

HONG KONG BIRD REPORT

1994

香港鳥類報告



紀錄委員會報告

一九九四年內錄得的品種，分別為 A 類 338 種，D 類 9 種。前一年則分別為 354 種（包括後來確認補上的一種，下詳）及 8 種。當中新增的 A 類有四種，D 類則有一種。情況簡介如下：

新增 A 類品種：

1. 長咀鵪 *Charadrius placidus*：二月二十日至三月二十日，錦田有一隻。
2. 棕沙燕 *Riparia paludicola*：十二月十四日，在松柏塢錄得一隻。
3. 靴襪鶯 *Hippolais caligata*：九月三十日至十月一日，在米埔和落馬洲之間，發現一隻。
4. 棕眉柳鶯 *Phylloscopus armandii*：十月十六日，在嘉道理農場網獲一隻；之後，十月三十日及十一月六日，在柯士甸山和十一月二十六日在米埔，都有紀錄。

至於首次錄得的藍臉吸蜜鳥 *Entomyzon cyanotis*、黑頭黃鸝 *Oriolus xanthornus* 和家麻雀 *Passer domesticus* 都歸入 E 類；而紅頂鵪 *Timalia pileata* 則是在一九九三年新增的品種。

多年前原本有一個中賊鷗 *Stercorarius pomarinus* 的紀錄，經過索取有關的資料，並加以詳細審議後，決定取消該項紀錄。因此，在一九九三年九月廿六日，於鶴咀觀察到的三隻中賊鷗，才算是第一個正式的紀錄。另外一項修訂為接納有關白腹軍艦鳥 *Fregata andrewsi* 的紀錄，有關細節會連同所有關於軍艦鳥的覆核結果，於下年度報告。

其他有關大鵟 *Buteo hemilasius*、海鷗 *Larus canus brachyrhynchus*、草鴞 *Tyto capensis*、黃咀角鴞 *Otus spilocephalus* 和北蝗鶯（指名亞種）*Locustella ochotensis* 的紀錄，尚在審議中。

紀錄委員會還在覆核各個舊紀錄，籌備新版的《香港鳥類名錄註釋》，最新的一項結論如下：

102 蠟鵪 *Haematopus ostralegus*

在 1958 年 12 月 10 日的一項紀錄，由於久缺詳細的描述，現決定取消。所以，這個品種由 A 類降為 D 類。

此外，對下列各品種的了解已經加深，日後提交報告時，可毋需詳細描述：魚鷗 *Larus ichthyaetus*、灰背鷗 *L. schistisagus*、白腰燕鷗 *Sterna aleutica*、巨咀柳鶯 *Phylloscopus schwarzi*、烏鶇 *Muscicapa sibirica* 和牛頭伯勞 *Lanius bucephalus*。不過，如果報告涉及異常的數量、觀察地點或時候，紀錄委員會仍可能索取有關的詳情。所以遇到這些情況時，報告者最好仍然是附上詳細的資料。

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本報告內有一篇文章，談論香港大型白色鷗類的識別問題，是同類討論中，最詳盡的一次。雖然在一些分類學的問題上，特別是把 *vegae* 和 *heuglini* 劃分開來，仍然意見紛紜，不過紀錄委員會已決定接納這些分類建議及相關的意見。只有一個關於 *Larus argentatus smithsonianus* 的紀錄，由於尚在審議中，未有定論。基於這些結論，新增到香港鳥類名錄的有許氏鷗（暫譯）*Larus heuglini*、紅腳銀鷗 *Larus vegae*、及黃腳銀鷗 *Larus cachinnans*；而銀鷗 *Larus argentatus* 的情況則要進一步考慮。為了掌握更多準確的情況，請各位在冬季時，特別留意這些鷗類。遇上較罕見品種時，請作詳細報告。

Accipiter 鷹類的辨別研究，經已有結果，並於本報告內發表。至於軍艦鳥的討論，限於篇幅和相片數目，推遲至明年的報告。

繁殖鳥類調查在 1994 年繼續進行，結果較前一年稍為遜色，不過，仍可望於 1995 年全部完成。另一方面，冬季水禽調查每一個月都有進行，調查範圍較廣，因而總數也有所增加。

年中較值得一提的紀錄包括闊別十六年的彩鷗 *Plegadis falcinellus* 和廿三年來的第一隻棕腹杜鵑。由於陸續還有紅頭 / 黑頭鷗 *Emberiza bruniceps/melanocephala* 的報告，而且每年都在相約的時間出現，這對組合已上升為 A 類。這兩個品種都有可能出現，請大家特別留意。

紀錄委員會的成員沒有更換，包括 Mike Chalmers（香港觀鳥會紀錄委員）、Geoff Carey、Paul Leader 和 Mike Leven。

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ISSN 1017-118
Published in 1995 by the
HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY
GPO Box 12460, Hong Kong
(A registered society under the Hong Kong Societies Ordinance)

Editor: G.J. Carey

Records compiled by: G.J. Carey, D.A. Diskin, V.B. Picken and P.J. Leader

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(1994)

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Front cover: Australian Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*
Mai Po, Hong Kong, March 1994 (*Ray Tipper*)

EDITORIAL NOTE

The thickness of the Report continues to increase and, indeed, it could have been longer but for the expense of including more colour photographs. The systematic list has increased in length again which is very welcome. This, plus recent substantial increases in the cost of paper, have meant that new avenues have had to be explored in report production in an attempt to keep costs down. Readers may notice some slight changes in connection with this but, otherwise, I hope things are much as in previous years.

I would like to thank David Melville, Mike Chalmers and C.Y. Lam for advice and other help in the production of this Report. I am also grateful to Jeremy Pearse for his high-quality illustrations and Chan Ming Ming for providing the Chinese translations. Eunice Chan provided much help in producing maps and I am grateful to other staff at WWF Hong Kong which has provided photocopying facilities and other support.

Since 1991 the Society has actively attempted to sell the Report in Europe, particularly the UK. This has been very successful and has enabled us to continue producing a high-quality product that is both lengthy and well-illustrated. Most of the credit for this must go to Sebastian Anstruther and his secretary, Barbara Copeland, who have processed orders and remitted money quickly and efficiently. Due to family commitments, Sebastian has now given this up and the Society owes a great debt of gratitude to him for his hard work. This role has now been assumed by Wendy Young.

The Report in its present format would not be possible without the advertising and sponsorship that is included. I am very grateful for this support provided by Swarovski (HK) Ltd., Carl Zeiss Far East Ltd., Shiro Hong Kong Ltd. (Nikon distributor), Schmidt and Co. Ltd. (Leica distributor), Pro Cam-Fis, Government Information Services and Woods Photo Supplies. Readers of this Report who avail themselves of the services of these companies are urged to mention the Society and the Report when doing so. John Holmes organised this advertising and sponsorship, for which many thanks.

I am also grateful to those who helped with proof-reading: Mike Chalmers, Dave Diskin, Paul Leader, Mike Leven, Verity Picken and Tim Woodward.

GEOFF CAREY

RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT

G.J. Carey

In 1994 the number of species recorded was 341 in Category A and 9 in Category D. This compares with the high set last year of 354 in Category A (including one further subsequent addition, see below) and 8 in Category D.

During 1994 four species were added to Category A. The changes are summarised below while the categories used are defined in the Systematic List.

Additions to Category A

1. Long-billed Plover *Charadrius placidus*. One seen at Kam Tin from 20 February to 20 March.
2. Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola*. One at Long Valley on 14 December.
3. Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata*. One between Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau during 30 September - 1 October.
4. Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*. One trapped at KARC on 16 October, followed by others at Mount Austin on 30 October and 6 November, and Mai Po on 26 November.

First records of Blue-faced Honeyeater *Entomyzon cyanotis*, Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*, and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* were added to Category E from 1994, while Chestnut-capped Babbler *Timalia pileata* was added from 1993.

In addition, after efforts to obtain details of the only record of Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* and subsequent review, it was removed from the list, only to be re-instated with the record of three birds at Cape D'Aguilar on 26 September 1993. Another review process has seen the addition of Christmas Island Frigatebird *Fregata andrewsi* to the List, full details of which, together with a review of all frigatebird records, will be published in the next Report.

Records of Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*, 'Mew' Gull *Larus canus brachyrhynchus*, Grass Owl *Tyto capensis*, Mountain Scops Owl *Otus spilocephalus* and Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella ochotensis* are still under consideration.

The review of old records in preparation for the next edition of the Checklist continues. The following decisions have recently been made.

5 Swinhoe's Storm Petrel

Oceanodroma monorhis

Although the identification of this individual, a mounted specimen in Zoology Department, Hong Kong University, is not in doubt, there is no evidence that it came from Hong Kong waters. Accordingly, it is now relegated from Category A to Category F.

102 Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

After review, the previously accepted record of 10 December 1958 is now considered unacceptable as there are no details accompanying the record. Accordingly, it is now relegated from Category A to Category F.

A number of species have been removed from the list of species requiring descriptions due to better knowledge concerning their identification and/or status, viz. Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyæus*, Slaty-backed Gull *L. schistisagus*, Aleutian Tern *Sterna aleutica*, Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*, Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica* and Bull-headed Shrike *Lanius bucephalus*. As with all species though, it should be noted that for records of birds in unusual numbers, at unusual localities or at unusual times of year, the Records Committee may request details to be submitted. Observers are urged to bear this in mind should they make such observations, take care to write any notes at the time and, preferably, submit these details regardless of being asked in order to speed up record processing.

Contained in this Report is a paper on the identification and status of large white-headed gulls in Hong Kong. This paper is the most thorough statement of the situation concerning large gulls in the region. Although certain aspects of the taxonomy presented may not be universally accepted, especially the splitting of the forms *vegæ* and *heuglini*, the Records Committee has decided to follow the classification suggested and to accept the comments regarding the status of the forms mentioned, with the exception, at present, of the sole record of *Larus argentatus smithsonianus* which is under review. This has resulted in the addition to the Hong Kong List of Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini*, Vega Gull *Larus vegæ* and Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans*, but the review of Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*.

In an attempt to gain a more accurate idea of the relative status of the types described in the paper, observers are urged to pay particular attention to gulls in ensuing winters and, where necessary, take detailed descriptions to back up claims of the rarer forms.

The progress made with *Accipiter* identification has culminated in the paper presented this year. As noted above, the frigatebird review has been postponed until next year due to restrictions on space and the number of photographs.

The Breeding Bird Survey continued during 1994, though perhaps with slightly less success than 1993. Nevertheless, it is still hoped that it will be completed in 1995. Winter Waterfowl Counts continued monthly, this time with better coverage which is reflected in the totals achieved.

Notable records during the year included the first Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* for 16 years, the first Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo for 23 years and further records of Red-headed/Black-headed Buntings *Emberiza bruniceps/melanocephala*. Regarding the latter, due to the continued occurrence of these birds at a very similar time of year, the species pair has been moved to Category A. It should be noted that it is possible that both species are occurring and observers need to be alert to this.

Membership of the Records Committee remained unchanged during the year, consisting of Mike Chalmers (Recorder), Geoff Carey, Paul Leader and Mike Leven.

The systematic list was compiled by G.J. Carey (rarities and waterbirds, excluding waders), D.A. Diskin (raptors and species 280 to end), V.B. Picken (species 179-279) and P.J. Leader (waders). Thanks are due to the following observers who submitted records for inclusion in this report:

P.T. Antrobus, D. Akers-Jones, P. Aston, R. Barretto, Birdquest, D.R. Bradshaw, J.E. Burton, J. Bryant, G.J. Carey, M.L. Chalmers, M.M. Chan, S. Chan, H.F. Cheung, D.A. Diskin, J.S.R. Edge, C.J. Feare, M. Hale, J. Holmes, P.J. Hopkin, P.R. Kennerley, E.M.S. Kilburn, P.J. Leader, P.J. Lee, Y.Y. Lee, M.R. and E.P. Leven, R.W. Lewthwaite, W.Y. Lo, F.N.Y. Lok, K. Maunders, D.S. and V. Melville, R.C. Nicoll, J.D. Nielsen, V.B. Picken, T. ap Rheinault, P.D. Round, S.E. Shaum, P. Stockwell, G. Tedbury, Y.Y. Tung, M. Turnbull, I. Tyzzer, G.A. Walthew, J.M.C. Webster, M.D. Williams, F.K.O. Wong, T. Woodward, D. Wright, W.L. Young.

MONTHLY SUMMARIES

G.J. Carey and C.Y. Lam

January

Milder than normal, the first noticeable surge of the winter monsoon did not arrive until 13th, which was followed by the passage of a cold front on 18th. Temperatures eventually fell to 7.9°C at the Royal Observatory on 21st. Mild weather quickly returned however, punctuated only by a two-day easterly surge during 29-30th.

The year began well with several interesting birds scattered throughout the Territory: Sulphur-breasted Warbler and Slaty-legged Crake at Ho Chung, Eye-browed Thrush near Tai Po Kau, and a Japanese Sparrowhawk at Mai Po, all on 1st. On 2nd an adult winter Brown-headed Gull was recorded at Mai Po and three Grey Bushchats were seen near Lai Chi Wo. A sub-adult '*fulvescens*' Spotted Eagle was noted in the Deep Bay area during 4-10th and a Ruddy Shelduck was seen at Mai Po on 4th. At Long Valley on 8th and 22nd a Grey-headed Bunting was seen, and from 8th to 27 February about 40 Striated Yuhinas were seen intermittently in Aberdeen Country Park, especially early in the evening at Peel Rise.

The mildness of the winter was reflected in records of single Bitterns, Yellow Bitterns and Little Green Heron, all at Mai Po during the month. A female Baer's Pochard was seen at Mai Po on 8th, and a pair was there on 31st. Two Black-shouldered Kites were at Mai Po on 11th.

The month's waterfowl count brought new highs of 241 Great Crested Grebe, 6913 Shoveler and 6642 Pintail, with a record 2200 Night Herons at Mai Po on 13th. Wigeon also reached a new high of 1627. Very welcome was a continuance of the double-figure count of Dalmatian Pelicans from the previous winter, with 18 present from 14th to the month's end.

Two intriguing swiftlets were at Ho Chung during 14-16th and the only record of Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike in the first part of the year was one at Mai Po on 14th. Two Bright-capped Cisticolas were at Lam Tsuen Valley on 15th, and a single Grey Bushchat was seen at Pok Fu Lam on 15th. At Tsim Bei Tsui on 16th a European Starling was noted, and on the same date the Ruddy Crake at Tin Shui Wai present at the end of 1993 was seen again.

A rather early Asian House Martin was at Mai Po on 20th, and the first of the year's White Ibises was seen there on 21st, records continuing to 17 April. All too brief was a male Baikal Teal that spent only ten minutes at the waterfowl collection at Mai Po on 20th. Black-faced Spoonbills peaked at 74 on 23rd and a Ringed Plover was found in Deep Bay on 28th, remaining to 10 March. A new high for Grey Plover was set on 28th when 751 were counted. A further indication of the relatively mild weather came on 28th when two fledged Little Grebe chicks were seen at Mai Po. The month finished with an Ancient Auk in Mirs Bay on 29th, a Dusky Thrush at Long Valley on 29th and 31st, the first in a series of Deep Bay records of Slaty-backed Gull on 30th, and a Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher in Tai Po Kau on the same day.

February

Another mild month that was also cloudier and more humid than usual. Weak surges of the winter monsoon arrived on 2nd and 9th, followed by a cold front that crossed the South China coast on 12th with strong easterlies the following day. A replenishment of the monsoon during 16-18th maintained the cool conditions. Another cold front passed on 24th and temperatures dropped to 11.7°C on 28th.

The first birds of note in the month were a Styan's Grasshopper Warbler on 1st that remained until 14th, and three Baer's Pochards on 3rd at Mai Po; two days later a Crested Honey Buzzard was at Ma Tso Lung. At Mai Po on 6th another Styan's Grasshopper Warbler was present, and two Ruddy Shelducks were noted from this date, remaining until 19 March; there was a further Baer's Pochard on 10th. Also on 10th, Saunders' Gulls reached a new high of 172, 40 Pacific Swifts at Mai Po marked the beginning of passage, a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler and a Two-barred Greenish Warbler were in Lam Tsuen Valley, the latter remaining until 12th.

Curlews reached a new high of 1190 on 11th, and also on that date there were 2,000 Silky Starlings at Mai Po. Painted Snipe numbered six at Kam Tin on 12th, and a Brown-headed Gull was present at Mai Po during 12-14th. Lesser Sandpipers peaked at 151 on 12th and three hybrid Eurasian/American wigeons were present at Mai Po during 12-26th. During the month's waterfowl count there was a new winter high for Redshank of 1089. Rare gulls at Mai Po included a Common Gull from 11th to 19th and a Glaucous-winged Gull on 14th and 19th. Oriental White Storks peaked at seven on 13th and a Ruddy Crane was at Mai Po on 16th.

Away from Mai Po a Brown Shrike was at Happy Valley on 17th and an Eye-browed Thrush was seen in Kowloon Park on 19th, with a Dusky Thrush at Long Valley on 23rd and 26th. A European Starling was at Mai Po on 19th, with a pair of Scaup at Tsim Bei Tsui the following day. Gull interest at Mai Po continued with a Glaucous Gull on 20th and 28th, a peak count of four Slaty-backed Gulls on 25th, further Common Gulls on 25th and during 26-27th, and two Great Black-headed Gulls on 26th. The Kentish Plover flock peaked at 3700 on 24th and the Avocet flock peaked at a record 926 on 25th.

On 26th a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was again at Lam Tsuen, and on the same day there was a Black-shouldered Kite at Mai Po on 26th. The first Oriental Pratincole and Australian Curlew of the spring were seen on 26th, and a Lapwing was at Kam Tin during 26-27th. The month ended with another unidentified swiftlet at Mai Po during 27-28th.

March

The month was dominated by a late northeast monsoon and it was cooler and cloudier than normal. Surges of the monsoon with winds mainly from the east arrived on 9th and 13th. Weak northerly replenishments came on 17th and 22nd, and a strong easterly surge was recorded on 27th, followed by a weaker spell on 30th.

A female Baikal Teal was seen in the waterfowl collection at Mai Po from 4 March to 20 April. Also on 4th, a Lanceolated Warbler was at Liu Pok.

Five Black Bulbuls were at Tai Po Kau on 6th, and the following day a Bittern was seen at Tin Shui Wai. The only spring report of Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler concerned one at Nam Sang Wai on 8th. On the same day a Brown-headed Gull was seen from the boardwalk, and a Spoon-billed Sandpiper recorded there on 10th was the earliest ever in spring. A Lapwing was recorded at Mai Po on 10th and 12th.

The first Large Hawk Cuckoo was heard on 11th. During the month's waterfowl count 4938 Cormorants were recorded, a new high. A Broad-billed Roller was in Tai Po Kau on 16th, twelve days earlier than any previous bird. Grey-faced Buzzards were also seen from 16th but the highest count of the spring was only 15, at Discovery Bay on 19th. The winter's Oriental White Storks were last seen on 20th. The first White-vented Needletails were seen on 19th, and a Brown Shrike was at Shuen Wan on the same day. The following day there were three Great Black-headed Gulls off the boardwalk.

The only spring report of Black-naped Oriole concerned two males at Long Valley on 20th. The spring's first Blue and White Flycatcher was seen on 22nd, and the following day a Verditer Flycatcher was at May Road. The earliest ever Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was recorded at Mai Po on 24th, when there was also a rather early Turnstone. Grey Thrush passage began with three at Tai Po Kau also on 24th, and a Sulphur-breasted Warbler was on Cheung Chau on 26th, the same day that two Chinese Greenfinches were at Mai Po.

A Bittern was at Shuen Wan on 27th and two Buff-bellied Pipits were at Luk Keng on the same date. Also on 27th a new high of 1688 Spotted Redshanks was recorded, as was a high of 463 Great Knots, at least one of which had been ringed three days previously in northwest Australia. This arrival coincided with a strong easterly surge. The first Hobby of the spring was noted on 27th, the first Arctic Warbler on 30th and the first Red-winged Crested Cuckoo on 31st. An Ancient Auk was seen at Cape D'Aguilar on 28th, a Brown Fish Owl was in Sai Kung on 30th, and a Slaty-backed Forktail was at Tai Po Kau on the same day. The first Nordmann's Greenshank of the spring also occurred on 30th, and the only spring report of Ashy Minivet concerned three flying north over Cheung Chau on 31st.

April

It was the warmest and, in terms of rainfall, the driest April since records began in 1884. A gentle humid southeasterly airstream brought fine and sunny conditions until 9th, when it was displaced by an easterly surge. The last significant cold surge of the season arrived on 13th, accompanied by overcast skies and occasional light rain. After mid-month warmer south to southwesterly winds set in. Conditions were generally fine and sunny except on 21st and 29th when unsettled weather occurred under the influence of nearby troughs of low pressure.

A good spring passage of Red-tailed Robins included five singing on Cheung Chau on 1st and eight singing on Ping Chau on 9th. A Yellow Bittern flying up the Lam Tsuen river canal in Tai Po on 1st was the first of the spring, as was the Little Green Heron at Tai Po Kau on the same date. There was a small spate of Ferruginous Flycatchers during 1-4th, including five at Tai Po

Kau on the earliest date, and the Hainan Blue Flycatchers were back there by 2nd. Penduline Tits peaked at Mai Po at 50 on 2nd, and the following day two Crested Serpent Eagles flew northwest over the reserve, probably migrants. Asiatic Dowitchers peaked at 36 on 6th and 14th in a rather poor spring for the species, and the highest count of both Nordmann's Greenshank and Australian Curlew was eleven on 11th. A Little Stint was present on 8th

The first Indian Cuckoo was heard at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12th, and on the same date two Two-barred Greenish Warblers were seen, one at Tai Po Kau and one at Mount Austin. Spring passage of Narcissus Flycatchers consisted of five birds during the period 12-16th, and the only Japanese Yellow Bunting of the spring was at Tin Shui Wai on 14th. On the same date an Eastern Crowned Warbler was in Tai Po Kau, as was a Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo, the first for 23 years.

A Swinhoe's Egret was seen at Mai Po on 15th the same date that the first Grey-streaked Flycatchers and Brown Shrikes of the spring were seen. Oriental Cuckoos at Long Valley on 15th and Lam Tsuen Valley on 16th were the only birds of the spring, as was a Pale-legged Leaf Warbler at Ping Chau on the latter date. The only Asian Paradise Flycatchers of the spring were singles in Tai Po Kau and at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 16th, while up to three Japanese Paradise Flycatchers were reported from Tai Po Kau between 12th and 15th, with another one seen there on 16th and 19th. The only Chinese Goshawks of the spring were seen in a four day period from 15th to 18th, a mere seven birds in total. Passage of Eye-browed Thrushes involved one on Ping Chau on 16th, five there on 23rd, and three in Tai Po Kau on 27th.

The Smew first seen in December 1993 was last seen at Mai Po on 16th, and a late Imperial Eagle was there on 17th. Turnstones peaked at a new high of 268 on 20th. Up to two Water Rails were present at Tin Shui Wai during 21-23rd, while single Ruddy Crakes were seen at Nam Sang Wai on 21st and at Tin Shui Wai during 19-24th. A White-bellied Green Pigeon was seen at Ping Chau on 23rd, and two Blue-tailed Bee-eaters flew over on the same day. A Styan's Grasshopper Warbler was seen at Mai Po on 23rd, and on the same date appeared the first Black Bazas of the spring, a pair at Shuen Wan.

A full-winged Lesser Tree Duck was present in the Mai Po waterfowl collection on 26th, and a Grey Phalarope remained at the reserve from 26th to 1 May. Two Black Bulbuls were in Tai Po Kau on 27th. Redshanks reached a new high on 29th when 3474 were counted at Mai Po. Finally, a Black-shouldered Kite was at Liu Pok on 30th.

May

The month was on the whole hot and dry compared to normal. The heaviest rain fell during 3-4th bringing over 100mm under the influence of the monsoon trough. Unsettled weather was recorded on 11th, 15th, 17th and 28-31st due to the proximity of successive troughs of low pressure.

A Glossy Ibis was present at Mai Po during 1-2nd, only the third record for Hong Kong, and five Swinhoe's Egrets were together there on 2nd.

A Brown Fish Owl was in Sai Kung on 5th, and on the same date a very large flock of 1370 Sand Martins, nearly tripling the previous high count, was seen at a pre-roost gathering at Mai Po. A new spring high count of 80 Whiskered Terns was noted on 6th, and on the same date an Oriental Plover was seen briefly from the Mai Po boardwalk. There were two spring records of Watercock, both on 7 May, at Nam Sang Wai and Tin Shui Wai. A Schrenck's Bittern was at Cheung Sheung, Sai Kung, on 7th, and the following day a Sooty Flycatcher was on Ping Chau.

A Lapwing was at Pak Nai on 13th, the third latest ever, and a very late Black-tailed Gull was in Deep Bay during 14-26th. Grey-rumped Sandpipers reached 442 on 17th, and the second Schrenck's Bittern of the month was at Luk Keng on 23rd. The month finished with 86 Black-naped Terns in eastern waters on 27th, along with 56 Roseate Terns.

June

Strong winds blew for two days from east-northeast during 3-4th prior to the formation of Severe Tropical Storm Russ. As the storm passed to the southwest of Hong Kong, winds offshore were strong from a generally easterly direction between 6th and 8th. Later in the month Tropical Storm Sharon brought fresh easterlies during 24-25th as it passed to the west-southwest of Hong Kong.

Two Black Bazas were seen at Sha Lo Tung on 5th, and a Great Barbet on Hong Kong Island on 18th was the third record there in 35 years. An Osprey was seen in Deep Bay during the month, as was a Fantail Warbler holding territory at Mai Po. Also at Mai Po was the first midsummer Lesser Sandplover on 25th. Finally, 10-20 Vinous-throated Parrotbills were at Tai Mo Shan on 26th.

July

It was the wettest July in terms of rainfall since records began in 1884. Weather was unsettled on most days.

A White-vented Needletail near Shek Kong on 1st was a new late date. An Osprey was in the Deep Bay area during the month and a Black-faced Spoonbill was seen at Mai Po on 8th. A Bar-tailed Godwit on 12th was the first midsummer record, and a male Black-naped Oriole was present at Lo Wu on 13th. Migrants were in evidence at the very end of the month with a Watercock at Kam Tin, four Chestnut Munias and a Fantail Warbler at Mai Po on 31st.

August

Above normal rainfall was recorded in an active southwest monsoon. Strong winds from the west were recorded offshore on 26th and 27th during the close passage of Severe Tropical Storm Harry.

Black Baza passage began with 11, including at least one juvenile, at Shek Kong Catchwater on 6th. Redshanks continued their high numbers with 2471 on 7th, a new autumn high. An Eagle Owl was seen at Ting Kau catchwater on 7th, and flava wagtails had returned by 9th, a new early date. The first records of Eastern Crowned Warbler and Asian Paradise Flycatcher

concerned birds at Lead Mine Pass on 14th, and two Watercocks were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 17th. A new early date for Yellow-rumped Flycatcher was set by one at Mai Po on 20th, and the first of several autumn records of Black-shouldered Kite at Tin Shui Wai occurred on 21st. Finally for the month, 66 Aleutian Terns were at Cape D'Aguilar on 27th during the approach of STS Harry.

September

The close passage of Tropical Storm Luke on 12th brought the first broad northeasterly flow over southern China of the winter season. Winds offshore were strong during 12-13th. A weak surge of the northeast monsoon brought disturbed weather on 23rd and fresh winds offshore the following day.

The month began with 85 Aleutian Terns off Cape D'Aguilar on 1st and a Black Bittern at Luk Tei Tong, Lantau, on the same day. Two Black-winged Cuckoo Shrikes at Mai Po on 2nd were the earliest ever; the following day the first Yellow-breasted Bunting of the autumn was seen at Long Valley. The first autumn record of Painted Snipe concerned two birds at Long Valley on 5th, and on the same date the first Kentish Plover of the winter was seen at Mai Po.

A Sooty Flycatcher was seen at Tai Po Kau on 7th. The first records in a very good autumn for Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler were on 10th; the first Pale-legged Leaf and Arctic Warblers, and also Brown Flycatcher, occurred on this date too, with Dusky Warbler seen the day after. Nine Red Turtle Doves at Mai Po on 12th was also the first of the autumn. An Orange-headed Ground Thrush was seen in Tai Po Kau on 13th, and on the same date a Ruddy Crake was at Long Valley. On 14th occurred the first of five autumn records of Grey-streaked Flycatchers, and on the same date a Thick-billed Warbler and a Sooty Flycatcher were at Mai Po.

A heavy passage of Pintail Snipe occurred during the month, peaking at a new high of 70 of 17th, and the same date the first Marsh Harrier of the winter was noted. Up to three Japanese Paradise Flycatchers were seen in Tai Po Kau between 16th and 25th. Red-breasted Flycatchers were noted from 18th, and single Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were at Mai Po on 18th and 25th. By far the earliest ever autumn Chestnut Bunting was seen at Kam Tin on 28th, and the earliest Pintails were seen on 20th, and Cormorant on 21st, both at Mai Po. Siberian Blue Robin passage during the month consisted of five birds between 17th and 25th. The first Verditer Flycatcher of the second winter period was seen on 21st. Five Purple-backed Starlings flew over Mai Po on 21st and 25th.

The first Yellow-browed Warbler was noted on 24th, and a Ruddy Sparrow was present at Shuen Wan landfill on the same date. The first autumn report of Grey Bushchat was of one at Mai Po on 26th. Four Forest Wagtails were noted in autumn, all between 21st and 28th. A Schrenck's Bittern was at Mai Po and a Baillon's Crake was at Long Valley on 28th; the following day a Chinese Pitta was seen on the Kap Lung Trail. Finally, on the last day of the month Hong Kong's first Booted Warbler was seen near Lok Ma Chau.

October

It was generally fine and dry owing to a persistent northeast monsoon. Typhoon Seth, which skirted northern Taiwan, brought three days of broad northerly flow over southern China between 9th and 11th. The first cold front of the season reached Hong Kong on 19th, followed by two days of strong northerlies. It was then clear and rainless for the rest of the month.

The month began on 1st with a Crested Honey Buzzard at Mong Tseng, a Siberian Blue Robin at Mount Austin and the first Blyth's Leaf Warbler of the winter at Shing Mun. An early Short-tailed Bush Warbler was at Leadmine Pass on 2nd, and single Schrenck's Bitterns were seen at Mai Po on 3rd and 5th, and at Long Valley on 9th. A Citrine Wagtail was at Tsim Bei Tsui and four Ashy Minivets were at Pak Nai on 4th, and the following day 14 Blue-tailed Bee-eaters at Tsim Bei Tsui. was a new autumn high. Two Purple-backed Starlings were near Lok Ma Chau on the same date, and 23 Painted Snipe were at Long Valley. Also on 5th, 42 Intermediate Egrets at Tsim Bei Tsui was a new high.

An Aleutian Tern was in Mirs Bay on 6th, and the day after at Long Valley saw the earliest ever Bluethroat. Five Pheasant-tailed Jacanas were present at Tsim Bei Tsui on 8th, one of which remained until 16th. The first Black-faced Spoonbills of the autumn were at Mai Po on 8th, and a Grey-headed Flycatcher on Ping Chau the same day was the earliest ever; also at the latter locality was an Amur Falcon, Hong Kong's second. This autumn's Garganey passage was very marked with 494 on 8th, a new high, and on the same date a Yellow-browed Bunting was at Nam Sang Wai. A Siberian Thrush was at Mount Austin on 9th, and on 13th a Bay Woodpecker was in Tai Po Kau.

A Pale-footed Bush Warbler trapped at KARC on 15th was the fifth record for Hong Kong; also that day, a flock of 503 Crested Mynahs gathered at Tsim Bei Tsui, the largest flock recorded for a number of years. On 16th a Yellow-streaked Warbler was caught at KARC, the first for Hong Kong. The first Rubythroat of the winter was at KARC on the same date, as well as a Two-barred Greenish Warbler; also on 16th was a Blue and White Flycatcher at Mount Austin. A Blackbird at Mai Po on 18th was the first of the winter, and the first Grey-backed Thrush was seen three days later. Of the two wintering eagles, Spotted was recorded from 16th and Imperial from 22nd. The second Baillon's Crake of the autumn was found at Long Valley on 17th, remaining to 11 November.

The 21st of the month was extremely good for birds due to the passage of the first cold front of the winter two days previously and the ensuing strong northerlies. On this date at least six Black Bazas were over Mount Austin, a new late date, a Ruddy Crake was at Long Valley and the first Red-tailed Robin, Silky Starling and Grey-headed Bunting of the winter were seen. A movement of Yellow-breasted Buntings occurred with a total of 686 noted flying northeast at Mong Tseng and Chek Lap Kok. At Mai Po a Ringed Plover was also found which remained to 8 November. On 22nd two Swinhoe's Egrets were seen at Mai Po, the first autumn record for at least ten years, and two Crested Honey Buzzards flew over Mount Austin. The first Daurian

Redstarts of the winter were at Mai Po on 23rd, as were the first Saunders' Gulls; also on this date there was a Pied Harrier at Mai Po and 30 Painted Snipe at Kam Tin. A European Starling was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 24 October.

The first of three Citrine Wagtails at Long Valley up to the end of the year was seen on 28th. A Sparrowhawk was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 28th. The only autumn record of Grey-faced Buzzard concerned one flying west at Mount Austin on 29th; also there on that date was the second Blue and White Flycatcher of the autumn, and the first Mugimaki Flycatchers; in addition, a Chinese Greenfinch was at Mai Po. Finally for the month, on 30th a second Yellow-streaked Warbler was present at Mount Austin and a Marsh Harrier flew southwest over there, the first record for Hong Kong Island; on the same date a Vivid Niltava (Hong Kong's first) and an Eye-browed Thrush were at KARC, and the first Chinese Bush Warbler of the winter was recorded at Tsim Bei Tsui.

November

The absence of significant surges of the winter monsoon made it one of the warmest Novembers on record. It was fine most of the time, and less than 1mm of rainfall was recorded. The only event of any significance was a spell of strong easterlies during 14-15th.

A Bull-headed Shrike was at Ho Chung during 2-4th, with others at Wu Kau Tang on 6th, and at Mui Wo on 10th. Waterbirds returning to winter in Deep Bay included two Spoonbills on 2nd, a White Ibis on 3rd and Great Crested Grebes on 9th. Penduline Tits were first noted on 2nd, and one flew northeast over Chek Lap Kok on 4th, the first record away from the northern New Territories. There was a Brambling at Mount Austin and three *lugens* Black-backed Wagtails at Ping Chau on 5th, the same day that the first Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher of the winter was seen at Mai Po. An Oriental White Stork was also seen on 5th and two were present by 29th.

Another Yellow-streaked Warbler and the winter's first Pallas's Warbler were seen at Mount Austin on 6th, and on the same date a late Arctic Warbler was seen at Mai Po, as was a Whiskered Tern. A European Starling was at Kam Tin on 7th and 9th, and a Citrine Wagtail was there on 12th. A Siberian Thrush and one or two Yellow-bellied Tits were at KARC on 13th, and on 15th a Crested Kingfisher was seen at Yi O, Lantau. An Orange-headed Ground Thrush was seen at Mount Austin on 17th, and a very high count of 3349 Wigeon was achieved in the waterfowl count. The fifth ever Hawfinch in Hong Kong was seen at Mui Wo on the same date.

The first Grey Thrush and Russet Bush Warbler of the winter were seen at Mai Po on 19th, and there was a very obliging Oriental Pratincole at Long Valley during 20-27th. Sulphur-breasted Warblers were reported from Ho Chung on 20th and Mount Austin on 27th, a Two-barred Greenish Warbler was at Lam Tsuen on 21st, a Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was at Tai Po Kau on 22nd, and, finally, a Styan's Grasshopper Warbler was caught at Mai Po, and there was a flock of 39 Eye-browed Thrushes at Mount Austin on 26th.

December

This was an exceptional month being much warmer and wetter than normal. A surge of the monsoon arrived on 3rd and a cold front on 12th. Severe Tropical Storm Axel approached Hong Kong from the south and gave rise to two unusually rainy winter days on 24th and 25th.

Two Lapwings were at Long Valley during 2-4th, and the latest ever Sharp-tailed Sandpiper occurred at Mai Po on 2nd. Black-faced Spoonbills reached a new high of 78 on 3rd, and on the same date at Sha Lo Tung occurred the Territory's second Brown Bush Warbler. Two Red-breasted Mergansers were in Shuen Wan bay during 9-13th.

Sulphur-breasted Warblers were recorded in Tai Po Kau on 10th and 15th, and also at Ng Tung Chai on 29th. There was a Radde's Warbler at Sha Lo Tung on 10th. Different *lugens* Black-backed Wagtails were seen on Ping Chau on 10th and 31st, and at Sha Lo Tung, single Bright-capped Cisticolas were recorded on 10th and 24th. At Long Valley on 14th Hong Kong's first Plain Martin was seen. Up to 13 Short-tailed Bush Warblers were in Tai Po Kau mid-month, along with a Two-barred Greenish Warbler on 15th.

A new high of 38 Painted Snipe were seen at Kam Tin on 17th, and a Besra was at Long Valley on the same day. Dusky Thrushes began arriving on 17th, heralding a good winter for this species. A massive 4041 Wigeon were present during the waterfowl count, a new high. A European Starling was at Tin Shui Wai on 18th, and on the same date an unseasonal Pale-legged Leaf Warbler was on Cheung Chau and an Orange-headed Ground Thrush was in Tai Po Kau remaining to the year end.

Black-shouldered Kites were recorded at Long Valley on 18th and at Mui Wo on 26th. A Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler was near Hong Kong University on 19th. Hong Kong's seventh Japanese Robin was found at Ng Tung Chai on 26th. A Little Green Heron was at Sandy Bay, Pok Fu Lam, on 27th and a Brown Fish Owl was in Sai Kung on the same day. The increase in the number of wintering Avocets in Hong Kong continued with 996 being counted on 29th. Finally, ten Eye-browed Thrushes were at Ngong Ping on 30th.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

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In the interests of brevity, records for species which are generally common and widespread throughout the year are not listed unless significant reports were received. The dates of the waterfowl counts referred to are 16 January, 13 February, 13 March, 19 November and 18 December, although it should be noted that these may include counts made up to a week either side. Species listed in Collar *et al.* (1994) are indicated by the appropriate categories in parentheses: C = critical; E = endangered; V = vulnerable; N = near-threatened. † indicates that more detailed data concerning spring passage are provided in Table 1. KARC = Kadoorie Agricultural Research Station.

Category A

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

- 1 Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area excluding Nam Sang Wai (upper row) and at Nam Sang Wai alone (lower row) were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
DB	95	70	80	18	21	7	13	21	35	84	74	88
NSW	108	114	115	98	81	82	62	37	28	25	20	40

Breeding success at Mai Po was very poor presumably due to the high level of rainfall during the summer. Two fledged chicks were noted in the Waterfowl Collection as early as 28 January, with two broods there in early April. Subsequently, however, no broods were seen until early September during which month five broods totalling eight young were noted up to 26th. Breeding was also noted at Tsim Bei Tsui, where at least five broods seem to have been involved, including two each of four birds on 9 October, and at Nam Sang Wai where 31-38 pairs were present and 17 broods were seen (many pairs were unsuccessful due to the summer's heavy rain). Nam Sang Wai thus has the greatest concentration of breeding birds in the Territory, possibly holding up to 40% of the Hong Kong breeding population.

Away from the Deep Bay area, up to six birds were seen at Tai Mei Tuk in January, up to four were noted at Ho Pui Reservoir, Nam Chung, Plover Cove and Shing Mun during February and March, one was at Shuen Wan on 19 April, up to two were there during the latter half of November and three during 8-25 December; finally, one was at Kam Tin on 6 November.

- 2 Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*
Waterfowl count totals for the first winter period were 241 in January, 125 in February and 117 in March, with the only subsequent spring record being a single on 6 April from the boardwalk. The January count is a new high for Hong Kong, the previous highest being 200 on 4 February 1968. In the latter part of the year, the earliest record concerned seven at Tsim Bei Tsui on

9 November; 42 were recorded during the waterfowl count of the same month, and 44 during the December count.

- [**Shearwater sp.** *Puffinus sp.*
An unidentified *Puffinus* shearwater was seen from Cape D'Aguilar on 13 April (MDW).]

- 6 Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*
The January waterfowl count recorded 3546 in the Deep Bay area, the February count produced 4638, and the March count 4938 (see below). Subsequently, over 1000 were still present on 26 March, 195 were counted on 1 April, 10 on 6 April, and the final spring record was of three on 30 April, excluding an injured adult that remained throughout the summer in the Waterfowl Collection. Apart from the latter bird, the earliest of the autumn was seen on 21 September (PJL), a new early date. Thereafter, about 120 were seen to arrive at Mai Po high from the north on 20 October, and numbers built up to 2791 by the time of the November waterfowl count and 4805 by the December count.

Elsewhere, two were noted at Shing Mun Reservoir on 10 February, and up to three birds were noted there from 23 October until the end of the year. A maximum of 338 were noted at Plover Cove Reservoir in the first winter period, with 392 being the highest count at Shuen Wan. However, it is likely that birds move freely between the two sites, and, more importantly, it seems that these birds also roost at Mai Po. For this reason, last year's high count of 5983 has been amended to 4759; consequently, the March count this year of 4938 is now the highest on record for Hong Kong.

It should be noted that the recent build up of numbers in Deep Bay means that it is one of the most important wintering sites of this species in the whole of Asia (c.f. Perennou *et al.* 1994).

- 7 Dalmatian Pelican (V)** *Pelecanus crispus*
The six birds present at the end of 1993 increased gradually to 18 by 14 January, and this number was recorded until the end of the month. Subsequently, 17 were noted until 13 March, 13 were seen on 19th, five immatures remained on 22nd, two were seen on 29th and one immature was recorded to 3 April. The only record in the second winter period was of two on 30 December. All records were from the Deep Bay area.

- 7.9 Christmas Island Frigatebird (V)** *Fregata andrews*
1993: On 25 September during the close approach of Typhoon Dot an immature was seen from Cape D'Aguilar (PJL,MRL). This is the second record for Hong Kong. Details of the first record, accepted after review of all frigatebird records, will be published in next year's report.

- [**Frigatebird sp.** *Fregata sp.*
Two unidentified frigatebirds were seen at Mong Tseng on 17 May (RWL,GAW).]

- 10 Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*
In the first winter period single birds were noted at Mai Po on six dates from 3 January to 23 February. In spring the only records were one at Tin Shui

Wai on 7 March and one at Shuen Wan on 27 March. In the latter part of the year there were two records, singles at Mai Po on 3rd and 26 December.

11 Yellow Bittern

Ixobrychus sinensis

In the first winter period a maximum of three birds was noted at Mai Po from 16 January to 4 February and one was at Nam Sang Wai on 21 February. One at Mai Po on 12 March was possibly a migrant, but the earliest definite migrant was one flying up the Lam Tsuen River in Tai Po on 1 April. The highest counts subsequently were five to seven at Tin Shui Wai during 2-7 May and three at Shuen Wan on 20 May; in addition, eight were present at Nam Sang Wai on 10 June. Summer records included one to two at Nam Sang Wai and Tin Shui Wai during June and July, three at Lok Ma Chau-Lo Wu on 19 June, two at Shuen Wan on 24 June and three at Tsim Bei Tsui, including one juvenile, on 26 July; about ten pairs were estimated to be breeding at Mai Po and three recently-fledged young were observed near Lok Ma Chau on 9 September. Other records of interest included singles at Mui Wo, Lantau, on 15 May and 4 June, three feeding in the open at Shek O Golf Course on 5 June and one at Pok Fu Lam on 11 June.

In the second half of the year the highest count was four at Mai Po on 13th and 23 August and at Tsim Bei Tsui on 22 September. Elsewhere in September, up to two were recorded at a number of locations in the northern New Territories and at Mui Wo; these were followed by one to two birds on ten dates in October, all in the Deep Bay area except one on Lantau, and, finally, one at Mai Po during 5-6 November.

12 Schrenck's Bittern (N)

Ixobrychus eurhythmus

There were five records during the year. In spring a female was at Cheung Sheung, Sai Kung, on 7 May (MLC) and another was at Luk Keng on 23 May (SES). In autumn single females or immatures were seen at Mai Po landfill on 28 September (GAW), at Mai Po on 3rd and 5 October (JMCW), and at Long Valley on 9 October (HFC,YYL). The latter three are the seventh to ninth autumn records, all of which have occurred between 23 September and 9 October.

13 Chestnut Bittern

Ixobrychus cinnamomeus

A male overwintered at Mai Po and was last seen on 19 March. In spring singles were recorded on five dates in April (three records of males), three in May (including one in Hong Kong Park on 29th) and once in June, on 4th. Midsummer records involved four dates in July (one male), including 3-4 birds at Mui Wo on 3rd. In August there were records on five dates (all single females or immatures), and in September on nine dates (including three males), the highest day total being five at Long Valley, Kam Tin and Mui Wo on 25th; in October the only records concerned singles at Long Valley on 2nd, 6th and 9th. The final record of the year was a male at Mai Po on 23 December. The spread of records throughout the summer suggests that breeding may be occurring locally.

14 Black Bittern

Ixobrychus flavicollis

An adult male was at Luk Tei Tong, Lantau, on 1 September (PJH). Excluding an exceptional typhoon-related influx of birds at the end of May

1989, there have now only been five records of this species since the 1976 publication of the Checklist, one each in April, July and August, and two in September.

16 Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2200	120	48	61	25	78	16	13	4	4	25	153

The count of 2200, made on 13 January at Mai Po (SC), is a new high for Hong Kong; the previous highest was 1179 during the January 1990 waterfowl count, although most of these were actually roosting at Fu Tian. At Kowloon Park an immature was present on 22 January and 30 April; from 19 August to 5 October a maximum of seven birds was noted here, and from 6 October to 10 December the highest count was 22 on 6 December. Other records away from Deep Bay included one at Magazine Gap on 21 February and 24 May, and up to 12 birds seen daily from 16 August at a roost at Heng Fa Chuen. At Shuen Wan the peak count in the first winter period was six, and in the second, 30.

Breeding was confirmed at seven sites and involved at least 507 nests or pairs. At Mai Po village there were two nests; at Mai Po N.R. there were 253; at Stonecutters, 53; at Tai Po, three; at A Chau, 174; and at Centre Island, Tolo Harbour, a new colony was found consisting of at least two nests, but possibly as many as ten. In addition, at Shuen Wan there were about 20 breeding pairs. At Mui Wo three very young juveniles in late July and a spread of records from mid-May onward involving up to eight birds suggested breeding may have occurred locally.

17 Little Green Heron

Butorides striatus

Relatively mild weather very early in the year provided more records than usual in the first winter period. At least one was present at Mai Po (not a usual locality for overwintering birds) until 22 February; one was at Aberdeen Reservoir on 29 January and two were at Shek Kong catchment on 19 February. The next record was a single at Tai Po Kau on 1 April, followed by one in a concrete drain at Lei Muk Shue on 5th, but the first record of the summer at Mai Po occurred on 16 April. Away from Deep Bay, two were at Tai Tam on 28 May. As for the breeding population, at Mui Wo two to five birds were noted from 15 May to 3 September, including three juveniles on 4 June; at Mai Po 15 pairs were estimated to be breeding. Other summer records included a maximum of six at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 June, with three juveniles there on 11 July, and one at Nam Sang Wai on 10 June and 9 August.

In autumn up to five birds were noted at Mai Po from 13 August to 2 October with the maximum count occurring on 18 September; four were present at Tsim Bei Tsui on 17 August and 1 September, with the final record there being two on 5 October. Elsewhere, two were at Shuen Wan on 17 August, up to five were at Mui Wo during 1-18 September, two were at Yung Shue Au and one was at Kuk Po (both near Starling Inlet) on 9 September, one was at Kam Tin on 17 September, and one was at Ho Pui on 13 October. The only record of the second winter period was one at Sandy Bay, Pok Fu Lam, on 27 December.

