

# THE HONG KONG BIRD REPORT 1977



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**THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY**

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**Published in 1979 by the**

## **HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY**

c/o Zoology Department, University of Hong Kong

(A registered society under the Societies Ordinance)

Records compiled by M. L. Chalmers and G. C. H. Cooper

## **OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY**

|                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Chairman . . . . .       | F.O.P. Hechtel                  |
| Hon. Secretary . . . . . | C. R. Payne                     |
| Hon. Treasurer . . . . . | M. A. Webster                   |
| Hon. Recorders . . . . . | M. L. Chalmers<br>G.C.H. Cooper |

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Membership continued to rise, and at the end of the year there were 104 local members and 42 overseas.

The following outings were held during the year:—

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| January 1st    | Mai Po   |
| January 8th    | Colonial Cemetery, Happy Valley<br>(beginners' outing) |
| January 16th   | Woodlands  |
| February 4th   | Mai Po   |
| February 18th  | Mong Tseng   |
| March 19th     | Tai Lung Wan   |
| April 9th      | Mai Po   |
| April 21st     | Mai Po   |
| May 8th        | Mai Po   |
| June 21st      | Tai Mo Shan  |
| August 29th    | Mai Po   |
| September 18th | Mai Po   |
| October 8th    | Tai Lung Wan   |
| October 16th   | Mong Tseng (Chinese speaking)                          |
| October 30th   | Mong Tseng   |
| November 13th  | Woodlands  |
| November 19th  | Ma Wan   |
| December 4th   | Mai Po   |
| December 27th  | Mong Tseng   |

This impressive list is the longest yet, and still the vast majority of our outings are well patronised by members. On the whole, it seems members do not like having to book places on outings in advance, but there are undoubtedly some who prefer the smaller groups, and the booking system has encouraged some members to attend who never join the bigger groups. This seems thoroughly desirable, and so my recommendation would be that the system is continued. The search for new localities for outings continues; Tai Lung Wan has proved a great success, but other localities are still needed. Another innovation has been the introduction of so-called 'Chinese-speaking' outings. While there is no intention to split the Society on racial lines, there is no doubt that one or two Chinese in a big group of foreigners feel a bit out of it, especially as at present they tend to be beginners rather than experts; I think the foreigners would feel the same way if the situation was reversed. For many years, the Committee of the Society has been very conscious of the need to arouse local interest

in Hong Kong's wildlife, as without this there can be little effective conservation, and whatever is conserved would pass unnoticed among the people who should be such a policy's main beneficiaries. The past two or three years have seen the beginning of such local interest, and the Society must do its best to encourage it.

I hope that members have appreciated the new bulletins, longer and with more specifically 'bird' news. This is a joint enterprise of Clive Viney and Charles Payne, and I feel the Society owes them a vote of thanks for all their work.

As usual there have been changes during the year, with Tim Fisher off to Fiji shortly after achieving the first 'ton-up' for Hong Kong. The Committee for next year will look somewhat different too. Clive Viney feels it is time to step down as Recorder, a job for which the work-load has increased so greatly over the past few years that the Committee has decided to recommend that it should be a two-man job in future, so that the current high standard can be maintained, and also that Annual Reports can more easily be got out in rather quicker time than the 1976 issue. I have decided to resign as Chairman, because I am currently Chairman of the Conservancy Association, and it is just not practicable to have the same person doing both jobs at once; fortunately our former Chairman, Fred Hechtel, has agreed to stand for election to this job for a second term. David Carthy has resigned from the Committee due to pressure of work, and Lam Chiuying because his frequent travels seem to be timed to impede his job of organising the Chinese-speaking outings.

It seems almost a custom for the Chairman's Report to say nasty things about Government's conservation policy, or lack of it. It would however be unjust to overlook the positive things which are being done towards a proper conservation of our rapidly dwindling countryside. The Country Parks scheme is one; in the local context, the countryside has to be made available to the mass of the people for recreation, though this should be done concurrently with stricter measures to conserve selected habitats. If the two things are not concurrent, areas deserving strict conservation will disappear either through over-utilisation or through unwise development. In theory the Country Parks scheme is a fine thing for Hong Kong, but it is being expanded too fast and too far. Country Parks, if they are to be viable, need management facilities and manpower, and there is no way in which such services can be provided under current allocations of finance. Nor can the necessary management be produced out of thin air; it needs training, and that too cannot be done overnight. It is not often that we say Government is going too fast, but in this case it seems to be the fact of the matter. We would prefer to see a more limited number of parks, properly managed and controlled, expanding gradually as manpower and other resources became available. Another way in which the present Country Parks policy seems to us to be misguided is that the Authority grabs any land of which it can

get control, thus tending to ignore important areas which for various reasons are not quite so easy to secure. This seems to be a wrong approach in principle, though it is easy to understand the motives behind it.

The second major advance last year was the employment of a consultant to survey the Mai Po Marshes for their suitability as a wildfowl park cum nature reserve. Professor Geoffrey Matthews of the Severn Wildfowl Trust came here in November, and has, we understand, reported to Government on his findings. We have not yet seen the Report, but we fear that the development of the housing estate at Tai Shang Wai will have made access too difficult, and the land too expensive for resumption. That abomination is slowly taking shape; bulldozers are busy constructing the bund to separate the estate from the marsh, and rows of little houses are appearing near the old nursery where Jacanas and Watercock used to breed. Now I am afraid only the mosquitoes are left. However, whatever we feel about the estate, we must face the fact that there is no way it can be stopped at this stage; we should therefore concentrate our efforts on trying to secure adequate protection for the rest of the marsh.

We should also go ahead with more detailed proposals for reserves in other parts of the Colony. Mai Po is extremely well documented, but such sites as the fung shui woods of the Lam Tsuen Valley are still not well enough known. We tried, a few years ago, to compile a site register of areas of ornithological importance, but few forms ever got completed, because members were just not willing to spend the time on them. The current rash of construction of village-type houses in the New Territories, for which no planning permission is needed, is quite literally nibbling away at the edges of many of the old woods. Some of the smaller ones are already near disappearing in favour of little houses without proper access routes, drainage, water supply, or any other facilities. Of course it is good to see the villagers getting better accommodation, but they could get something a great deal better for much the same price if Government would insist on a minimum of proper planning. At the same time the fung shui woods, which are of great historical, botanical, entomological and ornithological interest, could be saved to perform the ecological function for which they were originally planted.

Perhaps the Society should now spend more of its attention on these areas, while not neglecting Mai Po, of course. As a follow-up to this, it would be well worth while investigating how the heartlands of the main forestry plantations, at Tai Po Kau and Shing Mun, could be converted into mixed forest as a replacement for the fung shui wood habitat which is gradually vanishing. This would at least be easier than re-creating a marsh.

*M. A. Webster*

## REPORT ON THE BIRDS 1977

*Hon. Co-recorders: G. C. H. Cooper and M. L. Chalmers*

A high level of activity in the field was again rewarded with a wide range of sightings. After careful vetting by the Records Committee the total number of species accepted was 260 excluding all those not specifically identified and all the suspected escapes under Category E. Five new species were added to Category A of the Hong Kong List. These comprised a flock of over ten White-throated Needletails at Beas River in April, several groups of Purple-backed Starlings at Mai Po and Sek Kong in September, a Band-bellied Crake found dead at Jardine's Lookout in October, and a Wren and Slaty-backed Forktail both in Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve in December. None of these were unexpected as they are all birds whose known ranges extend to nearby parts of China. The Wren is in fact reinstated to Category A after being relegated to Category F in 1975. Three species were also added to Category E, namely Streaked Shearwater, Blossom-headed Parakeet and Grey-headed Parrotbill.

The records of successful or suspected breeding were also encouraging. It is likely that Chestnut Bitterns, Crimson-legged Crakes and Watercock all bred in the north-west New Territories. Both Swinhoe's and Great Egrets nested at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry with the commoner species. Collared Scops Owls bred at Victoria Barracks, Chinese Babax were heard in the summer on Tai Mo Shan, and White-cheeked Laughing Thrushes continued their expansion.

The year was memorable for the spring wader passage when most of our wader species were recorded, often in record breaking numbers. In the autumn a good variety of ducks were recorded on the marshes, and in the winter reports of buntings and woodland species were widespread and varied. Numbers of wintering gulls continued to increase. A monthly summary is given below:

### January

This was the coldest January since 1934 and record numbers of over 10,000 Black-headed Gulls and over 600 Herring Gulls were counted in the harbour and approaches. Two Brown-headed Gulls were also reported. A Streaked Shearwater was recovered at Aberdeen on 28th, the first record for Hong Kong. However, as the bird appeared to have been caught at sea and released or escaped at Aberdeen, it has been allocated to Category E. Apart from a record number of 250 Shelduck in Deep Bay and several reports of Baer's Pochards or Tufted Ducks at Mai Po, conditions were generally quiet on the marshes. The woodlands were more rewarding with Yellow-bellied

Tits still widespread (they remained until the end of March), a male Hainan Blue Flycatcher at Ho Sheung Heung on 24th (the first for seven years), and fair numbers of Red-tailed Robins although thrush records were generally poor. A male Hobby and female Watercock at Sek Kong on 16th were unusual winter sightings, and a Ruddy Crake at Mong Tseng from 29th January to 6th March provided the first wintering record for this species.

### February

Dalmatian Pelicans again wintered in the Deep Bay area from 23rd January to 12th March with a maximum of 39 on 26th February. Mai Po produced both European and Lesser Spoonbills, Black-winged Stilts, Marsh Sandpipers, Ruffs, Lesser Egrets, and a new high count of 74 Grey Plovers. Black Bulbuls, Collared Sivas and Scarlet Minivets were reported from Tai Po Kau and several other localities. Both Imperial and Steppe Eagles occurred in the Long Valley/Lok Ma Chau area.

### March

The drought conditions continued and large areas of farmland in the New Territories were abandoned. An adult Great Black-headed Gull in breeding plumage was seen at Pak Nai on 12th and two unidentified Frigate-birds were seen over Mai Po on 23rd. Breeding activity by White-cheeked Laughing Thrushes was noted near Clearwater Bay Road and towards the end of the month the spring wader passage began at Mai Po.

### April

Conditions at Mai Po were favourable, and wader records dominated this month. Virtually the entire Hong Kong list of waders was represented and often in good numbers. Highpoint was the new maximum number of 26 Asiatic Dowitchers on 21st. On the same day a visiting ornithologist, Dr. Derek Scott, saw 101 species whilst in the company of two local members. This was the first time that over 100 species had been seen by one person in a day, and the total included over 10 Needle-tailed Swifts (White-throated Needletails) — a new species for Hong Kong. Vinous-throated Parrotbills were seen at Eagle's Nest on 5th and 8th and a male Amur Falcon was reported at Fanling on 7th. At least one pair of Swinhoe's Egrets and one pair of Great Egrets bred at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry.

### May

The wader passage at Mai Po continued with high numbers of 400 Eastern Little Stints and 200 Curlew Sandpipers on 1st, and 300 Spotted Redshanks and 60 Knots on 8th. A pair of Collared Scops Owls with four young were seen at Victoria Barracks.

## June

Black and Chestnut Bitterns, Red Avadavats and Chestnut Munias were reported from Mai Po. Three Scarlet Minivets at Tai Po Kau again raised hopes of possible breeding.

## July

Several Pratincoles and Common Sandpipers again summered at Kai Tak, and three Whimbrel were seen there on 14th. A female Frigate-bird was seen over the harbour on 23rd. Chinese Babax were heard on Tai Mo Shan, and a Black-naped Green Woodpecker was seen at Fanling. At the end of the month Chestnut Bitterns and Watercock were seen at Luk Keng with Crimson-legged Crakes nearby.

## August

The autumn wader passage was by contrast very disappointing. Black Bitterns were again reported at Mai Po. A Buzzard was seen over North Lantau on 13th, and new early dates were established for Pallas's Warbler and Short-tailed Bush Warbler at Bride's Pool on 27th and 28th respectively.

## September

Indian, Common/Himalayan, Large Hawk and Red-winged Crested Cuckoos were all recorded in the Beas River/Fanling area. Several Tricolour Flycatchers and Forest Wagtails were reported from widespread areas. An exceptionally early juvenile Black-tailed Gull was found dead at Kai Tak on 12th, and four early Herring Gulls and one Pied Harrier were seen near Ting Kau on 25th during Severe Tropical Storm "Freda", the only storm to cause No. 8 Signals to be hoisted this year. The same day a flock of Purple-backed Starlings, a new Hong Kong species, was seen at Mai Po, and three birds were subsequently seen at Sek Kong on 28th.

## October

Weather conditions for the first eleven days were unsettled with heavy showers and thunderstorms. A male Horsfield's Goshawk was seen at Chek Keng on 8th. A surge of cooler air through the Taiwan Straits on 10th was accompanied by further heavy showers and fresh easterly winds resulting in the hoisting of the Strong Monsoon Signal. The following morning another new species, a Band-bellied Crake, was found dead at Jardines Lookout. A Goshawk at Mong Tseng on 16th was a new early date. Good numbers of duck including Falcated Teal, Gadwall and Mallard were present at Mai Po from mid-month. A party of six Grey-headed Parrotbills was seen on Cheung Chau and remained until November.

## November

In the first half of the month a Hen Harrier and two probable

Grey-faced Buzzard Eagles were seen at Mai Po. A Japanese Night Heron stayed for several days at San Tin. A Short-eared Owl, only the second for Hong Kong, was found dead at Kai Tak on 18th. Thrush records were poor but there were widespread sightings of Monarch, Grey-headed, Verditer and Robin Flycatchers. Good numbers of Yellow-breasted, Chestnut, Tristrams, Grey-headed and Little Buntings were also reported. An irruption of Treepies began at the end of the month with over 80 at Mai Po on 27th.

## December

After a mild start markedly cooler conditions set in on 24th after the passage of a cold front. A Hoopoe and Niltava were seen on Lantau on 23rd. The end of the month was marked by exceptional sightings at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve. Grey-throated Minivets were seen on 24th and 26th, a Wren on 29th and a Slaty-backed Forktail on 31st. The latter two are both new species for Hong Kong.

