37 on 21 December of which 35 were adults. Away from Deep Bay, regular counts at sea to the north of Lantau showed that numbers here increased from 18 on 6 January to at least 90 on 28th. In February and March counts fluctuated widely, presumably due to continuous passage throughout this period. Counts of 20 on 5 February, 51 on 10th, 20 on 18th, 82 on 21st February and 10 on 14 March illustrate how widely the numbers here vary. The last record from these waters was of 32 adults on 21 March.

162.2 Vega Gull *Larus vegae* 紅腳銀鷗

Single adults were present in the waters north of Lantau on 14 January and 5 February, and at the Mai Po boardwalk on 1st, 11th and 27 February and 2nd and 31 March, with two on 1 March and three on 23 February and 3 March (GJC,PJL).

162.3 Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans* 黃腳銀鷗

In the Deep Bay area the only January records were of three adults on 11th followed by one there the next day. Four adults on 1 February was the only report in the first days of the month but adults were present almost daily at the boardwalk hide from 10 February to 1 April. The highest February count was six adults on 27th and the March peak was seven on 1st followed by five on 22nd. A single adult in front of the boardwalk hide on 1 April was the last record of the spring. Away from Deep Bay there were regular occurrences of single adults at sea to the north of Lantau between mid January and late March. Counts involving more than one bird included two on 17 January and three on 5 March. There were no reports from the second half of the year. Records of this species continue to increase as observers become more aware of its subtle but distinctive appearance. While the identification of adults has now become fairly straightforward the understanding of immature plumages is still causing problems which may be resulting in the under-recording of Yellow-legged Gull in Hong Kong. However, the pattern of a small wintering population and a significant spring passage in February and March is clearly demonstrated in the 1997 records.

163 Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus* 灰背鷗

Two first-winters were present in Deep Bay on 3 January and at least one remained there to the end of the month. Away from there a first-winter bird was identified at sea to the north of Lantau on 17 January. In February, birds were present daily from the boardwalk hide until the 23rd with counts of three first-winters during 1-2nd and 12-13th, four on 27th, and two on the

23rd. The only March records relate to two first-winters at sea to the north of Lantau on 21st and two first-winters in front of the boardwalk hide on 4th and 23rd. Due to the distinctive pale bill of one of these first-winters, it is almost certain that the 21st and 23 March records relate to the same two individuals. Although just four birds could account for all the records it is likely that a minimum of ten individuals occurred, making 1997 the best year to date for this species in Hong Kong.

166 Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* 三趾鸕
An adult winter was south of Sha Chau on 14 January (PJL); this is the fifth Hong Kong record.

167 Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica* 鸕嘴噪鸕
As in most previous years, Mai Po and Deep Bay provided all spring records. The first birds arrived at Mai Po on 22 March and counts of 15 on 23rd and 31 March, and 17 on 30 March are the highest March counts on record. Continuous passage in early April saw numbers increase from 34 on 1 April to peak at 198 on 8 April. Numbers then dropped to 12 on 12 April but a further influx on 15 April brought 105 to Mai Po. Following this there was a steady decline to just a single bird at Mai Po on 23 April which was the last spring record. During autumn there were just two reports: a first-summer in eastern waters on 8 August was presumed to be an early migrant, although there have been occasional midsummer records, and a juvenile at or near Mai Po during 12-13th and on 18 September. The count of 198 on 8 April is the second highest, the maximum being 279 on 12 April 1992.

168 Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* 紅嘴巨鸕
The only records during the first winter period were of single adults, assumed to relate to the same individual, seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 22 February and 8 March. Spring migration commenced on 30 March when eight appeared at Mai Po. Numbers then increased during the first week in April to reach a peak of 26 on 8 April. After this date numbers declined to five on 15 April and two on 20 April, the last spring record. Two flew east past Po Toi on 9 April. There were no reports during the summer months and the only record in the second half of the year was of a single adult in Deep Bay on 15 November. The peak of 26 is the lowest since 1986. With spring migration lasting just 22 days, 1997 achieved the dubious status of being the worst spring for this species since 1972.

169 Greater Crested Tern *Sterna bergii* 大鳳頭燕鸕
South of HK Island, four were present on 14 April and one was seen on 29 April (PJL *et al.*); one was seen near Tap Mun on 20 July (LKS).

170 Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* 黑枕燕鸕
Four at the Ninepin Group on 29 April was the first record of the year. As usual, occasional visits to offshore breeding islands produced the remainder of the records for the year; there were no records of storm blown birds in the

autumn. On 12 July a visit to Shek Ngau Chau, Kung Chau and the beacon at the entrance to the Tolo Channel located a minimum of 40 in this area. A count of 190 during a subsequent visit to Kung Chau near Tap Mun during 19-20 July included at least some Roseate Terns *S. dougallii*. On 8 August, at least 45, including a minimum of ten fledged juveniles, remained at Shek Ngau Chau but all breeding activity had ceased by this date and there were no unfledged birds on the island.

171 Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* 粉紅燕鸕
All records in 1997 are from the breeding islands and adjacent seas so the available data is limited due to the difficulties involved in accessing these areas. Four in flight at the entrance to the Tolo Channel on 12 July were unusual for that locality and may have been from the colony at Kung Chau near Tap Mun, where at least 190 Roseate and Black-naped Terns *Sterna sumatrana* were present during 19-20 July. Breeding was proved at Kung Chau for the first time on 27 July when 64, including ten juveniles, were found. Breeding also occurred again on Shek Ngau Chau where 40 were present on 27 July and 55, including at least ten fledged juveniles, were counted on 8 August. Taken together, the 1997 breeding season was by far the most successful to date with at least 20 juveniles fledged from two breeding sites.

172 Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* 普通燕鸕
In spring, a count of 69 to the south of HK Island on 14 April included at least 19 of the form *S.h. longipennis* and one presumed *S.h. minussensis*. The only other spring record was of 11, not subspecifically identified, seen from the ferry to Dong Ping Chau on 19 April. At least some of the 30 seen near Tap Mun on 19 July were first-summer birds of one of the red-legged forms. Also early were ten in eastern waters on 8 August. Of these, at least four were adults of the form *S.h. tibetana* and a further two were first-summer birds. The close approach of STS Zita produced small numbers at traditional seawatching sites with five west of Cheung Chau on 21 August, three at Cape D'Aguilar on 22nd and three in Mirs Bay on 23 August. The only September report relates to 126 at sea to the south of Cheung Chau on 8 September. The record on 19 July is the earliest ever autumn record in Hong Kong while that on 8 August is, with that of 200 in eastern waters on 8 August 1987, the second earliest.

172.1 Aleutian Tern *Sterna aleutica* 白腰燕鸕
A breeding plumage adult at sea near Po Toi on 14 April (GJC,MRL, VBP) is the earliest ever record for Hong Kong and was the only spring record in 1997. Three flew past Cape D'Aguilar on 22 August during the close approach of STS Zita and nine adults seen from the ferry to Dong Ping Chau on 23rd were probably also displaced by this storm. A further 30 including 29 in breeding plumage and one reported as being in winter plumage were present in the West Lamma Channel on 24 August. On 8 September an estimated 25 were at sea to the south of Cheung Chau along with 126 Common Terns *S. hirundo*.



12 Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*
Tap Mun, Hong Kong, 23 August, 1997

Henry T. H. Lui

173 Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus* 褐翅燕鷗

The first records for the year came from Mirs Bay with up to 30 seen from the ferry to Dong Ping Chau during 12-13 July. These may have been from the colony on Shek Ngau Chau although the presence of 30 at Kung Chau near Tap Mun on 20 July suggests that Bridled Terns may also have bred at this site. A visit to Shek Ngau Chau on 27 July revealed at least 115 adults along with some chicks. Although it was expected that the passage of Typhoon Victor in early August would have taken a serious toll of unfledged birds, a visit there on 8 August located a minimum of 250 adults and 55 unfledged young on the island, and no indication that the typhoon had any significant impact on chick numbers. Away from breeding areas, the close approach of Typhoon Victor also brought 35 to Cape D'Aguilar on 2 August and 40 there the following day. A further five flew past Cheung Chau on 2 August. The last record of the year was of five, including two juveniles, at sea to the south of Cheung Chau on 8 September. In terms of both breeding pairs and fledged young, 1997 was the most successful breeding season to date and the third year in succession that successful breeding has occurred at Shek Ngau Chau.

174 Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata* 烏燕鷗

A juvenile was seen south of Cheung Chau on 8 September (GJC, PJJ *et al.*). This is the third Hong Kong record.

175 Little Tern *Sterna albiglans* 白額燕鷗

The first bird appeared on 24 March, the fourth earliest date on record. By 1 April there were three at Mai Po but numbers remained low in Deep Bay throughout the spring with a peak of just five at Mai Po on 13 April. After this date occasional singles were seen at Mai Po until 30 April, apart from three

there on 20th. The only May record was of a single bird at Mai Po on 22nd, but observer coverage and/or reporting was poor in that month. Away from the Deep Bay area in April four flew east past Po Toi on 9th, 36 were seen from the ferry to Dong Ping Chau on 12th and six were seen south of HK Island on 14th. There were no autumn records. A rather poor showing for this species in Deep Bay but the higher offshore counts suggest that many may pass through Hong Kong waters undetected.

176 Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* 鬚浮鷗

Two at Mai Po on 10 April was the first record for the spring. This was followed by only three further records, all in April in the Mai Po area: 12 on 20th, three on 26th, and one on 23rd. Away from Deep Bay five were seen south of HK Island on 14 April. There were no autumn or winter records. This was the worst spring showing since 1989.

177 White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* 白翅浮鷗

With just three records relating to ten in Discovery Bay on 10 May, 30 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 23 September, and six at Mai Po fish ponds on 11 October, 1997 was the worst year for this species since 1985. The complete lack of spring passage through the Deep Bay area is noteworthy. It is possible that this species may be undergoing a long-term population decline and the reduction in numbers in Hong Kong could be related to the disappearance in recent years of the wintering population in southern peninsula Malaysia and Singapore (PRK pers. obs.).

178 Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus* 扁咀海雀

The recent upsurge of reports from offshore waters continued into 1997 with five records concerning 11 birds. A single bird was near Sha Chau on 14 January and five days later a group of four was seen in Mirs Bay. A flock of five at sea to the south of HK Island on 27 February is the second highest on record following seven seen in April 1996. Singles were also seen off Po Toi on 28 January and 21 February.

179 Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* 火斑鳩

Three at Ma Tso Lung on 11 January and up to 14 in the San Tin area on 15th and 31 March were the only winter records. Spring passage was initially light, with one or two birds at Kowloon Park, Mai Po, San Tin and Lin Barn Tsuen during 1-16 April, before briefly intensifying towards the end of the month with 30 at Lin Barn Tsuen on 23rd, 12 at San Tin on 24th and 20 at Mong Tseng on 26th. Two at San Tin on 16 May was the only subsequent spring record.

In sharp contrast to 1996, record numbers were found in autumn. Following one at Chek Lap Kok on 11th, the first of the autumn, and 33 flying over Tin Shui Wai reclamation on 20th, a new high of 74 were counted at a pig farm in the Mong Tseng hills on 21 September (MLC). The previous high of 67 was recorded in the same area on 4 October 1994. Although sometimes elusive, the majority of the flock appear to have remained at Mong Tseng until the end of the year. Elsewhere, there were up to five at Chek Lap Kok and Mai Po

from 24 September to 6 October, singles at Penfold Park on three dates during 7-21 October with five there on 28 October and 4 November, one at Po Toi on 23 October, up to two in the Mai Po area between 28 October and 9 November, singles at Kam Tin on 16th and Mui Wo on 20 November, and up to five at San Tin on 10 November and 15 December.

180 Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* 山斑鳩

In the first winter period 110 at Mai Po on 13 February and 55 at a pre-roost gathering at Shek Wu Wai on 4 March were the only sizeable counts. Spring passage was noted mainly during 29 March-26 April, higher counts being 22 at Shuen Wan on 29 March and 30 at Lin Barn Tsuen on 30 March and 23 April. Five at Diocesan Boy's School, Mong Kok, on 3rd and six at Cheung Chau on 9 April were considered unusual. After three weeks without a report, there were four at Mai Po on 16th and four at Kam Tin on 18 May, the last of the spring.

One at Mai Po on 1 October was the first of the autumn. Subsequently, this species was fairly widespread in small numbers. The only counts exceeding 20 were 60 at Lai Chi Wo on 29 November and 148, the highest count of the year, at a pre-roost gathering at Nam Chung on 5 December.

181 Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* 珠頸斑鳩
No significant reports.

183 Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* 綠背金鳩
Singles, unless indicated, were recorded at Chai Wan Catchwater on 5 January, Tai Po Kau on 1 March, Cheung Chau on four dates during 19 March-9 April and also on 9 September, Dong Ping Chau on 19th, Kap Lung on 27th and Sha Lo Tung on 29th and Wong Chuk Yeung on 30 April, KARC (two) on 23rd and Cape D'Aguilar on 25 May and 2 October, KARC on 26 June and Fung Hang (Starling Inlet) on 23 September.

184.1 Thick-billed Pigeon *Treron curvirostra* 厚嘴綠鳩
1993: one was present at Yung Shue O on 4 December (CAV) (previously accepted as *Treron* sp.). This, the first record of a live bird in the territory, becomes the second Hong Kong record, the others having been found dead on 8 November 1986 and 15 January 1996.

185 Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus* 紅翅鳳頭鵲
Recorded between 6 April and 29 June at a total of 22 sites, with one at Lok Lo Ha during 26 April-28 June the only confirmed long-staying individual. Following reports of singles from 11 sites, including Kowloon Park and Long Valley, during 6-21 April, records peaked during 23-29 April, a week earlier than in 1996, and included three at Ho Pui on 23rd, ten in the Yung Shue O-Cheung Sheung area on 26th, a new high, and three in the Sha Lo Tung-Hol Tau area on 29th. Subsequently reported at Long Valley on 1st, Shuen Wan during 13-16th, Fei Ngo Shan on 17th, Yung Shue O (two) on 24-25 May

KFBG on 1st, KARC on 9th and the Kowloon Hills on 29 June. In autumn, one was trapped at Mount Davis on 4 October.

186 Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx fugax* 棕腹杜鵑
One was on Po Toi on 13 October (PJL); this is the sixth Hong Kong record.

1996: singles were at Mount Nicholson on 20 April (MRL) and at Wong Chuk Yeung (Ma On Shan) on 30 July (MH); these are the fourth and fifth Hong Kong records.

187 Large Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparveroides* 鷹鵒
Recorded from 11 February to 15 June at a total of 30 sites, mostly in the central and northeast NT. Approximately half the records occurred during 22-27 March and 25-29 April. Highest counts were four at Wu Kau Tang and at Yung Shue O on 25 March, three at Fei Ngo Shan on 25th and four at Sha Lo Tung on 29 April. The only reports of confirmed long-staying individuals concerned one regularly singing at Lok Lo Ha from 11 February, a new early date by 14 days, to 15 June (DAD) and up to two at Shuen Wan from 10 March to 11 June. However, most calling birds are likely to have been on territory rather than on passage.

189 Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus* 八聲杜鵑
In a return to normal following the previous year's poor showing, 51 bird-days were reported from 20 sites, all in the NT, with the great majority of records occurring during the period 7 March-18 May, including long-staying birds at Shek Wu Wai during 7 March-12 April, Long Valley (two) during 8 April-15 May and Shuen Wan during 9 April-7 May. Outside this period there were singles at Mai Po on 12 January (trapped) and 30 August, Tin Shui Wai on 6th and Long Valley on 18th, 19th and 25 October.

190 Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* 四聲杜鵑
One heard at Ngam Pin (near Ho Sheung Heung) on 10 March (KHK, TDD) was by six days the earliest ever spring record. There were no further records until 9 April, a more typical spring arrival date, after which there were regular reports until 21 June of one or two birds at a further 14 sites mostly in the northern NT, though the only confirmed long-staying birds were at Shuen Wan (17 April-21 June) and Long Valley (28 April-18 May). Away from the NT, this species was also noted at Cheung Chau on 9th, Dong Ping Chau on 12th, Mount Davis on 18th, Stonecutter's on 28 April and Po Toi on 14 May.

192 Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus* 中杜鵑
In spring recorded in April at Shuen Wan on 20th, Mai Po on 26th and Sha Lo Tung on 29th. In autumn noted in September at Mai Po on 10th and 13th, and Mong Tseng on 21st; also seen at Mai Po on 15 October. All were singles and those of 29 April and 13 September hepatic.

An unidentified cuckoo *Cuculus* sp. was noted at Mai Po on 13 September.

193 Common Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea* 噪鵲

Birds were recorded singing in all months of the year, the earliest date being 20 January at Ho Pui and the latest 10 December at Shuen Wan. In November-December, over-wintering birds were reported at Fanling Golf Course, Shuen Wan (up to five at each site), Tsim Bei Tsui (up to four), Long Valley, Penfold Park and Tai Po Industrial Estate.

Single juveniles at Mong Tseng on 26th and Nam Sang Wai on 28 April were giving begging calls and associating with Common Magpies *Pica pica*, the second successive year in which this has been noted.

194 Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* 褐翅鴉鵂

One carrying a snake c. 10 inches in length at Tai Lam Chung CP on 19 June was the only significant report.

195 Lesser Coucal *Centropus benghalensis* 小鴉鵂

Records were received for nine sites: Shek Wu Wai, Cape D'Aguilar, Cheung Sheung, Shuen Wan, Lin Barn Tsuen, Sha Lo Tung, Ho Pui, Fanling Golf Course and Kau Sai Chau.

195.1 Grass Owl *Tyto capensis* 草鴉

One was at Mai Po on 25 January (PJL).

1994: one was at Mai Po on the nights of 23-24th and 26-27 April (PRK, PJL, MRL *et al.*)

196 Collared Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena* 領角鴉

Reported from just nine sites, about half that of the previous year, and most frequently in March, April and November, as follows: Lok Lo Ha in January-May and September-December, Ho Chung in February (up to two), Yung Shue O in February-May (up to two) and November, Shuen Wan in March and November, Aberdeen CP and Shing Mun in April, Robin's Nest in September and October, Cloudy Hill in February, April and October, and Chinese University in November. All records referred to calling birds and, except as indicated, to singles.

197 Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia* 紅角鴉

One was at Robin's Nest (Hung Fa Leng) on 11 April (JH), and a grey-phase bird was trapped at Mai Po on 11 October (PJL). These are the tenth and eleventh Hong Kong records.

198 Eurasian Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* 鵂鴞

Singles were on Po Toi on 14 February (PJL), at Mong Tseng on 11 April (RWL) and at Chek Lap Kok on 27 August (GJC); the latter bird was taken into care by KFBG but subsequently died. In addition, a feather from this species that had appeared overnight was found at Chek Lap Kok on 7 October (GJC).

A large owl, probably this species which has previously been recorded at the site, was seen on Po Toi on 30 June (ML).

199 Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* 褐魚鴉

One was found at Tsing Yi on 8 October and taken into care (per CHF); however, there is no evidence that this was a wild bird.

1995: a large owl, probably this species which has previously been recorded at the site, was seen at Yung Shue O on 27 May and 1 July (PA, TW).

200 Asian Barred Owllet *Glaucidium cuculoides* 斑頭鴞鵂

Noted at a record 16 sites, all in the NT and most frequently in February and April, as follows: Mai Po (trapped on 12 January), Shek Wu Wai (two on 10 February), Long Valley and Hebe Haven (February), Shuen Wan (February and March), Yung Shue O (February and November), Ma Tso Lung and Kap Lung (March), Ho Chung, Mong Tseng, Shing Mun and Cheung Sheung (April), Ho Pui (three juveniles on 18 June), Shui Mei Tsuen (near Kam Tin) (September-December), Fanling Golf Course (October and December) and KARC (December). All reports referred to single birds except as indicated. In addition, a nest with at least one juvenile was found in a disused second-floor kitchen near Ho Sheung Heung on 10 May. The upsurge of reports during the past two years is probably due to a welcome increase in record submission.

201 Brown Hawk Owl *Ninox scutulata* 鷹鴞

Singles were at Shek Wu Wai during 8-11 April (JH, JW) and at Cloudy Hill on 18th and 22 October (YHK, LKS *et al.*).

204 Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus* 普通夜鷹

At Yung Shue O one was present on 25 March, two were heard on 11 April, one was present on 26th and three were noted on 2 May (RWL).

205 Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* 林夜鷹

In a very poor year, records were received for only three sites: at Robin's Nest one was present from 24 February to 5 March and also on 18 October, at Shek Wu Wai two were calling on 15 March and at Tin Shui Wai reclamation one was calling on 11th, a female was seen on 12 April and several were present on 16 May.

206 White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus* 白喉針尾雨燕

There were only two records: one at Tai Mo Shan on 27 April and four at KFBG on 27 October. The latter was only the third autumn record and more than a month later than previous records.

207 White-vented Needletail *Hirundapus cochinchinensis* 灰喉針尾雨燕

Five at Kap Lung on 16th, 120 there on 25 March, one at Po Toi on 9th and 20 at KFBG on 21 April were the only records. The count of 120 was the first three-figure count for March and the third highest yet recorded.

Unidentified Needletails, either this or the previous species, were recorded as follows: one at Mai Po on 28 March, two at Ng Tung Chai on 2nd and one at Mount Davis on 19 April.

207.5 Common Swift *Apus apus*

樓燕

One was at Mai Po village fish ponds during 6-7 April (GJC *et al.*). This is the second Hong Kong record, following the first of last year.

208 Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus*

白腰雨燕

One at Mai Po on 5 February, the first of the year, was followed by one at Lin Barn Tsuen on 8th and four there on 22 February. There were no further reports until 22 March when three were present at Po Toi. Passage in March was light with two at Wu Kau Tang on 25th, one at Po Toi on 27th, 20 at Lin Barn on 28th and 17 there on 31st. In April, passage remained thin with counts not exceeding 35 in the Mai Po area during 1-6th and peaking at only 40 at Lin Barn Tsuen on 7th. Following two at Mai Po on 10th and ten at Lin Barn Tsuen on 13th, the month ended with 30 at Mount Austin on 21st, six there on 28th, three at Tai Mo Shan on 27th and one at The Ninepins on 29th.

Reports of two at Po Toi on 14th, 14 there on 30th, two at Yung Shue O on 24 May, eight at Po Toi on 8th, three at Tap Mun on 19th and two at Soko Islands on 29 July may have referred to breeding birds. No records were received for June. August reports comprised one at Cheung Chau on 1st, eleven at Po Toi on 7th and one at Hok Tau on 9th. The only subsequent record concerned two at KFBG on 26 October.

209 Little Swift *Apus affinis*

小白腰雨燕

Following 200 at Lin Barn Tsuen and 250 at Ma Tso Lung during 24-27 January, which in view of the presence of similar numbers in mid December probably concerned local residents rather than migrants, three distinct migration pulses were again noted. The first pulse comprised 500 near Mai Po during 8-11 February, 800 there and a further 500 at Tin Shui Wai on 15th and 400 near Mai Po on 18th. During the next influx numbers near Mai Po rose from 200 on 22 March through 300 during 23-26th to peak at 1200 on 28 March, the highest count of the year. Numbers then fell to 150 by 31 March. The final pulse comprised 1000 near Mai Po on 1st and 6 April. Subsequent April records comprised 40 at Mount Austin on 21st, 25 at Tai Mo Shan on 27th and smaller numbers elsewhere.

Four at Po Toi on 14th and 30 May, and 30 at Shuen Wan on 8 July were probably local residents. Up to seven at Chek Lap Kok, where this species is infrequently reported despite systematic coverage, on 28 August and 11 September may well have been migrants, as may 40 at KFBG on 23 September. All subsequent reports probably referred to local residents. Higher counts were 50-60 at Long Valley during October-November, with 200 there on 8 November, 30 at Fanling Golf Course and 40 at Penfold Park, also during October-November, and 80 at San Tin, 200 at Tsim Bei Tsui and 100 at Nam Sang Wai during 10-13 December.

[Swiftlet sp.

金絲燕類

A type 1 or 2 swiftlet (see Hale and Kennerley 1995) was at San Tin on 10 December (PJL).]

210 White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

白胸翡翠

Records were received for 37 sites, compared to just nine in 1996, with reporting much better in the second half of the year. In the first winter period, up to two birds were noted at Shuen Wan, Ho Pui and five sites in the Deep Bay area. During 23 March-17 April the only reports concerned up to two on 2nd and 12 April at Tsim Bei Tsui, Yim Tso Ha and Tai Po Kau, reflecting a scarcity in spring well known to Big Bird Race participants. From 17 April to 16 July, up to three were noted at Ngam Pin, Nam Chung, Shuen Wan, Stonecutter's, Long Valley, Nam Hang (Frontier Closed Area), KARC, Cape D'Aguilar, Ho Pui and Fo Tan. Numbers subsequently increased, with four at Peng Chau on 19th, five at Ngam Pin on 23 July, three including a juvenile at Shuen Wan on 1st, six at Starling Inlet on 5th and four at Mai Po on 18 August, presumably reflecting the presence of locally bred birds and the arrival of migrants. The number of reports increased in September, though counts were lower at Starling Inlet and Shuen Wan. Passage was strongest during October with reports from 15 sites, including counts of six at Mai Po on 18th and ten, the highest of the year, at Starling Inlet on 21st. In November and December birds were slightly less widespread with maxima of six at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui and four at Starling Inlet.

211 Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*

藍翡翠

From the beginning of the year until 16 April, up to two were noted at Mai Po, Tsim Bei Tsui and Shuen Wan and singles were present at Kam Tin on 4th and Tai Po Kau on 12 April. The only records from mid April until early September concerned one at Nam Chung on 18 April, up to two at Shuen Wan from 20 April to 11 June and one at Ngam Pin on 23 July; in addition, a party of four seen at Pak Fu Shan in the Frontier Closed Area probably included two juveniles. The first autumn reports concerned singles at Mai Po, Starling Inlet, San Tin, Shuen Wan, Tsim Bei Tsui during 6-26 September and also two at Ho Pui on 22nd. Singles were subsequently noted at Shuen Wan until the end of the year. Further arrivals in October included three at Starling Inlet on 3rd, four at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4th, singles at Penfold Park during 7-28th and Long Valley on 12th, six at Mai Po and 12, the highest count of the year, at Starling Inlet on 21st and singles at So Lo Pun and Yung Shue Au on 24th. Twelve were again present at Starling Inlet on 6 November and 9 December. Other records in November and December included five at Tsim Bei Tsui on 9th, four at Mai Po on 15 November and singles at Tung Chung on 10th and Yung Shue Au on 27th and 30 December.

212 Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

普通翠鳥

Recorded throughout the year. In the first winter period higher counts were seven at Ngam Pin on 11 March, five at Mai Po during 6-9 April and six at Ngam Pin on 17th. From the latter date until 22 July, the highest count was three at Ho Pui on 18-19 June. Highest counts at widespread sites during each month thereafter were as follows: nine on 5 August, ten on 3rd and 22 September, twelve on 21 October and 24 November and seven on 9th and 24 December at



13 Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*
Hong Kong, October 1997

J. & J. Holmes

Starling Inlet; nine on 23 September, three on 4 October, five on 9 November and four on 18 December at Tsim Bei Tsui; and seven on 25 September, nine on 26 October, one on 16th and 21 November and three on 30 December at Mai Po. The counts at Starling Inlet were the highest of the year.

213 Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* 斑魚狗

Noted at 17 sites and in all months, with records fairly evenly spread throughout the year, except for June and July when observer activity is lowest. Highest counts were six at Starling Inlet on 22 September and 24 December, and three at Mai Po on 6 April and 23 October, San Tin on 13 May, Kam Tin on 18 May, 25 July and 8 August and Nam Sang Wai on 13 December. Also recorded at Shuen Wan, Ho Pui, Ngam Pin, Ho Sheung Heung, Plover Cove, Dong Ping Chau (August), Lin Barn Tsuen, Yung Shue Au and Lai Chi Wo.

214 Crested Kingfisher *Ceryle lugubris* 冠魚狗

Single birds were at Nam Chung on 22 September and Lai Chi Wo on five dates during 23 September-30 December.

215 Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* 栗喉蜂虎

Four at Mai Po on 4 April (RM) were by five days the earliest ever in spring. Subsequently, there were three there on 11th, eleven heading north at Lin Barn Tsuen on 23rd and one at Mai Po on 26 April. Eight at Mai Po on 28 September (YYT,CHF) was the sole autumn record and, by seven days, the earliest yet.

Unidentified bee-eaters *Merops* sp. were recorded as follows: six at Tin Shui Wai on 21st and 18 at Mai Po on 13 October.

216 Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* 三寶鳥

In a poor showing following the exceptional numbers of the previous year, recorded on passage in rather small numbers. Spring reports were confined to April and comprised two at Tai Po Kau on 11th, one there on 15th, four at Ho Chung on 16th, two at Shing Mun on 18th, singles at Mount Davis and Dong Ping Chau on 19th, up to two at Tai Po Kau on 20th and 23rd and singles at Mui Wo on 22nd, Ng Tung Chai on 27th and 29th and Shing Mun on 29th. The only autumn records concerned single birds (except as indicated) at Po Toi on 19th, Green Island on 24th and Mount Davis on 27 September, KFBG on 4th, Sha Lo Tung on 5th (two), Po Toi on 13th, Green Island on 14th, Lamma Island on 18th and Kap Lung on 21 October.