18 Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
199	108	174	54	58	124	109	118	53	94	235	234

Peak winter counts at Shuen Wan were 39 on 14 January and 55 on 11 November. Eight were present at Heng Fa Chuen on 16 August. Breeding was confirmed at five sites and involved 193 breeding pairs or nests. At Ho Sheung Heung 62 nests were noted; at Mai Po village, there were 71; at Mong Tseng, 13; at Ho Pui village, 25; and at Shuen Wan there were about 22 breeding pairs. In addition, adults were present at the Tai Po and A Chau egrettries, but no nests were seen.

19 Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
43	12	10	106	79	19	92	48	224	72	71	53

Away from breeding localities, three roosted at Stonecutters on 28 March, 15 were at Kam Tin on 27 February with 20 there on 4 April and one on 16 April, six were on Lantau on 15 May, up to six were present at Mui Wo from 25 September to 16 October, 70 were seen at Kam Tin on 31 August, followed by 50 there on 17 September, two on 22 October and five on 26 December, and an unusually tame bird was feeding around sprinklers at Aberdeen Sports Ground on 13 November.

Breeding was confirmed at three sites and involved at least 73 nests. At Mai Po village four nests were noted, and at A Chau there were 68. In addition, 247 adults and 106 juveniles were recorded at Shuen Wan on 15 August, with one nest having been seen earlier in the summer. Adults were present at Mai Po N.R. and Ho Pui village, though no nests were found.

20 Swinhoe's Egret (E) *Egretta eulophotes*
A single bird was seen at Mai Po on 15 April (RWL), and five were there together on 2 May (SES, RWL). Unusually, two adults were seen at Mai Po on 22 October (RWL, VBP); this is only the second autumn record since publication of the Checklist. Despite the latter record, an unimpressive showing for this species.

21 Reef Egret *Egretta sacra*
One to six birds were recorded from the following localities: Tung Chung/Chek Lap Kok, Mui Wo and Chi Ma Wan (Lantau), Ma Wan, Stonecutters, Lamma Island, Cheung Chau, Gau Tau, the Ninepins, Tai A Chau, Clearwater Bay (Kowloon), Heng Fa Chuen, Chek Keng, Cape Collinson and Cape D'Aguilar. However, the highest counts were 12 at Chi Ma Wan on 15 October, 13 at Sok Kwu Wan, Lamma, on 18 August and 15 at Long Harbour, Sai Kung, on 29 December.

22 Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
839	924	655	157	550	920	171	198	568	1680	1282	1030

At Mai Po the majority of the January Deep Bay population, about 700 birds, was in a pre-roost gathering on a *gei wai* on 11th; most of the March population, 490 birds, were feeding in a fish pond there on 4 March; in addition, the highest October count consisted of a flock of birds feeding on a drained *gei wai* at Mai Po. A grey-phase bird was at Mai Po during 7-8 May and on 25 June. Records of interest away from the Deep Bay area included up to 14 birds at Heng Fa Chuen in autumn and over 70 birds at Tai O, Lantau, on the last day of the year. At Shuen Wan the peak count was 413 on 15 January.

Breeding was confirmed at eight sites and involved at total of 342 nests or pairs. At Ho Sheung Heung three nests were noted; at Mai Po village there were 14; at Mai Po Reserve, 171; at Mong Tseng, 110; at Tai Po, 18; at A Chau, three; and at Stonecutters, three. In addition, about 20 breeding pairs were recorded at Shuen Wan, and adults were present at Ho Pui village, though no nests were found.

23 Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	5	9	4	1	—	2	2	7	42	9	5

The October count was made on 5th at Tsim Bei Tsui (RWL) and is a new high for Hong Kong, the previous highest being 20. Away from Deep Bay, one was at Starling Inlet on 6 March, two were at Shuen Wan on 5th and 8 April, one was at Luk Keng on 23 May, five were at Kam Tin on 31 August, four were at Shuen Wan landfill on 26 September, two were at Kam Tin on 29 October and at Shuen Wan on 25 December, and one was at Pui O, Lantau, on 26 December.

24 Great Egret *Egretta alba*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
413	303	256	54	82	64	42	29	181	479	541	311

Away from Deep Bay, at Shuen Wan the post-breeding count was 59 on 17 August; the highest winter counts there were 52 on 16 February and 40 on 17 December. Also noted at Stonecutters (11 roosting on 28 March), Lai Chi Wo (one on 2 January), Kam Tin (four on 17 September and one on 26 December) and Mui Wo (one on 27 December).

Breeding was confirmed at three sites and involved a total of 53 nests or pairs. At Mong Tseng eight nests were noted, and at A Chau there were 25; in addition, about 20 breeding pairs were noted at Shuen Wan.

25 Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
843	565	1033	104	1	—	13	7	106	445	834	1248

The latest spring record at Mai Po was one on 31 May; at Nam Sang Wai nine were seen on 10 June and three were still present on 28 June. There were three July records, including 11 on 13th at Nam Sang Wai and 13

between Mai Po and Lo Wu on 30th. Away from Deep Bay, one flew over Shing Mun reservoir and 23 were at Ho Chung on 1 January, and seven were at Kam Tin on 26 December; at Shuen Wan up to 19 were present in the first winter period with 27 in the second. Breeding was confirmed at A Chau where there was one nest.

26 Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
Monthly totals of individuals in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	1	2	8	2	1	2	3	5	5	3	3

Records of single juveniles at Mai Po on 9 July and at Nam Sang Wai on 28 June, 13th and 27 July suggest breeding locally. One at Ha Pak Nai on 22 October was unusual. Away from Deep Bay, the only record was of an immature at Kam Tin on 18 December.

28 Oriental White Stork (E) *Ciconia ciconia boyciana*
Four birds were present from the beginning of the year up to 13 February when seven were seen (JMCW), the highest count of the winter. Five were reported as late as 20 March, the latest record of the first winter period. In the second winter period the first record was of a single on 5 November, and two were present by 29 November, remaining until the end of the year (RWL,GJC). This is the ninth record for Hong Kong and the fifth consecutive winter of occurrence. All records were from the Deep Bay area.

29 Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*
One was present at Mai Po during 1-2 May (PJH,JB *et al.*). First recorded on 21 April 1978, this is the only record since that year.



1 Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 1 May 1994

Ray Tipper

30 White Ibis (N) *Threskiornis melanocephalus*
In the first part of the year recorded from 21 January to 23 April, two immatures and one adult being noted. In the second part of the year recorded on five dates in November from 3rd and twice in December; all these records probably involved the same adult. All records from the Deep Bay area.

31 European Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
Up to four birds were noted in the first winter period, with three still remaining on 13 March, two on 2 April and, finally, one on 20 April. In the second winter period the earliest record was of two on 2 November; these remained until 3 December when three were recorded. All records from Deep Bay, mainly Mai Po.

32 Black-faced Spoonbill (C) *Platalea minor*
Numbers in the first winter period peaked at 74 on 23 January, subsequently declining to 53 on 25 February, 47 on 27 March, 37 (all except one immature) on 6 April, 20 on 30 April and, the final spring record, one on 17 May. Three were seen south of Cheung Chau on 24 March heading east-northeast over the sea. An immature at Mai Po on 8 July indicated over-summering. In the second half of the year the earliest record was of 14 at Mai Po on 8 October; interestingly, on 22nd 24 were seen soaring high and drifting west over Starling Inlet. Subsequently, numbers increased to 50 on 12 November and 78 on 3 December (RWL,GJC), a new high for Hong Kong.

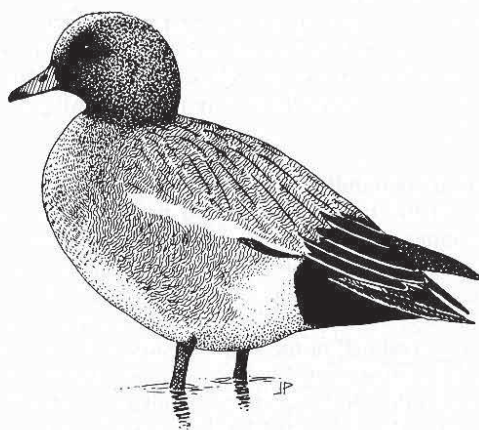
33 Lesser Treeduck *Dendrocygna javanica*
One full-winged bird was present in the Mai Po waterfowl collection on 26 April (RWL). This is the ninth record for Hong Kong.

36 Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*
One was recorded at Mai Po and in Deep Bay from 4 January, with two present from 6 February (SC,GJC,MLC *et al.*); these remained until 19 March.

37 Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*
Numbers continued their recovery from the very low totals recorded during 1990-92 and the January waterfowl count of 1400 was only 27% below the average recorded in the previous eight years. The February count was 1142, and the March count was 545. Numbers apparently dropped sharply thereafter with only six seen on 26 March and one during 4-5 April, the final record. In the second half of the year 80 were present by the time of the December waterfowl count and 150 were counted on 27th.

40 Wigeon *Anas penelope*
Totals for waterfowl counts in the first months of the year were 1627 in January, 684 in February and 1629 in March (at the time a new high). Departure occurred in the last half of the month as the only April records were three on 15th and singles on 20th and 26th. The earliest record in the second half of the year was five at Tsim Bei Tsui on 21 October. High numbers continued in the second half of the year with 3349 during the November waterfowl count and a massive 4041, a new high for Hong Kong, during the December count. Prior to this year the previous highest count was 1335 during the January 1992 waterfowl count.

For the third and fourth successive winters, hybrid Wigeon x American Wigeon *A. americana* were noted at Mai Po with three males present in the waterfowl collection during 12-26 February (GJC,PRK), and up to two males seen there on 4th and 7 December (RWL).



Jeremy Pearse

41 Falcated Teal

Anas falcata

Waterfowl count totals in the first part of the year were 72 (of which eight were males and the rest female/immature) in January, 113 in February and 35 in March. Subsequently, five were still present at Mai Po on 5 April and the final record was two on 16 April. In the second winter period the earliest record was one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 8 November; numbers built up to 45 by 27 November and 121 by the December waterfowl count. All records were at Deep Bay, primarily Mai Po.

42 Gadwall

Anas strepera

The highest counts of the first winter period were 12 on 26 January, 23 on 10 February and 15 three days later. Subsequently, three were present on 15 March, and two were seen on 27 March. In the second half of the year the earliest record was of three on 19 November, with three seen again on 29 December. All records in the Deep Bay area, primarily Mai Po.

43 Baikai Teal (V)

Anas formosa

A male was seen to arrive at the Mai Po Waterfowl Collection on 20 January in the company of 12 Teal, only to depart south after ten minutes (JMCW). A full-winged female was seen at the same place from 4 March to 20 April (RWL,PJL).

44 Teal

Anas crecca

Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1652	1938	1463	41	—	—	—	1	43	138	2098	1981

The highest count in April was also the latest in spring, on 15th. The earliest in autumn was a single on the last day of August, only six days later than the earliest ever. Away from the Deep Bay area, up to 11 were seen at Shuen Wan up to 11 April, a female was at Ho Chung on 15 January, 13 were at Long Valley on 5 January, up to 18 were seen at Kam Tin until the end of January and, apart from 68 on 18 December, up to ten were seen there from 8 October until the end of the year.

45 Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

The January waterfowl count recorded a total of 26, the same number were also seen on 10 February, and the March waterfowl count logged 29. The final record was of a male at Mai Po on 15th. In the second winter period the earliest record was of two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 21 October; numbers built up to 25 by 6 November and 27 by the time of the December waterfowl count. The only record away from the Mai Po-Tsim Bei Tsui area was a male at Long Valley on 17 November.

46 Yellow-nib Duck

Anas poecilorhyncha

Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area of the two subspecies, *zonorhyncha* upper row and *haringtoni* lower row, were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>zonorhyncha</i>	270	224	202	2	5	5	1	2	6	94	275	216
<i>haringtoni</i>	17	11	5	5	11	20	2	10	29	40	19	16

The discovery that two races of Yellow-nib Duck occur in Hong Kong came as a surprise to everybody. The wintering population consists primarily of *A.p. zonorhyncha* ('Chinese Spotbill') with small numbers of *A.p. haringtoni* ('Burmese Spotbill'). In summer the two forms breed sympatrically, with no evidence yet of interbreeding; at this time *haringtoni* appears to predominate. A paper on this discovery is now under preparation. Away from Deep Bay, one was at Kam Tin on 29 October and 32 were there on 6 November.

47 Pintail

Anas acuta

A total of 6642 was recorded in Deep Bay during the January waterfowl count, a new high for Hong Kong; the February and March totals were 2868 and 425 respectively. Spring departure seems to have passed unnoticed as the latter was the latest record. In autumn the first record was of two on 20 September (PJL), the earliest ever in the Territory by six days. Numbers subsequently built up to 463 by the November waterfowl count and to 2641 by the December count. Away from Deep Bay and the area immediately adjacent, at Long Valley there were five on 15 November and seven on 2 December, and at Kam Tin there were three on 11 November and one on 17 December.

48 Garganey

Anas querquedula

In the January waterfowl count five birds were recorded, at the low end of the range of recent years. About 20 were present at the end of January

and beginning of February, but there were no more records until three on 21 March. Subsequently, the highest spring count was 25 on 4 April and the final spring record occurred on 6 May. This poor first part of the year was more than compensated for in autumn, however. The first record was of 11 on 18 September and numbers then built up to 381 on 25 September and 494 on 8 October (RWL,VBP), a new high; 419 were still present on 17 October. At the end of the year 25 were present at Mai Po. Away from Deep Bay, one to three birds were seen on four dates at Long Valley from 11 September to 5 November.

49 Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

In the January waterfowl count 6913 were recorded, a new high for Hong Kong; in the February count 6265 were noted, and in March, 2639. Subsequently, there were few records before the final one of 36 on 15 April. The first in autumn was noted on 5 October with numbers building up to 500 by 23 October, 3000 on 2 November, and 5508 during the December waterfowl count. All records came from Deep Bay.

50 Pochard *Aythya ferina*

There were six records during the year all at Mai Po or Tsim Bei Tsui: one male and three females on 26 January, one male on 31st, one male and two females on 3 February, one male on 6th and 26 November, and two males on 18 December.

51 Baer's Pochard (V) *Aythya baeri*

Records considered to definitely relate to wild birds (i.e. they were seen away from or flying out of the waterfowl collection at Mai Po) were as follows: a female on 8 January (GJC,PJL), a pair on 31 January (PJL), a male and two females on 3 February (PJL), and a male on 10 February (JMCW).

52 Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

In the first part of the year recorded on fifteen dates from 5 January to 16 March with the highest count being 26 on 3 February; other notable counts included 19 on 21 February and 17 on 8 January. The only records in the second winter period were of 12 during the December waterfowl count and one later in the month, on 24th. All records, except for a female at Nam Chung on 6th and 16 March, were at Mai Po. In addition, however, 120 were noted at Fu Tian during the March waterfowl count.

53 Scaup *Aythya marila*

The only record in the year was of a pair at Tsim Bei Tsui on 20 February (PA).

55.5 Smew *Mergus albellus*

The female present at Mai Po from 16 December 1993 remained until 16 April (RWL).

56 Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

A single was recorded during the January waterfowl count, and this was followed by 54 during the February count. The only other records during the first part of the year were two near Lau Fau Shan on 5 March, four flying

east-northeast over the sea to the south of Cheung Chau on 24 March, and nine doing the same on 1 April. In the second winter period two females were in Shuen Wan bay during 9-13 December.

57 Black Baza *Aviceda leucophotes*

A pair was at Shuen Wan from 23 April until 10 July, and five to seven birds were there on 7 May. Three were at Tai Po Kau and two were at Sha Lo Tung on 27 April and one was at Tai Mo Shan on 28 April. Two were seen at Ho Chung on 2 May, two were at Luk Keng on 8 May and two were at Fanling Golf Course on 13 May. Two were again seen at Sha Lo Tung on 5 June.

With the exception of the pair at Shuen Wan, there were no further sightings until 6 August when 11, including at least one juvenile, were seen at Shek Kong Catchwater. One was at Castle Peak on 7 August, one was at Long Valley on 17 August and 11 September, seven were at Sheung Shui on 22 August, seven were at Chau Tau on 1 September, 18 were at Hang Tau Tsuen, Sheung Shui, on 11 September, 11 were at Luk Keng on 17 September, nine were at Chau Tau on 1 October, 18 were at Chek Keng and one was at Hoi Ha on 2 October, and the final sighting was of at least six over Mount Austin on 21 October (VBP), a new late date for Hong Kong.

58 Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

Singles were at Ma Tso Lung on 5 February (PJL) and at Mong Tseng on 1 October (DAD); two birds were seen at Mount Austin on 22 October (MT).

59 Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

In the first half of the year two were recorded at Mai Po on 11 January and one was there on 26 February, one was at Liu Pok in the frontier controlled area on 30 April and one was at Nam Sang Wai on 7 May. The next record was of one at Tin Shui Wai on 21 August and, with the exception of two on 27 August, there were sporadic records of single birds at this site until 23 November. Further sightings, all of single birds, were made at Mai Po on 26 October and 4 November, Long Valley on 25 November and 18 December, and Mui Wo on 26 December. As in 1993, possibly no more than four individuals were involved in these sightings.

60 Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Five hundred were counted at the Aberdeen Country Park roost on 30 October. Other counts included 50 at Mai Po on 23 January, 50 at Chau Tau on 27 February, 55 at Shuen Wan landfill on 22 October, 50 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 November and 50 between Mai Po and Lo Wu on 10 November. Thirty birds at Tai Tam Reservoir on 22 May were seen feeding opportunistically on Budgerigar and lovebird sp. that had recently been released.

61 White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

The first day of the year brought an interesting report of an immature destroying two toy kites at Shek O. Away from the traditional sites, there were several reports of at least two different birds in the Deep Bay area until 7 May and again from 20 September. There were a number of reports from Hong

Kong Island, including inland records of one at Tai Tam Reservoir on 19 March with two there on 1 October, and singles at Aberdeen Country Park on 18 October, at Mount Austin on 30 October and near Magazine Gap on 27 December.

The only breeding report came from the northeast coast of Lantau in November and December. Nest-building was noted but it is not known if the pair successfully raised young.

63 Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela*

Singles were regularly reported from Tai Po Kau between 5 March and 26 August, two were seen on 2 September and one was there on 2 October. Up to three birds were recorded at nineteen other sites during the year, although there were never more than three reports from any one site. Interestingly, the highest number of sightings occurred in April and then October, including two flying northwest over Mai Po on 3 April and singles at Tin Shui Wai on 4th and 12 October. This perhaps indicates that although this species is regarded as sedentary, a small movement may take place through Hong Kong.

64 Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Up to three were recorded in the Deep Bay area until 1 April and birds were again present from 17 September with a maximum of five on 18 October. One was seen at Long Valley on 28 September and one flew southwest over Mount Austin on 30 October. The latter is the first record for Hong Kong Island.

66 Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos*

A juvenile, probably a male, flew past the Mai Po boardwalk on 23 October (PJL, GJC *et al.*).

68 Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis*

In the first part of the year adult males were seen at Mai Po on 1 January (GJC) and 3rd and 7 April (PJL). In October singles were seen at Mai Po on 2nd (female/immature) (HFC, PJL), Ping Chau on 8th and Mai Po on 9th (both juveniles), Mai Po on 15th (a juvenile male trapped), and Tsim Bei Tsui on 28th (a male). In November adult males were seen at Mai Po on 1st and 11th, and another was seen at Lok Ma Chau on 19th (all PJL). In addition, an immature male was seen at Mui Wo on 12 November (PJH).

68.1 Besra *Accipiter virgatus*

A juvenile female was trapped at Mai Po on 17 September (GJC, PJL), a juvenile female flew into a window at Dragon View, Castle Peak Road on 22 October (DAJ per DSM), a juvenile male was trapped at KARC on 30 October (PJL) and an adult female was at Long Valley on 17 December (GJC, PJL).

1989: the bird originally published as a Crested Goshawk showing a supercilium (Chalmers 1990) was actually a juvenile female Besra (RB) (see Leader and Carey 1995).

[Sparrowhawk sp. *A. gularis/virgatus/nisus*
Small unidentified accipiters were reported as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	5	5	15	1	—	—	2	11	33	16	4

A typical pattern showing migratory peaks in April and October/November.]

69 Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Single adult females were present at Tsim Bei Tsui on 9th (RWL) and 28 October (PRK).

70 Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*

Reported from 29 locations during the year. As in 1993, the majority of records were from Hong Kong Island and the central New Territories. Also seen on Ping Chau and Cheung Chau, and at Mui Wo.

71 Chinese Goshawk *Accipiter soloensis*

Three were seen at Kowloon Peak on 15 April (MH), a single adult male was at Mai Po on 16 April (RWL) and three flew north at Tsim Bei Tsui on 18 April (MDW). Not a good year for this species.

72 Grey-faced Buzzard *Butastur indicus*

Two birds flew north at Cheung Chau on 16 March (MDW), 15 drifted northeast along the coast at Discovery Bay on 19 March (PJH) and three were at Kat O on the same date (IT); one was seen at Mai Po on 21 March (PJL) and a further two birds were recorded at Cheung Chau on 27 March (MDW). The only other spring record was of a single bird at Tai Po Kau on 15 April (GJC). In autumn there was one record, a bird flying west at Mount Austin on 29 October (MT).

73 Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Regularly recorded in the Deep Bay area until 20 March with a maximum of six birds on 23 January. Other reports during the first winter period were of two birds at Tai Tam Reservoir and singles at Lok Ma Chau, Chau Tau, Kam Tin, Long Valley, Ng Tung Chai, Nam Chung, Shuen Wan, Tai Lam Country Park, Ho Chung, Tsuen Wan, Western District on Hong Kong Island, Cheung Chau and Ping Chau. The last record in spring was of a single bird at Cape D'Aguilar on 28 March.

In the second winter period recorded in the Deep Bay area from 18 October, the most seen being five at Tsim Bei Tsui on 25 October. Also reported from Ma Tso Lung, Chau Tau, Kam Tin, Long Valley, Tai Po Kau, Shuen Wan, Tai Long, Mount Austin, Barker Road and Hatton Road on Hong Kong Island, Cheung Chau, Ping Chau and Chi Ma Wan, Lantau. In addition, an individual was regularly seen perched on the overhead lights along the Tolo Highway at Tai Po in November and December.

74 Spotted Eagle (V) *Aquila clanga*

In the first winter period up to three were recorded in the Deep Bay area, mainly at Mai Po, until 27 March. Sub-adults of the '*fulvescens*' colour form were noted at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 January, Nam Sang Wai on 5 January

and Mai Po on 10 January and 19 February; these records presumably refer to the same bird. Elsewhere in the northern New Territories, three were at Kam Tin on 3 February and one was there on 26th and 27 February, two were at Lok Ma Chau on 5 February with one there on 20th and 26 February, one was at Ma Tso Lung on 21 February, one was at Long Valley on 26 February and three were recorded at Chau Tau on 27 February. A single bird observed at Tai Tam Reservoir on 11 February is the first record from Hong Kong Island. In the second winter period up to two birds were recorded in the Deep Bay area, again mostly at Mai Po, from 16 October. One was seen at Kam Tin on 11 November and one was at Ma Tso Lung on 19 November.

75 Imperial Eagle (V)

Aquila heliaca

In the first winter period regularly recorded in the Deep Bay area in small numbers until 22 March. Most records were from Mai Po, where the maximum count was of four or five birds on 11 March. Also reported at Ma Tso Lung from 5 February until 21 March with a maximum count of nine on 21 February. Other reports came from Long Valley where one was seen on 30 January, from Kam Tin where an immature was seen on 13 February and an adult on 20 February, from Chau Tau where one was seen on 10 February and two were seen on 27 February, and from Lok Ma Chau where there were eight on 26 February, one on 27 February and three on 19 March. A late record was of an immature at Mai Po on 17 April.

The first record in the second winter period was of a single bird at Mai Po on 22 October and a maximum of three birds was noted at that site on 1st and 26 November. The highest concentration was reported from the Ma Tso Lung/Crest Hill area where birds were regularly seen flying to roost in November and December; a maximum of 13 was recorded on 19 November, the second highest total for the territory. Other reports were of singles at Chau Tau on 11 November, at Kam Tin on 11 November and 18 December, at Tai Lam Country Park on 13 November and at Fanling on 11 December.

76 Bonelli's Eagle

Hieraetus fasciatus

There were no reports of breeding this year although sightings, usually of single birds, were made at traditional sites in the central and northern New Territories as well as in the southern part of Lantau Island. In the Deep Bay area an immature was seen at Pak Nai on 30 January, and at least three different birds were present at Tsim Bei Tsui/Mai Po between 8 August and 4 December. Two adults, one of which was displaying, were seen at Shouson Hill, Hong Kong Island, on 4 December.

76.1 Mountain Hawk Eagle

Spizaetus nipalensis

1989: one was near Marina Cove, Sai Kung, on 22 October (MH) (see plate 2). A re-examination of the photographs of this bird has enabled identification of this, the second record for Hong Kong, the first having occurred the previous year.



2 Mountain Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis* Separated from Crested Honey Buzzard and Crested Serpent Eagle by massive build, with broad body and wings, bulging secondaries, seven primary fingers and rather short, evenly barred, tail.
Sai Kung, Hong Kong, 22 October 1989
Martin Hale

77 Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

In the first winter period noted at Deep Bay until 17 May, the maximum being eight at Tsim Bei Tsui on 3 April. Away from Deep Bay there were reports of singles at Sai Kung, Plover Cove, Yung Shue O, Tolo Channel and Ping Chau in January and Long Valley in April. There were midsummer sightings of single birds in the Deep Bay area on five occasions in June and July. Two birds were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 8 August, one was at Nam Sang Wai on 9 August and birds were regularly seen in Deep Bay from 23 August to the end of the year with a maximum of eight from the Mai Po boardwalk in mid-November. Elsewhere, one was at Tai Lam Reservoir on 21 August, one was at Luk Keng on 21 September, one was seen at Shuen Wan on 24 September and up to two were recorded there between 26 November and 19 December, one was seen elsewhere in Tolo Harbour on 8 October and a single was also recorded at Mui Wo on 11th and 31 October.

79 Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

In the first winter period there were reports from thirteen sites, all in the New Territories except for one at Tai A Chau, Soko Islands, on 17 February; all records were of single birds except for two at Kam Tin on 3 February. The last record was of one at Tin Shui Wai on 16 April. The first record in autumn was of three to four birds in the Deep Bay area on 1 October. Thereafter it was far more widespread than in the first part of the year with records not only from the New Territories but also from Hong Kong Island, Lantau, Ma Wan, Chek Lap Kok and urban Kowloon. The majority of records occurred in October, indicating that this species is perhaps more common as a passage migrant through the territory than as a winter visitor.

80 Amur Falcon*Falco amurensis*

A juvenile was seen at Ping Chau on 8 October (PIL). After review of previous records, this is now the second record in recent years, the last one considered acceptable being an adult male at Fanling Golf Course on 7 April 1977.

82 Hobby*Falco subbuteo*

In spring migrants were noted flying west at Mai Po as follows: one on 27 March, one on 10 April, two on 23 April and one on 2 May. The only other spring report was of one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April. In summer a pair present at a site in the northern New Territories from mid-May to mid-September bred and raised at least two young (GAW). This is the first definite breeding record for Hong Kong (see elsewhere in this Report). Sightings during July and August indicate that a pair probably bred at another site in the northern New Territories and a further summer record was of one mobbing a Peregrine at Starling Inlet on 25 June.

There were regular sightings of birds in the northern New Territories, presumably involving both summering and migrant birds, until 21 October with a late bird at Kam Tin on 6 November. Elsewhere in autumn one was at Sha Lo Tung on 14 September, four were at Tai Lam Country Park on 21 September and one was there on 13 October, one was at Mui Wo on 25 September, one was at Tate's Pass on 2 October, one was at Ping Chau on 8 October and one was on Cheung Chau on 22 October. On Hong Kong Island passage migrants were observed between 25 September and 22 October; all records were of single birds from Mount Austin apart from two at Aberdeen Country Park on 9 October and one from Victoria Park on 10 October.

83 Peregrine Falcon*Falco peregrinus*

Recorded at widespread localities throughout the year, although clearly fewer in the summer months. A pair was seen in aerial display flight at a coastal site in Mirs Bay on 8 May.

84 Chinese Francolin*Francolinus pintadeanus*

Reports included at least ten singing males at Lin Fa Shan, Sunset Peak, on 22 May and 15 singing males in the Chau Tau/Ma Tso Lung area during May and June. Still present on the eastern side of Hong Kong Island where up to five were recorded at Mount Parker and in the hills above Big Wave Bay and Shek O in the summer months.

85 Japanese Quail*Coturnix japonica*

In the first winter period birds were present at Long Valley until 6 May, the maximum being 11 on 12 February. Elsewhere, two were at Ho Chung on 13 January and singles were there on 16 January and 17 February, two were in Lam Tsuen Valley on 15 January, the remains of a dead bird were found near Mai Po on 20 January, three were at Tin Shui Wai on 26 January and one was there on 19 February and 9 April, and one was on Ping Chau on 29 January.

The first record in autumn was of one at Ma Wan on 28 September. Up to four were at Tin Shui Wai between 4th and 24 October, up to five were at Tsim Bei Tsui between 13th and 29 October, two were at Ho Chung on 22

October, one was at Mai Po on 23 October, one was at Kam Tin on 29 October, two were at Ping Yeung on 5 November and one was at Yuen Long on 18 December. Up to five were reported at Long Valley from 27 October to the end of the year.

[Buttonquail sp.*Turnix sp.*

Single unidentified buttonquails were seen at Tate's Cairn on 1 October and at Shek O Country Park on 23 October (both TW), and two birds were seen at Sha Lo Tung on 10 December (RWL).]

88 Slaty-legged Crane*Rallina eurizonoides*

One was at Ho Chung on 1 January (EMSK), and another was found in Tsim Sha Tsui on 27 April, held overnight, ringed and released the following day (CJF,DSM). In addition, one to four birds were heard at Yung Shue O during 5-6 May and another was heard at Shuen Wan on 15 May (both RWL). The calls recorded closely resemble those recorded in Japan and raise the possibility that the species, due to its secretive nature, may be being overlooked breeding in Hong Kong.

89 Water Rail*Rallus aquaticus*

One was at Tin Shui Wai on 14th (GAW) and up to two birds were present during 21-23 April (GJC *et al.*).

90 Banded Rail*Rallus striatus*

Few records received this year, though up to four were recorded in Deep Bay during the year's winter waterfowl counts. At Mai Po the species was hardly recorded during the summer, however two juveniles were seen on 8 September so breeding did take place, as it did at Tin Shui Wai and Tsim Bei Tsui. Elsewhere, a single was at Sha Lo Tung on 27 April and one, considered to be a migrant, was at Long Valley on 28 September.

91 Baillon's Crane*Porzana pusilla*

Singles were present at Shuen Wan on 20 May (GJC,RWL) and at Long Valley on 28 September (PIL), with a different bird (a juvenile) present there during 17 October to 11 November (PIL *et al.*). These are the ninth to eleventh records for Hong Kong.

92 Ruddy Crane*Porzana fusca*

The bird first seen at the end of 1993 at Tin Shui Wai was seen again on 16 January (RWL); the only other record in the first winter period was one in a ditch at Tam Kon Chau on 16 February (GAW). In spring singles were seen in April at Nam Sang Wai on 21st and at Tin Shui Wai during 19-24th (MDW,GAW *et al.*). In autumn singles were seen at Long Valley on 13 September (SES) and 21 October (PIL).

Two unidentified cranes were flushed from the marsh at Luk Tei Tong, Lantau, on 1st and 3 September (PJH).

- 95 White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	23	31	12	22	2	–	13	17	12	17	21

Ten to twenty pairs bred at Mai Po and five to ten pairs bred at both the Lok Ma Chau and Ma Tso Lung areas.

- 96 Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
108	40	44	16	3	–	–	–	3	11	76	61

Away from Mai Po, the only notable count was 42 at Lok Ma Chau on 27 February.

- 96.1 Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio porphyrio*
One was seen at Mai Po on 14 and 18 April (RWL). However, as with last year's records, the loss of two birds from a collection at Fairview Park means that the escape likelihood is high, and thus these records will not be added to the total for this species.

- 97 Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea*
There were two spring records, both on 7 May: a female at Nam Sang Wai (GAW) and a male at Tin Shui Wai (RWL). Subsequent records were as follows (all female/immatures unless stated): a male at Kam Tin on 31 July (PA), two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 17 August (GAW), up to three at Long Valley (including one male) during 10-28 September (GJC,GAW *et al.*), up to two at Luk Keng during 17-18th (SES,PJL *et al.*), one at Nam Sang Wai on 24th (GAW), singles at Tsim Bei Tsui on 10 October and from 30th to 2 November (RWL *et al.*), singles at Mong Tseng on 21st (PJL), Luk Keng on 22nd (JSRE), and Long Valley on 29 October (PJL,MRL), and, finally, one at Tung Chung on 24 November (MDW). This was a very good autumn for this species with more sightings than have been recorded for a number of years.

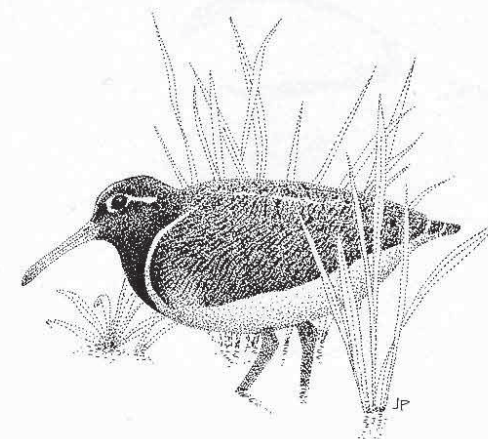
- 98 Coot** *Fulica atra*
Waterfowl count totals in the first part of the year were 757 in January, 403 in February and 598 in March. Subsequently, the latest spring record at Mai Po was of three on 3 April; one over-summered at Shuen Wan for the first time, and probably also at Nam Sang Wai. In the second winter period waterfowl count totals were 360 in November and 148 in December. In addition, one was seen on the sea between Mui Wo and Peng Chau on 31 October and an immature was in the marsh at Luk Tei Tong, Lantau, on 5 November.

- 100 Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*
Five were present at Tsim Bei Tsui on 8 October, one of which remained until 16 October (EMSK *et al.*).

- 101 Painted Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*
Recorded regularly until 17 April at Long Valley and Kam Tin. Peak counts during this period were six at Kam Tin on 12 February and five at Long

Valley on 14 January, 12 February and 1 April. One was at Lok Ma Chau on 4 March. The first record during autumn was two at Long Valley on 5 September. Numbers at this site increased to 14 by 28 September and a new high of 23 on 5 October (RWL); this was followed by a reduction in numbers to 12 on 21 October. At Kam Tin the first autumn record was on 25 September when nine were noted. On 23 October a further new high of 30 were present (CHF), and, although much smaller numbers were recorded during November, yet another new high was set on 17 December when 38 were seen (DAD). The highest count prior to this year was 14 in September 1993.

As noted in last year's report, the previously declining status of this species has changed due to the coverage of Long Valley and Kam Tin.



Jeremy Pearse

- 103 Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*
The only records during the first half of the year were four at Mai Po on 11 January and 80 there during the January waterfowl count. The next record was four at Mai Po on 21 August, increasing to 161 by 25 September, and to 301 by 2 November. This latter count is close to the highest ever of 329. The last record of the year was a single at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 November continuing the apparent decline in winter numbers of this species in recent years. Records away from the Deep Bay area were up to 24 at Long Valley between 23 August and 11 October, two at Chep Lap Kok during 8-9 September, up to two at Shuen Wan landfill during 19-21 September, and one at Kam Tin on 8 October.

- 104 Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*
The wintering flock numbered 770 on 14 January, and peaked at a record 926 on 25 February (GJC,PJL,VBP). During the March waterfowl count 901 were counted; by 20 March the flock size had fallen to 765, following

which numbers declined to 490 on 24 March, 204 on 2 April, and, finally, 99 on 14 April. In the second half of the year 55 were present by 27 October; there was then a gradual increase in numbers to 98 on 8 November, 294 on 3 December, 517 during the December waterfowl count, and 996, a new high, on 29 December (MLC). All records were from Deep Bay except for six flying southwest along the coast at Discovery Bay, the first record away from Deep Bay. The numbers of this species wintering in Deep Bay have doubled since 1990.



Jeremy Pearse

105 Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum*

In spring recorded on sixteen dates between 26 February and 17 April at Mai Po, Tsim Bei Tsui, Long Valley, Kam Tin and Cheung Chau. The maximum count, at Mai Po, was only seven on 10 April. In autumn eleven were at Mai Po on 14 August, and a combined total of 530, a new high, were at Mai Po and Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 October (PJL,RWL). All birds on this date were observed heading southwest at about 100m in six flocks numbering between 25 and 180 birds. The previous high was 300 on 23 March 1988. The only other record was of a winter plumaged adult at Long Valley during 20-27 November.

106 Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

The highest count of the year was 250 recorded during the January waterfowl count; the February count noted 143. High counts from individual sites during this period were 59 along the coast between Nim Wan and Lau Fau Shan and 53 at Tin Shui Wai on 16 January, 31 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 February, 30 at Kam Tin on 22 February, with 35 there on 13 March. At Tin Shui Wai on 21 April a pair with a juvenile were noted. Fifteen were at Shuen Wan landfill on 10 July, with 35 present during September and 19 on 12

October. Elsewhere, 15 were at Chep Lap Kok on 25 August, 50 were at Tsim Bei Tsui and 39 were at Long Valley on 4 October, and at Tsim Bei Tsui 62 were noted on 6 November, 87 were present on 20 November, and 54 were seen on 30 November. Thirty were at Shuen Wan on 5 December and also at Mong Tseng on 10 December. The highest counts during the second half of the year were during the November and December waterfowl counts when 183 and 122 respectively were recorded.



3 Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* adult non-breeding
Long Valley, Hong Kong, November 1994

Ray Tipper

107 Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Single birds showing characteristics of the race *C.h. tundrae* were seen from the boardwalk hide during 28 January to 10 March (PJL), and from 21 October to 8 November (PJL,RWL *et al.*).

107.5 Long-billed Plover (N) *Charadrius placidus*

One was seen at Kam Tin from 20 February to 20 March (PA *et al.*). This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

108 Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

The wintering flock in Deep Bay numbered 3180 on 14 January and 3700 on 24 February. During the March waterfowl count 3280 were still present. There was then a rapid departure: by 15 March only 780 remained, falling to 440 on 18 March, and 100 on 30 March. Recorded on six dates during April, the highest count was 30 on 2 April. The final count of the spring was six on 26 May.

The first of the autumn was a single on 5 September. The wintering flock started to arrive in numbers in early October, with 249 present on 5th,

and increased over the next few weeks to 700 on 14th, 1100 on 21st and 1500 on 27th. There was only a slight increase over the following two weeks but by 15 November 2500 were present. Except for four at Shui Hau Wan, Lantau, on 16 October, all records were from the Deep Bay area.

109 Lesser Sand Plover†

Charadrius mongolus

During the early part of the year the highest count was 151 on 12 February (PJL); this, most unusually, was the highest count of the year, and also the highest ever winter count. During March counts did not exceed five, except for 40 on 10th. Two on 3 April was the only record after 27 March until 6 April when 100 were counted. As Table 1 indicates, numbers subsequently declined to about 40 up to mid-month, and then there was a second influx by 20th when 100 were noted; there was possibly another smaller influx before the end of the month, but by 2 May only five were noted. Thirty-eight on 6 May was the last significant count before the final record of the spring, four on 31 May. One was present on 25 June, the first midsummer record.

Autumn passage began with two on 7 August; subsequently no more than ten were present until 40 on 5 October, followed by lower numbers until 8 November when 70 were recorded, and 2 December, when 102 were counted. A bird showing the characters of the race *altrifrons* was noted on 26 February. All records were from Deep Bay.

110 Greater Sand Plover†

Charadrius leschenaultii

Present from 10 March in low numbers until 30 March when 226 were noted. The second major influx of the spring brought the highest count of the year, 1000 on 6 April, and numbers then remained high until a reduction by 17 April saw only 38 present. A third influx occurred by 23 April when numbers had increased to 213, subsequently declining to 41 on 29th. Numbers remained generally low in May, although there was an increase to 100 during 17-23 May presumably due to later migrating first-summer birds. On 25 June 87 were seen. Autumn passage was probably under way by 10 August when 82 were noted, the highest count during the second half of the year. Numbers declined subsequently to 70 on 23 August, 30 on 2 September, 20 on 8 September and four on 15 September. None were then recorded until 8 October, after which date up to five were noted on three dates until the last record of the year, a single on 22 October. Three on Ping Chau on 16 April was the only record away from the Deep Bay area.

111 Oriental Plover

Charadrius veredus

One was seen briefly from the Mai Po boardwalk on 6 May (PJL,RWL).

112 Asiatic Golden Plover

Pluvialis fulva

Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
220	203	240	246	10	—	—	80	150	220	210	158

The wintering flock peaked at 240 on 26 March and remained until at least 1 April. None were then noted until 8 April when 80, presumed passage migrants, were present. The highest count of the year was 246 on 11 April.

Subsequently, five on 23 April were followed by 77 on 26 April, and then no more than 20 until the last record of the spring, a single on 7 May. First noted in autumn on 7 August when two were present. There was a gradual increase until 21 October and numbers then stabilised at around 200 until at least 8 November. The wintering flock was established by at least 3 December. All records were from Deep Bay except for a juvenile at Long Valley on 24 September. This individual exhibited distinctly grey plumage tones remarkably similar to juvenile American Golden Plover *P. dominica*, but showed structural characters of Asiatic Golden Plover.

113 Grey Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
751	735	220	60	20	—	—	15	8	40	37	431

The count of 751 on 28 January is a new high (PJL). On 11 February 735 were still present, although this had fallen to 506 by 20th. By 18 March only 220 remained; this was the last count exceeding 100 during the first half of the year. The final count of the spring was 20 on 30 May. Present in autumn from 7 August when three were noted. The peak count during autumn was 40 on 27 October, and the highest of the second winter period was 431, recorded during the December waterfowl count. Except for one on Ping Chau on 4 April, all records were from the Deep Bay area.

114 Grey-headed Lapwing (N)

Vanellus cinereus

Peak monthly counts at all sites were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	11	11	1	—	—	—	—	—	9	10	18

Recorded at Kam Tin, Long Valley, Tsim Bei Tsui, Mai Po and Shuen Wan landfill. All counts higher than six were from Kam Tin which is now the most important site for this species in Hong Kong. The last record of the spring was a single at Kam Tin on 4 April. Passage migrants were recorded during 3-22 October at three sites; however, the core of the wintering flock at Kam Tin was already established by 23 October when seven were noted, increasing to nine on 30 October. The highest count of the year was eighteen at Kam Tin on 18 December.

115 Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

In the first part of the year singles were recorded at Kam Tin during 26-27 February, Mai Po on 10th and 12 March and Pak Nai on 13 May. There have only been two other May records: 17 May 1986 and 27 May 1990. Two were at Mai Po on 12th, 15th and 27 November and at Long Valley during 2-4 December.

1993: At Kai Tak one was present on 23 January, and three were there on 25 February.

116 Great Knot†

Calidris tenuirostris

Up to 13 were noted during the first winter period. The first arrival of the spring had occurred by 22 March when 24 were noted. There was then a

very rapid increase until 27 March when 463, a new high, were present (PJL). This was succeeded by a departure almost as rapid with 385 present on 30 March, 106 on 2 April, and 11 on 8 April. A second arrival occurred by 14 April when 200 were present, after which very low numbers were noted until the last record of the spring on 30 May. One was seen on 25 June; there is only one later record: 1 July 1989. In autumn one was present from 7 August until 2 September, seven were noted on 8 September, and 33, the highest count of the second half of the year, occurred on 15 September. Up to 19 were then present until 23 October, after which there were no records until four on 8 November. Four were then noted on two further dates in November, and one in December. All records were from Deep Bay.

The marked influx on 27 March, which included three Australian leg-flagged birds, coincided with a period of very strong easterly winds. This species apparently usually migrates non-stop from northwest Australia to the Shanghai area (Barter and Wang 1990). The arrival of large numbers associated with easterly winds suggests that the birds may have suffered from a lack of tail winds sufficient to carry them to the Yangtze estuary (c.f. Melville 1980, Tulp *et al.* 1994) and thus used Deep Bay to refuel. The fact that the birds apparently remained in Deep Bay for less than ten days suggests that they may have only fed sufficiently to fly to the Yangtze estuary.

117 Knot *Calidris canutus*

Recorded regularly from 2 January when 17, the highest count during the early part of the year, were logged. Numbers thereafter did not exceed ten until 50 on 6 April, the highest count of the year. Other than 30 on 14 April and 16 on 29 April, subsequent numbers during the spring were not higher than ten. The last spring record was two on 30 May. Present in the second half of the year from 5 September until 3 December, peaking at seven on 24 September. The only record away from the Deep Bay area was a juvenile at Shuen Wan landfill on 24 September.

118 Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Recorded at Mai Po on eight dates between 2 April and 31 May. About 18 individuals seem to have been involved, with the maximum day count being eight on 23 April. All records from Deep Bay apart from Tai Long Wan where three were present on 7 May.

119 Red-necked Stint† *Calidris ruficollis*

Up to two birds twice in both January and February were the only records during the first winter period. Two hundred on 24 March was the highest count for that month. Passage was very good during April peaking at 1000 on 14th. Numbers then fell until a fresh arrival by 6 May, and on 9 May 420 were present. During 12-20 May between 50 and 100 were present, followed by 11 on 26 May, the last record of the spring. Recorded in autumn from 13 August until 23 October the highest count being eight on 8 September. The only records away from Deep Bay were two at Shui Hau Wan, Lantau, on 15 May, and up to five at Shuen Wan landfill during 25 August to 24 September.

119.1 Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

One at Mai Po on 8 April (PJL) and one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 May (GAW).

120 Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Recorded regularly during the first half of the year until 20 April, when four were at Tin Shui Wai. During the January waterfowl count 68 were noted, the highest count during the first half of the year. Records during this period came from Tin Shui Wai, Tsim Bei Tsui, Mong Tseng, Kam Tin, and Long Valley. The first record during the second half of the year was seven at Shuen Wan landfill on 21 September. Records thereafter came from the same sites as during the first half of the year plus Mai Po. The highest count of the year was 73 during the November waterfowl count.

121 Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*

Recorded regularly until the last record of the spring, three at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 May. The highest count of the year was 45 at Mong Tseng on 16 January, and the maximum count during the spring was 12 at Mai Po on 28 April. During the second half of the year noted from 21 August until 19 November the peak count being 13 during the November waterfowl count. Recorded away from Deep Bay at Kam Tin during February, March and September, Long Valley during August and September, Shuen Wan in April, and Shuen Wan landfill during September.

122 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*

Recorded in spring between 24 March (PJL), equalling the earliest ever, and 23 May. Numbers exceeded 30 only on 29 April and 2 May, the peak of 147 on the first of these dates being a new high (PJL). In autumn the only records were singles on 18th and 25 September, 15 November and 2 December (PJL), the latest ever record. All records, except for one at Shuen Wan on 23 April, came from Mai Po and Deep Bay.

123 Curlew Sandpiper† *Calidris ferruginea*

Up to three were present on three dates in the last week of February. During the second half of March numbers increased rapidly from 20 on 18th to 760 on 24th and 937 on 30th. During April there were three marked arrivals: by 8th when 3330 were recorded, which subsequently built up to 4770 on 14th; by 23rd when 3404 were noted; and by 29th when 5640 were recorded. This third peak is close to the highest ever count of 6000 in April 1990. After 29th numbers dropped to 4656 on 2 May, followed by a sharp reduction to 200 on 6th. The last record of the spring was eight on 30 May. Six were present on 25 June. In autumn the first record was 356 on 7 August; 289 were present on 10 August declining rapidly to 75 on 19 August and then very slowly until the final record of the year of ten on 23 October. All records were from the Deep Bay area.

124 Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The highest count of the first winter period was 2820 on 14 January; 2000 were still present on 10 March. Five hundred were seen on 15 March, and the only other record during the first half of the year was of one on 22 March. There were no records in April which is unusual. In autumn present from 15

September, with 33 noted on 21 September. During mid-October the first wintering birds arrived and there was then a gradual increase in numbers to 440 on 21 October, 800 on 27 October, 2032 during the November waterfowl count, and 4377 during the December waterfowl count, a new high. All records were from the Deep Bay area.