The Systematic List incorporates records from the following observers:—

H. G. Ackford, Dr. R. J. Barnes, E. A. Barnes, C. P. Barnes, D. P. Carthy, M. L. Chalmers, A. Cheung, K. K. Chiu, G. C. H. Cooper, D. Deptford, Lt. Col. C. G. Edwards, R. Ferguson, T. H. Fisher, Supt. D. J. Galloway, A. Galsworthy, T. P. Garland, I. W. Harris, J. M. Ingles, J. A. Irving, K. Lo, D. S. Melville, C. R. Payne, H. C. Ryker, D. A. Scott, Maj. M. A. Taffinder, C. A. Viney, M. A. Webster, C. D. Weidemann, B. D. Wilson.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST FOR 1977

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

#### 2. Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Three in Deep Bay on 18 February, including one in breeding plumage, and one in same area on 12 March.

#### 4. Little Grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis*)

Up to eight at Mai Po until 31 March, and three there until 5 June and from 21 October. Summer records for Mai Po, San Tin, Sha Po and Ho Pui Reservoir indicate that breeding probably occurred at these localities although the site at Mai Po was later destroyed by dredging. Small numbers were recorded from other widespread ponds and reservoirs during the winter months.

#### 7. Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*)

Flocks of wintering birds recorded regularly from the Deep Bay area between 23 January and 12 March. Maximum count was 39 on 26 February. All specifically identified pelicans were of this species.

#### 8. Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Up to 205 in Deep Bay until 26 March and up to 300 there from 21 October, with maximum counts on 22 January and 27 December. Up to 55 roosted on the rocks in Plover Cove until 29 March and from 31 October numbers increased to almost 100 by the end of the year. The highest number counted at the roost on Hei Ling Chau was 41 on 21 November. Also recorded regularly in smaller numbers from Stonecutter's Island, Ma Wan, North Lantau, Chi Ma Wan, Peng Chau, and Cheung Chau during the winter months. Four at Tai Lam Chung on 26 February and one at Shing Mun Reservoir on 26 December.

#### [9/10. Frigate-Bird sp. (*Fregata* sp.)

Two birds seen at dusk on 23 March over Deep Bay were at too great a distance to permit specific identification (GCHC, THF, DAS). One probable female Greater Frigate-bird (*F. minor*) in Victoria Harbour on 23 July (RJB, EAB, CPB) cannot be safely separated from *F. ariel* which could occur here.]

#### 12. Yellow Bittern (*Ixobrychus sinensis*)

All records are from the Deep Bay Marshes. Numbers rose sharply from early April to over 50 by May and remained high until September. One or two birds remained at Mai Po in both winters.

#### 13. Chestnut Bittern (*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*)

Two at Mai Po on 29 May and 5 June. Up to four in the Starling Inlet/Plover Cove area from 24 July to 24 August including three probable immatures.

#### 14. Black Bittern (*Dupetor flavicollis*)

One at Mai Po on 11 June and 5 and 29 August.

#### 15. Japanese Night Heron (*Gorsachius goisagi*)

One at the British Officer's Mess, Cassino Lines, San Tin on 16 November had apparently been present since about 9 November (GCHC, MLC, CAV). The bird, which was quite tame, searched for earth-worms on the lawn each morning and evening. This is the third Hong Kong record.

#### 16. Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*)

Two at Mai Po on 1 January, and one there regularly up to 23 April and from 15 October.

#### 17. Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Breeding occurred at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry with birds present from 17 April. At least six adults and six juveniles seen on 8 May and over 15 (mostly juveniles) on 9 September. Also recorded at Mai Po between 17 April and 13 November with about 30 on 23 April rising to about 100 (mostly juveniles) on 21 October over the outer mangroves. Four immatures seen at Mong Tseng on 20 February.

#### 18. Chinese Pond Heron (*Ardeola bacchus*)

Common throughout the year in wet low-lying areas of the New Territories and along muddy shores. At Yim Tso Ha Egrettry 145 were counted on 16 July. Six flew west over the sea at Ting Kau on 18 April, and single birds were seen in urban Kowloon on 10 and 25 October.

#### 19. Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

Present throughout the year in the northern New Territories, particularly around Sha Tau Kok, Long Valley, Lok Ma Chau and Yuen Long. Commoner in the summer months with many pairs breeding at Yim Tso Ha Egrettry. Also recorded on passage between 22 March and 24 April and on 4 September from southern coastal areas with groups of up to 11 flying east past Ting Kau and on the rocks at Kwai Chung and Stanley.

#### 20. Little Green Heron (*Butorides striatus*)

Recorded at Mai Po from 14 April to 25 September with maximum of about 10 from June onwards. One to three birds also seen between 12 March and 1 October at Sai Kung, Tai Mong Tsai, Sheun Wan,

Ping Shan and Mong Tseng. About 10, including immatures, seen at Ho Chung on 27 August. Single birds seen at reservoirs at Tai Lam Chung on 17 September, Hok Tau on 24 November and 10 December, and Shing Mun on 26 December.

**21. Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*)

Common throughout the year in the northern New Territories, particularly in the Deep Bay area. About 200 pairs bred at the egretty at Mai Po and a lesser number at Yim Tso Ha. One seen on the rocks at Ma Wan on 13 April. As in 1973–1976, one 'grey phase' bird was sighted at Mai Po on several occasions between 17 April and 25 August.

**22. Lesser Egret** (*Egretta intermedia*)

Four at Mai Po on 6 February (GCHC, THF, CAV).

**23. Swinhoe's Egret** (*Egretta eulophotes*)

Two adults seen at a nest in Yim Tso Ha Egretty from 24 April to 22 May.

**24. Reef Egret** (*Egretta sacra*)

Single birds and small groups of up to four recorded from rocky shores throughout the year. Most records refer to outlying islands, the southern shore of Hong Kong, Kai Tak, Sai Kung Peninsula and the coast along Castle Peak Road.

**25. Great Egret** (*Egretta alba*)

At least 20 recorded in the Deep Bay area up to 15 May and up to 50 there from 14 August. One flying north at Sai Kung on 30 April. Up to four seen around Luk Keng in the winter months. One pair bred at Yim Tso Ha Egretty and two pairs were seen feeding young in the outer mangroves at Mai Po in August.

**26. Grey Heron** (*Ardea cinerea*)

Present in the Deep Bay area until 15 May and from 26 August with maximum numbers of about 150 in February and March. One at Luk Keng from 11 October to 10 December.

**27. Purple Heron** (*Ardea purpurea*)

Up to six at Mai Po until 28 May and from 1 August except for 12 on 24 April and 8 on the 5 August. Single birds seen at Plover Cove, Shuen Wan and Luk Keng in January, October and December respectively.

**30. White Ibis** (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*)

One at Mai Po on 2 January, up to three there from 19 February to 1 May, and one or two from 15 October. One bird wintered at Luk Keng from 21 November.

**31. European Spoonbill** (*Platalea leucorodia*)

Up to 14 at Mai Po between 15 January and 1 May with maximum numbers in February and March.

**32. Lesser Spoonbill** (*Platalea minor*)

One at Mai Po on 19 February with a flock of 14 European Spoonbills. At least one, and probably up to five, on the marshes between 13 March and 1 May and three there on 3 November. There is some doubt as to the maximum number of spring records due to possible confusion with *P. leucorodia* which were present in mixed flocks at the same time.

**33. Mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

One drake at Mai Po on 23 January and at least one drake and up to four ducks there between 16 October and 13 November.

**34. Yellow-nib Duck** (*Anas poecilorhyncha*)

One or two on the Mai Po Marshes between 20 March and 15 May and up to 20 there from 1 August until the end of the year.

**35. Gadwall** (*Anas strepera*)

One female on 21 October at Mai Po and up to six, including at least two drakes, present there from 6 November to 18 December.

**36. Falcated Teal** (*Anas falcata*)

Up to 17 including four drakes at Mai Po from 16 October to 11 December. Fully plumaged drakes were recorded from 12 November. Also one drake at Lok Ma Chau on 31 December.

**37. Teal** (*Anas crecca*)

Common in the Deep Bay Area up to 17 April and from 2 October with maximum counts of about 500 on 12 March and over 400 on 3 November. Elsewhere, between one and three birds recorded from Shuen Wan, Shatin, Lok Ma Chau and Ting Kau during the winter months.

**39. Garganey** (*Anas querquedula*)

Recorded at Mai Po from 8 April to 8 May and from 2 September to 14 November. Maximum numbers on each passage were 60 on 2 April and 120 on 2 October. About 40 flew east over the sea past Ting Kau on 22 April and a pair were seen on a pond at Castle Peak on 25 September.

**40. Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*)

Up to 27, including at least four drakes, in the Deep Bay area from 16 October to 27 December.

41. Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Recorded in the Deep Bay area up to 20 February and from 21 October with maximum counts of over 100 in Deep Bay on 18 February and 33 at Mai Po on 23 October.

42. Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Several drakes in Deep Bay on 16 January and up to seven birds at Mai Po from 15 October to the end of the year. Records fewer than in previous years.

45. Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*)

One male and one female at Mai Po on 1 January (MAW, HGA, RJB et al) and one male there on 15 December (RJB et al).

[45/46. Baer's Pochard/Tufted Duck (*Aythya baeri/fuligula*)

All records are from the Mai Po Marshes. At least two females/immatures were present from 16 January to 12 February, one of which was probably *A. fuligula*. On 21 October one probable male *A. baeri* was reported, and later the same day a flock of ten birds, not specifically identified, were seen in flight. One female/immature remained from 3 to 18 December.

The above records have highlighted an identification problem for females or immatures of the above species.]

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

Six seen in Deep Bay about one mile south of Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 February, and one female on a fish pond at Mai Po on 16 November.

50. Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Recorded regularly in Deep Bay up to 17 April and from 16 November with maximum numbers of about 250 on 16 January and 200 on 27 December. One or two birds were occasionally seen over the Mai Po Marshes during this period. Numbers of wintering birds appear to be increasing.

55. Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*)

Common and widespread in all months with increased numbers in the winter, particularly at traditional roosting areas on Stonecutter's Island and The Peak. Over 50 at Kowloon Reservoirs on 27 February and at a day roost on Ma Wan on 19 November.

57. Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Single birds recorded regularly from widespread areas until 3 April and from 17 October with up to three in the Mong Tseng and Mai Po areas. One summer record at North Lantau on 13 August.

[58. Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Single birds reported from Island School, Hong Lok Yuen and Mai Po up to 16 May and from widespread areas from 30 October. Two at She Shan on 13 November and two at Ho Sheung Heung on 23 November. All were probably *A. nisus* but the possibility of *A. gularis/virgatus/badius* cannot be ruled out.]

[59. Japanese Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter gularis*)

An adult female sparrowhawk seen at close quarters at Ma Nam Wat, Sai Kung on 23 November showed a conspicuous broad dark mesial stripe on pale throat. (GCHC, CAV). Although the description indicates that this may well have been a Besra (*A. virgatus*), whose breeding range reaches Kwangtung, the possibility of *A. gularis* cannot be excluded.]

60. Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

One at Mong Tseng on 16 October, a new early date.

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

An adult male perched in a pine tree overlooking paddies at Chek Keng, Sai Kung on 8 October (MLC, GCHC) was the fifth record for Hong Kong.

63. Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*)

Two adults at Long Valley on 16 January and 6 February, Lok Ma Chau on 13 February and 26 November, and Mai Po on 31 December. Single adults at Fanling on 27 February and Mai Po on 6 November, and single immatures at Mong Tseng and Lok Ma Chau on 18 February.

64. Steppe Eagle (*Aquila rapax*)

One immature at Lok Ma Chau on 26 and 27 November. Immature eagles, probably of this species, were reported at Long Valley on 18 February, Mai Po on 6 November and Lok Ma Chau on 17 November.

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

Recorded between March and July, usually in pairs, from widespread areas including the Sai Kung Peninsula, northern New Territories and Lantau.

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

Single adults or pairs and single immatures reported throughout the year from offshore islands, Tolo Harbour, eastern and southern coasts, including Victoria Harbour. Definite breeding attempts were made in at least four separate locations.

**[68. Grey-faced Buzzard-eagle** (*Butastur indicus*)

Two birds soaring above Mai Po Marshes on 6 November were probably this species. One was seen to mob an immature Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*).]

**69. Serpent Eagle** (*Spilornis cheela*)

Recorded singly or in pairs throughout the year from widespread locations, including Lam Tsuen Valley, Tai Po Kau, Sai Kung Peninsula Mai Po and Mong Tseng.

**70. Marsh Harrier** (*Circus aeruginosus*)

Several wintered at Mai Po up to 21 April and from 28 September with maximum count of seven on 6 February. Most were immatures or females except for single records of adult males in February, March, and December.

**71. Pied Harrier** (*Circus melanoleucos*)

Single adult males at Mai Po on 11 September and at Ting Kau on 25 September. The latter flew in off the sea in the wake of Severe Tropical Storm "Freda"

**72. Hen Harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*)

An adult female at Mai Po from 6 to 13 November (CAV, GCHC).

**74. Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Up to three in the Deep Bay area until 20 April and from 18 August. One at Plover Cove on 13 February and again on 15 and 20 November.

**75. Hobby** (*Falco subbuteo*)

Single birds seen at Sek Kong on 16 January, Lok Ma Chau on 11 September, Tai Long Wan on 8 October and Mai Po on 16 October.

**76. Peregrine Falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*)

At least one pair of adults and one immature in the urban areas of Hong Kong, Kowloon and Tsuen Wan, with records in most months. Seen to chase Tree Sparrows (*Passer montanus*) in Wanchai and Happy Valley on several occasions. One regularly perched on Murray Building between February and April. Single birds, mostly immatures, seen at Mai Po in January and from August. Apparently three at Mai Po on 6 November. One at Fung Yuen on 17 July.

**78. Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*)

One or two recorded regularly from widespread areas up to 27 March and from 8 October. On 8 February one was seen to swoop from the top of a housing estate block in Homantin, Kowloon and attack a canary in a cage on a 6th floor balcony (CRP).