217 Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* 戴勝

Single birds were noted at seven sites as follows: Ma Tso Lung on 11 January, Shuen Wan on 19 January and 9 February, Ngam Pin on 10 March, Mai Po on 13 September and 3rd and 13 December, Penfold Park on four dates during 26 September-28 October and then again on 11 December, Dong Ping Chau on 21 October and Tsim Bei Tsui on 21 November.

218 Great Barbet *Megalaima virens* 大擬啄木鳥

Away from traditional sites in the central NT, this species was also recorded at Luk Keng in April and July, Wo Hang in May, and Nam Chung in December.

219 Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* 鐵鵲

In the first winter period, singles were noted at Dong Ping Chau on 18 January, Lin Barn Tsuen on 4 February, Mai Po on 3 April and KFBG on 8 April. The first in autumn was one at Tin Shui Wai on 20 September. This was a favoured site, with singles there on 27th and 28 September, three on 5th and singles on 11th and 26 October and 23 November. Singles were also recorded at Mai Po on 24 September, Lin Barn Tsuen and Chek Lap Kok on 25 September, Mong Tseng on 2 October, Long Valley on 4th and 18th, Chek Lap Kok again on 7 October, Shing Mun on 10 October, and singles were trapped at KARC on 28 October and 23 December.

220 Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* 黑枕綠啄木鳥

One was at Ho Sheung Heung on 9 May (LY,KHK). This is the fourth Hong Kong record.

1996: a female in pine woodland on the north slope of Sheung Ma Lei Yue hill (near Crest Hill) (TDD) constitutes the third Hong Kong record. Following a review, only two previous records are now considered acceptable: an immature at She Shan on 21 April 1977 and an immature at Fanling Golf Course on 15 July 1977.

225 Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* 小雲雀

Noted primarily at Tin Shui Wai, where numbers again peaked in October, as follows; six on 5 January, two on 22 March, five on 4th and three (singing)

on 12 April, two on 25-26 June, two on 21 August, up to five during 14-27 September, up to 20 during 6-28 October and, finally, up to eight on 23rd and 26 November. The only other records concerned two at Shuen Wan landfill on 28 February and, at Chek Lap Kok, 16 on 14 November and three on 26 November.

226 Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

灰沙燕

Following two at Lin Barn Tsuen on 25 March, the only other records in a poor spring passage all came in April and concerned up to six at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4th and 6th, up to two at Mai Po on 4th, 9th and 10th, two at Lin Barn Tsuen on 13th and one at Long Keng (Sai Kung) on 16th. For the first year since 1988 there were no reports in May, though this was likely due to a lack of observer coverage and/or reporting. Two at Lin Barn Tsuen on 25 September were the first of the autumn. Passage was then noted on seven dates, peaking in October with 22 at Lin Barn Tsuen on 10th, 40 at Mai Po on 11th and 15 there on 23rd. Subsequently, there were 10 at San Tin on 10th, a total of four at Mai Po and Lin Barn Tsuen on 18 November, one at Tsim Bei on 13th and, finally, two at San Tin on 25 December.

227 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

家燕

Up to 12 at Mai Po, Ma Tso Lung and Tin Shui Wai in January were presumably the remnants of the over-wintering flock noted at Mai Po the previous December. Two over the sea north of Lantau on 12th and up to six there on five dates during 18-27 February were the first spring migrants. Spring passage was far less intense than usual and peaked in March, with numbers building from up to 60 north of Lantau, off Po Toi and at Lin Barn Tsuen during 19-22nd to peak at 800 near Mai Po on 23rd and 27th. Passage then almost petered out in April, the highest counts being 150 near Mai Po on 6th, 66 at Lok Ma Chau on 11th and 60 at Shuen Wan on 24th. Locally bred juveniles were noted near Mai Po on 6th and 8 April. Gatherings of up to 35 at Sha Po, Long Valley and Ho Sheung Heung in April and May were probably summer visitors, as were 30 at Shuen Wan on 11 June and 30 at Long Valley on 31 July.

Twenty heading southwest over the sea north of Lantau on 7 August were the first definite autumn migrants and 62 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 23 September the first sizeable autumn flock. From early October until 18 December up to 20 were noted on several dates in the Deep Bay area and there were flocks of 300 at Mai Po on 23 October and 110 there on 18 November. In a warm autumn, a pair at Shui Tau Tsuen (near Kam Tin) were found nesting on 20 November and had produced four young by 8 December. These fledged on 15th and were seen again on 18 December (RG). This is the latest Hong Kong breeding record.

One showing characters of the central Siberian form *tytleri* was at Shuen Wan during 24-25 April (RWL).

228 Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

金腰燕

In the first-winter period there were up to two at Mai Po on 3rd, three there on 11th and four at Ma Tso Lung on 27 January. Spring passage was noted on only six dates as follows: eight near Mai Po and one at Long Valley on 23 March and two at Po Toi on 27 March, one at Kowloon Park on 3 April,

20 at Mai Po on 6th, two at Lin Barn Tsuen on 7th and one at Mount Austin on 21 April. Three at Tin Shui Wai on 14 September were the first of the autumn. Higher counts to the end of the year comprised a total of 21 at Long Valley and Mai Po on 4 October, nine at the Mai Po boardwalk on 16th, 13 at Mai Po on 18th with 30 there on 29 November, ten there on 8th, 49 at San Tin on 10th and 100 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 December, the highest of the year and only the fourth to reach three figures. One or two were also noted at Long Valley on 21 September and 14th and 30 December, Tsim Bei Tsui on 23 September and 23 December, Mai Po on 11 October, San Tin on 10 November, Tin Shui Wai on 7 December, Nam Sang Wai on 13 December and Green Island on 16 December.

229 Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*

煙腹毛腳燕

Following two at Po Toi on 10 January, only the fifth record in this month, the only spring migrants reported were four in the Mai Po fish ponds area on 23 March and five there the next day. The first in autumn were 20 at Mai Po on 16 November. These were followed by 36 at KFBG on 19th, 16 at Mount Davis on 29 November, one at Tai Mo Shan on 4th and one at San Tin on 10 December, the last of the year.

230 Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

田鸫

Birds of the migrant form *A.r. richardi* were present from the beginning of the year until 20 April and again from 6 August until the year end. Small numbers were recorded in January, February and March from many sites including Penfold Park, Tsim Bei Tsui, Long Valley, Tin Shui Wai, Mai Po fish ponds and Chek Lap Kok. Numbers increased in April as migrants passed through the territory with counts of 19 at Kam Tin on 20th and 25 at Chek Lap Kok on 25th. In autumn birds appeared at the same localities. At Chek Lap Kok, where the first appeared on 6 August, numbers increased to 15 by 27 August and remained around this figure until late November. Other good autumn counts included 20 at Sha Tin racecourse on 12 October and 45 at Tin Shui Wai on 21 October. The only breeding season records of the form *A.r. sinensis* came from Tai Mo Shan where 12 were counted on 27 April and six, including a family party with three juveniles, were present on 1 June. Finally, a small bird with bright buff underparts of indeterminate subspecies was seen at Mai Po fish ponds on 23 March.

231 Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus*

山鸫

All records came from traditional sites and the highest count was of six singing males at Sunset Peak on 18 May. Two singing males were at Tai Mo Shan on 1 June.

232 Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

樹鸫

Present in single figures at many lowland localities until April. High counts of 14 at Nam Sang Wai on 15 March and 20 at Long Valley on 1 April relate to passage birds. The last spring record was of one at Sha Lo Tung on 29 April. In autumn the first migrant appeared on KFBG on 11 October and numbers then increased throughout November and December with records from numerous localities.

Counts of 20 at KFBG on 20 November, 18 at Tai Po Kau on 18 November and 12 at Kam Tin on 6 December were the highest during the second part of the year.

- 233 Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi* 北鵲
Singles were noted at Mai Po and Long Valley on 24 April (DAD, MDW) and at Chek Lap Kok on 23 May (GJC).

- 234 Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* 紅喉鵲
During the early part of the year high counts were 40 at Long Valley on 25th January and 38 at the Mai Po fish ponds on 31 January; most other winter counts were in single figures but from widespread localities including Tsim Bei Tsui, Chek Lap Kok, Kam Tin and Tin Shui Wai. Numbers increased in April as passage birds moved through the territory and 300 around fish ponds at Lin Barn Tsuen on 7 April (PJL) is the highest ever. Forty were also present at Long Valley on the same date, and 36 were at Chek Lap Kok on 10th. The last spring record was of a single at Chek Lap Kok on 25 April. Autumn passage was first noted on 25 September with singles at both Long Valley and Chek Lap Kok; this increased at the latter site to 108 on 16 October, a high count for autumn. Numbers here remained high until the end of the month but dropped to just five in early November. Elsewhere, 28 at Sha Tin racecourse on 21 October and 30 at Long Valley on 28 October, with 40 there on 18 November, were the only other significant counts. Small numbers were then recorded at many lowland sites until the year end.

- 235 Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus rubescens* 水鵲
One at Long Valley on 18th and 25 October (YYT,RPM) is the earliest autumn record by over two weeks. One flew south over Mai Po on 15 November (PJL).

- 236 Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus* 林鵲鵲
A poor year with just four records. One at Mai Po on 31 March was early. In autumn one was at Kap Lung on 21 September and singles were at Tai Po Kau and Mai Po on 25 September.

- 237 Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* 黃鵲鵲
As usual, birds of the forms *M.f. taivana*, *M.f. simillima* and *M.f. macrorynx* were recorded at widespread lowland localities.

Numbers of *M.f. taivana*, the common wintering form, were low in January and February with the only counts above single figures being 20 at Long Valley on 5 January and 50 at the Mai Po fish ponds on 25 January. Numbers increased during late March with 100 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15th and 250 at the Mai Po fish ponds on 23rd being noteworthy. In April numbers declined with a count of 29 at Mai Po on 1st being the highest of the month and the last record of this form was of six at Long Valley on 26th. The first southbound migrants appeared at Tin Shui Wai with ten there on 23 September but remained low until the year end, counts of ten at Lin Barn Tsuen on 1 November and at Kam Tin on 6 December being the winter highs.



14 Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
Lamma Island, Hong Kong, January 1994

Wong Tin Wa



15 White Wagtail *Motacilla alba leucopsis*
Hong Kong, March 1997

J. & J. Holmes

Migrant *M.f. simillima* appeared on 1 April and increased to a high of 625 at Chek Lap Kok on 24th. Most of these were passing overhead on a northeasterly bearing. On the same date 2500, were present at Lin Barn Tsuen, including 988 on one drained pond. Other races present on that date and birds flying north totalled 554 giving a combined record count of 3054 (PJL). The previous high was 600 on 13 April 1991. Double figure counts were recorded at several localities throughout the month with 39 at Lin Barn Tsuen and 78 at Long Valley on 26th

being noteworthy. There were no May records. In autumn, 60 at Chek Lap Kok on 27 August were the first and passage continued until 7 October. Within this period, birds were also recorded at Mai Po and Long Valley with a high of 45 on 14 September.

A wintering bird of the form *M.f. macronyx* was at Ma Tso Lung on 11 January but all other records fell between 15 March and 26 April. Singles appeared at Tsim Bei Tsui, Mai Po, Chek Lap Kok and Lin Barn Tsuen, and two were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 April and at Shuen Wan on 9th.

Many were reported which were not assigned to any particular race. Of these, the most significant relate to spring passage with an estimated 1000 going to roost at Mai Po during 6-7 April and 250 at Shuen Wan on 24 April. The Mai Po roost was active throughout the month with 270 there on 30th. The first autumn report was of one at Mai Po on 15 August and counts of over 100 at Long Valley between October and the end of the year and at Mai Po on 11 October are worthy of mention.

An aberrantly-coloured bird, the balance of probability suggesting it was a *flava* wagtail as opposed to *M. citreola*, was at Mai Po village fish ponds on 9 April. This bird was largely bright yellow with white wings (RM *et al.*)

238 Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* 黃頭鵪鶉

Two were at Lin Barn Tsuen on 25 January. Two first-winters were at Long Valley during 2-9 November and what may have been one of these was seen again there on 5 December.

239 Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* 灰鵪鶉

Up to three were present at several sites until late March. Numbers increased as passage birds moved through with 40 at Mai Po village fish ponds on 23 March and 50 at Mai Po on 1 April being the spring highs. Numbers dropped throughout April and the last was at Mai Po on 30th. There were few autumn reports and the first at Nam Chung on 3 September was over a month later than usual. Although roost counts at Mai Po produced 20 there on 11 October and 80 on 21st, the late autumn and winter picture was of small numbers at several lowland sites.

240 White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* 白鵪鶉

Wintering birds were widely recorded at many sites throughout the territory and the majority were of the form *M.a. leucopsis*. Counts of approximately 50 at Nam Sang Wai and 11 at Ma Tso Lung on 11 January, 200 along the Mai Po access road on 18 February and 120 at Lin Barn Tsuen on 23 March were the monthly highs. Numbers fell in late March and April as birds departed for the breeding areas but as usual there were several records indicative of *M.a. leucopsis* breeding locally. A juvenile at Mai Po on 22 March was the earliest evidence yet of breeding in the territory. Subsequently, a male with two recently fledged juveniles were noted at Fo Tan on 5 May and 5-7 pairs were estimated to have bred at Chek Lap Kok. Elsewhere, a pair with two juveniles at Shuen Wan on 21 June were probably local breeding birds and one or two remained

on Cheung Chau throughout the summer, but apparently without attempting to breed. It is not clear when autumn passage commenced due to the presence of breeding birds and family parties: birds at Chek Lap Kok in late August, at Cape D'Aguilar on 18 August and at Mai Po on 6 September may well have been locally breeding birds. Although widely reported in November and December, other than 80 at San Tin on 15 December, no site held more than seven.

Although small numbers of the form *M.a. ocularis* wintered in the Deep Bay area, numbers increased in March as northbound migrants arrived. High counts of 120 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15 March and at the Mai Po fish ponds on 23 March mark the peak passage period. Smaller numbers remained into April at several sites with the last of the spring being one at Kam Tin on 20 April. The first returning bird appeared at Sha Tin racecourse on 7 October and the autumn peak was 15 there on 11 November. Occasional singles and small groups remained at Long Valley until the year end.

A male of the form *M.a. lugens*, colloquially known as Black-backed Wagtail, was at Lin Barn Tsuen on 22 March (DAD).

242 Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike *Coracina melaschistos* 暗灰鵪鶉

The only reports of wintering birds were of singles at Lam Tsuen on 4 January, at Tai Po Kau on 18 January and To Fung Shan (Sha Tin) on 9 March. Further records at Tai Po Kau on 24 March and 6 April may refer to the January individual. There were several records of passage birds in autumn between 17 September and 4 October from Ho Chung, Po Toi, Mai Po, Tai Po Kau, KFBG and Mong Tseng. All were singles apart from two at Ho Chung on 17 September and one on Po Toi on 19 September, with two there on 21 September and 23 October. In the second winter period, at least one was present at Tai Po Kau between 15 November and the year end, with three there on 16 November. Elsewhere, one was at Fanling golf course on 15 November and 29 December.

244 Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus* 灰山椒鳥

Spring passage commenced on 5 April with records from Mai Po, Kau To Shan and Dong Ping Chau. Subsequently there were reports of singles at Po Toi, Mount Austin, Mai Po, Cheung Chau and Tsim Bei Tsui, with the last being a single at Tsim Bei Tsui on 18 April. The only report of more than one bird concerned four on Dong Ping Chau on 12 April. In autumn, singles were at KFBG on 27 October and Mount Davis on 6 November, while three were at Mui Wo during 7-8 November.

245 Grey-throated Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* 灰喉山椒鳥

A flock of up to 80 was at Tai Po Kau in the early part of the year and juveniles were seen there in April, indicating that breeding occurred. In the second half of the year numbers peaked at approximately 60 at Tai Po Kau in late September but dropped to 30 by the end of the year. Away from Tai Po Kau there was a single female in Ho Chung on 5 March, a flock of 20 at Shing Mun on 6 September and a single at KFBG on 11th and 27 October.

246 Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus* 赤紅山椒鳥

Up to 20 were present at Tai Po Kau in early January but then appear to have declined to single figures from February until the end of April. There were no further records from Tai Po Kau until five were seen on 25 October, and the only other report was of four on 30 November. Away from Tai Po Kau there were five at KARC on 8 February, a male at KFBG on 31 March and one at Shing Mun on 6 September.

247 Red-whiskered *Pycnonotus jocosus* 紅耳鸛
No significant reports.

248 Chinese Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis* 白頭鸛
Three flocks of approximately 1000, 500 and 800 were seen over the Tolo Channel on 5 April and a further 200 were on Dong Ping Chau the same day, indicating an abnormal movement. The first juvenile was noted at Cape D'Aguilar on 25 May.

249 Sooty-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus aurigaster* 白喉紅臀鸛
A count of 40 at Ma Tso Lung on 11 January was the only significant report received.

250 Chestnut Bulbul *Hypsipetes castanotus* 栗背短腳鸛
There were widespread records of this species from the NT in the early part of the year although the only January report was of two in the Kowloon Hills catchwater on 4th. Regular reports of a single bird came from the KFBG area between February and May and 30 were noted at Kap Lung on 16 March. Elsewhere singles and groups of up to three were noted at Ng Tung Chai, Ho Chung, Tai Tam CP, Shuen Wan and Tai Po Kau in March and April. The only midsummer record was of two heard at Chung Mei on 21 June. Regularly noted again in small numbers from mid October onwards with reports from Kap Lung, Tai Po Kau and Ng Tung Chai. Numbers increased in December when a small influx brought four to KFBG on 14th, a further four were singing at Tai Tam CP on 15th, at least 30 were at Tai Po Kau from 23 December and two were at Ha Miu Tin (Plover Cove) on 29th.

251 Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes madagascariensis* 黑短腳鸛
Eight to ten at Tai Po Kau on 4 May and three at 700m at Tai Mo Shan on 31 May were unusual records. A small influx occurred in autumn with a flock of approximately ten at Tai Po Kau from 20 December until the end of the year. Elsewhere singles were found at Shing Mun on 25 October, KFBG on 2 December and Mong Tseng on 23 December.

251.1 Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii* 橙腹葉鸛
Birds were present at Tai Po Kau throughout the year. Most reports were of singles but a party of five on 4 October included two juveniles begging food from adults. Away from Tai Po Kau there were reports from KFBG in February and Kap Lung in March.



16 Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii*
Tai Po Kau, Hong Kong, April 1997

J. & J. Holmes

251.5 Japanese Waxwing *Bombus japonica* 小太平鳥
Five were at Shek Wu Wai on 7 February (LKS) and three were at Long Valley on 20 April (LKM). The first Hong Kong record occurred on 5-6 April 1991. On the basis of these records, and evidence of widespread dispersal in East Asia at the time into areas where this species is generally rare or absent (P.J.L., G.J.C. in litt. to Records Committee), Japanese Waxwing has been moved from Category D to A.

255 Rufous-tailed Robin *Luscinia sibilans* 紅尾歌鸛
Rather scarce in both winter periods. Singles in the Kowloon Hills catchwater on 11 January and at KARC on 26 January, and two at Tai Po Kau on 23 February were the only reports in the first winter period. Several singing males found in late March and April may also relate to wintering birds but by this date passage migrants could be occurring. These singing males included at least two on Cheung Chau between 19 and 29 March, one at Tai Po Kau on 24 March, five at Ng Tung Chai on 2 April, four on Dong Ping Chau on 5 April and two there again on 12 April. Seventeen on Po Toi on 9 April was by far the highest count of the year. In autumn and early winter, eight were trapped at KFBG and KARC from 4 November to 20 December, singles were trapped at Mount Davis on 7 November and 6 December, and singles were at Tai Po Kau on 18 November and 15th and 18 December.

256 Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* 紅點鸛
The only January record was a male at Sha Lo Tung on 1 January. Po Toi again held the highest counts of this species with 35 on 21 March and 41 on 9 April. In April, singles were noted at Mai Po on 1st and 8th and three were there on 6th. The last spring record was of two at Chek Lap Kok on 25

April. The first returning birds in autumn appeared on 22 October at Mai Po, followed by 12 on Po Toi the following day, and 23 there on 11 November. Other November and December records were of singles reported from Chek Lap Kok, Ha Miu Tin, A Ma Wat and Long Valley. The only other report of more than one bird concerned five at High Island Reservoir near Pak Tam Chung on 4 December.

257 Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* 藍點鸝

All reports in the first part of the year were from the Deep Bay area and concerned one or two in late winter and spring; at Long Valley three were present until mid April. The last spring record was of one at Mai Po and three at Lin Barn Tsuen on 15 April. The first autumn bird was at Mai Po on 14 November. Thereafter singles were reported from Nam Sang Wai on 15 November and Long Valley on several dates in November and December.

258 Siberian Blue Robin *Luscinia cyane* 藍歌鸝

In September, a female was along the path to the Youth Hostel at Tai Mo Shan on 6th, a first-winter male was trapped at KFBG on 22nd and a first-winter female was trapped at Tai Mo Shan on 26th.

259 Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* 紅脇藍尾鸝

Wintering birds were not numerous in the early part of the year but there were records from widespread localities until early March, though Tai Po Kau was the only site from where there were regular records. Reports of singles came from the Kowloon Hills catchwater, Ng Tung Chai, Kowloon Peak and the Tai Mei Tuk catchment within this period while the highest number noted was five on the Twisk Nature trail on 18 February. The last winter record was of one heard on Kowloon Peak on 5 March; however, a migrant immature male at Cheung Sheung during 16-18 April (GR,ML) is the latest on record by seven days. The first of autumn, one on Po Toi on 11 November, was followed by 30 at KFBG on 19 November and widespread sightings of up to four at Tai Po Kau and Fanling golf course and singles in Mong Tseng and the Kowloon Hills catchwater to the end of the year.

260 Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus auroreus* 北紅尾鸝

There were widespread reports of wintering birds from Lam Tsuen, Tai Mei Tuk catchment, Mai Po, Sha Lo Tung, Mount Davis and Dong Ping Chau in January and February. There were no March or April records. A male at Ho Chung during 10-18 May is substantially later than the latest ever record of 17 April, and is assumed to have involved an escape. The first returning bird appeared at Mai Po on 3 November and there followed reports of singles at KFBG, Ho Chung, Fanling Golf Course, Sam A Tsuen, Wu Kau Tang, Pak Tam Chung, Kam Tin, Tsim Bei Tsui, Mong Tseng and Sha Lo Tung until the end of the year.

262 Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis* 鵲鸝
No significant reports.

263 Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* 黑喉石鸝

Regularly reported in the early months of the year from the Deep Bay area but numbers were generally low and no site held more than six. The last report of the spring concerned four at Tin Shui Wai on 12 April. Return passage was noted at 6 September when a first-winter male appeared at Mai Po. There followed numerous reports from widespread localities and, as usual, Long Valley was the site which held the highest numbers with monthly maxima of 15 on 5 October, 30 on 3 November and 12 on 5 December. Other localities which regularly held up to ten in autumn included Chek Lap Kok, Penfold Park, Tin Shui Wai, Mai Po and nearby fish ponds, Long Valley, Lam Tsuen and Kam Tin. Regular coverage of Fanling golf course in autumn produced a maximum of 16 on 26 December.

264 Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea* 灰林鸝

In October, singles on Lamma Island on 18th and at Tai Mo Shan on 28th were the first of the autumn. These were followed by a female at Sha Lo Tung on 22 November, a female at Mong Tseng on 30 November and a male at Sha Lo Tung on 3 December which remained until at least 13 December. There were no spring reports.

267 Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* 藍磯鸝

In the early months the only reports were of nine on Po Toi on 10 January and singles at Chau Tau on 12 January, Kowloon Peak on 5 March and Tai Mo Shan on 6 March. In April there was a female at Cape D'Aguilar on 6th, another at Shuen Wan on 26th and a male of the form *M.s. philippensis* was noted at 850m. asl at Tai Mo Shan on 27 April. The first report in autumn was of a first-winter bird on Cheung Chau on 21 September followed by two at Chek Lap Kok on 24 September. In October a male of the form *M.s. philippensis* was at Penfold Park on 7 October and what was considered to be a different male was there on 17 October. Up to five were present on Po Toi during October. A further male of the form *M.s. philippensis* was at Sha Tau Kok Pier on 24 October while at Tai Mo Shan a female was present during 21-29 October. There was only one report in November, a female at Ap Lei Chau on 2nd, while in December two first-winter males were at Tai Mo Shan on 3rd and a male of the form *M.s. philippensis* was at Chai Wan on 20th.

268 Blue Whistling Thrush *Myiophoneus caeruleus* 紫嘯鸝

A pair kept under regular observation at Lok Lo Ha (Fo Tan) gives fledging date of a first brood of four as the last week in April and of the second brood of three as the first week of July. The same nest on top of an air-conditioner of a village house was used to raise both broods. Nine were present on Po Toi on 21 March.

269 Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina* 橙頭地鸝

At the beginning of the year an adult was at the entrance to Tai Po Kau on 7th and 23 February and a singing male was at Kap Lung on 21 April. At Tai Po Kau what was probably the same bird returned in autumn where it was again at the entrance on 27th and 30 November.

270 Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma* 虎斑地鵯

There were the usual scattered reports of singles at a number of sites including KARC, Po Toi, Ho Chung, KFBG, To Fung Shan (Sha Tin) and Cheung Chau between January and March but only Tai Po Kau produced regular sightings, with up to three there between early January and 1 April. The last spring report was of one at Mount Austin on 9 April. The first returning bird in autumn was at Tai Po Kau on the early date of 30 October. Although there were no further reports from this site until 20 December, at least two then remained to the end of the year. Elsewhere, one was trapped at KFBG on 17 November, one frequented Fanling golf course during 6-20 December and one was at Sha Lo Tung on 31 December.

271 Siberian Thrush *Zoothera sibirica* 白眉地鵯

The only reports were from KFBG where a female/immature was seen on 11 October and a first-winter female was trapped on 20 October.

272 Japanese Thrush *Turdus cardis* 烏灰鵯

A male at KARC on 8th, three in the Kowloon Hills catchwater on 11th, a male on Dong Ping Chau on 18th and a male and a female trapped at Cape D'Aguilar on 19th were the only birds noted in January. Scattered and infrequent sightings of singles in February and March came from Po Toi, Cape D'Aguilar, KARC, Tai Po Kau, Cheung Chau and Ho Chung, while in April, singles at Shing Mun and Mai Po on 12th were the only records. Autumn passage was weak with three at Mount Davis on 15 November, four at KFBG on 19th, three at Cape D'Aguilar on 22nd, one at Mount Davis on 30 November and a total of five at KFBG and Tai Mo Shan during 2-3 December the only records. Later in December there were singles at Fanling golf course, KFBG, KARC, Cape D'Aguilar and Wong Chuk Yeung during 14-20 December, and two were at Tai Po Kau on 23rd.

273 Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* 烏鵯

Small numbers were reported from widespread localities in the first part of the year including Ma Tso Lung, Tsim Bei Tsui, Lau Fau Shan, Kam Tin, Lam Tsuen, Tai Po Kau, Fo Tan, Penfold Park and Chung Mei. The highest counts however came from Shek Wu Wai where 25 were feeding in an Ilex tree on 8 February and ten remained there on 7 March. The last bird of the spring was in Kowloon Park on 12 April. There were no over-summering or breeding records this year and a flock of 26 at Sha Tau Kok on 3 October constituted the first returning birds. Thereafter, there were numerous records from many sites throughout the NT, most being of singles or groups of less than five individuals. The main arrival occurred in early November and counts of 22 at Fanling golf course on 1st and 11th, 20 at Ng Tung Chai on 8th, 27 at Po Toi on 11th, 15 at Sha Lo Tung on 12th, 12 at Shek Wu Wai on 15th, 20 at Hoi Ha Wan on 16 November, 18 at Mai Po on 19th, and 15 at Shuen Wan on 28th illustrate the widespread nature of this influx. Numbers were generally lower in December with no count exceeding six but reports continued from widespread localities throughout the territory until the end of the year.

274 Brown-headed Thrush *Turdus chrysolaus* 赤腹鵯

Two were at Ngong Ping on 7 February, a male was on Po Toi on 21 March and a first-winter female was at Tai Po Kau on 9th and 14 December.

275 Grey-backed Thrush *Turdus hortulorum* 灰背鵯

More numerous at the beginning of the year with reports of singles and groups of up to four reported from Sha Lo Tung, Kowloon Hills catchwater, Tai Po Kau, Twisk Nature trail, Tai Mei Tuk catchment, Nam Sang Wai, Mai Po, Shek Wu Wai, Long Valley, Dong Ping Chau, Ho Chung and To Fung Shan (Sha Tin). The highest counts were of 30 at Tai Po Kau on 23 February and 20 there on 22 March. The last spring record was of one in Kowloon Park on 7 April. As with Grey Thrush *T. cardis* there were few reports of migrants in autumn, these being one on Po Toi on 11 November, 15 at KFBG on 19 November, and five south over KARC on 10 December. Up to three wintered at Fanling golf course from 17 December until the year end and there was at least one at Tai Po Kau in the last week of the year.