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

One recorded from the Mai Po boardwalk hide on 10 March (PJL) was the earliest ever in spring; in addition, two were noted on 28 March, and singles were present on 31 March, 1st, 3rd, 10th and 11 April, and 5 May. A poor year for this species.

126 Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

Up to three were present from 13 January to 11 March. None were then noted until what were presumably the first passage birds on 25 March, though until 2 April numbers did not exceed 15. Numbers increased to 40 by 14 April, remaining around that figure until 23 April, having peaked at 41 on 20 April, the highest count of the year. Other than 30 on 6 May, counts during that month did not exceed 12. The last record of the spring was one on 30 May. Unusually, the only records in the second part of the year concerned one on 18 September and two on 24 September. All records were from Deep Bay and Mai Po.

127 Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Singles were present at Mai Po on 12th, 20th and 24 February, 29 March, 4 September and 5th and 28 October.

129 Fantail Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

The highest count of the year was 123 recorded during the January waterfowl count. Eighty were at Lok Ma Chau on 26 February and 4 March and 40 were present at Kam Tin on three dates between 27 February and 18 March. Fifteen at Lok Ma Chau on 3 April and at Mai Po the following day were the highest counts for that month; the last record of the spring was three at Tin Shui Wai on 26 April. In autumn recorded from 23 September when 30 were present at Long Valley, with 70 there on 28 September. The only other high counts for the rest of the year were 35 at Kam Tin on 12 October, 45 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 November and 43 during the November waterfowl count.

130 Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura*

Singles were at Long Valley on 2 January and Mai Po on 25 January; nine and five respectively were recorded during the January and February waterfowl counts, the only records before 5 March. Between 5 March and the final record of the spring on 17 April recorded regularly at Long Valley and Kam Tin, although the highest count during this time was ten at Tsim Bei Tsui on 13 March. Singles at Mai Po on 21 August and Mui Wo on 1 September were the first of the autumn. Passage during September was very strong, peaking at a new high of 70 on 17 September at Long Valley (PJL). On 24 September 50 were at Long Valley, and 30 were at Mai Po; 30 were still present at Mai Po on 28 September. Far fewer were present after late September, the highest count during October being six, and only up to two were noted during November and December.

131 Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala*

Two during the January waterfowl count and one at Kam Tin on 30 January were the only records until spring when birds were present between 4 March and 17 April. During this period all records came from Lok Ma Chau, Long Valley and Kam Tin with numbers not exceeding four. During autumn recorded from 21 August to 19 October at Mai Po, Long Valley and Shuen Wan landfill. The highest count of the year was 12 at Long Valley on 17 September. One was noted during the December waterfowl count.

134 Asiatic Dowitcher (N)† *Limnodromus semipalmatus*

In spring recorded between 30 March and 17 May, the only count higher than 13 being 36 on 14 April. Autumn passage covered the period 7 August to 25 September and the peak count was nine on 23 August. All records in a very poor year for this species were from the Deep Bay area.

135 Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Singles were noted as follows: at Shing Mun Reservoir and Kop Tong on 2 January, at Pak Nai on 12 February, at Tsim Bei Tsui on 16 October, Cheung Chau on 22 October, Mount Austin on 22 October and 28 November, Mui Wo on 7 November, and Lead Mine Pass on 11 December. Finally, two were at Chau Tau on 12 December.

136 Black-tailed Godwit† *Limosa limosa*

Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
255	172	1087	2000	200	—	—	38	63	207	190	205

The wintering flock, which peaked on 22 January, had largely departed by mid-March when only 70 were present. There was a continual increase in numbers from 15 March until 8 April when 2000, the highest count of the year, were present. Following 1160 on 14 April, there were records on only eight dates until the last of the spring on 30 May, the only notable counts being 200 on 5 and 6 May. Present in autumn from 7 August, when six were noted, following which there was a gradual increase until 207 on 22 October. On 2 November 190 were present, but none were then recorded until 151 on 20 November; in December 205 were seen during the waterfowl count. All records were from the Deep Bay area.

137 Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Records of a single bird between 14 January and 22 March presumably relate to the same individual. A small arrival occurred in late March with 18 present on 26 March and 23 the following day. Sixteen were present on 1 April, and, after a dearth of records during 3-13th, the bulk of birds occurred during 14-20 April, including the highest count of the year, 68 on 17th. After 20th up to three were recorded on seven dates until the last record of a single bird on 17 May. One was present on 12 July, the first midsummer record. In autumn recorded between 21 August and 16 October, peaking at 30 on 18 September. All records were from Deep Bay and Mai Po.

139 Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

One was present on 15 March, but there were no more records until 8

April when five were noted. Numbers increased to 20 on 14 April and 48 on 23 April, and then remained above 35 until at least 2 May. The highest count for the remainder of May was 15 on 12th, and the last record of the spring was three on 30 May. Present in autumn from 7 August until 8 October, after which the only records were a single at Tsim Bei Tsui on 11th and 13 November, and six during the waterfowl count of that month. The peak count of the year was 156 on 8 September. The only records away from the Deep Bay area were singles in Mirs Bay on 24 April and on Ping Chau on 18 September.

140 Curlew *Numenius arquata*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1008	1190	373	20	10	11	9	44	82	101	109	396

The highest count of the year, 1190 on 11 February (PJL), is a new high. Numbers declined gradually following this and by mid-March only 380 remained; by early April numbers had declined further to 20. Other than a very slight increase during mid-April, no more than 20 were recorded, and, as similar numbers were present during June and July, it would therefore appear that the summering population was established by the last week in April, and possibly as early as the middle of April. On 7 August 24 were recorded, after which numbers slowly increased to 109 on 2 November. The highest count during the latter part of the year was 396 during the December waterfowl count. All records were from Mai Po and Deep Bay.

141 Australian Curlew (N) *Numenius madagascariensis*
Present in spring on 26 February and between 26 March and 7 May, the highest count being eleven on 11 April. In autumn noted from 16 October until 3 December, with two present during November. All records were from the Deep Bay area.

142 Spotted Redshank† *Tringa erythropus*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
819	1670	1688	1218	800	—	—	5	2	3	811	857

The wintering population peaked at 1670 on 15 February. By 15 March 800 were present, declining to 200 on 21 March. Fresh arrivals then increased numbers to 1688 on 27 March (PJL), a new record. On 30 March 1200 were recorded, following which none were noted until a second influx took numbers up to 718 on 10 April and 1218 on 14 April. Another dearth of records followed until 26th and 29 April when up to 25 were present. On 6 May 700 were noted, the third significant arrival of the spring. Numbers declined gradually thereafter until the last record on 23 May.

Recorded in autumn from 7 August, when two were noted, with numbers remaining low until 50 on 27 October. By 2 November a large arrival had taken place and 811 were present. The highest count for the latter part of the year was 857 during the December waterfowl count. One at Long Valley on 19 March was the only record away from the Deep Bay area.

Table 1 Numbers of selected wader species at Mai Po on selected dates in April 1995.

Date	Species	April											
		1	2	3	5	6	8	10	11	13	14	15	17
	Lesser Sand Plover												
	Greater Sand Plover												
	Great Knot												
	Red-necked Stint												
	Curlew Sandpiper												
	Asiatic Dowitcher												
	Black-tailed Godwit												
	Spotted Redshank												
	Redshank												
	Marsh Sandpiper												
	Greenshank												
	Nordmann's Greenshank												
	Terek Sandpiper												

- 143 Redshank†** *Tringa totanus*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
142	1089	340	3474	500	—	765	2471	221	500	546	2

The February waterfowl count total of 1089 is a new winter high. Numbers during March were generally low but there was a conspicuous arrival by 11 April when 820 were noted, numbers then increasing to 2090 by 17 April; 2018 were still present on 23 April. A reduction in birds after 23 April was followed by a huge arrival by 29 April when 3474 were recorded (PJL), a new high. This represents an increase of 50% over the previous highest total. Numbers had dropped to 2000 by 2 May and for the rest of that month did not exceed 500. The final record of the spring was on 30 May. Autumn passage was well under way by 7 August when 2471 were present, a new autumn high (PJL); numbers then declined slowly stabilizing at around 500 during mid-October to mid-November. Remarkably, the only record after that would appear to be two on 18 December.

- 144 Marsh Sandpiper†** *Tringa stagnatilis*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
668	807	1087	938	6	—	—	5	295	599	607	167

The highest count of the year was 1087 during the March waterfowl count. By 18th numbers had dropped to under 200, but fresh arrivals by 24th increased this figure to 1053. By 2 April 410 remained, none were then noted until 467 on 8 April, and 938 were present on 10th. By 15 April numbers had apparently again declined and none were noted. Subsequently recorded on only five dates, numbers no greater than seven, until the last spring record on 14 May. In autumn present from 7 August when two were noted, numbers not exceeding 20 until 200 on 8 September. There was then a gradual increase to 599 on 27 October and 607, the highest count of the autumn, on 2 November. Numbers declined until mid-November, and the highest count during December was 167 during the waterfowl count of that month.

- 145 Greenshank†** *Tringa nebularia*
Peak monthly counts in the Deep Bay area were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
386	519	788	800	600	—	—	655	774	640	68	195

Early in the year the highest count was 519 during the February waterfowl count; 788 were present during the March count, and there was then probably a gradual decline to 485 by 21 March. No more than 200 were then present until 725 on 22 April and 800 on 23rd. By 2 May only 100 were noted but this had risen to 600 on 6 May. Numbers were no higher than 30 after mid-month, and the last record of the spring was on 30 May. Recorded in autumn from 7 August when 363 were noted. Following a gradual increase, the highest count of the second half of the year was 774 on 8 September.

- 146 Nordmann's Greenshank (E)†** *Tringa guttifer*
Recorded from 30 March to 30 May. As in previous years two distinct passage periods were detected: from 30 March to 17 April, during which time the peak count was eleven on 11 April, and all individuals were adults; and during 12-30 May, when the peak count was eight on 23 May, and all were first-years. A late adult was present on 2 May, and two early first-years on 28-29 April. All records came from the Deep Bay area.

- 147 Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*
The highest count of the year was 28 during the January waterfowl count. The last record of the spring was one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April. The first record in the autumn was one at Lok Ma Chau on 26 August. Sixteen were recorded during both the November and December waterfowl counts.

- 148 Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*
Peak monthly counts were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
80	190	46	45	70	—	—	27	100	65	120	51

The highest count of the year was 190 at Kam Tin on 22 February. The last record of the spring was one at Yim Tso Ha on 8 May. The first record in the autumn was two at Shuen Wan landfill on 13 August. The highest count during the latter half of the year was 100 at Kam Tin on 17 September.

- 149 Terek Sandpiper†** *Xenus cinereus*
The first record of the year was on 26 March. Three-figure counts were made on five dates in April: 100 on 6th, 200 on 14th; 170 on 17th; 250 on 26th; and 477 on 29th, a new high (PJL). Numbers during May did not exceed 50 until mid-month, and towards the end of the month an arrival was detected with 160 on 26 May, and 150 on 30 May, the last count of spring. Twenty-one were present on 25 June, 52 on 26 June and seven on 12 July; thereafter noted in autumn between 7 August and 8 November. Ninety were present on 7 August, slowly increasing to 169 by 23 August, and then decreasing to seventy by 15 September. Numbers after mid-September did not exceed ten.

- 150 Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*
The highest count during the first half of the year was 33 recorded during the January waterfowl count. Present in spring until 17 May. Up to three birds were recorded at Shuen Wan from 26 June to 21 July. The first record in autumn was on 13 August. The peak count during the year was 46 during the November waterfowl count.

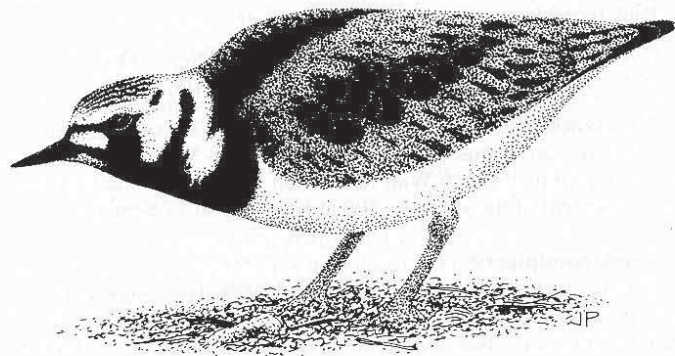
- 151 Grey-rumped Sandpiper** *Heteroscelus brevipes*
Present in Deep Bay from 14 April, numbers did not exceed 25 until 12 May when 260 were present. The main arrival had occurred by 15 May when 418 were noted, increasing further to a new high of 442 on 17 May (PJL). There was then a rapid decrease in numbers, and on 30 May, the last record of the spring, only 15 remained. One was present on 26 June, with three on 11 July; thereafter noted during autumn between 7 August and 2 October. The peak count in autumn was 30 on 23 August, after which there was a gradual decline until the last two on 2 October. Recorded away from Deep Bay

at ten widespread coastal sites during both spring and autumn., with the maximum present being 19 at Shuen Wan on 22 May.

152 Turnstone

Arenaria interpres

One at Mai Po on 24 March, one day later than the earliest spring record, remained the only sighting until 10 April when three were noted. Fifty were present by 17 April, and a very large arrival had occurred by 20 April when 268 were counted (PJL), a new high. On 29 April 150 still remained, but numbers during May were never higher than fifty. The last record of the spring was on 30 May. In autumn singles were present at Mai Po on 21 and 28 August and at Mong Tseng on 1 October.



Jeremy Pearse

153 Red-necked Phalarope

Phalaropus lobatus

Recorded in spring from Deep Bay and widespread coastal areas between 15 March and 17 May. High counts were 133 between Cheung Chau and Central on 11 April, 114 at Mai Po on 14 April and 100 in Mirs Bay on 13 April. A rather late bird was present at Shuen Wan on 26 June. Noted on three dates in both September and October, including the highest count of the year of 300 off Ping Chau on 18 September. Such numbers in autumn are unusual.

153.1 Grey Phalarope

Phalaropus fulicarius

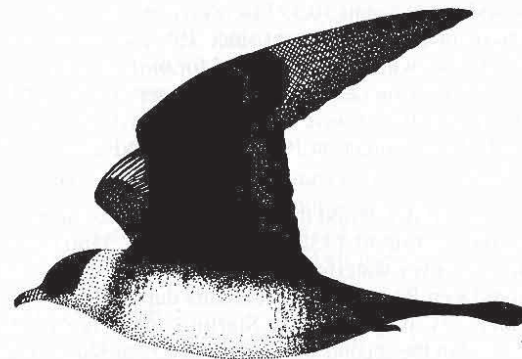
A first-summer was seen at Mai Po from 26 April to 1 May (MDW,RWL). Following hard on the heels of the first two records last year, this is the third for Hong Kong.

154 Pomarine Skua

Stercorarius pomarinus

1993: After review of the previous record, which is now considered unacceptable, three birds seen on 26 September from Cape D'Aguiar (PJL,MRL) constitute the first record for Hong Kong (see elsewhere in this

Report). In addition, two were seen at Cape D'Aguiar on 5 November (RWL,MDW), a short time after the closest approach of Tropical Storm Ira.



Jeremy Pearse

155 Long-tailed Skua

Stercorarius longicaudus

Eleven adults were seen on 12 April in Mirs Bay (GJC). Two adults were seen on 16 April in the same area, along with three other birds possibly this species (MDW). These are the seventh and eighth records for Hong Kong.

156 Great Black-headed Gull

Larus ichthyæetus

In February, a first-winter was seen on 8th (PJL), and a first-winter plus a second or third-winter were seen on 26th, with the older bird remaining until the following day (GJC,MLC,PRK). In March, birds were seen on 2nd (an adult), 4th (an adult summer and a second-winter), 8th (two adult summers, one second-winter and one first-winter), 10th (an adult summer), 11th (a second-winter), 13th and 15th (a second-winter and a first-winter), 16th (a second-winter), 20th (a first-winter and two third-winters) and 21st (a second-winter) (PJL,VBP,MLC). The count of four birds on 8th is a new high and the record of 21st is the latest ever. Although it was probably a good year for this species, almost daily observations from the boardwalk during the main passage period have allowed a more accurate picture of occurrence.

157 Saunders' Gull (E)

Larus saundersi

The count in January of 102 on 16th is considered to be the local wintering population, but the peak count of 172 on 10 February (JMCW) is considered to include migrants from further south,. The latter is a new high for Hong Kong. Numbers subsequently declined to 119 on 19 February, 83 on 27th, 43 on 18 March, and 10 on 1 April. Thereafter, until 16 April up to five birds were recorded and the final records of the spring were of a first-summer seen on three dates during 5-12 May.

The earliest record in autumn was of two on 23 October (GJC,PJL *et al.*), which equals the earliest arrival date since at least 1985. Subsequently, numbers built up to 31 on 16 November and 42 on 3 December.

158 Black-headed Gull

Larus ridibundus

Waterfowl count totals in the first part of the year were 17,412 in January, 15,066 in February and 10,197 in March. Peak numbers recorded in Deep Bay have remained fairly constant since 1986, varying within the range 14,544 to 18,190. In line with the recent trend for birds to remain in Deep Bay somewhat longer into spring, 2836 were still present on 5 April, 2000 were estimated on 10 April and 500 were noted on 16 April. The only subsequent records concerned a first-summer on 19 April, and 6 and 20 May, and two first-summers on 11 May.

In the second winter period the earliest record was nine on 21 October. Numbers thereafter built up to 1432 on 2 November, 3460 on 8 November, 6722 during the November waterfowl count and 15,450 during the December count. Away from Deep Bay, the highest counts during the first winter period were 500 at Shuen Wan and 120 at Starling Inlet during the February waterfowl count, and in the second winter period, 252 at Shuen Wan with none noted for Starling Inlet.

159 Brown-headed Gull

Larus brunnecephalus

An adult winter was recorded on 2 January (PJL), a heavily-oiled adult winter was seen during 12-14 February (MLC,PJL,MRL), and a first-winter was seen on 8 March (PJL).

160 Black-tailed Gull

Larus crassirostris

Up to one adult, one second-winter and one first-winter were reported in Deep Bay until 23 February when 12 birds (one adult and eleven immatures) were noted. Subsequently, up to three first-winters were seen during March, one first-summer was seen during 1-5 April and also during 14-26 May, the latter constituting the latest ever Deep Bay record. There were no records during the second winter period.

161 Common Gull

Larus canus

In February a first-winter was seen from the boardwalk from 11th to 23rd (MLC,RWL,PJL), and different individuals were seen there on 25th (GJC,RWL,VBP) and during 26-27th (GJC,PRK,VBP). A first-winter was also seen there during 4-5 March (PJL).

161.5 Heuglin's Gull

Larus heuglini

Deep Bay waterfowl count totals in the first winter period of large gulls, the great majority of which are *L.h. taimyrensis*, were 290 in January, 370 in February and 443 in March. However, 707, the highest count of the winter, were noted on 27 February; this is the second highest count ever, the highest being 753 on 12 January 1986. Subsequently, numbers fell to 248 on 20 March, 41 on 28 March, 12 on 1 April, four on 8 April and, finally, one on 15 April. In the second winter period the first record was of an adult on 24 October; however, numbers remained fairly low until the end of the year with the highest count being 30 on 27 December.

1991: An adult *L.h. heuglini* was seen from the boardwalk on 24 February 1991 (PRK). This is the only documented record of this form which probably does not occur annually (Kennerley *et al.* 1995)

[162.2 Vega Gull

Larus vegae

Although *L.v. birulai* is considered a regular winter visitor to Deep Bay in small numbers, outnumbered by *L.h. taimyrensis* by approximately 20:1 (Kennerley *et al.* 1995), the records submitted for 1994 do not allow identification with certainty of this form. At present the only 'documented' record is that in plate 14, photographed 17 February 1991.]

[162.3 Yellow-legged Gull

Larus cachinnans

Although *L.c. mongolicus* is an annual, though scarce, winter visitor to Deep Bay (Kennerley *et al.* 1995), the records submitted for 1994 do not allow identification with certainty of this form. At present the only 'documented' record is that in plate 15, photographed 24 February 1991.]

163 Slaty-backed Gull

Larus schistisagus

A series of records in the early part of the year reflects an increased understanding of the true status of this species in the Territory. Records of first-winter birds (unless stated otherwise) were as follows: in January one on 30th (PJL); in February, one first-summer on 14th (PJL,RWL), two on 17th (GJC,VBP), the first-summer again on 24th (PJL), four on 25th (GJC,RWL), two on 26th (PRK *et al.*), and three during 27-28th (PJL *et al.*); in March, three during 4-5th (RWL,PJL), one on 11th (PJL), a first-summer during 11-12th (PJL,GJC), first-summers on 15th and 18th (PJL), two first-years on 20th (RWL) and a first-winter on 21st (PJL).

164 Glaucous-winged Gull

Larus glaucescens

Single first-winter birds, possibly the same individual, were present at Mai Po boardwalk on 24 January (PJL), and 14th and 19 February (RWL).

165 Glaucous Gull

Larus hyperboreus

A second-winter bird was seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 20 February (PJL,RWL), and again on 28 February (GJC,PRK). This is the fifth record for Hong Kong.

167 Gull-billed Tern

Gelochelidon nilotica

Recorded in spring at Mai Po from 3 April to 30 May with the peak count being 100 on 14 April; numbers subsequently declined quickly to 33 on 17th, 13 on 6 May and 6 on 11th and 30th. Elsewhere nine were seen at the entrance to Tolo Harbour on 9 April and 31 were seen off Ping Chau on 23 April. In autumn, at Mai Po one was recorded on 21 August, two were seen on 22 September and an immature was seen three days later; elsewhere, three were off Cape D'Aguilar on 27 August.

168 Caspian Tern

Sterna caspia

The only record during the first winter period was a single at Mai Po on 21 January. In spring the earliest record was of two on 26 March; subsequently, numbers built up to 150 on 14 April, apparently declining sharply thereafter to 20 on 16th, and two on 5 May, with no records for the

period between these dates. The final spring record was two on 30 May. In autumn singles were present on 23 October and 16 November, and two were seen on 2 December. All records from Deep Bay, primarily Mai Po.

170 Black-naped Tern

Sterna sumatrana

First recorded in spring on 24 April when 38 were seen in eastern waters. Subsequently, 37 were seen in southern waters on 5 May, seven were seen near Tap Mun on 7 May, and 86 were seen in eastern waters on 27 May. Breeding was confirmed at one site in eastern waters with at least ten pairs noted. In autumn over 80 were recorded in the Tap Mun-Gau Tau sea area on 14 August, two were seen from Cape D'Aguilar on 27 August and a juvenile was seen in eastern waters on 1 September.



4 Black-naped Terns *Sterna sumatrana* adults
Eastern Waters, Hong Kong, June 1994 Peter Hopkin

171 Roseate Tern

Sterna dougallii

On 27 May 56 were seen in eastern waters, including three pairs copulating; at the same locality about 20 birds were noted on 10 July. The only certain autumn record was of an adult at Cape D'Aguilar on 27 August, although a flock of about 50 at the same locality on 12 September were considered to be probably this species.

172 Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

A flock of over 100 were seen in western Victoria Harbour on 26 March; the only other spring record was of a first-summer at Mai Po on 17 April. In autumn a first-summer was seen at Mai Po on 21 August, 26 were seen from Cape D'Aguilar on 27 August during Tropical Storm Harry, single adults were seen near the Ninepins and in the West Lamma Channel on 1 September (the former of the race *tibetana/minussensis*), 39, including one juvenile, were seen on 12 September during the passage of Tropical Storm Luke, and one was seen in eastern waters on 6 October.

172.1 Aleutian Tern

Sterna aleutica

Four to six adults were seen in Mirs Bay on 24 April (GJC,PJL,PRK). This is the third spring record. In autumn 65 adults and one first-summer were seen from Cape D'Aguilar on 27 August (PJL), 85 adults were seen in eastern waters on 1 September (MH,PJL), 12 adults were seen from Cape D'Aguilar on 12 September (RWL), and one adult was in Mirs Bay on 6 October (PJL). The latter is the latest so far recorded.

173 Bridled Tern

Sterna anaethetus

Five were seen near Gau Tau on 14 August (PJH *et al.*), ten were recorded at Cape D'Aguilar on 27 August (MLC,PJL,RWL), three adults were seen at the same locality on 12 September (RWL), and two were in eastern waters on 6 October (PJL,VPB).

175 Little Tern

Sterna albifrons

In spring recorded as follows: three on 26 March, one the following day, one on 11 April, two on 19 April, one on 2 May and one on 30 May. In autumn one was present on 7 August, a juvenile was seen on 18 September and two were recorded on 25 September. All records at Mai Po. A rather poor year for this species, especially the spring.

176 Whiskered Tern

Chlidonias hybridus

Recorded on nine dates in spring from 8 April to 20 May. Records were of single birds except for two on 13 April, three on 27 April, and a new spring high count of 80 on 6 May (PJL). In autumn recorded thus: one adult on 24 August, one juvenile on 28 August (at Shuen Wan), six (five adults and one juvenile) on 4 September, one adult on 15 September and one juvenile on 6 November. All records were in the Deep Bay area except for that stated.

177 White-winged Black Tern

Chlidonias leucopterus

Recorded on five dates in spring from 30 April to 12 May with the highest count being 180 on 11th. In autumn recorded on eight dates from 27 August to 30 October (mainly between 4th and 25 September) with the highest count being 51 on 24 September. Apart from a flock of 40 at sea between Cheung Chau and the Sokos flying north towards Hong Kong at 1800h on 19 May and a juvenile at Shuen Wan on 27 August, all records were from Deep Bay.

178 Ancient Auk

Synthloramphus antiquus

One in winter plumage was seen in Mirs Bay on 29 January (MLC,RWL), and one moulting into summer plumage was seen at Cape

D'Aguilar on 28 March (RWL,MDW). These are the eighth and ninth records for Hong Kong.

179 Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*
Only seven records in the first winter period with sightings at Lam Tsuen, Kam Tin, Mong Tseng, Tsim Bei Tsui and Tin Shui Wai where 38 were reported on 21 January; the last was one in Kowloon Park on 16 April. Nine at Mai Po on 12 September was the first autumn record; later reports included two at Shuen Wan on 26 September, one at Mong Tseng on 1 October, 67 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 October and two at Mui Wo on the same day, one at Kowloon Park on 21st and 28 October, one at Mount Austin on 29 October and eight at Chek Keng on 27 December.

180 Rufous Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
High counts in the early part of the year included a maximum of 150 flying to roost at Mai Po in January and February, 44 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 19 February, 39 at a roost near Shuen Wan landfill on 9 March, and 50 at Mai Po on 5 April; the latest sighting was of three at Nam Sang Wai on 7 May. The first autumn record of five at San Tin on 20 October was followed by the autumn high of 60 at Long Valley two days later. Other reports were of 50 at Tan Shan Valley on 30 October, 55 flying to roost at Mai Po on 5 November, 30 at Sha Lo Tung on 4 December, 50 leaving a roost at Shuen Wan on 16 December, 40 at Mai Po on 23 December and 42 at Kam Tin on 26 December.

181 Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*
No significant records.

183 Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*
Recorded from widespread locations, including Hong Kong Island, Ping Chau and Lantau, in all months except January and November. All records were of single birds except for two in Tai Po Kau on 21 May and 30 August. A juvenile was trapped at KARC on 20 August and another was seen in Tai Po Kau on two days later.

184 White-bellied Green Pigeon *Treron sieboldii*
A female was seen at Ping Chau on 23 April (MH,JDN). This is the fourth record for Hong Kong.

[**Green Pigeon sp.** *Treron curvirostra/pompadora*
A green pigeon, either Thick-billed or Pompadour Pigeon, was seen in Tai Po Kau on 21 March (JH).

1993: One of these two species was at Yung Shue O on 4 December (CAV). This record was inadvertently omitted from last year's Report.]

185 Red-winged Crested Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*
The first was heard on 31 March in Tai Po Kau. Subsequently reported from several locations in the central and eastern New Territories, and also from Mount Austin and Mui Wo. A recently fledged juvenile was seen with Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrushes in Tai Po Kau on 21 May. The last record was on 5 June.

1993: a juvenile trapped at KARC on 17 November is the latest ever and was one of three birds to be trapped there during the year, the others being adults on 16 April and 4 August.

186 Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo *Cuculus fugax*
One was heard and seen at Tai Po Kau on 14 April (PDR). This is the second record for Hong Kong, the first having occurred on 27 October 1971.

187 Large Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparveroides*
First heard at Chek Nai Ping on 11 March. Except for a few reports from Lantau and one from Kam Tin, all subsequent records came from the central and eastern New Territories. The last concerned two at Shuen Wan on 28 May.

189 Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus*
Reported throughout the year, all records coming from the New Territories. Single juveniles were seen being fed by Long-tailed Tailorbirds in Tai Po Kau on 21 August and at Ho Chung on 17 September; further juveniles were noted at Mai Po in September, October and November.

190 Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*
First heard at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April. As only three observers submitted records of this species, it is assumed that it was less widespread than usual. Apart from a single juvenile at Mai Po on 11 July, the last was seen on 29 June.

192 Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*
In contrast to last year, there were fewer spring than autumn records, one at Long Valley on 15 April and two in Lam Tsuen Valley on 16 April being the only sightings in the first part of the year. The first autumn birds, two at Mai Po on 18 September, were followed by singles at Mai Po, Long Valley, Kam Tin and Shing Mun, the last being seen on 23 October. The total number of birds noted in autumn was probably seven.

193 Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*
Single juveniles at Mount Austin on 27 August and Mui Wo on 25 September were both being fed by Blue Magpies. These appear to be the first records of a Koel being fostered by this species (see Lewthwaite 1995).

194 Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*
No significant reports.

195 Lesser Coucal *Centropus benghalensis*
Ten pairs were reported between Lok Ma Chau and Lo Wu, a distance of c.4 kms, during the summer.

196 Collared Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena*
No significant reports.

- 198 Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo*
One was seen at Ting Kau catchwater on 7 August (MLC).
A large owl, probably Eagle Owl which has previously been recorded at this site, was seen at Chau Tau on 22 April (MH).
- 199 Brown Fish Owl** *Ketupa zeylonensis*
In Sai Kung singles were seen on 30 March and 5 May (RWL), and at another site on 27 December (EMSK).
An unidentified large owl seen at one of the above two sites on 15 April (MH) was probably this species.
- 200 Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides*
Recorded at Shek Kong Catchwater on 1st and 2 April, Hang Tau Tsuen on 5th and 6 April, and at Mong Tseng on 15 April. One was regularly seen at Sheung Shui between 26 September and 19 October, and singles were reported at Shing Mun on 1 October, Lok Ma Chau on 5 October, Shing Mun again on 10 November, and at KARC on 13 November.
- 205 Savannah Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis*
The first two records, one found in a net at Mong Tseng on 19 January and another at Wai Tsai on 12 February, were followed by two on 1 April on Lamma and four on 4 April at Chau Tau, where the species continued to be reported until 18 April. Also noted from Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 April, Kau To Shan, Sha Tin, on 23 April, Tin Shui Wai on 2 May (where a bird was seen on a nest), Shuen Wan on 20 May, and Beacon Hill on 18 September.
- 207 White-vented Needletail** *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*
Passage was first reported over Kat O where five were seen on 19 March. This was followed by seven over Tai Po Kau on 1 April, two there on 2 April and eight on 10 April, six at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April, one there on 15 April, and two at Tsing Tam Reservoir, Shek Kong catchment, on 1 July (MDW), a new late date by 13 days.
- 208 Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus*
Passage began on 10 February when 40 were noted at Mai Po; 25 were seen there on 18 February, 50 on 18 March, 30 the following day, and 25 on 14 April. Reports from elsewhere included 25 at Ma Tso Lung on 21 March, 20 at Lo Fu Tan, Lantau, on 1 April, 30 over Mount Austin on 15 April and 20 over Sunset Peak on 22 May. These flock sizes were considerably smaller than last year's. Breeding was suspected on Crest Hill, Lo Wu, in mid-June. In autumn two were seen at Chek Lap Kok on 8 September, two were at Mai Po on 14 September, one was at Shuen Wan on 26 September, and, finally, on 8 October two were noted over Ping Chau and one was at Pok Fu Lam.
- 209 House Swift** *Apus affinis*
As with the preceding species, sizes of passage flocks were generally smaller than last year although there was one large movement. High counts involved 200 on 15th and 30 January, 500 on 3 February followed by 5000 the following day, 100 on 26 February, 300 the next day, 100 on 28 February, 500

on both 18th and 19 March, and 200 on 14 April; all these reports came from Mai Po. One hundred were seen at Shuen Wan on 9 May. On 31 December 250 were seen at roost at the Chinese University.

- [**Swiftlet sp.** *Collocalia sp.*
Single unidentified swiftlets corresponding to type 1 in Hale and Kennerley (1995) were seen at Ho Chung during 14-16 January (MH *et al.*) and at Mai Po during 27-28 February (PRK). These are the first records of this swiftlet type in Hong Kong.]
- 210 White-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*
Breeding occurred at Shuen Wan and Lung Tsai Ng Yuen, Lantau, where one bird was seen giving a lizard to another.
- 211 Black-capped Kingfisher** *Halcyon pileata*
Present at Mai Po until April and recorded there again from 31 July. Away from the Deep Bay area, recorded on Lantau, at Lai Chi Wo and at Shuen Wan. High counts were seven at Mai Po on 21 January and ten at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 October.
- 212 Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*
Breeding occurred at Shuen Wan where a recently-fledged juvenile was being fed by adults on 15 August.
- 213 Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*
Reports came from Nam Sang Wai, Kam Tin, Long Valley, Ho Sheung Heung, Nam Chung, Starling Inlet, Lai Chi Wo, Shuen Wan and Ma Wan, Lantau, as well as Mai Po. Nesting probably took place at Shuen Wan.
- 214 Crested Kingfisher** *Ceryle lugubris*
A single was seen at Yi O, Lantau, on 15 November (JEB).
- 215 Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops philippinus*
In spring two flew over Ping Chau on 23 April, two were at Mai Po on 5 May, nine were at Tsim Bei Tsui the following day, and a further two flew over Mai Po on 15 May. Autumn reports, all from Tsim Bei Tsui, comprised a new autumn high of 14 on 5th and 9 October (RWL), and one juvenile on 13 October.
- 216 Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus orientalis*
A new early date by 12 days was set by a single in Tai Po Kau on 16 March (SES). There were four in Tai Po Kau and one at Luk Keng on 12 April, one was at Shek Kong on 15 April, one was in Tai Po Kau the following day, 11 were at Ho Chung and three were at Shuen Wan on 4 May, and two were at Sha Lo Tung and singles were at Chek Keng and Sai Kung Country Park on 7 May. Autumn passage took place between 17 September and 12 October, the total of at least 27 birds including reports from Shek O, Aberdeen Country Park (12 on 1 October), Mount Austin and Lantau, as well as from the New Territories.

217 Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

All records were of singles, with most sightings (19 reports involving between six and ten individuals) in the first three months of the year; locations were Mong Tseng, Tsim Bei Tsui, Kam Tin, Shek Kong, Mai Po and Long Valley. Singles were also at Mai Po on 6 April and 1 May. In the second part of the year singles were reported at Shuen Wan on 27 August, Long Valley on 6 November and Shek Kong on 11 November; reports from Kam Tin between 7 November and 18 December probably involved one individual.

218 Great Barbet *Megalaima virens*

One was seen and heard calling in Aberdeen Country Park on 18 June (VBP). This is the third time since 1960 that this species has been recorded from Hong Kong Island where it formerly bred, the previous two occasions being 13 April 1986 and 13 August 1988, both at Mount Nicholson. Fourteen at Tai Po Kau on 21 May is the highest count made at a single site in Hong Kong. In addition to regular reports from its strongholds in the central New Territories, two were noted at Pak Tam Au on 26 March, four were at Ho Chung on 5 March and one was heard at Luk Keng on 17 September.

219 Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Singles were reported from Tin Shui Wai, Tsim Bei Tsui, Nam Sang Wai, Kam Tin, Ma Tso Lung, Ho Chung and Mai Po (where there were an additional two on 6 February) in the early part of the year. The last was seen on 5 April. First recorded in the second winter period on 1 October, when singles were seen at Mai Po and Tin Shui Wai. Apart from three at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 October, all other sightings were again of singles, from Tsim Bei Tsui, Nam Sang Wai, Mai Po, Ho Chung, Tan Shan Valley, Tung Chung and Ping Chau.

220.5 Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*

One was heard in Tai Po Kau on 22nd and 24 August (RWL) and a male was seen there on 13 October (MH). Given that all sight records refer to a male, there is no evidence to suggest that more than one bird has been involved in all records so far of this species.

1992: One was heard in Tai Po Kau on 9 April (PDR). This is now the earliest record for Hong Kong.

223 Chinese Pitta (V) *Pitta nympha*

One was seen on the Kap Lung Trail, Tai Mo Shan Country Park, on 29 September (KM,PS). This is the seventh Hong Kong record.

225 Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

There were only three reports away from Tin Shui Wai: a single flying over Mai Po on 14 February, one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 23 October and two at Lau Fau Shan on 28 October. At its Tin Shui Wai stronghold at least four pairs were recorded from 7 March to 14 May with up to three singing birds noted on any one day. In the second winter period one bird was noted there on 12 October, five were present on 16 and 22 October, two on 24 October, one on both 28 and 29 October and ten on 26 December.

225.1 Northern Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

A series of autumn records at Mai Po (unless stated) as follows: two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 25 October, one on 27 October, two the following day at Tsim Bei Tsui, one flying southeast on 12 November, one on 19 November, one on 2 December and, finally, one on 17 December (all PJL). In addition, one was at Kam Tin on 7 November (RWL). These are the fourth to eleventh Hong Kong records suggesting either an exceptional autumn for this species or, perhaps more likely, that it has been overlooked in the past.

225.5 Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola*

One was present at Long Valley on 14 December (PJL *et al.*). This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this report).

226 Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

An excellent year for this species. An exceptionally large flock of 1370 birds, nearly tripling the previous high count, was seen at a pre-roost gathering at Mai Po on 5 May (PJL). The following day the same flock (this time numbering 1310 birds) was seen there while 82 were noted at Tsim Bei Tsui. These, together with 220 birds at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 May, were the only spring records. Autumn passage, which began with two at Tin Shui Wai on 1 October, was also strong, continuing until 9 November when the last 12 were seen flying over Mai Po. Most sightings (all from the northwestern New Territories apart from a single at Chek Lap Kok on 20 October) involved fewer than ten birds. Higher counts included 43 at Mai Po on 20 October, 32 on 22 October, 100 on 26 October, 15 on 28 October, 70 on 2 November and 25 on 4 November.

227 Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Passage began on 10 February with 40 at Mai Po and continued with 50 there on 26 February, 100 the next day and 50 the day after, 500 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 16 March, 50 at Mai Po on 4 April and 500 on 14 April, and ended with 300 the following day. This is a repeat of last year's lower-than-usual numbers. In midsummer 120 were noted at roost on Cheung Chau on 28 July and 134 the next day. High counts in the second winter period were 100 at Mui Wo on 1 September, 300 at Mai Po on 11 September, 100 at Lin Fa Shan, Lantau, on 9 October, 600 at Mai Po on 26 October, and 150 at Mai Po on 17 November.

228 Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

Most records fell in January, April, September, October and November and involved up to five birds from widespread locations in the New Territories and Lantau. Elsewhere three were reported from Mount Austin on 10 January and four were over southern waters on 24 April. Eight were noted at Mui Wo on 25 September, seven were at Tin Shui Wai on 1 October and 20 were at Tong Fuk, Lantau, on 16 October.

229 Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*

Spring records were as follows: one at Mai Po on 20 January, five at both Kam Tin and Tsim Bei Tsui and two at Mai Po on 26 February, one at Kam Tin on 27 February, one at Wing Kei Tsuen and three at Mai Po on 28 February, at least 15 at Mai Po on 2 March, singles at Kam Tin on 6 March and

Mai Po on 15 March, four over the sea near Cheung Chau on 17 March, and one at Mai Po on 18 March. In autumn there were two at Tsim Bei Tsui on 9 October and one on 22 October, and six were noted at Mai Po on 23 October.

230 Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

As last year, counts were generally low, with highs in the first winter period of 30 at Long Valley on 2 January, 20 there on 22 January and 20 at Tin Shui Wai on 15 April. In the latter part of the year peak counts were 20 at Long Valley on both 28 September and 17 October, and 45 at Tin Shui Wai on 16 October. Singing males of the breeding form *A.n. sinensis* were noted on Sunset Peak on 22 May, at Shuen Wan on 28 May and at Sha Lo Tung and Pat Sin Leng on 5 June.

231 Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus*

One was singing on Tai Mo Shan on 28 April, three were on Sunset Peak on 22 May, one was on Lantau Peak on 3 July and two were at Ngong Ping on 3 July. Also noted on Ma On Shan on 7 August.

232 Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

In the first part of the year peak counts from Long Valley comprised 20 on 2 January, 28 on 8 January and 20 on 30 January. There were 20 at Ho Chung Valley on 11 February and 20 at Kam Tin on 23 February. Last seen on 15 April. The first bird of the second winter period was a single over Mount Austin on 14 October while 30 were seen flying northeast over Chek Lap Kok on 21 October and 18 on 3 November. Ho Chung yielded 20 on 12 November, while Long Valley records included 35 on 4 December, 15 on 16 December and 30 on 20 December.

233 Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi*

One at Mai Po on 5 May (PJL).

234 Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

Peak numbers came early in the year with 30 at Long Valley on 2 January, 60 there on 5 January, 55 on 8 January, 20 on 22 January and 40 on 28 January. Apart from 20 at Shek Kong on 3 April, numbers then fell rapidly until the last record on 10 May (GAW), a new late date. A single at Kam Tin and seven at Long Valley on 28 September were the first autumn records. Thirty-seven were at Long Valley on 19 October and 40 on 22 October, and 20 were noted at Mai Po on 27 October; further Long Valley records were 20 on 28 October, 26 on 4 November, 25 on 4 December and 15 on 17 December.

235 Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens*

One was at Mai Po on 17 February (PJL), two were seen at Luk Keng on 27 March (GJC) and one was at Mai Po on 17 November (PJL).

236 Forest Wagtail *Dendroanthus indicus*

All records fell in late September: singles at Tai Lam Country Park and Mai Po on 21st, at Mount Davis on 24th, at Mai Po on 26th and near Tai Po Kau on 28th.

237 Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

In spring peak counts of unascribed *flava* wagtails included 150 on 11 January, 400 on 9 February, 200 on 10 February, 200 on 19 March, 100 on 25 March and 100 on 5 May; all these records came from Mai Po but smaller numbers (between 23 and 60) were seen at Tsim Bei Tsui. High counts of the race *taivana* ranged from 15 to 50 at Long Valley, Mai Po, Kam Tin and Lok Ma Chau between early January and 15 April. Records of the race *macronyx* were thus: at least one at Lok Ma Chau on 26 February, four at Long Valley on 3 April, one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April and one at Lok Ma Chau on 15 April. Birds of the race *simillima* arrived later, 50 at Mai Po on 26 April being the first, followed by 35 at Shuen Wan on 27 April, 35 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 2 May, 30 flying north over Long Valley on 6 May, 136 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 7 May, and 100 at Shuen Wan on the same day.

In autumn high counts of unascribed *flava* wagtails were lower than in spring, ranging from 15 at Long Valley on 9 August (PJL – a new early date by 10 days) to 100 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 October, but most flock sizes were between 20 and 50. However, counts of the race *taivana* were higher than in spring, including 20 at Long Valley on 4 October, 44 both there and at Kam Tin on 9 November, 50 at Long Valley on 4 December, 60 there on 14 December, and 70 there three days later. The numbers of *macronyx* were also higher with 50 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 October, 10 at Long Valley on 28 October, and 10 at Long Valley on 4 November. High counts of *simillima* included 20 at Long Valley on 10 September, 30 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 October, and 20 at Long Valley on 28 October.

238 Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

A first-winter was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 October (PJL, VBP). At Long Valley an adult female was seen from 28 October to 20 December (PJL, PRK *et al.*), a first-winter was present there from 29 October to 28 December (PJL, PRK, DAD) and a different adult female was noted on 15 December (DAD). At Kam Tin an adult female was seen on 12 November (DAD). This unprecedented series of sightings constitutes the sixth to tenth records for Hong Kong and includes the first of a first-winter bird, all previous records having concerned adult males except for one adult female. It may be that searching through *flava* wagtail flocks in autumn and early winter will turn up more in the future.

239 Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

A flock of 200 was recorded at Mai Po on 26 April while the last bird of spring was one over Tai Po Kau on 21 May. Autumn passage began with one at Chek Lap Kok on 28 July; two near Shek Pik, Lantau, on 31 July may not have been migrants (see elsewhere in this Report).

240 White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Tsim Bei Tsui held 94 on 26 January, 84 on 7 February and 107, the highest midwinter count, on 19 February. The spring maximum, again at Tsim Bei Tsui, was just 27 on 1 April. Presumed summering birds were seen at Shuen Wan, though it should be noted that work on the Breeding Bird Survey has revealed that this species occurs in scattered areas of the New Territories during the summer months. The only large flock of the autumn totalled 600

birds at Mai Po on 21 October – no other flocks exceeded 50 birds. Two pairs of the race *leucopsis* bred near Lok Ma Chau and another two pairs bred near Ma Tso Lung.

Adult males of the race *M.a. lugens*, known as Black-backed Wagtail, were recorded as follows: three at Shuen Wan on 19 March (RWL), one at Kam Tin on 25 September (VBP), three at Ping Chau on 5 November (EMSK), and singles there on 10th (GJC) and 31 December (DAD), the latter a different bird from the former.

242 Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike *Coracina melaschistos*

Although only one was seen in the early part of the year (at Mai Po on 14 January), the second winter period brought a total of at least 16 birds, two at Mai Po on 2 September (VBP) a new early date by four days, being the first reported. Most were single sightings from widespread locations but four were noted at Mai Po on 3 October. One bird remained at Mount Austin from 24 September to 19 October and another was in Tai Po Kau from 20 November to 31 December.

244 Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus*

The only spring report concerned three flying north over Cheung Chau on 31 March while the sole autumn record was of four birds at Pak Nai on 4 October.

245 Grey-throated Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris*

Recorded in small numbers from Shing Mun, Lead Mine Pass and Kowloon Hills Catchwater, as well as from Tai Po Kau, where peak counts were 40 on 27 February, 20 on 2 September, 50 on 19 October and 30 on 29 October.

246 Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*

Present in Tai Po Kau throughout the year although the largest flock recorded contained only ten birds. Elsewhere, records included 12 at Kop Tong on 2 January, seven at Kau To Shan, Sha Tin, on 3 January, 40 at Shing Mun on 10 February, ten at Lead Mine Pass on 2 October and two at Fo Tan on 30 December.

247 Crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*

No significant reports.

248 Chinese Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis*

No significant reports.

249 Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus aurigaster*

No significant reports.

250 Chestnut Bulbul *Hypsipetes castanonotus*

Present at Kowloon Hills Catchwater throughout the year. Also recorded from Kop Tong (12 on 5 January), Wu Kau Tang, Mui Tsz Lam (30 on 22 January), Hok Tau reservoir, Ho Chung, Beacon Hill, Tai Po Kau (15 on 21 May), Ng Tung Chai, Shing Mun reservoir, and Lead Mine Pass (20 on 4 December). There was one breeding record from Tai Po Kau.

251 Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes madagascariensis*

A party of five in Tai Po Kau on 6 March (JEB) and two there on 27 April (IT,MDW) were the only records.

251.1 Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii*

After just four reports of up to three birds in January, February and April, none were recorded until 17 September. This was followed by intermittent sightings, again of up to three birds, into December. Other than one in Lam Tsuen Valley on 30 October and a pair there on 6 November, all sightings were in Tai Po Kau.

254 Japanese Robin *Erithacus akahige*

A male was seen at Ng Tung Chai, Lam Tsuen Valley, on 26 December (EMSK). This is the seventh record for Hong Kong.