**79. Chinese Francolin** (*Francolinus pintadeanus*)

Recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories, Lantau and the south side of Hong Kong island. Often heard but seldom seen.

**84. Water Rail** (*Rallus aquaticus*)

One at Mai Po on 1 January.

**85. Banded Rail** (*Rallus striatus*)

Up to three recorded throughout the year at Mai Po. Single birds also seen at Shatin on 2 February, Shuen Wan on 17 April, and up to four at Luk Keng on several occasions during August.

**87. Ruddy Crane** (*Porzana fusca*)

One seen regularly between 29 January and 6 March at a small pond near Mong Tseng. This is the first wintering record of this species for Hong Kong.

**87.1. Band-bellied Crane** (*Porzana paykulli*)

An adult was found dead at Jardine's Lookout on 11 October after having struck a wall (HGA). The specimen was handed to Mr. F. O. P. Hechtel for keeping. This is a new record for Hong Kong.

Main distinguishing points from the very similar Ruddy Crane (*Porzana fusca*) were the conspicuous black and white bands on flanks, belly and undertail covers, the indistinct white barring on wing coverts, and larger size.

This species breeds in North China and migrates south to winter in Indo-China and Malaysia.

**88. Crimson-legged Crane** (*Amaurornis akool*)

Two adults near Bride's Pool between 22 May and 26 September. One juvenile seen with an adult at the same location on 25 September indicated that successful breeding probably occurred.

**89. White-breasted Waterhen** (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*)

Common and widespread throughout the New Territories with occasional records from Hong Kong Island.

**90. Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Recorded regularly in the north and west of the New Territories throughout the year with summer records of juveniles at Sha Po, Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau, indicating that breeding probably occurred at these locations. Over 20 at Mai Po on 1 January, 17 April and 31 December.

**91. Watercock** (*Gallicrex cinerea*)

A female seen feeding along a stream at Sek Kong on 16 January

is an unusual winter record (MAW). Up to three adults and one immature at Luk Keng between 17 July and 2 September indicate probable breeding. A female at Silvermine Bay on 17 and 18 August and another at Mai Po on 16 October. A female or immature was picked up in Kowloon Tong on 12 October and released the next day.

**92. Coot** (*Fulica atra*)

Again recorded through the summer at Mai Po with two in June, August and September. Regularly seen in good numbers up to 15 May and from 19 October in the Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau areas. Maximum numbers were 134 at San Tin in 21 February and about 100 at Lok Ma Chau on 31 December. Also up to 12 at Plover Cove, two at Luk Keng, one at Pui O, and five at Castle Peak during the winter months.

**93. Pheasant-tailed Jacana** (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*)

One or two at Lok Ma Chau from 15 October to 30 December. Four at Castle Peak on 16 October.

**96. Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Two at Long Valley on 1 January and seven there on 24 January. One at Castle Peak on 2 January. Two at Kai Tak on 2 and 8 October. Four in flight over Mai Po on 17 December.

**97. Grey-headed Lapwing** (*Vanellus cinereus*)

At least two at Long Valley up to 24 January. Two at Kai Tak on 17 February, four at Mong Tseng on 18 February, and one at Castle Peak on 16 October. Up to three at Mai Po or Lok Ma Chau between 21 October and 20 November, and three at Sek Kong on 19 November.

**99. Little Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius dubius*)

Regularly recorded in the Deep Bay area and at Kai Tak until 24 April and from 5 August. Usually about 50 on the marshes during the winter, but over 100 recorded at Lok Ma Chau on 24 January and 13 November. At Kai Tak the maximum number counted was 37 on 6 September. Also seen in smaller numbers at Lantau, Luk Keng and Tai Po.

**100. Kentish Plover** (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)

Common in the winter at Kai Tak and in widespread areas of the New Territories, particularly in the Deep Bay area, until 4 May and from 22 September. Flocks of over 100 seen at Mai Po on 23 October and over 500 on 11 December. Regular counts at Kai Tak gave maximum numbers of 80 on 6 January and 75 on 16 December.

**101. Greater Sand-plover** (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)

Maximum counts in spring were about 100 at Mai Po on 21 April

and 1 May, with 15 at Kai Tak on 29 April. Numbers were greatly reduced in autumn with a maximum of seven at Mai Po on 17 December and six at Kai Tak on 28 October.

**102. Mongolian Sand-plover** (*Charadrius mongolus*)

Maximum number was 25 at Mai Po in the late April and early May, with only two at Kai Tak. No autumn records.

**[101/102. Sand-plover Sp.]** (*Charadrius leschenaultii/mongolus*)

Records for sand-plovers, not specifically identified, fell between 12 March and 28 May, and from 15 July until the end of the year. Most sightings were from the Deep Bay area except for up to five at Sai Kung in March and April, and one at Baguio Villas in August.]

**104. Grey Plover** (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Record high numbers reported at Mai Po in the early part of the year, increasing from about 16 on 23 January to about 50 on 6 February, 74 on 13 February, and 70 to 80 on 6 March. Two were recorded at Kai Tak on 4 and 11 February. The highest count the following winter was 32 at Mai Po on 27 December. Extreme dates were up to 28 May and from 14 August.

**105. Asiatic Golden Plover** (*Pluvialis dominicus*)

Maximum of six at Mai Po or Lok Ma Chau between 21 February and 29 April and up to seven there from 25 August to 23 October. At Kai Tak up to three recorded between 18 March and 13 May and up to five between 19 August and 28 October.

**106. Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*)

All records are for the spring passage. A flock of 16 was seen at Lok Ma Chau on 1 May, with 12 still there on 4 May. Up to six at Mai Po between 17 April and 15 May, one at Kai Tak on 29 April and 13 May, and one at Sai Kung on 30 April.

**107. Fantail Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Recorded regularly during the winter months at Mai Po, San Tin, Lok Ma Chau and Castle Peak, with lesser numbers at Luk Keng, Shuen Wan, Shatin, She Shan and Kai Tak. Maximum numbers were at least 60 at Castle Peak and 100 at Lok Ma Chau.

**[108/109. Snipe Sp.]** (*Gallinago stenura/megala*)

Snipe, not specifically identified but not *G. gallinago*, were recorded at Mai Po on 8 March, 8 May and between 25 August and 7 September. Probable sightings of *G. stenura* were made on 8 March at Mai Po and 17 December at Lok Ma Chau, the call being heard in both cases.]

**112. Woodcock** (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Two at Tai Om on 16 January and single birds at Sek Kong and Chi Ma Wan between 16 January and 21 February. Individuals recorded again from 6 November to 11 December at Ho Sheung Heung, Fung Yuen and Sek Kong, with two at Tung Chung, Lantau on 23 December.

**113. Curlew** (*Numenius arquata*)

Several recorded regularly at Mai Po up to 14 May and from 7 September, with maximum numbers of 25 on 13 February, 18 on 6 March and a flock of 59 over the outer mangroves on 27 December.

**114. Australian Curlew** (*Numenius madagascariensis*)

All records are from Mai Po for the spring passage only, with two on 10 April, nine on 1 April and one between 1 and 8 May.

**115. Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Recorded on the Deep Bay Marshes from 15 April to 22 May with maximum of 44 on 17 April, and again in autumn with up to 8 from 14 August to 23 October. One at Kai Tak on 22 April, and an unusual summer record of three there on 14 July. Three at Tai Po on 19 September.

**116. Little Whimbrel** (*Numenius minutus*)

One at Kai Tak on 22 April (KKC, DSM).

**117. Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*)

Flocks of up to 37 reported at Mai Po and up to 9 at Lok Ma Chau between 13 March and 4 May, with maximum number on 11 April. One or two at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau between 18 August and 30 December.

**118. Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*)

Up to three at Mai Po between 3 and 21 April.

**119. Asiatic Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*)

First record of 11 at Lok Ma Chau on 2 April is a new early spring date. Seen regularly at Mai Po from 9 April to 15 May with numbers rising to a new maximum of 26 in one flock on 21 April. Up to four seen at Mai Po on autumn passage between 14 and 29 August.

**120. Green Sandpiper** (*Tringa ochropus*)

Widespread throughout the New Territories up to 24 April and from 17 August. Usually seen singly or in small numbers, but up to 20 recorded at Castle Peak, Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau during the winter months.

**121. Wood Sandpiper** (*Tringa glareola*)

Commonly recorded in marshy areas of the New Territories up to 8 May and from 25 August. Large flocks of between 100 and 200 birds reported at Lok Ma Chau from 24 January to 30 April with 260 counted on 23 March, 80 at Castle Peak on 25 September, and 100 at Lok Ma Chau between 13 and 27 November. One seen at Kai Tak on 29 April and four on 9 September. One in Kowloon on 11 October.

**122. Redshank** (*Tringa totanus*)

Regularly seen at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau on spring passage between 8 March and 15 May, and less frequently in autumn from 14 August to 27 November. Numbers increased to 150 between 28 April and 1 May, and rose from about 50 in the autumn to 200 at Lok Ma Chau on 6 November. At least 24 at Sai Kung on 30 April, one at Luk Keng on 24 August and several heard at Plover Cove on 3 September.

**123. Spotted Redshank** (*Tringa erythropus*)

Fairly common on the Deep Bay Marshes up to 8 May and from 22 August with flocks of over 100 regularly reported. Maximum numbers were 300 at Mai Po on 8 May and 200 at Lok Ma Chau on 13 November. Two recorded at Kai Tak on 15 April.

**124. Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*)

Up to 14 regularly recorded in the Deep Bay area until 28 May and from 9 August, with over 20 at Mai Po on 1 May and 22 August. One at Sai Kung on 30 April.

**126. Marsh Sandpiper** (*Tringa stagnatilis*)

Up to six on the Deep Bay Marshes from 15 January to 21 March, and from 25 August to the end of the year. Maximum numbers of up to 35 were recorded on the spring passage between 27 March and 1 May. One recorded at Castle Peak on 1 October.

**127. Common Sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Common and widespread up to 15 May and from 14 August except for regular summer records at Kai Tak of up to four in late May, one or two in July and five in early August.

**128. Grey-rumped Sandpiper** (*Heteroscelus brevipes*)

On the spring passage, up to three at Kai Tak and up to 10 at Mai Po between 20 April and 15 May. Five at Tai Po on 25 April, and one at Sai Kung on 30 April. In the autumn, two were recorded at Kai Tak and up to eight at Mai Po between 5 August and 28 October, and one at Starling Inlet on 6 and 9 September.

**129. Terek Sandpiper** (*Xenus cinereus*)

Recorded on the Deep Bay marshes from 10 April to 22 May, and from 18 to 29 August. Maximum numbers were 35 in the spring on 24 April and six in the autumn. One or two reported at Kai Tak between 22 April and 13 May, and one at Sai Kung on 30 April.

**131. Great Knot** (*Calidris tenuirostris*)

Up to 10 at Mai Po between 9 April and 8 May, and one there on 27 and 29 August.

**132. Eastern Little Stint** (*Calidris ruficollis*)

Three to four at Lok Ma Chau on 23 January. Large flocks were reported on the spring passage at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau between 20 March and 15 May, with maximum numbers of about 250 in late April and 400 on 1 May. One at Kai Tak on 15 April and five at Shuen Wan on 17 April. In the autumn up to 20 were seen between 18 August and 30 December, mainly at Lok Ma Chau.

**133. Long-toed Stint** (*Calidris subminuta*)

Recorded at Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau until 4 May and from 11 September. Groups of 15 to 30 seen on spring passage with maximum of 50 on 21 April. Up to 10 reported on autumn passage and during the winter months. One at Pak Nai on 26 March.

**134. Temminck's Stint** (*Calidris temminckii*)

Flocks of up to 50 reported from the Deep Bay Marshes, principally Lok Ma Chau, until 21 April and from 9 October with maximum of over 70 at Mai Po on 12 March including one almost complete albino stint, probably of this species.

**135. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** (*Calidris acuminata*)

Recorded regularly on the Deep Bay Marshes between 9 April and 15 May. Numbers increased to 20 at Lok Ma Chau on 30 April and 30 at Mai Po on 1 May. One at Kai Tak on 29 April. The only autumn record was one at Lok Ma Chau on 16 October.

**136. Dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*)

Recorded on the Deep Bay Marshes between 9 January and 17 April, and from 25 September to 11 December, usually singly or in small groups of up to 20 birds. A large flock of 250 was seen at Mai Po on 13 February, 34 at Lok Ma Chau on 13 November, and over 100 at Mai Po on 11 December.

**137. Curlew Sandpiper** (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Regularly reported from the Deep Bay Marshes between 27 March and 28 May with over 200 at Mai Po on 1 May. Also recorded at Kai Tak with one on 28 and four on 29 April. In the autumn single

birds seen at Shuen Wan on 13 October and Lok Ma Chau from 24 August to 15 December.

**138. Sanderling** (*Crocethia alba*)

One at Pak Nai on 26 March, two at Mai Po on 23 April and one there on 1 May and 27 August.

**139. Spoon-billed Sandpiper** (*Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*)

Single birds seen at Mai Po on 18, 21 and 23 April, 14 and 15 May; two there on 30 April and three on 1 May.

**140. Broad-billed Sandpiper** (*Limicola falcinellus*)

Recorded from 9 April to 15 May at Mai Po with numbers increasing to a maximum of 45 in one flock on 21 April. Numbers remained high for several weeks with 25 seen on 24 April and 40 on 15 May. One at Sai Kung on 30 April.

**141. Ruff** (*Philomachus pugnax*)

One or two at Lok Ma Chau between 16 and 30 January. One Ruff and two to three Reeves there from 13 to 19 February, and again on 27 March. At Mai Po, one Reeve was regularly reported from 14 April to 8 May. A pair remained at Lok Ma Chau from 6 to 13 November, and a single bird was seen there on 17 December.

**142. Red-necked Phalarope** (*Phalaropus lobatus*)

Single birds seen at Lok Ma Chau and Mai Po on 29 and 30 March respectively. Three at Mai Po on 14 and four on 15 April, including three in summer plumage. Two at Luk Keng on 25 September.

**143. Black-winged Stilt** (*Himantopus himantopus*)

Up to seven at Mai Po between 13 February and 14 May, and up to 16 at Mai Po or Lok Ma Chau, usually the latter, from 26 August until the end of the year.