276 Pale Thrush *Turdus pallidus* 白腹鵯

Apart from six at Tai Po Kau on 23 February, and two at Kowloon Hills catchwater on 11 January and at Mai Po on 4 February, all other reports referred to singles. These were at Mai Po on 27 January and 1 March, KFBG on 30 January, To Fung Shan (Sha Tin) on 15 February, Mount Austin on 16 February, Twisk Nature trail on 18 February, Cheung Chau on 20 February and 17 March, Po Toi on 21 February and Tai Po Kau on 22 March. The autumn was a poor one for most thrushes and the only reports in the second half of the year concerned singles trapped at KARC on 25 November and at KFBG on 14 December.

277 Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* 眉鵯

The only records during the first winter period concerned a single at Ho Chung on 20 February and two at Tai Po Kau on 23 February. Passage was noted at 22 March with the first at Tai Po Kau. This was followed by one at KFBG on 8th, five at Mount Davis on 18th, ten at KFBG on 20th, one at KARC on 21st, up to 20 at Kap Lung during 21-27th, and nine in the Cheung Sheung area on 26th. Returning migrants became conspicuous in November. Following six at Mount Davis on 6th, there were 35 at KFBG on 8th, 55 at KARC on 10th, seven at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15th, 125 south on 19th and 171 south the following day, both at KFBG (PJL), the latter being a new high. One at Tai Po Kau on 15 December was the only report that month.

278 Dusky Thrush *Turdus naumanni* 斑鵯

Up to three at Queen's Hill Camp, Fanling from 10 February to 18 March and one at Long Valley on 27 December were the only records.

279 Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus* 灰背燕尾

A pair were reported from Ng Tung Chai between February and September. Courtship feeding was noted on 22 February and one of the pair was seen carrying food on 25 April, suggesting breeding may have occurred.

280 Asian Stubtail Warbler *Urosphena squameiceps* 鱗頭樹鶯

One or two were regularly reported from Tai Po Kau, Lower Shing Mun and Fo Tan in January and February. Elsewhere there were occasional records from KFBG, Po Toi, Wu Kau Tang, Sha Lo Tung, Kap Lung and Cape D'Aguilar until early March, and the last wintering bird was at Tai Po Kau on 24 March. In autumn the earliest arrival was on 27 October when one was trapped at KFBG. Subsequent records until the year end were from Tai Po Kau, Wu Kau Tang, Mong Tseng, Mount Davis, Pak Tam Chung, Ng Tung Chai, Fanling golf course, Mount Davis and Cape D'Aguilar. Most reports refer to singles but Tai Po Kau held good numbers throughout December with at least five on 15th and 12 on 23rd. Four in the Kowloon Hills catchwater on 30 November and five at Fanling golf course on 15 December are the only other reports of more than two at any single site.

281 Japanese Bush Warbler *Cettia diphone* 短翅樹鶯

There were widespread records of up to five wintering to the end of March, with three records in April on 6th, 9th and 21st, the latter at KFBG. The first song was heard at Mai Po on 8 February. The highest count of the year was 20 on Po Toi on 21 March. The first returning bird was found at Penfold Park on 26 September and there were then widespread sightings of up to five in the Deep Bay area and also at Wu Kau Tang, Mount Davis and regular reports of up to four at Fanling golf course from 28 November to the end of the year.

282 Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes* 山樹鶯

One was trapped at KFBG on 8 January and two were at Dong Ping Chau on 18 January. In the second winter period singles were trapped at KFBG on 19 November and 7 December, and at KARC on 23 December.

282.5 Russet Bush Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmii* 高山短翅鶯

Records of singing birds came from Sha Lo Tung on 21st and 25 January, and Shuen Wan on 4 February. There were several reports of singing males near the summit of Tai Mo Shan including one on 6 March, two on 25 April, at least four on 27 April and one again on 30th. Singing birds were again heard at Po Toi on 11 November, A Ma Wat on 29 November, and Sha Lo Tung on 9 November and 3 December. Singles were trapped at Sha Lo Tung on 27 November and at Wong Chuk Yeung the following day.

282.6 Brown Bush Warbler *Bradypterus luteoventris* 棕褐短翅鶯

1995: one was at Sha Lo Tung on 4 November 1995 (RWL). This is the fourth Hong Kong record.

283 Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* 棕扇尾鶯

There were few reports in the early part of the year with 20 at Long Valley on 7 March being the highest. The latest records came from Tin Shui Wai and Dong Ping Chau on 12 April. There were no reports during the summer and the first returning bird appeared at Chek Lap Kok on 5 August. Numbers

increased rapidly after this date with counts of 14 at Tin Shui Wai on 21 September and 15 at Chek Lap Kok on 27 September. Good numbers remained at several sites until the end of the year with 30 at Tin Shui Wai on 6 October, 36 at Chek Lap Kok on 6 October and over 100 at Long Valley from early December to the end of the year being the most notable.

283.1 Bright-capped Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* 黃頭扇尾鶯

One at Shek Wu Wai on 8 February was the only report in the first half of the year. In autumn two were at Sha Lo Tung on 4 October followed by at least six there on 9 November and one on 25 December.

284 Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* 褐頭鷓鴣

No significant reports.

285 Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* 灰頭鷓鴣

No significant reports.

286 Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola* 小蝗鶯

There were no spring records but widespread reports came from several localities in autumn. With such a skulking species, establishing the true numbers present is almost impossible so the counts below should be taken as minimum numbers present. The first record, one at Chek Lap Kok on 27 August, was particularly early. Small numbers remained here until at least 7 October with a peak count of seven on 11 September. Several were noted at Tin Shui Wai in September with a peak of nine on 20th. A good series of records came from Mui Wo in October with four there on 1st and 19th and one remaining until 26 October. As always, however, Long Valley was the favoured locality for this species with birds present from 31 August to 26 October and a peak count of 35 on 14 September, including eleven trapped.

288 Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* 矛斑蝗鶯

An excellent year for this skulking species and, given this species' broad habitat preference, one wonders just how many must have passed through the territory undetected. One at KFBG on 23 September was the earliest; the only other September record was of one trapped at Mai Po the following day. In October, singles were noted at Tin Shui Wai on 1st and 11th with two there on 26th and three on 21st. Other October reports included two at Chek Lap Kok on 6th and singles at Kap Shui Mun on 9th, Penfold Park on 12th, at Mui Wo on 19th, Po Toi on 23rd, Long Valley on 25th and Green Island on 28th. Also reported from Mai Po, Long Valley and Wong Chuk Yeung. Late records came from Chek Lap Kok on 14 November and Kam Tin on 16 November.

289 Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps* 黑眉葦鶯

Winter records concerned singles trapped at Mai Po on 19 January and 1 March. Passage birds were noted there from 28 March to 30 April with a good count of ten singing birds on 30th. An early returning migrant was at Long Valley on 5 September but there were no further reports until October

when small numbers were reported from many sites in the Deep Bay area. Elsewhere, strong passage was recorded at Mui Wo with 25 there on 1 October and 40 on 19 October. Numbers declined in November and the last in that month concerned three at Mui Wo and one at Mai Po on 29th. The final record of the year was of one at Mai Po on 21 December.

289.07 Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* 稻田葦鶯

One was trapped at Mai Po on 19 January (PJL). This is the third Hong Kong record.

289.08 Manchurian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus tangorum* 東北稻田葦鶯

Singles were present at Chek Lap Kok (GJC) and Lin Barn Tsuen (PJL) on 25 September, and at Tin Shui Wai during 27-28 September (DAD). These are the fifth to seventh Hong Kong records.

290 Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* 大葦鶯

The first of the year was trapped at Mai Po on 12 January; this was followed by one at Ma Tso Lung on 15 March. There then followed a rather poor spring passage with a maximum of just eight singing males at Mai Po on 22 April. The last spring report was of one in Kowloon Park on 3 May. A singing male at Mai Po on 14 June was unusual but midsummer records are not without precedent. The first return migrants appeared at Mai Po on 27 August and passage continued until 3 November when the last bird was seen at Long Valley. Unlike the spring, numbers were high in autumn, especially in the Lin Barn Tsuen area where numbers peaked at 300 (including 200 on one pond) on 25 September (PJL), a new high. At Mai Po 120 birds were trapped from 30 August to 9 November. Other high counts in the Mai Po area included 100 on 20 October.

291 Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon* 蘆鶯

In September, singles were at Mai Po on 13th and Lin Barn Tsuen on 25th.

292 Golden-spectacled Warbler *Seicercus burkii* 金眶鸚鶯

A bird at HKU on 17 January and 14 March is presumed to have wintered there. Two were at Shing Mun on 10 October and one was there on 18 October.

295 Large Grass Warbler *Graminicola bengalensis* 大草鶯

Reports from Tai Mo Shan indicate that there were at least three pairs there during the summer and successful breeding occurred with a pair feeding young on 1 June and a juvenile seen by the upper car park barrier on 20 July. Away from Tai Mo Shan, two at Sha Lo Tung on 1 January are presumed to have been wintering birds while one on Kowloon Peak on 25 April could have been a bird on territory.

296 Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* 火尾縫葉鶯

No significant reports.

297 Sulphur-breasted Warbler *Phylloscopus ricketti* 黃胸柳鶯

Singles at Ho Chung on 2 February, KFBG on 19 November and Tai Po Kau on 31 December were the only records. As with some previous records, the Ho Chung bird lacked the strong sulphur wash to the belly.

298 Blyth's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides* 冠紋柳鶯

In January and February, singles were recorded at the Kowloon Hills catchwater, Tai Po Kau and Ng Tung Chai, with the last wintering bird reported there on 22 February. In the second winter period one was at Wu Kau Tang on 29 November and up to three were regularly reported at Tai Po Kau from 30 November until the year end.

299 Eastern Crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus coronatus* 冕柳鶯

The only spring record came from Dong Ping Chau where a single bird was found on 12 April. Autumn passage was first noted on 29 August at Tai Po Kau and continued until 10 October when the last bird was seen at Shing Mun. Most reports came from Tai Po Kau with four there on 31 August and one or two seen regularly until 17 September. Elsewhere, three at Shing Mun on 6th, two at Kap Lung on 21st and one at KFBG on 27th were the other September records. A single bird at Hatton Road, HK Island on 9 October, three at Shing Mun on 10th and one one Po Toi on 13 October were the last of the autumn.

300 Pale-legged Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus tenellipes* 灰腳柳鶯

One on Dong Ping Chau on 18 January and one trapped at KARC on 19 February were rather unseasonal. Just two were noted in spring: singles on Dong Ping Chau on 5 April and at Mount Davis on 18 April. Returning birds were first recorded on 27 August at Mai Po. Throughout September there were numerous records from widespread localities including Kowloon Park, KFBG, Kap Lung, Sha Lo Tung, Mong Tseng, Pak Nai and Cheung Chau, with a good count of 12 made at KFBG on 20th. Passage continued into the first half of October in reduced numbers with up to three noted at Kowloon Peak, KFBG, Sha Lo Tung, Tai Po Kau, Shing Mun, Po Toi, Cheung Chau and Mai Po. After the middle of October the only reports were of calling birds at Mount Davis on 23rd, Tai Po Kau on 30th and at least one at Fanling golf course from 13 October until the end of the month; in addition, three were trapped at Mount Davis on 17th. The last bird was seen at KFBG on 19 November.

300.2 Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* 暗綠柳鶯

Singles were at Mai Po on 11 October (trapped) and during 22-23 October (PJL), and at Tai Mo Shan on 29 October (VBP).

301 Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* 極北柳鶯

Spring passage was first noted on 5 April when one was at Mai Po. The only other spring reports came from Cheung Chau where there were two on 27 April and one on 11 May. The first southbound migrants were reported from Mai Po and Mount Davis on 6 September. Although recorded at many localities throughout the territory in September and early October, other than 15 on Po

Toi on 13 October, no reports of more than four together were received and most referred to just singles. The last report came from Po Toi where there were four on 23 October. The autumn passage was considered by one observer to be rather feeble compared with the numbers recorded a decade earlier.

302 Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* 黄腰柳鶯

Wintering birds were present until 31 March with up to eight noted at several localities including Po Toi, Tai Po Kau, Lower Shing Mun, Kowloon Hills catchwater, Lion Rock CP, Tai Mei Tuk catchment, To Fung Shan (Sha Tin), Kap Lung and KFBG. Returning birds were noted from 4 November; Tai Po Kau held the greatest number with at least nine there from 18 November and an estimated 40 on 23 December. Elsewhere, recorded at Kowloon Hills catchwater, Mai Po, KARC, KFBG, Tai Mo Shan and Mount Davis.

302.5 Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus sichuanensis* 四川柳鶯

One was trapped at KFBG on 4 March 1997 (MRL). This is the first Hong Kong record (Leven 1999).

303 Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* 黄眉柳鶯

Widely reported in small numbers until mid April with the latest being at Mai Po on 30 April. Returning birds were noted from 16 September with the first being at Mai Po. Thereafter, there were widespread reports throughout the territory until the end of the year. Fanling Golf Course held good numbers throughout autumn with monthly peaks of eight on 28 October, 20 on 28 November and 25 on 3 December. Tai Po Kau also held up to 12 in November and December but no other localities reported double figures.

303.5 Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* 休氏黄眉柳鶯

One was at Shek Wu Wai on 3 December (LKS). This is the fourth Hong Kong record.

304 Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* 巨嘴柳鶯

Singles at KFBG on 27 October and Sha Lo Tung on 30th were the only October reports. In November there were singles at Mount Davis on 1st, 15th and 30th, at KARC on 1st and 17th, Mount Austin on 1st, Kap Shui Mun on 8th and Ngong Ping tea gardens on 9th, with a further two between there and Shek Pik reservoir on the same day. Finally, one was at KARC on 7 December.

304.5 Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii* 棕眉柳鶯

Singles were trapped at Mount Davis on 1 November and at KFBG on 4 November (both MRL). These are the seventh and eighth Hong Kong records.

305 Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* 褐柳鶯

Reported from the Deep Bay area until 30 April; although widespread here, numbers were rather low with no more than seven birds at any locality. Singing birds were heard at Mai Po from 23 March. Wintering birds were also reported from Penfold Park, Tai Po Kau village, Kam Tin, Dong Ping Chau

and Po Toi. The first returning bird was at Lin Barn Tsuen on 18 September; this was followed by widespread reports of small numbers from many lowland sites until the year end. Noteworthy estimates include 22 at Mai Po on 15 October, 30 at Long Valley on 25 October and 35 there on 3 November, 15 at Tin Shui Wai on 28 October and ten at Penfold Park on 11 November.

307 Hainan Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis hainanus* 海南藍鶇

Singing males were regularly recorded at woodland localities in the NT in April including three at Kap Lung from 6th, three at Tai Po Kau from 8th, two at Shing Mun from 12th, three at KFBG from 15th and one at Ng Tung Chai from 27th. There were no further reports until late August when a pair was at Tai Po Kau on 29th and a male was again there on 31st. The last of the year was at Shing Mun on 6 September.

308 Blue and White Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* 白腹鶇

A poor spring for this species with only one March report, that of a male at Tai Po Kau on 22nd. The first of the year was a male at Ng Tung Chai on 2 April, followed by one on Dong Ping Chau on 5 April and one at Tai Po Kau on 6th, a female on Cheung Chau on 10th, another female at Mai Po on 10th and a male at Tai Po Kau the same day. The last spring record was a female on Dong Ping Chau on 12th. Reports in autumn comprised females at Tai Mo Shan on 26 September (trapped), on Po Toi on 6th and at Lin Barn Tsuen on 20 October, and a first-winter male trapped at Tai Mo Shan on 29 October.

309 Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina* 銅藍鶇

Reports in the early part of the year concerned one at Mui Wo during two weeks in January, a male at KFBG on 4 January, one at Ho Chung from 5 January until 6 February, a female at the Tai Mei Tuk catchment on 19 February and a male at Tai Po Kau from 24th to 30th. In autumn, a male and a female were at Shing Mun on 1 November and the male was there again on 12th. Elsewhere, a male was at Lai Chi Wo on 30 December and a female was at Tai Po Kau the same day.

310 Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa ferruginea* 紅褐鶇

Singles at Tai Po Kau on 29 March and 11 April and two on Po Toi on 9 April were the only reports.

311 Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica* 烏鶇

A excellent series of records in autumn began with one at Tai Mo Shan on 30 August, a very early date. In September, reports included single birds at Tai Po Kau on 14th and 17th, Cheung Chau on 17th, Po Toi on 19th, Mai Po on 20th, Pak Nai on 21st and again on 27th, Tai Mo Shan (trapped) on 26th and two at Tai Po Kau on 28th. An interesting series of reports came from KFBG with two on 20 September, one on 27th and what may have been the same two individuals there again on 4 October and one on 5th. Other October records included singles at Sha Lo Tung on 7th, Shing Mun on 10th, Mai Po on 15th, Tai Mo Shan on 21st and Tai Po Kau on 30th.

312 Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta* 斑胸鵂
Two on Dong Ping Chau on 19 April were the first of the spring. In the same month, one was at Mai Po on 23rd, two were at Tai Mo Shan on 27th and one was at Stonecutters on 28th. The only autumn record referred to one at Kap Lung on 21 September. A poor year for this species.

313 Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* 北灰鵂
Single birds were recorded throughout the territory in the early months of the year, the last spring record being at Mai Po on 15 April. One at Mai Po on 5 September was the first of autumn and was followed by widespread reports of one or two until the year end. Obvious arrivals of migrants in October included five on Cheung Chau on 18th, three on Po Toi on 23rd and four at Mai Po on 25th.

314 Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* 紅喉鵂
In the first part of the year singles were noted at Kam Tin on 28 February, Mai Po on 10 March, Kowloon Park on 11 April and Mai Po on 27 April; the latter bird was a male. Good numbers were recorded in autumn starting with the first at Mai Po on 11 October. During the same month there were singles at Kowloon Park on 14th, Mount Davis on 16th, Mai Po on 18th and 21st, with two there on 22nd, Lin Barn Tsuen on 20th and Cheung Chau on 23rd, with five on Po Toi the same day. November reports involved singles at Tai Po Kau on 1st and 2nd, Ng Tung Chai on 8th, Kowloon Park on 13th and KFBG on 17th. In December, singles were noted at Mai Po on 16th and Mong Tseng on 26th. Regular coverage of Fanling golf course resulted in an interesting series of records following the first on 14 October. Seven were found here on 22 October and although numbers fluctuated daily, six were still present on 28th and five on 31st. Up to three then remained throughout November and December until the end of the year.

315 Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki* 鵂
The best showing in the early months for many years. Wintering birds and spring migrants included a male and female at Ho Chung on 26 January, one at Ngong Ping on 7 February, a male and a female at Tai Po Kau on 23 February, an adult male at Kap Lung on 16 March and a different bird there on 25th, a female on Cheung Chau on 11 April and one at Tai Po Kau on 15 April. In comparison, return passage in autumn was the poorest for many years and the only reports received away from the Kadoorie area were of a female at Ng Tung Chai on 7 November and one at Fanling golf course on 28 November. At KFBG and KARC ten birds were trapped and one was seen from 27 October to 14 December, six of these during 17-18 November, typical dates for peak passage through Hong Kong.

316 Yellow-rumped Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia* 白眉鵂
The first birds appeared at Shing Mun and Mount Davis on 6 September. Further reports during that month concerned two at Mai Po on 13th, seven at Kap Lung on 14th, singles at Tai Po Kau on 14th and 17th, one at Mount Davis on 20th, two in Kowloon Park and singles at Kap Lung and Pak Nai on 21st, two at Lin Barn Tsuen on 25th and a further bird at Pak Nai on 27th. A poor year for this species.

317 Narcissus Flycatcher *Ficedula narcissina* 黃眉鵂
In April, males were reported from Dong Ping Chau on 5th and 12th, Tai Po Kau on 6th, 11th and 12th, Po Toi on 9th, Cheung Chau on 10th and the Peak on 14th.

317.1 Green-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula elisae* 綠背鵂
A male was seen at Ho Chung on 29 March (JAH); this is the second Hong Kong record, following the first last year.

318 Grey-headed Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* 方尾鵂
At least three were present at Tai Po Kau from early January until late March, and up to two wintered around the Mai Po car park from early January until 22 March. Other winter reports included singles in the Kowloon Hills catchwater on 4 and 14 January and Lion Rock CP on 5 January. The last wintering bird was reported from Tai Po Kau on 29 March. One in the Kowloon Hills catchwater on 8 November was the first returning bird and two were reported here on 30 November. Singles at Shing Mun on 30 November and HKU on 4 December were the only other reports away from Tai Po Kau, where the first bird was noted on 9th November, and numbers then increased to eight by 18 November. Up to five remained at Tai Po Kau until the end of November and throughout December.

319 Asian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* 壽帶鳥
The only spring migrants were singles at Tai Po Kau on 11 April and at the Peak on 14 April. A bird in Tai Tam CP on 20 August was the first of autumn and during that month singles were noted at Tai Po Kau from 27th and Mai Po from 29th. In September most reports came from Tai Po Kau with one noted on several days until 17th and two there on 14th. Other September records included three at Shing Mun and singles at Tai Mo Shan and at Tai Po Kau on 6th, one at Hok Tau on 9th, one at Kap Lung on 14th and two at Mount Davis on 15th. In October there were singles at the Chai Wan catchwater on 1st and at Mong Tseng and Tung Chung on 4th. The last report was of one at Tai Po Kau on 25 October.

320 Japanese Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* 紫壽帶鳥
Unusually, there were no spring records. The first of autumn was at Tai Po Kau on 29 August, and further singles were noted here on 25 September and 25 October. One was at Mai Po on 20th and 25 September. The only other report concerned two at Kap Lung on 21 September.

321 Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* 黑枕王鵂
A male on Dong Ping Chau on 18 January and an unsexed bird on Cheung Chau on 8th and 20 February and 18 March were the only reports in the early months of the year. One at Lin Barn Tsuen on 25 September (PJL) is the earliest autumn record. Later in autumn, single females were noted at Shing Mun on 25 October and again on 1 November, Hatton Road on 13 November, Mount Davis (trapped) on 15th, Fanling golf course on 29th and at Tai Po Kau on 30 November. One was again present on Cheung Chau from 22 December until the end of the year.

321.2 Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* 棕頸鉤嘴鵲

On HK Island reported from Tai Tam CP on 2 April, Mount Cameron on 25 August, Aberdeen CP on 28 August, Chai Wan Catchment on 26 December and Mount Davis all year. In Kowloon and the NT noted at Kowloon Hills Catchment on 7 February, Tai Po Kau on 3 March, Shing Mun on 9 February (four), 12 April and 6 September (two), Tai Mo Shan on 27 April, Yung Shue O on 15 November, Tai Po Kau on 18 November (four) and 23 December, and Wong Chuk Yeung all year. Records are of single birds unless stated. A welcome increase in reporting is providing a more accurate picture of the status of this species.

321.5 Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis webbianus* 棕頭鸚雀

At Tai Mo Shan two were present on 15 March, and five there on 25 April included a nest-building pair.

322 Chinese Babax *Babax lanceolatus* 矛紋草鵲

At least two birds were near the top of Tai Mo Shan on 27 April.

323 Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis* 黑領噪鵲

There were records throughout the year at various wooded localities of small parties of up to nine birds. On HK Island noted at Tai Tam CP on 20 August and Chai Wan Catchment on 1 October. In the NT there were records from Fo Tan, Ho Chung, KFBG, Kap Lung, Kowloon Hills Catchment, the Lai Chi Wo area, Lion Rock CP, Ng Tung Chai, Pak Tam Chung, Shing Mun, Tai Mei Tuk, Tai Po Kau, Twisk Nature Trail and Yung Shue O. Breeding was confirmed in Tai Po Kau where two were seen carrying food on 11 April and a party of nine with a juvenile was seen the next day.

324 Black-throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax chinensis* 黑喉噪鵲

On HK Island noted at Mount Davis, Cape D'Aguilar, Mount Austin, Pok Fu Lam Road and Tai Tam CP. In the NT singing males were at KARC and Wong Chuk Yeung all year. There were also records from Kowloon Hills Catchment, Lion Rock CP, Ng Tung Chai and Shing Mun. Most records referred to no more than three birds, the exception being at least eight at Shing Mun on 12 April. There were many records in April when birds are very vocal.

325 Hwamei *Garrulax canorus* 畫眉

No significant reports.

326 White-browed Laughingthrush *Garrulax sannio* 白頰噪鵲

Few records were submitted this year. Noted at ZBG and Cheung Chau; at the latter site, where it has long been resident, there was a party of eight on 16 September

327 Masked Laughingthrush *Garrulax perspicillatus* 黑臉噪鵲

No significant records.



17 Masked Laughingthrush *Garrulax perspicillatus*
Hong Kong, 1997

J. & J. Holmes

328 Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea* 紅嘴相思鳥

All records were from January to April and September to December. Reported from Tai Po Kau, Tai Mo Shan, Mount Davis, Shing Mun and Kowloon Park up to the end of April. No doubt overlooked during the summer months, during the second half of the year noted at Shing Mun, Ng Tung Chai and Tai Po Kau.

329 Striated Yuhina *Yuhina castaniceps* 栗頭鳳鵲

In the first half of the year there were two at Sheung Shui on 27 March and two at Ng Tung Chai on 27 April; regular reports from Ng Tung Chai in recent years are considered to relate to feral birds, and it seems likely that those at Sheung Shui had also escaped or been released. During the second winter period at least three were at Ng Tung Chai on 7 November, 30 were at Tai Po Kau on 14 December and 23 were at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 28 December.

330 White-bellied Yuhina *Yuhina zantholeuca* 白腹鳳鵲

Recorded throughout the year except from May to July. Most records referred to one or two individuals at Tai Po Kau, but also recorded at Ho Chung on 5 March, Shing Mun on 6 September, with three there on 10 October, and at Ng Tung Chai on 7 November.

331 Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus* 紅頭山雀

The last few years have seen a decline of this species in Tai Po Kau, and there were only two records at this site in 1997: seven on 25 October and two on 31 December. The only other reports were at Ho Pui where there was one on 15 January and 20, including recently-fledged young, on 18 June.

- 332 Yellow-bellied Tit** *Parus venustus* 黃腹山雀
The only record was from KFBG where there were two on 2 December.
- 333 Great Tit** *Parus major* 大山雀
No significant reports.
- 333.1 Yellow-cheeked Tit** *Parus sibilans* 黃頰山雀
Most records were from Tai Po Kau where the highest count was at least 15 during 7-8 April; a juvenile was here on 15 July. Elsewhere, a juvenile was at Shuen Wan on 16 September, two were at Shing Mun on 10 October and one was at Ng Tung Chai on 7 November.
- 334 Chinese Penduline Tit** *Remiz consobrinus* 攀雀
The first record of the year was of three at Mai Po on 8 February. Significant numbers were not recorded until late March when there were 14 at Ma Tso Lung on 15th and more than 20 there on 28th. In April it was reported almost daily in the Deep Bay area but no more than five were noted except on 18th when 15 were at Tsim Bei Tsui. The latest spring record was of two trapped at Mai Po on 27 April. In the second half of the year three were at Mui Wo on 3 November, two were at Tai O on 29 November (the second and third Lantau records and only the third and fourth away from the northwest NT) and 16 were trapped at Mai Po from 22 November to 28 December.
- 335 Fork-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga christinae* 叉尾太陽鳥
No significant reports.
- 336 Buff-bellied Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus* 紅胸啄花鳥
This species was recorded in small numbers throughout the year at Tai Po Kau, where the highest count was eight on 7 April, and there was a suggestion of breeding when a singing male and two females or immatures were seen on 15 July. Elsewhere, one was at Shum Chung on 27 January, two were at Lok Ma Chau on 11 April and one was at Shing Mun on 18 October.
- 337 Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum cruentum* 朱背啄花鳥
No significant reports. The status of this species on HK Island is unclear, but it would seem to be largely absent; observers are encouraged to submit all records from there.
- 337.1 Plain Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum concolor* 純色啄花鳥
Singles were trapped at KARC on 8 January and 19 February (MRL), and were seen at Tai Po Kau on 25 October (PH), Lung Fu Shan on 16 October (YYT), Mount Davis on 31 October and 13 December (MRL) and at Green Island on 16 December (PJL). These are the tenth to sixteenth Hong Kong records.
- 338 Chestnut-flanked White-eye** *Zosterops erythropleurus* 紅脇繡眼鳥
This scarce winter visitor was recorded five times: two at Tai Po Kau

on 18 January and at Shum Chung on 10 February, one at Cape D'Aguilar on 14 March, and two at Mount Davis on 7 November with one there on 27th. In addition, one trapped at Mount Davis on 19 December was considered probably to be an escape.