255 Red-tailed Robin *Luscinia sibilans*

An excellent year for this species with 34 being reported in the first winter period. Widespread records included five singing on Cheung Chau on 1 April and eight singing on Ping Chau on 9 April; last recorded on 16 April. The second winter period produced an even larger number of birds, beginning with one at Mount Austin on 21 October. At KARC alone 20 birds were trapped from 30 October to the end of the year.

256 Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

Reported mostly from the New Territories and outlying islands up to 29 April, with ten being noted at Mai Po on 11 February and six there on 7 April. Recorded again from 16 October when one was trapped at KARC. Daily maxima in this second winter period were six at Mount Austin on 12 November and 11 December, six at Sha Lo Tung on 17 December, and five on Ping Chau on 31 December. Singing males were heard at several locations in April and December.

257 Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Numbers were up this year with peak counts of ten and 13 at Long Valley on 8th and 28 January respectively; the last reported on 26 April was also at Long Valley. The first autumn bird was trapped at Long Valley on 7 October, a new early date by seven days (PJL). Recorded until the end of the year in slightly lower numbers than the first winter period with the daily maximum being four. Regularly recorded at Long Valley with additional reports of one or two birds from Tsim Bei Tsui, Tin Shui Wai, Nam Sang Wai, Mai Po, Shuen Wan and Ho Chung.

258 Siberian Blue Robin *Luscinia cyane*

In September a female was seen at Mount Austin on 17th (MT), a first-year male was at Mai Po on 21st, a first-year male was trapped at KARC on 24th and two females and an immature male were at Mount Austin on 25th (VBP,MT); in addition, a female was at Mount Austin on 1 October (MT).

259 Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

Sight records involved up to four birds at widespread locations in the early part of the year, the latest record being one at Pak Tam Au on 26 March.

In addition, a total of 15 trapped birds in the first winter period included nine at KARC on 1 January and five there on 22 January. The first autumn report was of two at Mount Austin on 5 November and, although most subsequent sightings again involved up to four birds, high counts were ten at Mount Austin on 12th and 27 November and 4 December, 14 at Shing Mun on 22 December and 20 at Ngong Ping, Lantau, on 30 December. The total of trapped birds in the second winter period was 50 and included nine at KARC on 17 December and 18 there on 21st. The majority of birds were females or immature males.

260 Daurian Redstart

Phoenicurus aureoreus

Recorded from widespread locations with a male at Mai Po on 4 April being the last in spring. The first autumn records were three males at Mai Po on 23 October and one at Lead Mine Pass on the same date. At least 12 were reported at Tan Shan Valley on 30 October. Four birds wintered at Mai Po, five at Mui Wo and two at Mount Austin.



5 Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureoreus* first-winter male
Mai Po, Hong Kong, December 1994

Geoff Carey

261 Plumbeous Water Redstart

Rhyacornis fuliginosus

A female was seen on Lam Tsuen River, near Tai Po, on 15 January, possibly the same bird was at Lam Tsuen Catchment on 5 February, and a male was at Shek Kong Catchment on 10th and 19 February. In the second part of the year single females were reported at Tsuen Wan on 17 December, and from Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 27 and 30 December.

262 Magpie Robin

Copsychus saularis

Five pairs bred at Mai Po where this species is increasing as wooded areas mature.



6 Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureoreus* female
Chinese University, Hong Kong, December 1994

Geoff Carey

263 Stonechat

Saxicola torquata

High counts (between ten and 18) in the early part of the year were all at Long Valley, where the last were seen on 7 April. Recorded again from 17 September when three were found at Luk Keng. Higher counts thereafter, again all from Long Valley, were 45 on 28 September, 41 on 19 October, 30 on 28 October and 34 on 4 November; the highest however, was 53 at Tin Shui Wai on 12 October.

264 Grey Bushchat

Saxicola ferrea

Three near Lai Chi Wo on 2 January and a single at Pok Fu Lam on 15 January were the only records in the early part of the year. The first autumn report was of one at Mai Po on 26 September. Two were at Mount Austin on 1 October, singles were found at Mount Davis the next day, at Mai Po on 4 October and at Ping Yeung on 22 October, and a male and a female were at Tan Shan Valley on 29th and 30 October. Singles were reported at Mount Austin on 19th and 20 November, and at KARC on 4 December. At Hok Tau one was present on 3 December and a male and a female were there the following day. An excellent year for this species.

267 Blue Rock Thrush

Monticola solitarius

Only six birds were reported in the early months, the latest being seen at Coombe Road on 17 April. The second part of the year saw greater numbers, reaching a total of 22, with the first bird being reported at High Island Dam on 10 September. An immature was present at Chek Lap Kok between 26 August and 30 December.

268 Violet Whistling Thrush

Myiophonus caeruleus

No significant reports.

269 Orange-headed Ground Thrush *Zoothera citrina*
Four records this year: one in Tai Po Kau on 13 September (RWL), a juvenile trapped at KARC on 15 October, one on Mount Austin on 17 October (VBP), and one, again in Tai Po Kau, from 18 December until the end of the year (JH).

270 White's Thrush *Zoothera dauma*
Reports in the early part of the year involved one near Tai Po Kau on 1 January, one at Shing Mun on 11th and 15 January, two in Tai Po Kau on 30 January and 6 February, and one at Shek Kong on 9 February. First recorded in the second winter period from 6 November when one was trapped at KARC. Reports totalling at least 14 birds came from Lam Tsuen, Lead Mine Pass, Tai Po Kau, KARC (including one trapped on 13 November and two trapped on 30 December), King's Park, Mount Austin, Magazine Gap, Mount Nicholson and Ngong Ping; in addition, four were at Lead Mine Pass on 31 December. This represents a doubling of numbers recorded in recent years.

271 Siberian Thrush *Zoothera sibirica*
Only two records, a female (and probably one other bird) at Mount Austin on 9 October (IT), and another female trapped at KARC on 13 November (MRL).

272 Grey Thrush *Turdus cardis*
Up to three wintering birds were reported intermittently from several locations until 23 February. Passage began with at least three in Tai Po Kau on 24 March, and continued until 12 April when the latest was seen in Aberdeen Country Park. Recorded again from 19 November when one was noted at Mai Po. A total of over 20 birds was seen in the first part of the year and at least 14 birds in the second.

273 Blackbird *Turdus merula*
The only high count in the early part of the year was 34 at Ho Chung on 16 January – most flocks numbered fewer than nine birds. These figures are lower than those reported in the last two years but similar to those noted prior to 1992. The latest records comprised a bird singing in Kowloon Park in early May and two at Lok Ma Chau on 7 May. On 30 August a juvenile male was reported between Lok Ma Chau and Ma Tso Lung; this is the first record for that month and the first suggestion of breeding. One at Mai Po on 18 October was the first autumn record. Peak counts thereafter were 20 in Tai Po Kau on 7 November, 36 at Ho Chung on 12 November, 30 near Tai Po Kau on 26 November and 30 at Tan Shan Valley on 3 December.

275 Grey-backed Thrush *Turdus hortulorum*
Recorded regularly, mostly in small numbers, in the early part of the year. Larger flocks included ten in Tai Po Kau on 2 January, ten on Ping Chau on 8 January, 15 there on 29 January, ten at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on the same day, 18 in Tai Po Kau on 31 January, and 20 at Tai Long Wan on 26 March. The latest record was three in Tai Po Kau on 11 April. First reported in autumn on 21 October when one was at Mai Po. Records thereafter were few until a December influx when it was widespread in small numbers.

277 Eye-browed Thrush *Turdus obscurus*
Singles were near Tai Po Kau on 1 January and in Kowloon Park on 19 February. Passage occurred in April with one on Ping Chau on 16th, five there on 23rd, and three in Tai Po Kau on 27th. A single trapped at KARC on 30 October was followed by a flock of 39 at Mount Austin on 26 November. At least a further 20 birds were reported, including ten at Ngong Ping on 30 December and six trapped at KARC from 5 November to 17 December.

278 Dusky Thrush *Turdus naumanni*
The four records in the first winter period all came from Long Valley, with singles on 29th and 31 January, and again on 23rd and 26 February (possibly relating to the same individual). At Mount Austin four were seen on 17 December, at least six (in a flock of 21 thrushes, probably all this species) were noted on 19 December, one was present the next day, and one on 27 December; finally, one was reported at Mai Po on 31 December. All birds were of the race *eunomus*.

279 Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus*
One was at Tai Po Kau on 30 March (MH). There have now been five records of apparently wild birds in Hong Kong, the others being December 1977-January 1978, July 1979, May 1981 and May-June 1989. What was presumably the same, apparent escape as that reported in 1993 at Lo Wai, near Tsuen Wan, was seen again at the same locality on 28 November, 4th and 17 December (HFC,YYL). The damaged tail feathers had moulted out however, and the plumage condition was just as a 'wild' bird might be.

280 Short-tailed Bush Warbler *Cettia squameiceps*
In the first winter period recorded in small numbers at Tai Po Kau, Ho Chung, Kowloon Hills Catchwater, Kowloon Park, Wu Kau Tang, Long Valley, Shing Mun, Tai Lam Country Park, Tai Long Wan, Aberdeen Country Park, Ping Chau and Cheung Chau. The maximum was eight at Tai Po Kau on 2 January and the last record was at Ngong Ping on 6 April. The first in autumn was at Lead Mine Pass on 2 October, six days later than the earliest ever. The next record, however, was not until 30 October when one was caught at KARC. Thereafter, apart from up to 13 in Tai Po Kau in mid-December, it was reported in ones and twos at Kadoorie Farm, Lead Mine Pass, Kowloon Hills Catchwater, Sha Lo Tung, Shuen Wan, King's Park, Magazine Gap, Mount Austin and on Lantau.

280.1 Pale-footed Bush Warbler *Cettia pallidipes*
One was trapped at Mai Po on 15 October (PIL). This is the fifth record for Hong Kong, the previous four having been recorded at KARC; all have fallen within the period 6 October to 19 November.

281 Chinese Bush Warbler *Cettia diphone*
Recorded from nine sites in the first winter period with counts of four at Mai Po and Wu Kau Tang on 2 January, and five at Nam Sang Wai on 5 January with four there on 8 March; the latest record was of one singing at Mount Austin on 16 April. More numerous in the second winter period. The first record was of a single bird at Tsim Bei Tsui on 30 October; subsequently recorded from twelve other sites with counts of up to five at Mount Austin

during November and December, eight at Mai Po on 26 November, eleven at Sha Lo Tung on 4 December, five at Tsim Bei Tsui on 14 December, up to six at Mui Wo during the latter part of December, four at Tung Chung on 30 December and four on Ping Chau on 31 December.

282 Mountain Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes*

In January singles were noted at A Ma Wat on 2nd (RWL), KARC (trapped) on 8th, Tai Po on 10th (SES) and Ping Chau on 29th (RWL,WLY). In the second winter period one was trapped at KARC on 22 October, one was at Ho Chung on 4 November (IT), two were trapped at KARC on 26 November with one there on 4 December (the 22 October bird retrapped) (MRL,PJL), one was at Sha Lo Tung on 24 December (DAD) and one was at Mount Austin on 29 December (VBP). Much scarcer than in 1992 and 1993.

282.5 Russet Bush Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmi*

Records of singing birds were as follows: two at A Ma Wat on 2 January (RWL), one near Nim Wan on 12 February (RWL), one at Mai Po on 19 November (JSRE), one at Tan Shan Valley on 27 November (RWL), one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 30 November (RWL), up to two at Sha Lo Tung during 7-24 December (RWL,DAD), one at Liu Pok on 20 December (PJL) and one on Cheung Chau on 27 December (MDW). In addition, one was seen at A Ma Wat on 5 January (GJC) and one was trapped at Sha Lo Tung on 3 December (PJL,VBP).

282.6 Brown Bush Warbler *Bradypterus luteoventris*

One was caught and ringed at Sha Lo Tung on 3 December (PJL,VBP). This is the second record for Hong Kong.

283 Fantail Warbler *Cisticola juncidis*

Good numbers were reported at Long Valley in the first winter period with maximum counts of 56 birds on 8th and 30 January. In April and May birds in song flight were noted at Tin Shui Wai, Tsim Bei Tsui and Kam Tin and a male was also holding territory on the scrape at Mai Po during May and June. At Mai Po the first migrant bird was recorded on 31 July and the species was noted regularly there in small numbers thereafter. Reports during the second part of the year included maximum counts of 10 at Mui Wo on 1 October, 40 at Tin Shui Wai on 4 October, 70 at Long Valley on 17 December and 20 at Tung Chung on 30 December. One was at Mount Austin on 23 October, an unusual site for this species.

283.1 Bright-capped Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*

At Ho Chung up to two birds were noted on five dates from 3 January to 17 February (MH); the bird recorded at Nam Sang Wai on 4 December 1993 was seen again on 5 January (GAW) and two were recorded at Lam Tsuen Valley on 15 January. In the second part of the year at Ho Chung two were present on 30 November and one was seen on 27 December (MH); singles were at Sha Lo Tung on 3rd, 10th and 24 December (all DAD). Finally, at Tung Chung six birds were present on 27th and 30 December (PJL,PJH).

284 Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*
No significant reports.

285 Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris*
No significant reports.

286 Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*

The only report in spring was of one at Nam Sang Wai on 8 March. The first records in what was to prove an excellent autumn for this species were of three at Kam Tin and two at Long Valley on 10 September. There was one further record of six birds at the former site on 25 September but at Long Valley birds were recorded regularly until 19 October with a peak count of 45 on 28 September, the second highest count for the territory. Single birds were at Mai Po on 11th, 23rd and 27 September with two recorded on 28th; three were at Mui Wo on 11 September and birds were regular there until 1 October with a maximum of 11 on 18 September; one was at Ho Chung and between 30 and 40 were at Luk Keng on 17 September, with nine at Luk Keng on 18 September; five were at Shuen Wan landfill on 19 September with 12 there on 24 September, two on 26 September, one on 28 September and four nearby on 29 September; one was at Ha Wan Tsuen and three were at Lok Ma Chau on 23 September, two to three were at Sunset Peak on 25 September at 400-500m asl, one was at the Tsing Ma bridge construction site during 26-27 September, one was at Tin Shui Wai on 1 October, one was at Nam Sang Wai on 8 October and one was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 9 October. One at Mai Po on 2 December is the first winter record since publication of the Checklist, all earlier records at this time lacking substantiation. All birds subspecifically ascribed were of the race *L.c. minor*.

287 Styan's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella pleskei*

Singles were at Mai Po as follows: during 1-14 February (PJL), trapped on 6 February (PJL), on 23 April (MH), and trapped on 26 November (PRK,PJL).

288 Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata*

There were two spring records: one was at Liu Pok on 4 March (PJL) and one was at Long Valley on 1 April (PJL, MRL). These are the second and third spring records for Hong Kong. In autumn singles were at Long Valley on 28 September, 6th, 11th, 28th and 29 October and 4 November; two were on Mai Po landfill on 28 September, one was at Tin Shui Wai on 1 October, two were there on 4 October and single birds were recorded there on 5th, 8th, 12th and 24 October and 8 November, one was at Nam Sang Wai on 8 October, one was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 9th and 28 October, and one was at Ma Tso Lung on 10 November. Away from the New Territories an exhausted bird was picked up at Police Headquarters, Wan Chai on 11 October, two were at Mount Austin on 15 October, one was at Tong Fuk, Lantau, on 16 October, one was killed by a lorry at the Tsing-Ma Bridge site on Ma Wan on 21 October and a more fortunate individual was seen on the same island on 1 November creeping around on the floor of the Kap Shui Mun Bridge site canteen! An excellent series of records for this enigmatic species.

289 Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

Singles recorded at Mai Po on 3rd and 16 February and 4 March, and at Ma Tso Lung on 5 February were clearly wintering individuals, although up to two birds at Mai Po during 12-13 March and one there on 27 March are

more problematic. Spring passage was light with three at Nam Sang Wai on 6 April, two at Mai Po on 7 April with one there on 16 April, one in Kowloon Park on 12th, 16th and 22 April, and 12 in the Mai Po/Lo Wu area on 7 May.

Autumn passage was much more pronounced: the first record was of two birds at Nam Sang Wai on 22 September and passage peaked in late September/early October with high counts of 25 at Long Valley on 28 September, ten at Tin Shui Wai on 4 October, and nine at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 October; migrants were noted regularly at these sites in small numbers until 24 November. Elsewhere, up to three were recorded at Mui Wo from 25 September to 5 November although there was a peak of 11 birds there on 15 October, three were on Ma Wan on 28 September and one was in Kowloon Park on 21st and 28 October. There were two reports in December: singles at Mai Po on 4th and at Long Valley on 14th.

290 Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

One was singing at Mai Po on 9 March, three were present on 12 March, two were singing on 13 March and one was singing on 26 March. There were further reports of up to three birds at the same site between 1st and 30 April, one was at Nam Sang Wai on 6 April, up to 30 were in the Mai Po/Lo Wu area on 7 May and one was singing at Tsim Bei Tsui on 17 May. In summer there were reports of single birds at Mai Po on 12 July and 20 August, although the latter may have been an early migrant.

The first definite passage birds were three at Mai Po on 5 September and the peak count at this site was of 80 birds on 25 September. Other counts included 15 at Shuen Wan landfill on 24 September, 60 at Long Valley on 28 September, 40 at Tin Shui Wai on 1st and 4 October and 18 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 October. Although the main passage period was in late September/early October, migrants were present in small numbers through November into the first week of December, the last sightings of the year being of single birds at Long Valley and Mai Po on 4 December. Away from the New Territories up to five birds were recorded from Mui Wo between 12 September and 1 October, four were on Ma Wan on 28 September with one there on 3 October, and one was in Kowloon Park on 21st and 28 October.

291 Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon*
One was at Mai Po on 14 September (PJL).

291.5 Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata*
An adult of the race *caligata* was present between Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau on 30 September and 1 October (PJL *et al.*). This is the first record for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

292 Yellow-eyed Flycatcher Warbler *Seicercus burkii*
One was at Pok Fu Lam on 12 January (TR) and one was in Lam Tsuen Valley on 10th and 26 February (MRL, PJL, EMSK). In the second winter period one was trapped at KARC on 1 October, one was in Tai Po Kau on 22 November (VBP) and one was near Hong Kong University on 19 December (MT).

295 Large Grass Warbler *Graminicola bengalensis*

One was reported from Fei Ngo Shan on 16 April. At Tai Mo Shan two were seen on 17 April, three were present on 22 May, one was there on 10 July and two were there on 12 October. One was recorded at Sunset Peak on 3 July. Two individuals were noted at Shing Mun on 10 November at 450m and 500m asl respectively.

296 Long-tailed Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*
No significant reports.

297 Sulphur-breasted Warbler *Phylloscopus ricketti*

The only records in the first winter period were of singles at Ho Chung on 1 January (EMSK) and on Cheung Chau on 26 March (MDW). In the second winter period singles were seen at Ho Chung on 20 November (MH), at Mount Austin on 27 November (MT, VBP), at Tai Po Kau on 10th and 15 December (IT, PJL, VBP) and at Ng Tung Chai on 29 December (DAD).

298 Blyth's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides*

At least two were in Tai Po Kau on 22 January, one was there on 27 February and two were seen on 19 March. The only other reports in the first winter period were of one at Ho Chung on 1 January, one at Ping Chau on 29 January and one at Kowloon Hills Catchwater between 29 January and 14 March. In the second winter period one was at Shing Mun on 1st and 4 October, two were recorded at Tai Po Kau on 11 December with three there on 15th, and one was at Kadoorie Farm on 22 December. Much scarcer than in 1992 and 1993.

299 Eastern Crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus coronatus*

The only spring report was of one in Tai Po Kau on 14 April. The first record in autumn was of two at Lead Mine Pass on 14 August. One was at Tai Po Kau on 23 August, seven were there on 17 September, three were present on 21 September and one was nearby on 28 September. Elsewhere singles were recorded from Mount Davis on 3rd and 24 September, Shing Mun on 14 September and 1 October, Tai Lam Country Park on 21 September, Mount Austin on 25 September and 2 October, and Pak Nai on 1 October. The final record of the year was of two at Tai Po Kau on 18 October.

300 Pale-legged Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus tenellipes*

The only report in spring was of one at Ping Chau on 16 April. In autumn the first bird was heard at Mount Austin on 10 September and passage birds were recorded at a number of widespread locations until 29 October. Passage peaked towards the end of September: ten were at Mount Davis on 24 September, at least 20, a new high count for the territory, were at Mount Austin on 25 September (MT), five were at Mai Po on 27 September, five were at Cheung Chau on 28 September, six were at Pak Nai on 4 October and five were on Ping Chau on 8 October. There was one winter record of a single bird on Cheung Chau on 18 December (MDW).

300.2 Two-barred Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*

One was at Lam Tsuen Valley during 10-12 February (PJL, GJC), one was in song at Tai Po Kau and one was at Mount Austin on 12 April (both

GJC), one was caught and ringed at KARC on 16 October (PJL), one was at Lam Tsuen Valley on 21 November (MDW) and one was at Tai Po Kau on 15 December (PJL).

301 Arctic Warbler

Phylloscopus borealis

In spring one was in Kowloon Park on 30 March, one was at Mai Po on 5 April, two were on Ping Chau on 23 April and seven were there on 8 May. The first autumn records were of three at Mai Po and singles at Mount Austin and Beacon Hill on 10 September. Thereafter regularly recorded at widespread locations until 18 October. Eight were in Tai Po Kau on 17 September but, as with *P. tenellipes*, there was a definite migratory peak in the last week of September when 20 were at Mount Davis on 24th, ten were at Mount Austin on 24th and 25th, 25 were at Mai Po and 15 were at Mui Wo on 25th, with at least 20 there the following day. The last record was of a single late bird at Mai Po on 6 November.

302 Pallas's Warbler

Phylloscopus proregulus

Much smaller numbers than usual were reported in the first winter period. The highest counts noted were 12 in Tai Po Kau on 22 January, ten at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 29 January and six in Lam Tsuen Valley on 12 February. The latest record was of two singing birds in Tai Po Kau on 2 April. In the second winter period four were recorded at Mount Austin on 6 November and birds were present there until the end of the year with a maximum of 20 on 4 December. Elsewhere, this species was reported from only nine other sites, high counts being 40 in Tai Po Kau on 15 December and eight at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 27 December.

303 Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

Noted in small numbers at widespread locations in the first winter period, the highest number recorded being 20 in Tai Po Kau on 20 March. There was evidence of passage in mid-April with ten at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April and the same number at Mai Po on 15 April. The last spring record was of two birds in Tai Po Kau on 16 April. In autumn the first bird was seen at Mount Austin on 24 September and an influx of 20 birds occurred at Mui Wo on 28 September. The species was widespread in the territory from the beginning of October, peak numbers being 20 at Mount Austin on 9th and 22 October, 40 in Tai Po Kau on 15 December, 43 in the Kowloon Hills Catchwater area on 27 December, 20 in Tan Shan Valley on 30 December and 20 at Ngong Ping on the same date.

304 Radde's Warbler

Phylloscopus schwarzi

At Mount Austin there was a series of autumn records, with single birds noted on 22nd and 29-30 October, (MT,VBP,IT), 2nd (VBP), 5th and 6 November (different birds), and 12th and 19 November (all MT). Elsewhere, singles were at Nam Sang Wai on 8 October (GAW), Mai Po on 26th, KARC on 30 October and on 6 November (all PJL), and Sha Lo Tung on 7th (RWL) and 10 December (DAD); another was trapped at Mai Po on 14 December (FW). A good autumn for this species though part of the reason for such a high number of records is almost certainly greater familiarity with its identification.

304.5 Yellow-streaked Warbler

Phylloscopus armandii

Four birds were seen during the autumn: singles trapped at KARC on 16 October (PJL), seen and subsequently trapped at Mount Austin on 30 October (VBP *et al.*), seen and photographed at Mount Austin on 6 November (MT), and trapped at Mai Po on 26 November (PRK *et al.*). These are the first records for Hong Kong (see separate paper in this Report).

305 Dusky Warbler

Phylloscopus fuscatus

Recorded at Mai Po until 7 April with relatively low maximum counts of eight birds on 1 January, ten on 2 March and eight, including four singing birds, on the last date. Reported in ones and twos from only six other sites, the last record being of a single bird at Tai Long Wan on 7 May. Much more widely reported in the second winter period: the first record was of one at Long Valley on 11 September and up to 35 birds were present at that site throughout October; other counts at various localities included 20 at Mui Wo on 28 September, 25 at Tin Shui Wai on 4 October, 20 at Mount Austin on 22 October and 20 at Mai Po on 1 November.

306 Fukien Niltava

Niltava davida

A male was at Ng Tung Chai on 26 December (EMSK).

307 Hainan Blue Flycatcher

Cyornis hainana

Two singing males and at least one female were reported from the traditional site in Tai Po Kau between 2 April and 27 April; another singing male was present on the brown walk at Tai Po Kau on 21 May. An immature male was seen in Tai Po Kau on 2 September and a male was on Cheung Chau on 22 October.

308 Blue and White Flycatcher

Muscicapa cyanomelana

In spring there were reports of single males at Tai Po on 22 March, at Plunkett's Road, the Peak, on 23 March, at Pak Tam Au on 26 March and in Tai Po Kau and on Ping Chau on 1 April; there were two males at the latter site on 16 April. In autumn there was a female at Mount Austin on 16 October, with an immature male there on 29th; at KARC a female/immature was trapped on 30 October.

There was a rather sad report of three being released from captivity with many other birds at Tai Tam Reservoir on 22 May. These birds had not grown their wings and could not fly.

309 Verditer Flycatcher

Muscicapa thalassina

The only report during the first part of the year was of one at May Road, Hong Kong Island on 23 March. In the second winter period singles were recorded at Tai Po Kau on 21 September, 19 November, and 3rd, 21st and 24 December, at Pak Nai on 30 October, at Mount Austin on 26 November, at Tung Chung on 30 November, at Hok Tau on 3 December, at Lead Mine Pass on 4th and 31 December, in Tan Shan Valley on 11 December, in Lam Tsuen Valley on 11 December, near Hong Kong University on 19 December, at Tai Po Kau on 24 December and at Po Tong Ha, Tuen Mun, on 27 December.

310 Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa rufilata*

At least five birds were at Tai Po Kau on 1 April (DAD,MRL *et al.*), one was recorded there on 2nd and 4 April (IT,WLY,HFC), and one was on Ping Chau on 16 April (MDW).

311 Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*

One was at Ping Chau during 7-8 May (PJH,JB). In autumn an adult was seen at Tai Po Kau on 7 September (RWL) and a first-winter was at Mai Po on 14 September (PJL).

312 Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta*

Two were seen at Long Valley on 15 April, two were at Yung Shue O on 16 April, two were on Ping Chau on 16th and 23 April and 8 May, one was at Tai Po Kau on 30 April, two to three were at Tai Long Wan on 7 May, one was at Ho Chung on 12 May and the last spring record was of one at Big Wave Bay on 15 May. In autumn there were five records, all of single birds, at Ma Wan on 14 September, at Mai Po on 14th and 24 September, at Nam Sang Wai on 24 September and at Tai Tam Country Park on 9 October.

313 Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris*

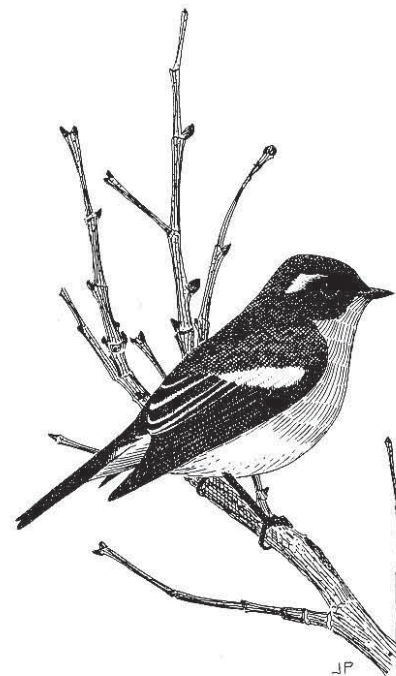
In the first winter period up to three were reported from Mai Po, up to two were at Tsim Bei Tsui, and singles were noted at eleven other sites. The final spring record was of one at Mai Po on 5 May. The first autumn report was of single birds at Beacon Hill and Kuk Po on 10 September; the species was widespread thereafter until the end of October with peak counts of 12 at Mai Po on 25th and 27 September, four to five at Mount Austin on 29 September with six there on 9 October, and six at Pak Nai on 4 October. Singles were reported from nine sites during November and December.

314 Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

In the first winter period singles were at Mai Po on 2nd, 21st and 22 January, at Nam Sang Wai on 5 January and at Kam Tin and Luk Keng on 6 March. In the second winter period one was at Mount Davis on 18 September and 21 October, two were at Mai Po on 25 September and singles were there on 26 September, 19 November and 4 December; one was at Mount Austin on 1 October and two were there on 29 October. Further reports, all of single birds, came from Nam Sang Wai on 8th and 22 October, Shing Mun on 12 October and 22 December, Long Valley on 18 October, Tin Shui Wai on 22 October, Mui Wo on 7 November and Ping Chau on 31 December.

315 Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki*

The only report in the first part of the year was of one on Ping Chau on 13 April. In autumn up to two were recorded at Mount Austin between 29 October and 12 November, one was at Pak Nai on 30 October, two were in Tai Po Kau on 5 November with singles there on 20 November and 10 December, one was at Aberdeen Reservoir on 28 December and singles were at Ng Tung Chai and the Chinese University on 31 December. At KARC 13 birds were trapped during 30 October-21 December.



Jeremy Pearse

316 Yellow-rumped Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia*

Up to ten different birds, although not more than three on any one day, were recorded at Mai Po between 20 August (PJL) and 25 September. The former record is a new early date for the territory. At KARC birds were trapped in September as follows: four on 3rd, one on 10th and five on 17th. Singles were reported from Kuk Po on 9 September, Beacon Hill on 10 September, Lam Tsuen Valley on 11 September, Tai Po Kau on 13th and 17 September, and Tuen Mun on 19 September.

317 Narcissus Flycatcher *Ficedula narcissina*

One was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 12 April (RWL), one was in Tai Po Kau on 14th and 16 April (PJL,RWL,PTA), one was at Kowloon Park during 15-16 April (EMSK,WLY *et al.*) and two were on Ping Chau on 16 April (MDW).

318 Grey-headed Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

In the first winter period up to two were regularly seen in Tai Po Kau until 20 March with a maximum of five birds there on 30 January, two birds were at Kowloon Hills Catchwater from 29 January to 11 March, one was at Ho Chung from 1 January to 5 March with two present on 11 February and one

was also reported from Lam Tsuen Valley from 10 February to 4 March with two there on 27 February.

The first record in the second winter period concerned one on Ping Chau on 8 October (GJC, PJJ *et al.*), a new early date for the territory. The next record was of a single bird in Lam Tsuen Valley on 30 October and one, probably the same bird, remained there until at least 17 December, two were at Tai Po Kau on 19 November with one there on 15 December, one was noted at Ho Chung on 20 November, two birds were at Lead Mine Pass on 11 December with one there on 31 December, one was at Mui Wo on 26 December and two were at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 27th and 30 December.

319 Asian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*

Singles noted in Tai Po Kau and at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 16 April were the only spring records. In autumn the first record was of one at Lead Mine Pass on 14 August and four were seen there on 2 October; one was at Tai Po Kau on 21 August and birds were recorded at that site on several dates up to 8 October with a maximum of four on 25 September; one was at Mai Po on 25th August and between 20th and 26 September, one was at Kuk Po on 9 September, three were at Shing Mun during 14-15 September, one was at Luk Keng on 17 September, one was at Tuen Mun on 19 September, one was at Mount Davis on 24 September and one was at Lai Chi Chong, Sai Kung, on 29 September.

320 Japanese Paradise Flycatcher (N) *Terpsiphone atrocaudata*

Up to three were reported from Tai Po Kau between 12th and 15 April, and one was seen there on 16th and 19 April. In autumn singles were trapped at KARC on 17th and 24 September; up to three were seen in Tai Po Kau between 16th and 25 September and one was there on 19 October, up to two were present at Shing Mun from 1st to 12 October, one was at Lead Mine Pass on 2 October, one was at Mount Austin on 12 October and the final record was of one on Cheung Chau on 22 October.

321 Black-naped Monarch Flycatcher *Hypothymis azurea*

In the first winter period one was at Mai Po between 2 January and 30 March, two were at Long Valley on 2 January and singles were seen there on 14th and 16 January and 4 March. Singles were also recorded on Ping Chau on 8th and 29 January, and 9th and 16 April, one was in Tai Po Kau on 9 January and 2nd and 11 April, one was at Ho Chung on 15 January, one was at Shek Kong on 9 February, one was in Lam Tsuen Valley on 27 February, one was at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 11 March and one was at Hong Kong University on 4 April. The final sighting was of a female or immature at Mai Po on 27 April (IT), a new late record for Hong Kong. In the second winter period singles were at Mai Po on 5 November, at Shouson Hill, Hong Kong Island, between 15 November and 9 December, at Ho Chung on 20 November and 20 December, at Tan Shan Valley on 11 December, in Tai Po Kau on 15 December and at Long Valley on 15th, 16th and 28 December.

321.2 Rufous-necked Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*

On Hong Kong Island one was seen at Lady Clementi's Ride on 3 February, up to five were noted at Tai Tam Reservoir from May to July, four

were at the summit of Mount Parker on 19 June and up to three were present at Mount Austin from 31 August to 20 December. In the New Territories up to five were reported from Shing Mun/Lead Mine Pass in January, April, October, November and December, one was heard at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 30 March, and two were calling on the north side of Tate's Cairn on 1 October.

321.5 Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis webbianus*

A bird in Kowloon Park on 30 March was presumed to be an escape. Between ten and twenty were at Tai Mo Shan on 26 June.

322 Chinese Babax *Babax lanceolatus*

On Tai Mo Shan up to three were seen in April and a party of two adults and four juveniles were seen in June; on the northern slopes of Grassy Hill an adult was seen carrying food to a nest on 21 May at 450m asl and a party of six birds was seen on 22 December.

323 Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush *Garrulax pectoralis*

In the New Territories reports came from Tai Po Kau, Shing Mun, Ho Chung, Kowloon Hills Catchwater, Kowloon Reservoirs, Tai Lam Country Park, KARC, Ng Tung Chai, near Ma Mei Ha and the Wu Kau Tang/Lai Chi Wo area. Numbers never exceeded ten at any one site. A recently fledged bird was seen at Tai Po Kau on 22 August (RWL). This is the first confirmed breeding record for Hong Kong. On Hong Kong Island up to 15 were recorded at Tai Tam, up to six were seen at Aberdeen Country Park, and four were at Mount Austin on 5 November, a new site for this species.

324 Black-throated Laughing Thrush *Garrulax chinensis*

On Hong Kong Island up to four were reported from Big Wave Bay, Chai Wan, Mount Austin, Mount Nicholson and High West. In the New Territories up to five were present at Kowloon Hills Catchwater throughout the year and the maximum number recorded at Shing Mun was 11 on 4 December. Elsewhere, two were in Tai Lam Country Park on 20 August, two were at Ho Pui on 13 November and one was at KARC on 4 December.

325 Hwamei *Garrulax canorus*

No significant reports.

326 White-cheeked Laughing Thrush *Garrulax sannio*

The only reports received from Hong Kong Island were of one in the ZBG on 16 April with two there on 21 July. This species is now absent from Mount Austin where it was common six years ago. In the New Territories three were in the hills north of Sha Tin on 8 January, up to three were at Chau Tau in February, April and December, two were in Tai Lam Country Park on 20 August, two were in Tan Shan Valley on 30 October and one was at Sha Tin Pass on 27 December.

327 Black-faced Laughing Thrush *Garrulax perspicillatus*

No significant reports.

328 Pekin Robin*Leiothrix lutea*

In the New Territories up to ten were recorded from Tai Po Kau and Lead Mine Pass and smaller numbers were reported from Wu Kau Tang, A Ma Wat, Ng Tung Chai, Lion Rock Country Park, Kowloon Reservoir, Shing Mun and Tai Mo Shan; four trapped at KARC on 6 November had obviously been cage birds, although one trapped there on 13 November did not show signs of captivity. Up to three birds were in Kowloon Park in February and March, and on Hong Kong Island eight were at Mount Davis on 3 February, two were at Mount Parker on 19 June and six were at Mount Austin on 23 December. A flock of twenty near Hong Kong University on 23 December were obviously recently released birds.

329 Striated Yuhina*Yuhina castaniceps*

The party of about 40 birds first noted on 25 November 1993 was seen at various places in Aberdeen Country Park (most regularly early in the evening at Peel Rise) from 8 January to 27 February. At Kowloon Hills Catchwater up to six birds were reported from 23 March to 23 April (DAD,GT). On the latter date a family party of six was seen, including adults feeding young (see separate note in this Report). This is the first breeding record for Hong Kong. In the second part of the year several were seen there on 10 September and ten were seen in the same area on 10 December (YYT,LKS).

330 White-bellied Yuhina*Yuhina zantholeuca*

In the first winter period two were at A Ma Wat on 5 January and two were at Kop Tong on the same day, one was at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 29 January and 14 March, one was in Tai Po Kau on 23 January and 6 February, two were at Shing Mun on 10 February and one was there on 5 April. In summer two were at Ho Chung wood on 7 August, and on 30 August two separate parties were seen in Tai Po Kau: one was of three birds, the other party of six to eight birds included one or two immatures, indicating that breeding probably occurred locally. Up to three birds were noted at Tai Po Kau in September, one was reported from there in October and two were seen in December. Elsewhere, two were at Lead Mine Pass on 2 October, two were at Shing Mun on 5 October and one was at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 30 December.

331 Red-headed Tit*Aegithalos concinnus*

Two were seen at Ho Chung on 12 January, three were at Shing Mun on 15 January, three were at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 9th and 29 January and one was there on 14 March. Reported from Tai Po Kau between 9th and 27 April with a family party of two adults and several young being noted on the 9th; this is the fifth breeding record for Hong Kong. In the second half of the year up to four were seen in Tai Po Kau from 16 September, 17 – a new record count for the territory – were present at Lead Mine Pass on 11 December (PA), seven were at Shing Mun on 4 December and one was there on 22 December, and two were at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 30 December.

332 Yellow-bellied Tit*Parus venustus*

The only report was of at least one flying south over KARC on 13 November (GJC).

333 Great Tit*Parus major*

Six records – five of one bird, one of two birds – at Cheung Chau during the year were exceptional as this species is rare on the island.

333.1 Yellow-cheeked Tit*Parus spilonotus*

Recorded throughout the year at Tai Po Kau in small numbers, the most seen on any one day being five on 5 May; an adult was seen carrying food on the brown walk on 21 May. One was singing along Kowloon Hills Catchwater in January and March and one was seen there on 30 December, one was at Tai Mo Shan on 22 May, one was at Shing Mun on 1 October, two were at Lead Mine Pass on 2 October and one was at Mount Austin on 5 November, and 17th and 20 December.

334 Penduline Tit*Remiz pendulinus*

At Mai Po ten were present on 8 January and small numbers were noted on four other days in that month; in February there was one record of ten birds on 23rd and, thereafter, there were fairly regular records between 9 March and 27 April with peak counts of 25 birds on 20 March and 50 on 2 April. Elsewhere, ten birds were in the Lok Ma Chau/Lo Wu area on 5 February and birds were heard at Ma Tso Lung on 21 February and 4 March. In the second winter period up to 20 were recorded at Mai Po from 2nd to 26 November, one flew northeast over Chek Lap Kok on 4 November (GJC) – this is the first occurrence in Hong Kong away from the northern New Territories – one was at Long Valley on 4 November and two were there on 26 November, and three were at Tin Shui Wai on 28 November. There were no December reports.

335 Fork-tailed Sunbird*Aethopyga christinae*

Nineteen birds were counted along the brown and blue walks at Tai Po Kau on 21 May.

336 Fire-breasted Flowerpecker*Dicaeum ignipectus*

In the first winter period six were in the Wu Kau Tang area on 2 January, three were at Wu Kau Tang and six at Kop Tong on 5 January, one was at Shing Mun on 11 January and one was in Tai Po Kau on 20 February. In the second winter period one was at Shing Mun on 10 November, one was at Tai Po Kau on 26 November and 24 December, and one was at Tung Chung on 27 December. Probably under-reported.

337 Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker*Dicaeum cruentatum*

No significant reports.

339 White-eye*Zosterops japonica*

No significant reports.

340 Black-naped Oriole*Oriolus chinensis*

The only spring report was of two males at Long Valley on 20 March. In summer a pair was seen mobbing a Crested Goshawk at Lok Ma Chau on 31 May and one was there on 19 June, a male was present at Lo Wu on 13 July, one was recorded at Kam Tin on 31 July and two were there on 31 August, and

two juveniles were seen at Ma Tso Lung on 22 August; these records suggest that breeding may still occur in the Territory. Later in the autumn passage was noted at Mui Wo between 18 September and 8 October with a maximum of six present on 4th and 8 October, singles were reported from Long Valley on 23rd and 25 September, passage was noted at Mai Po between 18 September and 9 October with a maximum of four on the last date, one was at Pak Nai on 4 October, two were on Ping Chau, one was at Kam Tin and one was at Nam Sang Wai on 8 October, one was at Shing Mun on 12 October, one was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 21 October and a late bird was seen at Shing Mun on 4 December.

341.1 Bull-headed Shrike

Lanius bucephalus

Single female/immatures were recorded at Mai Po during 28-29 October (PJL), and in November at Ho Chung from 2nd to 4th (MH), at Wu Kau Tang on 6th and at Mui Wo on 10th (both DAD).

342 Brown Shrike

Lanius cristatus

One was at Happy Valley on 17 February; one at Shuen Wan on 19 March was considered to be the same bird as was there on 1 November and 27 December 1993 (the record was inadvertently omitted from the 1993 Report), and one on Lamma on 27 March may also have been a wintering bird. Passage birds were recorded from 15 April to 10 May at ten sites, usually in ones or twos but eight were present in the Chek Keng/Tai Long Wan area on 7 May. All ascribed records during the first part of the year were of the subspecies *lucionensis*, apart from the Shuen Wan bird which was considered to be of the race *cristatus*.

In autumn migrants were noted at eleven sites between 4 September and 20 October with no more than two individuals at any one site. Single birds at Cape D'Aguilar on 4 September, at Shuen Wan during 19-23 September and at Tsim Bei Tsui on 19 October were ascribed to the race *cristatus*. Later in the year the only records came from Lantau: singles were reported from Mui Wo on 10 November, Pui O on 26 December, Cheung Sha on 28 December and Tai O on 29 December. All of these were assigned to the race *lucionensis*.

343 Rufous-backed Shrike

Lanius schach

Ten were counted in the Tsim Bei Tsui area on 26 January.

345 Black Drongo

Dicrurus macrocercus

Recorded throughout the year in the New Territories in small numbers. There was a high winter count of 16 birds in the frontier controlled area between Mai Po and Lo Wu on 5 February. The highest count in spring was of ten birds at Tai Long Wan on 7 May. In autumn there was a pronounced passage of birds through the northwest New Territories between 11 September and 14 October, particularly at Mai Po where 69 were seen on 25 September (PJL) (a new high), 25 on 27 September and 26 on 14 October; all of these birds were flying in a southwesterly direction. Elsewhere, at least 20 birds were at Long Valley on 11th and 29 September, 20 were at Tin Shui Wai on 1st and 4 October, 40 were at a pre-roost gathering at Ma Tso Lung on 5 October and 15 flew west at Tsim Bei Tsui on 10 October.

346 Ashy Drongo

Dicrurus leucophaeus

All reports in the first part of the year that were subspecifically ascribed were of the race *leucogenis*: one was at Shing Mun on 1st and 15 January, one was at Carolina Gardens on 13 January, two were in Tai Po Kau on 2 February, and one was at Aberdeen Country Park between 14 March and 6 April. Unascribed birds were recorded at Shing Mun on 5 January and 6 April, at Tai Po Kau on 5 March (two birds) and 16 April. In the second winter period one of the race *leucogenis* was at Mount Davis on 7 October, two of the race *leucogenis* were at Lead Mine Pass on 23 October, three of the race *leucogenis* were in Tai Po Kau on 20 November, one of the race *leucogenis* was there on 1 December and one of the race *salangensis* was there on 21 December, one of the race *leucogenis* was at Shing Mun on 10 November and singles at Shing Mun on 11 December and Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 30 December were both of the race *salangensis*.

347 Hair-crested Drongo

Dicrurus hottentottus

Counts included 17 in Lam Tsuen Valley on 12 February, 15 at Mui Wo during September and 25 at Shouson Hill on 2 December.

348 Jay

Garrulus glandarius

Records were received from only three sites: two were at Shing Mun on 5 April, one was at Tai Mo Shan on 22 May and two were at Ma On Shan on 30 October with one there on 6 November.

349 Blue Magpie

Urocissa erythrorhynchus

Six were in Kowloon Park on 22 January. Seen fairly regularly on Cheung Chau during the year with a party of seven noted on 22 November; this species is generally rare on the island. An adult at Mount Austin on 27 August was seen feeding a juvenile Koel.

350 Treepie

Dendrocitta formosae

Reported from Tai Po Kau between March and September, the maximum being eight birds at the end of August; other records in the first part of the year were of two at Hong Kong University on 3 January, one at Ng Tung Chai on 11 January, one at Luk Keng on 6 March, one at Ho Chung wood on 16 April with at least two birds there during May, and three at Kau To Shan, Sha Tin, on 28 April. In the second part of the year three were at Mount Austin on 17 September, up to four were recorded from Mount Davis between 18 September and 22 October, two were in Tan Shan Valley on 22 October and six were there on 30 October, two were at Ho Chung on 12 November, 13 were at Mount Kellett on 20 November and one was at Pok Fu Lam on 27 December.

351 Magpie

Pica pica

No significant records.

352 Jungle Crow

Corvus macrorhynchus

Forty were counted in Tai Po Kau at midday on 5 May and 47 were seen leaving the forest in the direction of Tolo Harbour at dawn on 21 May. Good numbers frequented the Shuen Wan area between 25 June and 23 July, the maximum count being 112 on the latter date.

353 Collared Crow*Corvus torquatus*

Reported to be much scarcer at Mai Po now than it was ten years ago. At Shuen Wan 16 were present on 9 March, then noted regularly between 25 June and 23 July with a maximum of 33 on 11 July; 20 were seen there on 19 September. On Hong Kong Island, where this species is unusual, two were at Mount Davis on 7 October.

354 Silky Starling (N)*Sturnus sericeus*

In the first winter period 1500 birds were counted at the Tsim Bei Tsui roost on 16 January and up to 600 were noted at the roost in February. Other counts during the first winter period included 90 at Long Valley on 5 January, 2000 at Mai Po on 11 February with 1000 there on 19 February, 340 roosting at Kam Tin on 13 March and 65 at Shuen Wan 16 March. The latest record was of a single bird at Mai Po on 5 April.

The first record in the second winter period was of one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 21 October and 220 were recorded at Mai Po on 22 October with 300 there the following day. A roost again developed along the Fence in November with 933 birds there on 5 November, 1973 on 13 November and an immense flock estimated to contain between 3000 and 5000 birds on 3 December (RWL). This is a new high count for Hong Kong. At Mai Po landfill on 4 November 2500 were counted (such high counts at Mai Po presumably refer to the same birds that roost at the Fence) and the roost at Kam Tin held 1000 birds on 7 November. At Shuen Wan on 13 December 240 birds were present. Forty birds were also counted at Mui Wo on 10 November and a single bird was present at the same site on 13 November; this species is apparently very rare on Lantau.

355 Purple-backed Starling*Sturnus sturninus*

Five flew over Mai Po on 21st and 25 September and two were seen near Lok Ma Chau on 5 October (all PJL).

357 Chinese Starling*Sturnus sinensis*

In January and February up to nine birds were recorded at Nam Sang Wai and up to five were seen near Mai Po. In spring, two were at Mai Po on 13 March and one was near there on 20 March, two were at Tsim Bei Tsui, one was at Shuen Wan and one was at Tseng Tau on 25 March, and two to three were at Tung Chung on 6 April, but the peak passage period occurred in mid-April: 15 were at Mai Po on 13th, 14 were at Nam Sang Wai on 14th, 30 were seen coming in to roost in the mangroves at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15th and 20 were at Long Valley on the same date.