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

One at Mai Po from 12 to 18 February. About 30 in Deep Bay on 13 March, 10 at Lok Ma Chau on 13 November, and eight in Deep Bay on 27 December.

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

Two or three at Mai Po from 13 March to 1 May. At Sai Kung one seen on 21 and six on 30 April. Regularly recorded at Kai Tak throughout the summer with six on 25 March, up to 14 in April and up to 9 in May, one in June, six on 8 July, five on 5 August and two on 2 September.

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

Regularly recorded from Victoria Harbour, Deep Bay, Tolo Harbour and the offshore areas up to 28 March and from 2 November except for one extremely early record of four adults flying east past Ma Wan on 25 September during strong winds following the passage of Severe Tropical Storm "Freda". The highest count at the beach roost near Pak Nai was 250 on 18 February, and the maximum at Kai Tak was 141 on 4 January. Regular counts in the West Lamma Channel gave a maximum of 619 on 21 January (KKC, DSM).

**150. Great Black-headed Gull** (*Larus ichthyæetus*)

An adult in full summer plumage was seen and photographed on the beach at Pak Nai with roosting Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) on 12 March (MLC). This is the third record for Hong Kong (see photograph in 1976 Bird Report).

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

An adult male shot dead at Kai Tak on 27 January. Single adults seen there on 28 January and 30 December, off Tap Shek Kok, Castle Peak on 5 March, and at Pak Nai on 27 December.

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

Recorded from widespread coastal areas up to 19 March and from 2 December, apart from an exceptionally early record of a juvenile found dead at Kai Tak on 12 September. Most records are of immatures with maximum counts of eight in Castle Peak Bay on 2 January, at least six in West Lamma Channel on 23 February, and six in Tolo Harbour on 19 March. Two adults seen at Pak Nai with one immature on 18 February.

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

Very common and widespread during the winter months. Highest numbers were reported in December with over 1,000 at Pak Nai on 10, 1,500 at Tai Po on 15, 5,100 in Deep Bay on 21, and 1,420 at Kai Tak and 3,500 in western half of Victoria Harbour on 23 December. Regular fortnightly counts of roosting gulls in the West Lamma Channel showed that between 10,000 and 11,000 birds were present in January and December (KKC, DSM). Extreme dates were up to 26 March and from 2 November.

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

At least three adults at Mai Po on 1 January.

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

One at Mai Po on 1 May. Up to 15 at Lok Ma Chau between 25 September and 20 October.

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

Three at Mai Po on 15 April. Between 10 and 15 recorded at Lok Ma Chau and Mai Po between 7 September and 2 October. One adult at Castle Peak and over 30 at Luk Keng on 25 September, and four in Starling Inlet on 26 September. Three at Mai Po on 26 November and one marsh tern (*C. leucoptera/hybrida*) there on 17 and 18 December.

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

At Pak Nai, 18 seen on 11 April and 15 on 16 April. Up to 24 at Mai Po from 15 April to 1 May. Five at Luk Keng on 25 September.

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

Regularly recorded from the Deep Bay area up to 5 June with maximum counts of 80 at Pak Nai on 20 February and 52 at Mai Po on 22 May. Up to six seen there between 1 and 29 August, and up to 19 from 10 to 26 December.

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

"Commic" terns (*S. hirundo/paradisaea/dougalli*), not specifically identified, were reported as follows:— one at Mai Po on 19 August, probably *S. hirundo*, seven off Po Toi Island on 21 August, three at Ting Kau on 4 September, eight in East Lamma Channel the same day with over 70 there on 17 September and four on 25 September, and seven in West Lamma Channel on 19 September.)

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

Up to 25 in the Deep Bay area from 14 April to 1 May. One at Lok Ma Chau on 29 September.

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

More commonly recorded than in recent years with widespread reports of up to 10 until 8 May and from 18 September. A flock of at least 10 wintered at Beas River up to 5 May. Also recorded at Homantin, Stanley and Lantau, as well as being fairly widespread in the New Territories. On 10 December a flock of over 25 was seen above the reservoir at Lau Shui Heung.

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

Common and widespread.

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

Six at Mong Tseng on 18 February, one at Sai Kung on 30 April and one at Mai Po on 16 and 19 October.

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

One at She Shan on 23 April, one at Mong Tseng on 6 September

and up to three at Fanling/Beas River and Ho Sheung Heung between 9 September and 5 October. Although close views were obtained and comprehensive descriptions submitted for some of these sight records, in no cases were the diagnostic calls heard.)

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

Single birds reported from widespread areas of the New Territories, Hong Kong Island, Cheung Chau and Ma Wan between 17 April and 1 July. Several present at Fanling Golf Course during June. Many records were based on call only.

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

One dead bird picked up at Beas River on 2 September appeared to have been killed during the night by flying into an overhead wire. The specimen, in good plumage, was handed in to the Society.

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

Quite common and widespread. Heard or seen regularly during the first nine months of the year. Thereafter only one, a hepatic female/immature, at Mai Po on 11 December and one in Kowloon on 2 December. Two hepatic females stayed in a garden at Fanling from early in the year until June after which only one remained. On 17 September a young bird was seen in the same garden being fed by a Longtailed Tailor-bird (*Orthotomus sutorius*).

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

One at Beas River on 18 September.

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

Quite common and widespread throughout the year in the New Territories and on Hong Kong island, but most regularly recorded between March and September.

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

Quite common and widespread.

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

More frequently recorded than previous years and possibly more common than thought as it seems to be a greater skulker than the Greater Coucal (*Centropus sinensis*). Up to three reported from widespread areas in the New Territories, Lantau, Cheung Chau and Stanley.

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

A small owl flushed several times from trees at Fanling Golf Course on 10 September was probably this species.]

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

At Tai Mei Tuk, Plover Cove one heard calling from 9 January to mid-April and again from September to the end of the year. Two adults and four fledglings were seen in Victoria Barracks on 26 May.

**184. Short-eared Owl** (*Asio flammeus*)

On 18 November one was found dead at Kai Tak, the victim of birdstrike (DSM). Its plumage was in good condition and it was not thought to be an escape. This is only the second record of this species for Hong Kong, the previous bird also being found dead.

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

An unidentified medium-sized brown owl with a long tail seen near Wong Nei Chong Gap on 19 February may possibly have been this species (MAW).]

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

Two birds, not specifically identified, were seen at dusk on the Fanling Golf Course on 17 September and one again on 28 September.]

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

A group of over ten birds was seen low overhead at Beas River on 21 April (GCHC, THF, DAS). This is the first record for Hong Kong.

The following description was noted:— "Large size (*greater than Apus pacificus*), short square tail, very long slightly bulbous wings, clear cut white throat, white vent extending up sides of flanks as thin line, pale brownish area on mantle, rest of plumage dark blackish brown. Flight graceful with much gliding, wing beats relatively shallow, occasional high speed bursts". (DAS).

This species has a wide range across Asia from the Himalayas to North China and migrates through South China and Indochina to wintering grounds as far south as Australia and New Zealand.

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

Recorded from widespread areas between February and September and again in November, generally in small numbers but large flocks of over 60 were noted in February and March in the Lok Ma Chau/Mai Po area.

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

Recorded in every month of the year from widespread areas with occasional large flocks of up to 200 seen. Breeding colonies noted at Hong Kong Football Stadium, Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long.

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

Recorded in ones and twos in most months of the year from the Deep Bay Marshes and Starling Inlet area. Three birds at Yim Tso Ha on 24 April and three at Luk Keng on 3 September.

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

Locally common and widespread until end of April and from

August. No records for May and generally scarce in June and July.

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

Fairly common and widespread in the New Territories with regular records from urban Kowloon, Hong Kong Island, Lantau and other offshore islands. Although reported in every month there were fewer records in the summer months.

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

Up to three reported from widespread areas in the winter months with a maximum count of six at Mong Tseng on 16 October. Also widely recorded in the summer months but generally in smaller numbers. Unusual records of one at Kai Tak on 30 September and two at K.G.V. School, Kowloon on 10 October.

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

One adult reported at She Shan between 17 and 21 April. One at Tsung Pak Long on 18 September. An immature at Tai Long Wan on 8 October.

**199. Hoopoe** (*Upupa epops*)

One reported at Tung Chung on Lantau island on 23 December. (HGA, TPG).

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

Regularly reported from widespread parts of the New Territories throughout the year. At least two pairs in the Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve and in the Chek Keng/Tai Long Wan area. Pairs also reported from Bride's Pool, Hong Lok Yuen, She Shan, where two were seen mating, and Fung Yuen.

**201. Black-naped Green Woodpecker** (*Picus canus*)

One at She Shan on 21 April and an immature at Fanling Golf Course on 15 July.

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

Single birds reported from widespread areas, especially the north-western part of the New Territories, up to 10 April and from 13 October when one was seen at Kowloon Park and one at Gin Drinkers' Bay rubbish tip the next day.

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

One at Long Valley on 1 January. Recorded throughout the year at Kai Tak with peak numbers of 31 on 21 January and 37 on 18 November. Two at Mai Po on 23 October and one there on 16 November. On 30 October two appeared on the Happy Valley Rececourse and by 13 November the number had grown to nine. On 23 November three were found at Sai Kung.

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

Recorded from widespread areas throughout the year but much commoner between March and August. On 20 August about 950 were counted at dusk on the telephone wires at Lok Ma Chau.

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

A poor year for this species. Four seen at Mong Tseng Village on 20 February and a late record on 22 May when two were observed at Jardine's Lookout in a mixed flock of Swifts and Swallows. Up to four were recorded from the Mai Po Marshes between 16 and 27 November.

**208. House Martin** (*Delichon urbica*)

A new early date of one at Luk Keng on 2 February. One near the Ching Chung Koon Temple at Castle Peak on 25 September associating with Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*).

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

Between 27 February and 8 May two were seen on several occasions over the Mai Po Marshes sometimes in company with Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) and up to five were present on 30 April. On 21 October one seen in flight over the Mai Po Marshes.

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

Common and very widespread throughout the rural areas but rare in the urban areas with only one record of two seen frequently in Kowloon Tong. First young out of the nest reported on 13 March. As usual, melanistic Dusky Shrikes were noted from widespread areas.

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

Fairly well recorded this year from widespread areas, mainly in the New Territories but also from Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, from 19 January to 30 April and again from 2 September to 29 October. An unusual summer record of a bird at Tai Mei Tuk, Plover Cove on 7 June and three winter records of single birds in late December at Pokfulam, Lok Ma Chau and Pak Nai.

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

Recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories in every month of the year but the strongholds are still the Fanling Golf Course, where at least five pairs bred, and Tai Po Kau. Other records, often of immature birds only, came from Mong Tseng, Ta Kwu Leng, Sek Kong, Tai Long Wan, Tai Om, Kowloon Park and King George V School, Kowloon, mostly between September and November.

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

Quite common and widespread from 15 April until the end of

October with two January records from Tai Po Kau Forest and Lantau and several records for November and December. The highest count was of about 20 on Mai Po Marshes on 7 September.

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

One remained at She Shan from 16 January to 21 April, and a single bird (identified as race *salangensis*) was seen there on 27 November. One at Sha Tau Kok on 11 December.

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

Commonly recorded from widespread areas, including Hong Kong Island, between early April and mid-October, often in flocks of more than ten. Young birds were also reported from several areas in June and July. Winter records included single birds at Tai Po Kau forest on 30 January, Mai Po Marshes on 6 February, and Ma Wan on 19 November.

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

Recorded in all months except July, mainly from the New Territories, but with odd records for Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. Usually in small groups of less than ten but over 30 seen at Mai Po on 7 September and a similar number at Lok Ma Chau on 27 November. One pair bred at the club-house at Fanling Golf Course.

**218.1 Purple-backed Starling** (*Sturnus sturninus*)

A flock of 35 to 40 mixed adults and immatures was watched feeding near Tam Kon Chau Police Post at Mai Po on 25 September, the day following the passage of S.T.S. "Freda" (GCHC, CAV). Four were subsequently seen at Sek Kong on 28 September (GCHC, THF), and three starlings, possibly of this species, were seen at Tap Mun on 8 October. These are the first records for Hong Kong.

The main distinguishing features from Chinese Starlings (*S. sinensis*) were the small size, dark mantle and patch on nape (both metallic purple in adults), contrasting whitish rumps, lack of pale tip to tail, and white double wingbar.

This species breeds in northern China and migrates south through Indochina to winter in Malaysia and Indonesia.

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

Quite common and widespread during both winters including records from Lantau, Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. Usually seen in flocks with maximum counts of over 100 at Sha Tau Kok on 24 November and 100 at Lok Ma Chau on 13 December. Extreme dates were until 17 March and from 15 October.

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

A flock of 20 reported at Lok Ma Chau on 2 January. Up to 22

in the Ha Tsuen area in January with fewer in the following two months. Eight at Mong Tseng on 20 February with one or two remaining until 10 April. One at Mai Po on 9 March. Recorded in the autumn in small numbers from 9 September onwards from widespread areas of the New Territories, including Shatin, Sha Tau Kok, Mai Po and Castle Peak and in Kowloon.

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

Up to 11 at Lok Ma Chau until 19 February and five there on 27 December.

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

Locally common throughout the year in the New Territories and now appears to be firmly established at Stanley on Hong Kong Island where up to eight were regularly seen. Breeding was proved there when three juveniles were seen just out of the nest with two adults. Counts of over 150 were made at Fanling Golf Course.

**223. Crested Mynah** (*Acridotheres cristatellus*)

Common and widespread.

**224. Jay** (*Garrulus glandarius*)

A pair on Volunteer Slopes, Fanling on 5 February, two at Hong Lok Yuen on 5 March and at the Beas River Jockey Club on 11 September. Single birds at Po Lin Monastery, Lantau, on 28 December and at Tsung Pak Long on 29 December.

**225. Blue Magpie** (*Urocissa erythrorhyncha*)

Common on Hong Kong Island and locally common in favoured areas of the New Territories and Lantau.

**226. Magpie** (*Pica pica*)

Common and widespread. On the Fanling Golf Course evening flocks of up to 50 were noted in September.