- 339 Japanese White-eye** *Zosterops japonicus* 暗綠繡眼鳥
Significant records received were counts of at least 300 at Tai Po Kau on 4 January and 200 at Shum Chung on 10 February, and an observation of a flock of 25 flying northeast at a height of about 200m. asl at Chek Lap Kok on 25 March.
- 340 Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis* 黑枕黃鸝
There was only one record in spring: one at Ho Sheung Heung on 18 April. The first autumn record was on 6 August when there was one at San Tin. Most records were in September and October, with the highest count being 34 at Green Island on 24 September (PJL), a new high. The last record of the year was two at KFBG on 4 November. Records were also received from Long Valley, Mai Po, San Tin, Shing Mun and Shuen Wan.
- 341 Bull-headed Shrike** *Lanius bucephalus* 牛頭伯勞
There were three records: a female at Shuen Wan from 21 January to 25 March, an adult female at the recently cleared Tai Po Kau orchard from 12 December that remained into 1998, and a female at Long Valley on 27 December.
- 342 Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* 紅尾伯勞
Singles were noted in April at Shuen Wan Landfill on 17th, Cape D'Aguilar and Yung Shue O on 26th, at 850m. asl on Tai Mo Shan on 27th, Mai Po and Nam Sang Wai on 28th, Long Valley on 29th and Wong Chuk Yeung on 30th, and in May at Cape D'Aguilar during 24-25th. All records were of the form *lucionensis*. In the second half of the year up two birds were noted from 28 August at Chek Lap Kok, Cheung Chau, Kowloon Park, Mount Austin, Tin Shui Wai Reclamation and Tsim Bei Tsui. One was seen regularly at Penfold Park from 26 September to 12 November, the later date being the latest record of the year.
- 343 Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* 棕背伯勞
No significant reports.
- 345 Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* 黑卷尾
In the winter months high counts were seven at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28 January, four at Shum Chung on 29 January, five at Lok Ma Chau on 11 November and five at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 December. Other high counts during the year were more than ten at Stonecutters on 28 April, 19 at Long Valley on 22 September, 15 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 October, 12 at Long Valley on 7 October and 20 at Mai Po on 7 October. Migration was also noted: four migrating southwest at Chek Lap Kok on 7 October and three flying south at KFBG on 11 October. No breeding was reported although this species regularly breeds in the NT.

Also reported at Mong Tseng, Tin Shui Wai, Nam Sang Wai, Kam Tin, Ho Sheung Heung, Ma Tso Lung, Shuen Wan, Mui Wo and Peng Chau.

- 346 Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* 灰卷尾
In the first winter period singles were reported from Tai Po Kau, Shun Chung, Lam Tsuen, Shing Mun and Shuen Wan, with the latest record being at this last site on 16 May. In autumn one was at Po Toi on 21 September; subsequently, singles were recorded at Shing Mun and Mount Davis, with up to two at Tai Po Kau. Only three birds were ascribed to race with two being *D. l. leucogenis* and one *D.l. salagensis*.

- 347 Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus* 髮冠卷尾
The highest counts during the year were of 25 at Shek Kong Catchment and six to seven at Man Fat Monastery (Sha Tin) on 2 January, 15 at Lam Tsuen on 4 January, ten at Lam Tsuen on 1 March, seven at To Fung Shan (Sha Tin) on 9 March, seven at Fo Tan on 5 September, nine at Tai Mei Tuk on 26 September, ten at Tai Po Kau on 4 October and ten at Fanling Golf Course on 27 December. Records suggest that the population of this species in Hong Kong was the same throughout the year. Also reported from Cheung Chau, Lok Ma Chau, Long Valley, Mai Po, Mong Tseng, Nam Hang, Sheung Shui, Sha Lo Tung, Shuen Wan, Tai Po Kau, the Sha Tin area, Yung Shue O, Mount Davis and HKU.

- 348 Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* 松鴉
There were only two records: two at Yung Shue O on 25 May and two at High Island Reservoir on 4 December. Sightings of this species have declined over the past three years.

- 349 Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythrorhynchus* 紅嘴藍鵲
One or two seen in the mangroves at Mai Po on 12 May continues the run of scarce spring records in recent years at this locality.

- 350 Grey Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae* 灰樹鵲
The latest spring record was one at KARC on 25 May. The earliest autumn record was of two at Mount Davis on 27 September that remained into 1998; these birds are probably resident at this site. The highest count was five at Shum Chung on 31 January. Other records, received from KFBG, Kap Lung, Ng Tung Chai and Yung Shue O, referred to only one or two birds.

- 351 Common Magpie** *Pica pica* 喜鵲
At Mai Po there were more than 50 preparing to roost in mangroves at dusk on 2 October and similarly 45 were at the border fence at dusk on 18 November. It would seem that communal roosting of this species occurs commonly in this area during winter.

- 352 Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchus* 大嘴烏鴉
The highest count was 52 feeding on mudflats at Shek Pik on 26 October.

There was only one breeding record: three individuals included a begging juvenile at Shuen Wan on 16 August. This species has been seen in only small numbers at Shuen Wan since the closure of the nearby landfill.

- 353 Collared Crow** *Corvus torquatus* 白頸鴉
Reported from Aberdeen, Stonecutters, Chek Lap Kok, Shum Chung, Shuen Wan, Island House, Long Valley, Ma Tso Lung, Mai Po, Nam Sang Wai and Tsim Bei Tsui. A pair probably nested at Chek Lap Kok and a juvenile was present at Nam Sang Wai on 15 May. The highest counts were of 36 at Shuen Wan on 7 July, 30 there on 1 August, 26 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 23 September, 25 at Shuen Wan on 16 October, 20 at Mai Po on 16 November and 31 on the mudflat in front of the Mai Po boardwalk at dusk on 23 November.

- 354 Red-billed Starling** *Strunus sericeus* (N) 絲光椋鳥
High counts in the first part of the year did not exceed 100 before early March, but on 11th 800 were present at Mai Po. Numbers then declined with 33 at Long Valley on 23 March and 20 at Mai Po on 9 April. The latest record in spring was an adult male at Nam Sang Wai on 28 April, the latest on record. The earliest report in autumn was one at Long Valley on 19 October. Subsequent higher counts were 300 at Mai Po on 28 October, about 300 at Kam Tin on 1 November, 400 at Kam Tin on 6 December and more than 600 at the Tai Sha Lok section of the Shenzhen River on 19 December. Away from the northwest NT records were also received from Cape D'Aguilar and Chek Lap Kok (unusual at both these sites), KARC, Kau Sai Chau, Kowloon Park, the Starling Inlet - Luk Keng area, Penfold Park and Shuen Wan.

- 355 Purple-backed Starling** *Sturnus sturninus* 北椋鳥
There were two records during the year: one at Mui Wo on 1 October and six at Long Valley during 25-26 October.

- 356 Chestnut-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus philippensis* (N) 紫背椋鳥
An adult male and two other birds were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 October (JH,JW).

- 357 White-shouldered Starling** *Sturnus sinensis* 灰背椋鳥
Higher counts were as follows: at Nam Sang Wai 46 on 11 January, with 41 on 22 February and 50 on 13 December, and at Mai Po 40 on 4 April, 35 on 9 April and 20 on 16 April. Other than these there were 40 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 April, about 30 at Shuen Wan on 9 April, 30 with juveniles at Cheung Chau on 3 August, 32 at Mui Wo on 15 August with 15 pairs there during the summer, and 50 at Long Valley on 24 September. Breeding was also confirmed at Cheung Chau where there up to 30 with juveniles from 6 July to 3 August. There were also two juveniles at Tai A Chau on 29 July. Away from the northwest NT also recorded at Cape D'Aguilar, Chek Lap Kok, Ho Pui, Kau Sai Chau, Kowloon Park, Luk Keng, Nam Chung, Shuen Wan/Ting Kok, Tung Chung, Tai O and Tap Mun.

- 358 Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* 紫翅椋鳥
In spring one at Mai Po on 10 April is the latest spring record, other than a possibly escaped bird in 1996 (see below). In the second part of the year, at Mui Wo one was present on 24 October, at Kam Tin there were two on 26 October, two on 1 November, four on 2 November and seven on 1 December, at Mai Po there were singles on 5th and 7 November, and at Long Valley there were up to two during 15-16 November. It seems likely that some of these reports concern the same individuals. A good year for this species.
1996: one was at Penfold Park on 6 February, 1 March and 23 April. In view of the long stay, late final date and urban location, it seems likely that this was an escaped or released bird.
- 360 White-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus cineraceus* 灰椋鳥
The highest count in the first part of the year concerned 23 at Long Valley and 110 at Mai Po on the same day on 24 January. Subsequent numbers fell with 25 at Mai Po on 23 February, 40 on 1 March and 18 on 8 March, and nine at Long Valley on 14 February and 12 at Nam Sang Wai on 22 February. The latest spring records were of three at Tsim Bei Tsui on 18 April and one at Ting Kok two days later. The earliest autumn record was of one at Mai Po on 23 October. Records in October referred to no more than two individuals, but numbers rose rapidly in November when there were about 100 at Kam Tin on 2nd, 20 at Mai Po on 3rd, about 60 at Long Valley on 8th, 41 at the Liu Pok section of Shenzhen River on 20th and about 50 at Mai Po on 21st. Numbers rose further in December when there were 350 at Kam Tin on 6th and about 30 at Nam Sang Wai on 13th. Away from the northwest NT, records were only received from Ting Kok and Cape D'Aguilar.
- 361 Black-collared Starling** *Sturnus nigricollis* 黑領椋鳥
High counts were 39 at Ho Pui on 15 January, 51 at Long Valley on 14 February, 41 at Nam Sang Wai on 22 February, 55 at Long Valley on 10 April, 35 at Chek Lap Kok on 25 September and about 200 at Long Valley on 28 October.
- 362 Crested Myna** *Acridotheres cristatellus* 八哥
The highest roost counts came from Chek Lap Kok where 500 were noted on 25 September and 15 November, with 600 on 7 October.
- 363 Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* 麻雀
No significant records.
- 364 White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata* 白腰文鳥
One at Chek Lap Kok on 28 August was unusual at this site. Nest-building was noted on 11 July at Shuen Wan and an adult was seen feeding three juveniles on 5 September at Fo Tan. The highest count was of 120 at Ho Pui on 12 June.

- 365 Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata* 斑文鳥
The highest counts received were of 80 at Mai Po on 18 August, 66 at Long Valley on 9 April and 40 at Lok Ma Chau on 24 January.
- 366 Chestnut Munia** *Lonchura malacca* 栗腹文鳥
There were four records of singles at Mai Po on 6 April, Long Valley on 9 April, Mai Po on 27 April (trapped) and Po Toi on 21 September, the latter a juvenile.
- 366.1 Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla* 燕雀
Single males were at Mount Austin on 12 April (MDW) and at Mai Po on 14 April (PS). In autumn, there were three records in early November: one at Mai Po during 8-9th (EMSK *et al.*), two at Po Toi on 11th (PJL) and one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15th (GJC). A relatively good year for this species.
1995: the tame, presumed escaped bird seen at Magazine Gap on 8th and 10 May was seen again on 14th in company with two others (MT).
- 367 Grey-capped Greenfinch** *Carduelis sinica* 金翅雀
There were three records: three at Ting Kok on 7 January, up to four at City One, Sha Tin from 11 May to 20 June and one at HK Sports Institute (Sha Tin) on 29 May, presumably one of the birds also seen at City One.
- 368 Eurasian Siskin** *Carduelis spinus* 黃雀
A flock of at least 20 birds were present in Tai Po Kau during 6-26 February.
- 369 Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus* 朱雀
A female or immature at Sha Lo Tung on 8 November and a first-winter (trapped) at Mount Davis on 13 December were the only records.
- 370 Yellow-billed Grosbeak** *Eophona migratoria* 黑尾蜡嘴雀
Relatively few individuals were recorded this year with only five records: singles at Lam Tsuen on 1 April, Mount Austin on 12 April, Sha Lo Tung on 29 April and Shuen Wan on 2 May, as well as two at Nam Sang Wai on 28 April. These records are atypically late for this species which is most often reported in midwinter. There were no records in the second half of the year, and it seems likely that some, at least, of these records relate to escaped or released birds. This former relatively widespread winter visitor has declined considerably in recent years.
- 370.1 Japanese Grosbeak** *Eophona personata* 黑頭蜡嘴雀
Nine were present at Lam Tsuen on 11 April (RWL); this is the ninth Hong Kong record. Whilst most have occurred in winter there have been two previous early April occurrences; all but two records have occurred at Lam Tsuen.

371 Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* 灰頭鵪

Low numbers were recorded in early January but then started to pick up in late January and February, with 15 at Shum Chung on 31 January, 25 at Lam Tsuen on 12 February and 20 at Long Valley on 14 February. Numbers dropped during late February and March but picked up again in April perhaps in tandem with observer activity. At Mai Po during this month there were about 30 on 3rd and 60 on 6th. Elsewhere, there were 25 at Long Valley on 7 April. Two males of the form *sordida* at Mai Po on 30 April was the final record of the spring. The earliest autumn record was of one was at Ho Sheung Heung on 9 October, and the highest autumn count was 20 at Lok Ma Chau on 11 November. In December the numbers dropped with no more than ten at any site.

Of those assigned to subspecies, a male at Starling Inlet on 15 March, a female at Mai Po village on 22 April, a male at Stonecutters on 28 April, two males at Mai Po on 30 April and a pair at Mong Tseng on 6 December were of the form *sordida*, and an adult male at Sha Lo Tung on 25 November, single males at the same site on 2nd and 25 December and at Mong Tseng on 13 December were of the form *spodocephala*. However, since *E.s. sordida* is by far the commoner of the two forms in Hong Kong, it is likely that some observers are not specifically noting occurrences of this form.

372 Japanese Yellow Bunting *Emberiza sulphurata* (V) 硫黃鵪

All records this year were of singles in April. At Mai Po there was a female on 8th and one on 9th; at Shuen Wan there was a female on 18th and one on 24th; and at Long Valley one was present on 28th. A poor showing, in sharp contrast to the record numbers of last year.

373 Chestnut-eared Bunting *Emberiza fucata* 赤胸鵪

There were only four records of singles at Lin Barn Tsuen on 10 March, Long Valley on the rather late date of 28 April, Chek Lap Kok on 14 November and KFBG on 19th November.

373.2 Yellow-browed Bunting *Emberiza chrysophrys* 黃眉鵪

A female was at Mai Po on 9 April (GDJ).

374 Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami* 白眉鵪

There were few reports in the first half of the year: one trapped at Tai Mo Shan on 29 January, two trapped at Mount Davis on 8 March, a male at Mai Po on 4th and 6 April and two females at Cheung Chau on 14 April. In autumn the earliest record concerned one at Tai Po Kau on 18 November. Subsequently, at KFBG and KARC eight birds were trapped from 19 November to 20 December, and in December up to two were at Tai Po Kau during 14-23rd, with singles at Mount Davis on 19th and Kap Lung on 21st. A rather poor year for a species which seems to have declined in recent years.

375 Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* 田鵪

Singles were near Lok Ma Chau on 27 January (PJL) and at Sha Lo Tung on 22 November (LKS).

376 Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* 小鵪

Numbers increased greatly in February, with about 20 together at Tai Po Kau Village on 4th, 43 at Lam Tsuen on 12th, with 25 the next day, and 46 at Long Valley on 14th. In March numbers decreased to less than ten, with six at Long Valley on 7th and eight at Lin Barn Tsuen on 22nd the highest counts. The largest groups of passage birds in April were 30 at Long Valley on 3rd, 40 at Mai Po on 8th and 50 there on 16th. The latest spring record was of two at Mai Po on 21 April. In autumn the first record was of two at Fanling Golf Course on 31 October. High counts were nine at Sha Lo Tung on 25 November, ten at Long Valley on 5 December and 15 at the Liu Pok section of Shenzhen River on 19 December. Recorded from widespread areas of the NT.

377 Chestnut Bunting *Emberiza rutila* 栗鵪

In January a male was at Wong Chuk Yeung on 9th. In spring the sole record was of three at Mai Po on 9 April, a remarkably poor passage. The first autumn record concerned one at Ho Chung on 15 October. Subsequent higher counts were 39 at KFBG on 26 October and 20 at Mount Davis on 6 November. Subsequently, there were only small numbers at widespread locations in the NT.

378 Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola* 黃胸鵪

Before late March numbers were generally not higher than six, the exception being 16 at Lin Barn Tsuen on 9 February and 20 there on 16 March. Subsequently, higher counts were at Mai Po fish ponds: 40 on 28 March, up to 35 during 6-8 April and 20 on 21 April. The latest spring record was of two at Long Valley on 28 April. The earliest autumn record concerned one at Chek Lap Kok on 10 September. Subsequently, after one or two in September, the highest counts were 27 at Long Valley on 9 October, 18 at Penfold Park on 14 October, 70 at Long Valley on 18 October and 25 at Mui Wo on 19 October. After that no more than six were recorded at any site. There were records from Chek Lap Kok, Ho Sheung Heung, Kau Sai Chau, Lin Barn Tsuen, Long Valley, Mai Po, Mai Po fishponds, Mui Wo, Penfold Park and Sha Lo Tung.

379 Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* 蘆鵪

Two females were at Mai Po village fish ponds on 3 April (PJL).

Black-/Red-headed Bunting 黑/褐頭鵪

Emberiza melanocephala/bruniceps

One was at Mai Po on 31 October and 1 November (YYT *et al.*).

380 Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami* 鳳頭鵪

The only reports were in July at Tai Mo Shan where there were three on 13th and one on 20th.

CATEGORY C

Species which, although originally introduced by man, have now established a regular feral breeding stock that may or may not be self-supporting.

- 601 Rock Dove** *Columba livia* 野鴿
No significant reports
- 603 Yellow-crested Cockatoo** *Cacatua sulphurea* 小葵花鳳頭鸚鵡
No significant reports.
- 605 Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* 家八哥
Up to three birds were reported from Sha Po, Kam Tin, Ho Pui, San Tin, Mai Po and Sha Tau Kok; the only higher count was of 15 at Long Valley on 11 April.

CATEGORY D

Species considered to have probably occurred in a wild state but for which the possibility of escape or release from captivity cannot be satisfactorily excluded.

- 706.6 Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophilata* 橙胸鵙
1989: one was near Tai Om, Lam Tsuen Valley on 7 February (MAW). This record precedes the other three records.
- 706.7 Blue-throated Flycatcher** *Cyornis rubeculoides* 藍喉仙鵙
1968: a male, either of the nominate form or *C.r. glaucicomans*, the latter of which has been recorded on three occasions, was at Bethanie on 15th and 28 December (MAW). This record precedes the other records.
- 709 Rufous-capped Babbler** *Stachyris ruficeps* 紅頭穗鵯
Reported from Tai Po Kau (April, November and December), Shing Mun (April and October) and Tai Mo Shan (August). This species seems to be spreading to other areas of the Tai Mo Shan massif.
- 711 Grey-headed Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis gularis* 灰頭鶯雀
Five were at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 7 February with one there on 5 July.
- 712 Grey-cheeked Fulvetta** *Alcippe morrisonia* 灰眶雀鵲
Singles were at Tai Mo Shan on 20 July, Tai Po Kau on 28 September and Ng Tung Chai on 7 November.
- 712.1 Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** *Sitta frontalis* 絨額鵲
Up to six were reported from Tai Po Kau during the year, with two at Shing Mun on 6 September and one at Luk Keng on 29 March.

- 712.5 Chestnut-tailed Starling** *Sturnus malabaricus* 灰頭棕鳥
One, not presumed to be a wild bird due to its tameness, was at Victoria Park on 16 February (CMM).

- 712.7 Russet Sparrow** *Passer rutilans* 山麻雀
A male was at Mai Po on 27 March (JMCW). However, the habitat is unusual and the date rather late; consequently, the possibility that this bird was an escape cannot be ruled out.

- 715.3 Meadow Bunting** *Emberiza cioides* 三道眉草鵲
One was at Mount Austin on 7 January (EMSK).

CATEGORY E

Species for which all published records are suspected to concern birds that have escaped or been released from captivity.

- | | |
|---|--------|
| Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i> * | 倉鴞 |
| Alexandrine Parakeet <i>Psittacula eupatria</i> | 亞歷山大鸚鵡 |
| Rose-ringed Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i> | 紅頸綠鸚鵡 |
| Golden-fronted Leafbird <i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i> | 金額葉鵯 |
| Blue-winged Leafbird <i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i> | 藍翅葉鵯 |
| Pied Bushchat <i>Saxicola caprata</i> | 白斑黑石鵲 |
| Blue-fronted Redstart <i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i> * | 藍額紅尾鵲 |
| Elliot's Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax ellioti</i> * | 橙翅噪鵲 |
| Silver-eared Mesia <i>Leiothrix argentea</i> | 銀耳相思鳥 |
| Blue-winged Minla <i>Minla cyanuroptera</i> | 藍翅希鵲 |
| Green Jay <i>Cyanocorax yncas</i> | 綠色藍鵲 |
| House Crow <i>Corvus splendens</i> | 家鴉 |
| Azure-winged Magpie <i>Cyanopica cyanus</i> | 灰喜鵲 |
| Vinous-breasted Starling <i>Sturnus burmannicus</i> | 紅嘴棕鳥 |
| Hill Myna <i>Gracula religiosa</i> | 鷓鴣 |
| Baya Weaver <i>Ploceus philippinus</i> | 黃胸織布鳥 |
| Yellow-fronted Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i> | 黃額絲雀 |
| Streaked Weaver <i>Ploceus manyar</i> * | 紋胸織布鳥 |

Species marked * were first recorded in 1997.

The Barn Owl was captured in Western District on 3 October and handed over to KFBG. The Azure-winged Magpie, at Tung Chung on 10 December, was the first record since 1995.

The following records were submitted to, but not accepted by,
the Records Committee

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*, Magazine Gap, 17 February (accepted as Frigatebird sp.); Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*, Ocean Park, 21 December; Swinhoe's Egret *Egretta eulophotes*, Tolo Harbour 3 May, Nam Chung 9 October; Pacific Reef Egret *Egretta sacra*, Shek O, 22 August (accepted as Pacific Reef or Swinhoe's Egret); Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*, KFBG, 5 October; Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, Lin Barn Tsuen 14 March, Kam Tin, 1 November; Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*, Mai Po, 22 October; Yellow-legged Buttonquail *Turnix tanki*, Tin Shui Wai 28 September, Long Valley 1 October (all accepted as Buttonquail sp.), Long Valley 26 October; Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*, Tin Shui Wai 21st and 27 September, 1st and 5 October (accepted as Buttonquail sp.), Tin Shui Wai 6 October; Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus*, Mai Po, 30 April; Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus*, near Cheung Chau, 21 August; Jaeger sp. *Stercorarius* sp., Tolo Channel, 19 July; Large Owl sp., Pak Tam Chung 24 February, Sai Kung CP 11 July; Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens*, 2nd, 5th and 30 November, 27 December, Long Valley; Red-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax formosus*, Tai Mo Shan, 21 April; Japanese Robin *Erithacus akahige*, Mai Po, 15 April; Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, The Peak, 24 March; Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*, Mount Austin, 1 November; Hill Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis banyumas*, Cheung Chau, 18 October; Pallas's Rosefinch *Carpodacus roseus*, Starling Inlet, 7 April; Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, Mai Po village, 13 April.

1995: White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alboides*, Long Valley, 14 October; Brown Bush Warbler *Bradypterus luteoventris*, Sha Lo Tung, 26 October; Pale-footed Bush Warbler *Cettia pallidipes*, Ng Tung Chai, 2 February; Black/Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala/bruniceps*, Sha Lo Tung, 5 November.

1994: Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*, juvenile, Dong Ping Chau, 8 October (previously accepted).

1992: Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*, Starling Inlet, 18 February.

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WINTER WATERFOWL COUNTS 1997-98

G.J. Carey

Coordinated mid-monthly counts of wintering waterfowl in Hong Kong were again carried out by members of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society from November to March. These were conducted on 15 November, 13 December, 17 January, 14 February and 14 March. The January count was carried out to coincide with the Asian Waterfowl Census organised by Wetlands International Asia-Pacific. Counts from November to March have been carried out each winter since 1992-93.

In accordance with guidelines provided by Wetlands International, other counts, if higher, are included from the one-week period either side of the coordinated count date. It should be noted that for the majority of species this means the single count must be higher than the total number provided by the coordinated count for it to be included. As in recent winters, the use of mobile phones at Tsim Bei Tsui and Mai Po boardwalk ensured that double-counting and, as far as possible, under-counting was avoided for birds in Inner Deep Bay.

Unfortunately, coverage was slightly less than complete in three months, and the following sites were uncounted: Fu Tian in November and December,

Table 1. Waterfowl Counts Winter 1997-98: totals by group and site.

group	site	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Cormorants	Deep Bay Area	2570	4500	6033	4941	4334
	SI/SW	49	0	0	6	0
Ardeids	Deep Bay Area	2800	1642	2723	2558	2743
	SI/SW	749	609	927	712	652
Ducks and grebes	Deep Bay Area	17,968	10,446	23,575	20,564	5315
	SI/SW	18	14	22	15	1
Rails, Coot etc.	Deep Bay Area	170	122	944	311	229
	SI/SW	1	14	31	29	15
Waders	Deep Bay Area	6783	6969	9849	5230	6136
	SI/SW	97	99	88	107	37
Gulls and terns	Deep Bay Area	1968	6105	12,570	10,682	395
	SI/SW	0	0	51	30	0
Totals	Deep Bay Area	32,259	29,784	55,694	44,286	19,152
	SI/SW	314	736	1119	859	705

SI = Starling Inlet, SW = Shuen Wan

and Shenzhen River 'A' and 'B' and Nam Sang Wai in February. The results of the five counts are summarised in table 1; results in full are provided in table 2 to allow comparison with previous years. Full details of all counts can be obtained from the count coordinator.

During the January count a total of 55,694 waterbirds of 64 species were recorded in the Deep Bay area; excluding Nam Sang Wai, which was only included in the list of count sites during winter 1995-96, the total is 54,095. These counts are approximately 18.7% below the totals reached in 1996 and 17.25% below those for 1997. Such a drop is a cause for concern and numbers need to be monitored carefully in the future.

If the highest Deep Bay counts for each species during the winter period proper, defined as December to February, are added together, the total is 58,544 birds of 71 species, about 5.1% higher than the Deep Bay count for January. This is, perhaps, a more accurate reflection of the importance of Deep Bay as it is the minimum number of birds that utilised its resources for at least part of the winter. This is 19.8% below the equivalent figure obtained for winter 1995-96, and 16.7% below that for winter 1996-97.

A new waterfowl count high of 1639 Avocets was noted in January; in addition, a new Hong Kong high of 2045 was noted on 26 January; the peak count of wintering Avocets in Deep Bay has quadrupled in the five years since 1993. Increases in Avocet numbers in Europe have been associated with increases in organic pollutants that have benefitted their preferred prey items (Prop 1996), and it is quite possible that the same relationship is occurring here. The total of 24 Dalmatian Pelicans continues the recovery in wintering numbers of this species and is the highest count since 1988. However, recent evidence indicates that the East Asia population of this species may stand at only approximately 100 birds (*A. Braunlich in litt.*), meaning that Deep Bay has supported 20-25% of this regional population in recent years.

Black-faced Spoonbill numbers in January were 113, the highest midwinter count yet, and new highs were reached for Northern Pintail (7,235) and Red-necked Stint (49), the latter presumably reflecting the relative mildness of the winter. For the first time January count records of Common Gull and Vega Gull were received. In February a count of 560 Tufted Ducks was a new high for Hong Kong.

At Shuen Wan 215 waterbirds of 13 species were recorded, and at Starling Inlet 904 birds of 16 species were recorded. Raptor species were again counted and the following January totals were obtained in Deep Bay: Black Kite - 40; Eastern Marsh Harrier - 1; Common Buzzard - 2; Greater Spotted Eagle - 2; Imperial Eagle - 6; Osprey - 8; White-bellied Sea Eagle - 1.