In summer one pair bred at Mai Po and juveniles were seen in July and August, suggesting that two broods were raised, one pair bred successfully at Nam Sang Wai, about 20 birds bred at Mong Tseng, 20 nesting birds were seen at Mui Wo on 15 May, two birds were at Shek O on 14th and 28 May, a first-summer male was at Shuen Wan on 22 May, two birds were at Stanley Fort on 28 May, three to four pairs were visiting potential nest sites at Cheung Chau on 2 June and 40 birds were seen at a roost on the island on 21 June, two adults were feeding a juvenile in a nest at Shek O Golf Course on 5 June and a different adult bird was seen at Shek O village on the same date, a male was reported from the Lok Ma Chau/Lo Wu border road on 19 June and a bird was seen at Chai Wan on 22 June.

In autumn ten were at Long Valley on 11 August and six were there on 15 September, three birds were at Ma Wan on 18 August and there was a flock of 20 there on 13 September, 32 were in the Mai Po area on 30 August with four there on 8 September, two on 21 September and two on 28 September, one was on Ping Chau on 18 September, six were at Kam Tin on 25 September and one was there on 6 November, one was at Ma Tso Lung on 10 November, and the last record of the year came from Mai Po where four were seen on 26 November.

358 European Starling*Sturnus vulgaris*

One was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 16 January (RWL), one was at Mai Po on 19 February (MRL) and one was at Kam Tin during 21-22 February (RWL,DAD). In the second winter period one was at Tsim Bei Tsui on 24 October (GAW), one was at Kam Tin from 29 October to 9 November (PA,RWL) and one was at Tin Shui Wai on 18 December (JSRE).

360 Grey Starling*Sturnus cineraceus*

In the first winter period the maximum numbers reported from the Deep Bay area were 63 at Nam Sang Wai on 5 January, 30 at Mai Po on 8 January, 50 at Mong Tseng on 21 January, 40 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 20 February and 100 at Ma Tso Lung on 4 March. Elsewhere one was at Ho Chung on 3 January, one was at Long Valley on 4 February and 20 March, three were at Kam Tin on 13 February, two were in Kowloon Park on 26 February, 13 were at Shuen Wan on 16 March with ten there on 21st and 25 March, 11 were at Luk Keng on 18 March and one was at Tseng Tau on 19 March. The latest reports were of nine at Long Valley on 4 April with one there on 10 April. The first autumn record was of five birds at Ping Yeung and 11 birds at Kam Tin on 29 October; up to 100 birds were regularly recorded at the latter site until 18 December. Recorded at Tsim Bei Tsui from 5 November with a maximum count of 186 at a pre-roost gathering with other starlings on 19 December. Forty were at Nam Sang Wai on 9 November.

361 Black-necked Starling*Sturnus nigricollis*

The highest numbers reported were 133 in four flocks heading east over Long Valley, presumably to roost, at 1700h on 11 September and 107 counted in a pre-roost gathering at She Shan, Lam Tsuen, on 21 September. Ten were counted at Ma Wan on 11 October; the species is rare there.

362 Crested Mynah*Acridotheres cristatellus*

The highest count during the year was of 503 in a pre-roost gathering at Tsim Bei Tsui on 15 October (RWL). Chalmers (1986) states that this species occurs 'occasionally in flocks of several hundred'; this is certainly the highest count since publication of the Annotated Checklist and may well be the highest on record.

363 Tree Sparrow*Passer montanus*

No significant reports.

364 White-backed Munia*Lonchura striata*

Twenty were in Kowloon Park on 12 March, two were at Mai Po on 26 April where this species is apparently rare, a flock of 18 was in the Lam Tsuen Valley on 19 October and flocks of twenty were noted at Mount Austin

in October and early November, such numbers being unusually high for the location.

365 Spotted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*
Regularly reported from Long Valley with counts of 95 on 15 February, 200 on 25 July, 100 on 3 September and 93 on 6 December. Sixty-five were at Kam Tin on 26 December.

366 Chestnut Munia *Lonchura malacca*
Four adults were at Mai Po on 31 July (MMC), single adults were there on 7th and 19 August (PJJ), one juvenile was there on 4 September (DAD) and three juveniles were present on 2 October (VBP). Elsewhere three birds were at Long Valley on 13 September (SES), five were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 5 October (RWL) and three were at Nam Sang Wai on 9 November (GAW).

366.1 Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*
One was at Mount Austin on 5 November (MT).

367 Chinese Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*
Two were at Mai Po on 26 March, one was there on 29 October and three were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 30 October. The paucity of records is a further indication of the decline of this species in the territory.

369 Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*
Eight were at Wu Kau Tang on 22 January, one was at Long Valley on 27 February and four were at Nam Chung on 6 March. The only records in the second part of the year were of one at Mount Austin on 20 October and three flying west over Mai Po on 31 December.

370 Black-tailed Hawfinch *Coccothraustes migratorius*
In the first winter period ten were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 30 January and 30 were there on 26 February, three were at Mong Tseng on 30 January, two were at Shek Kong on 9 February, nine were at Mai Po during 19-20 February and ten were at Tsim Bei Tsui and three were at Lau Fau Shan on 3 April. In the second winter period 25 were at Lok Ma Chau on 19 November, three were at Kam Tin on 11 December, one was there on 17 December and six were there on 18 December, 15 were near Ho Sheung Heung on 23 December, 14 were in Lam Tsuen Valley on 28 December and eight were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 31 December.

371 Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*
Small numbers were present at widespread localities in the first winter period. Passage in March was weak with maximum counts of 35 at Mai Po on 26 March and 15 at Mount Austin on 31 March. The last spring record was of one at Tsim Bei Tsui on 6 May. In autumn one was at Mai Po on 24 October; recorded widely thereafter but never more than ten at any one site.

372 Japanese Yellow Bunting *Emberiza sulphurata*
The only record was of one at Tin Shui Wai on 14 April (GAW). A stark contrast to the record numbers in April 1993.

373 Grey-headed Bunting *Emberiza fucata*
The only records during the first winter period were of single birds at Long Valley on 8th and 22 January. In the second winter period up to two were present at the end of the Fence at Tsim Bei Tsui during 21-30 October, one was at Long Valley on 21 October, up to two were present there between 30 October and 5 November and one was seen on 14 December, two were at Ho Chung on 1 November and one was at Tung Chung on 30 December.

373.2 Yellow-browed Bunting *Emberiza chrysophrys*
One was at Nam Sang Wai on 8 October (GAW).

374 Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami*
Up to ten were reported from Tai Po Kau until 10 April. Elsewhere, singles were trapped at KARC on 22 January and 26 February, four were seen at A Ma Wat on 2 January, four were at Sam A Tsuen on 22 January, one was at Sha Lo Tung on 23 January, one was at Mong Tseng on 30 January, singles were reported from Ho Chung on 11 February and 5 March and two were near Ng Tung Chai on 12 March. The only reports received in the second winter period were of five at Tai Po Kau on 22 November with one there on 1 December and two there on 24 December, and at least two at Ngong Ping on 30 December. Much scarcer than usual in the latter part of the year.

376 Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*
Maximum counts during the first winter period were of 60 at Long Valley on 30 January, 20 at Ho Chung on 10 February, 15-20 at Kam Tin on 13 February and 20 at Mai Po on 30 March. The latest record in spring was of three at Kam Tin on 17 April. The first bird of the autumn was at Mount Austin on 16 October. Numbers remained generally low throughout the territory with maximum counts reported of ten at Ho Chung on 12 November, 20 at Mount Austin on 20 December and 20 at Tung Chung on 30 December.

377 Chestnut Bunting *Emberiza rutila*
The only spring record was of a tame individual, presumably an escape, at Tai Tam on 29 May. The first autumn record was of a male at Kam Tin on 28 September (RWL) which is a new early date for autumn. There were no further records until the more typical date of 21 October when 10 were at Mong Tseng, two were at Tsim Bei Tsui and one was at Mount Austin. Aside from 104 at Sha Lo Tung on 7 December, numbers were generally much smaller than in recent years with the higher counts being six at Mount Austin on 29th and 30 October, 30 at KARC on 6 November and between 12 and 20 near A Ma Wat on 3 December.

378 Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola*
There were four sightings in the first two months of the year: one was at Long Valley on 8th and 28 January, one was at Mong Tseng on 21 January and one was at Nam Sang Wai on 21 February. In spring two were at Tin Shui Wai on 16 April, one was at Mai Po on 19 April, nine were at Tsim Bei Tsui and three were at Long Valley on 6 May, and three were at Shek O golf course on 15 May. Autumn passage commenced on 3 September when two were seen at Long Valley and birds were recorded at widespread locations until 16

December. Peak movement occurred in the third week of October when 60 were at Long Valley on 19 October, 610 were counted moving northeast over Mong Tseng on 21 October and 76 were seen also flying in a northeasterly direction over Chek Lap Kok on the same date. One on Cheung Chau on 9 November was the first record for the island.

[**Red-headed/Black-headed Bunting**

Emberiza bruniceps/melanocephala

A first-winter was present at Tsim Bei Tsui from 12th to 27 October (RWL *et al.*), an adult female was at Mong Tseng on 24 October (PIL), and an immature male or adult female was at Tan Shan Valley on 26 November (RWL). Investigations are continuing as to the identity of these birds, especially that at Tsim Bei Tsui which was seen well by a number of observers and photographed.

The continued occurrence of these birds at the same time of year has resulted in the species pair being moved to Category A. It is possible that both species are occurring and, whilst the Records Committee has not reached any decision regarding this, observers should bear in mind the possibility. In any event a detailed description should be taken when encountering any bird of this species pair.]

380 Crested Bunting

Melophus lathamii

Seven birds were observed near the summit of Tai Mo Shan on 22 May and a single bird was seen there on 26 June (PTA, HFC), ten were at Heung Shek Cemetery above Chuen Lung on the southern slope of Tai Mo Shan on 26 June (PA), six to ten singing males were counted in the Pat Sin Leng range on 5 June (RWL), three birds, one of which was a juvenile moulting into first-winter plumage, were seen at Yi O New Village, Lantau, on 11 October (JEB) and two were seen north of Cheung Lek Village, near Lok Ma Chau, on 13 November (JH). The summer records represent a resurgence for this species with the highest numbers for some years.

CATEGORY B

Species which have been recorded in an apparently wild state in Hong Kong but not in the last fifty years

501 Ring-necked Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

Four males and three females were at Mai Po on 16 January, with presumably one of these still present on 22 January; in addition, a pair were at Ping Yeung on 12 February. There were further birds at Mount Austin on 13 October and Long Valley on 12th and 18 November. All of these were escaped or released birds.

CATEGORY C

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

601 Feral Pigeon

Columba livia

No significant reports.

602 Rainbow Lorikeet

Trichoglossus haematodus

No significant reports.

603 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Cacatua sulphurea

No significant reports.

604 Rose-ringed Parakeet

Psittacula krameri

Recorded at Kam Tin in January, February, March, October and November with maximum counts of 12 on 13 February and 10 on 7 November. Three were at Pak Nai on 16 January.

605 Common Mynah

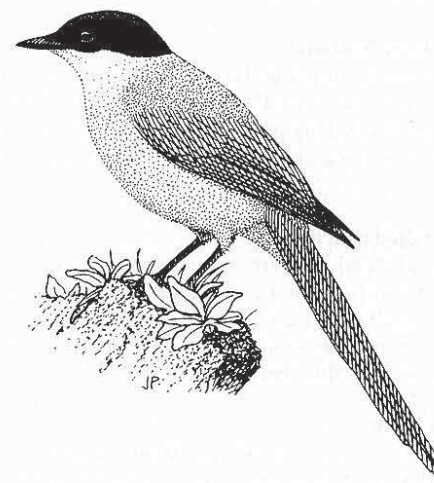
Acridotheres tristis

At Kam Tin, where birds were present throughout the year, the maximum count was of 30 on 20 February and a juvenile was seen on 31 July. A pair probably also bred near Fairview Park. Two were at Tsim Bei Tsui on 4 January, two were at Nam Sang Wai on 25 January, four were there on 8 February and five were there on 9 November, one was at Shuen Wan on 20 May, four were at Shek Kong on 29 May, three were at the United Services Recreation Club, Kowloon, on 21 October and two were at Tin Shui Wai on 19 December.

606 Azure-winged Magpie

Cyanopica cyana

Single birds were seen in the ZBG on 20 March and 21 July.



Jeremy Pearse

CATEGORY D

Species which have occurred in an apparently wild state but for which the possibility of escape or release from captivity cannot be satisfactorily excluded

- 706.6 Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophilata*
A male was in Tai Po Kau on 31 January (PTA), roughly one year after the first accepted record in 1993. It should be noted that the number assigned to the first record was incorrect, and should be as stated here.

- 706.7 Blue-throated Flycatcher** *Cyornis rubeculoides*
A first-year male was killed flying into a window at KARC on 2 May (per PJL). This is the second record for Hong Kong. It should be noted that the number assigned to the first record was incorrect, and should be as stated here.

- 709 Rufous-capped Babbler** *Stachyris ruficeps*
One was at Shing Mun on 15 January (DAD) and three or four were at The Peak on 27 November (JSRE).

- 711 Grey-headed Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis gularis*
One was at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 11 April (DAD).

- 712 Grey-cheeked Fulvetta** *Alcippe morrisonia*
At Kowloon Hills catchwater at least three were present in May, two were there on 9 October, one was present on 11 November, with two noted on 27 December. Three were seen at Ho Chung on 20 December and one was seen at Ng Tung Chai on 29 December.

- 712.1 Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** *Sitta frontalis*
Up to six were recorded at Tai Po Kau throughout the year and two adults were seen feeding two recently fledged birds on 7 May. Singles were at Shing Mun on 1 January, 8 May and 1 October, and three were seen together on 22 December, and one was at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 29 January and 6 March.

- 712.5 Chestnut-tailed Starling** *Sturnus malabaricus*
A pair bred at Kowloon Park in mid-May and two juveniles were seen with the adults on 2 July; at least one adult remained until the year end (YYL,YYT). The adults showed obvious cage damage and, as might be expected given the locality, were almost certainly escapes. These records will not be added to the total for this species.

- 712.7 Ruddy Sparrow** *Passer rutilans*
A male was present at Shuen Wan landfill on 24 September (RWL,GJC,PJL), and a female was there on 3 October (RWL). A bird showing feather damage was at Ho Chung during 7-12 February (MH), two males were in Kowloon Park on 30 March (DAD) and a tame female was near Tai O, Lantau, on 29 December (PJH). Note that the correct number for this species is as stated here.

- 715 Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
An adult was at Mui Wo on 17 November (PJH). This is the fifth record for Hong Kong, and the first since 5 January 1985.

CATEGORY E

Species for which all published records are suspected of being birds that have escaped or been released from captivity

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 800.5 Wood Duck | <i>Aix sponsa</i> |
| 801.5 Red Lory | <i>Eos bornea</i> |
| 805 Alexandrine Parakeet | <i>Psittacula eupatria</i> |
| 808 Budgerigar | <i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i> |
| 812.5 Blue-winged Leafbird | <i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i> |
| 813 Pied Bushchat | <i>Saxicola caprata</i> |
| 814.15 Chestnut-capped Babbler ** | <i>Timalia pileata</i> |
| 814.7 Red-winged Laughing Thrush | <i>Garrulax formosus</i> |
| 816 Silver-eared Mesia | <i>Leiothrix argentauris</i> |
| 816.01 Blue-winged Minla | <i>Minla cyanoptera</i> |
| 816.17 Blue-faced Honeyeater * | <i>Entomyzon cyanotis</i> |
| 816.18 Black-hooded Oriole* | <i>Oriolus xanthornus</i> |
| 816.2 Green Jay | <i>Cyanocorax yncas</i> |
| 817 House Crow | <i>Corvus splendens</i> |
| 821 White-vented Mynah | <i>Acridotheres javanicus</i> |
| 822 Indian Grackle | <i>Gracula religiosa</i> |
| 822.5 House Sparrow * | <i>Passer domesticus</i> |
| 824 Baya Weaver | <i>Ploceus philippinus</i> |
| 826 Red Bishop | <i>Euplectes orix</i> |
| 830 Java Sparrow | <i>Padda oryzivora</i> |
| 831 Yellow-fronted Canary | <i>Serinus mozambicus</i> |

Species marked * were first recorded in 1994; that marked ** in 1993.

Silver-eared Mesia is now well-established as a breeding species at Tai Po Kau, Shing Mun and Kowloon Hills Catchwater. Elsewhere one was at Chai Wan on 25 June and 10 were seen near Hong Kong University on 23 December. Blue-winged Minla is now regularly recorded in the central New Territories at the same sites as Silver-eared Mesia and up to three juveniles were seen soliciting food in Tai Po Kau in September. Continued records of Red-winged Laughingthrush on Tai Mo Shan suggest that breeding may occur there.

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

- Christmas Island Frigatebird** *Fregata andrewsi* two, Mong Tseng, 17 May (accepted as Frigatebird sp. *Fregata* sp.)
Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* Cape D'Aguilar, 13 April (accepted as Shearwater sp. *Puffinus* sp.)
Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* Mai Po, 17 September
Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis* Ho Sheung Heung, 10 May; Tin Shui Wai, 21 August
Lesser Tree Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* Tin Shui Wai, 19 April; Long Valley, 25 July

Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides* Kowloon Reservoir, 20 February
Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* near Sha Tin, 21 February
Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Sha Tau Kok, 2 October; one or two, Mai Po, 22 October
Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* male, Sha Tsui Tan, Lantau, 16 January
Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* two, Island House, 12 April; one female, Luk Keng, 17 September; one male, Mui Wo, 16 October (all accepted as sp.). Ho Pui, 13 March.
Besra *Accipiter virgatus* Fan Shan Au, Lantau, 31 July
Northern Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* Tsim Bei Tsui, 25 March
Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* Cheung Sha Wan, Lantau, 11 December
Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* Nam Chung, 17 September
Sooty Crake *Porzana tabuensis* Tin Shui Wai, 19 April
Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* Tin Shui Wai, 6 May
Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus* first-winter, Mai Po, 19 March
Common Gull *Larus canus* first-winter, Mai Po, 5 March
Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus* Victoria Harbour, 21 March
Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* five, Mirs Bay, 18 April; four, Mirs Bay, 24 April
White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus* Mai Po, 26 February
Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus* Kam Tin, 28 February
Brown Hawk Owl *Ninox scutulata* Mount Nicholson, 15 April
Woodpecker sp. Shing Mun, 4 December
Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus* Tate's Pass, 2 October
Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyris ruficeps* Mount Austin, 4 December
Grey-headed Parrotbill *Paradoxornis gularis* six, Hong Kong University, 20 December
Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia*, Tai Po Kau, 30 August
Ruddy Sparrow *Passer rutilans* Sai Wan Ho, 3 March
Red-tailed Laughingthrush *Garrulax milnei* two, Tai Mo Shan, 30 July
Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea* ZBG, 12 March
Mountain Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes* Tai Mo Shan, 26 June
Russet Bush Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmii* two, Yim Tso Ha, 17 November
Spotted Bush Warbler *Bradypterus thoracicus* Mount Austin, 20 October
Bright-capped Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* Tan Shan Valley, 11 December
Styan's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella pleskei* Kam Tin, 28 February; Nam Sang Wai, 27 January, 21 February, 8 March, 6 April (two), 14 April; Tsim Bei Tsui, 9 April, 19 April
Pale-legged Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus tenellipes* 10 December, Lion Rock Country Park
Two-barred Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* Lam Tsuen, 26 February; Ping Chau, 1 April
Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus humei* Sha Tin Pass, 27 December
Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* Mount Austin, 30 October
Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica* Tai Po Kau, 1 April
Bull-headed Shrike *Lanius bucephalus* Long Valley, 28 December
Siskin *Carduelis spinus* Stonecutters, 19 March
Japanese Grosbeak *Coccothraustes personatus* five, Kam Tin, 8 October 1985:
Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* subadult male, Mai Po, 5 January

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WINTER WATERFOWL COUNTS 1993-94

G.J. Carey

For the second winter in succession, in addition to the annual coordinated count of wintering waterfowl held in January, coordinated mid-monthly counts during November to March were also carried out. The dates of these counts were 14 November, 12 December, 16 January, 13 February and 13 March. Although there were omissions in coverage, it was more complete than that obtained last winter, and this seems to be reflected in the totals achieved. In accordance with guidelines from Asian Wetland Bureau and the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau other counts, if higher, were included for the one week period either side of the coordinated count date. It should be noted that this means the single count must be higher than that achieved by the coordinated count for it to be included.

The results of the five counts are summarised in Table 1. The January count is provided in full in Table 2 to allow comparison with previous years. Full details of all counts can be obtained from the count coordinator.

Table 1. Winter 1993-94 Waterfowl Count totals by group and location

group	location	Nov ¹	Dec ¹	Jan	Feb	Mar ¹
Cormorants	DB	1508	4759	3546	4638	4938
	SI/SW	0	0	0	0	0
Ardeids	DB	4179	3134	4632	2037	2201
	SI/SW	460	419	811	987	1106
Duck and Grebes	DB	8377	14,806	21,172	17,019	7337
	SI/SW	0	6	14	0	0
Rails, Coot	DB	138	1147	882	460	677
	SI/SW	0	6	15	0	1
Waders	DB	5859	9931	11,653	8714	10,605
	SI/SW	0	23	6	4	0
Gulls, terns	DB	4842	12,441	17,807	15,502	10,704
	SI/SW	0	500	376	620	0
Total	DB	24,903	46,218	59,692	48,370	36,462
	SI/SW	460	954	1222	1611	1107

1: Shenzhen River areas not counted.

DB: Deep Bay; SI: Starling Inlet; SW: Shuen Wan

During the January count in the Deep Bay area a total of 59,692 birds of 74 species was recorded. This represents a new high and is 10,539, or 21.4%, higher than the previous record of 49,153 attained last year. In addition, 853 birds of 12 species were recorded at Shuen Wan, and 369 birds of 12 species were recorded at Starling Inlet.

Hong Kong Bird Report 1994: 92-97, Dec. 1995

One of the reasons for this apparent increase is the very high number of both ducks and waders. Ducks peaked well above previous years' counts, with Pintail and Shoveler, which make up approximately 65% of duck numbers, both reaching new highs of 6642 and 6913 respectively. In addition, Shelduck numbers continued their recovery from the relatively low numbers recorded during 1990-92 and were only 27% below the average recorded in the previous eight years. Wigeon also reached a new high of 1627, about 20% higher than the previous highest.

Wader numbers were significantly higher than the previous highest total of 9182. Grey Plover and Black-tailed Godwit both reached new winter maxima, Avocet numbers were especially high, and notable totals for Eurasian Curlew and *tringas* were recorded. The Night Heron flock was found this year and, at a new high for the species of 2200, this contributed significantly to the total.

Numbers of Cormorants continued at the high levels of the previous two winters as Deep Bay establishes itself as one of the most important wintering sites for this species in the whole of Asia (c.f. Perennou *et al.* 1994). Dalmatian Pelicans consolidated their recent slight increase, countering the long-term decline in numbers apparent since the 1970s. The total of 17,412 Black-headed Gulls was much in line with those of the past eight years.

If the highest Deep Bay counts in the winter period proper, defined as December to February, for each species are added together, the total is 66,346 birds of 81 species, which is about 11% higher than the Deep Bay count of January. This is, perhaps, a more accurate reflection of the numbers of birds dependant on the bay for at least part of the winter.

Raptor species were again counted and the following January totals were obtained: Black Kite – 35; Marsh Harrier – 2; Common Buzzard – 2; Spotted Eagle – 6; Imperial Eagle – 5; Osprey – 14; Peregrine – 1; White-bellied Sea Eagle – 1.

The cooperation of the staff at Fu Tian Nature Reserve and WWF HK is gratefully acknowledged. The following observers participated in the counts: G.J. Carey (coordinator), J.A. Hackett, R.W. Lewthwaite, Y.J. Wang, M.L. Chalmers, P.J. Leader, M. Wall, M.&E. Leven, W.&A. Young, J. Holmes, J.R.S. Edge, I. Tyzzer, M. Kilburn, D.A. Diskin, M. Hale, M. Turnbull, C.Y. Lam, H.F. Cheung, W.K. Li, M.M. Chan, L. Young, C.A. Viney, P. Garland, J. Bryant, V.B. Picken, M.D. Williams, R.D.E. Stott. I am very grateful to all who took part.

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Table 2. Summary of Waterfowl Count January 1994

Species	Shuen Wan	Starling Inlet	Ma Tso Lung/ Lo Wu	Fu Tian	Mai Po	Deep Bay*	Nim Wan /LFS	Tin Shui Wai	Lok Ma Chau	Total
Little Grebe		2	5	7	58	23		2		97
Great Crested Grebe				160		81				241
Cormorant					3546					3546
Dalmatian Pelican						18				18
Bittern					1					1
Yellow Bittern					3					3
Chestnut Bittern					1					1
Night Heron	2	7			2200					2209
Little Green Heron					1					1
Chinese Pond Heron	39	2	32	68	41	20	18	18	2	240
Cattle Egret		9	8		1	26		8		52
Little Egret	413	15	17	113	80	452	157	20		1267
Intermediate Egret						2		4		6
Great Egret	33	218	6	110	89	207	1			664
Grey Heron	18	55	108	16	299	410	5	5		916
Purple Heron				1	2					3
Oriental White Stork						4				4
White Ibis					2					2
European Spoonbill					2					2
Black-faced Spoonbill				26	28					54
Ruddy Shelduck					1					1
Shelduck						1400				1400
Wigeon			6	7	332	1282				1627

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Table 2 (cont.). Summary of Waterfowl Count January 1994

Species	Shuen Wan	Starling Inlet	Ma Tso Lung/ Lo Wu	Fu Tian	Mai Po	Deep Bay*	Nim Wan /LFS	Tin Shui Wai	Lok Ma Chau	Total
Falcated Teal					72					72
Gadwall					11					11
Baikals Teal					1					1
Teal	11		53	1	282	1316				1663
Mallard					12	14				26
Yellow-nib Duck				10	114	148				272
Pintail			3	4990	86	1563				6642
Garganey					5					5
Shoveler				200	13	6700				6913
Pochard					2					2
Baer's Pochard					1					1
Tufted Duck		1			20					21
Red-breasted Merganser				1						1
Duck sp.						2190				2190
Banded Rail						3				3
Ruddy Crake								1		1
White-breasted Waterhen	1	2			3	4	2	1	3	16
Moorhen	1	6	8		47	8			45	115
Coot	5		23	101	633					762
Black-winged Stilt					80					80
Avocet						770				770
Little Ringed Plover			29	63		53	65	40		250
Kentish Plover						3180				3180
Lesser Sand Plover						106				106

Table 2 (cont.). Summary of Waterfowl Count January 1994

Species	Shuen Wan	Starling Inlet	Ma Tso Lung/Lo Wu	Fu Tian	Mai Po	Deep Bay*	Nim Wan /LFS	Tin Shui Wai	Lok Ma Chau	Total
Asiatic Golden Plover						220				220
Grey Plover						538				538
Grey-headed Lapwing						2				2
Great Knot						13				13
Red Knot						6				6
Red-necked Stint						2				2
Temminck's Stint				66		1	1			68
Long-toed Stint							44			44
Dunlin						2820				2820
Broad-billed Sandpiper						2				2
Common Snipe			4	3	4	1		6	105	123
Pintail Snipe								2	7	9
Swinhoe's Snipe									2	2
Black-tailed Godwit					255					255
Bar-tailed Godwit						1				1
Curlew						1005				1005
Spotted Redshank						819				819
Redshank				105	13	24				142
Marsh Sandpiper						668				668
Greenshank						386				386
Green Sandpiper	1		7	7	3		3	4	4	29
Wood Sandpiper			16		7		25	25	7	80
Common Sandpiper	3	2	11	6	4	5	3	4		38
Wader sp.							1			1

Table 2 (cont.). Summary of Waterfowl Count January 1994

Species	Shuen Wan	Starling Inlet	Ma Tso Lung/Lo Wu	Fu Tian	Mai Po	Deep Bay*	Nim Wan /LFS	Tin Shui Wai	Lok Ma Chau	Total
Saunders' Gull						102				102
Black-headed Gull	326	50	710	560		15,000	1142			17,788
Black-tailed Gull						2				2
Herring Gull						290				290
Caspian Tern						1				1
TOTAL	853	369	1046	6621	8355	41,888	1467	140	175	61,188

* Deep Bay comprised that area of the bay under Hong Kong jurisdiction outside the border fence, plus the fish pond area inside the fence at Tsim Bei Tsui.

由九三年十一月至九四年三月的整個冬季之內，每箇月中旬，在後海灣都安排了水禽調查。表一是這五次調查結果的簡介。為方便和過去幾年的作比較，一月份的統計結果詳列於表二。在這個一月，在後海灣共錄得 74 個品種，合共 59,692 隻，比去年的 49,153 多出 10,539 隻 (約21.4%)，又再刷新紀錄。數目大增，主要是因為鴨類和涉禽的數目都非常之多。鸕鶿數目之多，足以証明後海灣是在整個亞洲中，鸕鶿渡冬的最重要地區之一。

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REPORT ON BIRD RINGING IN HONG KONG IN 1994

David S. Melville

A total of 2678 birds of 129 species was ringed in 1994. Species totals are provided in Table 1, together with those from previous years. The most recent report on bird ringing in the Territory is given by Melville (1994). Ringing activities continued to be concentrated at the WWF Hong Kong Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve and the University of Hong Kong Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre (KARC), near Shek Kong.

The totals were lower than in 1993 due to a reduction in ringing activity at Mai Po, as well as smaller than usual numbers of buntings in spring, and bulbuls and White-eyes in the autumn at Mai Po. Numbers of both bulbuls and White-eyes however, were usual at KARC.

Three Yellow-streaked Warblers were trapped which, together with one sight record, comprise the first records of this species for the Territory (Leader 1995).

Following the ringing of a Slaty-legged Crake which had been picked up in urban Kowloon in 1993, another was ringed in similar circumstances having been picked up at night outside the Peninsula Hotel, Tsim Sha Tsui, on 27 April.

Following an increasing number of summer sightings of Hobby in the Territory (Leven *et al.* 1994), breeding was confirmed in 1994 (Walthew 1995). This may explain two juveniles caught at Long Valley on 10 September, apparently recently-fledged.

There were four overseas movements of ringed birds during the year, all of which were Curlew Sandpipers (Table 2). These bring to 20 the total number of movements of this species between Hong Kong and Australia. Leg flagging of waders in Australia continues to throw further light on shorebird migration, and there were some 33 sightings of colour-flagged shorebirds during the year (Table 3). Also during the year information on shorebird migration through Hong Kong resulting from ringing activities was used in the environmental impact assessment study for the Shenzhen River Regulation Project which may affect the Inner Deep Bay area.

A selection of the more interesting between-season recaptures of known migrants is given in Table 4. Longevity records for a variety of 'resident' species are given in Table 5. For a number of species our studies appear to be the first to determine longevity (c.f. McClure 1984).

I wish to thank the Ringing Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology for permission to use their rings in Hong Kong. Trapping is carried out under permits issued by the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, and ringing at KARC is conducted with the kind permission of the University

of Hong Kong. I am grateful to fellow ringers Geoff Carey, David Carthy, Cheung Ho Fai, Paul Leader, Mike Leven and Fox Wong. Many others assisted with ringing during the course of the year and I thank them all, especially Liz Leven, Vicky Melville and Lew Young. A great debt of gratitude is owed to Mike and Liz Leven for computerising the ringing records. Paul Leader kindly collated the leg flag records.

Bird ringing in Hong Kong is a WWF Hong Kong project made possible through the generous sponsorship of Exxon Energy Limited. We are most grateful for their continuing support.



EXXON ENERGY LIMITED

Table 2. Overseas movements of ringed birds during 1994

Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>			
NV58694	ringed :	27 August 1991, Mai Po, Hong Kong	
	controlled :	5 March 1994, Broome, W. Australia	
	distance :	4591 km	
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>			
NV69703	ringed :	4 May 1993, Mai Po, Hong Kong	
	controlled :	13 April 1994, Port Hedland, Western Australia	
	distance :	4790 km	
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>			
041-46352	ringed :	4 April 1988, Broome, W. Australia	
	controlled:	23 April 1994, Mai Po, Hong Kong	
	distance :	4582 km	
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>			
041-82923	ringed :	29 December 1993, Werribee, Victoria, Australia	
	controlled :	23 April 1994, Mai Po, Hong Kong	
	distance :	7447 km	

Table 3. Sightings during 1994 of waders marked in Australia with leg flags

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii*
yellow: 9 April (1), 11 April (1), 7 May (1)

Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus*
orange: 13 May (1)

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*
yellow: 27 March (1), 31 March (1-3)

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*
orange: 14 April (1), 7 May (1)*, 13 May (1), 15 May (1), 17 May (1)
red:** 6 May (1)*, 7 May (1)*

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
yellow: 9 April (2), 23 April (2), 26 April (1), 30 April (1)
red**:
3 April (1), 22 April (1), 29 April (1-2), 30 April (1), 21 August (1)
orange: 1 April (1), 15 April (1), 17 April (1), 23 April (1), 26 April (2), 29 April (2), 2 May (2)

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*
yellow: 27 April (1), 18 September (1)

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
orange: 13-17 May (1)

All birds seen at Mai Po except those marked *, which were recorded at Tsim Bei Tsui

** there have been a number of sightings of birds reported to be carrying 'red' flags. No birds have been marked with red flags in Australia and none are known to have been so marked elsewhere on the flyway. Currently, all records of 'red' flags are being treated as orange by the Australasian Wader Studies Group (M. Barter *in litt.*)

Birds marked with yellow flags originate from northwest Australia, those with orange (red) flags originate from Victoria.

Table 4. Selected recaptures of known migrants in 1993*

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*
VK09235 ringed : 8 October 1992
recaptured : 14 March 1993, 26 November 1994

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
F353797 ringed : 14 November 1990
recaptured : 12 March 1994 (40 months, c.f. 25 months)

Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*
Three birds were recaptured during the year, the oldest a regular wintering bird at KARC that has now been recaptured 11 times, the latest noted below:
VH60964 ringed : 11 November 1990
recaptured : 8 January 1994 (38 months, c.f. 25 months)

Grey-backed Thrush *Turdus hortulorum*

Three birds were recaptured (two at Mai Po, one at KARC), the oldest being:

RS13172 ringed : 7 December 1991
recaptured : 11 January, 1 February 1992; 13 February, 6 March 1993; 26 March 1994 (27 months, c.f. 13 months)

Chinese Bush Warbler *Cettia diphone*

There were seven recaptures, of which the oldest was a regular wintering bird at KARC that has now been recaptured 16 times, most recently as noted below:

F145103 ringed : 27 January 1990
recaptured : 21 December 1994 (59 months, c.f. 31 months)

Mountain Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes*

OS8857 ringed : 28 November 1992
recaptured : 26 February 1994, KARC (15 months, c.f. 12 months)

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

VJ79632 ringed : 19 September 1993
recaptured : 17 September 1994. This bird was aged as a juvenile when first ringed - the similarity of capture dates is noteworthy.

VK09432 ringed : 27 February 1993
recaptured : 27 March, 4 April, 25 April 1993; 29 October 1994. When first ringed the bird was apparently overwintering at Mai Po.

Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

There were five recaptures, all at KARC, the oldest three being:

OS8818 ringed : 22 November 1992
recaptured : 1 January, 22 January 1994
3F2574 ringed : 1 January 1992
recaptured : 1 January, 22 January 1994
3F2576 ringed : 18 January 1992
recaptured : 22 January 1994

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

4V4369 ringed : 24 December 1989
recaptured : 12 January 1991, 4 April 1993, 22 January 1994

This must be a near longevity record for this species (no published data appear to exist c.f. McClure 1984, Cramp 1992).

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

There were 17 recaptures at Mai Po and at KARC, the oldest of which was:

4V4329 ringed : 17 December 1989
recaptured : 7 April 1994. This is the most recent of 13 occasions when this bird has been recaptured.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

There were 12 recaptures of which the oldest was:

E051494 ringed : 26 January 1990
 recaptured : 25 November 1990, 27 January 1991, 18 January 1992, 9 December 1994, KARC. (60 months, c.f. 61 months)

* All records refer to Mai Po unless otherwise indicated. The interval between recaptures is given, compared with details of the longest surviving bird recorded in East/Southeast Asia during the MAPS programme (McClure 1984).

Table 5. Longevity records for some 'resident' Hong Kong birds**Magpie Robin** *Copsychus saularis*

RS43837 ringed : 1 November 1992
 recaptured : 20 November 1994 (25 months, c.f. 96 months)

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*

6N3543 ringed : 26 December 1987
 recaptured : 26 November 1994 (83 months, c.f. 12 months)

Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis*

ER25263 ringed : 6 December 1992
 recaptured : 30 October 1994 (22 months)

Hwamei *Garrulax canorus*

RA05332 ringed : 11 November 1989
 recaptured : 5 November 1994 (60 months)

Black-faced Laughingthrush *Garrulax perspicillatus*

ER12128 ringed : 30 March 1991
 recaptured : 4 April 1994 (37 months)

Silver-eared Mesia *Leiothrix argentea*

VK09227 ringed : 4 October 1992
 recaptured : 13 November 1994 (25 months, c.f. 67 months)

Great Tit *Parus major*

H501584 ringed : 5 December 1992
 recaptured : 16 October 1994, KARC (22 months, c.f. 38 months)

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus*

7F0878 ringed : 23 November 1991
 recaptured : 22 January 1994 (26 months)

* This table only includes those species not noted in previous reports or those where previous longevity records have been exceeded. Hong Kong data are compared with the longest surviving bird recorded in East/Southeast Asia during MAPS programme (McClure 1984).

Table 1. Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1994.

Species	MAPS*	'75-'93	1994	total
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		1		1
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		1		1
Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>		1		1
Yellow Bittern <i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>	15	76	3	94
Schrenck's Bittern <i>Ixobrychus eurhyhmus</i>		2		2
Chestnut Bittern <i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	1	3		4
Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		6		6
Little Green Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>		9		9
Chinese Pond Heron <i>Ardeola bacchus</i>		91	5	96
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		2		2
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>		6		6
Falcated Teal <i>Anas falcata</i>		1		1
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>		36		36
Yellow-nib Duck <i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>		3		3
Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>		1		1
Garganey <i>Anas querquedula</i>		8		8
Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>		1		1
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>		40		40
Japanese Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter gularis</i>	1	21	3	25
Besra <i>Accipiter virgatus</i>		11	5	16
Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>		1		1
Chinese Goshawk <i>Accipiter soloensis</i>		1		1
Imperial Eagle <i>Aquila heliaca</i>	1			1
Bonelli's Eagle <i>Hieraetus fasciatus</i>		1		1
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	4	2		6
Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>			2	2
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>		1		1
Chinese Francolin <i>Francolinus pintadeanus</i>	7			7
Japanese Quail <i>Coturnix japonica</i>	1		1	2
Yellow-legged Button Quail <i>Turnix tanki</i>	1	1		2
Barred Button Quail <i>Turnix suscitator</i>	1	1	1	3
Slaty-legged Crake <i>Rallus eurizonoides</i>		1	1	2
Banded Rail <i>Rallus striatus</i>		1		1
Baillon's Crake <i>Porzana pusilla</i>	1			1
White-bell. Waterhen <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	1	22		23
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		3	4	7
Watercock <i>Gallix cinerea</i>			1	1
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>		5		5
Painted Snipe <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>		5	5	10
Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		1		1
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		10		10
Oriental Pratincole <i>Glareola maldivarum</i>		3		3
Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>		6	3	9

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1994.

Species	MAPS*	'75-'93	1994	total
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>		45		45
Lesser Sand Plover <i>Charadrius mongolus</i>		65	3	68
Greater Sand Plover <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>		258	10	268
Asiatic Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis fulva</i>		109	2	111
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		82	2	84
Great Knot <i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>		93	2	95
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>		105		105
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>		1		1
Red-necked Stint <i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	6	201	5	212
Temminck's Stint <i>Calidris temminckii</i>		1		1
Long-toed Stint <i>Calidris subminuta</i>		31		31
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper <i>Calidris acuminata</i>		44	2	46
Pectoral Sandpiper <i>Calidris melanotos</i>		1		1
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1	950	146	1097
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>		373	19	392
Spoon-billed Sand. <i>Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus</i>		3		3
Broad-billed Sandpiper <i>Limicola falcinellus</i>		106	11	117
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		3		3
Fantail Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	1	116	3	120
Pintail Snipe <i>Gallinago stenura</i>		18	3	21
Swinhoe's Snipe <i>Gallinago megala</i>		13		13
Asiatic Dowitcher <i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>		23	4	27
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>		49	14	63
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>		78	4	82
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		442	12	454
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>		29		29
Australian Curlew <i>N. madagascariensis</i>		2		2
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>		18		18
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>		1438	81	1519
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>		100	12	112
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>		60	4	64
Nordmann's Greenshank <i>Tringa guttifer</i>		1	1	2
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>		1		1
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>		198	6	204
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>		547	29	576
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	4	145		149
Grey-rumped Sandpiper <i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>		69	2	71
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>		32	4	36
Grey Phalarope <i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>		1		1
Red-necked Phalarope <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>		11	1	12
Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ridibundus</i>			1	1
Black-naped Tern <i>Sterna sumatrana</i>		11		11
Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougalii</i>		6		6
Rufous Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>		41	5	46
Spotted Dove <i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	2	203	9	214

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1994.

Species	MAPS*	'75-'93	1994	total
Emerald Dove <i>Chalcophaps indica</i>		13	3	16
Rose-ringed Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i>	1			1
Budgerigar <i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>		4		4
Red-winged Cuckoo <i>Cacomantis coromandelianus</i>		3		3
Plaintive Cuckoo <i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>		6	4	10
Oriental Cuckoo <i>Cuculus saturatus</i>		2		2
Koel <i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>		6	4	10
Greater Coucal <i>Centropus sinensis</i>		12		12
Lesser Coucal <i>Centropus benghalensis</i>	2	3		5
Collared Scops Owl <i>Otus bakkamoena</i>		1		1
Oriental Scops Owl <i>Otus (scops) sunia</i>	2	1		3
Barred Owlet <i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>		2		2
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	2	1		3
Pacific Swift <i>Apus pacificus</i>		18		18
House Swift <i>Apus affinis</i>		47		47
White-breasted Kingfisher <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	24	62	5	91
Black-capped Kingfisher <i>Halcyon pileata</i>	5	37	9	51
Common Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	104	942	42	1088
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>		5		5
Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>		1		1
Great Barbet <i>Megalaima virens</i>		1	1	2
Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	21	29	3	53
Chinese Pitta <i>Pitta nympha</i>		1		1
Oriental Skylark <i>Alauda gulula</i>		3		3
Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	1			1
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	11	218	52	281
Asian House Martin <i>Delichon dasypus</i>		26		26
Richard's Pipit <i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	13	8	1	22
Olive-backed Pipit <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	86	63	11	160
Pechora Pipit <i>Anthus gustavi</i>		3		3
Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>		1		1
Forest Wagtail <i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>		2		2
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>		74		74
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	6	5		11
White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	18	494	1	513
Ashy Minivet <i>Pericrocotus divaricatus</i>		2		2
Collared Finchbill <i>Spizixos semitorques</i>		2		2
Crested Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	80	1358	316	1754
Chinese Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>	895	2517	272	3684
Brown-breasted Bulbul <i>P. xanthorrhous</i>		1		1
Red-vented Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus aurigaster</i>	95	20	5	120
Chestnut Bulbul <i>Hypsipetes castanonotus</i>	2			2
Black Bulbul <i>H. madagascariensis</i>	1			1
White-tailed Robin <i>Cinclidium leucurum</i>		1		1
Red-tailed Robin <i>Luscinia sibilans</i>	6	54	21	81

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1994.

Species	MAPS*	'75-'93	1994	total
Rubythroat <i>Luscinia calliope</i>	95	214	28	337
Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>	9	32	1	42
Siberian Blue Robin <i>Luscinia cyane</i>		6	1	7
Red-flanked Bluetail <i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	30	252	69	351
Daurian Redstart <i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>	16	16	1	33
Magpie Robin <i>Copsychus saularis</i>	2	70	14	86
Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	48	89	2	139
Grey Bushchat <i>Saxicola ferrea</i>	1	1	1	3
Pied Bushchat <i>Saxicola caprata</i>		1		1
White-throated Rock Thrush <i>Monticola gularis</i>		1		1
Violet Whistling Thrush <i>Myiophonus caeruleus</i>	11	16	2	29
Orange-headed Ground Thrush <i>Zoothera citrina</i>			1	1
Siberian Thrush <i>Zoothera sibirica</i>		2	1	3
White's Thrush <i>Zoothera dauma</i>	2	3	4	9
Grey Thrush <i>Turdus cardis</i>	53	39	4	96
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	1	10		11
Brown Thrush <i>Turdus chrysolaus</i>	1	1		2
Grey-backed Thrush <i>Turdus hortulorum</i>	209	202	39	450
Pale Thrush <i>Turdus pallidus</i>	15	3	3	21
Eye-browed Thrush <i>Turdus obscurus</i>		17	7	24
Dusky Thrush <i>Turdus naumanni</i>	3			3
Short-tailed Bush Warbler <i>Cettia squameiceps</i>	1	17	7	25
Chinese Bush Warbler <i>Cettia diphone</i>	19	340	44	403
Mountain Bush Warbler <i>Cettia fortipes</i>		22	3	25
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler <i>C. acanthizoides</i>		2		2
Pale-footed Bush Warbler <i>Cettia pallidipes</i>		4	2	6
Russet Bush Warbler <i>Bradypterus seebohmii</i>		4	1	5
Brown Bush Warbler <i>Bradypterus luteoventris</i>		1	1	2
Fantail Warbler <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		25	1	26
Bright-capped Cisticola <i>Cisticola exilis</i>		5		5
Plain Prinia <i>Prinia inornata</i>	12	680	33	725
Yellow-bellied Prinia <i>Prinia flaviventris</i>	39	1209	67	1315
Pallas's Grasshopper Warb. <i>Locustella certhiola</i>	5	24	19	48
Middendorff's Grasshopper Warb. <i>L. ochotensis</i>		1		1
Styan's Grasshopper Warbler <i>L. pleskei</i>	8	19	2	29
Lanceolated Warbler <i>Locustella lanceolata</i>		6		6
Black-browed Reed W. <i>Acrocephalus bistrigiceps</i>	21	399	11	431
Blunt-winged Warbler <i>A. concinens</i>		1		1
Great Reed Warbler <i>A. arundinaceus</i>	251	1978	70	2299
Paddyfield Warbler <i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>		1		1
Blyth's Reed Warbler <i>A. dumetorum</i>		4		4
Thick-billed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus aedon</i>		15		15
Yellow-eyed Flycat. Warbler <i>Seicercus burkii</i>		4	1	5
Large Grass Warbler <i>Graminicola bengalensis</i>		3		3
Long-tailed Tailorbird <i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	11	225	39	275

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1994.