**227. Treepie** (*Crypsirina formosae*)

This species irrupted again this year. First recorded on 27 November with about 80 flying high over Mai Po, four at She Shan and several near Stanley. Up to 21 were regularly sighted from widespread areas including the Peak and Lantau up to the end of the year.

**228. Jungle Crow** (*Corvus macrorhynchos*)

Locally common in the New Territories and Hong Kong Island with occasional records for Kowloon. Usually recorded singly or in small groups but flocks of up to 30 recorded in favoured areas. On 21 April 50 were seen flying over She Shan woods and on 17 September over 40 were seen leaving a roost at Hong Lok Yuen

between the Lo Wu and the Wo Hop Shek areas, the birds returning to Lo Wu in the evenings.

**229. Collared Crow** (*Corvus torquatus*)

Regularly recorded throughout year from favoured areas mainly at Mai Po and around Tolo Harbour. Up to 17 at Mai Po Marshes on 18 January.

**230. Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina melaschistos*)

One at She Shan on 16 January. Widespread in small numbers from 6 February until 6 April, and from 25 September to 11 December.

**233. Ashy Minivet** (*Pericrocotus divaricatus*)

One at Tai Long Wan on 19 March and two at Tai Po Kau on 7 September.

**234. Grey-throated Minivet** (*Pericrocotus solaris*)

Three at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 24 December in a mixed flock with nine Scarlet Minivets (*P. flammeus*), and eight in same area with four Scarlet Minivets on 26 December.

**235. Scarlet Minivet** (*Pericrocotus flammeus*)

Recorded in good numbers, usually in small flocks of up to ten, from widespread areas of the New Territories until 16 April and from 13 November, including one flock of 20 to 30 at Tai Po Kau on 3 and 9 January. One summer record of three in the Tai Po Kau Forest on 12 June.

**236. Chestnut Bulbul** (*Hypsipetes castanotus*)

One seen perched on telephone wires in the Sek Kong area on 24 April.

**237. Black Bulbul** (*Hypsipetes madagascariensis*)

Regularly recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories, Kowloon and Hong Kong Island between 9 February and 3 April when up to 50 were seen over the Mai Po Marshes. Single birds seen at Tsung Pak Long on 3 and 12 December.

**238. Crested Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus jocosus*)

Common and widespread.

**239. Chinese Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus sinensis*)

Common and widespread.

**240. Red-vented Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*)

Common and widespread, but tends to be more localised than the above two species.



Streaked Shearwater 28 January 1977  
Photo: D.S. Melville



Snipe Sp. at Kai Tak October 1978  
Photo: D.S. Melville



Yim Tso Ha Egrettry from the air 5 May 1977

Photo by courtesy of Brig. J.M. Chapple, Officer Commanding Brigade of Gurkhas



Black-Winged Stilts at Lok Ma Chau  
Photo: M.L. Chalmers



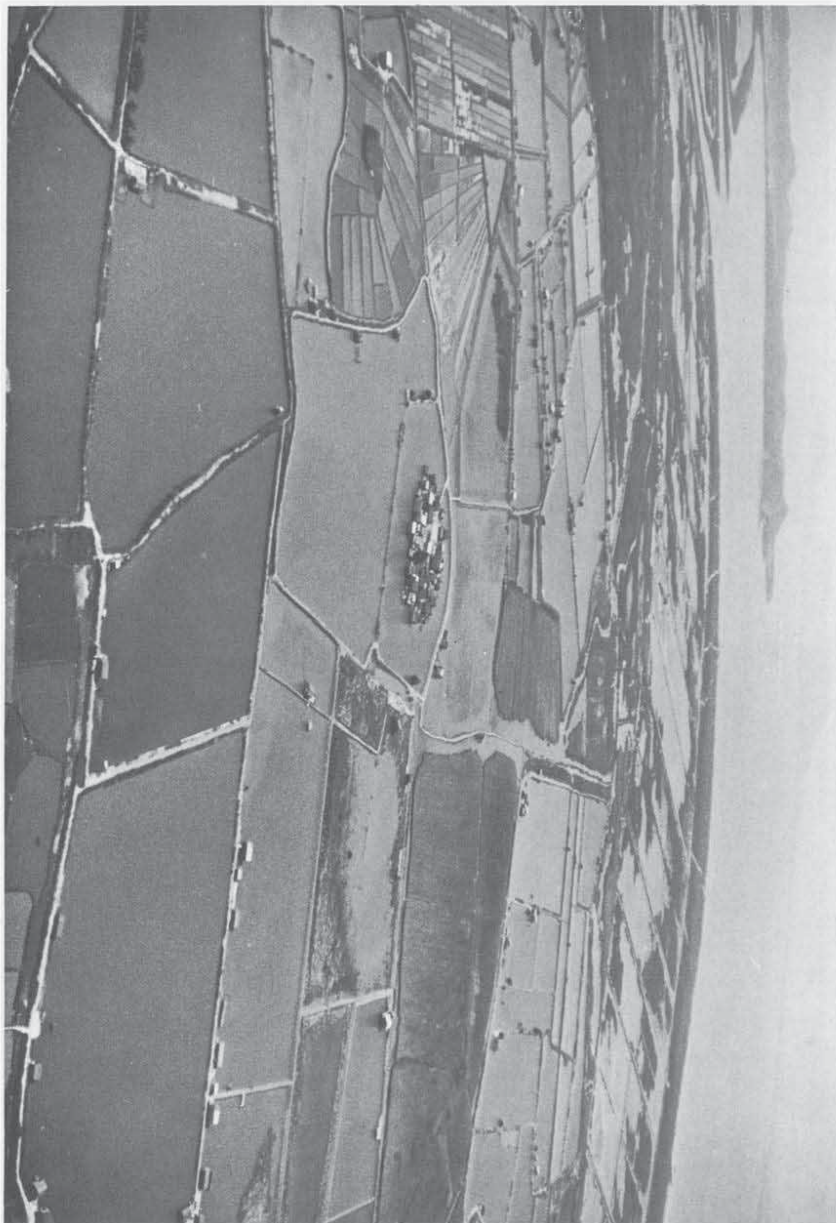
Curlew - Sandpiper  
Photo: D.J. Galloway



Black-Winged Stilts at Lok Ma Chau  
Photo: M.L. Chalmers



Juvenile Kentish Plover at Kai Tak October 1978  
Photo: D.S. Melville



**241. Black-faced Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax perspicillatus*)  
Common and widespread.

**242. Black-throated Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax chinensis*)  
Two at Bowen Road, Mid Levels, on 12 February and one there on 20 April.

**243. Hwamei** (*Garrulax canorus*)  
Quite common on Hong Kong Island and localised wooded areas of the New Territories. Also reported from several areas of Kowloon in small numbers.

**244. Greater Necklaced Laughing-thrush** (*Garrulax pectoralis*)  
Small flocks of up to 20 reported throughout the year in the Tai Po Kau Forest. In March one seen several times in the Botanical Gardens gathering nesting material was presumably an escape.

**245. Chinese Babax** (*Babax lanceolatus*)  
At least two birds heard calling on the upper slopes of Tai Mo Shan on 2 July. Up to five probables had been heard earlier in April. This is the first record of this species since 1972.

**246. Collared Siva** (*Yuhina castaniceps*)  
A flock of about eight was seen in Tai Po Kau Forest on 16 January and about 20 there on 13 February. A flock of ten was seen at the Hong Kong University on 8 March.

**248. Asian/Ince's Paradise Flycatcher** (*Terpsiphone paradisi*)  
From 24 August to 22 September single birds seen at Bride's Pool, Tai Po Kau Forest and Pak Hok Chau. One male at Sek Kong Woods on 27 November.

**249. Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** (*Terpsiphone atrocaudata*)  
One male at Castle Peak on 25 September and one at Tai Po Kau Forest on 29 September.

**250. Grey-headed Flycatcher** (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*)  
One at Tai Po Kau on 3 and 9 January and one at She Shan on 9 January. Up to three in Sek Kong Woods from 27 November until the end of the year.

**251. Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher** (*Hypothymis azurea*)  
One female/immature remained in a garden at Fanling from 4 February until 11 April, which is new late date for this species. One at Tsung Pak Long on 16 February. A pair returned to the Fanling garden briefly on 5 November and single birds were seen in the Tai Po Kau Forest on 26 and 29 December.

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

Quite common and widespread up to 6 May, which is a new late spring date, and from 2 September, being commoner in the autumn.

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

One at Ma Wan on 30 April and at least four near Clear Water Bay Road on 6 May. Single birds in Sek Kong woods from 18 September to 1 October and in the Mai Po area and Fanling Golf Course from 1 to 28 October.

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

One at She Shan on 9 January, a male in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 16 January and another in Sek Kong woods on 24 January. A male on Lamma Island on 12 and 16 February, at Hong Kong University on 21 February and at Tregunter Path on 28 March. Between 23 and 28 November one male remained at Three Fathoms Cove. One at Sha Tau Kok on 11 December and single males at Tai Po Kau Forest on 24 and 26 December.

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

Quite common and widespread in the New Territories with occasional records from the Colonial Cemetery in Happy Valley and Hong Kong University until 16 April. A male stayed in a garden at Fanling until 17 April and on 15 April was joined by a second male, both by then in full plumage. First autumn record was on 11 October at Hong Kong University and from then on reported from widespread areas of the New Territories until the end of the year.

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

One sub-adult male at Hok Tau Reservoir on 29 November and up to two females in Tai Po Kau Forest between 24 and 26 December.

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

Apart from one female/immature seen at She Shan on 9 October all records were between 10 September and 9 October with up to six in Beas River/Fanling Golf Club area, two of which were males, three at Tai Po Kau Forest and single birds at Sek Kong Woods and Bride's Pool.

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

One full male seen in the wood at Ho Sheung Heung on 24 January. This is the first record of this species for seven years. The bird was in fine plumage and gave every appearance of being in a wild state. (CAV, GCHC).

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

Quite common and widespread up to 3 April and from 19

November, with up ten recorded in the Hok Tau Area on 24 November.

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

Up to three at She Shan and Tai Po Kau, and single birds at Bowen Road Mid-levels, and Sek Kong up to 21 February. Single birds at Bride's Pool on 28 August and at Lok Ma Chau on 26 September were both well ahead of the previous earliest date for this species (25 October). Single birds also recorded from 22 November at Ho Sheung Heung, Fung Yuen, Tai Po Kau, Cheung Chau, Hong Kong University and Lantau.

**265. Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** (*Locustella certhiola*)

One seen at the edge of a pond behind Mai Po Village on 11 September (MLC).

**266. Styan's Grasshopper Warbler** (*Locustella pleskei*)

Up to three on the Mai Po Marshes from 20 April to 1 May, with single birds there on 1 January, 8 March and 23 October.

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

Quite common at Mai Po during the spring passage between 6 March and 8 May, with maximum numbers in late April. Two at Kai Tak on 11 March and a single bird there on 2 December. Also reported at Mai Po during the autumn passage between 18 September and 23 October, but far scarcer than in spring.

**268. Great Reed-warbler** (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*)

Common at Mai Po during the spring passage between 9 April and 8 May with larger numbers, up to 50, during the autumn passage between 22 August and 16 November. Over 30 at Gin Drinkers Bay (Kwai Chung) on 14 October, with other records from Lok Ma Chau, Mong Tseng and Kowloon Park.

**269. Dusky Warbler** (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*)

Common and widespread until 1 May and from 11 September.

**270. Yellow-browed Warbler** (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

Common and widespread until 24 April and from 11 September.

**271. Pallas's Warbler** (*Phylloscopus proregulus*)

Fairly common and widespread until 6 April and from 27 August, which is a new early date for this species. On 1 January in the Happy Valley Colonial Cemetery several 'waves' of this species totalling in excess of 100 birds, were seen moving through in company with flocks of White-eyes (*Zosterops japonica*).

**272. Arctic Warbler** (*Phylloscopus borealis*)

Only a few records of up to three birds in the spring between 9 March and 30 April from widespread areas. Very common during the autumn passage between 27 August, which is a new early date, and 15 October.

**279. Long-tailed Tailor-bird** (*Orthotomus sutorius*)

Common and widespread.

**280. David's Hill-Warbler** (*Prinia polychroa*)

One on Tai Mo Shan on 21 August.

**281. Brown Wren-warbler** (*Prinia subflava*)

Common on the Deep Bay Marshes with one or two records from Lok Ma Chau and Starling Inlet. First fledglings out of the nest on 17 April at Mai Po.

**282. Yellow-bellied Wren-warbler** (*Prinia flaviventris*)

Common and widespread.

**283. Fantail Warbler** (*Cisticola juncidis*)

Locally common throughout the northern New Territories in all months, but most numerous during the winter. Also recorded from Kai Tak and Lantau, with one record of a single bird in Kowloon on 7 March.

**285. Red-tailed Robin** (*Erithacus sibilans*)

Single birds reported from several woodland areas in the New Territories and from two sites on Hong Kong Island between 23 January and 8 March. Also single birds at Sek Kong on 19 November and Tai Po Kau on 31 December. A dead bird was found at Repulse Bay on 28 October.

**286. Bluethroat** (*Erithacus svecica*)

Single birds at Mai Po marshes between 2 January and 17 April and again from 4 December onwards.

**288. Rubythroat** (*Erithacus calliope*)

Quite common and widespread up to 21 April and well recorded again from 20 November.

**289. Red-flanked Bluetail** (*Tarsiger cyanurus*)

Commonly recorded from widespread areas until 17 March but very rare in the autumn with only three records from Tai Po Kau Sha Lo Wan and Tsat Muk Kiu, all between 21 and 31 December.

**290. Magpie-robin** (*Copsychus saularis*)

Common and widespread with first young reported out of the nest on 11 May.

**291. Daurian Redstart** (*Phoenicurus aureoreus*)

Quite common and widespread until 3 April and from 10 October.

**292. Plumbeous Water-redstart** (*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*)

Single females/immatures recorded from Ting Kau on 23 and 31 January, Nim Wan on 29 January and Bride's Pool on 3 November. Single males at Bride's Pool between 19 January and 9 March and at Tai Lam Chung on 26 February.