Table 2. Summary of Waterfowl Count January 1998

SPECIES	Shen-zhen River	Mai Po	Fu Tian	Deep Bay	TBT fish ponds	Nim Wan/LFS	Tin Shui Wai	Nam Sang Wai	Lok Ma Chau	Deep Bay Area	Shuen Wan	Starling Inlet	Total
Little Grebe		8	5	1	18	3	4	8		47		2	49
Great Crested Grebe*				49						49			49
Great Cormorant		5810						223		6033			6033
Dalmatian Pelican*				24						24			24
Night Heron	19	3								22	6	420	448
Chinese Pond Heron	41	62	14	17		44	5	10	1	194	12	9	215
Cattle Egret		26			3				3	32		10	42
Little Egret	54	310	135	261	35	118	21	12		946	31	65	1042
Intermediate Egret		1			2			2		5	1		6
Great Egret	54	80	38	99	12	52	17	22		374	75	191	640
Grey Heron	49	564	32	271	8	7	10	70		1011	17	90	1118
Purple Heron		1								1			1
Eurasian Spoonbill		1								1			1
Black-faced Spoonbill		25	88							113			113
Shelduck				1290	1					1291			1291
Eurasian Wigeon		134	1400	241	23					1798			1798
Falcated Teal		48								48			48
Green-winged Teal	12	1512		1223	651			101		3499	20		3519
Mallard				1						1			1

Table 2 (cont.). Summary of Waterfowl Count January 1998

SPECIES	Shen- zhen River	Mai Po	Fu Tian	Deep Bay	TBT fish ponds	Nim Wan/ LFS	Tin Shui Wai	Nam Sang Wai	Lok Ma Chau	Deep Bay Area	Shuen Wan	Starling Inlet	Total
Chinese Spotbill				46				46		92			92
Burmese Spotbill				2						2			2
Spotbill (unsub)		5						1		6			6
Northern Pintail		503	5550	1179	3					7235			7235
Garganey		23		5	2					30			30
Northern Shoveler		208	5300	1105	2					6615			6615
Tufted Duck		1		210	1					212			212
Duck sp.			2650							2650			2650
Banded Rail				1		1				2			2
White-breasted W'hen		7	6	1		1			2	17	2	10	29
Moorhen		44	5	15				25	2	91	6	11	108
Coot		145		660	29					834	2		836
Black-winged Stilt										0		1	1
Avocet				1639						1639			1639
Little Ringed Plover*			5				62			67	16	30	113
Kentish Plover				1800						1800	25		1825
Lesser Sand Plover				12						12			12
Pacific Golden Plover*				100						100			100
Grey Plover				557						557		7	564

Table 2 (cont.). Summary of Waterfowl Count January 1998

SPECIES	Shen- zhen River	Mai Po	Fu Tian	Deep Bay	TBT fish ponds	Nim Wan/ LFS	Tin Shui Wai	Nam Sang Wai	Lok Ma Chau	Deep Bay Area	Shuen Wan	Starling Inlet	Total
Grey-headed Lapwing				1						1			1
Great Knot				1						1			1
Red Knot				1						1			1
Red-necked Stint*				49						49			49
Temminck's Stint*			3				44			47			47
Long-toed Stint*				2						2			2
Curlew Sandpiper				1						1			1
Dunlin				2950		100				3050			3050
Broad-billed Sandpiper				1						1			1
Common Snipe									16	16			16
Pintail Snipe									13	13			13
Black-tailed Godwit*				125						125			125
Eurasian Curlew*				601		1				602		1	603
Spotted Redshank*				550						550			550
Common Redshank*				135						135			135
Marsh Sandpiper*				750						750			750
Greenshank*				130						130		3	133
Tringa sp.*				150						150			150
Green Sandpiper	4	1	5			1		3	1	15			15

Table 2 (cont.), Summary of Waterfowl Count January 1998

SPECIES	Shen-zhen River	Mai Po	Fu Tian	Deep Bay	TBT fish ponds	Nim Wan/LFS	Tin Shui Wai	Nam Sang Wai	Lok Ma Chau	Deep Bay Area	Shuen Wan	Starling Inlet	Total
Wood Sandpiper						8				8			8
Common Sandpiper	1	5	3	8		8		1	1	27	2	3	32
Pallas's Gull				1						1			1
Saunders' Gull*				76						76			76
Black-headed Gull			2900	8005		285		1075		12265		51	12316
Black-tailed Gull*				1						1			1
Common Gull*				2						2			2
Heuglin's Gull*				210						210			210
Vega Gull				5						5			5
Yellow-legged Gull*				3						3			3
Slaty-backed Gull*				7						7			7
TOTAL	234	9527	18139	24574	790	629	163	1599	39	55694	215	904	5681

*Indicates total includes or comprises count made one week either side of count date
 TBT=Tsim Bei Tsui; LFS=Lau Fau Shan; Deep Bay comprises that part of Deep Bay outside the border fence within Hong Kong jurisdiction.

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在這年度十一月至三月間，本會會員在每月中旬進行了有組織的冬季水禽普查。以一月為例，水禽總數為55,694隻。個別品種方面，黑臉琵鷺有113隻，這是此品種第二大度冬數目；卷羽鵜鶘有24隻，佔東亞總數100隻的20-25%。后海灣對東亞度冬水禽的重要性，可見一斑。

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REPORT ON BIRD RINGING IN HONG KONG IN 1997

David S. Melville and Michael R. Leven

A total of 3198 birds of 122 species was ringed in 1997. Species totals are provided in Table 1, together with those from previous years. The most recent report on bird ringing in Hong Kong is given by Melville and Leven (1998). Ringing activities continued to be concentrated at the WWF Hong Kong Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, and the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG) and adjacent University of Hong Kong Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre (KARC), near Shek Kong. MRL's postgraduate project has resulted in regular ringing at Ma On Shan, Tai Mo Shan, Mount Davis and Cape D'Aguilar, while some netting took place at both Kam Tin and Long Valley, particularly for Greater Painted-snipe (Leader 1999).

One new species new to Hong Kong was caught during the year - a first-winter Chinese Leaf Warbler. This record is of particular significance since all previous published records have been from central China (Sichuan, Shanxi, Hebei) during the breeding season (Alstrom *et al.* 1992, Leven 1999).

Other species of note captured included the third records for Hong Kong of Paddyfield Warbler and Hume's Leaf Warbler, the fifth record of Blyth's Reed Warbler, and two Yellow-streaked Warblers (seventh and eighth records).

Terns again nested on Shek Ngau Chau and 50 young Bridled Terns were ringed. The numbers of waders ringed was again very low, this being due to the birds no longer roosting in a readily accessible site at Mai Po, and serious time constraints among members of the ringing team.

There were two records of birds ringed at Mai Po from overseas (Table 2). Details were received, belatedly, of a Common Greenshank ringed on spring migration at Mai Po in 1985 and shot in Central Siberia in 1990, within the breeding range of the species (Cramp and Simmons 1982). This is our first recovery of a Common Greenshank, and only our second recovery from Russia (Melville and Galsworthy 1992). The Oriental Reed Warbler was our fifth record from Japan. From the date of its capture it is not possible to determine whether it was a breeding bird or on passage since the species breeds throughout Japan except northeast Hokkaido (Brazil 1991).

Sightings of leg-flagged waders continue to yield valuable results as detailed in Table 3. The sighting of a Bar-tailed Godwit flagged in northwest Australia was our first, although one ringed at Mai Po has been controlled there (Melville 1989). Most Bar-tailed Godwits on northward migration from northwestern Australia appear to fly directly to the east China coast (Barter 1989, Barter and Wang 1990) and then move to the west coast of the Korean Peninsula (Minton and Jessop 1997).

There were many handlings of recaptured birds in Hong Kong during the year, some of which were multiple captures on the same individual. A selection of the more interesting recaptures is given in Table 4. There was only one longevity record of a 'resident' bird during 1997 which exceeded previously published records (Table 5).

We wish to thank the Ringing and Migration Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology for permission to use their rings in Hong Kong. Trapping is carried out under permits issued by the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries. Ringing at KARC is conducted with the kind permission of the University of Hong Kong, and we also thank the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden for permission to work on their land, and Hong Kong Telecom for permission to work at Cape D'Aguilar. We are grateful to fellow ringers David Carthy, Cheung Ho Fai, Paul Leader, Li Kwok Shing, Fox Wong and Yu Yat Tung. Many others assisted with ringing during the course of the year and we thank them all, in particular Liz Leven for assisting in computerising the records. Geoff Carey kindly collated the leg flag sightings.

Bird ringing in Hong Kong is a WWF Hong Kong project made possible through the generous support of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong South. We are most grateful for their support.



Table 1. Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1997

species	MAPS*	1975-1996	1997	total
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		1		1
Great Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		1		1
Great Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>		1		1
Yellow Bittern <i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>	15	83	3	101
Schrenck's Bittern <i>Ixobrychus eurythmus</i>		2		2
Cinnamon Bittern <i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	1	4		5
Black Bittern <i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i>			1	1
Black-cr. Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		6		6
Striated Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>		12	5	17
Chinese Pond Heron <i>Ardeola bacchus</i>		101		101
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		2		2
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>		6		6
Eurasian Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>		2		2
Falcated Duck <i>Anas falcata</i>		1		1
Common Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>		42		42
Spot-billed Duck <i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>		3		3
Northern Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>		2		2
Garganey <i>Anas querquedula</i>		12		12
Northern Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>		2		2
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>		40		40
Besra <i>Accipiter virgatus</i>		23	6	29
Japanese Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter gularis</i>	1	28		29
Eurasian Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>		1		1
Crested Goshawk <i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i>		2		2
Chinese Goshawk <i>Accipiter soloensis</i>		1		1
Imperial Eagle <i>Aquila heliaca</i>	**1			1
Bonelli's Eagle <i>Hieraetus fasciatus</i>		1		1
Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	**4	2		6
Eurasian Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>		2		2
Saker Falcon <i>Falco cherrug</i>		2		2
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>		1		1
Chinese Francolin <i>Francolinus pintadeanus</i>	**7			7
Japanese Quail <i>Coturnix japonica</i>	**2	1	1	4
Yellow-legged Button-quail <i>Turnix tanki</i>	**1	1		2
Barred Button-quail <i>Turnix suscitator</i>	1	2	3	6
Slaty-legged Crake <i>Rallus eurizonoides</i>		2		2
Slaty-breasted Rail <i>Rallus striatus</i>		1		1
Baillon's Crake <i>Porzana pusilla</i>	1			1
White-breasted Wren <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	1	25	4	30
Common Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		8	1	9
Watercock <i>Gallicrex cinerea</i>		1	1	2
Eurasian Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>		6		6
Pheasant-tld Jacana <i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>		1		1

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1997

species	MAPS*	1975-1996	1997	total
Greater Painted-snipe <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>		107	17	124
Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		2		2
Pied Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		12		12
Oriental Pratincole <i>Glareola maldivarum</i>		3		3
Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>		9		9
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>		45		45
Lesser Sand Plover <i>Charadrius mongolus</i>		69		69
Greater Sand Plover <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>		283		283
Pacific Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis fulva</i>		135		135
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		88		88
Great Knot <i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>		95		95
Red Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>		107		107
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>		1		1
Red-necked Stint <i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	6	207		213
Temminck's Stint <i>Calidris temminckii</i>		1		1
Long-toed Stint <i>Calidris subminuta</i>		33		33
Pectoral Sandpiper <i>Calidris melanotos</i>		1		1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper <i>Calidris acuminata</i>		48		48
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1	1113	2	1116
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>		407		407
Spoon-billed Sand. <i>Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus</i>		3		3
Broad-billed Sandpiper <i>Limicola falcinellus</i>		118		118
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		3		3
Common Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	1	148	1	150
Pintail Snipe <i>Gallinago stenura</i>		23	9	32
Swinhoe's Snipe <i>Gallinago megala</i>		16		16
Asian Dowitcher <i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>		28		28
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>		65		65
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>		84		84
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		464		464
Eurasian Curlew <i>Numenius arquatus</i>		29		29
Far Eastern Curlew <i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>		3		3
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>		20		20
Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>		1557	3	1560
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>		115		115
Common Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>		67		67
Nordmann's Greenshank <i>Tringa guttifer</i>		2		2
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>		3	1	4
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>		211	1	212
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>		591		591
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	4	148		152
Grey-tailed Tattler <i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>		71		71
Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>		36		36

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1997

species	MAPS*	1975-1996	1997	total
Red-necked Phalarope <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>		16		16
Red Phalarope <i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>		1		1
Common Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ridibundus</i>		1		1
Black-naped Tern <i>Sterna sumatrana</i>		14		14
Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>		9		9
Bridled Tern <i>Sterna anathetus</i>		23	50	73
Oriental Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>		51		51
Spotted Dove <i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	2	229	6	237
Emerald Dove <i>Chalcophaps indica</i>		24	4	28
Rose-ringed Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i>	1			1
Budgerigar <i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>		4		4
Chestnut-winged Cuckoo <i>Cacomantis coromandelianus</i>		6	5	11
Large Hawk Cuckoo <i>Hierococcyx sparveroides</i>		2		2
Plaintive Cuckoo <i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>		15	1	16
Oriental Cuckoo <i>Cuculus saturatus</i>		2	1	3
Asian Lesser Cuckoo <i>Cuculus poliocephalus</i>		1		1
Koel <i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>		16	1	17
Greater Coucal <i>Centropus sinensis</i>		17	1	18
Lesser Coucal <i>Centropus benghalensis</i>	2	5		7
Grass Owl <i>Tyto capensis</i>		1		1
Collared Scops Owl <i>Otus bakkamoena</i>		2		2
Oriental Scops Owl <i>Otus (scops) sunia</i>	2	1	1	4
Eurasian Eagle Owl <i>Bubo bubo</i>			**1	1
Asian Barred Owlet <i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>		**2	1	3
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	**2	1		3
White-vented Needletail <i>H. cochinchinensis</i>		1		1
Pacific Swift <i>Apus pacificus</i>		18		18
Little Swift <i>Apus affinis</i>		80		80
White-throated Kingfisher <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	24	74	2	100
Black-capped Kingfisher <i>Halcyon pileata</i>	5	53	3	61
Common Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	104	1060	19	1183
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>		5		5
Dollarbird <i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>		2		2
Eurasian Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>		1		1
Great Barbet <i>Megalaima virens</i>		3		3
Eurasian Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	21	38	4	63
Speckled Piculet <i>Picumnus innominatus</i>		1		1
Fairy Pitta <i>Pitta brachyura</i>		1		1
Oriental Skylark <i>Alauda gulgula</i>		3		3
Pale Martin <i>Riparia diluta</i>	1			1
Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	11	284	3	298
Asian House Martin <i>Delichon dasypus</i>		33		33
Richard's Pipit <i>Anthus richardi</i>	13	10		23
Upland Pipit <i>Anthus sylvanus</i>		1		1

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1997

species	MAPS*	1975-1996	1997	total
Olive-backed Pipit <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	86	87	22	195
Pechora Pipit <i>Anthus gustavi</i>		3	1	4
Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>		1		1
Forest Wagtail <i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>		2		2
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>		74	1	75
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	6	50		56
White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	18	496	3	517
Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike <i>Coracina melaschistos</i>		2		2
Ashy Minivet <i>Pericrocotus divaricatus</i>		2		2
Collared Finchbill <i>Spizixos semitorques</i>		2		2
Red-whiskered Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	80	2117	246	2443
Chinese Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>	895	3359	344	4598
Brown-breasted Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus xanthorrhous</i>		1		1
Sooty-headed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus aurigaster</i>	95	29	2	126
Chestnut Bulbul <i>Hypsipetes castanonotus</i>	2			2
Black Bulbul <i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>	1			1
White-tailed Robin <i>Cinclidium leucurum</i>		1		1
Rufous-tailed Robin <i>Luscinia sibilans</i>	6	147	21	174
Siberian Rubythroat <i>Luscinia calliope</i>	95	310	45	450
Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>	9	37		46
Siberian Blue Robin <i>Luscinia cyane</i>		11	3	14
Red-flanked Bluetail <i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	30	489	109	628
Daurian Redstart <i>Phoenicurus auroreus</i>	16	22	5	43
Common Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	48	98	10	156
Grey Bushchat <i>Saxicola ferrea</i>	1	3		4
Pied Bushchat <i>Saxicola caprata</i>		1		1
Oriental Magpie Robin <i>Copsychus saularis</i>	2	117	15	134
White-throated Rock Thrush <i>Monticola gularis</i>		1		1
Blue Whistling Thrush <i>Myiophonus caeruleus</i>	11	24	14	49
Orange-headed Thrush <i>Zoothera citrina</i>		1		1
Scaly Thrush <i>Zoothera dauma</i>	2	13	2	17
Siberian Thrush <i>Zoothera sibirica</i>		4	2	6
Japanese Thrush <i>Turdus cardis</i>	53	77	33	163
Common Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	1	10		11
Brown-headed Thrush <i>Turdus chrysolaus</i>	1	1		2
Grey-backed Thrush <i>Turdus hortulorum</i>	209	326	51	586
Pale Thrush <i>Turdus pallidus</i>	15	9	4	28
Eyebrowed Thrush <i>Turdus obscurus</i>		31	7	38
Dusky Thrush <i>Turdus naumanni</i>	3	1	1	5
Asian Stubtail Warbler <i>Urosphena squameiceps</i>	1	36	16	53
Pale-footed Bush Warbler <i>Cettia pallidipes</i>		6		6
Japanese Bush Warbler <i>Cettia diphone</i>	19	473	64	556
Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler <i>Cettia fortipes</i>		36	3	39

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1997

species	MAPS*	1975-1996	1997	total
Yellowish-bellied Bush Warb. <i>C. acanthizoides</i>		2		2
Russet Bush Warbler <i>Bradypterus seebohi</i>		7	2	9
Brown Bush Warbler <i>Bradypterus luteoventris</i>		3		3
Zitting Cisticola <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		29	7	36
Bright-capped Cisticola <i>Cisticola exilis</i>		5		5
Plain Prinia <i>Prinia inornata</i>	12	775	24	811
Yellow-bellied Prinia <i>Prinia flaviventris</i>	39	1444	78	1561
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella certhiola</i>	5	50	15	70
Middendorff's G. Warbler <i>Locustella ochotensis</i>		3		3
Styan's Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella pleskei</i>	8	21		29
Lanceolated Warbler <i>Locustella lanceolata</i>		8	6	14
Black-browed Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus bistrigiceps</i>	21	477	36	534
Manchurian Reed Warbler <i>A. tangorum</i>		4		4
Blunt-winged Warbler <i>Acrocephalus concinens</i>		1		1
Paddyfield Warbler <i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>		2	1	3
Blyth's Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>		4	1	5
Oriental Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus orientalis</i>	251	2292	112	2655
Thick-billed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus aedon</i>		22	1	23
Golden-spectacled Warbler <i>Seicercus burkii</i>		5		5
Large Grass Warbler <i>Graminicola bengalensis</i>		3		3
Common Tailorbird <i>Orithotomus sutorius</i>	11	408	68	487
Sulphur-breasted Warbler <i>Phylloscopus ricketti</i>			1	1
Chinese Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sichuanensis</i>			1	1
Hume's Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus humei</i>			1	1
Blyth's Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus reguloides</i>		1		1
Eastern Crowned Warbler <i>Phylloscopus coronatus</i>		14	1	15
Pale-legged Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus tenellipes</i>		119	49	168
Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>		11	1	12
Arctic Warbler <i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	12	279	45	336
Pallas's Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	5	156	26	187
Yellow-browed Warbler <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	19	337	95	491
Radde's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>		17	7	24
Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	104	1744	141	1989
Yellow-streaked Warbler <i>Phylloscopus armandii</i>		4	2	6
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		3		3
Hainan Blue Flycatcher <i>Cyornis hainana</i>		4	1	5
Blue-and-white Flycatcher <i>Cyanoptila cyanomelana</i>		13	2	15
Verditer Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa thalassina</i>		2		2
Dark-sided Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>		1	1	2
Grey-streaked Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa griseisticta</i>		2		2
Asian Brown Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa latirostris</i>	6	54	4	64
Red-breasted Flycatcher <i>Ficedula parva</i>	1	19	3	23
Mugimaki Flycatcher <i>Ficedula mugimaki</i>		97	18	115

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1997

species	MAPS*	1975-1996	1997	total
Yellow-rumped Flycatcher <i>Ficedula zanthopygia</i>	2	97	5	104
Narcissus Flycatcher <i>Ficedula narcissina</i>		2	1	3
Grey-headed Flycatcher <i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	1			1
Asian Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>		5	1	6
Japanese Paradise Flycatcher <i>T. atrocaudata</i>		10		10
Black-naped Monarch <i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	1	8	3	12
Rufous-capped Babbler <i>Stachyris ruficeps</i>		1		1
Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler <i>Pomatorhinus ruficollis</i>		1	2	3
Masked Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax perspicillatus</i>	18	34	7	59
Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax pectoralis</i>		44	2	46
Black-throated Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax chinensis</i>	2		4	6
Hwamei <i>Garrulax canorus</i>	**7	161	31	199
White-browed Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax sannio</i>		2		2
Red-winged Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax formosus</i>		1		1
Elliot's Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax ellioti</i>			1	1
Red-billed Leiothrix <i>Leiothrix lutea</i>	**9	163	18	190
Silver-eared Mesia <i>Leiothrix argentea</i>		96	6	102
Blue-winged Minla <i>Minla cyanouroptera</i>		1		1
Grey-headed Parrotbill <i>Paradoxornis gularis</i>		1		1
Vinous-throated Parrotbill <i>Paradoxornis webbiana</i>		1		1
Black-headed Sibia <i>Heterophasia melanoleuca</i>		1		1
Striated Yuhina <i>Yuhina castaneiceps</i>		4		4
Black-throated Tit <i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>		1		1
Yellow-cheeked Tit <i>Parus spilonotus</i>		1		1
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	34	136	16	186
Chinese Penduline Tit <i>Remiz pendulinus</i>		258	42	300
Fork-tailed Sunbird <i>Aethopyga christinae</i>	1	97	30	128
Buff-bellied Flowerpecker <i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>		26	3	29
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker <i>D. cruentatum</i>		7	1	8
Plain Flowerpecker <i>Dicaeum concolor</i>		2	3	5
Chestnut-flanked White-eye <i>Zosterops erythropleura</i>		23	4	27
Japanese White-eye <i>Zosterops japonica</i>	217	6920	848	8035
Black-naped Oriole <i>Oriolus chinensis</i>		2		2
Tiger Shrike <i>Lanius tigrinus</i>		2		2
(Bull-headed Shrike <i>Lanius bucephalus</i> ***)	1			1
Brown Shrike <i>Lanius cristatus</i>	6	42	8	56
Long-tailed Shrike <i>Lanius schach</i>	39	62	5	106
Black Drongo <i>Dicrurus macrocerus</i>		7		7
Hair-crested Drongo <i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>	1	7	2	10
Eurasian Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		1		1
Blue Magpie <i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>	4	7		11
Common Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	**2	4		6
Red-billed Starling <i>Sturnus sericeus</i>		38	3	41

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1997

species	MAPS*	1975-1996	1997	total
Purple-backed Starling <i>Sturnus sturninus</i>		1		1
White-shouldered Starling <i>Sturnus sinensis</i>	2	15		17
White-cheeked Starling <i>Sturnus cineraceus</i>		4	2	6
Black-collared Starling <i>Sturnus nigricollis</i>		24		24
Crested Myna <i>Acridotheres cristatellus</i>	2	17		19
White-vented Myna <i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>		2		2
Ruddy Sparrow <i>Passer rutilans</i>		2		2
Eurasian Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	**92	568		660
Baya Weaver <i>Ploceus philippinus</i>		11	3	14
White-rumped Munia <i>Lonchura striata</i>		110	58	168
Scaly-breasted Munia <i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	34	746	27	807
Chestnut Munia <i>Lonchura malacca</i>	1	5	1	7
White-headed Munia <i>Lonchura maja</i>		1		1
Red Avadavat <i>Amandava amandava</i>	5	9		14
Yellow-fronted Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i>		9		9
Grey-capped Greenfinch <i>Carduelis sinica</i>	1			1
Eurasian Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i>		1		1
European Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		1		1
Common Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	12	10	2	24
Yellow-billed Grosbeak <i>Coccothraustes migratorius</i>	9			9
Black-faced Bunting <i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>	219	1216	49	1484
Japanese Yellow Bunting <i>Emberiza sulphurata</i>		9		9
Chestnut-eared Bunting <i>Emberiza fucata</i>	1	4	1	6
Yellow-browed Bunting <i>Emberiza chrysophrys</i>		2		2
Tristram's Bunting <i>Emberiza tristrami</i>	4	65	15	84
Little Bunting <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	2	263	14	279
Chestnut Bunting <i>Emberiza rutila</i>		164	38	202
Yellow-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza aureola</i>	28	51	7	86
Common Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		10		10
Pallas's Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza pallasi</i>		2		2
Japanese Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza yessoensis</i>		1		1
Black-headed Bunting <i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>		1		1
Crested Bunting <i>Melophus lathami</i>		3		3
Total	3,191	37,764	3,198	44,153

* The Migratory Animals Pathological Survey (MAPS) programme ran from 1964 to 1971. Ringing was carried out in Hong Kong between 1965 and 1968. Details of MAPS birds are from McClure and Leclavet (1972) and from F.O.P. Hechtel's records. In the few cases where a discrepancy exists, the higher figure has been taken.

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

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

Table 2. Overseas movements of ringed birds reported during 1997

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

DR44095 ringed: 22 April 1985, Mai Po, HK
 recovered: 26 May 1990, Khampa, Vilyuyskiy,
 Central Siberia, Russia
 63°44'N 122°50'E, Shot
 distance: 4,631km N

Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*

VE52064 ringed: 5 April 1990, Mai Po, HK
 controlled: 11 May 1997, Sugao Pond, Mitsukaido City, Ibaraki
 Prefecture, Japan
 35°57'N 139°56'E
 distance: c. 3,000km NE

Table 3. Sightings during 1997 of waders marked with leg flags

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

yellow: 1 April (1)

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*

yellow: 2 April (1)

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*

orange: 23 April (1), 4 May (1), 11 May (1)
 yellow: 1 April (1), 23 April (1)

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

orange: 23 March (1), 28 March (2), 30 March (1), 31 March (4),
 1 April (3), 8 April (2), 10 April (1), 11 April (1), 13 April (1),
 22 April (1), 23 April (2), 26 April (2), 27 April (1),
 28 April (1), 30 April (1)
 yellow: 8 April (1), 11 April (1), 12 April (1), 13 April (2), 23 April (1),
 26 April (1), 28 April (1)

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

yellow: 20 April (1)

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

yellow: 23 April (1)

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

yellow: 11 April (1), 26 April (1), 28 April (1)
 orange: 11 April (1)

Table 4. Selected recaptures of known migrants in 1997

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*

ES0158 ringed: 29 June 1996
 recaptured: 16 August 1997 (Mai Po)

This is the first record of a between-season recapture of this species.

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandelianus*

DA74775 ringed: 27 April 1996 (KARC)
 recaptured: 23 May 1996 (KARC); 8 April (KFBG),
 9 June 1997 (KARC)

This is the first record of a between season recapture of this species. The two ringing sites are on the same hillside, separated by about 200m in elevation, KARC being the lower site.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

J161690 ringed: 4 February 1995
 found dead: 8 January 1997 (KARC)

The bird was long dead when found - possibly a road kill.

Rufous-tailed Robin *Luscinia sibilans*

J161511 ringed: 1 January 1994
 recaptured: 22 January, 20 March 1994; 17 November, 6
 December 1996; 11 December 1997 (KARC)
 J070822 ringed: 19 December 1995
 recaptured: 18 January, 11 December 1997 (KARC)

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

There were seven recaptures, the oldest being:

VK09680 ringed: 8 January 1994
 recaptured: 3 March 1996; 1 February 1997 (Mai Po)

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

J161673 ringed: 7 January 1995
 recaptured: 8 January 1997 (KARC)

Over six hundred of these birds have been ringed but this is only the second between-season recapture. It is notable that most are caught on autumn passage, whereas this bird presumably over-winters in Hong Kong. The previous recapture was also a wintering bird (Melville and Leven 1998).

Japanese Thrush *Turdus cardis*

RW19045 ringed: 24 November 1996
 recaptured: 15 December 1996; 14 December 1997 (KFBG)

This is our first between season recapture for this species, and only the third bird to be recaptured on any occasion. Japanese Thrushes are rarely recorded at KFBG or KARC except during November and December.

Japanese Bush Warbler *Cettia diphone*

There were six recaptures, the oldest being:

H698587 ringed: 44 April 1994
 recaptured: 28 December 1997 (Mai Po)

Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes*

J070235 ringed: 11 November 1995 (KARC)
 recaptured: 27 January (KARC), 3 February 1996 (KARC);
 7 December 1997 (KFBG)
 J070424 ringed: 3 December 1995
 recaptured: 8 January 1997 (KARC)

It is of interest that the first of these birds returned to the same general location in successive winters, but to a site a few hundred metres uphill in the second winter.

Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

J070852 ringed: 28 January 1996
 recaptured: 19 January 1997

This bird is noteworthy in that few Black-browed Reed Warblers over-winter in Hong Kong.

Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*

There were 5 recaptures, the oldest being:

VK09468 ringed: 25 April 1993
 recaptured: 6 April 1997 (Mai Po)

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

There were three recaptures, the oldest being:

0Y7175 ringed: 27 January 1996
 recaptured: 8 February 1997 (KARC)

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

There were three recaptures, the oldest being:

9S0849 ringed: 23 December 1995
 recaptured: 4 February 1996; 28 December 1997 (Mai Po)

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

There were 13 recaptures, the oldest being:

0S8365 ringed: 6 March 1993
 recaptured: 27 September, 30 October 1997 (Mai Po)

The dates when this bird has been caught and the lack of other records suggest that this is a passage bird which winters further south. Most other recapture records relate to birds which over winter in Hong Kong.