Species	MAPS*	'75-'93	1994	total
Blyth's Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus reguloides</i>		1		1
Eastern Crowned Warbler <i>P. coronatus</i>		12		12
Pale-legged Leaf Warbler <i>P. tenellipes</i>		49	21	70
Arctic Warbler <i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	12	166	43	221
Pallas's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	5	72	25	102
Yellow-browed Warbler <i>P. inornatus</i>	19	204	62	285
Radde's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>		9	2	11
Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	104	1369	109	1582
Yellow-streaked Warbler <i>P. armandii</i>			3	3
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		3		3
Two-barred Greenish Warbler <i>P. plumbeitarsus</i>		6	3	9
Hainan Blue Flycatcher <i>Cyornis hainana</i>		2		2
Blue and White Flycat. <i>Cyanoptila cyanomelana</i>		7	1	8
Grey-streaked Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa griseisticta</i>		2		2
Brown Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa latirostris</i>	6	35	4	45
Red-breasted Flycatcher <i>Ficedula parva</i>	1	16		17
Mugimaki Flycatcher <i>Ficedula mugimaki</i>		51	12	63
Yellow-rumped Flycatcher <i>F. zanthopygia</i>	2	66	17	85
Narcissus Flycatcher <i>Ficedula narcissina</i>		1		1
Grey-headed Flycatcher <i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	1			1
Asian Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>		3		3
Japanese Paradise Flycatcher <i>T. atrocaudata</i>		4	2	6
Black-naped Monarch <i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	1	6		7
Rufous-capped Babbler <i>Stachyris ruficeps</i>		1		1
Greater Necklaced L'Thrush <i>Garrulax pectoralis</i>		26	5	31
Black-throated Laughing Thrush <i>G. chinensis</i>	2			2
Hwamei <i>Garrulax canorus</i>	7	97	19	123
Black-faced Laughing Thrush <i>G. perspicillatus</i>	18	19	4	41
Red-winged Laughing Thrush <i>G. formosus</i>		1		1
Pekin Robin <i>Leiothrix lutea</i>	9	114	15	138
Silver-eared Mesia <i>Leiothrix argentauris</i>		50	20	70
Vinous-thr. Parrotbill <i>Paradoxornis webbiana</i>		1		1
Black-headed Sibia <i>Heterophasia melanoleuca</i>		1		1
Red-headed Tit <i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>		1		1
Yellow-cheeked Tit <i>Parus spilonotus</i>		1		1
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	34	82	12	128
Penduline Tit <i>Remiz pendulinus</i>		172	30	202
Fork-tailed Sunbird <i>Aethopyga christinae</i>	1	40	11	52
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker <i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>		10	3	13
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker <i>D. cruentatum</i>		1	4	5
Chest-flank White-eye <i>Zosterops erythropleura</i>		15	1	16
White-eye <i>Zosterops japonica</i>	217	4746	444	5407
Black-naped Oriole <i>Oriolus chinensis</i>		2		2
Tiger Shrike <i>Lanius tigrinus</i>		1	1	2
(Bull-headed Shrike <i>Lanius bucephalus</i> ***)	1			1

Table 1 (cont.). Birds ringed in Hong Kong 1966-1994.

Species	MAPS*	'75-'93	1994	total
Brown Shrike <i>Lanius cristatus</i>	6	23	2	31
Rufous-backed Shrike <i>Lanius schach</i>	39	49	4	92
Black Drongo <i>Dicrurus macrocerus</i>		7		7
Hair-crested Drongo <i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>	1	5	1	7
Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		1		1
Blue Magpie <i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>	4	6	1	11
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	2	2		4
Silky Starling <i>Sturnus sericeus</i>		20	13	33
Purple-backed Starling <i>Sturnus sturninus</i>		1		1
Chinese Starling <i>Sturnus sinensis</i>	2	13		15
Grey Starling <i>Sturnus cineraceus</i>			1	1
Black-necked Starling <i>Sturnus nigricollis</i>		22		22
Crested Mynah <i>Acridotheres cristatellus</i>	2	14	2	18
White-vented Mynah <i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>		2		2
Ruddy Sparrow <i>Passer rutilans</i>		2		2
Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	92	552	7	651
Baya Weaver <i>Ploceus philippinus</i>		7	1	8
White-backed Munia <i>Lonchura striata</i>		38	6	44
Spotted Munia <i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	34	697	20	751
Chestnut Munia <i>Lonchura malacca</i>	1	5		6
White-headed Munia <i>Lonchura maja</i>		1		1
Red Avadavat <i>Amandava amandava</i>	5	9		14
Yellow-fronted Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i>		9		9
Chinese Greenfinch <i>Carduelis sinica</i>	1			1
Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i>		1		1
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		1		1
Common Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	12	9		21
Black-tailed Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes migratorius</i>	9			9
Black-faced Bunting <i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>	219	1050	47	1316
Japanese Yellow Bunting <i>Emberiza sulphurata</i>		6		6
Grey-headed Bunting <i>Emberiza fucata</i>	1	4		5
Yellow-browed Bunting <i>Emberiza chrysophrys</i>		2		2
Tristram's Bunting <i>Emberiza tristrami</i>	4	33	10	47
Little Bunting <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	2	219	14	235
Chestnut Bunting <i>Emberiza rutila</i>		122	14	136
Yellow-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza aureola</i>	28	26	14	56
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		2	2	2
Pallas's Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza pallasi</i>		1		1
Japanese Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza yessoensis</i>		1		1
Crested Bunting <i>Melophus lathamii</i>		2		2
Total	3,190	28,950	2,678	34,818

N.b. The relevant details of a small number of records of species trapped at KARC and requiring descriptions to be assessed by the Records Committee have yet to be submitted.

1994 年內，被環志的雀鳥有 129 種，合共 2,678 隻。表一列舉了在過去幾年中，環志了的各個品種的總數。由於在米埔的環志活動減少了，加上，春天的鷓鴣及秋天的鵲類和暗綠繡眼鳥，都較正常為少，引致九四年的總數有所下降。特別的紀錄有：網獲的三隻棕眉柳鶯 *Phylloscopus armandii* 與及另一隻觀察到的，是這個品種在香港的首輪紀錄。九月十日，在松柏望捉到的兩隻燕隼雛鳥，顯然都是羽翼初長的。年中共有四次涉及在海外環志的雀鳥，都是彎咀濱鵲。表三是帶顏色旗號的水邊鳥類的觀察紀錄；表四是季節間再度捕獲的雀鳥的情況；而表五則顯示一些留鳥前後兩次落網相距的時間。

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LONG-BILLED PLOVER: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

G.J. Carey

On the morning of 20 February 1994 Paul Aston and Elme Balasan were walking along the northern side of the river at Kam Tin when, after flushing several Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius*, they disturbed a noticeably larger *Charadrius* plover with long wings, a very thin wing bar at the base of the secondaries and a very pale wash at the base of the primaries. When the bird landed next to a Little Ringed Plover it could be seen that although the general appearance was very similar to the latter, it was structurally distinct: its body was much larger and proportionately longer, and it also had a very long bill (as long as Greater Sandplover *C. leschenaultii*); it also had a white collar encircling the neck and a black breast band. This combination of features indicated it was probably a Long-billed Plover *C. placidus*. Later in the afternoon they were able to consult Sonobe and Usui (1993) which confirmed the identification.

The bird remained in the area until 20 March and was either seen on the river bank when the tide was low enough, or on nearby fish ponds at high tide. The following description is largely based on that submitted by PA, and is supplemented by those of other observers who saw the bird during its long stay. It was photographed by J. Holmes (see plate 7).

Size and structure About 30-40% larger than Little Ringed Plover with body, legs (especially above the 'knee') and bill proportionately longer. The bill was relatively finer than that of Little Ringed Plover, fairly even in depth along most of its length, and tapered to a blunt tip only along the distal quarter. The tail projected about 10mm beyond the closed wing tip; there was no primary projection beyond the tertials. In flight the wings appeared long with a large wing area.

Head Forehead white; above this there was a thick black frontal band that was broader than that of Little Ringed Plover and was mottled brown (presumably the black feathers were moulting in). Behind this the crown and nape were sandy-brown. The lores were dark brown forming a rather narrow line. A rather indistinct sandy-buff supercilium began at the rear of the frontal band and reached almost to the rear of the ear coverts; below this there was a broad eye stripe behind the eye that reached around to encircle the nape. The ear coverts were sandy-brown though the area immediately below the eye was mottled blackish. The throat was white and this extended as a narrow line below the ear coverts to form a complete collar around the neck.



7 Long-billed Plover *Charadrius placidus*
Kam Tin, Hong Kong, March 1994

John Holmes

Upperparts Dull grey-brown, though sandier and paler than Little Ringed Plover, with each feather possessing a thin buff fringe; the tertials and scapulars also had an indistinctly darker subterminal band. The tertials were sandy-brown and slightly darker than the mantle. The rump was slightly warmer than the mantle.

Wings and tail Closed primaries blackish-brown, darker and colder than the coverts and mantle feathers. There was a narrow and distinct white wing bar formed by the tips to the greater secondary coverts. The bases of the inner primaries were washed paler. The outer wing coverts were slightly darker and the outer primary shaft was pale. The closed tail appeared the same colour as the mantle and did not show any white but, when it was fanned, the outermost three pairs of rectrices were tipped white; the central tail feathers had no white at the tip. All the tail feathers were obviously darker subterminally.

Underparts Below the throat there was a breast band that was broad at the sides of the chest, but noticeably narrower in the centre. The central region of this band was mainly blackish whereas it was largely brown at the sides, only the upper edge being black. The blackish portion of this band extended as a narrow collar around the sides of the neck, below the white collar. The rest of the underparts were white.

Bare parts Bill and eye black, the latter with a creamy orbital ring only distinct on the lower half. Legs yellowish-flesh.

Call None heard.

Marchant *et al.* (1986) state that juvenile plumage is lost very rapidly so that ageing is rarely possible in the field. In addition, the sexes are similar in plumage and size.

Long-billed Plover breeds in East and Northeast China north to the Amur River, as well as in Japan. It migrates south or southwest to winter in Korea and South China west to Nepal and Bengal, though some are apparently resident in South China and Honshu, Japan. Vagrancy to Malaysia, Brunei and Bali has been recorded (Marchant *et al.* 1986). Given such a distribution, and the fact that it is migratory, its occurrence in Hong Kong was not unexpected. A previous record of Long-billed Plover for 4 December 1955 (Herklots 1967) was considered doubtful due to possible mistaken identification and placed in Category F by Chalmers (1986).

The species was accepted by the Records Committee of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society into Category A of the Hong Kong list.

1994年二月二十日，一隻長咀鷸 *Charadrius placidus* 在錦田出現，並逗留至三月二十日。識別的憑據是身體的大小、咀的長度與及完全白色的領圈。年齡和性別，在野外無從分辨。長咀鷸在中國東部和東北，以及日本繁殖，冬季時向南或西南遷徙至韓國或華南。因此，在香港出現，並非不可能。這個品種已獲紀錄委員會接納為A類。

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POMARINE SKUA: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader and Michael R. Leven

The autumn of 1993 was remarkable for the number and variety of seabirds seen from Cape D'Aguilar, Hong Kong Island, during storms and typhoons. Having already enjoyed considerable success in the previous two typhoons (see Lam and Williams 1994), it was with great anticipation that we headed back down to Cape D'Aguilar early on 26 September with Typhoon Dot at its closest approach and the no. 8 signal hoisted.

We arrived at about 0645h to gale force winds and exceptionally rough seas. Having found some shelter and set up our telescopes, there was already a steady passage of seabirds occurring with Bridled Terns *Sterna anaethetus*, Common Terns *S. hirundo* and Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus* passing in reasonable numbers. The intensity of passage increased gradually and, by mid morning, the sea was alive with birds with, for example, up to about 50 Bridled Terns within sight at one time.

During the course of the morning we observed three single and one group of three skuas *Stercorarius* sp. which, due to their large size, barrel-chested appearance and strong, powerful flight, we considered to be Pomarine Skuas *S. pomarinus*. However, these birds were distant and, as no plumage features or tail details were noted, the identification could not be confirmed.

At about 1400h PJJ saw a group of three skuas attacking a Common Tern about 500m distant. During the course of this attack we could both clearly see that one of the skuas, a pale phase adult, had the full tail spoons diagnostic of Pomarine Skua. The following description was taken:

Three skuas were located attacking a Common Tern at about 500m in good light. It was immediately apparent that the skuas were large, much larger than the Common Tern, with a wing span almost double that of the tern and an overall body length roughly half as long again. The skuas were very strong and powerful with broad-based wings, strong wing beats and a heavy, deep-chested appearance. The tail was quite full, long and slightly rounded. Twice, when attacking the tern, one of the skuas flew up higher and then dropped down onto the tern, in so doing allowing good views of a tail clearly showing tail projections that were narrower at the base and bulbous at the tip – the classic tail 'spoons' of an adult Pomarine Skua.

The upperparts were uniform dark brown; the breast was also dark brown, the same or very similar to the upperparts. The rest of the underparts were very pale and neatly demarcated from the dark breast. The underwings were uniformly dark. The other two accompanying skuas were identical.

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Given that the tail shape was clearly seen, identification was straightforward, this being the one diagnostic field character that separates light-phase adult Pomarine Skua from the superficially similar Arctic Skua *S. parasiticus*. The large size, powerful appearance, broad wings and barrel-chest are supportive features (Harrison 1985).

We left Cape D'Aguilar having seen a very impressive movement that included three Streaked Shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas*, 11 petrels Hydrobatidae sp., one Christmas Island Frigatebird *Fregata andrewsi*, six Intermediate Egrets *Egretta intermedia*, 72 Garganey *Anas querquedula*, 584 Red-necked Phalaropes, one Long-tailed Skua *S. longicaudus*, 368 Common Terns, 20 Aleutian Terns *S. aleutica* and 740 Bridled Terns.

At the time, the only previous record of Pomarine Skua was of a single bird in 'Hong Kong Harbour' in February 1957 (de la Moussaye 1958). However, correspondence with the original observer has revealed that the sighting was actually on the sea near Pok Fu Lam (R. de la Moussaye *in litt.* to Records Committee). When this was published, no notes accompanied the record; attempts by the Records Committee to obtain a description were unsuccessful and thus, under the circumstances, it was felt that it could no longer be considered acceptable. Consequently, the Cape D'Aguilar record becomes the first record of Pomarine Skua in Hong Kong for which adequate documentation exists. Later in 1993, two Pomarine Skuas were seen at Cape D'Aguilar on 5 November after the closest approach of Tropical Storm Ira.

De Schauensee (1984) notes Pomarine Skua to be accidental in winter in China with single records in Shanxi, Jiangsu and Guangdong provinces. In addition, 3-4 Pomarine Skuas were noted in the Taiwan Strait in early February 1987 (G.J. Carey pers. comm.).

在1993年九月廿六日，颱風黛蒂接近本港時，香港島鶴咀對開處有海鳥經過。當中有三隻中賊鷗 *Stercorarius pomarinus*：以尾部明顯的匙形判別，其他支持證據包括翼基寬闊、拍翼有力、胸部突出與及外表強悍。跟在1957年二月首次錄得這個品種的觀察者聯絡商討後，有關的紀錄已經撤消，所以，1993年這次觀察，才算是本港首個紀錄。

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PLAIN MARTIN: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

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At about 1100h on 14 December 1994, I was birdwatching at Long Valley when, at a distance of about 150m, I noticed a small hirundine hawking over a pond. Given the size, shape and structure of the bird, I initially assumed it to be a Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*. However, it soon flew closer revealing a uniform grey-brown throat and upper breast, identifying it as a Plain Martin *R. paludicola*.

The bird remained in the area for the next couple of hours and was also seen by M. Hale and V.B. Picken. The following description was taken:

Head Uniform dark grey-brown, merging into the throat, and lacking the half collar of Sand Martin. Eye dark.

Upperparts Nape and mantle uniform mid sandy-brown. Rump and uppertail coverts slightly sandier and conspicuously paler. Uppertail dark brown, darker than mantle. Upperwing as mantle.

Underparts Throat and upper breast uniform dark grey-brown, with no trace of a breast band or pale throat. Lower border of the throat patch diffuse. Upper flanks dark grey-brown. Lower flanks, lower breast, belly and undertail coverts uniform off white. Under side of tail dark brown. Underwing uniform dark brown.

Structure Very similar to Sand Martin, although none were present for comparison. Wings long and thin but broadly-based. When wings held close to the body the wing tips reached the tail tip. Tail with shallow fork. Body slim.

Behaviour Spent most of the time hawking for insects in the same manner as Sand Martin.

Identification

Plain Martin is only likely to be confused with Sand Martin from which it can easily be separated by its uniform brownish throat and lack of breast band. The only problem with the Long Valley bird would appear to be the darkness of the throat patch. Illustrations of Plain Martin in de Schauensee (1984), Wang *et al.* (1991) and Viney *et al.* (1994) show Plain Martin with the throat far paler than this individual, and contrasting with the sides of the head. In order to resolve this query Martin Hale checked skins of Plain Martin at Academia Sinica, Kunming. This revealed that the underpart coloration of the Long Valley bird was typical of Plain Martin, suggesting that existing illustrations of the species in regional field guides are incorrect (see plate 8).

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The paler rump may also be a feature of Plain Martin (Wang *et al.* 1991, Schekkerman and van Westrienen 1991). Sand Martins in spring 1995 had a much deeper and more obvious tail fork, and also a comparatively bulkier body and deeper chest (pers. obs.).



8 Skins of Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola* From left to right, four from Indochina, one from China, two from Taiwan. Note underpart coloration of right hand three.
British Museum, Tring, UK

Paul J. Leader

Distribution

Plain Martin has a disjunct breeding range in Africa and southern Asia. The Asian race *R.p. chinensis* is separated from the rest of the species' range by the Middle East region. In Asia, it occurs in Afghanistan, Pakistan, northern India, Bangladesh, Burma, China, Vietnam, Laos, and the Philippines, with an isolated population in south-central Russia (Turner and Rose 1989). In China it breeds in Yunnan Province and Taiwan according to Cheng (1987), and de Schauensee (1984) states that it probably occurs in Guangxi and Guangdong. Some Asian populations are known to undertake local movements between breeding and wintering areas; the population in south-central Russia is also migratory (Turner and Rose 1989).

在 1994 年十二月十四日，一隻棕沙燕 *Riparia paludicola* 在松柏型的菜田上，追捕昆蟲。雖然該鳥的大小、形狀及體型和灰沙燕 *Riparia riparia* 非常相似，但是喉部和上胸都是均勻的灰棕色，又沒有任何胸帶，可以確定為棕沙燕。雖然喉部顏色的深淺程度，跟參考書籍描述的有出入，查看標本後，發覺出錯的是參考資料而已。這個品種已獲接納為 A 類。

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Martin Hale for checking skins at Academia Sinica, Kunming, and that institute for allowing him access to the collection there.

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BOOTED WARBLER: THE FIRST RECORD FOR HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader

At about 1430h on 30 September 1994 I was cycling along the border fence road between Mai Po and Lok Ma Chau. I had travelled about 2km when I noticed a small passerine fly up from the side of the road and land in the tangle of barbed wire on top of the fence. I stopped and located the bird, and, although I could only see the head, I realised it was a small, unusual warbler. Initial thoughts of it being a rare *Acrocephalus* warbler were suddenly dispelled when the bird flew down onto the road and started hopping around, at which point I suspected it to be a Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata*. After watching it for 2-3 minutes at a distance of 25 metres, using Zeiss 10×40 binoculars, I hurriedly left and returned about 20 minutes later with a Kowa 30x TSN4 telescope. At about 1710h I obtained confirmatory views, and the bird disappeared about 20 minutes later.

The following day the bird was still present permitting the double-checking of some of the plumage features and enabling a handful of other birdwatchers to see it, including H.F. Cheung, R.W. Lewthwaite and V.B. Picken who also submitted descriptions. The following description was taken over the two days the bird was present.

Size A small, slim warbler the same size as Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*, which was confirmed by direct comparison with the latter. In isolation it had appeared slightly larger than a Dusky Warbler, but this was probably due to the proportionately longer tail of Booted Warbler.

Structure Very distinctive and unusual, a cross between a Dusky Warbler and a Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*. The long bill and plain face together imparted an *Acrocephalus*-like appearance to the head, rather than a *Phylloscopus*-like appearance. The forecrown was slightly sloping, which perhaps slightly exaggerated the bill length. The body was small and slim, the wings short, with a short primary projection roughly half the length of the visible tertials. The tip of the wing fell roughly equal with the longest undertail coverts. The latter were noticeably short, shorter than on both *Acrocephalus* and *Phylloscopus* warblers. The tail was proportionately long, recalling Blyth's Reed Warbler, but very square cut (even looking slightly notched once or twice).

Head Though the supercilium was diffuse, it clearly reached the base of the bill and extended behind the eye to the rear of the ear coverts. The pale grey-brown supercilium was narrowest immediately above the eye, broadest behind, and slightly more indistinct in front. The lores were pale, the same colour as the supercilium. There was no eyestripe in front of the eye but a very narrow eyestripe was visible behind the eye, that was very thin, almost pencil-like in thickness, and extended as far behind the eye as the supercilium. Above the supercilium there was

a diffuse thin dark border, though this was not always obvious except on close views, particularly when the bird was looking in the direction of the observer. The facial pattern was very plain, recalling Blyth's Reed Warbler.

Upperparts The crown, nape and mantle were uniform grey-brown, looking noticeably pale grey in flight. However, in the warmer afternoon sunlight on 1 October, the upperparts looked much browner and more like the oft-quoted 'milky-tea' colour. The tertials were the same colour as the mantle but with thin paler fringes. The closed wing was also concolorous with the mantle, and was uniform except for paler fringes to the secondaries which formed an indistinct pale panel in the wing; this was more apparent in the afternoon sunlight. The tail was the same colour as the mantle but with paler tips to at least some of the tail feathers.

Underparts Similar colour to the upperparts except slightly, but distinctly, paler, and with a distinct greyish-buff wash to the flanks and sides of the breast. The throat and undertail coverts were paler than the rest of the underparts, with the undertail coverts being palest.

Bare parts The bill was distinctly long and thin, obviously longer than that of Dusky Warbler but not quite approaching that of Blyth's Reed Warbler, although still distinctly reminiscent of the latter. When viewed from below (as the bird was perched on the top of the fence) the bill was notably broad-based, similar to that of Eastern Crowned Warbler *P. coronatus*. The upper mandible was entirely dark, and the lower mandible grey-pink except for an area of darker shading near the tip, similar in extent and darkness to that shown on the lower mandible of Arctic Warbler *P. borealis*.

The legs were proportionately long, and the feet proportionately large. Both were orange-brown and bright in the afternoon light. In the harsher mid morning light the legs appeared more pinkish-grey.

Behaviour The bird spent much of its time out in the open and would fly up onto the barbed wire on the top of the fence if disturbed. It spent a lot of time, especially in the cooler afternoon period, hopping around on the road in an almost chat-like manner. When it did so the long tail and legs were very apparent. It also spent time along the over grown edges of the road and favoured an area of short grass. Most of the time it was in view it was either hopping around in the road or on the fence. A couple of times it flicked its tail as it hopped but showed none of the nervous behaviour of Dusky Warbler. Two or three times when apparently alarmed it raised its rear crown feathers, giving a peak to the rear of the crown, similar to an alarmed Manchurian Reed Warbler *A. tangorum*.

Call Only heard to call once when flushed at a distance of about 1m, when it gave an alarm call similar to the *tak* call of Dusky Warbler but less stony.

Both days were clear and sunny, with direct sunlight at all times, this being rather harsh late morning on 1 October, resulting in colour tones appearing colder and greyer, and also in the bird spending less time in the open. The bird was watched for a total of about an hour and a quarter as close as 5 metres.

The bird was aged as an adult because the primary tips, tertials and tail all showed abrasion; a first-winter bird would have fresher plumage (Lewington *et al.* 1991).

Identification

The critical step in the identification of such a difficult species is establishing the genus. Features of this bird typical of *Hippolais* warblers include the open-faced expression, short under tail coverts, a square-cut tail, rather stout pale legs, and uniform plumage lacking rich brown or rufous tones (Harrop 1990).

In Hong Kong the most likely confusion species are Blyth's Reed Warbler, Blunt-winged Warbler *A. concinens*, Paddyfield Warbler *A. agricola*, Dusky Warbler and Chiffchaff *P. collybita tristis*. The list of mainly structural features given above will eliminate these species, but there are also further differences. Blyth's Reed and Blunt-winged Warblers would never have such a grey tone to the upperparts (Kennerley and Leader 1992). Paddyfield Warbler, however, can show distinctly grey plumage tones in worn plumage in summer and autumn; in addition, it also often has a dark shadow above the supercilium, dull pinkish legs, and an obvious dark tip to the lower mandible (Kennerley 1992, Kennerley and Leader 1992), and is thus a more likely source of confusion. However, in worn plumage the head pattern is much more strongly marked than Booted Warbler, with a dark loreal spot, a long pale supercilium and more marked eyestripe. The very pale underparts would also contrast conspicuously with the upperparts; finally, the bill of Paddyfield Warbler is very narrow. Chiffchaff is readily ruled out due to its black legs and bill. Dusky Warbler may be grey above (Leader 1992), can show a dark tip to the lower mandible and, exceptionally, a dark border above the supercilium (Bradshaw 1992), but has a longer supercilium, a narrower bill and a shorter tail.

Among members of the genus *Hippolais*, Upcher's Warbler *H. languida*, and Olive-tree Warbler *H. olivetorum* are readily discounted due to their much larger size; Icterine Warbler *H. icterina* and Melodious Warbler *H. polyglotta* usually show strong green or yellow plumage tones, and are also larger (Harrop 1990). All four are also notably long-winged. The two remaining species are Booted Warbler and Olivaceous Warbler *H. pallida*. Features which may point to Olivaceous Warbler are the lack of pale sides to the tail, the long bill, slightly sloping forecrown and pale wing panel. The pale tips to the tail may also be lacking in Booted Warbler, and it may also show a pale wing panel (Lewington *et al.* 1991, M.R. Leven *in litt.*). The southern race of Booted Warbler, *H.c. rama*, is longer-billed than the nominate race (Osborn 1993, Cramp 1992) which may also account for the sloping forecrown. The eastern race of Olivaceous, *H.p. eliaci*, is small and dainty, and thus more similar to Booted which is the smallest *Hippolais* warbler. Compared to Booted however, Olivaceous is slightly larger, although there is some overlap, the supercilium does not extend beyond the eye, it normally lacks a dark tip to the lower mandible, although exceptionally shows a small darker area near the tip, lacks a dark border above the supercilium, and has a slightly rounded tail (Williamson 1968, Harrop 1990, Lewington *et al.* 1991, Parmenter and Byers 1991, Cramp 1992).

The two races of Booted Warbler are sometimes split into two species Booted Warbler *H. caligata*, and Syke's Warbler *H. rama* (Sibley and Monroe 1993), although this is not widely accepted. Beaman (1994), noted that the morphological differences are not especially marked, and that there are apparently no significant differences in vocalizations. Cramp (1992), however, states that there are marked differences between the two in terms of colour, relative length of tail and bill, bill shape and wing formula, but note that there is an area of hybridization, and follow the traditional treatment of *rama* as a race of *caligata*, though noting that further study is required.

The Hong Kong bird can be ascribed to the race *rama*. This is based on the grey, not sandy-brown upperparts; the long, broadly-based bill and the long-tailed appearance (Cramp 1992). Measurements of bill, tail and wing for both races are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Wing, tail and bill measurements of Booted Warbler

	<i>H.c. caligata</i>	<i>H.c. rama</i>
wing	57-64	59-65
tail	43-50	48-56
bill (to skull) (after Cramp 1992)	12.9-14.5	14.8-16.3

Distribution

The nominate race *H.c. caligata* breeds in central and eastern Eurasia from northwest and central Russia east to western Siberia and northwest Mongolia and south to south S.S.R. and extreme western China, wintering in Pakistan and central and south India. *H.c. rama* breeds from northwest Oman, Iran, Afghanistan, from Transcaspia east to Turkestan, and probably Pakistan, wintering in southern India and Sri Lanka (Sibley and Monroe 1993). Cheng (1987) records both forms breeding in Xinjiang province. The breeding range of Booted Warbler and, especially, its Indian wintering grounds, are similar to those of other passerine vagrants to Hong Kong e.g. Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler *P. inornatus humei*, Chiffchaff, and Paddyfield Warbler (Melville 1987, Leader 1989, Kennerley 1991).

Booted Warbler has been accepted onto Category A of the Hong Kong List. As well as being the first record for Hong Kong, this is the first published record east of the breeding range.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Richard Lewthwaite and Richard Stott for providing me with relevant references.

在1994年九月三十日，一隻靴襠鶯 *Hippolais caligata* 在落馬洲附近的邊境鐵線網內的車路上被發現，並逗留至第二天。*Hippolais* 鶯類的特徵包括平淡無特別標記的面部、短小的尾下腹羽、方形的尾、淺色而又粗狀的腿、身體的顏色基本上劃一，並且沒有紅棕色。而這次發現的雀鳥則有較小的體型、毛色完全沒有黃或綠色的感覺、眉紋伸延至眼後、下咀尖端呈深色、眉紋之上也有深色的邊沿、而尾巴則呈方形。這個品種已獲接納為 A 類。

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YELLOW-STREAKED WARBLER: THE FIRST RECORDS FOR HONG KONG

Paul J. Leader

Introduction

On 16 October 1994 I was mist-netting at Kadoorie ARC with M.R. Leven and Cheung Ho Fai when we trapped an unusual, small warbler. Because it was similar to Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*, but smaller with a finer bill and entirely buff underparts streaked yellow, we excitedly concluded that it was probably a Yellow-streaked Warbler *P. armandii*. We returned to the ringing station where a careful check of the measurements confirmed our suspicions. Full measurements, a description and photographs were taken (see plate 8) and the bird was then released.

Remarkably, this proved to be the first of four Yellow-streaked Warblers in Hong Kong during autumn 1990. On the morning of 30 October V.B. Picken and I. Tytzer found the second, a remarkably confiding bird, at Mount Austin. This was seen by a number of observers and was trapped by P.J.L., P.R. Kennerley and MRL that afternoon. The third record also came from Mount Austin, when M. Turnbull discovered another very confiding individual on 6 November. Finally, while mist-netting at Mai Po on 26 November, MRL extracted a further Yellow-streaked Warbler, this individual was also seen in the hand by P.J.L., F. Wong, and P.R.K. Biometrics of all the birds trapped are provided in Table 1.



9 Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*
KARC, Hong Kong, 16 October 1994

Paul J. Leader

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Table 1. Biometrics of Yellow-streaked Warblers trapped in Hong Kong during autumn 1994

	16 Oct	30 Oct	26 Nov
wing	58	61	59
tail	52	49	49
bill (s)	12.9	12.3	—
bill (w)	3.3	3.6	3.4
bill (d)	2.9	3.2	3.1
tarsus	20.0	24.1	20.8
weight	9.6	14.0	11.3
fat score (after Anon 1984)	0	3	3
emarginated primaries	345(6)	3456	3456
notch on 2nd primary	16	15	17
age	3	3	3
(all measurements in mm)			

Wing formula

16 Oct	+10	-8.5	-1.5	-1	WP	-3	-4.5	-6.5	-8.5		
30 Oct	+9	-8	-1	WP	-2	-3	-5	-7	-7.5		
26 Nov	+10	-7	-1	WP	WP	-1.5	-4	-6	-7	-9	-9
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	ss

Field description

The following description of the bird at Mount Austin on 30 October was taken by V.B. Picken.

The bird was watched as it hopped about, often disappearing from view under the leaves and then reappearing and perching prominently on a leaf stem. It frequently flicked its wings and sometimes held its tail higher than the wings. It remained faithful to a very small area, returning to it three times after temporary absences. Later it flew across the road and flitted about in the branches of a tree c.4m above the ground before dropping to the ground and feeding in the leaf litter; it took numerous caterpillars.

It was similar in size to a Dusky Warbler *P. fuscatus* and the general impression was of an olive-green bird with yellowish underparts and supercilium; when it moved deeper into the woodland edge it appeared browner above and the underparts were more warm buff. At no time did it show the grey-brown upperpart and whitish underpart coloration of Dusky Warbler. The bird looked short-winged and had a square-ended tail. The primary tips were shorter than the longest uppertail coverts.

Head Long yellowish supercilium, the same width for its whole length, though possibly narrowing very slightly where it curved down in front of the eye; it did not quite reach the base of the bill. The supercilium was bordered above by an inconspicuous dark shadow that was not always apparent and which did not extend quite as far back as the supercilium. There was a dark eyestripe which was greyer and less conspicuous in front of the eye; this was fractionally shorter than the supercilium and petered out at the end. A very

thin, pale lower eyering was visible. The cheeks were very slightly mottled below the eye.

Upperparts Uniform olive-greenish, the crown and mantle being concolorous but the uppertail coverts very slightly paler. There was a brighter green panel in the closed wing and the primary and tertial tips looked greyer.

Underparts Basically yellowish (the same colour as the supercilium), with indistinct diffuse streaking visible on the breast at very close range; this streaking was darker yellowish. The throat appeared the same colour as the breast. There was no darker coloration on the flanks. The very centre of the belly was whitish. The undertail coverts were a tawny colour and the undertail greyish-brown.

Bare parts The eye was dark; the bill was shorter, more pointed and thinner than that of Radde's Warbler. The upper mandible was dark horn and the lower mandible pale, almost yellowish in sunlight, with a dark, greyish tip. The legs were long, thin and pale yellowish-white, as were the feet.

Call A bunting-like *tsit* was heard coming from its direction but the bird was not actually seen calling. Later that day, however, other observers heard the same call, which was clearly given by the bird.

The plumage of the other three birds was effectively identical to the bird of 30 October, except for the last individual which had a stronger olive wash to the upperparts and was slightly duller on the underparts.

Identification

Given its medium size, uniform olive-brown upperparts without wing bars, pale underparts with buff under tail coverts and well-marked supercilium, Yellow-streaked Warbler is only likely to be confused with Radde's and Dusky Warblers (Leader 1995).

Separation in the hand relies largely on measurement of bill width and depth, as provided by Svensson (1992):

	Radde's	Yellow-streaked	Dusky
bill width (mm)	3.5-4.4	2.5-3.6	2.5-3.4
bill depth (mm)	3.2-3.9	2.6-3.2	2.3-2.9

Only the second bird falls into the tiny overlap zone between Radde's and Dusky Warbler. This individual was heard in the field giving the diagnostic bunting-like *tsit* call of Yellow-streaked Warbler which is very different to the *quip* call of Radde's Warbler. The three trapped birds also had yellow streaking on the underparts extending onto the throat which Radde's Warbler never shows. The second Mount Austin bird showed entirely buff underparts, a comparatively fine bill and slim build, features which separate it from Radde's Warbler. All four birds are easily separated from Dusky Warbler which is never so buff below. For a more systematic review of the field identification of the three species see Leader (1995).

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IDENTIFICATION AND SYSTEMATICS OF LARGE WHITE-HEADED GULLS IN HONG KONG

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Introduction

The (sub)specific identity of the large gulls that winter in Hong Kong and belong to the so-called 'Assemblage of large white-headed gulls', which includes Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*, has been the subject of several publications. In Hong Kong it has traditionally been accepted that two subspecies of 'Herring Gull' are regular winter visitors. The form which in adult plumage has variable dark grey upperparts¹ and orange-yellow to pale yellow legs has been assessed as *L.a. mongolicus*, while the form with paler grey upperparts and flesh-coloured or pinkish legs has been considered to be *L.a. vegae* (Macfarlane and Macdonald 1966, Webster 1968, Herklots 1974, Chalmers 1986, Kennerley 1987, Viney and Phillipps 1988, Melville 1990).

The taxonomy of the Assemblage is controversial and the relationships between the Palearctic forms belonging to it are unclear. In works in which the Herring Gull is considered to be a taxon encompassing a multitude of highly differentiated and only superficially similar forms, both *mongolicus* and *vegae* have been included as subspecies of Herring Gull (e.g. Stegmann 1934, Vaurie 1965, Barth 1968, Cramp and Simmons 1983, Grant 1986, Yudin and Firsova 1988). Others have treated the largely southern, yellow-legged group of forms, including *mongolicus*, as the Yellow-legged Gull *L. cachinnans* (e.g. Dwight 1925, Stresemann and Timofeef-Ressovsky 1947, Alexander 1954, Devillers and Potvliege 1981, Haffer 1982, Devillers 1983, Stepanyan 1990, Panov *et al.* 1991, Yésou 1991, Yésou and Filchagov 1993, Yésou *et al.* 1994, Beaman 1994), and this opinion is now widely accepted. Also, the isolated, inland southwest Asian form *armenicus* is now generally considered to be a separate, monotypic species, Armenian Gull *L. armenicus* (e.g. Devillers and Potvliege 1981, Haffer 1982, Devillers 1983, 1985, Dubois 1985, *British Birds* 1993 86:1-2, Yésou *et al.* 1994, Beaman 1994). Some authors consider the populations which breed in the arctic regions of north-central and northeastern Asia to belong to a fourth separate species, Vega Gull *L. vegae* (Haffer 1982, Devillers 1983, 1985, Viney *et al.* 1994). More recently, some or all of a distinct group of forms breeding from extreme northeastern Europe throughout the arctic regions of Asia have been treated as another species, Heuglin's Gull *L. heuglini* (alternatively named Siberian or West Siberian Gull) by several authors (Stepanyan 1990, Filchagov *et al.* 1992a, 1992b, Underhill *et al.* 1993, Beaman 1994), including, by some of these authors, Vega Gull. Heuglin's Gull stands apart from Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus*, the sixth (and so far last) Eurasian species within that part of the Assemblage also known as the *L. argentatus*-*L. fuscus*-*L. cachinnans* group of forms, henceforth called the Herring Gull Group.

¹ In this paper we define the term 'upperparts' to include the combined feather groups of mantle, back, scapulars and upperwing coverts.

The current state of knowledge of the systematics of the Asian forms of the Assemblage based upon published literature is summarised with particular emphasis on the Herring Gull Group. Field studies of the Herring Gull Group by PRK, MLC and others in Hong Kong, in particular since 1989, and by TH in Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea have established that the field characters of adult birds previously assumed to be *mongolicus* and *vegae* do not correspond with the characters associated with these forms. It has however been recognised for several years that this long-standing interpretation is incorrect. Recently, Leven *et al.* (1994) indicated that in Hong Kong the continued use of *L.(a.) mongolicus* for dark-mantled, yellow-legged birds is very tentative and that pale-mantled, pink-legged birds are (only) possibly *L.(a.) vegae*.

The taxonomic position of the remaining Asian members of the Assemblage recorded from Hong Kong, namely Slaty-backed Gull *L. schistisagus*, Glaucous-winged Gull *L. glaucescens* and Glaucous Gull *L. hyperboreus* is well established. Each is generally accepted as behaving as good species and they seldom interbreed with other Asian forms of the Assemblage. Only a few Slaty-backed × Glaucous-winged Gull pairs are known from the periphery of their range (P. Yésou *in litt.*) and local hybridisation between Slaty-backed and Vega Gull has been reported, as summarised by Haffer (1982). We therefore do not propose to include these species within this discussion.

This paper aims to amend previous misunderstandings and establish the correct identity of adults of the forms which occur in Hong Kong. We demonstrate that, at least in adult plumage, six or more distinct forms have occurred in Hong Kong, four or five of them regularly. The field identification and status of adults of each of these forms is discussed and guidelines for the identification of the forms which occur in Hong Kong are presented based upon established characters from known breeding populations.

Review of the (sub)species of the Herring Gull Group which breed in Asia

The systematics of the Asian forms of the Assemblage which have traditionally been considered as (sub)species belonging to the Herring Gull Group are problematic. Their classification has historically been based almost exclusively on the study of museum material. Recent fieldwork on the breeding grounds in various parts of the former USSR, in particular by A.V. Filchagov, V.I. Grabovsky, S.V. Pyzhianov and P. Yésou, has given the initial impetus to what may develop into new insights into their relationships (Yésou and Filchagov 1993, Filchagov 1994). Although further studies are needed before a thorough revision of their systematics can be proposed, a summary of the present knowledge may help in understanding the situation which occurs in Hong Kong and elsewhere in the northern Asia Pacific region.

Eight forms of the Herring Gull Group breed in Asia. Four (*viz.* *heuglini*, *taimyrensis*, *birulai* and *vegae*) are primarily arctic breeders which are found along the Arctic Ocean coasts on cliffs, rocky islets, pools in wet and dry tundra, and forest bogs of the northern taiga zone (Pleske 1928). The remaining forms (*viz.* *cachinnans*, *armenicus*, *barabensis* and *mongolicus*) breed along the southern inland seas and lakes from Turkey and western

Kazakhstan to northeastern China. The three westernmost forms (*viz.* *heuglini*, *cachinnans* and *armenicus*) have part of their breeding ranges in northeastern and southeastern Europe. The most important field characters of breeding adults of each of these eight forms are discussed following a west – east and north – south sequence. Also included is a summary of their breeding and non-breeding season distributions and a map illustrating the breeding ranges of the eight forms is shown in Figure 1.

The shade of grey of the upperparts of the various forms is one of the three principal eye-catching features of these gulls, both in the field and in skin collections, the other two being leg colour and, in adult winter plumage, head and neck streaking. The use of terms like neutral grey or slate grey for the upperparts colours would lack an adequate definition of the shades of grey and would hamper a much desired comparison between the various forms and a clear understanding of the variability within some forms.

Table 1. Upperpart colour of adults of nine forms belonging to the 'Assemblage of large white-headed gulls' which have their breeding ranges in Europe and North America

form	upperparts	key breeding area
Glaucous Gull <i>L.h. hyperboreus</i>	very pale grey	Greenland
Herring Gull <i>L.a. smithsonianus</i>	pale grey	ne. North America
Herring Gull <i>L.a. argentatus</i>	pale grey	British Isles
Herring Gull <i>L.a. argentatus</i>	pale/med. grey	n. Fennoscandia
Yellow-legged Gull <i>L.c. michahellis</i>	pale/med. grey	w. Mediterranean
California Gull <i>L.c. californicus</i>	med. grey	nw. USA
Western Gull <i>L.o. occidentalis</i>	med./dark grey	n. Pacific USA coast
Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>L.f. graellsii</i>	dark grey	British Isles
Great Black-backed Gull <i>L. marinus</i>	blackish grey	nw. Europe

Data derived (partially) from Dwight (1925), Stegmann (1934), Cramp and Simmons (1983), Grant (1986) and Jehl (1987).

Establishing a defined colour system, similar to Barth's (1966) treatment of the northwest European forms of the Herring Gull Group, is beyond the scope of this paper. A solution which is both intelligible and simple is hard to find. Table 1 provides a list of a number of forms belonging to the Assemblage which are well-known in various parts of the northern hemisphere outside Asia and which can be considered as pilot forms for assessing the shade of grey of the Asian forms. Their sequence as given here is from paler to darker grey, with key breeding areas inhabited by populations representing the characteristic colour shade of each. For the sake of simplicity, after Table 1 all forms of the Herring Gull Group treated in this paper are mentioned by their scientific name only.

Outside the breeding season, the plumage and bare part coloration of the various forms can differ from that in the breeding season. The head and neck become variably streaked dark greyish-brown in all the northern forms,

while streaking usually remains faint or is absent by midwinter in the southern forms. In forms which are yellow-legged in the breeding season, there is a tendency for the legs to become paler, sometimes even fleshy-pink without any yellow pigment visible in the field but this is not consistent for all yellow-legged forms. In *armenicus*, almost invariably, the legs remain bright yellow throughout the non-breeding season. Furthermore, the frequency of dark-eyed individuals tends to increase and many individuals also develop dark markings on the bill (vide Madge 1992). Although these characters are better developed in *armenicus*, dark-eyed individuals with dark bill markings can be found in all populations except in *cachinnans* which invariably appears to retain pale irides (Yésou and Filchagov 1993).

heuglini Upperparts dark grey, rather similar in tone to *graellsii*, from which it differs in structure, being less slender, more sturdy, and to Slaty-backed Gull from which it differs by the pattern of the outer primaries, narrower white tips to the secondaries, yellow legs during the breeding season, less bulky structure, a finer, more delicate bill and, in flight, narrower bases to the wings. The primary moult regularly extends into February, occasionally into March (Devillers 1983, Grant 1986, Shirihai *et al.* in prep.).

Breeds from the Kola peninsula to the Gydan peninsula in western Siberia. Most individuals apparently migrate in a southwesterly to southerly direction and winter in Israel, around the Arabian peninsula and in East Africa.

taimyrensis Upperparts variably medium to dark grey, similar to *occidentalis* or slightly paler than *graellsii*, yellow legs and a pale yellow iris. The primary moult is not completed before late December or, more often, in January (P. Yésou *in litt.*). (see plate 254 in Grant (1986) for a probable adult in January which has not yet completed primary moult). A bird photographed in Japan which we consider to be *taimyrensis*, has been named as *L. fuscus* (not including *heuglini* and *taimyrensis* according to the relevant distribution map) (Anon 1988), but this has not been accepted by the Wild Bird Recording Committee of the Wild Bird Society of Japan (1989) (Teruaki Morioka *in litt.*).

Breeds from the lower reaches of the Yenisei River to the Kara Sea and in the southwestern Taimyr peninsula. It has been generally considered that *taimyrensis* moves in a southwesterly direction to the Persian Gulf and East Africa, where the presence of individuals displaying the characters of *taimyrensis* has been established by sight records, photographs and a few museum specimens (Grant 1986, Urban *et al.* 1986, S.C. Madge *in litt.*). The only recoveries of birds from the Taimyr peninsula refer to juveniles which have moved to the east or southeast. However, it is likely the identity of the adults was not established at the time these juveniles were ringed, and these may have been either *taimyrensis* or *birulai* (P. Yésou *in litt.*). These recoveries relate to (1) an individual ringed in the southeastern corner of the peninsula which moved to Sakhalin Island in the Russian Far-East (Filchagov 1992) and (2) an individual ringed on the northwestern coast of the Taimyr peninsula, which was recovered near the Lena river at Yakutsk, Yakutia (P. Yésou *in litt.*).

birulai Upperparts variably pale to medium grey, paler than *taimyrensis*, and similar in tone to *argentatus* or *michahellis*. Pale flesh-coloured legs. Primary moult starts in late June (Filchagov *et al.* 1992b, about a month later than *argentatus* and *argenteus*, and about a month earlier than *heuglini*). Primary moult is well advanced in August and is likely to be completed by late December.

Breeds from the northwestern Taimyr peninsula to the New Siberian archipelago. The divide between *taimyrensis* and *birulai* in the Taimyr peninsula remains unclear (Pleske 1928, Stegmann 1934, Filchagov *et al.* 1992b) and they may be sympatric there. Published information on the winter range is lacking but it is likely that the bulk of the population winters on the coast of China where it possibly meets and mixes with *vegae*.

vegae Upperparts variably medium grey, usually darker than *birulai* and slightly paler than *taimyrensis*, similar in tone to *californicus*. Always shows fleshy-pink legs. Although the literature indicates that *vegae* usually shows a pale iris, this can in fact be highly variable. In some individuals the iris is pale yellow while in others it is dark brown (Ujihara and Ujihara 1992, PRK and MLC pers. obs.). The primary moult is late and many individuals may not have completed it by late December (Ujihara and Ujihara 1992). In Japan, an individual growing the outermost primary was observed in early February 1986 (PRK and MLC pers. obs.).

Breeds east of *birulai* to the Chukotka peninsula and south along the coast to the Anadyr region. In winter, *vegae* (including *birulai* by virtually all authors who discuss its winter distribution) is reportedly found in east Asia from the Sea of Japan and the Korean peninsula (e.g. Fiebig 1993) south along the coast of China (La Touche 1931-1934, Cheng 1987).

cachinnans Upperparts pale to medium grey, paler than *michahellis* and *birulai*, and in some birds almost as pale as *argenteus*. Leg colour generally reported as yellow, but adults observed in or near colonies in both Central Asia (Bokhara) and the southern Ukraine had leg colour which varied from flesh-coloured through pale yellow to bright yellow (S.C. Madge, P.L. Meininger *in litt.*, P. Yésou *in litt.*, G.O. Keijl pers. comm.). Iris pale.

Breeds from the Black and Azov Seas to Lake Balkash. In winter it is found from Israel and Egypt to the Indian subcontinent. The reported occurrences of this form in eastern Asia may refer to birds from the eastern populations now known as *mongolicus*, but formerly included in *cachinnans*.

armenicus Upperparts pale to medium grey, tending to the latter and conspicuously darker than *cachinnans* and as dark or slightly darker than *michahellis* and *argentatus* but slightly paler than *vegae*. It differs from these forms in size and structure, being slightly smaller, with a rounder head and considerably shorter bill. The iris colour is variable from dark brown through grey-brown to, on occasions, dull yellowish but it is typically dark in winter. It sometimes has dark marks on the bill (Filchagov 1993, Buzun 1993), but in winter almost invariably shows a solid black and sharply demarcated subterminal band (Madge 1990, Satat and Laird 1992).