**293.1 Slaty-backed Forktail** (*Enicurus schistaceus*)

One seen in Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 31 December feeding along the rocky stream near the upper part of the blue walk (CPB, EAB). This is the first record for Hong Kong.

The following description was noted:— "At a glance very much like a wagtail. Long tail; mainly black and white. Tail long and black with 4/5 white thin bars and a fairly deep fork (only visible at certain angles). Tail moved up and down in wagtail fashion. Rump and lower back white. White bar across wing which is otherwise dark. Head and upper back slaty grey. Short fairly prominent white eyebrow. Throat black. Rest of underparts white. Rather shy, having to be flushed from sides of rocky stream. Flies rapidly with flash of white as rump/lower back seen. Size 8/9".

This species is resident along rocky streams up to 5,000 feet over much of South-East Asia, and Hong Kong is within its breeding range.

**294. Stonechat** (*Saxicola torquata*)

Common and widespread until 5 May, a new late date, and from 11 September.

**295. Grey Bushchat** (*Saxicola ferrea*)

Pairs at Mong Tseng between 29 January and 18 February, and at Chi Ma Wan on 19 February. A female at Castle Peak Monastery on 2 January and single males at Fanling on 5 February and Cheung Sha on 12 February. A pair at Fanling on 22 December and single males on Lantau and at Mong Tseng between 16 October and 23 December.

**296. Blue Rock-thrush** (*Monticola solitaria*)

Recorded from widespread areas, including several of the outlying islands and urban localities, until 24 April and from 28 September.

**297. Chestnut-breasted Rock-thrush** (*Monticola rufiventris*)

Single males at Sheun Wan on 3 January and 31 December, and

Sharp Peak, Sai Kung, on 6 January.

**298. Violet Whistling Thrush** (*Myiophonus caeruleus*)

Locally common in suitable areas on Hong Kong Island, Lantau and the New Territories.

**299. Pale Thrush** (*Turdus pallidus*)

Single birds at Sek Kong woods on 16 January and 19 February and at Po Shan Road on 21 February. Two at Chi Ma Wan on 19 February and Trappist Monastery, Lantau on 21 February. A single bird at Beas River on 21 April was a new late date for this species. The only autumn record was for Hok Tau Reservoir where one was seen on 10 December.

**300. Eye-browed Thrush** (*Turdus obscurus*)

One female at Sek Kong woods on 16 January and a pair at Stanley on 20 February.

**302. Grey-backed Thrush** (*Turdus hortulorum*)

Well recorded from widespread areas up to 13 April and from 22 November.

**303. Dusky Thrush** (*Turdus naumanni*)

Fairly common and widespread until 20 March, but no records for the succeeding winter.

**304. Blackbird** (*Turdus merula*)

Fairly common and widespread until 19 March, and again from 3 November. In November and December large flocks of up to 50 were seen in woods at She Shan and Tsung Pak Long.

**305. Grey Thrush** (*Turdus cardis*)

One or two recorded from widespread areas until 10 April, with small numbers again from 3 December.

**308. White's Thrush** (*Zoothera dauma*)

Several records of single birds from widespread areas until 13 April with at least three at Sek Kong on 16th January, but none at all for the succeeding winter.

**309.1 Wren** (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

One observed at very close quarters in Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 29 December (HGA). The observer is familiar with this species in Europe, and the description submitted rules out any possibility of confusion with the Short-tailed Bush Warbler (*Cettia squameiceps*).

This the first record of a Wren since 1962 and reconfirms its inclusion in category A. Formerly 821 of Category F.

This species breeds across China from north-east to south-west and into Burma, and Hong Kong is within its extensive wintering range.

**310. Great Tit** (*Parus major*)

Locally common and widespread. First young out of the nest reported on 3 April.

**311. Yellow-bellied Tit** (*Parus venustulus*)

Following the irruption of this species in November 1976 small flocks of up to 20 were recorded from widespread wooded areas of the New Territories until 26 March. Also recorded at Hong Kong University until 30 March and on Hei Ling Chau on 16 March.

**313. Richard's Pipit** (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*)

Locally common and widespread until 27 May and from 9 September. One adult bird with an immature seen on Tai Mo Shan on 21 June. Large numbers again recorded from Kai Tak with a highest count of 58 on 25 February.

**314. Indian Tree Pipit** (*Anthus hodgsoni*)

Common and widespread until 24 April with an unusual late record of one bird at Tai Po Kau Forest on 15 May. Commonly recorded again from 10 October.

**315. Red-throated Pipit** (*Anthus cervinus*)

Regularly reported in small numbers in the Mai Po/Lok Ma Chau area until 11 April and from 3 November. Also recorded from Shatin, Luk Keng, and Sek Kong. Good numbers again reported from Kai Tak in the spring with 60 to 70 there on 30 March.

**318. Upland Pipit** (*Anthus sylvanus*)

Two reported from Tai Mo Shan on 5 April, one there on 21 April and four there on 2 July. Five on Sunset Peak, Lantau, on 12 July and over ten there on 25 July.

**319. Forest Wagtail** (*Dendronanthus indicus*)

One in Tai Po Kau Forest on 11 and 15 April. One at Sek Kong on 11 September, up to three birds in Hong Lok Yuen on 17 September and one on Cheung Chau on 19 September.

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

Common and widespread until 28 May and from 20 August, with over 60 at Mai Po on 31 December.

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

Quite common and widespread until 2 May and from 16 August.

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

Well recorded from the northern New Territories with a few records from other areas, including Hong Kong Island. Maximum count was 200 at Mai Po on 24 April. Also seen at Kai Tak in good numbers with a peak of 78 on 9 September. Extreme dates were until 13 May and from 25 August.

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

Recorded in small numbers from widespread areas including Hong Kong Island, Tai Po Kau Forest, She Shan, Bride's Pool, Fanling, Sai Kung, Sek Kong and Sha Lo Wan, Lantau. The highest numbers, up to seven, were reported from Tai Po Kau.

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

Common and widespread.

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

Recorded from widespread areas including Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve, the Lam Tsuen Valley, Bride's Pool, Homantin and Kowloon Park and Hong Kong Island. A pair bred successfully in a garden at Fanling.

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

A female at Bride's Pool on 3 January. Single males at Tai Po Kau, Hong Kong Island, and Homantin between 9 January and 6 March. A female at Sek Kong on 9 October, two males at Tai Po Kau on 29 and one male at Wu Kau Tang on 30 December.

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

Recorded in flocks of up to 30 in widespread areas of the New Territories, Kowloon and Hong Kong Island until 13 April and from 3 November. An unusual summer record of one bird on the Fanling Golf Course on 15 August was probably an escapee.

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

Reported from widespread areas, mostly in small flocks of less than 15. A single bird seen at Sha Tin on 3 July and a flock of about 200 on the Fanling Golf Course on 26 August were the only summer records. Otherwise not recorded between 14 May and 12 September. Generally fewer records for the second winter, but with one flock of 36 at Castle Peak on 21 October.

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

Recorded in generally small numbers until 12 March when a flock of about 25 was seen at Sai Kung. On 13 November four female/immatures seen at Sek Kong.

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

Common and widespread until 1 May and from 25 September.

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

Generally only single birds reported from widespread areas of the New Territories but three at Castle Peak Monastery on 2 January and at least five there on 26 February. Over ten at Hong Lok Yuen on 5 March, two at Ma Nam Wat on 23 November, and one at Hok Tau on 24 November.

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

One female at Mong Tseng on 30 October. Four, including a male, at She Shan on 19 November and a pair there on 18 December. A male at Ma Nam Wat on 23 November and a female at Mai Po on 18 December.

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

No spring records. Single females at Mai Po on 4 September, Tung Chung, Lantau on 20 November and Three Fathoms Cove on 23 November. A flock of 17 was observed feeding on the Gin Drinker's Bay rubbish tip on 14 October. One at Kowloon Park on 13 October and 30 December. Two at Kai Tak on 25 November and one there on 9 December. One male at Mai Po on 11 December.

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

At least five at Mai Po between 8 and 12 March and one male at Sha Ha, Sai Kung on 23 November.

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

Uncommon but widespread in small numbers until 21 April and from 12 November, with up to 15 recorded at Pak Nai, Deep Bay in March and up to 10 on Mai Po Marshes in April.

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

A flock of about 12 near Tung Chung, Lantau on 16 January and a single male at Tai Long Wan on 19 March. Up to three in Lam Tsuen Valley during April with two to three on Tai Mo Shan in April and July. At least ten at Tung Chung on 20 November and over six at Three Fathoms Cove on 23 November. Also recorded from Sha Ha, Sai Kung, Shui Hau, Lantau and Wu Kau Tang.

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

Very common and widespread but generally associated with habitations. Recorded in large numbers throughout the year at Kai Tak with a maximum of 102 on 13 May. A flock of about 300 was reported on new reclamation at Sai Kung on 27 August.

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

Recorded only from the Mai Po Marshes with most records falling between 18 August and 18 December except for two there on 5 June. The majority were race *atricapilla* with flocks of up to 22 on 25 September, including many immatures. Also several records of up to five race *malacca* from 18 September to 3 December, several of which were seen carrying nesting material. Immatures of this race were also noted.

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

Quite common and widespread, often in flocks, with a maximum count of 65 on 17 April. Very few records for June and July. Nest construction noted from April to October.

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

Recorded from widespread areas throughout the year with flocks of over 30 at Tai Om on 23 August, She Shan on 18 September and Auxiliary Police Headquarters, Wanchai Reclamation, on 18 October. Nest building noted in both January and October.

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

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

Up to two at Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve between 16 April and 3 September, one at Chi Ma Wan on 18 February, two seen regularly at the Deep Water Bay Golf Course in April, one at Tai Mei Tuk on 21 May, and one at Shing Mun on 24 August.

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

Recorded from widespread areas of the New Territories, Kowloon and Hong Kong Island with flocks occasionally exceeding 30. A distinct southerly movement of small flocks was noted over the Mai Po Marshes on the evening of 30 October and on several subsequent occasions.

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

Up to three seen regularly on the Mong Tseng Peninsula between 18 February and 1 October. Two at Fanling between 18 May and 15 November. One at Nim Wan on 24 April, two at Kam Tin on 11 June and one at Bride's Pool on 23 October. One at Tregunter Path on 6 February was almost certainly a recent escape.

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

Expansion of range continued with numerous reports from wide

spread areas. As in 1976 details of all records are given below.—

Lam Tsun Valley; six at She Shan on 1st January and two on 13 November.

Hong Kong University; up to nine between 6 January and 7 February.

King George V School; Kowloon, up to four between 19 January and 13 October.

Mid-levels; four at Bowen Road between 27 February and 20 April, four on 18 September and one in December.

Tseng Lan Shue, Junk Bay; up to 10 from 26 February to 4 April with breeding behaviour by one pair. Also regularly seen nearby at Clearwater Bay Apartments until July.

Homantin, Kowloon; up to four between 27 February and 17 April.

Kowloon Reservoirs; up to three from 18 March to 5 April.

Hok Tau Reservoir; one on 24 November.

Tai Tam Catchwater (near Stanley); several on 10 December.

Kowloon Park; up to six throughout the year.

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

Regularly recorded on the Mai Po Marshes in small flocks of about five from 21 March until 16 October. One at Kai Tak on 25 November. Single birds at the Botanical Gardens on 28 April and Kowloon Park on 18 November were presumably escapes.

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

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

Regularly recorded from Victoria Barracks/Central (daily maximum 15), Happy Valley (up to 20) and Hong Kong University (up to 9) throughout the year. Two on Stonecutter's Island on 14 October. In Kowloon, one bird at Caldecott Road on 4 March and one at U.S.R.C. on 16 October. No records for the New Territories.

**602. Indian Grackle** (*Gracula religiosa*)

One in the Botanical Gardens/Murray Building area on 10 and 11 March, one at Stanley on 30 April and up to three in the Caldecott Road area between 11 August and 21 September.

**E. SPECIES OF WHICH ALL PUBLISHED RECORDS ARE SUSPECTED OF BEING OF BIRDS ESCAPED OR RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY.**

(Note: additional entries to Category E are not in systematic order.)

**703. Amur Falcon** (*Falco amurensis*)

An adult male was observed at close quarters both at rest and in flight at Fanling Golf Course on 7 April (HGA). This is the third record of this species for Hong Kong, and the first since 1962. Hong Kong could lie on the migration route of this long distance migrant falcon and it is possible that the above records refer to wild birds.

**707. Vinous-throated Parrotbill** (*Paradoxornis webbiana*)

Two flocks totalling over ten birds at Eagle's Nest Nature Trail on 5 April (CAV), and at least three still there on 8 April (MAW). Hong Kong is within the natural range of this species and it is possible that the above records were wild birds.

**710. Java Sparrow** (*Padda oryzivora*)

Two at Happy Valley on 15 September. One in Kowloon Park on 11 October. A male and two females/immatures at the Botanical Gardens on 7 November and one at Pak Nai, Deep Bay on 27 December.

**715. Budgerigar** (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)

One at Mai Po on 1 May, one at Happy Valley Racecourse on 8 August and one at Lok Ma Chau on 27 November. Also reported twice at Kowloon Park.

**[721. Rustic Bunting** (*Emberiza rustica*)

A bunting with a rufous nape was recorded at Kai Tak Airport on 16 December (DSM). From the description submitted it appears to have been either a winter male Rustic or Lapland Bunting (*Calcarius lapponicus*).]

**727. Yellow-fronted Canary** (*Serinus mozambicus*)

One at the Auxiliary Police Headquarters, Wanchai Reclamation on 24 April and one on the Fanling Golf Course on 15 August.

**723. Rainbow Lorikeet** (*Trichoglossus haematodus*)

Up to six at Victoria Barracks recorded regularly from June through September and it is probable that a pair bred there this year.

**725. Azure-winged Magpie** (*Cyanopica cyanus*)

At least four were seen in and around the Botanical Gardens from 9 March until 12 December. It is known that four escaped from the aviaries there in 1976 and these are probably the same birds,

**726. Pied Bushchat** (*Saxicola caprata*)

Up to two males recorded at Kai Tak throughout the year were probably escapes. A further male was seen at Gin Drinker's Bay rubbish tip on 14 October. The easternmost limit of this species' range appears

to be far to the west of Hong Kong and, at this stage, it would seem most likely that all reports are of escaped birds.