Chinese Penduline Tit *Remiz consobrinus*

J070881	ringed:	25 February 1996
	recaptured:	29 November 1997
J070992	ringed:	9 March 1997
	recaptured:	21 December 1997 (Mai Po)

These are our second and third recaptures of this species. The first was ringed on 21 March 1992 and recaptured on the same date in 1993 suggesting that it was a passage migrant, whereas the two birds recaptured in 1997 may have been wintering.

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*

VK09688	ringed:	20 March 1994
	recaptured:	29 June 1997 (Mai Po)

This bird was aged as a first summer when ringed, being in the final stages of remige moult.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

There were eight recaptures, the oldest being a bird of the race *sordida*:

J161531	ringed:	26 February 1994
	recaptured:	20 March 1994; 25 November, 1 December, 26 December 1995; 14 March 1996; 26 January 1997 (KARC)

Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami*

J070584	ringed:	2 December 1996
	recaptured:	15 and 21 December 1996; 19 November 1997 (KFBG)

Table 5. Longevity record for Hong Kong resident birds

During the year there was only one record which exceeded previously published records.

Hwamei *Garrulax canorus*

RA05332	ringed:	11 November 1989
	recaptured:	19 April 1997 (KARC) (89 months)

本年度環志的雀鳥有 3,198 隻，品種數目達 122。環志工作集中於米埔自然保護區、嘉道理農場和香港大學嘉道理農業研究中心。以個別品種來說，最突出的有香港首次錄得的四川柳鶯；另外，稻田葦鶯和休氏黃眉

柳鶯是本港第三個記錄；布氏葦鶯為本港第五個記錄。旗志記錄方面亦頗為理想，一隻在澳洲西部旗志的斑尾塍鵒首次在香港出現的。此外，本港環志的雀鳥屢有再次網獲的記錄，根據網獲日期可以推算出雀鳥壽命（詳見內文）。

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PACIFIC LOON: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

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On 19 February 1997 I was carrying out boat surveys for Chinese White Dolphins *Sousa chinensis* in the area north of Chek Lap Kok. At about 1130h about two km. southeast of Lung Kwu Chau, I noticed a large dark bird sitting on the sea, some 400-500m away. My initial reaction was that it was merely a Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* which is regular in the area, although rarely are they seen sitting on the water. However, I suddenly thought that it might be a winter-plumaged loon *Gavia* sp., and, whilst trying not to panic, I asked my colleague Gill Braulik to have the boat stopped. It quickly transpired that it was in fact a diver, but the question was which one, especially as none were on the Hong Kong list!

The boat captain, directed by GB, managed to get very close to the bird, although not surprisingly it kept diving. At one stage, the bird surfaced about 25m. away from the boat. We watched the bird for about 15 minutes, and then continued the dolphin surveys. During the period of observation, I concentrated on taking photographs of the bird, there being no other bird watchers on board. I used two rolls of 36-exposure film, two of which are shown in plates 18 and 19, and used them as the basis for the following description.

Size and structure A large seabird, superficially similar to a Great Cormorant. Body long and flat, with the centre of the back not much higher than the rear of the body, giving the effect of being low in the water. Neck long but very thick, which possibly made it appear somewhat short. Head rather slender, with a gently-rounded crown. Bill grey, long and very pointed, with both mandibles tapering evenly to a fine point. There was an obvious gape line extending almost as far back as the eye. The feet were set well back at the rear of the body.

Plumage Basically black above and white below. The forecrown and the rest of the head above the eye, the back and sides of the neck, mantle, closed wing and entire flanks were a very dark matt black-brown. When viewed from behind however the neck was conspicuously pale grey with fine dark streaking. The mantle showed small pale spots and a small area of black feathering that had at least one large white square within it, indicating the start of moult into summer plumage. The flanks looked uniformly blackish at all times; as this feature was known to be of significance, special attention was paid to it. The area below the eye, the throat and the breast were white except for a small dusky line that went from the base of the ear coverts to under the chin. The border between the white and black on the sides of the neck was very crisp and straight, although it was slightly diffuse on the lower breast.

Behaviour At all times the bird remained on the water, either swimming or diving in response to the boat. On about three occasions, it uttered a loud *gwou* before diving. It also sat very upright flapping its wings, which were clearly very pointed. It would dive for up to 20 seconds and reappear up to 100m. away.

Given sufficient views juvenile and adult winter loons are readily separable on the basis of the distinct pale scalloping to the mantle and scapular of juvenile birds formed by pale tips to these feathers. This bird lacked these and was thus an adult that had just started moult into summer plumage.

In winter plumage only Pacific *G. pacifica* and Black-throated Loons *G. arctica* show the combination of blackish upperparts, neck sides and flanks, a rounded head and a grey bill with both mandibles tapering to a fine point. Field separation of Pacific and Black-throated Loon has been covered in detail by Birch and Lee (1995, 1997), and the key features in winter plumage are as follows.

- **Flanks** The flanks of Pacific Loon are entirely dark, lacking the conspicuous white rear flank patch of Black-throated Loon. This is considered the best field mark, and is obvious over considerable distances (pers. obs. in South Korea).
- **Vent-strap** Most Pacific Loons show a distinct dark line across the base of the undertail coverts, which is very rarely shown by Black-throated Loon. The undertail coverts were not seen on the Hong Kong bird.
- **Chin-strap** Pacific Loons, especially winter-plumaged adults, frequently show well-defined narrow dark lines extending down from the ear-coverts to join under the chin. While Black-throated Loon may show an indistinct chin-strap, it is never as well marked as in Pacific Loon. Note that Pacific Loon may lack this feature.
- **Nape** Pacific Loon may show a markedly pale nape patch that contrasts with the rest of the head and neck. This feature is not as prominent on Black-throated Loon.
- **Head pattern** Black-throated Loon shows a cleaner and more well-defined contrast between the dark head and nape and white throat than Pacific Loon.
- **Structure** While not necessarily of use when dealing with lone birds, Pacific Loon tends to have both shorter bill and neck and a more smoothly-rounded head shape.

The Hong Kong bird can be safely identified as a Pacific Loon due to a combination of all-dark flanks, a conspicuous chin-strap and a pale nape patch. Accordingly it has been accepted as the first record for Hong Kong and placed in Category A of the Hong Kong List.

Although previously treated as a race of Black-throated Loon, Pacific Loon is widely treated as a monotypic species (e.g. Howard and Moore 1994). Pacific and Black-throated Loons have been found breeding sympatrically in eastern Siberia and western Alaska, sometimes even on the same pond (Birch and Lee 1997).

The status of both Pacific Loon and Black-throated Loon within the Pacific region has long been confused by the taxonomic treatment of the two, and the long-held belief that the two were inseparable in winter plumage (e.g. Massey *et al.* 1990). Brazil (1991) considers Pacific Loon to be a fairly common winter visitor to Japan. Previous records in China of Pacific Loon are seemingly few, coming only from Shandong (de Schauensee 1984, Cheng 1987). Thus, this is the first record of the species for southern China, and the first record for the Oriental Region. This record coincided with the first Little Gull *Larus minutus* for Hong Kong and South China only five days later (Leader 1999b).

一九九七年二月十九日，在龍鼓洲東南約二公里的海面，Paul J. Leader 先生發現一隻太平洋潛鳥 *Gavia pacifica*。根據拍下的相片，此鳥的背羽及三級飛羽在羽尖的部份缺少了幼鳥才有的淺色環邊，因而斷定牠是一隻成鳥。和外型相近的黑喉潛鳥 *G. arctica* 比較，這鳥腦部均為深色（黑喉潛鳥腦部明顯是白色的），尾下覆羽有一條明顯的深色紋：一條深色而清楚的幼線從耳羽下方伸延至頸部以下，形成一類帶（黑喉潛鳥在這方面則不甚明顯）；頭和枕部與頸的顏色差別較少（黑喉潛鳥頭和枕顏色則較深，有白喉，色澤分明）。根據以上區別，這鳥無疑是一隻太平洋潛鳥。這個發現已確認為香港首個記錄，並列入 A 類。文獻顯示，這次記錄更是中國南部以至東洋界的首個記錄。

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18 Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica*
Hong Kong, 19 February 1997

P.J. Leader



19 Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica*
Hong Kong, 19 February 1997

P.J. Leader

Paul J. Leader

Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, G.P.O. Box 12460, Hong Kong

LITTLE GULL: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader

While watching gulls from the Boardwalk Hide at Mai Po on 23 February 1997, I found a first-winter Little Gull *Larus minutus*. The bird, which was asleep when located, was seen in the Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus* flock during 1210-1340h, down to a range of 200m. It was seen by numerous other observers, although only G.J. Carey submitted supporting notes; these have been incorporated in the description that follows.

Size and structure A tiny, distinctly round-headed gull, approximately 80% of the length of nearby Black-headed Gulls, with the top of the head only reaching the mantle of the Black-headed Gulls. It was considered to have a body size approximately 60% of the nearby Saunders's Gulls *L. saundersi*. The bill was short, fine and rather pointed.

Plumage The head was largely white with indistinct darker areas in front of and behind the eye, and dusky-grey rear crown and nape, the latter slightly paler in the centre. There was also a bold neatly defined ear-covert mark that was about twice the size of the eye. The mantle was the same colour grey as that of Black-headed Gull. The closed wing showed a matt black wedge from the bend of the wing to the primaries. In flight, the outer primaries were matt black and there was a matt black bar across the coverts. The black areas contrasted with the rest of the upperparts, which were pale grey, to form a conspicuous blackish W across the upperwing. The tertials were also dark with a narrow pale fringe. The underwing was a uniform dusky-grey. The underparts were white except for a faint greyish smudge at the sides of the breast extending up to the mantle. The tail was white with a narrow black terminal band. The eye was dark, as were the legs which were also thin and short; the bill was all black.

The combination of small size, dark cap, and striking W pattern across the wings makes identification of this bird straightforward (Grant 1986). Among Palearctic gulls, only Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* and Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea* show a similar upperwing pattern in first-winter plumage. Both are easily eliminated: Black-legged Kittiwake is larger than Black-headed Gull and first-winter Ross's Gull lacks a dark cap.

Little Gull is regarded by Cheng (1987) as very rare in China, breeding in Nei Mongol Autonomous Region and migrating through Xinjiang, Hebei and Jiangsu; de Schauensee (1984) states that the species is a straggler to North China in winter to Heilongjiang, Jiangsu and west Xinjiang. There are in fact very few published records from China. Hemmingsen and Guidal (1968) include an immature at Beidaihe, Hebei during 8-9 October 1943, and refer to only one other record in China: the remains of one, and a party of about 30 in the region of the lower Yangtze on 6 October 1921. More recent records come mainly from Beidaihe: 9 May 1992 (M.D. Williams *in litt.*), 29-30 September

1992 (Bradshaw and Rowlands 1992), 24 October 1993 (G.J. Carey *in litt.*), 3 May 1994 (M.D. Williams *in litt.*), early August 1994 (Dierschke and Heintzenberg 1994) and 3-6 October 1996 (Gerntholtz and Knoll 1996). In addition, one was Xianghai, Jilin on 23 May 1993 (Holt 1995). Thus, this is the first published record for China south of the Yangtze River, and its occurrence coincided with the first record of Pacific Diver *Gavia pacifica* in southern China five days earlier (Leader 1999a).

Brazil (1991) refers only to four Japanese records of Little Gull, two in June and one each in August and April, contra the suggestions of Harrison (1983) and de Schauensee (1984) that the Siberian population winters in the Sea of Japan. This record has been accepted as the first record in Hong Kong, and the species placed in Category A of the Hong Kong List.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Geoff Carey and Martin Williams for providing other records of Little Gull in China.

一九九七年二月廿三日，在米埔自然保護區浮橋觀鳥亭外面的泥灘，Paul J. Leader 先生發現一隻小鷗 *Larus minutus*。據觀察所得，這鳥比紅嘴鷗 *L. ridibundus* 小；飛翔時；翼上覆羽有一條深色「W」狀粗紋，因此判定是一隻首次渡冬的小鷗，經評審後確認為香港首個記錄，並列入A類。小鷗在中國十分罕見，這次是中國長江以南的首次記錄。

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CHINESE LEAF WARBLER: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Michael R. Leven

At 0805h on 4 March 1997 I found a leaf warbler, *Phylloscopus* sp., in the top panel of a mist net at my regular trapping site in shrubland at Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden. Silhouetted in the early morning light, the plumage features of the bird were not very clear and I assumed that it was a Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. Accordingly, I placed it in a bag for future processing without much thought. However, when I removed the bird from the bag a few minutes later I was immediately struck by the fact that the central crown stripe was more marked than any Yellow-browed Warbler I had handled before, but the crown pattern was much less well-defined than that of a Pallas's Leaf Warbler *P. proregulus*. I quickly confirmed that the bird had a dull creamy yellow rump and I realised that I had trapped one of a number of pale-rumped *Phylloscopus* warblers that have complex head patterns (here termed the *proregulus* group), none of which had previously been recorded in Hong Kong. The following description was taken.

Size A very small *Phylloscopus* warbler; similar in size to a small Pallas's Leaf Warbler, clearly a member of the *proregulus* group.

Head The head showed a weak and poorly-defined cream central crown stripe, especially poorly-defined on the forecrown, though broadening and better defined on the hindcrown. The sides of the crown were a dull, very dark brownish-green, slightly darker immediately above the supercilium (thus giving the



20 Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus sichuanensis*
Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, 4 March 1997

Gary Ades



21 Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus sichuanensis*
Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, 4 March 1997

Gary Ades



22 Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus sichuanensis*
Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, 4 March 1997

Gary Ades



23 Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus sichuanensis*
Wolong, Sichuan Province, June 1996

P.J. Leader

appearance of a lateral crown stripe). There was a broad cream supercilium, slightly more yellow in front of the eye, which narrowed slightly and became rather diffuse towards the bill. In contrast to Pallas's Leaf Warbler the supercilium did not meet the central crown stripe above the bill. The eye-stripe was very dark brownish green, very weak in front of the eye but broadening behind. There was an incomplete whitish eye-ring. The cheeks and ear coverts were rather pale greyish-cream with darker greenish mottling.

Body and wings The upperparts were a dull olive-green, with a greyish cast especially on the mantle, but a brighter olive green on the remiges and rectrices. There were well-defined cream wing bars at the tips of the median and greater coverts, the greater covert bar being longer and broader (as is typical of the *proregulus* group). The greater coverts were slightly darker than the rest of the contour feathers. The two shorter tertials (but not the longest) had cream tips. The rump was pale creamy-yellow. The underparts were dull greyish-white, and especially grey on the breast which contrasted with a whiter throat and belly, thus forming a diffuse and ill-defined breast band.

Bare parts The upper mandible was very dark horn, almost black, while the lower mandible was distally dark with the basal third orange-yellow. The legs and feet were dull orange-brown.

Biometrics

Wing length (maximum chord): 48mm
Tail length: 34mm

Wing formula (outermost primary as P1)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
+7*	-8	-2	WP	WP	-1	-4.5	-5.5	-6	-8

*from longest primary covert

Emarginations on P3456. No visible fat. Weight: 4.9g. Age 5 (i.e. second calendar year) based on the relatively pointed rectrices.

The bird was then ringed, photographed by Gary Ades, and released. It was not heard to call and flew into thick cover on release and was not seen again.



24 Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 16 November 1991

P.J. Leader

Identification

In view of the bird's overall dullness and very small size, my initial view was that this bird was probably a Lemon-rumped Warbler *P. chloronotus*. However, being aware of recent developments in the taxonomic and morphological distinctions within the *proregulus* group, I sent details of the bird to Dr. Per Alström. He replied to the effect that the bird was not a Lemon-rumped Warbler, but was a Chinese Leaf Warbler *P. sichuanensis*. I had considered the possibility of the bird being this species but, much to my chagrin, had believed that it was too small. (It transpired that overall size, and even wing length, are generally not helpful in separation of different species in the *proregulus* group.)



25 Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*
Sichuan Province, June 1990

U. Olsson



26 Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*
Sichuan Province, June 1990

U. Olsson



27 Gansu Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus kansuensis*
Qinghai Province, June 1993

U. Olsson

Per Alström kindly sent me a copy of the original paper describing Chinese Leaf Warbler (Alström *et al.* 1992), together with advance details of a paper concerning a further potential confusion species, Gansu Leaf Warbler *P. kansuensis*, which was described later that year (Alström *et al.* 1997). With the benefit of this material, it is apparent that identification of Chinese Leaf Warbler in the hand is straightforward, albeit dependant upon a series of rather minor plumage features.

As is stated by Alström *et al.* (1992), the most obvious feature distinguishing Chinese Leaf Warbler from Lemon-rumped Warbler is the head pattern. In comparison with that species, Chinese Leaf Warbler shows relatively duller sides to the head, a weaker central crown stripe, especially anteriorly, and a less marked eye stripe.

Separation from Gansu Leaf Warbler is achieved by virtue of the fact that there are apparently no significant or diagnostic plumage features separating Gansu Leaf Warbler from Lemon-rumped Warbler which are 'essentially identical on plumage' (Alström *et al.* 1997).

On the basis of the foregoing, this record was accepted by the Hong Kong Bird Records Committee, and Chinese Leaf Warbler was admitted to Category A of the Hong Kong list.

Status and range

Chinese Leaf Warbler was described from birds trapped at Wolong Nature Reserve, Sichuan Province in June 1990, together with a specimen (originally labelled *Phylloscopus proregulus chloronotus*) in the Academia Sinica, Beijing

which had been collected in Shanxi Province in May 1962 (Alström *et al.* 1992). It has subsequently been observed in summer at a number of localities in Hebei Province, another locality in Shanxi Province, as well as three further localities in Sichuan Province (Alström *et al.* 1992). The breeding range thus appears to extend at least from west-central to north-eastern China. However, Alström *et al.* (1992) were unaware of any observations from potential wintering areas, or indeed of any birds apparently on migration, though it has since been observed annually as a spring passage migrant on the coast of Hebei Province (G.J. Carey pers. comm.). This observation from Hong Kong thus appears to be the first published record from a locality distant from the breeding areas.

During the period 1966-96, 161 Pallas's Warblers were trapped in Hong Kong (mostly during the 1990s), and as this record is the first for Hong Kong of any other taxon in the *proregulus* group, it is clear that Chinese Leaf Warbler does not occur in Hong Kong in large numbers. However, P.D. Round (*in litt.*) has advised that it now appears that Chinese Leaf Warbler is the most numerous taxon of the *proregulus* group in northern Thailand in winter. Presumably, it was previously confused with Lemon-rumped Warbler, which was formerly described as the most common taxon in the *proregulus* group in Thailand (Lekagul and Round 1991), or Gansu Leaf Warbler. It is not known where the latter taxon winters but it too is presumed to be a migrant (Alström *et al.* 1997).

It therefore appears likely that Chinese Leaf Warbler typically winters to the west of Hong Kong as does Lemon-rumped Warbler, and, presumably, Gansu Leaf Warbler. All three taxa might, therefore, occur in small numbers as winter visitors or passage migrants.

Identification of the *proregulus* group in Hong Kong

The brightness and clarity of the head pattern and the brightness of the rump should readily identify Pallas's Leaf Warbler, but it also has a more pointed wing. Thus, wing formula will separate most Pallas's Warblers from the other taxa in the *proregulus* group (Ticehurst 1938, Williamson 1962, Alström *et al.* 1997) Chinese Leaf Warbler is then separable, as is discussed above, from Lemon-rumped Warbler and Gansu Leaf Warbler by details examination of the head pattern. Finally, separation of Lemon-rumped and Gansu Leaf Warblers is dependant upon detailed examination of bare part colouration, especially that of the bill, which is more extensively pale on the lower mandible, at least in spring and summer, in Gansu Leaf Warbler than in Lemon-rumped Warbler (Alström *et al.* 1997). There are also differences in the wing formula of the two taxa (Ticehurst 1938, Alström *et al.* 1997) but, since there is complete overlap in the ranges of these (Alström *et al.* 1997), this can only be used as a supporting character with respect to a single bird.

As in the hand, the brightness and clarity of the head pattern and the brightness of the rump of Pallas's Leaf Warbler should separate this species from the other species in the group. In exceptional viewing conditions Chinese Leaf Warbler might then be identified by close examination of the head pattern.

However, it appears that there are, as yet, no diagnostic visual features for the separation of Lemon-rumped and Gansu Leaf Warblers in winter.

However, should a singing bird be observed (and *Phylloscopus* warblers do frequently sing whilst on spring passage) all forms should be readily separable (see Alström *et al.* 1992, Alström *et al.* 1997).

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork during which the Chinese Leaf Warbler was trapped was undertaken as a part of my research under the Department of Ecology and Biodiversity of Hong Kong University. Trapping was undertaken with the permission of Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Gardens. I would like to thank Gary Ades of Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Gardens for permission to include the photographs of the bird and Paul Leader for providing photographs of Pallas's Leaf Warbler, for stimulating discussion on the minutiae of *Phylloscopus* identification and for providing comments on the draft text. Finally, I am especially grateful to Dr. Per Alström for his elucidation of the identity of the bird and his generosity in providing copies of the papers concerning identification criteria of the *proregulus* group.

一九九七年三月四日，Michael R. Leven 先生在嘉道理農場網獲一隻四川柳鶯 *Phylloscopus sichuanensis*。這鳥容易與黃腰柳鶯 *P. proregulus* 及甘肅柳鶯 *P. kansuensis* 混淆。不過，在良好的觀察條件下，可用以下各項特徵將其區分：頭部方面，四川柳鶯的頭側比黃腰柳鶯較暗晦，頭中央的線較幼，尤以前部分為甚；過眼線不太鮮明。甘肅柳鶯的羽色和黃腰柳鶯差別不大。因此，和黃腰柳鶯羽色近似的柳鶯，可能是甘肅柳鶯。這個發現經評審為香港首次記錄，並列入 A 類。本文又討論了一四川柳鶯的發現歷史及分佈情況。

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THE STATUS OF GREATER PAINTED-SNIPE IN HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader

Introduction

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* is unusual among Charadriiformes in its sex-role reversal in social behaviour and polyandrous breeding strategy, where the female pairs successively with at least two, often three to four males each year. The male normally builds the nest, incubates the eggs and rears the young to fledging, typically unaided by the female. It is sexually dimorphic in terms of both plumage and size, with the females being larger and brighter (Cramp and Simmons 1983, del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). It is a poorly known species, and its behaviour is difficult to study as it is unobtrusive and skulking during the day and tends to be local and uncommon throughout its range (Cramp and Simmons 1983).

Greater Painted-snipe is one of the few wetland dependant bird species in Hong Kong that does not regularly occur within the Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site, and it is at risk due to loss of unprotected wetland habitat elsewhere in Hong Kong. The aim of this paper is to review the current status of Greater Painted-snipe in Hong Kong.

Distribution and habitat

The nominate form *R. b. benghalensis* breeds in Africa, Egypt, Middle East, Asia east to Japan, including southern China, Philippines and Indonesia. The race *R. b. australis* is confined to the eastern half of Australia (Cramp and Simmons 1983, del Hoyo *et al.* 1996).

In China, it is resident from Sichuan and Yunnan eastwards to the coast and Taiwan, and a summer visitor from Shaanxi to the southern part of Liaoning province (Cheng 1987). The Chinese population is the only one known to undertake regular migrations; the movements of all other populations are considered nomadic (Hayman *et al.* 1986). However, this may reflect the limited amount of work that has been carried out on the species, and it is likely that some African populations are regular intra-African migrants (Urban *et al.* 1986).

Greater Painted-snipe is entirely a wetland-dependant species that inhabits rice fields, freshwater lakes with grassy islets for nesting, overgrown mudflats and dam-lakes, damp agricultural land, swamps and marshes interspersed with fairly deep pools up to 30-50cm. deep, soft muddy areas and dense shrubbery and reed-beds (del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). In Japan it occurs and breeds in wet rice and lotus fields, reed beds, and marshes and ponds (Brazil 1991).

Status in Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong it was considered by Chalmers (1986) to be a passage migrant and winter visitor. The first record of proven breeding occurred in

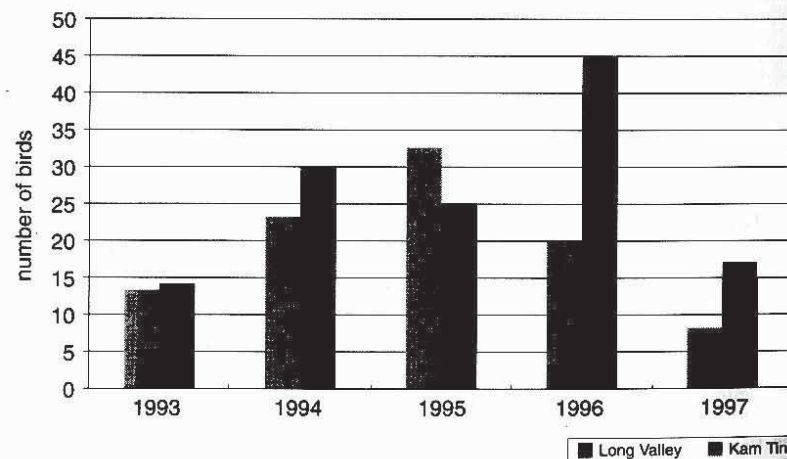
1988 (Chalmers 1989) and, since 1993, it has been recorded in high numbers at both Kam Tin and Long Valley, and now breeds annually. Prior to this, the species was considered to be declining in Hong Kong, although this may well have been due to a lack of observations of day time roost sites.

In Hong Kong it is dependent upon freshwater wetlands and is largely confined to wet agricultural areas with associated overgrown marshy areas, and grazed, seasonally wet, grassland. Although recorded breeding elsewhere within its range in habitats such as reedbeds from which it is absent in Hong Kong, this would appear to be due to its aversion to brackish water habitats. Not surprisingly, given the scarcity of freshwater habitat in Hong Kong, it has a very localised breeding distribution and is now confined to just two sites, Long Valley and Kam Tin. It has also occasionally bred in temporarily suitable areas elsewhere (see below). Records of non-breeding birds are almost exclusively from Kam Tin and Long Valley.

Observations at Kam Tin and Long Valley have shown that in autumn numbers of Greater Painted-snipe increase. Given that the species is a summer visitor to northern China (Cheng 1987), this is perhaps not unexpected. During 1993 to 1997 the only records away from these two sites concerned single birds at three sites on four dates, illustrating the high degree of importance of these sites to Greater Painted-snipe.

Kam Tin and Long Valley are both areas of active and inactive wet agricultural land. Long Valley is more actively farmed, but at both sites there are extensive areas of inactive agriculture characterised by dense aquatic vegetation. It is these areas that are favoured by Greater Painted-snipe, especially as daytime roost sites.

Figure 1. Peak count of Greater Painted-snipe per year at Long Valley and Kam Tin, Hong Kong 1993-97.





28 Grazed inactive agricultural land showing location of nest (bottom centre) shown in plate 30
Kam Tin, May 1998

P.J. Leader



29 Ungrazed inactive agricultural land favoured as a daytime roost site.
Kam Tin, September 1997

P.J. Leader

Greater Painted-snipe is very secretive during the breeding season and can be difficult to detect; however, during 1988-98 there were ten cases of proven breeding:

- 1988: a male with three juveniles at Lok Ma Chau on 4 July (Chalmers 1989).
- 1992: a pair with three juveniles at Tin Shui Wai on 9-23 August.
- 1993: a male with four juveniles at Long Valley on 8 July.
- 1996: an abandoned nest with four eggs at Kam Tin on 10 October, and a male giving a broken-wing distraction display at Long Valley on 16 May.
- 1997: a male at Kam Tin with four large juveniles on 2 April, and a different male with four very young chicks on 7 April; a long-predated nest was found there in October.
- 1998: two nests at Kam Tin, both with four eggs being incubated by males, in April and May.



30 Greater Painted-snipe nest
Kam Tin, May 1998

P.J. Leader

The 1992 breeding site at Tin Shui Wai was a filled-in fishpond that had extensive low aquatic vegetation and shallow water. It dried up in 1993 and became unsuitable for the species. The only site where breeding is regularly proven in Hong Kong is Kam Tin where a preliminary investigation in 1998 put the breeding population at approximately 10-15 birds. It is likely that breeding also occurs annually at Long Valley. It is not yet known whether the breeding population in Hong Kong is resident, or if it consists of summer visitors. In Hong Kong the usual clutch size would appear to be four, which is typical of the species elsewhere (Cramp and Simmons 1983, Roberts 1991, del Hoyo *et al.* 1996).