The breeding range is restricted to lakes in Armenia, eastern Turkey and northwestern Iran. It winters in Israel and Egypt and probably does not regularly move great distances (Hoogendoorn 1991, Satat and Laird 1992, Meininger and Sørensen 1992). As yet there remains a paucity of authenticated records from the Persian Gulf (Hirschfeld 1991, 1992) and it appears to be absent from East Africa, but the only record of a 'Herring Gull' in southern Africa is considered to be of *armenicus* (Tree 1989).

barabensis Upperparts pale to medium grey, darker than *cachinnans* and *michahellis*, and very close to *armenicus*. Legs yellow. Iris colour variable. It is a poorly studied form, which is smaller, more slender and generally more elegant than *cachinnans* in its overall appearance.

The breeding range appears to be restricted to the steppe region of northern Kazakhstan. The non-breeding distribution remains unknown, although birds which closely resemble this form occur in the Persian Gulf in winter (Hirschfeld 1992). Individuals observed by Madge (1992) in February 1991 in India, showed characters attributable to *barabensis*.

mongolicus Upperparts pale to medium grey, paler than *taimyrensis*, similar in tone to *michahellis* and *birulai*. Variable leg and iris colour (Madge 1983, 1985, Pyzhianov and Tupitsyn 1992, A. Hibi *in litt.*, S.V. Pyzhianov *in litt.*). Leg colour in particular is extremely variable, and ranges through orange, yellow and pink (S.V. Pyzhianov *in litt.*) but none of these colours amounted to more than 50% of the total number anywhere in the study area of Pyzhianov and Tupitsyn (1992).

Breeds from the Altai mountains to Transbaikalia, northern Mongolia and Hulun Nur, Nei Mongol Autonomous Region, China. The winter distribution is poorly known. Reports of this form from Pakistan as detailed by Roberts (1991) are probably based on a misinterpretation of the variability of bare part coloration among the different forms and cannot be considered to be fully established. Some birds ringed at Lake Baikal have been found in the Vladivostok area and the Sea of Japan (P. Yésou *in litt.*). These records suggest the possibility of a dispersal to the east of the breeding grounds. Brazil (1983, 1991) notes that *cachinnans/mongolicus* is an accidental visitor to Japan, but *taimyrensis* may not have been safely excluded.

Present knowledge of the systematics of the Herring Gull Group

Recent field studies have demonstrated that *heuglini* overlaps with both Herring Gull *L.a. argentatus* and Lesser Black-backed Gull *L.f. fuscus* in the westernmost part of its breeding range. It differs from them in its breeding and feeding biology and does not interbreed with them either (Filchagov and Semashko 1987, Filchagov *et al.* 1992a, Filchagov 1994), and thus behaves as a distinct species. This led Stepanyan (1990) to give it species rank. Since *taimyrensis* has been considered to be an intergrade between *heuglini* and *vegae* (e.g. Johansen 1960, Devillers 1983), Stepanyan (1990) merged all the northern forms into the same species, *L. heuglini*, a proposal followed by Filchagov *et al.* (1992b) and Beaman (1994). But recently Filchagov (1994) considered *heuglini* not to belong to the same species as *vegae* (designating the latter as a subspecies of Herring Gull). The variability of *taimyrensis* and

birulai and their apparent sympatry or parapatry over a huge area provides evidence that two species should be recognised in arctic Asia: *L. heuglini* (including *taimyrensis*) and *L. vegae* (including *birulai*). Moreover, the extremes *heuglini* and *birulai* are so very different in morphology (being almost as well differentiated as *graellsii* and *argentatus*) that retaining them in a single species would seem quite extraordinary in comparison to the other taxonomic changes which have been proposed for the Herring Gull Group in recent decades.

In southern Asia the morphology and relict status of *armenicus* leaves little doubt as to the validity of its status at the species level (e.g. Devillers 1983, Yésou *et al.* 1994). Less easy to establish is the status of *barabensis* which was classified with *taimyrensis* (e.g. Stegmann 1934) before it was described as a separate form (Johansen 1960). Its morphological differences from *cachinnans* and the close proximity of their respective breeding ranges suggest that it might be an isolated inland breeding species, in much the same way as *armenicus*. Further studies of its relationship with, and differences from, *cachinnans* and *armenicus* are needed before a final conclusion on its status can be established.

The relationship between *mongolicus* and *cachinnans* remains unclear, partly because the distribution and phenotypic variability of *cachinnans* is poorly known in the eastern part of its range. The supposed white-headed winter plumage of *mongolicus* suggests a similarity with *cachinnans*. Comparison of vocalizations, however, indicates that *mongolicus* may be more closely related to the northern forms (A.V. Filchagov, P. Yésou *in litt.*). Indeed, Buturlin (1934) merged *mongolicus* in *L. vegae*, but kept the other arctic forms separate, as *L.t. taimyrensis* and *L.t. antelius* (= *heuglini*), jointly with Armenian Gull (as *L.t. armenicus*). On the other hand, the similarity of the juvenile plumages of *cachinnans* and *mongolicus*, and the differences in juvenile plumages between the northern and the southern groups of forms in general, as documented in detail by Stegmann (1934), argue against classification of *mongolicus* under *L. vegae*.

Mention should also be made of *smithsonianus* which breeds along the arctic coasts of North America from the Mackenzie River delta, Northwest Territories, Canada eastwards (Johnson and Herter 1989). No detailed studies of its relationship with *vegae* have been made but the two forms differ strongly morphologically. The upperpart colour of *smithsonianus* is slightly paler than that of *argenteus* (Threlfall and Jewer 1978), and, in adult winter plumage, it has generally dense streaking and spotting on the head, upper neck and upper breast, the latter often forming a sharply demarcated bib. It has a long and heavy bill and a rather sloping forehead, causing the low and flat crown to peak far behind the eye, in this respect being somewhat reminiscent of Great Black-headed Gull *L. ichthyaetus*. Adult winter and immature plumages of *smithsonianus* and *vegae* differ markedly (Hoffman 1979, Grant 1986, Ujihara and Ujihara 1992), and the same is true for the first winter plumages of *smithsonianus* and *argenteus* (Mullarney 1990). Sound recordings of the calls of *smithsonianus* played to Herring Gulls in Europe elicited no response (Frings *et al.* 1958). Other differences between *smithsonianus* and European Herring Gulls have been summarized by Coues (1862) and Stegmann (1934),

in particular with regard to the wing tip pattern of adults. Threlfall and Jewer (1978) concentrated primarily on measurement differences between *smithsonianus* and *argenteus*. There can be no doubt that *smithsonianus* is a very distinct form and there is no indication that it intergrades with *vegae* as their breeding ranges are well separated.

To summarise, it is considered that *L. heuglini*, *L. vegae*, *L. cachinnans* and *L. armenicus* are good species. The status of *barabensis* as either a subspecies of *L. cachinnans* or *L. armenicus* or as a separate species remains unclear. Finally, *mongolicus* may be a subspecies of *L. cachinnans* or *L. vegae*; more work is required here to establish its true affinities but for the time being we have included it within *cachinnans*.

We must stress that we have not invented a new systematic arrangement of the Asian forms of the Herring Gull Group but have followed Haffer (1982), Devillers (1983, 1985) and Roselaar (1991) in grouping *heuglini* and *taimyrensis* with *fuscus* and regarding *vegae/birulai* as a separate species, while taking into account the subsequent research by Filchagov *et al.* (1992a) in regarding *heuglini* (and *taimyrensis*) as a species separate from *fuscus* and *argentatus*. Eventually this arrangement may be revised after the results of ongoing research have been published (c.f. Yésou and Filchagov 1993, Filchagov 1994).

Which forms are known to occur in the Asian-Pacific Region in winter ?

In Japan, *vegae* is a fairly common migrant through Hokkaido, a common winter visitor to Honshu and south to Kyushu and a wanderer to Ogasawara, the Iwo Islands and the Nansei Shoto (Ryukyu Islands) (Brazil 1991). There is also a single published record of *cachinnans/mongolicus* from Kyushu (Brazil 1983) although there are other sight records of such birds (Brazil 1991). Ujihara and Ujihara (1992) consider *vegae* to be the most frequently occurring form in Japan and note that small numbers of *mongolicus*, *taimyrensis* and *smithsonianus* may occur as well. The majority of the birds which occur in Japan have pink legs but a few have shown yellow legs and Ujihara and Ujihara (1992) tentatively consider the latter individuals to be either *mongolicus* or *taimyrensis*.

Cheng (1987) considers *vegae* to be the only form which winters in the southern and coastal provinces of China where it is a common migrant south to Guangdong province. Cheng (1987) also indicates that *cachinnans* breeds in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and *mongolicus* breeds in the Nei Mongol Autonomous Region but he does not list any coastal records for either of these forms.

A more helpful assessment is provided by La Touche (1931-1934). He discusses three forms of the Herring Gull Group which have been recorded in eastern China. The 'Pink-legged Herring Gull' *L.a. vegae* is described as having a pale grey mantle and wings, with, in winter, the head and neck streaked with brownish-grey. The legs are pink and the iris is pale yellow. La Touche states this form to be the commonest large gull on the China coast. The 'Yellow-legged Herring Gull' *L.a. cachinnans* is described as having a darker grey mantle than that of *L.a. vegae*, and in winter the head and neck are

streaked and spotted with greyish-brown. The legs are lemon-yellow and the iris is white to yellow. This gull is common in winter on the China coast where La Touche records it from Guangdong (Kwangtung) and Fujian (Fohkien) provinces as well as the lower Yangtze. He describes the breeding range as being the Mediterranean and shores of lakes and inland waters to Transcaspiia. La Touche then speculates that the 'Yellow-legged Herring Gull' breeds in China and the Amur and Baikal regions of Russia.

The identification of the third form, which La Touche names the 'Eastern Lesser Black-backed Gull' *L.f. taimyrensis*, is less well established. The mantle and wings are described as being much the same shade as Black-tailed Gull *L. crassirostris* and the head as being white. The legs are yellow and the iris white to pale yellow. This form is considered by La Touche to be a vagrant to China with just two undated records of an adult and an immature on the coast of Fujian province in winter. La Touche appears not to have personally examined these specimens and the description was taken by Howard Saunders at the British Museum (Natural History), UK. Subsequently La Touche (1931-1934) wrote in the Corrigenda and Addenda that J.L. Peters reidentified the adult as a Slaty-backed Gull and considered that the immature could not be positively identified. La Touche then adds that *L.f. taimyrensis* should be deleted entirely. Assuming that the adult did have yellow legs, it could not have been a Slaty-backed Gull, and its identity needs to be reassessed. However, in the same Addenda, La Touche refers to another record of *taimyrensis*, an immature recorded by Riley in Yunnan province, but again its identity cannot be firmly established.

La Touche was aware that Sushkin (1925) had established that the large white-headed gulls breeding in the Transbaikal region were distinct from *cachinnans* and had been described as *L.a. mongolicus*. However, the existence of *mongolicus* probably became known to La Touche only as he was nearing completion of his work (La Touche 1931-1934) as he refers to it in the Corrigenda and Addenda of Volume II when quoting Peters, but did not update the 'Yellow-legged Herring Gull' chapter. It is therefore almost certain that the birds which La Touche described (in our opinion incorrectly) as *cachinnans* were later erroneously considered to be *mongolicus* by many authors (see the introduction of this paper).

Which forms of the Herring Gull Group have previously been considered to occur in Hong Kong?

Vaughan and Jones (1913) refer to *cachinnans* as possibly the only Herring Gull in Hong Kong and note that no definite mature specimen of *vegae* had been seen or shot within the Territory. Herklots (1953) states that *cachinnans* was the dark-grey-mantled form occurring in Hong Kong but Macfarlane and Macdonald (1966) consider *mongolicus* as almost certainly being present but in smaller numbers. Similarly, Herklots (1974) also refers to this form as *mongolicus* but states that it was called *L.a. cachinnans* in the first (1953) edition. Thus, the change from the use of *cachinnans* to *mongolicus* appears to have occurred between 1953 and 1966 but it is not known who brought about this change or the rationale for the transition to *mongolicus*.

Given that La Touche (1931-1934) describes the mantle colour of

vegae as pale grey and that of *cachinnans* as darker grey than that of *vegae*, it is not surprising that, confronted by pale grey- and dark grey-mantled birds, early observers in Hong Kong assumed these to be the same forms which La Touche describes as being common winter visitors to China, particularly because he includes Guangdong province within the range of *cachinnans*. It is most likely that the '*cachinnans*' which La Touche was observing and collecting in eastern China was in fact the same form (dark-mantled, yellow-legged and streak-headed) which is most numerous in Hong Kong in winter today. This yellow-legged form has become (or perhaps always was) more common in Hong Kong than the pink-legged form described as '*vegae*' by La Touche.

Examination of specimens in the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, UK, indicates that *mongolicus* and *birulai* show very similar mantle coloration, while *vegae* is slightly darker than *mongolicus* (Plates 1 & 2). This is also supported by Barth (1966) who compared Munsell colour values for a number of forms including one specimen of *mongolicus* and three *vegae*. He found one of the *vegae* to be the same as the *mongolicus* while the other two *vegae* were slightly darker than *mongolicus*. This is of course contrary to previous thinking in Hong Kong and requires the identification of the yellow-legged form(s) to be reassessed. Since La Touche (1931-1934) describes his '*cachinnans*' as being darker than his '*vegae*' and having yellow legs and winter head-streaking, this form cannot have been *cachinnans* (or *mongolicus*), but must have been *taimyrensis* or *heuglini*.

The medium grey, pink-legged birds traditionally called *vegae* could of course be this form but may also be *birulai* or (if winter head-streaking was not considered in the identification) *mongolicus*. Ringing recoveries have shown that birds from both the Taimyr peninsula and Baikal regions do occur in east Asia in winter.

More recently, Viney *et al.* (1994) postulated that two additional yellow-legged 'plumage-types' occur in Hong Kong together with *mongolicus* (which they consider has a slightly darker upperpart colour than *vegae*, but which is depicted as much darker and with a streaked head). One of these additional forms they consider to be *cachinnans* (which they describe as small, with an upperpart colour in between *mongolicus* and *vegae*, an unstreaked head and a dark iris). The other yellow-legged 'plumage type' they consider to be *taimyrensis* (with upperpart colour similar to *vegae* and showing extensive head-streaking). However, this interpretation of the characters associated with the forms they discuss is incorrect and continues to perpetuate the myth that *mongolicus* is a consistently yellow-legged form and shows darker upperparts than *vegae*.

Which forms of the Herring Gull Group could occur in Hong Kong?

Before entering into a discussion on identification and status, it is of interest to speculate about the potential of the different forms to occur in Hong Kong in winter. What is currently known about distribution suggests that the southwest Asian *armenicus* is the least likely of the Asian breeding forms to occur in Hong Kong. The chance of encountering the essentially western forms *heuglini*, *cachinnans* and *barabensis* is greater, particularly those individuals

from the eastern extremes of their breeding ranges. However, the remaining four forms are considered to be much better candidates to reach Hong Kong.



10 Specimens of the four arctic breeding forms illustrating differences in upperpart colour, obtained on or near the breeding grounds. From left to right *Larus vegae*¹, *Larus vegae birulai*², *Larus heuglini taimyrensis*⁴ and *Larus heuglini heuglini*⁵. British Museum (Natural History), Tring, UK. (See Appendix 1 for specimen numbering.) Arnoud B. van den Berg

Assuming north-south migration is more likely in the arctic breeding forms than east-west migration, especially if it is also shorter, then *birulai* and *taimyrensis*, which breed almost due north of Hong Kong, are the most likely of the northern forms to occur in Hong Kong, followed by *vegae* and *heuglini*. The position of *mongolicus* is less clear. Although it breeds closer to Hong Kong than any of the other forms, it is likely not to migrate as far to the south as the northern forms and would therefore occur in Hong Kong in smaller numbers. Its status elsewhere on the coast of China may be masked by its superficial similarity to *birulai* and *vegae* combined with a lack of competent observers in the wintering areas. The partly sympatric Relict Gull *L. relictus* appears to undertake a similar migration through northern China to the Korean peninsula where it is known to winter, but it remains a vagrant to Hong Kong (Duff *et al.* 1991, pers. obs.).



11 Comparative upperpart colour of, from left to right, *Larus vegae vegae*¹, *Larus vegae vegae*², *Larus cachinnans mongolicus*⁶, *Larus cachinnans mongolicus*⁷ and *Larus vegae birulai*³, British Museum (Natural History), Tring, UK. (See Appendix 1 for specimen numbering). Michael L. Chalmers.

Other potential candidates of the Assemblage for vagrancy to Hong Kong include the North American Thayer's Gull *L. thayeri* and Iceland Gull *L. glaucoideus*, both of which have already occurred in Japan (Anon. 1988, Brazil 1991). In addition, the North American forms *smithsonianus* and *californicus* though not mentioned by Brazil (1991) may have already occurred in Japan (Ujihara and Ujihara 1992). These forms are probably less likely to occur in Hong Kong than *heuglini*, *cachinnans* and *barabensis*, but the propensity for gulls to wander is well demonstrated and the possibility of their occurring in Hong Kong is real.

The problem of identification

It is our opinion that field identification of the majority of adult individuals of the various plumage types of the Herring Gull Group which occur in Hong Kong in winter is possible. The major pitfall is the superficial similarity of *vegae*, *birulai* and *mongolicus*. Of course, this is not to say that identification of the various forms is straightforward. It requires a thorough understanding of their field characters, considerable practice and good observation conditions. With present knowledge, identification of quite a few problematic birds may not be possible, even under optimum conditions.

Table 2 provides a summary of the field characters of the various forms in adult winter plumage, and several major identification clues emerge from it. In the (sub)species review we have refrained from entering into the extremely difficult subject of differentiating between the wing-tip patterns of the various forms, characterised by (1) the number of outer primaries with black marks, (2) the comparative size and shape of these black marks, producing either a concave or a straight impression of the inner edge of the black wedge against the grey adjacent to it, (3) the size of the white 'mirrors' near the tips of the two outermost primaries, and whether the mirror on the outermost is connected with the white tip or separated from it by a subterminal black bar, and (4) the comparative sizes of the white tips to the outer four or five primaries, which are often clearly visible in gulls at rest. The major problem is that in the Asian forms, more so than in the forms occurring in the Western Palearctic, these characters appear to overlap considerably, and in our present state of knowledge of birds from the breeding grounds it looks as if the differences are generally slight.

Although there are some exceptions, e.g. the invariably small mirrors in *armenicus* (usually only present on the outermost primary), it has not been possible to assess sufficient details for each (sub)species. Nevertheless, in the identification chapter we have endeavoured to present some rather generalised (and incomplete) descriptions of the wing-tip pattern as observed in Hong Kong birds. Further field and museum studies may reveal more important clues for distinguishing between the relevant characters.

Similarly, we have not included any indication of comparative sizes in the (sub)species review, other than commenting upon the smaller sizes of *armenicus* and *barabensis*. Overlap between the six other forms is very extensive. However, in the identification review of birds observed in Hong Kong, some size differences as perceived in Hong Kong are presented.

It must be stressed that our treatment is the first move in a direction away from erroneous assumptions and the resulting confusion of the past. Therefore it needs to be considered as no more than a first step in the right direction. Actually proving what occurs in Hong Kong will remain impossible unless specimens are taken here and compared with known breeding season populations, or colour-marked birds from the breeding grounds are observed in Hong Kong. It is hoped the former will never happen; the latter seems highly unlikely in the near to mid term. Based upon examination of specimens, field observation of birds of known populations outside Hong Kong and a review of the published literature, we believe our conclusions to be correct.

[The cost of production of plates 10-11 in colour has been subsidised by Carl Zeiss Far East Co. Ltd.]

Table 2. Summary of most obvious field characters of adults in winter plumage of eight (sub)-species of the Herring Gull Group which breed in Asia, presented in sequence of increasing mantle darkness.

form	grey of upperparts	midwinter head streaking	leg colour	iris	bill marks*
<i>cachinnans</i>	palest	none	bright yellow to flesh	pale	none
<i>birulai</i>	pale to medium	moderate (?)	flesh or pinkish	pale or brownish	none
<i>mongolicus</i>	pale to medium, paler than <i>vegae</i>	none (?)	bright yellow to pink	pale	none
<i>armenicus</i>	pale to medium, slightly darker than <i>mongolicus</i>	scant	bright yellow	dark	subterminal black band
<i>barabensis</i>	pale to medium, similar to <i>armenicus</i>	none (?)	bright yellow	pale to dark	none or trace of band
<i>vegae</i>	medium, darker than <i>mongolicus</i>	moderate to heavy	pink	pale or brownish	none
<i>taimyrensis</i>	medium to dark	light to moderate	bright yellow to yellowish	pale	none or trace of band
<i>heuglini</i>	darkest	light to moderate	generally bright yellow	pale	none or trace of band

* excluding red spot

Identification of the forms of the Herring Gull Group in Hong Kong

Detailed observations of large gulls from the boardwalk hide at the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, in particular since 1989, have demonstrated that adults of six or more distinct forms of the Herring Gull Group are regularly passing through or wintering in Hong Kong. These can be summarised as follows.

Type A

Plumage and bare parts Upperparts variably medium to dark grey, darker than Kamchatka or Eastern Common Gull *L.(c.) kamtschatschensis* but slightly paler than *graellsii* and about as dark as *occidentalis*. There is a broad white tertial crescent but the scapular crescent is typically narrow and may be almost entirely absent in some individuals. The dark streaking around the head and nape is typically heaviest at the lower nape and the upper neck but on some individuals is very dense over the entire head, nape and upper breast. This streaking is usually still present on wintering birds until their departure in March. The white tips of the outer primaries, visible at rest, are small on the

two outermost (p10-9)², increasing in size inwards to fairly large on p7-6. In flight usually shows a medium-sized mirror on p10, separated from the white tip by a broad black bar, and occasionally also a small one on p9. The undersides of the outer primaries are blackish, fading to mid grey on the inner primaries and outer secondaries until they become white close to the body. They show marked contrast with the white underwing coverts and white tips to the secondaries. The legs are usually washed yellow and are not particularly bright but can occasionally be bright orange-yellow. The iris is very pale yellow and the orbital ring is red.



12 Group of four *Larus heuglini taimyrensis* (right hand birds of group). Note fairly light build, medium/dark grey upperparts and yellow legs typical of this form. All are adults apart from a third-winter bird second from right. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 24 February 1991. Peter R. Kennerley

Size and structure A medium-sized gull of the group, generally appearing slightly smaller than birds of Type B and distinctly less heavy-bodied. The head is somewhat rounded and less angular than that of Type B which gives it a rather gentle appearance.

Status The most numerous of the forms which winter in Hong Kong and is usually present between late October and late March. This is the type which has traditionally been referred to as *mongolicus* but it is now considered that these birds are *taimyrensis*.

² We follow Ginn and Melville (1983) in numbering primaries descendantly, thus the innermost primary is p1 and the outermost p10.

Type B



13 Adult *Larus vegae*, probably of the race *birulai*. Note the fairly heavy structure, streaking on head and nape and pink legs. The upperpart colour is difficult to assess in this photograph but it is fairly pale which favours *birulai* rather than *vegae*. Mai Po, Hong Kong, March 1991. John Holmes

Plumage and bare parts Upperparts pale to medium grey with a slight bluish cast and conspicuously paler than Type A. There is usually a broad white tertial and scapular crescent present. Dark streaking on the head and nape is usually fairly light but is occasionally heavy and extends onto the upper breast. This streaking is present throughout the winter and into March when birds depart. Up to five equally sized prominent white tips can be visible on the outer primaries at rest but it is more usual for p6 to be hidden and only four white tips visible. In flight shows a medium-sized mirror on p10 and consistently also a smaller one on p9. The undersides of the primaries and inner secondaries are pale and do not show marked contrast with the white underwing coverts. The legs are pale pink and the iris is pale yellow.

Size and structure Slightly larger and more heavy-bodied than Type A but not as deep-chested or broad-winged as Slaty-backed Gull. The bill is deep and heavy and the head angular, giving it an aggressive appearance.

[The cost of production of plates 13-15 in colour has been subsidised by Carl Zeiss Far East Co. Ltd.]



14 Adult *Larus vegae*, probably of the nominate form (left), and two *Larus heuglini taimyrensis* (right) plus several immatures. Note heavy streaking on head and nape, distinctly paler upperparts than accompanying *taimyrensis* and pink legs. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 17 February 1991. Peter R. Kennerley

Status A regular winter visitor to Deep Bay in small numbers where it is outnumbered by Type A by approximately 20:1. It may formerly have been the more numerous form in Victoria Harbour and the outlying islands where Type A is quite scarce but detailed studies to document this are lacking. It usually arrives in late November and December, i.e. about a month later than Type A, but is still present until late March. Birds of this form have traditionally been assigned to *vegae* but we consider the majority of these to be *birulai* which is slightly paler on the upperparts than *vegae*. The darkest-mantled birds of this type are probably *vegae* but the extent of upperpart colour variation in *birulai* remains to be fully established. The true status of *vegae* cannot be satisfactorily determined at this time but we are confident that it occurs in very small numbers each winter.

Type C

Plumage and bare parts Upperparts very similar to Type B but direct comparison is lacking. It differs from Type B by its white head which is present throughout the winter. Like that form, it shows broad white tertial and scapular crescents. There are usually four small but equal-sized white tips visible on the four outer primaries (p10-7) at rest. In flight shows a large mirror on p10, larger than in Types A and B and separated from the white tip by a narrow black bar. As in Type B, the undersides of the primaries and inner secondaries are pale and do not show a marked contrast with the white underwing coverts. The legs are pale pink and the iris is pale yellow.



15 Adult *Larus cachinnans mongolicus* (right of centre) with several *Larus heuglini taimyrensis*. Note large size, slightly larger than *taimyrensis*, lack of dark head streaking, paler upperparts with slight bluish cast and pink legs. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 24 February 1991. Peter R. Kennerley

Size and structure A large gull apparently identical in size to Type B. It appears rather more round-headed than that form but this may be an illusion created by the white unstreaked head.

Status A rather scarce form which is recorded each winter but in smaller numbers than Type B. The combination of an entirely white, unstreaked head, pale grey upperparts, pale pink legs and a large mirror on p10 are features associated only with *mongolicus* which is the form we consider these birds belong to.

Type D

Plumage and bare parts Upperparts pale to medium grey, slightly darker than Type B (but still conspicuously paler than Type A) and distinctly grey, lacking the bluish cast. The tertial crescent is quite narrow while the scapular crescent is either very narrow or entirely absent. Birds of this type have not been recorded with dark head streaking, always showing an entirely white head and nape. In flight it has mirrors on the outer two primaries (p10-9) and in this respect differs from Type A which generally shows a single mirror. The legs are usually yellow, sometimes appearing dull fleshy-yellow or occasionally even pink, but are typically bright orange-yellow. The eye is comparatively small and appears dark, giving the bird a small, beady-eyed appearance. On some individuals seen well at close range, the eye is deep yellow but will still appear dark and beady at any distance.



16 Adult of unknown form in centre of group of *Larus heuglini taimyrensis*. Compared with that form, note distinctly smaller size, small almost delicate bill, lack of dark head streaking, small, apparently dark beady eye, slightly paler upperparts and lack of scapular crescent. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 25 February 1990. Peter R. Kennerley

Size and structure Generally the smallest and least heavy-bodied of the forms occurring in Hong Kong but can at times appear deep-breasted and show a conspicuous ventral angle. It shows a proportionately small bill and a noticeably rounded head, giving it a delicate structure and gentle appearance not dissimilar to that of an Iceland Gull.

Status A very scarce passage migrant between late January and early March but seen in Deep Bay every year since 1990, except 1993. Specific dates of occurrence, all involving adults at Mai Po or Tsim Bei Tsui, include 25 February 1990, 26 January 1991, 1 March 1992 (two birds), 26 February 1994 and 4 March 1995 (PRK pers. obs.). Familiarity with this form may well achieve a clearer picture of its status.

This form is not mentioned by Chalmers (1986) as it was not recorded in Hong Kong prior to 1990. Based upon our field experience of the Asian forms in winter, we are unable to establish which form this type can be assigned to. Its characters are highly distinctive, more so than several of the other Asian forms discussed. We consider that most likely this form is *barabensis*, but this identification remains tentative.

[The cost of production of plates 16-18 in colour has been subsidised by Carl Zeiss Far East Co. Ltd.]

Type E



17 Adult showing characters of *Larus heuglini heuglini*. Note slight head streaking, dark grey upperparts with relatively little contrast with visible primaries and yellow legs. Primary moult not yet completed. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 24 February 1991. Peter R. Kennerley

Plumage and bare parts Very similar to Type A but the upperparts are darker, being as dark as *graellsii*. The scapular and tertial crescents on the Mai Po bird appeared identical with those of Type A. The head and nape are streaked grey-brown but not particularly heavily. The legs are yellow, similar to those of Type A and the iris is pale yellow.

Size and structure Apparently identical to that of Type A

Status Birds of this type are very scarce and probably do not occur annually but due to the variation in upperpart colour of Type A and the variable viewing conditions, it may be occurring more frequently than records suggest. As expected in *heuglini*, the bird in the photograph has, in late February, not yet completed the primary moult. The only record confirmed by photographs is an adult at Mai Po on 24 February 1991.

We consider birds of this type to be *heuglini*.

Type F

Plumage and bare parts This form shows slightly paler grey upperparts than Type B. In colour it most closely resembles *argenteus* or *smithsonianus*. The tertial crescent is broad while the scapular crescent, though narrow, is broader than that shown by Type D. The head and nape are streaked outside the breeding season. The legs are pale pink and the iris is also pale.



18 Adult showing characters of *Larus argentatus smithsonianus*. Note heavy appearance with deep-breasted structure, heavy bill, long, sloping forehead, pale grey upperparts only slightly darker than accompanying Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus*. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 30 January 1993. Peter R. Kennerley

Size and structure This is a large, heavily built gull, more so than Type B, compared to which it also has a proportionately longer, heavier bill. The head is angular with a long sloping forehead and a flat crown which gives it an aggressive appearance.

Status This form is very rare in Hong Kong and, as far as can be established, there is only a single record (documented by photographs), an adult at Mai Po on 30 January 1993.

The pale grey upperparts, pink legs, large size and angular head point to this form being *smithsonianus* but the extensive head, neck and breast streaking and spotting often retained in this form until midwinter was no longer present on this individual.

Status of the Herring Gull Group in Hong Kong

Large gulls of the Herring Gull Group are common winter visitors to Hong Kong where the first birds usually arrive in late October. There is a slow increase in numbers to mid to late December followed by a rapid rise in early January and numbers peak between mid-January and early February. Numbers remain high until mid-March but during this period, particularly from mid-February onwards, there is a continuous turnover of migrants passing through on the way to the breeding grounds. From mid-March numbers fall rapidly until late March when most have departed. The occasional straggler may remain into April, May or even June (Chalmers 1986, G.J. Carey pers. comm., PRK pers. obs.).



19 Adult *Larus vegae vegae* on the breeding grounds. Note the medium grey upperparts and pink legs which are typical of this form. Most birds in the region showed a dark iris at this season. Chukotschya, lower Kolyma River, Yakutia, Russia, 18 June 1994. Peter R. Kennerley



20 Adult *Larus cachinnans mongolicus* on the breeding grounds. Note overall similarity to *vegae* at this season, in particular the pink legs. Upperpart colour is similar to *vegae* but slightly paler with an indistinct blue cast. Unlike *taimyrensis*, the underside of the primaries and secondaries of the bird in flight show little contrast with the underwing coverts. Maloye More, Lake Baikal, Russia, June 1992. Pierre Yésou

[The cost of production of plates 19-21 in colour has been subsidised by Carl Zeiss Far East Co. Ltd.]



21 Adult *Larus vegae birulai* on the breeding grounds. On range these birds can only be *taimyrensis* or *birulai*. The upperpart colour is paler than *taimyrensis* observed in Hong Kong and the legs are pink which excludes *taimyrensis*. The upperpart colour actually appears close to that of nominate *vegae* and if photographed further east, could be confused with that form. Similar individuals (rather dark upperparts, pink legs) have been regarded by some authorities as *taimyrensis*. We classify all pink-legged individuals from the Taimyr populations as *birulai*, and all yellow-legged individuals as *taimyrensis*, regardless of upperpart colour in these extremely variable populations. Ostrava Slanzevic, estuary of the Taimyr river, Russia. Pierre Yésou

Within Hong Kong, 'Herring Gulls' formerly favoured Victoria Harbour, in particular the area around Kai Tak airport and used to form a roost in the West Lamma Channel where a maximum count of 617 was made on 21 January 1977 (Chalmers 1986). However, this roost is no longer used, possibly due to increased disturbance from shipping and/or a reduced availability of food supply making the harbour area less attractive (G.J. Carey pers. comm.). Small numbers are also regular around the outlying islands and offshore waters from Lantau in the west to Mirs Bay in the northeast. A former daytime beach roost at Nim Wan in outer Deep Bay which was regularly used until the mid 1980s has been deserted due to excessive disturbance.

Although gull numbers fluctuate from year to year, the peak counts of the Herring Gull Group, and *taimyrensis* in particular, roosting on the inner Deep Bay mudflats have remained in the 300-400 range in most of the period 1984 to 1994, as detailed in Table 3. However, peak counts of 753 in January 1986 and 608 in January 1991 (Chalmers 1987, Chalmers 1992) are noteworthy. Undoubtedly the construction of the boardwalk hide at the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve has enabled observers to gain access to a previously inaccessible area of Deep Bay and accurate counts have been made in this area since 1987. It will never be known if similar numbers have always wintered in Deep Bay but the desertion of former roosts elsewhere appears real.

Table 3. Peak midwinter counts of the Herring Gull Group in Deep Bay between 1984 and 1994

year	date	count
1984	15 January	319
1985	13 January	325
1986	12 January	753
1987	11 January	272
1988	17 January	422
1989	15 January	328
1990	14 January	364
1991	13 January	608
1992	12 January	321
1993	31 January	365
1994	15 January	390

Conclusions

The identification of the adult forms of the Herring Gull Group generally considered to occur in Hong Kong has been based upon incorrect criteria and a review of these identifications is required. It is now considered that the most numerous wintering form is *Larus heuglini taimyrensis* which shows mid to dark grey upperparts, yellow legs and dark head streaking. This form has previously been identified as *L. argentatus mongolicus*. A second form showing pale grey upperparts, extensive dark head streaking and pink legs is also a regular winter visitor to Hong Kong but in much smaller numbers. This form was previously thought to be *L.a. vegae* but is now considered to be *L. vegae birulai*. In addition to these commonest forms, a further four forms have occurred in Hong Kong showing the characters associated with *L.h. heuglini*, *L.v. vegae*, *L. cachinnans mongolicus* and *L.a. smithsonianus*. The identity of a highly distinctive seventh form remains unresolved but it displays unique structural and plumage characters which may be associated with *L.(c.) barabensis*. Of the five less common forms, *vegae* and *mongolicus* are probably regular winter visitors in small numbers, the unidentified form is a very scarce spring passage migrant and *heuglini* and *smithsonianus* are probably vagrants.

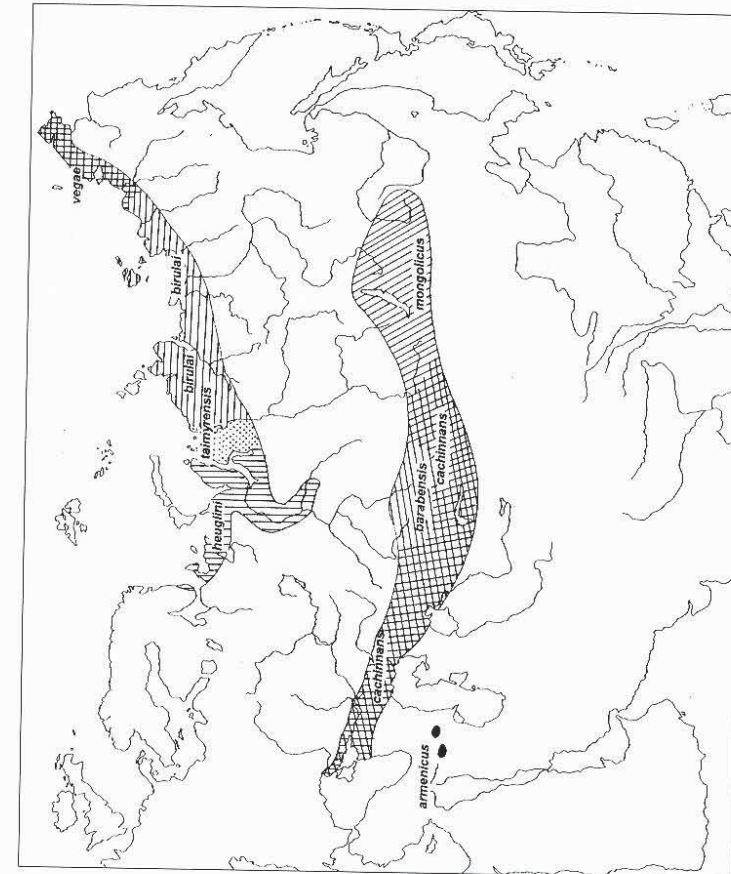


Figure 1. Approximate breeding distribution of the eight forms of the Herring Gull Group in Asia.

Appendix 1. Details of the specimens located in the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, UK, and referred to in the photograph captions.

ref	form	locality	date	sex	number	collection
1	<i>vegae</i>	Amur Bai	?	male	95.5. 14.5	Seebohm
2	<i>vegae</i>	Indigirka River, Siberia	29 Jul 1930	?	1965 M. 3948	Meinertz- hagen
3	<i>birulai</i>	Kotelnyi Island, New Siberian Islands	8 Jun 1902	female	1965 M. 3947	Meinertz- hagen
4	<i>taimyrensis</i>	River Glubakaja, Gulf of Yenisei	1 Aug 1908	?	1941:5:30- 3107	Ticehurst
5	<i>anteliu</i> (= <i>heuglini</i>)	Guidan peninsula west of Yenisei river mouth	9 Aug 1927	female	1965 M. 3945	Meinertz- hagen
6	<i>mongolicus</i>	south shore of Barun-Harei Lake, S.E. Transbaikalia	30 Jun 1925	female	1965 M. 3949	Meinertz- hagen
7	<i>mongolicus</i>	Lake Baikal	?	?	?	?

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our special thanks to Pierre Yésou who has unselfishly provided details of his experience of the various forms on their breeding grounds. He has also commented extensively upon earlier drafts of this paper and provided numerous clarifications on the systematics of the forms belonging to the Assemblage of large white-headed gulls which breed in Asia. However the final presentation on the systematics of the gulls discussed in this paper is the responsibility of the authors alone.

Peter Kennerley and Mike Chalmers would like to thank all those observers with whom they have spent many enjoyable hours watching and debating the identification of Hong Kong's gulls from the boardwalk hide at Mai Po. In particular, G.J. Carey, P.J. Leader, M.R. Leven, R.W. Lewthwaite, V.B. Picken and W. Young have stimulated healthy and vigorous discussion. Our thanks also go to D.S. Melville for making the contents of his extensive library freely available to us, to Simba Chan for kindly translating some of the Japanese references and to J. Holmes for permitting us to make use of his collection of gull photographs.

Ted Hoogendoorn is grateful for photographs, information and various kinds of assistance received from A.B. van den Berg, A. Hibi, G.O. Keijl, W.J. Maane, S.C. Madge, P.L. Meininger, H. Okabe, S.V. Pyzhianov, C.S. Roselaar, P. van Scheepen, H. Shiriha, K. Sonobe, G.H. Steinhaus and V.A. Zubakin. In particular the help provided by J.H. Kim, N.C. Moores, T. Morioka, J.Y. Park, M. Ujihara and O. Ujihara on the identification of large gulls wintering in Japan and South Korea was of major importance in establishing familiarity with the various forms and plumages found in those countries.

本文比較了銀鷗類在亞洲區的八種繁殖期的體型結構、體羽和裸露部份的特點，並提供初步的野外識別指引。牠們分屬四個品種：在北方繁殖的 *Larus heuglini* (包括 *L. h. taimyrensis*) 與及 *L. vegae* (包括 *L. v. birulai*)；在南方繁殖的 *L. cachinnans* (包括 *L. c. mongolicus* 和 *L. c. barabensis*) 與及 *L. armenicus*。在論到香港出現的銀鷗類成鳥的分辨方法時，文章指出 *taimyrensis* 和 *birulai* 是經常出現的冬候鳥；*vegae* 和 *mongolicus* 都會經常出現，不過只有少量。此外，還有一種未能確認的較細小品種，罕有地在春天過境，可能是 *barabensis*。此外，具有 *heuglini* 特徵的，也曾單隻地出現過，次數則極少；而關於同樣罕見的北美 *L. argentatus smithsonianus* 的報告，紀錄委員會還在審議中。

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IDENTIFICATION OF JAPANESE SPARROWHAWK AND BESRA

Paul J. Leader and G.J. Carey

Introduction

Identification of accipiters in southeast Asia is notoriously difficult, and in Hong Kong the separation of Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* and Besra *A. virgatus* currently provide one of the greatest challenges for field observers.

In recent years trapping of both species in Hong Kong for ringing has helped elucidate the problem and has led to the establishment of criteria for separation of the two species on both measurements and plumage features. These criteria were further tested by field observations in Hong Kong and China plus an examination of museum skins.

This paper discusses the best currently known criteria for separation of the two species in the field. Separation in the hand and the occurrence of the two in Hong Kong are also covered.

Field identification

Separation of Japanese Sparrowhawk and Besra in the field is not easy, normally requiring close and prolonged perched views. Identification of birds in flight is sometimes possible but, unless dealing with adult males, requires experience and practice. When encountering a small accipiter the most important features to focus on are:

- pattern of the underparts
- tail banding
- primary projection

The width of the mesial has been considered a useful field character; however, this only holds true with adults. Another feature, the number of visible tail bands on the upper side of the tail, is not considered to be of any use.

Japanese Sparrowhawk

Size and structure

This is the smallest accipiter occurring in Hong Kong, and, like all accipiters, males are smaller than females. Birds of comparable sex are shorter-winged and shorter-tailed than Besra, although the tail length of female Japanese Sparrowhawk and male Besra overlap (see figure 1).

As one would expect of a longer-distance migrant, the wing is more pointed than that of Besra. In addition, the primary projection is long, and, when judged from the tips of the bunched secondaries, the longest primary falls halfway down the tail.

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22 Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* male, probably adult. Compare upperpart coloration and width of tail barring with plate 24. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 4 December 1993. Geoff Carey



23 Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* male, probably adult. Compare coloration of underparts and underwing coverts with plate 25. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 4 December 1993. Geoff Carey

[The cost of production of plates 22-25 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



24 Besra *Accipiter virgatus* second calendar-year male. Compare upperparts and tail barring with plate 22. Kadoorie ARC, Hong Kong, 31 October 1992. P.J. Leader



25 Besra *Accipiter virgatus* second calendar-year male. Compare coloration of underparts and underwing coverts with plate 23. Kadoorie ARC, Hong Kong, 31 October 1992. Paul J. Leader

Plumage

Adult male

The flanks, breast and belly are washed a delicate pale peachy-pink, often with some diffuse whitish barring on the upper breast, lower belly and flanks. The throat is off-white and unmarked. The crown, ear coverts, mantle, rump and upperwing vary from mid grey to uniform dull dark grey with dark fringes. The tail is diffusely barred mid grey and dark grey, with the paler bars generally broader than the darker bars, though occasionally they are roughly equal. The iris is deep ruby red. Immature males show a more orange-red iris and retain some streaking on the throat.



26 Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* second calendar-year female. Compare pattern of underparts with plate 28. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 9 March 1991. *Paul J. Leader*

[The cost of production of plates 26-28 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



27 Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* second calendar-year female. Compare tail barring with plate 29. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 9 March 1991. *Paul J. Leader*



28 Besra *Accipiter virgatus* adult female. Compare underparts with plate 26. British Museum (Natural History), Tring. *Paul J. Leader*

Adult female

The flanks, breast and belly are barred grey-brown. The throat is off-white with a narrow, often hair-like, mesial. The upperparts are distinctly browner than those of the adult male, and there is a slight contrast between the mantle and the marginally darker and greyer crown. The tail is barred very dark and mid to pale grey-brown. Like the adult male, the paler bars are generally broader than the darker bars, but the contrast is greater. The iris is yellow.

Juvenile

The breast is streaked dark brown. The flanks and belly are more heavily marked a warmer brown and there is a tendency for this to become barred on the flanks. Throat as adult female but with a broader mesial. The upperparts are similar to the adult female, including the slightly darker crown, but have narrow rufous fringes in fresh plumage. Tail pattern and iris colour are as adult female.

Besra

Size and structure

Averages larger than Japanese Sparrowhawk with birds of comparable sex being longer-winged and longer-tailed.

The wing is more rounded than Japanese Sparrowhawk, and, coupled with the longer tail, this gives Besra a flight silhouette very similar to Northern Sparrowhawk *A. nisus*. The primary projection is distinctly shorter than that of Japanese Sparrowhawk, and, when judged from the tips of the bunched secondaries, the longest primary falls a third of the way down the tail.

Plumage

Adult male

The flanks, breast and belly are broadly barred dull chestnut-brown, with distinctly narrower pale bars. The throat is off-white with a narrow to broad mesial. The upperparts are darker than adult male Japanese Sparrowhawk, though in some birds the difference is minimal, and sometimes exhibit a distinct purple wash. The tail is similarly marked to that of adult male Japanese Sparrowhawk except that the paler bars are narrower than the dark bars. The iris is deep ruby-red.

Adult female

The underparts are more variegated than those of the male with a very dark, broad mesial stripe and upper chest streaking; the flanks and belly are broadly barred dull chestnut-brown, the bars being broader and more widely-spaced than those of the adult male. On more heavily marked birds the upper belly is completely chestnut-brown. The sides of the breast are chestnut-brown, often with some barring. The centre of the breast shows distinctive and contrastingly blackish tear drop-shaped markings. The throat is off-white with a broad blackish mesial. The crown is a similar colour to that of adult female Japanese Sparrowhawk, but the rest of the upperparts are noticeably paler,



29 Besra *Accipiter virgatus* juvenile female. Compare tail bars and wing shape with plate 30. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 12 September 1993. Geoff Carey



30 Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* juvenile female. Compare tail bars and wing shape with plate 29. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 12 October 1991. Peter Kennerley

[The cost of production of plates 29-30 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



31 Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* juvenile male. Compare tail barring and primary projection with plate 29. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 15 October 1994. Paul J. Leader

providing greater contrast between the crown and the mantle. The tail is barred pale grey-brown and blackish-brown, and, therefore, there is greater contrast between the pale and dark bars than in adult female Japanese Sparrowhawk. The paler bars are generally narrower than the darker bars, though on some birds they are roughly equal. The iris is yellow.

Juvenile

The flanks and belly are marked in a similar way to those of juvenile Japanese Sparrowhawk, although on average more heavily. The breast, however, has broad blackish teardrop-shaped markings which contrast conspicuously with the rest of the underparts. The throat is off-white with a broad blackish mesial which tends to be darker and broader than that shown by juvenile Japanese Sparrowhawk. The upperparts are similar to those of adult female Besra, except that the mantle is darker and, as a result, there is less contrast between the crown and the mantle, although it is still greater than that

[The cost of production of plates 31-33 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



32 Besra *Accipiter virgatus* juvenile male. Compare underpart streaking with plate 33. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 12 September 1993. Geoff Carey



33 Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* juvenile male. Compare underparts with plate 32. Mai Po, Hong Kong, 8 November 1992. Paul J. Leader

shown by juvenile Japanese Sparrowhawk. Some (possibly only juvenile males) exhibit a purple wash to the upperparts as in adult male Besra. The tail banding is the same as in adult female Besra except that the paler bars are darker. The iris is yellow.

Separation in the hand

King (1975) and Mees (1980) give criteria for in the hand separation of the two species, and in Hong Kong the latter has been used on the whole. However, during analysis of biometrics for all accipiters ringed in Hong Kong a further misidentification came to light (Leven *et al.* 1994, Melville 1994), due to a crucial measurement being incorrectly taken. An examination of photographs of this individual confirmed that the measurement had been incorrectly taken, and that on plumage features it was indeed a Besra. This highlights the need to double check all measurements and, ideally, photograph all unusual trapped birds.