Hong Kong being well south of its normal range. Nesting activity was noted during the year and one nestling was later found.

**730. Streaked Shearwater** (*Puffinus leucomelas*)

One was recovered in Aberdeen Harbour on 28 January with wire round its bill, examined and photographed at HKSPCA (DSM, MAW), and subsequently released in Victoria Harbour. It appears likely that this bird was captured at sea and subsequently escaped or was released at Aberdeen.

Four birds confiscated by police from a hawk on 19 December were also handed to HKSPCA but subsequently died.

Streaked Shearwaters probably occur regularly in the South China Sea, and appear to be the most likely shearwater species to be encountered near Hong Kong. On 4 August about 60 were seen in a raft on the sea about four miles east of Lema Islands just outside Hong Kong Territorial Waters (MLC).

**731. Blossom-headed Parakeet** (*Psittacula roseata*)

A male was well seen at Beas River near the Golf Course on 8 May and is the first record for Hong Kong. (GCHC, MLC, RF). It was in fine plumage and showed no signs of having been in captivity. Little is known of its range in China but it has previously been reported in Kwangtung Province. However, at this stage it is placed in this category as it is a frequent cage bird.

**732. Grey-headed Parrotbill** (*Paradoxornis gularis*)

A party of six seen regularly during October and November on Cheung Chau (CDW). This species is included in Category E since Parrotbills are common cage-birds and the possibility of escapes cannot be excluded. However, Hong Kong is within this species normal range.

**F. SPECIES OF WHICH ALL PUBLISHED RECORDS MUST BE REGARDED AS DOUBTFUL BECAUSE OF MISTAKEN IDENTIFICATION.**

**(817. Orange-bellied Niltava** (*Niltava sundara*)

An adult male Fukien/Orange-bellied Niltava (*Niltava davidi/sundara*) was seen at Sha Lo Wan, Lantau, on 23 December (HGA, TPG.)

**APPENDIX TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST FOR 1976**

124. Delete "One flying east at Ting Kau, during Typhoon Iris on 19 September", and add same note to 128.

THIRD APPENDIX TO 'AN ANNOTATED CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OF HONG KONG' BY M.A. WEBSTER, PUBLISHED BY THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY, 1975. (NUMBERS CORRESPOND TO THOSE USED IN THE CHECK-LIST).

15. One at Casino Lines, San Tin on 16 November 1977.
21. 'grey phase' bird seen again in 1977.
31. Up to 14 at Mai Po between 15 January and 1 May 1977.
41. A flock of over 100 in Deep Bay on 18 February 1977.
45. One male and one female at Mai Po on 1 January 1977 and a single male there on 15 December 1977.
50. New early date of 16 November.
60. New early date of 16 October.
61. An adult male at Chek Keng on 8 October 1977.
87. One wintered at Mong Tseng from 29 January to 6 March 1977.
- 87.1 *Porzana paykulli* (Ljungh) Band-bellied Crane Vagrant. One found dead at Jardine's Lookout on 11 October 1977 (New entry).
91. One winter record of a female at Sek Kong on 16 January 1977.
104. New high count of 74.
114. New late spring date of 8 May.
115. One summer record of 3 at Kai Tak on 14 July.
119. New early spring date of 2 April, and new maximum count of 26.
126. Up to 6 wintered at Mai Po from 15 January 1977.
130. New maximum count of about 60 birds in one flock.
137. New late date of 16 December.
141. One or two again wintered at Lok Ma Chau.
143. A flock recorded at Lok Ma Chau in both winters of 1977.
144. New late spring date 13 March, and new early winter date 13 November.
145. Further summer records from Kai Tak in 1977. Status revised to "Passage migrant, with occasional summer records".
146. New high count of 619 on 21 January 1977. New early autumn record of four on 25 September.
150. One adult at Pak Nai on 12 March 1977.
151. Several records for January, March and December 1977.
152. One exceptionally early autumn date of a juvenile at Kai Tak on 12 September 1977.

153. New maximum count of between 10,000 and 11,000 in winter of 1977.
172. New late date 2 September.
175. One at Beas River on 18 September.
184. One at Kai Tak on 18 November 1977.
- 189.1 *Hirundapus caudacutus* (Latham) White-throated Needletail Vagrant. A group of over ten was seen low overhead at Beas River on 21 April 1977. (New entry).
199. One at Tung Chung, Lantau on 23 December 1977.
208. New early date 2 February.
- 218.1 *Sturnus sturninus* (Pallas) Purple-backed Starling Vagrant. A flock of 35 to 40 at Mai Po on 25 September and four at Sek Kong on 28 September 1977. (New entry).
220. New early date 9 September.
233. New early autumn date 7 September.
234. Three at Tai Po Kau on 24 December and eight there on 26 December 1977.
236. New late date 24 April.
264. A new early autumn date of 28 August.
271. A new early autumn date of 27 August.
- 293.1 *Enicurus schistaceus* (Hodgson) Slaty-backed Forktail Vagrant. One feeding along a rocky stream in Tai Po Kau Forestry Reserve on 31 December 1977. (New entry).
311. Third recorded irruption continued with reports up to 30 March 1977.
314. New late date 15 May.
328. Unusual summer record of one on 15 August may have been an escape.
335. New early autumn date 4 September.
341. Up to five race *malacca* at Mai Po from 18 September to 3 December.
703. An adult male at Fanling Golf Course on 7 April 1977. Delete "two records".
707. Two flocks totalling over ten birds at Eagles' Nest Nature Trail on 5 April 1977, and at least three there on 8 April 1977.
730. *Puffinus leucomelas* (Temminck) Streaked Shearwater One recovered in Aberdeen Harbour on 28 January 1977 with its bill wired was subsequently released in Victoria Harbour. It appears likely that this bird was captured at sea and subsequently escaped or was released at Aberdeen. (New entry).

731. *Psittacula roseata* (Linnaeus) Blossom-headed Parakeet  
One at Beas River on 8 May 1977. (New entry).
732. *Paradoxornis gularis* (G.R. Gray) Grey-headed Parrotbill  
A party of six seen regularly during October and November 1977 on Cheung Chau. Although Hong Kong is within the range of this species, the possibility of escapes cannot be ruled out. (New entry).
817. An adult male at Sha Lo Wan, Lantau on 23 December 1977.

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## BIRDS IN CHINA FROM CANTON TO PEKING

By Don Weidemann

I had the opportunity of visiting China with a group from the Hong Kong Family Planning Association from May 17 to June 4 1978. Travelling with such groups provides an opportunity to visit several different areas of China, but the nature of the subject matter means that many hospitals and factories are to be visited. Since our group averaged one guide for every five people it was difficult to break away from the group and go off bird watching. With better opportunities I am sure that I could have done much better. Nevertheless I did manage to get five new life ticks.

The train ride from Shum Chun was done in pouring rain and birds were very few indeed. A White Wagtail was the first tick of the trip followed by Tree Sparrow, Swallow, Cattle Egret, Chinese Pond Heron and Crested Mynah.

The afternoon in Canton was spent on a quick tour of the city by bus and the only birds seen were House Swift and a few small flocks of White Eye.

The next day our group flew to Shanghai with all of its people and factories but few birds. I did see a small party of Chinese Bulbuls on the grounds of the former British Consulate near the Bund and a few Feral Pigeons. By now my list was only up to ten and I knew that if I was to beat Clive Viney's of nineteen I would have to get to work. Unknowingly my 1976 H.K. Bird Report was arriving in Hong Kong containing Karen Phillipps' report listing thirty-eight birds.

The next phase of our trip was by train, but no birds were seen the entire way to Nanking. In Nanking I was awake at 5:00 a.m. and was delighted to hear an Indian Cuckoo in the distance. The Yangtze River area around Nanking proved to be an area holding a comparatively large number of birds and I would recommend this area to anyone considering bird watching in China. A guide later told us that birds are trapped in this area and sold for export. Our group visited the nearby Sun Yat-Sen mausoleum and in fifteen minutes I had ticked off Magpie, Chinese Greenfinch, Brown Shrike, Blackbird, Indian Cuckoo, Rufous Turtle Dove, Black-naped Oriole, Red-Headed Tit and a lovely pair of Grey-Capped Woodpeckers.

The next day our coach drove across the famous Yangtze River Bridge to the newly opened area for tourists, Yangchow. A "rest" stop along the way at a commune provided me with another opportunity. While the rest of the group were sipping tea and eating

apples I climbed a steep hillside of pine trees and was promptly rewarded for my efforts. A pair of Cuckoos were perched at close range and began to call their distinctive "cuc-coo".

Our hotel stay in Yangchow was of one night's duration only but early the next morning (I had to unlock the door to let myself out of the hotel at 5:00 a.m.). I was able to see a pair of Black-Tailed Hawfinch, a party of Black-Faced Laughing-Thrush, Spotted Dove, four Red Turtle Doves, Great Tit as well as the very abundant Orioles, Brown Shrikes and Indian Cuckoos.

We continued north by train to the city of Tsinan, the capital of Shantung Province. Wheat harvesting and rice transplanting were in full swing, all under the observation of many Magpies who constructed their nests, one after the other, on telegraph poles through the fields. At one point I counted nests on six poles in a row in a field containing a political slogan denouncing the "Gang of Four".

The climax of the trip was a five day stay in Peking. The visit to the Great Wall was exciting but could have been better. I was told that a member of the British Embassy comes here every Sunday morning to bird watch at dawn. I was there at noon with hundreds of others milling about. Not to be frightened away was a lovely male Daurian Redstart in full song and Red-Rumped Swallow building her nest under the eave of a PLA barracks. Large numbers of Jungle Crow were also nearby. A visit to a stupa in the Fragrant Hills area the next day turned up five Broad-Billed Rollers and a Peregrine Falcon that made an unsuccessful try for a Swift.

We flew from Peking back to Canton and although it was sunny, I saw fewer birds on the return to Shum Chun than I had previously in the rain. A pair of Spotted Munias was the last tick of the trip.

## SPECIES LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED

Chinese Pond-Heron (*Ardeola bacchus*)  
 Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)  
 Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)  
 Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)  
 Spotted Dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*)  
 Rufous Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*)  
 Red Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*)  
 Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)  
 Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)  
 Indian Cuckoo (*Cuculus micropterus*)  
 Common Swift (*Apus apus*)  
 Large White-Rumped Swift (*Apus pacificus*)  
 House Swift (*Apus affinis*)  
 Broad-Billed Roller (*Eurystomus orientalis*)  
 Grey-Capped Woodpecker (*Picoides canicapillus*)  
 Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)  
 Red-Rumped Swallow (*Hirundo daurica*)  
 Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*)  
 Rufous-Backed Shrike (*Lanius schach*)  
 Black-naped Oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*)  
 Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*)  
 Crested Mynah (*Acridotheres cristatellus*)  
 Azure-Winged Magpie (*Cyanopica cyanus*)  
 Magpie (*Pica pica*)  
 Jungle Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchus*)  
 Chinese Bulbul (*Pycnonotus sinensis*)  
 Black-Faced Laughing Thrush (*Garrulax pectoralis*)  
 Daurian Redstart (*Phoenicurus aureus*)  
 Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)  
 Great Tit (*Parus major*)  
 Red-Headed Tit (*Aegithalos concinnus*)  
 White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)  
 White-Eye (*Zosterops japonica*)  
 Black-Tailed Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes migratoria*)  
 Chinese Greenfinch (*Carduelis sinica*)  
 Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)  
 Spotted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*)

APPENDIX TO "SEABIRDS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA  
FROM M. V. TAIPOOSEK"

M.L. Chalmers

(pp. 54 to 57 of The Hong Kong Bird Report 1976)

CORRIGENDA

- p.54 Sixth line of third paragraph should end "... (*Puffinus griseus*)"
- p.55 Sixth line of first paragraph should start "none showed the characteristic ..."
- p.55 Fifth line of second paragraph should read "..... several flocks of Sooty or Bridled Terns (*Sterna fuscata/anaethetus*) ....."
- p.56 Notes in table (fig. 1) against Shearwater sp. at 0915 on 5-8-77 should read "Large; dark brown underparts and pale underwing (probably Sooty)".

Gulls with aberrant plumage – some identification problems

David Melville and Mike Chalmers

Partial plumage albinism (absence of pigment), which may be patchy, forming a mosaic, or symmetrical, is not uncommon in birds and recent sightings in Hong Kong include a Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* and a stint *Calidris* sp. (D.M.). Such partially albino birds may initially surprise the observer but they are unlikely to present great identification problems unless the albinism is extensive. Leucism (dilution of normal pigmentation resulting in paleness) and total plumage albinism often pose more severe identification problems.

We are aware of three records of leucistic gulls and one of an albino gull in Hong Kong.

- A. A first-winter Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* was seen at Kai Tak on 3 December 1974 (D.M.). The soft parts were coloured normally. The mantle was very pale grey, almost white, the wing and ear coverts pale fawn and the primaries slightly paler than in other first-winter birds seen with it.
- B. A first-winter Black-headed Gull was seen at the Nim Wan gull roost on 20 March 1975 (D.M.). It was similar to 'A' above and may have been the same bird.
- C. A large first-winter gull was seen at Nim Wan on 18 February 1977 (M.C., D.M., et al). The size and shape were similar to a Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*. The plumage was generally pale with whitish areas across the upper wing coverts and inner primaries. A broad pale brown sub-terminal tail band was visible in flight. When at rest the closed wings did not project beyond the tail. Both the wings and the tail appeared short, giving the bird an odd heavy-bodied appearance and it flew with quick wing-beats. The iris was dark and there was a smudgy dark area around the ear coverts. The bill was entirely dark and the legs dull pink (Fig. 1).

Superficially the bird looked like a first-winter Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* but the short wings, all dark bill, pale tail band and whitish areas on the wing coverts indicated that it was not of this species.