In areas where nesting density is low (e.g. southern Africa) the incidence of polyandry is probably lower, and in one study only monogamy was recorded (Cramp and Simmons 1983). Interestingly, only one of the breeding records in Hong Kong may have involved monogamy (there is a possibility that the female, having paired with previous males remained with the last), that of a pair with four young at Tin Shui Wai in 1992. This may be indicative of low-density breeding, possibly due to the temporary nature of the site. Similarly, there is no evidence of monogamy at either Kam Tin or Long Valley, suggesting a high-density breeding population exists with a typical polyandrous breeding system at these two sites. However, the sample size is small and this requires further study

In order to investigate the numbers involved and the population dynamics of Greater Painted-snipe at Kam Tin and Long Valley, systematic trapping for ringing was undertaken at both sites during 1996, and at Kam Tin only in 1997; limited trapping was carried out at Long Valley in 1994 and 1995. All trapping was carried out under a permit issued by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Methodology

Favoured roosting sites were visited two to four times per month at Long Valley between 1 September and 13 October 1996 (after which the site became too dry) and at Kam Tin from 28 September to 22 December 1996, and on five dates between 20 September and 16 November 1997. At each visit, standard mist nets were erected and the area walked to flush birds in to the nets. The birds were quickly extracted and processed. The birds were aged, sexed (where possible), and a number of measurements were taken, including

Figure 2. Cumulative number of Greater Painted-snipe trapped and total counted per visit at Kam Tin, Hong Kong, 28 September to 22 December 1996.

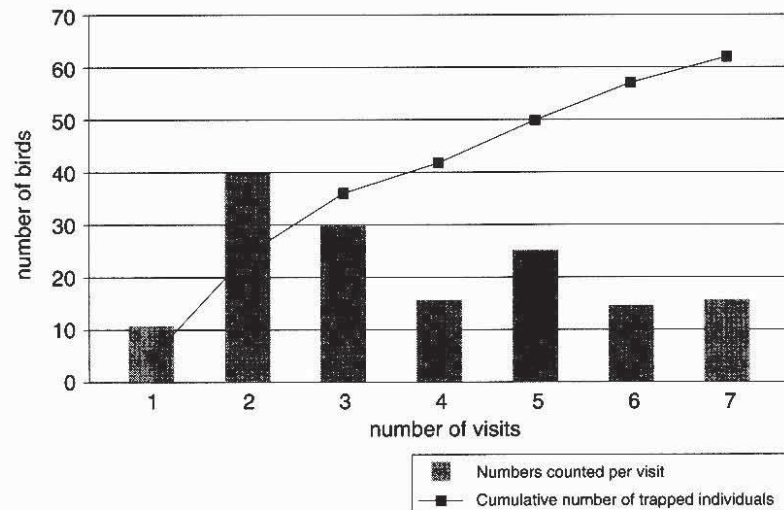


Figure 3. Cumulative number of Greater Painted-snipe trapped and total counted per visit at Long Valley, Hong Kong, 1 September to 13 October 1996.

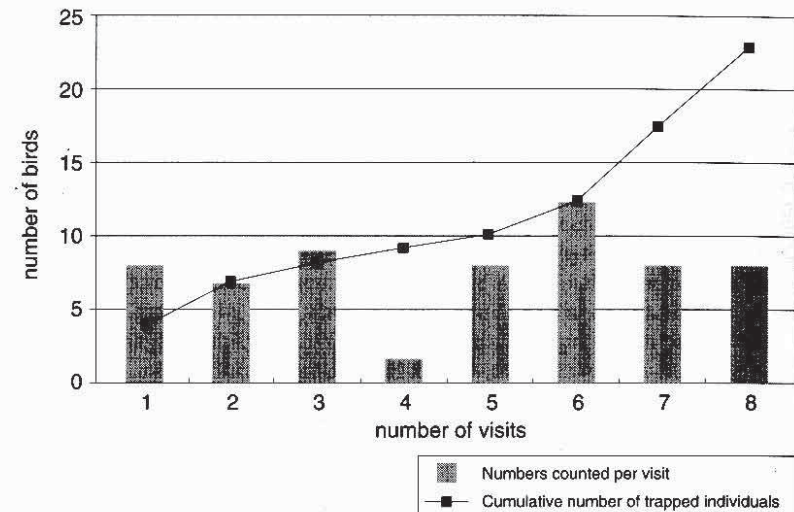


Figure 4. Cumulative number of Greater Painted-snipe trapped and total counted per visit at Kam Tin, Hong Kong, 20 September to 16 November 1997.

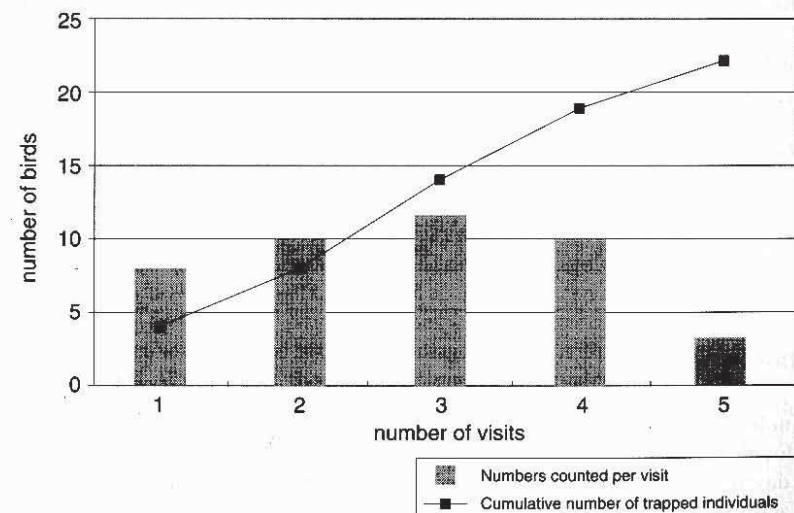
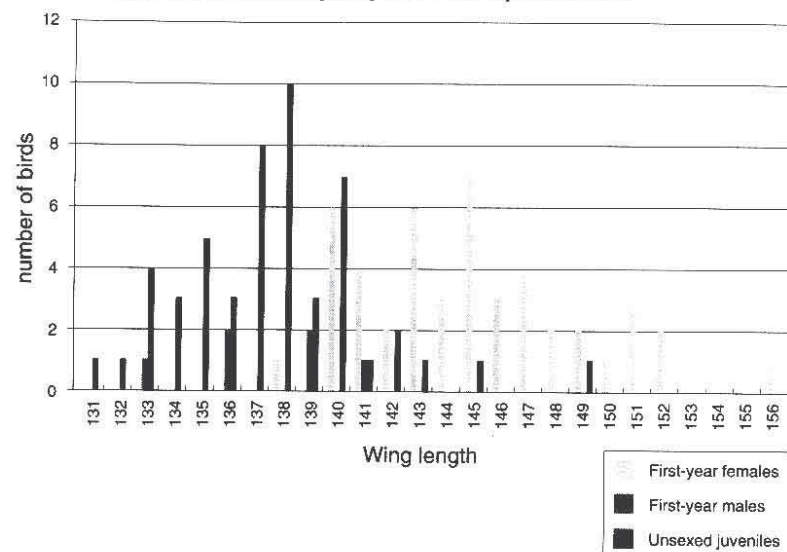


Figure 5. Distribution of wing lengths of 106 first-year Greater Painted-snipe trapped at Long Valley and Kam Tin, Hong Kong 1993-97. Retraps are excluded.



wing length, bill length, total head length, tarsus length, and weight. On each visit, the total number of birds present was also recorded.

Results

During 1996-97 a total of 102 Greater Painted-snipe were trapped, 80 at Kam Tin and 22 at Long Valley. Figures 2-5 and Table 1 present other aspects of the results graphically.

Table 1. Percentage of age/sex classes of Greater Painted-snipe trapped at Kam Tin and Long Valley, Hong Kong, 1996-97. Retraps are excluded.

Adult female	adult male	first-winter female	first-winter male	juvenile female	juvenile male	unsexed juvenile
3%	3%	38%	5%	11%	2%	38%

Discussion

The counts at Long Valley and Kam Tin during the period 1993-97 include the highest ever in Hong Kong; since 1958, no other site has held double-figure numbers of this species. The location of diurnal concentrations (daytime roosts) at both sites aided the assessment of numbers present and facilitated trapping. The peak counts at Long Valley and Kam Tin during this period were 33 and 45 respectively, both from small daytime roosts. Such concentrations would appear to be unusual as it is usually considered largely solitary (del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). Cramp and Simmons (1983) considered it generally solitary but that small flocks may form after breeding, including up to six in

Africa and 10-12 in India, but up to 25 in Australia. However, (Urban *et al.* 1986) state that in the non-breeding season it may form flocks of 3-15, sometimes 100 (Senegambia, February). In addition, an exceptional flock of 30 birds was reported in Myanmar by del Hoyo *et al.* (1996). In the Philippines, concentrations of up to 100 can occur at Candaba Marsh, Luzon (pers. obs.).

Figure 1 shows a general increase at both Long Valley and Kam Tin during 1993-96, but with a marked decline at both sites during 1997. This increase is considered to be almost entirely due to observer bias, following the discovery of day time roost sites at both sites. The recent decline may be due to deterioration of the roost sites; at Long Valley the daytime roost site became too dry, whereas the vegetation at the site of the Kam Tin daytime roost suffered from over-grazing by feral water buffalo, which had not been present on the roost site in previous years. Whether the birds were present at other suitable roost sites outside the general area is unknown. Observations in Hong Kong suggest that the ideal roost site should have water to a depth of 5-20cm. with emergent vegetation and limited or no grazing, and no human disturbance.

The number of birds trapped each year exceeded the peak count at both sites (Figures 2-4), indicating that the importance of these two sites for Greater Painted-snipe is greater than previously considered. At Kam Tin for example, in 1996 the highest count on a single visit was 45 (which was the highest count in Hong Kong since at least 1958), and a total of 63 birds were trapped during seven visits. Given that 45-60% of the birds present on any one visit were trapped, it is safe to assume that not all the Greater Painted-snipe present at Kam Tin in 1996 were trapped. It seems likely that the total number of birds present at Kam Tin during 1996 is several times higher than the peak count of 45.

There is some evidence of inter-site movements in Hong Kong: a bird that was originally trapped on 24 September 1996 was retrapped at Kam Tin on 14 October 1996, a movement of nine km. Published movements of Greater Painted-snipe are few: Marchant and Higgins (1993) refer to a movement of 11 km., and Cramp and Simmons (1983) note a 900 km ringing recovery in northern India.

Juveniles cannot be sexed on plumage features until post-juvenile moult commences. At this point, the brighter plumage of females makes them much easier to sex, whereas the new feathers on males are very similar to juvenile feathers. As such many more first-year females are detected; it also seems likely that many of the birds aged as juveniles are in fact first-winter males. The low percentage of adults trapped is of note; the reason for this is not known, but it may be a result of older birds being more difficult to trap.

The wing length range of Greater Painted-snipe trapped in Hong Kong was 131-156mm (n = 106). This suggests that on the basis of published biometrics (Table 2) the majority of the birds trapped in Hong Kong are females. However,

of the known males trapped most were outside of the range for male Greater Painted-snipe given in Table 2. This discrepancy is difficult to account for; Hayman *et al.* (1986) used maximum wing chord, the same technique used in Hong Kong, and although museum skins tend to shrink, in waders this is generally by 2% (Hayman *et al.* 1986), too small to result in the differences noted here.



31 Kam Tin, March 1998, same area as show in plate 29, but following bulldozing (see text)

P.J. Leader



32 Greater Painted-snipe, juvenile
Kam Tin, September 1997

P.J. Leader



33 Greater Painted-snipe, first-winter female
Long Valley, March 1999

P.J. Leader



34 Greater Painted-snipe, adult female
Kam Tin, October 1997

P.J. Leader

Table 2. Published wing length data (mm) of Greater Painted-snipe (nominate race).

Wing length of males (mm)	Wing length of females (mm)	Reference
125-135	135-150	Hayman <i>et al.</i> (1986)
125-135 (n 15)	136-143 (n 12)	Cramp and Simmons(1983)

Table 3. Summary of wing lengths (mm) of known sex Greater Painted-snipe (all ages) trapped in Hong Kong 1993-97.

	Range (mm)	Mean (mm)
All birds	131-156 (n 112)	135.8 (s.d. 5.17)
Males	133-149 (n 9)	138.8 (s.d. 4.57)
Females	138-156 (n 48)	145 (s.d. 4.0)

Hayman *et al.* (1986) also state that the Chinese population tends to average 3mm shorter in wing length than African birds. A review of the wing lengths of Greater Painted-snipe skins at the Institute of Zoology, Academia Sinica, Beijing, showed that while the overall range of measurements was similar to that published, the overlap zone between males and females was much greater (Table 4).

Table 4. Wing lengths (mm) of male and female Greater Painted-snipe skins at the Institute of Zoology, Academia Sinica, Beijing.

	Range (mm)	Mean (mm)
All birds	124-145 (n 42)	135.8 (s.d. 5.4)
Males	124-140 (n 24)	132.2 (s.d. 3.6)
Females	136-145 (n 18)	140.8 (s.d. 2.9)

It is notable that the measurements of birds trapped in Hong Kong are larger than those in Table 4. The large difference of 5.2mm in the mean of all birds trapped in Hong Kong and the museum specimens at Academia Sinica is difficult to explain, but may be due to a combination of shrinkage and the fact that, for a wader, Greater Painted-snipe have very rounded wings that, once dry, are difficult to measure using the maximum wing chord technique which involves the straightening and flattening of the primaries.

Of the many unsexed juveniles trapped in Hong Kong, most were at the lower end of the range (Table 1); it is likely that most of these were males.

Habitat loss in Hong Kong

Both Kam Tin and Long Valley are at risk due to development. Kam Tin, already much reduced in size due to the Kam Tin Main Drainage Channel, will be further affected by works related to West Rail, and the Kam Tin bypass. Long Valley will soon be affected by Sheung Shui Main Drainage Channel, and is at risk due to the suitability of the area for future development.

A further problem is the fact that both are zoned as agricultural areas which means that the ecological function of the area has no recognition. The

reality of this zoning was illustrated in early 1998 when the favoured daytime roost site at Kam Tin (an area of abandoned farmland) was bulldozed and drained. It is important that the ecological value of both active and abandoned wet agricultural areas (which are effectively wetlands) be recognised and legally protected. Without such protection, Greater Painted-snipe habitat will be eliminated and, as happened with Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*, also a freshwater wetland-dependant species, it will almost certainly be lost as a breeding species in Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986). Fortunately, at Kam Tin there was considerable regeneration of the vegetation in the recently-bulldozed area and the site remained suitable for the species during summer 1998, though how long this will remain the case is uncertain.

Other threats

Illegal trapping has accounted for the deaths of a least two Greater Painted-snipe at Long Valley during 1995-97 (R. Tipper, T. Dahmer pers. comm.). Although illegal trapping is a sporadic activity at Long Valley and the numbers of Greater Painted-snipe involved are low, prosecution is essential to deter offenders.

Conclusions

In Hong Kong, Greater Painted-snipe is almost entirely dependent upon two sites, Long Valley and Kam Tin. Both sites are at risk from development, which would result in the loss of the only suitable breeding areas for the species in the territory, and thus the loss of the species as a breeding bird in Hong Kong. Systematic trapping for ringing during the autumn and early winter of 1996 and 1997 proved that many more Greater Painted-snipe were present at both sites than simple counting indicated. The loss of these two sites would therefore not only affect the breeding population in Hong Kong but also the numbers present later in the year, many of which are likely to be migrants from the northern parts of the breeding range.

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香港的彩鷸是留鳥，亦有部分是冬候鳥。自一九八八年起，已經證實彩鷸在香港有繁殖的記錄，而松柏塢和錦田是彩鷸最常出沒的地方，因為兩地皆適宜彩鷸棲息，如耕地、荒廢了的農地與及長了草或蘆葦的淡水濕地。一九九六至九七年間，在上述兩地環志的彩鷸共有 102 隻，其中 80 隻在錦田、22 隻在松柏塢網獲。據估計，一九九六年在錦田棲息的彩鷸約有一百多隻。令人憂心的是，錦田和松柏塢將會成為交通孔道必經之

地，龐大的排水系統亦大大影響兩地的生態環境。若兩地成為都市，彩鷸將不能在香港繁殖，亦會大大減少牠們過境和渡冬的數目。

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THE IMPORTANCE TO WATERFOWL OF THE MAI PO MARSHES AND INNER DEEP BAY RAMSAR SITE

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During analysis of data collected by Hong Kong Bird Watching Society members as part of the work required to produce a revised edition of the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong*, we have examined closely counts of waterbirds. Especially during the period since 1985, more consistent and accurate counting has produced a significant amount of data that was used in this assessment. This, in turn, has not only allowed a more detailed and more accurate appreciation of the importance of Deep Bay to waterfowl, but has also highlighted the importance of records collected by members of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society.

The species listed below are either threatened, as defined by an entry in Birds to Watch 2 (Collar *et al.* 1994), or are species for which Deep Bay supports, or may support, at least 1% of the regional or flyway population as used for implementing the Ramsar Convention criterion 3c. The 1% threshold level has been calculated with reference to Rose and Scott (1997). In total, the Mai Po Marshes and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site can be considered to certainly or possibly be of importance to the populations of 32 waterfowl species, with a further eight being species of conservation significance. A summary of the status of each is presented below.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Deep Bay holds one of the largest wintering populations of Great Cormorant in Asia, and, with a five-year mean of peak counts during winter 1993-94 to 1997-98 of 6310, is certainly the most significant known concentration of wintering birds east of Turkmenistan (see Perennou *et al.* 1994). In addition, following figures in Rose and Scott (1994), the peak count of 8009 constitutes about 1.1% of the northern hemisphere population. Rose and Scott (1994) also estimate the east/southeast Asian wintering population to lie in the range 10-100,000 which means that Deep Bay regularly supports at least 6.3% of the regional population, and 0.9% of the northern hemisphere population.

Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*

Listed as Vulnerable in Collar *et al.* (1994), its world population is thought to number 3200-3400 breeding pairs with the prospect of further decline very real. While Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east Asian wintering population at less than 500 birds, even this seems much too optimistic. It is now considered to number only 100 individuals (A. Bratünlich *in litt.*); thus, the east Asian wintering population is critically endangered.

Up to the late 1970s there was a regular wintering flock of 70-85 birds; winter 1981-82 marked a watershed, however, and during the 1980s the five

highest peak counts were in the range 26-38; in the 1990s this has declined to 18-24. Based on the above figures, with a five-year mean of 20 birds during the winters of 1993-94 to 1997-98, Deep Bay regularly supports at least 20% of the regional population.

Schrenck's Bittern *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*

Listed as Near-threatened in Collar *et al.* (1994).

Recorded at widespread marshy locations throughout Hong Kong, including Mai Po, where records have generally occurred in spring.

Japanese Night Heron *Gorsachius goisagi*

Listed in Collar *et al.* (1994) as Vulnerable due to its being uncommon to rare and very local in its breeding areas in Japan where suitable habitat is very scarce.

Of the five Hong Kong records of this endangered and skulking heron, one at San Tin on 16 November 1977 (though apparently present for the week prior) is the only record from the Deep Bay area.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east/southeast Asian wintering population (equivalent to the world population) to lie in the range 25,000 to one million which means that with an average peak winter period count during the 1990s of 327, Deep Bay may hold 1% of the regional population.

Swinhoe's Egret *Egretta eulophotes*

Listed as Endangered in Collar *et al.* (1994), the world population of this species is estimated by Rose and Scott (1997) to lie in the range 1800-2500.

Previously recorded as a breeding visitor in small numbers, Swinhoe's Egret is now a spring passage migrant with occasional records in autumn. During the period 1986-97 the highest count in Deep Bay was of five birds. However, in spring 1998 an estimated 25 individuals were seen in Deep Bay (GJC pers. obs.), which is equivalent to a minimum of 1% of the world population.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east/southeast Asian wintering population to lie in the range 100,000 to one million which means that with an average peak winter period count during the 1990s of 1478, Deep Bay may hold 1% of the regional population.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east Asian migratory population to lie in the range 10-100,000 which means that with an average peak winter period count during the 1990s of 529, Deep Bay holds 0.5% to 5.3% of the regional population.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east/southeast Asian wintering population to lie in the range 25,000 to one million which means that with an average peak winter period count during the 1990s of 1322, Deep Bay holds up to 5.3% of the regional population.

Oriental Stork *Ciconia boyciana*

Listed as Endangered in Collar *et al.* (1994), the world population of this species is possibly about 3000 individuals. There have been 11 records in Hong Kong. The peak count of 121 birds in Deep Bay during winter 1990-91 constitutes about 4% of an estimated world population of 3000.

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Listed as Near-threatened in Collar *et al.* (1994).

There has been a substantial decline in recorded numbers of Black-headed Ibis in Deep Bay, and since the mid 1970s the peak count has remained in the range of one to five birds. This decline reflects that occurring elsewhere and is likely due to increased human pressure on its wetland habitat (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992).

Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*

Listed as Critical in Collar *et al.* (1994), the world population is estimated at 613 individuals (Dahmer and Felley 1998). The proportion of the world population supported by Deep Bay during the winter has remained relatively constant in the range 20-25%.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east Asian wintering population to be 60,000 which means that annually, since 1986, Deep Bay has supported an average of 2.9% of the flyway population, and a maximum of 6.7%.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Listed in Collar *et al.* (1994) as Insufficiently Known, a decline in recent decades means this species may be better listed as Near-threatened. A female was at Mai Po on 31 March 1986. Subsequent records are considered likely to involve feral birds from the waterfowl collection at Mai Po.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

The east Asian population is not known accurately, Rose and Scott (1997) estimating it to be in the range 100,000 to one million. The five-year mean of peak winter counts in Deep Bay during the period 1993-94 to 1997-98 was 2420 meaning that it plays host to approximately anything from 0.25 to 2.4% of the regional population.

Baikal Teal *Anas formosa*

Listed in Collar *et al.* (1994) as Vulnerable due to a marked decline caused by overhunting and habitat destruction, the world population is estimated

to be 105,000 (Moore 1996). One to four birds have been recorded each winter, with the exception of winter 1996-97, since the first documented record of Baikal Teal in Hong Kong on 28 January 1984, with the peak count being three females on 1 March 1986. Most records have been on fish ponds or *gei wai* in the Deep Bay area, with fewer in Deep Bay itself.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

The east and southeast Asian population is not known accurately, Rose and Scott (1997) estimating it to be in the range 100,000 to one million. The five-year mean of peak winter counts in Deep Bay during the period 1993-94 to 1997-98 is 4005 meaning that it plays host to approximately anything from 0.4 to 4.0% of the regional population.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

The east and southeast Asian population is not known accurately, Rose and Scott (1997) estimating it to be in the range 100,000 to one million. The five-year mean of peak winter counts in Deep Bay during the period 1993-94 to 1997-98 is 6562, meaning that it played host to approximately 0.65% to 6.5% of the regional population.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

The east and southeast Asian wintering population is not known accurately, Rose and Scott (1997) estimating it to be in the range 25,000 to one million. However, given that the sum of five-year means during Asian Waterfowl Census counts for the period 1987-91 produced a figure of 51,700 (Perennou *et al.* 1994), it seems likely that the regional population lies in the range 100,000 to one million. The five-year mean of peak winter counts in Hong Kong during the period 1993-94 to 1997-98 is 7386 meaning that Deep Bay probably plays host to approximately 0.7 to 7.3% of the regional population.

Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri*

Listed in Collar *et al.* (1994) as Vulnerable. Though its distribution is fairly wide, there has been a sharp decline recently in Russia due to drainage for rice cultivation and increased disturbance.

Mainly recorded from the second week of November to the first week of March, usually one or two birds are seen. Peak numbers have occurred during the middle two weeks of January, including the maximum count of 30 on 10 January 1987. However, since the establishment of the captive waterfowl collection at Mai Po in December 1989, it is possible that wild birds have been passed off as one of the pinioned birds.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Rose and Scott (1997) provide an estimate of 100,000 to over one million for the east/southeast Asian wintering population. At a mean peak count for the 1990s of 1620 birds, depending on the actual population figure, Deep Bay in some years may hold 1% or more of the regional population.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate that the southeast Asian wintering population lies in the range 10,000-100,000. The five-year mean of peak counts during the period 1992-93 to 1996-97 is 336, meaning that Deep Bay supports 0.3 to 3.3% of the regional population. However, this assumes that there is no turnover during each autumn to spring period, which seems unlikely, and thus the actual figure is probably higher.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east Asian wintering population to lie in the range 10,000-25,000, which means that, with a five-year mean during the winters from 1992-93 to 1996-97 of 1069, Deep Bay has supported 4.3% to 10.7% of the regional population. The peak species count of 1745 constitutes a minimum of 7% of the regional population.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east/southeast Asian wintering population (considered to be the subspecies *dealbatus* population) to lie in the range 25,000 to one million birds. With a five-year mean of winter peak counts during 1992-93 to 1996-97 of 2600 birds, and a peak count of 4000, Deep Bay may support 1% of the regional and subspecies population in at least some years.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

The east/southeast Asian and Australian wintering population is estimated to number 99,000 (Rose and Scott 1997) which means that as spring passage peaks at around 1000 in most years, Deep Bay annually supports 1% of this flyway population during spring passage.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east/southeast Asian and Australasian wintering population total to lie in the range 25,000-100,000, which means that, with a mean peak winter count during the five-year period 1993-94 to 1997-98 of 616, Deep Bay on average supports from 0.6% to 2.25% of the flyway population.

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*

Grey-headed Lapwing is listed as Near-threatened by Collar *et al.* (1994) with, excluding the discrete Japanese population, numbers estimated at from 10,000 to 25,000, and probably decreasing (del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). The primary threat seems to be changes in agricultural practices on the breeding grounds. While up to ten birds have been recorded at tidal ponds at Tsim Bei Tsui, a long-term favoured site for this species, generally only four or fewer have been present there in recent winters.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Conservative calculations of the number of birds passing through Deep Bay during spring migration, when almost all birds occur, arrive at a total number of birds of between 8310 and 11,400; these figures, however, are almost certainly underestimates as they assume a very simplistic pattern of turnover. Based on a flyway population estimate of 250,000 birds wintering in east/southeast Asia and Australasia (Rose and Scott 1997), this means that Deep Bay annually supports between 3.3% and 4.5% of the flyway population, though the actual figure is likely to be 5% or even higher depending on the rate of turnover.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The size of the east/southeast Asian wintering population is estimated by Rose and Scott (1997) to lie in the range 25,000 to 1,000,000. Thus, with an average peak count of wintering birds of 3336 during the 1990s, it is possible that Deep Bay supports in the region of 1% of the flyway population.

Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*

Listed by Collar *et al.* (1994) as Vulnerable, the total population is estimated at 2000-2800 pairs. Based on plumage characteristics of birds observed, the number of individuals passing through Hong Kong has been calculated at 16 during spring 1990 and 12 in 1998. The highest count concerns five on eight dates, four of which records have occurred during 8-10 April.

Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*

Listed as Near-threatened by Collar *et al.* (1994), the world population is stated by Rose and Scott (1997) to be 15,000-20,000 which means that, assuming a 1% threshold level of 180, Deep Bay has supported 1% or more of the global population in at least three years since 1984. This is based on the maximum count in each season and does not account for any turnover of birds passing through; thus, it is likely that this figure has been exceeded in more years than this.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The east/southeast Asian and Australian flyway population, which is equivalent to the world population of the subspecies *L.l. melanuroides*, is stated by Rose and Scott (1997) to be 162,000. This means that with a five-year mean of peak spring counts during 1993-97 of 1809, Deep Bay regularly supports a minimum of 1% of this population. As this is based only on the peak count each season and does not take into account turnover, and as the wintering flock presumably largely consists of different birds, the true figure is certainly higher, and may be closer to 1.3%.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Rose and Scott (1997) state that the east/southeast wintering population is in the range 10,000 to 100,000. With an five-year mean of peak winter counts during the period 1992-93 to 1996-97 of 800, Deep Bay, on average, regularly supports a minimum of 0.8-8% of the flyway population.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

A conservative estimate of the number of birds utilising Mai Po and the Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site during a typical year is 3500 birds. This, plus the knowledge that the figure may well be higher than this, throws into question the estimated figure of 10-25,000 provided by Rose and Scott (1997) for the east/southeast Asian wintering population. However, even if this figure is increased by one class to 25-100,000 Hong Kong still supports a minimum of 3.5% of the flyway population.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

A simple sum of peak spring and autumn counts for the years 1992 to 1997 produces figures in the range 1670 to 2350 (mean 1976), but this is almost certainly an underestimate as it fails to take into account turnover during the two passage periods and the fact it seems likely that at least some birds present in January are different from those occurring earlier or later in the winter. Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east/southeast Asian and Australasian wintering population at 90,000, meaning that Deep Bay annually supports at least 2% of the flyway population, and probably 3%.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

A simple sum of peak spring and autumn counts for the years 1992 to 1997 produces figures in the range 1196 to 2460 (mean 1670), but this is almost certainly an underestimate. After analysis of the admittedly limited series of frequent spring counts, and given that there is probably little overlap between birds occurring during winter and those during passage, the above figures rise to a range of 2311 to 4090 with a mean of 3127. Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east/southeast Asian and Australasian wintering population at 40,000, meaning that Deep Bay annually supports at least 3% of the flyway population, probably 4%, but in some years perhaps as high as 10%.

Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*

Listed in Collar *et al.* (1994) as Endangered, Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the world population of Nordmann's Greenshank to be 1000 birds. Summing the peak count of adults in April and of first-summer birds in May during the period 1990-96 produces annual totals in the range 19-67, with a mean of 38. This means that on average Deep Bay regularly supports at least 3.8% of the world population, though due to turnover during passage this figure is likely higher.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

During the ten-year period from 1988 to 1997 the minimum number of birds utilising Deep Bay lay in the range 261-735, with a mean of 443. Due to a paucity of data, Rose and Scott (1997) can only estimate the east/southeast Asian and Australasian population to lie between 25,000 and one million. Thus, it is possible in some years that Deep Bay supports 1% of the flyway population.

Saunders's Gull *Larus saundersi*

Listed as Endangered by Collar *et al.* (1994), Rose and Scott (1997) estimated the world population to be around 3000. However, recent surveys in South Korea and China indicate that 7000 may be a more accurate figure for the post-breeding population (Y.R. Gao pers. comm., N. Moores in *litt.*). If so, then at an average peak count for the 1990s of 128 birds, Deep Bay regularly holds 1.8% of the world population.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Rose and Scott (1997) estimate the east/southeast Asian wintering population to lie in the range of 100,00 to one million birds. With a five-year mean of peak winter counts during the period 1992-93 to 1996-97 equal to 17,999, Deep Bay regularly supports from 1.8% to 18% of the regional population.

Relict Gull *Larus relictus*

Listed as Near-threatened by Collar *et al.* (1994), Rose and Scott (1997) estimated the world population to be around 12,000. There have been three records of this species in Deep Bay, the last in winter 1992-93.

為了編製新版的香港鳥類名錄，編者需要對各種資料詳加審閱。有幸自一九八五年，在本會會員努力下，能夠在米埔自然保護區及附近一帶取得詳細可靠的資料，確立這個中國南部的拉姆薩爾濕地對鳥類保育的重要性。本文列舉 40 個品種，皆倚靠米埔保護區及后海灣一帶，作為度冬或過境停留區。現列舉數種為例：鸕鶿的最高度冬數目為 8,009 隻，估計佔北半球數量的 1.1%；黃咀白鷺經列為瀕危動物，全球估計已知數目只有 1,800 至 2,000 隻，這種鳥春天在后海灣停留的數目，在一九九八年高達 25 隻，佔總數的 1%。赤頸鴨平均每年高達 2,420 隻，佔東亞總數約 0.25 至 2.4%。

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APPARENT HYBRID MALLARD X SPOT-BILLED DUCKS

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Whilst surveying the Nam Sang Wai area on 17 January 1998 for the midwinter waterfowl count I found a group of twelve Chinese Spot-billed Ducks *Anas poecilorhyncha zonorhyncha* on an abandoned fishpond. Together with these birds was what initially appeared to be a drake Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, but on closer examination I noted that the bill had a very conspicuous subterminal yellow band. A sketch was made (Figure 1) and the following description taken:

Head with a green crown which extended down the hind neck. Face grey brown mottled darker brown, with a dark line through the eye. Pale grey ring round the neck. Breast maroon brown. Body typical of a drake Mallard and the black, curled upper tail coverts clearly visible. Bill dark grey at the base with blackish nail - subterminal area yellow, typical colour of Spot-billed Duck. When the bird flew there was typical 'Mallard' blue speculum, and the legs were orange.

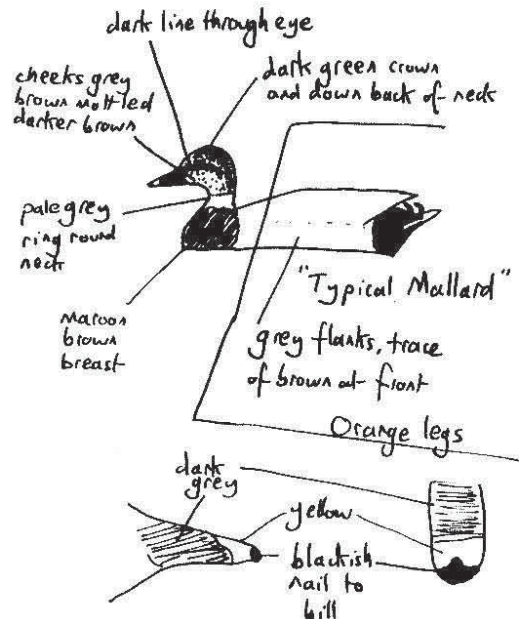


Figure 1. A sketch of the hybrid Mallard x Spot-billed Duck
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 17 January 1998

D.S. Melville

The characters of this bird suggest that it was a hybrid Mallard x Spot-billed Duck. A review of Hong Kong Bird Watching Society records reveals that there have been several other records of such hybrids in Hong Kong, although there is only one published report (Carey *et al.* 1996).

The first record, by R. Lewthwaite, was of a male at Tsim Bei Tsui on 23 January 1994. Lewthwaite noted (*in litt.*):

*While going through the gathering of ducks on the large tidal pond near the Police Post at Tsim Bei Tsui, I came across an extraordinary looking duck that, put simply, showed the body of a drake Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* beneath the head and bill of a [Chinese] Spotbill *Anas poecilorhyncha* [*zonorhyncha*].*

Unfortunately, the description I dictated at the time into a microcassette recorder has been lost. However, I clearly recollect the following details:

The bill pattern was exactly as a Spotbill, i.e. a black bill with a sharply demarcated yellow tip and a black nail. The head pattern, too, was very similar to a Spotbill's, i.e. with unstreaked buffy cheeks, an eyestripe and a prominent supercilium. However, a Mallard-like feature on the head was that the rear crown and nape were glossy green.

Features I can remember on the body were a burgundy-coloured breast which merged into greyish or greyish-brown flanks, a black stern out of which a white tail protruded, and a washed-out brownish or greyish mantle and scapulars. There was no white collar. The sum of these features made the body appear distinctly Mallard-like, though duller than drake Mallards that were present. The bird was similar in size to Mallard.

Light conditions were very good. I watched the bird through a 32x scope for about 5 minutes at a range of about 60-80 metres.

The second record, by C.A. Viney, was of a male at Tsim Bei Tsui on 2 February 1994. Viney noted (HKBWS records):

This extraordinary bird had the head and bill pattern, breast and upperparts of a Yellow-nib [Spot-billed Duck] but had the grey flanks, black stern, including the distinctively curved central tail feathers [upper tail coverts] and obvious white sides of tail of a Mallard drake.

Although the timing of these two records might suggest that they relate

to the same bird the descriptions indicate that two different individuals were involved.

The third record was of a male at Mai Po on 18 December 1994. M.L. Chalmers submitted a sketch of the bird (Figure 2) (HKBWS records).

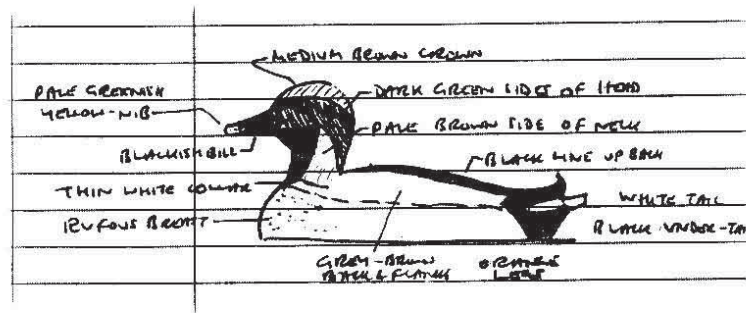


Figure 2. A sketch of the hybrid Mallard x Spot-billed Duck
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 18 December 1994

M.L. Chalmers

The fourth record was of a male at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 February 1995. No notes were taken at the time, however, subsequently Paul Aston (*in litt.*) considered that the bird was similar to that recorded by M.L. Chalmers.

On 28 November 1998 I observed another male on Pond 20 at Mai Po. This bird, which was in the company of 32 Chinese Spot-billed Ducks, appeared to be a typical Mallard apart from the neck collar which was a pale grey-brownish (rather than white as in a pure Mallard), and the bill, which was all dark except for a yellow band at the tip and black nail. The bill colouring appeared to be the same as those of the accompanying Chinese Spot-billed Ducks. What was presumably the same bird was seen at this site in company of both a male Mallard and Chinese Spot-billed Ducks on 5 December 1998 by G.J. Carey, who was able to take a detailed description:

Appeared slightly bulkier than accompanying Chinese Spot-billed Ducks, but in terms of plumage generally resembled a male Mallard though it was duller and darker. The upperparts and flanks were similar to a male Mallard though the flanks were duller. Below the water there was darker mottling on the belly that extended to just above the legs. The central portion of the chest and front of the neck were dark brown tinged dark rust, recalling the colour of a male Mallard. The sides of the head were a metallic green, the intensity varying according to the angle it was held towards the observer; the colour, however, was the same as a male Mallard, though it seemed slightly brighter. The upper and undertail coverts were largely black, with the central of those feathers nearest the belly broadly tipped whitish. The tail was pale,

though not as pale as a male Mallard. The underwing primary coverts were pale cream, the underside of the primaries were greyish. The secondaries were purplish-blue. The tertials were brown with a narrow whitish edge to the longest. The bill pattern was almost indistinguishable from accompanying Chinese Spot-billed Ducks apart from the fact that the nail extended further back. The legs were a deeper orange than accompanying Chinese Spot-billed Ducks.

I saw what appeared to be the same bird at Nam Sang Wai on 20 December 1998, and on the Scrape at Mai Po on 10 January 1999; on both occasions it was in the company of Chinese Spot-billed Ducks.

The differences in the appearances of these birds suggests that at least four different individuals may have been involved in these records. However it is possible that one or more birds could have undergone plumage changes between years. This might be the case with the birds recorded on 17 January and 28 November 1998 - the brown and green head pattern recorded in January could have been due the bird being in its first winter and thus the moult to breeding plumage being slower than that of an adult.

The fact that all records refer to males is perhaps not surprising in view of the possible difficulty in distinguishing at least some female hybrids from pure Spot-billed Ducks.

Gillham and Gillham (1995) note at least six records resulting from known crossing of male Mallard and female Spot-billed Ducks, apparently all in captivity (five males and one female). They state: 'Bonhote describes light and dark types of male in full plumage and likens both of them to drake Mallard. The dark birds are the most Mallard-like'. Del Hoyo *et al.* (1992) note that hybrid Mallard x Spot-billed Duck progeny are fertile. Gillham and Gillham (1995) note that Mallard-Spotbill x Mallard backcrosses differ little from those referred to above and first generation hybrids in eclipse...' more closely resemble Spot-billed Ducks. 'Female hybrids and backcrosses resemble female Mallard except that they show some white on the breast, more white on the wing, and have a bill similar to a Spotbill'.

The provenance of the Hong Kong birds remains unknown. Brazil (1991) recorded one Mallard x Spot-billed Duck (*zonorhyncha*) from Shinobazu-no-ike Tokyo, Japan. Kanouchi *et al.* (1998) include a photograph of a male Mallard x Spot-billed Duck taken at Taito-ku, Tokyo in February but further details are not provided. A female hybrid was seen at Lake Ashino-ko, near Hakone, Honshu, Japan on 17 February 1999 (GJC pers. obs.), and T. Morioka (pers. comm. to GJC) reports that hybrids are regularly, though rarely, met with in Japan. However, few readily accessible published sources are available.

The bird illustrated in Kanouchi *et al.* (1998) appears to be broadly similar to a Spot-billed Duck, but with less obvious pale fringes to the upper

wing coverts, very narrow fringes to the tertials and pale maroon breast. The head pattern has the dark crown of the Spot-billed with a trace of the dark eye and loreal stripes but the side of the head behind the eye shows a drake Mallard green. It appears that the bird may have slightly curved central tail coverts, typical of a Mallard. The bill is similar to that of a Spot-billed except that the yellow area is narrower by the dark nail, and the yellow extends further along the side of the bill.

Johnsgard (1965) noted that Spot-billed Ducks are sympatric with the Mallard in some areas 'but wild hybrids are known only from the Chinese race (*zonorhyncha*)', but provided no further details.

The breeding distributions of Mallard and Spot-billed Duck overlap in northern China and southeastern Siberia (Madge and Burn 1988). Rogacheva (1992) noted that 'in recent decades' the range of the Chinese Spot-billed Duck *A.p. zonorhyncha* has expanded to the northwest, thus apparently bringing it further into the range of the Mallard. Since she records that Spotbills usually occur singly in Central Siberia there might be a greater chance of a natural cross pairing in this area.

In Hong Kong the Mallard is regarded as a winter visitor (Chalmers 1986). The first summering record was of a male in 1983 (HKBWS unpublished records). A male also summered in 1993 (Carey and Chalmers 1993), and free flying Mallards (numbers and sex not stated) were present in the Waterfowl Collection at Mai Po during the summer of 1996 (Carey *et al.* 1998). All of these must be wild birds since no captive Mallards have been kept in the collection because of fears that they might cross with local Spot-billed Ducks; both *zonorhyncha* and *haringtoni* are known to breed at Mai Po (Carey and Melville 1996).

Although there has been no evidence of any wild Mallard breeding at Mai Po, and no young Spot-billed Ducks (or potential hybrids) were recorded in the Waterfowl Collection during 1996 (L. Young pers. comm.), it is of interest to note that a small 'domestic' type Mallard did breed in the Waterfowl Collection at Mai Po in early 1996. She was seen on 23 January with ten ducklings, by 28 January six ducklings remained, and by 6 February there were only 4 ducklings. None were seen after that date and it is unknown whether any fledged. What appeared to be the same female was seen again in the Waterfowl Collection on 15 December 1996 with several young ducklings (R. Lewthwaite *in litt.*). The time of breeding of this bird is of interest as is its origin - no 'domestic' Mallards having been released in the Waterfowl Collection. The male of the pair is unknown.

While it is possible that the female in the Waterfowl Collection in 1996 crossed with a Spot-billed Duck, this would not account for the earlier records and it seems more likely that these are genuinely wild hybrids. Observers should pay particular attention to summering records of Mallard in Hong Kong, and look for possible cross-pairing with Spot-billed Ducks.

自一九九四年一月廿三日起，已有單隻雄性的綠頭鴨 *Anas platyrhynchos* 和斑嘴鴨 *A. poecilorhyncha* (*zonorhyncha*) 混種記錄，並發現於小群斑嘴鴨中(按：雌性的混種實難以區分)。這混種雄鴨身體欠缺白頸環，其他特徵和綠頭鴨幾無分別，惟色澤較暗淡。頭部方面：嘴黑、尖端黃、嘴尖有黑點；頭紋近似斑嘴鴨；面頰沒有斑、淡褐色；有過眼線，眉紋明顯。不過，頭後和後頸帶有暗綠色的光澤。

David S. Melville 先生審閱歷年的報告，認為后海灣一帶見到以上的混種鴨皆為野生鴨類。他促請觀鳥者留心在夏天出現的綠頭鴨，並注意綠頭鴨有否和斑嘴鴨成雙出現。

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Social and migratory behaviour in Great Bittern.

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* is a scarce winter visitor and passage migrant through Hong Kong, with most records coming from the Deep Bay area (Carey *et al.* in prep.). In China it is a summer breeding visitor to western Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and the northeastern provinces, and it winters in southeast China (Cheng 1987). Due to the species secretive behaviour, it is poorly known in Hong Kong. This note details observations of Great Bitterns in Hong Kong, in particular those considered to relate to social and migratory activity. During 1992-1998, behaviour considered to relate to migratory activity was observed on three different occasions.

28 March 1992, Shuen Wan

Four birds were observed prior to dusk in a freshwater marsh. Just before dusk all four took to the air and commenced circling above the marsh, while regularly calling a deep *gwoa* similar to but deeper than the call of Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*. At about 1830h all four flew north-northeast in a tight flock. The birds were lost from sight, and although they were still calling, the calls slowly became weaker until they were no longer audible. Although it appeared that the birds had commenced northward migration, they returned some ten minutes later, calling as before and dropping back into the marsh. Six Great Bitterns had been present the previous evening, indicating that two may have left that evening.

12 March 1997, Mai Po

Five birds were present on pond 4 prior to dusk, of which four took to the air and circled around giving the same loud *gwoa* call. Slowly gaining height, they finally flew off north at 1845h, when one was still present on pond 4. The birds were not heard to return, despite the observer remaining in the area until 2400h; there were no subsequent records from Mai Po that spring. It would seem likely that the birds departed north that evening.

26 March 1998, Mai Po

At 1745h a single bird flew up from pond 6 and started to circle over the reed bed, calling regularly; a deep resonant *gwoa*. Over the next ten minutes it was joined by additional birds until five birds were circling high together. During this time, a different group of four birds had also formed, and were flying round low over the marsh. At this stage two other Great Bitterns were visible in the reeds on pond 3. The second group showed no intention of joining the first, and soon disbanded, returning to ponds 3 and 6. The flock of five was lost from sight, out over the mudflats at 1825h. That evening was clearly conducive to migration, as other birds seen departing north at dusk included 60 Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea*, and a flock of 33 Heuglin's Gulls *Larus heuglini* and a Yellow-legged Gull *L. cachinnans* in 'V' formation. Despite this, it would appear

than none of the Great Bitterns had departed that night as 13 were present the following evening, including a flock of six birds, although numbers declined steadily after that.

These records are of interest as such behaviour would appear to be poorly known. They also shed light upon the timing of the migration, and include the highest counts made in Hong Kong.

Cramp and Simmons (1977) refer to the flight-call as a nasal *kau*, and state that it is common in autumn when it is used as a contact-call during circling flights. Voisin (1991) describes the flight call as similar to that of Night Heron, and that both sexes give the call which is heard mostly at dusk in the autumn before migration when the birds circle above the reed beds. Hemmingsen (1968) recorded similar calls from Great Bitterns at night during spring and autumn migration at Beidaihe, Hebei, China. Dement'ev and Gladkov (1968) state the species calls after dark during migration, and that the flight call is a *kau* in some way resembling that of Night Heron but coarser and more shrill. It would appear that the call recorded in Hong Kong is the usual flight call of the species. Migration is normally nocturnal, although in dull weather also diurnal (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1968). Ali and Ripley (1987) state that the species is silent in winter, and although it is more vocal in late winter in Hong Kong, it does call occasionally during midwinter (pers. obs.).

The literature is contradictory regarding social behaviour of Great Bittern outside the breeding season. Many authorities simply state that it is solitary (Ali and Ripley 1987, Brown *et al.* 1982) or essentially solitary (Cramp and Simmons 1977). While migrants are typically solitary, they may exceptionally occur in groups of ten with short distances between individuals (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1968). The same authors refer to large concentrations of Great Bitterns flushed from quite small areas during spring and autumn. They considered that the birds tendency to take flight as individuals and not en masse indicated that such groups were more a result of availability of suitable resting sites than any social instincts.

The observations in Hong Kong of birds gathered by flight calls to form a small flock prior to departure would appear to be the first published that suggest that such behavior is social.

Carey *et al.* (in prep.) gives the latest dates in spring as 27 April to 1 May 1988, and up to two during 15-16 May 1982; the highest count prior to these observations is seven circling high and calling over Mai Po at dusk on 12 March 1984. This latter records fits in well with records discussed above and together they indicate departure occurs during the second to fourth weeks of March. It would seem likely that some of the records refer to birds that had not wintered in Hong Kong. Up to 1997 six of the seven records away from the Deep Bay area have occurred during the period 15 March to 7 April, and this

presumably indicates that migrants are present in Hong Kong at this time. In particular, at Shuen Wan in three consecutive years (1992-94) there were sightings on 27 March, but not during the preceding part of the year. However, prior to the March 1998 sightings (when a maximum of 13 birds were present) up to nine had been present during February, indicating that most, if not all, the birds seen in March were not recent arrivals.

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Harriers drowning prey

A recent note by Carey (1998) described the drowning of an Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope** by an Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus*, and said that drowning had not been recorded as a method of killing prey in my Marsh Harrier monograph (Clarke 1995). In fact, deliberate drowning of waterfowl by Marsh Harriers was covered in my book (see page 90), including the attendant dangers to harriers of being drowned themselves.

Carey was indeed fortunate to witness the technique, but it is not unique to Marsh Harriers. A published note and even a series of photographs documents this technique for Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus hudsonius* (Fitzpatrick 1979).

The Marsh Harrier was probably the raptor described by the classical philosopher Pliny as forcing wildfowl to dive, and in 1544 the Tudor naturalist William Turner wrote of 'the Balbushard of the English...it lives by hunting Ducks and those black fowls which Englishmen call Couts. The conflict of which Pliny makes mention...between this Eagle (if it should be called an Eagle) and the water-birds I have seen often, and not I alone, countless Englishmen witness it daily' (Evans 1903). With the vast decline in juxtaposition of man and wildlife in the modern world, this is now an experience readily accessible to few.

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* the species involved was indeed Eurasian Wigeon, and not that in the title to the note (eds).

Some observations on prey items of nesting terns in Hong Kong

During a one-hour visit to Kung Chau/Shek Ngau Chau on 18 July 1998 regurgitates from chicks of nesting terns were collected. The regurgitates were marked and immediately stored in an ice-box at 4°C. Back at the laboratory, the prey were immersed in 5% formalin for at least 48 hours. Later, the prey were transferred into 70% alcohol for storage and identification. Bridled *Sterna anathetus* Black-naped *S. sumatrana* and Roseate Terns *S. dougallii* were breeding on the island.

Two semi-digested anchovies *F. engraulidae* were collected from two Black-naped Tern chicks. One semi-digested Cardinal Fish *Apogon quadrifasciatus* and three discarded fish, including one *Apogon lineatus* and one Damselfish *Neopomacentrus bankieri*, were collected from the ground. The latter items may have been brought to the island by any of the three tern species present, either as food for chicks or perhaps during courtship feeding.

The presence of anchovies *F. engraulidae* and Cardinal Fish *A. quadrifasciatus* in the diet of local terns would appear to be rather unusual, despite the fact that both are common in Hong Kong waters at one season or another (Leung A.M.Y. pers. comm., Leung 1997). This is because both are demersal (bottom or bottom-associate) fish. Cardinal Fish *A. quadrifasciatus*

is generally only seen at the surface during the anaerobic conditions present during red tides (A. Cornish pers. comm.); no red tides were reported in nearby waters at the time. Thus, the feeding on demersal fish was not related to natural events, and was presumably associated with human fishing activities, probably trawling, a common method for catching demersal fish. The terns presumably fed on the harvested fish when they were brought to the surface. Although Higgins and Davies (1996) state that Roseate Terns consume Gobies *F. gobiidae*, primarily a bottom-living species, in the Great Barrier Reef, Australia, it is likely that terns in Hong Kong do not normally consume demersal or benthic fish since they are mainly active in open oceanic waters and they rarely visit reefs shallow enough for them to exploit such fish.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Verity Picken for providing transport to the island. I am very grateful to M.R. Leven (especially), Y.T. Yu, and P.J. Leader for their assistance in collection of regurgitates. My thanks also go to A. Cornish and A.W.Y. Leung for their identification and providing information about the prey fish and Dr. L. Young for his comments on an earlier draft.

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GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF RECORDS

Recording

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

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

Rarities

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

Field identification techniques for species in the area still need refining and the Society has a Records Committee to assess records and ensure that a high standard of reporting is maintained. A list of species considered by the Committee is given below. The list may seem dauntingly long and includes some apparently unmistakable species but, nevertheless, field descriptions of the birds listed are required if the record is to be considered for publication. Ideally, field notes of a rarity should cover the following points:

- a) Date, time and location of sighting.
- b) Power of binoculars/telescope used, distance of bird from the observer, weather and light conditions.
- c) Description of habitat and what other birds, if any, it was associating with.
- d) Angle of view and actions: at rest, in flight, swimming etc. The more varied the conditions the better.
- e) Its general size, shape and structure compared with other more familiar species. Structural features that may be important should be detailed e.g. bill length compared to length of head; relative position of wing tips to uppertail coverts; projection of primary tips beyond closed tertials; length of hind claw etc.
- f) The most detailed description possible of the plumage and bare parts, not just those parts thought to help in identification. This description should be logical and organised, and the following sequence is suggested:
 - i) head
 - ii) upperparts
 - iii) wings, including underwing if seen

- iv) tail, both upper and lower sides
- v) underparts
- vi) bare parts (iris, bill, gape if seen, legs and feet)
- g) Any calls, indicating especially the quality of the sound (harsh, rattling, shrill, hoarse, liquid etc.) and comparison with calls of other species.
- h) Notes on previous experience with the species or species with which it may be confused.
- i) Names of other observers present, if any.

More experienced observers will expand on features known to be critical e.g. extent and shape of supercilium and wing bars in warblers, pattern of scapular feathers in waders etc. A rough sketch or diagram is helpful. If possible try to get someone else to see the bird as two descriptions are better than one. Make sure that you take full field notes on the spot - it is all too easy to imagine field marks after consulting a book!

With regard to birds that have distinctive vocalisations, the Committee realises that in some cases call only records are acceptable. However, no matter how distinctive, the call should be described in as much detail as possible.

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

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

The following list of species for which written descriptions are required is based on the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986) plus additions detailed in annual Hong Kong Bird Reports from 1984/85 onwards. In some cases brief notes added to the record cards describing the salient features, ranges and viewing conditions will suffice. However, full descriptions are required for the rarer or more difficult species, or any new species not yet on the Hong Kong List. In addition, the Recorder may request descriptions of other species under unusual circumstances. Observers are urged to be aware of the significance of any unusual sightings made and to take full details *at the time of observation*; these should then be submitted with the record card. The list is subject to revision each year to include new species and delete those for which descriptions are no longer needed because of better defined status or fewer identification problems. Records of species new to Hong Kong require detailed written descriptions.

Records of species on the list below that are submitted without descriptions will not be considered

CATEGORY A

Horned Grebe
Black-necked Grebe
Streaked Shearwater
all boobies
all frigatebirds
all storm-petrels
Black Bittern
Japanese Night Heron
white-phase Pacific Reef Egret
Glossy Ibis
Lesser Whistling Duck
all swans
all geese
Cotton Pygmy-goose
hybrid wigeon
Ferruginous Duck
Velvet Scoter
Common Goldeneye
Smew
Crested Honey Buzzard
Brahminy Kite
Hen Harrier
Pied Harrier
Northern Goshawk
Eurasian Sparrowhawk
Upland Buzzard
Mountain Hawk Eagle
Amur Falcon
Saker Falcon
all buttonquails
Water Rail
all crakes except Ruddy
Purple Swamp-hen
Common Crane
Common Ringed Plover
Long-billed Plover
Pectoral Sandpiper
Jack Snipe
Long-billed Dowitcher
Lesser Yellowlegs
Red Phalarope
all skuas
Relict Gull

Slender-billed Gull
Common Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
Glaucous Gull
other large gulls apart from
taiyrensis and *mongolicus*
Kittiwake
Greater Crested Tern
Sooty Tern
Barred Cuckoo Dove
White-bellied Green Pigeon
Thick-billed Green Pigeon
Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo
Common Cuckoo
Asian Lesser Cuckoo
all owls except Collared Scops
and Barred Owlet
Grey Nightjar
all swiftlets
Common Swift
Collared Kingfisher
Speckled Piculet
Blue-throated Bee-eater
all woodpeckers
Chinese Pitta
all larks except Oriental
Plain Martin
Pechora Pipit
Buff-bellied Pipit
White Wagtail forms except
leucopsis and *ocularis*
Swinhoe's Minivet
Wren
Japanese Robin
Black Redstart
Pied Wheatear
White-throated Rock Thrush
Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush
Pale-footed Bush Warbler
Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler
Brown Bush Warbler
Styan's Grasshopper Warbler
Middendorff's Grasshopper Warb.
Blunt-winged Warbler

Paddyfield Warbler
 Manchurian Reed Warbler
 Blyth's Reed Warbler
 Booted Warbler
 Chestnut-crowned Warbler
 Rufous-faced Warbler
 Greenish Warbler
 Hume's Leaf Warbler
 Yellow-streaked Warbler
 Chiffchaff
 Brown-chested Jungle Flycatcher
 Fukien Niltava
 Green-backed Flycatcher
 Plain Flowerpecker
 Tiger Shrike
 Daurian Jackdaw
 Carrion Crow
 Chestnut-cheeked Starling
 Rose-coloured Starling
 Brambling
 Japanese Grosbeak
 Yellow-throated Bunting
 Yellow-browed Bunting
 Rustic Bunting
 all reed buntings
 Black-headed Bunting

CATEGORY B

Ring-necked Pheasant
 Pygmy Wren Babbler

CATEGORY D

Emerald Cuckoo
 Blue-winged Pitta
 Singing Bushlark
 Greater Cuckoo Shrike
 Brown-breasted Bulbul
 Japanese Waxwing
 Bohemian Waxwing
 all Niltavas
 Pale Blue Flycatcher
 Blue-throated Flycatcher
 Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher
 Rufous-capped Babbler
 Grey-headed Parrotbill
 Ruddy Sparrow
 Burmese Shrike
 Pallas's Rosefinch
 Hawfinch
 Rock Bunting
 Meadow Bunting
 Grey-necked Bunting

CATEGORY E

all new species

CATEGORY F

all