The other pale-winged gull known to occur in southern China is the Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* (Cheng 1976), which has not yet been recorded from Hong Kong (Melville 1977). This species is generally grey-brown in first-winter plumage. The legs are dark, "light cinnamon or vinaceous drab" (Bishop quoted by Dwight 1925). In second-winter plumage the back and mantle attain much of the grey of the adult, while the legs are "much like first-winter" (Dwight 1925). This did not fit the bird seen

at Nim Wan.

Close observation of the Nim Wan bird showed that the shortness of the wings and tail was due to abrasion, suggesting that the bird was leucistic since both leucism and albinism tend to weaken feathers (Hume 1975, Hedgren & Larsson 1973). Further reference to Hedgren and Larsson's useful paper supported this as they note:

- a. "The primaries of *Larus hyperboreus*. . . seem to be at least as light as, and often lighter than, the lightest parts of the wing coverts. This is not the case in leucistic gulls.
- b. The outer primaries of the leucistic gulls are darker than the other primaries. Dark secondaries and a dark terminal tail-band can usually be observed.
- c. The bill and iris of the leucistic gulls and the albinistic gulls are coloured normally.
- d. Leucistic and albinistic gulls often have extremely abraded primaries, rectrices and wing coverts." We thus conclude that this bird was probably a leucistic first-winter Herring Gull — the apparently sub-terminal tail band being due to bleaching of the abraded feather tips.

- D. A small gull was seen and photographed in Castle Peak Bay on 14 and 21 March 1976 (M.C.). The plumage was completely white, bill and legs orange and the iris dark (Fig. 2). The bird was similar in size and structure to the accompanying Black-headed Gulls and was considered to be an albino of that species.

Leucism and albinism have been quite widely recorded in gulls elsewhere, including the Herring Gull (Gross 1964, Hume 1975, Hedgren & Larsson 1973, MacMillan 1967, Mikkola 1970), Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus* (Abe & Matsuki 1968), Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* (Dick 1967), Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* (Frohling 1967) and Black-headed Gull (Melville unpublished).

In the case of the larger gulls, hybrid light-winged X dark-winged birds may further confound the problem of identification (Davies 1978). A summary of known hybrids is given in Table 1. In a recent study Strang (1977) found that many adult gulls collected in western Alaska were intermediate between Glaucous and Glaucous-winged Gulls in colour of iris and primaries and that only 28% displayed the pure Glaucous Gull phenotype. Ingolfsson (1971) found Herring X Glaucous Gull hybrids and Hoffman et al. (1978) noted a similar situation with adult Glaucous-winged X Western Gull (*Larus occidentalis*) hybrids. It is assumed that a similar range of characteristics is found in immature birds. However descriptions are generally lacking in the literature (Madge 1978).

Caution must be exercised when unusual gulls are observed and we would stress the need for taking full field notes of any such birds.

TABLE 1. Light-winged X dark-winged gull hybrids.

| Hybrid                     | Reference                          |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Glaucous X Herring         | Ingolfsson 1971, Jehl 1971         |
| Glaucous X Glaucous-winged | Devillers et al 1971, Strang 1977  |
| Glaucous-winged X Western  | Scott 1971<br>Hoffman et al. 1978. |
| Glaucous-winged X Herring  | Patten & Weisbrod 1974             |

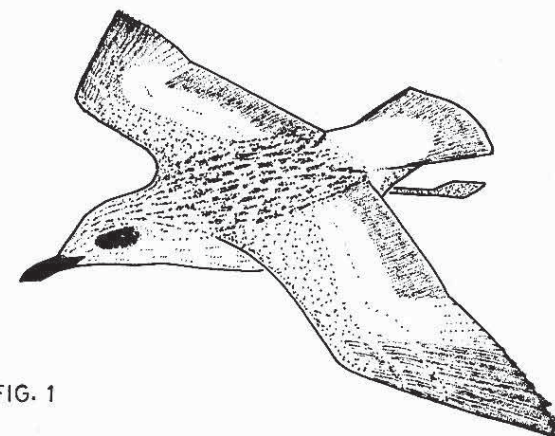


FIG. 1

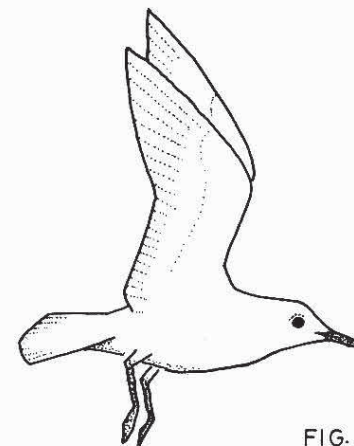


FIG. 2

MLC

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## BOOK REVIEW

David Melville

ÉTCHÉCOPAR, R.D. and HÜE, F. 1978. Les Oiseaux de Chine, de Mongolie et de Corée. Non passereaux. Pp. 585, 22 colour plates, numerous line drawings and maps. Paris: Les éditions du pacifique. 383 Fr. Francs.

This is the latest in a series of volumes by the authors designed to cover the avifauna of the major desert regions of the Old World from the Canaries to the Gobi desert – previous volumes being *Les Oiseaux d'Afrique du Nord* (1964) and *Les Oiseaux du Proche et du Moyen Orient* (1970). This volume departs somewhat from the course set by its predecessors in that it also covers non arid areas. In the Introduction Etchecopar states "En bref, j'étais ainsi conduit à rédiger le manuel que j'aimerais avoir en main s'il m'est un jour permis de me retrouver en pleine nature chinoise".

The project was beset by many problems. The area covered is vast and comprises many habitats ranging from the Himalayan massif to deserts and tropical rainforest. Although the literature is quite rich there have been few publications in the last forty years, there are currently very few ornithologists in China and many species remain very little known e.g. *Caprimulgus centralasiaticus* is known from one specimen only, and *Larus saundersi* has never been found breeding. Neither author had ever visited China, though observations on many species were made in Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Kashmir, north India, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Japan. They were also able to study a number of endemic species (e.g. Phasianidae) in captivity.

As if these problems were not enough, sadly the junior author died in a car accident in 1972; a new artist had to be found as Barruel, who had illustrated the previous volumes, was unable to prepare all of the plates; and finally, financial support and a new publisher had to be found after the collapse of Maison Bubée which had published the previous two volumes.

One must admire Étchécopar for seeing the project through to the end.

This volume covers the non-passerines (about 500 species) and a second volume on passerines is in preparation. The format follows the two previous volumes in the series. Dichotomous keys are given for many genera or groups. For each species, after scientific, French and English names information is given under the headings: identification, behaviour, breeding, distribution and subspecies.

The description of each species is brief, giving notes on adult plumage with seasonal and sexual differences where appropriate.

Body length is given (in cm) and for some species bill and/or wing length. Wing formula is given where it will aid identification e.g. *Accipiter virgatus/gularis/nisus*. Details of juvenile and immature plumage are often omitted. Field identification characters are summarised.

In a number of cases the text has been taken directly from *Les Oiseaux du Proche et du Moyen Orient* which can be confusing. For example the description of *Pluvialis dominicus* relies heavily on reference to that of *Pluvialis apricaria* which is not recorded from China and is thus not included in this book. The statement that in *Milvus migrans* "Le bec est noir ou jaune selon les races" is misleading since the only race with a yellow bill is *aegyptius* which does not occur in China.

Inevitably there are species which the authors have not seen live and descriptions have been taken from skins. This can lead to problems, particularly with the soft parts. Thus no mention is made of the conspicuous pink base to the lower mandible of *Numenius minutus*, and the leg colour of *Charadrius veredus* is described as "très sombre", whereas leg colour in birds passing through Hong Kong is very variable ranging from pink to yellow. No mention is made of the narrow web between all 3 front toes in *Tringa guttifer* – only between 2 front toes in *Tringa nebularia*.

In the section on behaviour, details are given of general habits, food and preferred habitats. Calls are often not mentioned presumably due to the authors inevitable lack of field experience, however correspondence with Asian birdwatchers should have provided additional information. In some cases e.g. *Tringa nebularia/guttifer* call is one of the most important field characters, while the call of *Larus saundersi* will often draw attention to a single bird in the midst of a group of *Larus ridibundus*.

Once again details have been taken from *Les Oiseaux du Proche et du Moyen Orient* and, for example, we are told of *Larus canus* following the plough and *Larus ridibundus* largely feeding on "déchets alimentation" in harbours – I am unaware of any records of the former behaviour in China and one suspects that the amount of "déchets alimentation" in modern Chinese harbours is small (even in Hong Kong, stomach contents analysis has shown that most *Larus ridibundus* feed on fish rather than refuse).

In some cases it appears that some of the literature has not been consulted. Thus there is no mention of apparent preference for intertidal feeding of *Egretta eulphotes* (Murton 1972), or of the characteristic 'sewing machine' feeding behaviour of *Limnodromus semipalmatus* (King et al. 1975, Webster & Phillipps 1976).

Notes on breeding are usually more complete, giving details of nest sites, breeding season, clutch size, egg colour and mean dimensions

(usually with sample size). This is an important part of the book as it highlights many of the gaps in Chinese ornithology and the species whose breeding is "inconnu" or "très mal connue" will provide plenty of scope for future study. The egg colour of *Egretta sacra*, which is not given, is pale blue-green; the breeding season of *Haliaeetus leucogaster* is given as April-June however in Hong Kong birds are on eggs in January.

The section on distribution and subspecies gives a short summary of breeding distribution and where the bird occurs on migration and in winter. A distribution map is given for most species breeding in the area, these generally following Cheng (1976) fairly closely. The winter range is not shown but arrows are used to indicate major migrations which is unsatisfactory.

Details of subspecies are given with a brief note of their distinguishing characters. This arrangement of having the nominate form described under "Identification" at the start of the species account and then the other forms separately at the end could lead to confusion. Thus *Circus aeruginosus* is described as having "Pas de blanc au croupion" however (over the page) *C.a. spilonotus* has "Du blanc au croupion". In common with most published works no mention is made of the very obvious pale blue tarsi of *Milvus migrans lineatus*.

A work such as this is not the place for detailed taxonomic discussion and generally none is offered. It is worth noting a few points e.g. *Charadrius mongolus schaeferi* is recognised by Cheng (1976) but not here; while Cheng (1976) only recognises *Tringa totanus totanus* as occurring in China, this work only recognises *T. totanus eurhinus* and Hale (1971) records *T. totanus eurhinus* and *T. totanus terrignotae*. One very surprising decision was the acceptance of Vaurie's (1962) theory that *Larus (melanocephalus) relictus* is in fact a hybrid between *Larus ichthyaetus* and *Larus brunnicephalus*, thus apparently ignoring recent Russian studies at breeding colonies (Auevov 1971).

The illustrations include 22 colour plates depicting 240 species (4 by Barruel, the rest by Berille), 2 monochrome plates (by Barruel) and numerous line drawings. Two of Barruel's colour plates, one monochrome plate and most of the line drawings were used in *Les Oiseaux du Proche et du Moyen Orient*.

Berille's plates tend to be in stronger colours than Barruel's, however he appears to have tried to keep to a similar style to Barruel. The plates are generally good; however, the legs of *Tringa incana* are shown as grey (though the text, correctly, describes them as "ochre jaune") and the iris of *Larus crassirostris* is shown as dark instead of pale yellow. In plate 19, the numbers 7 and 8 have been transposed.

In Hong Kong individuals of *Pluvialis dominicus* show an obvious dark ear patch, however this is not shown in the line drawing – due to the fact that this illustration appeared previously as *Pluvialis*

*apricaria*. Although the text describes *Apus affinis* as "Entièrement noir avec un croupion blanc" the drawing, correctly, shows the pale throat patch. The drawings of the tail feathers of *Gallinago gallinago* and *Limnocryptes minimus* are transposed – it would have been useful to include drawings of the tail feathers of the other *Gallinago* species.

In the text preference has been given to 'frenchified' place names. However there is a useful glossary of place names giving synonyms and locality details of the more obscure places. Since China is now converting to the use of pinyin, and there is already an atlas using pinyin names (Anon 1977), it would be useful to include pinyin names in the glossary to volume 2.

There are three indexes for scientific, French and English names. There is no bibliography as it is intended to include this in volume 2. I do not know how long we will have to wait before volume 2 sees the light of day but in any case it would have been advantageous to include a bibliography in this volume.

The format is extravagant (e.g. large type-face, wide page margins), this being in line with previous volumes, but resulting in increased costs. The book is expensive (about HK\$425) even by today's standards (*Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa* with 722 pages and 108 plates costs about HK\$240) and unfortunately will be beyond the reach of many people.

This book provides a useful illustrated introduction to the non-passerine birds of China for people outside the region. However, the broad generalisations and somewhat uncritical use of previously published material make it less valuable as a work of reference and those working with Chinese birds will still need to refer to the old classics (e.g. La Touche 1925-1934), and to more recent Chinese works (e.g. Cheng 1976, Cheng et al. 1973).

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## NOTES FOR APPLICANTS WISHING TO VISIT THE MAI PO MARSHES

The following information has been received from the Agriculture and Fisheries Department:

### Individuals

Individual members of the public will normally be granted a 'day permit', however in certain cases permits for a longer period may be issued. Applications should be made *at least two weeks* in advance of the proposed date and must include the following details:

Name in full

Hong Kong Identity Card No. or Passport No.

Date of proposed visit.

Point of entry into area: Tam Kon Chau/Tai Shang Wai

Purpose of visit

Other pertinent details e.g. membership of relevant societies etc.

### Groups

Group permits will be limited to a maximum of 35 persons per group and will be valid for one day only. Groups will normally be escorted by a Game Warden. To enable the spacing of group visits to prevent excessive disturbance, applications should be made *not less than one month* in advance of the proposed date and should include the following details:—

Name in full and Hong Kong Identity Card No. of group leader(s)

Date of proposed visit

Point of entry into area: Tam Kon Chau/Tai Shang Wai

Purpose of visit

Number in group

Other pertinent details

Please ensure that full details are given with your application, otherwise the issue of a permit may be delayed.

You are advised to apply for permits well in advance of the proposed visiting date.

All applications and enquiries should be addressed to:—

**The Director of Agriculture & Fisheries,  
Canton Road Government Offices,  
393 Canton Road,  
Kowloon.**