A criteria for in the hand separation not given by either King *et al.* (1975) or Mees (1980) is wing/tail ratio. This is an easy, though apparently not always diagnostic, way to identify the two species (see figure 1). Generally, birds with a wing/tail ratio of less than about 1.3 are Besra, those with a ratio above about 1.35 are Japanese Sparrowhawk. The plotting of wing/tail ratio against weight further clarifies the situation and allows birds to be sexed as well (see figure 2). This method has the advantage of quantifying the greatest difference between the two species: mass. Wing and tail measurements, being one-dimensional, do not express the differences in bulk that exist between males and females and the two species.

Status in Hong Kong

The status of Japanese Sparrowhawk and Besra in Hong Kong has been severely clouded by the problems of field identification, and, even with good photographs, mistakes have been made. A bird which flew into a house in 1989 was published as a Crested Goshawk *A. trivirgatus* showing a supercilium (Chalmers 1990), but it is now apparent that this was in fact a juvenile female Besra.

By using the dates of trapped birds some idea of the seasonality of the two species can be obtained. There will be some bias in this data due, for example, to the differences in ringing effort, both in terms of time and location, at various times of the year. However, a reasonably accurate picture can be drawn.

During the period 1988-1994 a total of 23 Japanese Sparrowhawks and 16 Besras were trapped. This proportion is not reflected by accepted field records (see table 1) which suggest that Japanese Sparrowhawk greatly outnumbers Besra. Partly because of this discrepancy, a review of all small accipiter records is now in progress. In some years, e.g. 1994, more Besras are trapped than Japanese Sparrowhawks. Both are most common in autumn, with Besra having a noticeably earlier passage period (see figure 3).

Figure 1. Wing and tail lengths of Besra and Japanese Sparrowhawk in Hong Kong

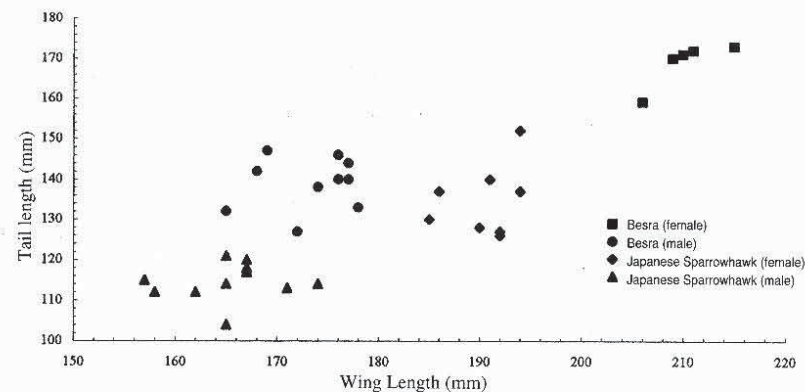


Figure 2. Wing/tail ratio and weight of Besra and Japanese Sparrowhawk in Hong Kong

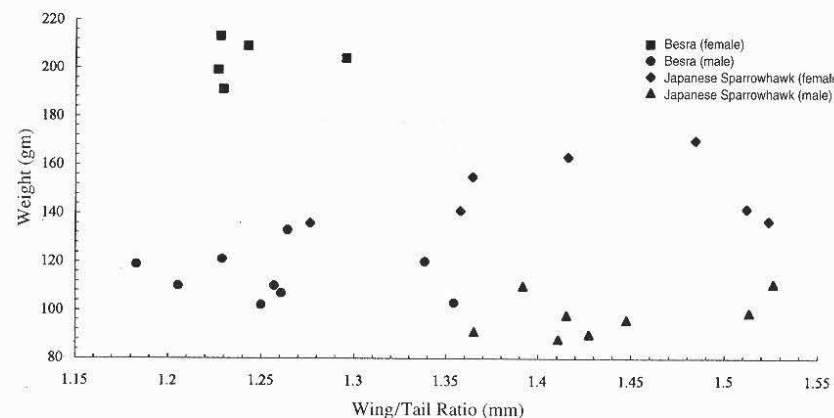


Figure 3. Accepted trapped records of Besra and Japanese Sparrowhawk 1988-1994

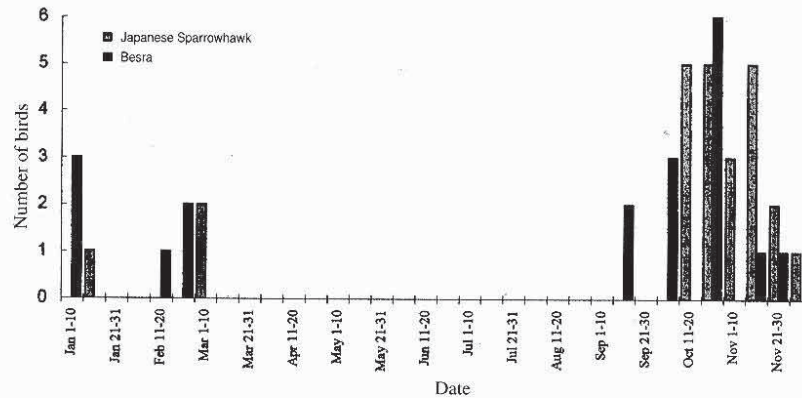


Table 1. Accepted field records of Besra and Japanese Sparrowhawk in Hong Kong 1988-1994.

Species	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
<i>A. gularis</i>	6	0	5	2	0	3	11
<i>A. virgatus</i>	3	1	0	2	1	0	1

There is also an apparent difference in site preference between the two species. Of the 23 Japanese Sparrowhawks trapped, 14 (60%) were males and 9 (40%) females. These were trapped in roughly equal numbers at the two main trapping sites Mai Po and Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre (KARC).

Of the 16 Besras trapped, 12 (75%) were males and only 4 (25%) were females. This is perhaps not surprising given the large size of females which results in them escaping from standard mist nets more easily. However, what is remarkable is that of the male Besras, 11 (91.7%) were trapped at KARC and none at Mai Po, and of the females one (25%) was trapped at KARC and three (75%) at Mai Po. While this may be pure coincidence (the sample size of females is small) it is possible that differences in prey preference mean that females prefer more open areas such as Mai Po; females, due to their larger size, may also be less suited to hunting in more closed habitat such as the shrub woodland at KARC.

Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to both the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, United Kingdom, and Academia Sinica, Beijing, for allowing access to skins. Thanks also to David Melville for the loan of references.

本文討論如何將松雀鷹 *Accipiter virgatus* 和日本松雀鷹 *A. gularis* 分辨開來。關鍵之處是日本松雀鷹的翅膀和尾巴都較短、初級飛羽突出部份則較長，尖端延伸到尾巴的一半、尾巴上灰暗的斑紋較淺色的斑紋為寬闊；此外，日本松雀鷹的幼鳥，也和松雀鷹幼鳥不一樣，上胸部沒有顯眼的黑色縱紋。如果拿在手上，可比較牠們的翼尾比例，與及和體重的有關數據。兩者出現的高峰期都在秋季，不過，無論在春天或秋天，松雀鷹都是較早過境的。紀錄委員會正在重新審核兩個品種過往的所有紀錄。

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FIELD IDENTIFICATION OF DUSKY, RADDE'S AND YELLOW-STREAKED WARBLERS

Paul J. Leader

Introduction

Until quite recently Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* was considered very scarce in Hong Kong, but, due to increased familiarity with its field characters, it is now annual in small numbers. In the majority of cases separation of Radde's and Dusky Warblers *P. fuscatus* in the field is quite straightforward, and work by Johns and Wallace (1980), Madge (1987, 1990) and Lewington *et al.* (1991), provide excellent references. However, the variability of Dusky Warbler is understated in these references (*viz.* Leader 1992), and the occurrence in autumn 1994 of four different Yellow-streaked Warblers *P. armandii*, the first records for Hong Kong (Leader 1995), adds a further dimension to the problem.

Dusky Warbler is an extremely common migrant and winter visitor to Hong Kong, and it is essential that observers acquaint themselves with this species if they wish to separate it from its rarer congeners.

All three are medium-sized *Phylloscopus* warblers that are plain brownish, olive-brown or olive-grey above, and pale below with varying amounts of buff; they have bold, long supercilia, and never have wingbars.

Dusky Warbler

Head

The supercilium is generally narrow, and is well defined in front of the eye, particularly the upper edge which is sharply delineated between the eye and the bill (Svensson 1992, 1994). In front of the eye the supercilium is usually whitish; behind the eye it tends to be more diffuse and distinctly buffish. However, a small number of individuals show greater variation than this, some having the supercilium diffuse in front of the eye, others, exceptionally, show a very broad, whitish supercilium which extends onto the nape and is extremely prominent (Leader 1992). Normally there is no dark border above the supercilium but this has, very rarely, been recorded (Bradshaw 1994).

Upperparts

Dark brown, lacking olive tones to the rump and upper tail coverts. May show olive fringes to the primaries and secondaries, resulting in a pale wing panel, but this is not seen as frequently as in Radde's Warbler. In worn plumage may exhibit varying degrees of greyiness above, which in extreme cases results in strongly grey upperparts in the field (Johns and Wallace 1980, Leader 1992). Other individuals may have pale sandy upperparts very similar to Chiffchaff *P. collybita tristis* (Leader 1992) (see below).

Hong Kong Bird Report 1994: 170-180, Dec. 1995



34 Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Typical autumn bird, note fine bill, well-defined supercilium in front of eye and slim build. Mai Po, 1 November 1994. Paul J. Leader



35 Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Atypically long supercilium with hint of dark border above. Mai Po, 26 January 1990. (Paul J. Leader)

[The cost of production of plates 34-37 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



36 Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Exceptionally grey individual in moult. Mai Po, 9 March 1991. Paul J. Leader



37 Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* Note superficial similarity to plate 36, but with diagnostic black bare parts. Mai Po, 6 February 1993. Paul J. Leader

Underparts

Pale with a small amount of buff at the sides of upper breast and flanks, typically with dull buff undertail coverts. A significant number, mainly adults, have rich buff undertail coverts, contrasting with the rest of the underparts; in the past this has been described as diagnostic of Radde's Warbler (Madge 1990). There is often a yellow wash on the underparts, but this is so faint that it is not usually discernible in the field.

Bare parts

The bill is rather fine, the upper mandible is relatively straight and the lower mandible usually shows a darker tip. The legs are thin and weak, and are normally dark.

Call

A hard, sharp *tatt* or *tak*.

Size and structure

Distinctly small and slim; proportionately small-headed and short-tailed.

Note: confusion is possible with *tristis* Chiffchaff. However, compared to Dusky Warbler, Chiffchaff has at least some green on the upperparts, a shorter supercilium, blackish bare parts, and a very different, high-pitched *eet* call.

Radde's Warbler

Head

The supercilium is longer and broader than that of a typical Dusky Warbler. It is usually broader and more diffuse in front of the eye than behind, particularly the upper edge between the eye and the bill which is poorly defined, unlike that of Dusky Warbler but similar to Yellow-streaked Warbler (Svensson 1992, 1994). The supercilium may fade by the spring, and then is more like that of Dusky Warbler (Bradshaw 1994). Behind the eye it often shows a conspicuous kink. Above the supercilium there is frequently a diffuse, darker border. The eyestripe is broad and more strongly marked than on Dusky Warbler, but similar to that of Yellow-streaked Warbler.

Upperparts

Dark brownish usually showing an olive wash, particularly on the rump, uppertail coverts, primaries and secondaries, the latter forming a distinctly bright, bronze-tinged wing panel. This olive wash is strongest in autumn, and may fade so that by the spring the upperparts are more similar to those of Dusky Warbler (Bradshaw 1994).

Underparts

Pale, normally with at least some buff at the side of the upper breast and on the flanks; some are rather clean below, and distinctly whitish on the belly. Undertail coverts rich buff, typically contrasting with the rest of the underparts; this has incorrectly been considered diagnostic in the past (Madge

[The cost of production of plates 38-40 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



38 Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* Typical autumn bird, note diffuse supercilium in front of eye and short stout bill. Kadoorie ARC, 7 November 1992. Paul J. Leader



39 Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* Typical autumn bird, note diffuse supercilium in front of eye, short stout bill and lack of buff below. Kadoorie ARC, 7 November 1992. Paul J. Leader



40 Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* Small-billed individual but note large build, typically large-headed appearance and normal supercilium. Kadoorie ARC, 6 November 1994. (Paul J. Leader)

1990), and given that Dusky Warbler not infrequently has similar under tail coverts, this feature should be used with caution, and in conjunction with other characters. The undertail coverts may fade to become paler and more similar in coloration to those of Dusky Warbler by spring (Bradshaw 1994). The belly is often washed yellowish, most notably in autumn, probably more so on first-winter birds. The chin and throat lack yellow streaking.

Bare parts

The bill is rather short and strong, especially compared to that of Dusky Warbler, and this applies even to the few Radde's Warblers that have comparatively fine bills (Lewington *et al.* 1991). Furthermore, such birds still show a more decurved upper mandible which is typical of Radde's Warbler, and different to that of Dusky Warbler. Such birds, however would be impossible to separate from Yellow-streaked Warbler on bill structure. The upper mandible is mid brown, the lower mandible is often pale and unmarked. The legs and feet are much thicker and stronger-looking than those of Dusky and Yellow-streaked Warblers, and are normally distinctly pale, similar to Yellow-streaked, but paler than Dusky Warbler.

Call

The typical call is a soft *quip*, remarkably similar to one of the calls of Russet Bush Warbler *Bradypterus seebohi*. When alarmed, gives a louder and sharper *tuc* call, similar to that of Dusky Warbler, though slightly softer (Bradshaw 1994).

Size and structure

Larger and heavier looking than both Dusky and Yellow-streaked Warblers, with a proportionately larger head than both, and a slightly longer tail than Dusky Warbler.

Note: confusion is possible with a brown Pale-legged Leaf Warbler *P. tenellipes*. Compared to Radde's Warbler this species is smaller, has narrow wingbars in fresh plumage, lacks strong buff tones to the undertail coverts, has thinner very pale grey-pink feet and legs, and a loud, metallic, *chink* call (Leader 1993).

Yellow-streaked Warbler

Head

The supercilium is longer and broader than that of Dusky Warbler, and very similar to that of Radde's Warbler. However, it is slightly less diffuse in front of the eye, particularly on autumn birds, and also more uniform, lacking the stronger contrast between the front and rear supercilium of Radde's Warbler; by spring, the supercilium is often buff in front of the eye.

Upperparts

Similar to those of Radde's Warbler

Underparts

First-winter birds have the entire underparts uniform warm buff, with yellow streaking on the belly, breast, and, diagnostically, the slightly paler throat (Ticehurst 1938, Svensson 1992); this, however, is very difficult to see in the field. Such birds are fairly easy to separate from Radde's Warbler, however, as they lack the dusky wash across the breast shown by the latter species. Adults generally are less buff and yellow below, and are rarely, if ever, as clean below as some Radde's Warblers. The undertail coverts are yellowish-buff (Williamson 1976), contrasting with the rest of the underparts, but not as strongly as on most Radde's Warblers.

Bare parts

The bill is slightly finer than that of Radde's Warbler and marginally heavier than Dusky Warbler. The upper mandible is decurved like Radde's Warbler, and is blackish-brown; thus, it is slightly, but consistently, darker than that of Radde's Warbler resulting in a stronger contrast between the upper and lower mandible. The lower mandible has a dark tip, though rarely this is lacking (Alstrom and Olsson 1994). The legs are thicker than those of Dusky Warbler, and thinner than those of Radde's Warbler, but equally as pale as the latter and therefore also rather prominent.



41 Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii* Probably adult. Note general similarity to Radde's Warbler, but with slightly finer bill, slimmer build and smaller head. December 1980, Thailand. P.D. Round



42 Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii* Note distinctly buff underparts with a finer bill and slimmer build than Radde's Warbler. Mount Austin, Hong Kong, 30 October 1994. Peter Kennerley

[The cost of production of plates 41-43 in colour has been subsidised by Nikon]



43 Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii* A typical autumn bird, note similar size to Radde's but structure closer to Dusky with bill intermediate between the two. 6 November 1994, Mount Austin, Hong Kong. Mike Turnbull

Call

A sharp bunting-like *tzic* (Lekagul and Round 1991, Leader 1995), or *zick* (Alstrom and Olsson 1994). This is very different to the calls of both Radde's and Dusky Warblers.

Size and structure

Size is in between that of Radde's and Dusky Warbler and this is apparent in the field. Structure more similar to Radde's than Dusky Warbler. Not quite so heavy looking as the former, and also lacks the proportionately large head of that species. Longer-tailed than Dusky Warbler, again recalling Radde's Warbler.

Summary of field identification

'Typical' individuals of the three species can be identified using the following features:

Dusky Warbler

- Supercilium buffish behind eye and well defined in front of eye
- Lack of dark border above supercilium
- Lack of olive tones above
- Small size and slim build
- Fine bill and thin dark legs
- Harsh *tak* call

Radde's Warbler

- Supercilium buffish and more diffuse in front of eye
- Dark border above supercilium
- Olive tones to upperparts, and pale panel in closed wing
- Large size and bulky build
- Short strong bill and thick, pale legs
- Soft *quip* call

Yellow-streaked Warbler

- More uniform supercilium than Radde's Warbler
- Dark border above supercilium
- Uniform buffish underparts in first-winter plumage
- Pale throat
- Intermediate size and build
- Intermediate bill size and structure, legs thinner than Radde's Warbler and paler than Dusky Warbler
- Metallic, bunting-like *tzic* call

Dusky Warbler, with which Hong Kong birdwatchers should be familiar, is not likely to be confused with Radde's or Yellow-streaked Warblers. However, separation of the latter two in the field can be extremely difficult; the calls of the two species are, however, diagnostic.

Status in Hong Kong

Dusky Warbler is a widespread winter visitor and passage migrant in Hong Kong. It is most numerous in the Deep Bay area, especially at Mai Po where it is normally the commonest *Phylloscopus* warbler. Radde's Warbler is a scarce autumn and very rare winter visitor. There are four records of Yellow-streaked Warbler, all in autumn 1994 (Leader 1995).

本文討論褐柳鶯 *Phylloscopus fuscatus*、巨咀柳鶯 *P. schwarzi* 和棕眉柳鶯 *P. armandii* 的識別方法。要將這三種鶯類分別開來，可留意眉紋的顏色和形狀、眉紋上方是否有深色的陰影、下體的顏色、大小、身體結構（包括腳和咀），而最簡便的，莫過於比較牠們的鳴聲。

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Geoff Carey and Peter Kennerley for their useful comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and Peter, Philip Round and Mike Turnbull for use of their photographs.

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SWIFTLETS IN HONG KONG

Martin Hale and Peter R. Kennerley

Prior to 1990 there were no reports of swiftlets *Collocalia* sp. from Hong Kong. Since then however, there have been five records of six individuals to the end of 1994. No swiftlet in Hong Kong has been specifically identified but it is apparent that they can be categorised into three distinct types. This paper analyses the distinctive and characteristic features of each type, especially in comparison with Himalayan Swiftlet *Collocalia brevirostris* and Edible Nest Swiftlet *C. fuciphaga*, which, on known distribution, are considered to be the most likely species to occur in Hong Kong.

Table 1 summarises relevant details of all documented sightings of swiftlets in Hong Kong within the period under consideration, and Appendix 1 provides field descriptions of swiftlets of each type recorded in Hong Kong.

Type 1 The records of 14-16 January 1994 (two birds) and 27-28 February 1994 (one bird) almost certainly refer to individuals of the same species. Another was seen at Tin Shui Wai in January 1995, and, although this record has not yet been reviewed by the Records Committee, it is considered typical of birds of this type and is illustrated in plate 44. Although minor differences in plumage are apparent for birds placed in this type, these are considered more likely to be due to individual observer perception under variable light and weather conditions, rather than to any significant differences between individuals.

Type 2 The records of 5 April 1990 and 20-22 March 1993 refer to dark-rumped birds that structurally seem to have been very similar. This can be seen by comparing the photographs of the March 1993 bird (plates 45 and 47) with that of the April 1990 bird (plate 46). These birds are considered, certainly by those who saw the 20-22 March individual well and are familiar with type 1 swiftlets, to be significantly different in structure to type 1 birds.

The swiftlet seen at Mai Po on 20-22 March 1993 was accepted by the Records Committee of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society as being an unidentified swift/swiftlet. Although the structure and wing shape of this bird were very distinctive and somewhat different to those associated with a typical swiftlet, we consider that this individual was indeed a swiftlet, and not a small swift *Apus* sp. Once again, there do appear to be minor differences in plumage between the two birds within this category, and also slight differences in the perceived depth of the tail notch.



44 Type 1 Swiftlet *Collocalia* sp.
Tin Shui Wai, Hong Kong, 29 January 1995

Ray Tipper

Type 3 The record of a swiftlet on 8 April 1990 at Mount Davis refers to a medium-sized swiftlet with an obviously notched tail. This, together with the lack of a capped effect and rather light, uniform plumage coloration, except for a conspicuous pale rump, appears to distance it from any of the other swiftlet records. The description of this bird, which has previously been published (Kennerley 1991), is repeated in Appendix 1.

Summary of the systematics of medium and large size swiftlets that occur in east and southeast Asia

The systematics proposed by various authorities for the swiftlets which occur in east and southeast Asia are inconsistent and confused. This is hardly surprising given the difficulty of identification, both in the field and of some museum specimens. Furthermore, field research into the systematics of the group remains in its infancy. We have therefore followed traditional treatments of the swiftlets which occur in continental Asia, e.g. Medway and Wells (1976), Cheng (1987), Chantler and Driessens (1995). The radical taxonomy proposed by Sibley and Monroe (1990) has not been followed.



45 Type 2 Swiftlet *Collocalia* sp.
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 20 March 1990

Paul J. Leader



46 Type 2 Swiftlet *Collocalia* sp.
Shuen Wan, Hong Kong, 5 April 1990

Ray Tipper

Table 1. Summary of plumage and structural features of swiftlets recorded in Hong Kong

feature	type 1		type 2		type 3
	Ho Chung 14-16 Jan 1993	Mai Po 27-28 Feb 1994	Shuen Wan 5 Apr 1990	Mai Po 20-22 Mar 1993	Mount Davis 8 Apr 1990
capped effect	yes	yes	no	yes	no
half collar	yes	yes	uncertain	yes	no
mantle colour	blackish, steel blue tinge in some lights	dark greyish- brown, tinged oily	smoky- brown	blackish- brown	dull greyish- brown
rump colour	light smoky grey-brown	pale grey- brown	same as mantle	same as mantle	paler, greyish- white
throat colour compared to breast	darker	darker, more blackish	slightly paler	paler	same
breast and belly	light smoky grey-brown, as rump	pale grey- brown, as rump	same as mantle	dull brown, paler than mantle	same as mantle
underwing coverts	dark brown or blackish	very dark brown	darker than remiges	blackish- brown	greyish- brown
underside of remiges	brown, slightly translucent	uniform, paler than underwing coverts	not established	paler than underwing coverts; rear edge of ss* and inner pp* much paler than bases of ss & outer pp	silvery grey
tail notch when tail closed	shallow, barely noticeable	no deep or obvious notch	deeply forked, similar to Sand Martin**	slight notch	very obvious
body size	slightly smaller than House Swift	slightly larger than Barn Swallow	marginally larger than Barn Swallow	slightly smaller than House Swift	similar to Barn Swallow
comments		smaller than 1993 Mai Po bird			palest bird

* pp = primaries, ss = secondaries

** *Riparia riparia*

Himalayan Swiftlet *Collocalia brevirostris* It is generally accepted that three races of Himalayan Swiftlet occur in mainland Asia. These are *C.b. brevirostris*, *C.b. innominata* and *C.b. rogersi*. A fourth form, *C. b. inopina*, has been proposed from China. This is typically a dark-rumped race, but with some variability shown (Chantler 1995). However, most authorities (e.g. de Schauensee 1984) regard *inopina* as synonymous with *innominata* and this treatment is followed here. A fifth form, *C.b. vulcanorum*, is restricted to volcanic peaks on Java and is considered to be resident.

Edible Nest Swiftlet *Collocalia fuciphaga* There are two races of Edible Nest Swiftlet in mainland southeast Asia: *C.f. germani* and *C.f. amechana*. Other races occur locally throughout the major island groups in southeast Asia between the Andamans in the west and the islands of Wallacea in the east.

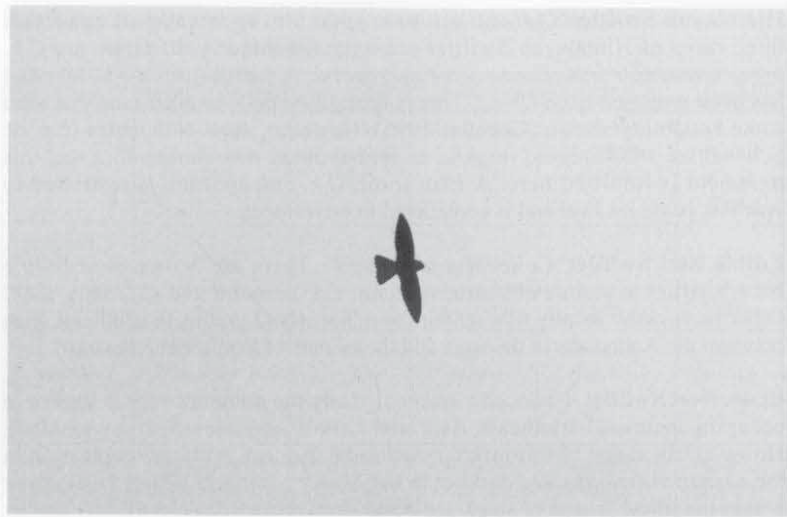
Black Nest Swiftlet *Collocalia maxima* Only the nominate race is known to occur in mainland southeast Asia and this is considered to be resident. However, the range of this race appears to be disjunct, with one population in the eastern Himalayas and another in the Malay peninsula. Other races occur within the island groups of southeast Asia.

Distribution

By far the most widespread subspecies of Himalayan Swiftlet in China is *C.b. innominata*, which breeds over much of central and western China and the Yangtze valley south to within 800km of Hong Kong. It winters south to Thailand and the Malay Peninsula (Medway and Wells 1976, Cheng 1987, Lekagul and Round 1991). The subspecies *C.b. rogersi* is found in southwestern Yunnan, as well as central and southern Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. Within China the nominate form *C.b. brevirostris* breeds in northwestern Yunnan, west to southern Tibet (Ali and Ripley 1983, Cheng 1987, de Schauensee 1984, Sibley and Monroe 1990). The three northern subspecies of Himalayan Swiftlet recorded from China are believed to be at least partly migratory.

Within China Edible Nest Swiftlet is only known from one colony at Hainan Island (Xian and Zhong 1983), but breeds commonly throughout southeast Asia where it is regarded as resident.

Black Nest Swiftlet is also believed to be sedentary within its range, and is reported from Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, India, but breeding has not been established (Ali and Ripley 1983). Whether it actually occurs in China is unclear. Vaurie (1972) and Cheng (1987) make no mention of Black Nest Swiftlet from Tibet or China, although de Schauensee (1984) states it occurs in southeast Tibet. It is conceivable that these northern populations may move away from the breeding grounds during the winter months although there is no evidence available to document this. As with all swiftlets however, dispersal outside the breeding season remains a possibility but would be almost impossible to establish.



47 Type 2 Swiftlet *Collocalia* sp.
Mai Po, Hong Kong, 20 March 1990

Paul J. Leader

In terms of known range and distribution, it would appear that Himalayan is more likely to occur in Hong Kong than Edible Nest while Black Nest remains an unlikely outside possibility.

Identification

In attempting to identify the Hong Kong swiftlets, it is felt most useful to concentrate on the differences between Edible Nest Swiftlet and the three subspecies of Himalayan Swiftlet. Black-nest Swiftlet is generally excluded from this analysis except where comment is considered appropriate. It is not known to migrate within mainland Asia and its range is restricted to the eastern Himalayas and the Malay peninsula so the likelihood of it occurring in southern China seems remote. The possibility of vagrancy by species of swiftlet previously unknown in China is dealt with later.

The plumage differences between Himalayan, Edible Nest and Black Nest Swiftlets are not great. All exhibit dark upperparts, variously described as black-brown, grey-brown etc., which may be broken by a paler rump patch of varying degrees of lightness. The underparts are lighter than the upperparts, but often with a darker chin and throat. The ear coverts are of a similar colour to the underparts, as are the sides of the neck, forming a partial, or sometimes complete, light collar. This partial or total isolation of the crown, which is often the darkest part of the upperparts, creates a capped effect. Some individuals show a partially translucent trailing edge to the underside of the remiges when seen from underneath.

Rump colour

Type 1 Museum specimens showing a rump as light as birds of this type were *C.b. rogersi*, and *C.b. brevirostris*. It is of particular interest that

there is considerable variation within the range of rump coloration shown by *C.b. rogersi*, with the rump ranging from as dark as the mantle and tail, through slightly paler, to significantly lighter. In contrast, specimens of *C.b. brevirostris* consistently show a rump colour slightly paler than the rest of the upperparts, and in this respect similar to the rump coloration shown by type 1 birds.

Type 2 Museum specimens showing a dark rump concolorous with the rest of the upperparts included some specimens of *C.b. innominata* and, as indicated above, some specimens of *C.b. rogersi*. Of the specimens of *C.b. innominata* examined, most showed a rump colour very slightly lighter than the upperparts, which might not be noticeable in poor light conditions, whilst some showed a rump concolorous with the upperparts.

Some races of Edible Nest Swiftlet supposedly show a concolorous mantle, rump and tail. Lekagul and Round (1991) state that *C.f. amechana*, the race with the darkest rump in southeast Asia, has a rump as dark as the back in birds which occur in extreme southern Thailand. However, this is not borne out by experience of *C.f. amechana* in Singapore which invariably exhibits a rump patch that contrasts, sometimes greatly, with the darker mantle and tail (PRK pers. obs.). This race is not known to be migratory and only occurs to the south of the pale-rumped *C.f. germani*, so it is most unlikely to account for the dark-rumped swiftlets included within type 2.

Type 3 Specimens showing a rump colour conspicuously lighter than the rest of the upperparts were *C.b. rogersi* and *C.f. germani*. Specimens of *C.b. rogersi* show a variable rump colour, some appearing pale and contrasting strongly with the mantle. All the specimens of *C.f. germani* examined had rump patches much lighter than those seen on the type 1 birds.

Xian and Zhong (1983) provide a description of two Edible Nest Swiftlets taken at Hainan Island which they considered to be *C.f. germani*. These birds are described as having a light grey-brown rump that formed a pale rump band contrasting with the rest of the upperparts. It has not yet been possible to establish exactly how pale and contrasting the rump patches of the Hainan birds are.

Capped effect

It will be noted from Table 1 that the type 2 swiftlet recorded on 5 April 1990 and the single type 3 record concern individuals that did not appear to show a dark cap. Observations of swiftlets in Hong Kong and Singapore show that this feature is not always easily seen (MH and PRK pers. obs.). Since all museum specimens examined showed this feature to some extent, and Xian and Zhong (1983) also noted this feature in Edible Nest Swiftlets taken at Hainan Island, the apparent lack of a capped effect is probably not significant.

Moult

No swiftlet seen in Hong Kong has shown any indication of wing or tail moult, or excessive abrasion of the remiges and rectrices which could be observed in the field, and it is considered unlikely that a swiftlet in active wing moult would migrate. Although swiftlet plumages can appear extremely

abraded, the effect of abrasion on the coloration of the rump at different times of year is unknown.

Size

In general terms Himalayan and Black Nest Swiftlets are larger birds than Edible Nest, but there is significant overlap in both wing and body measurements, although this may possibly be due to inconsistencies in the methods used when taking measurements. Table 2 provides a comparison of published measurements which illustrate the spread in body and wing length within swiftlets. Chantler (1995) quotes a body length of 130-140mm for Himalayan, and Ali and Ripley (1983) give a variation in wing length of 120-141mm with *C.b. innominata* lying at the upper end of the range of wing length. Edible Nest Swiftlet has a body length of 120-130mm (Ali and Ripley 1983, Lekagul and Round 1991) and a wing of 106-125mm. The Edible Nest Swiftlets obtained from Hainan Island are at the lower end of the size range for that species with a body length of 120mm and wing lengths of 106mm and 108mm (Xian and Zhong 1983), but only two specimens were measured.

Specimens of Himalayan and Black Nest Swiftlets appear bulkier than Edible Nest, and the overall impression of difference in size is rather more marked than measurements alone would suggest. Observations of swiftlets in Hong Kong suggest size differences between the various types are significant.

Comparison with House Swift *Apus affinis* or Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, which have generally been available for direct size comparison at the time of most Hong Kong swiftlet sightings (see Table 1), may lead to unreliable size estimates, since the structure and bulk of the birds being compared is rather different. However, the type 1 individuals all appear to have been large swiftlets, with sizes considered to range from slightly smaller than House Swift, which has a body length of 150mm and wing length in the range 130-142mm, to slightly larger than a Barn Swallow, which also has a total length of 150mm including tail streamers, but a distinctly shorter wing, lying in the range 108-123mm (Ali and Ripley 1983). Of the type 2 birds, the 1990 individual is described as marginally larger than a Barn Swallow (with tail streamers), whilst the 1993 bird was almost as large as House Swift. The type 3 record is of a bird conspicuously smaller than House Swift, approaching the body length of a Barn Swallow without the tail streamers.

Black Nest Swiftlet is larger than Edible Nest Swiftlet and similar to Himalayan Swiftlet. In terms of size it is felt that Edible Nest is probably excluded from types 1 and 2 which almost certainly exceed the upper end of the size range of that species. However, Edible Nest is clearly not excluded from type 3. Himalayan Swiftlet cannot be excluded from any type since a Himalayan Swiftlet at the lower end of the size range could account for the type 3 record, and at the upper end for the type 1 and 2 records.

Structure

In terms of structure, Edible Nest, Black Nest and Himalayan Swiftlets would appear once again to be rather similar, although as mentioned above, Himalayan and Black Nest are perhaps somewhat bulkier. Himalayan displays a tail notch usually over 15% of total tail length, whilst Edible Nest shows a

Table 2. Comparison of published measurements of Himalayan and Edible Nest Swiftlets

species	body size	wing range	comments	source
Himalayan	140mm	116-142mm		King, L&R
	130mm	see below		A&R
		120-133mm, mostly over 125mm	<i>C.b. brevirostris</i>	A&R
		132-141mm	<i>C.b. innominata</i>	A&R
Edible Nest	130mm			L&R
	127mm	110-125mm		King
	120mm	106-108mm	<i>C.f. germani</i> (from Hainan)	X&Z
	120mm	113-121mm	<i>C.f. inexpectata</i> (from Andamans)	A&R
Black Nest	127mm	122-136mm		King
	140mm	128-135mm		L&R, A&R

Sources: King: King *et al.* (1975), A&R: Ali and Ripley (1983), X&Z: Xian and Zhong (1983), L&R: Lekagul and Round (1991). Some measurements converted to millimetres.

tail notch usually 10-19% of tail length (King *et al.* 1975). The tail notch of Black Nest is considered to be the least pronounced, usually being less than 13% of the tail length (King *et al.* 1975). Based on the above, rather similar values, individuals with an obvious tail notch (the April 1990 type 2 bird and the type 3 bird) could be Himalayan or Edible Nest, whilst a barely perceptible tail notch (all type 1 birds and the March type 2 bird) does not appear to fit either of these species but could fit Black Nest. However, consideration of tail notch is perhaps of limited value, since the true extent can be very difficult to judge in the field and is very dependent on the way in which the tail is held (pers. obs.).

Ali and Ripley (1983) consider Black Nest to be practically indistinguishable from Himalayan but proportionately broader-winged with a slightly heavier build and a less forked tail. Observations of Edible Nest and Black Nest Swiftlets in Singapore indicate that any such structural differences are minor and may be put down to observer perception or bias (PRK pers. obs.).

Apart from size, the structure of swiftlets in types 1 and 3 are very similar and, compared to known populations of Himalayan, Edible Nest and Black Nest, can be considered structurally to be typical swiftlets. Type 2 swiftlets, however, are structurally quite distinct from typical swiftlets, the main features being the proportionately broad-based wings, larger head, similar size to type 1 swiftlets, rather heavy-bodied structure and only a slightly notched tail. Taken individually, any single feature would not indicate anything unusual about these birds. Together however, they combine to

produce a highly distinctive swiftlet, one so distinctive that some observers considered them to be a small swift rather than a swiftlet. However, it still retained the distinctive flight of a swiftlet as described in Appendix 1.

To the best of our knowledge there are no known swiftlet populations in Asia which appear structurally similar to type 2 swiftlets. It is possible they represent an extreme example of one of the commoner species but, for the time being, their identity must remain unresolved.

Timing of Hong Kong occurrences

The timing of the Hong Kong records is of interest. Whilst the spring records presumably refer to individuals caught up in the movement of House Swifts and Pacific Swifts *A. pacificus* through coastal southern China, the midwinter records are unlikely to be of migrating birds. Rather, they would be expected to be of birds wintering in South China and undergoing local movements to exploit available food sources. It would seem unlikely that Edible Nest Swiftlet, which breeds entirely to the south of Hong Kong and is believed to be resident, should move to the north and northeast during the northern winter. On the other hand, Himalayan Swiftlets breeding in China are more likely to move to coastal areas to the southeast of the breeding range. These midwinter occurrences do suggest the existence of a small and previously unknown wintering population in South China.

Discussion

The identification of *Collocalia* swiftlets is notoriously difficult and, even in the hand, may sometimes not be possible. We have endeavoured to establish features useful in attempting swiftlet identification in Hong Kong. However, it will be obvious that no definitive identification will be possible until one or more of the Hong Kong swiftlets are examined in the hand. It is, however, interesting to speculate on the identity of these birds, although it is stressed that this discussion is heavily influenced by the known ranges of swiftlets in China.

It is considered that type 1 birds are probably Himalayan Swiftlets of an as yet undetermined race. The slightly paler and contrasting rump displayed by birds of this type, and the relatively large size are correct for Himalayan Swiftlet of the races *C.b. brevirostris* and *C.b. rogersi*, and may be so for *C.b. innominata*. However, in terms of structure, birds of this type show an indistinct tail notch which, based upon the examination of specimens, is considered unusual for Himalayan. As previously discussed, it is not possible to accurately quantify the perceived depth of the tail notch in the field and, therefore, individual observer perception of this feature is likely to vary significantly. An indistinct tail notch is probably not significant and should not preclude Himalayan Swiftlet.

A provisional identification of the type 2 birds is more problematic. These birds are perceived by many observers to be significantly different in structure to the swiftlets in type 1. If there is more variation within the structure of swiftlets than is currently appreciated, or too much emphasis is being placed on the perceived structural differences, then birds of this type may prove to be dark-rumped examples of Himalayan Swiftlet *C.b.*

innominata. However, the Mai Po swiftlet of 20-22 March 1993 of this type was seen well by many observers and its distinctive structure was well documented.

For the moment the perceived differences in structure cannot be reconciled, and indeed discussion has centred on the similarity of these birds to the so called 'Beidaihe Swiftlet', an unidentified swiftlet seen at Beidaihe, Hebei province, China, on 26 and 29 April 1985 (Williams 1986). Based on a comparison of the photographs of the two type 2 records with the illustration of 'Beidaihe Swiftlet' (Williams 1986, Williams *et al.* 1986), the latter does indeed seem to have been similar in structure. It was, however, reported to have had a rump patch somewhat lighter than the rest of the upperparts. Given the variation in the rump colour of *C.b. rogersi* (and apparently also in *C.b. innominata*) the paler rump of the 'Beidaihe Swiftlet' may not be significant and this bird may also have been a type 2 swiftlet.

Interestingly, Inskipp and Inskipp (1993) in April and May 1993 also encountered unidentified swiftlets on several occasions in central Bhutan which they considered to probably be migrants. After comparison with specimens of *Collocalia* species, they speculated these swiftlets may have been an undescribed species. They considered the swiftlets to have been slightly larger and longer-winged than Himalayan Swiftlet and the rump was only slightly paler than the blackish plumage (of the upperparts). By comparison, they considered Himalayan to be greyer and show a more contrasting paler rump. The flight of these unidentified swiftlets is described as stronger, more direct and less 'fluttering' than Himalayan Swiftlet. Although brief, this description is also rather similar to that of the type 2 swiftlets.

The type 3 record is of an individual that appears, on balance, to have been different to birds in the two preceding types. Although a small Himalayan Swiftlet cannot be ruled out, it is considered that this record may relate to Edible Nest Swiftlet. The combination of a medium-sized swiftlet with an obviously notched tail and a rump conspicuously paler than the rest of the upperparts (and also apparently paler than the rump shown by the type 1 birds), all appear to favour Edible Nest.

It is possible that one or all of the species above breed or winter much closer to Hong Kong than is currently believed. Perhaps more likely is the probability that these birds have always occurred along the south China coast in small numbers and greater observer awareness is leading to an increased number of records.

Which other swiftlets could occur in Hong Kong?

Mention must be made of other swiftlet species not recorded from China. Since no additional swiftlet species are known to occur in mainland southeast Asia, it is assumed that the most likely source of such potential vagrants would be the Philippines. Otherwise, it is necessary to go as far as Borneo and Sulawesi to the south, and the Marianas to the east, before encountering additional swiftlet species, and these are also believed to be resident.

Three species of medium-sized swiftlet not previously discussed occur in the Philippines, where they are considered to be resident within the archipelago. The likelihood of these occurring in Hong Kong is minimal but cannot be entirely excluded. Only one of these, Island Swiftlet *C. vanikorensis*, is regarded as common and occurs throughout. This is apparently mainly a lowland species, similar in size to Edible Nest Swiftlet, with a rump described as more or less concolorous with the rest of the upperparts, and with a distinct tail notch (Dickinson 1989). However, in the field this species, identified on range and elevation of site of observation, shows it to be rather similar in plumage to the type 1 birds (MH pers. obs.). The most obvious difference from type 1 swiftlets, at least in bright sunlight, is the contrast between the dark upperparts and the rather light underparts, with the sides of the rump appearing the lightest part of the plumage. The rump, when seen against a dark background, is slightly, but obviously lighter than the rest of the upperparts, and in this respect is similar to that of the type 1 birds. The tail notch is often not obvious. Body length appears to be slightly less than that of a Barn Swallow (including tail streamers), which were present for comparison, and therefore slightly smaller than the type 1 individuals. However, as mentioned previously, any size comparison with Barn Swallow is difficult since the structures of the species are so different.

A second medium-sized swiftlet, Philippine Grey Swiftlet *C. mearnsi*, is endemic to the Philippines and is probably restricted to submontane regions where it is apparently uncommon. It is again similar in size to Edible Nest and has a slight tail notch and concolorous rump. However *vanikorensis* and *mearnsi* are probably indistinguishable in the field, and may be conspecific (Dickinson 1989).

Finally, Whitehead's Mountain Swiftlet *C. whiteheadi*, endemic to Luzon and Mindanao and believed to be rare and restricted to montane regions, should also be mentioned. This is a large swiftlet with a 'massive' head and a rump concolorous with the mantle and tail (Dickinson 1989). Reference to Appendix 1 will show that a rather large head was noted on the 20 March 1993 individual, which also, of course, showed a concolorous mantle, rump and tail.

Clearly then, none of the above species can safely be excluded when considering the identification of the Hong Kong swiftlets. However, it is considered unlikely that any of these species, which are not known to be migratory, and which, in the case of *C. mearnsi* and *C. whiteheadi*, are endemic to the Philippines, would stray as far as Hong Kong.

Conclusions

There is considerable variation in the rump coloration of Himalayan Swiftlet. In terms of plumage, structure and size it is considered that Himalayan Swiftlet could account for individuals in any of the three categories. Edible Nest Swiftlet on the other hand, is very likely excluded from type 2, since no dark-rumped populations of this species occur close to Hong Kong. It is also probably excluded from type 1, since the subspecies of Edible Nest occurring closest to Hong Kong, *C.f. germani*, on Hainan Island, probably always displays a rump patch which is much paler than that of type 1. Edible Nest Swiftlet of the subspecies *C.f. germani* could, however, clearly account

for the type 3 bird, which is noted as having a conspicuously pale rump as well as being a medium-sized swiftlet with a distinct tail notch.

Appendix 1.

Descriptions of swiftlets recorded in Hong Kong

Type 1 (*Ho Chung Valley, Sai Kung, 14 January 1994*)

Shape and structure Typical swiftlets. Of similar general proportions to House Swift, with which they were directly compared, although slimmer in both wing and body. Body and wings generally appeared slim and elongated, with the head appearing rather small in proportion to the rest of the body. Tail mostly appeared square ended, except when fanned, but on some views a shallow notch to the closed tail could be seen. Flight action fluttery, with periods of gliding on bowed wings.

Size Smaller than House Swift, but not greatly so, and initially difficult to pick out from the House Swift flock in which they were found.

Upperparts Head blackish, a capped effect visible on some views, but not readily seen. Mantle, back and upper wing coverts also blackish, although the back and mantle were perhaps slightly lighter than the head and upperwing coverts. Steel-blue tinge to the head, mantle, back and upperwing coverts was apparent on some views. Dark brown remiges. Rump light smoky grey-brown, obviously lighter than the rest of the upperparts. Tail black.

Underparts Throat and sides of head and neck blackish, although sides of the head and neck must have been lighter than crown to cause the capped effect described above. Breast, belly and flanks light smoky grey-brown, this colour joined to and concolorous with the smoky grey-brown of the rump. No sharp demarcation in colour between the head and the underbody, rather a gradation from dark head to lighter underbody. Underwing coverts dark, contrasting with remiges which were brown and slightly translucent against the light. Tail black.

Type 2 (*Mai Po, 20 March 1993*)

Shape and structure A large swiftlet, only slightly smaller than House Swift. Structure and flight very different to House Swift: wings narrower and held further forward to give a shape rather more reminiscent of Pacific Swift; wings did not pinch in at the body as in House Swift, giving the wing a broad-based structure, quite different to that of a typical swiftlet. Frequently seen gliding with wings held angled down below level of the body. When gliding it would twist entire body to change direction, almost throwing itself from side to side rather than changing the angle of the wings to the body. When flapping, wing beats typically jerky and wings not raised above the angle of the body in a manner reminiscent of a Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*. Body distinctly front heavy and quite chunky while rear end tapered quite uniformly behind the wings, unlike the House Swifts which invariably showed a pinched effect at the base of the tail. Tail very slightly notched but, on the rare occasions when the bird soared with other swifts, it would spread its tail and the notch would disappear completely, the tail then appearing very square cut.

Head of this bird seemed larger in proportion to body size than that of a typical swiftlet and also somewhat bulbous.

Size Probably 5-10% smaller than a House Swift.

Upperparts Crown blackish, coming down to the eyes, but not below, contrasting with paler ear coverts which swept round onto sides of nape. Pale sides to the nape did not extend onto the centre of nape. Entire upperparts uniform blackish-brown, including the nape and rump.

Underparts Throat marginally paler than ear coverts but not as pale as throat of House Swift. Breast and belly dull brown and uniform. Underside of primaries and secondaries slightly paler than body and underwing coverts. Trailing edge of secondaries and inner primaries distinctly paler than base of the secondaries and outer primaries, but the contrast was not clearly marked, rather an ill-defined gradation and the effect was rather translucent. This pale trailing edge to the secondaries and inner primaries probably the most conspicuous feature of the bird.

Type 3 (Mount Davis, 8 April 1990)

Shape and structure Small swift, conspicuously smaller than a House Swift, but with noticeably deeper fork in tail. Glided for long periods without flapping on wings noticeably more angled down than House Swift. When flapping, it was more rapid than House Swift but, because wings were relatively long, it did not appear to be a particularly fluttery flight. Fork in tail largely disappeared when it was fully spread, but was very obvious when the tail was closed.

Size Body size similar to Barn Swallow (without tail streamers) but not actually seen directly alongside.

Upperparts Plumage rather nondescript. Dull greyish-brown both above and below, relieved only by paler rump. Rump patch greyish-white, paler than the mantle and tail, well-defined but narrower than House Swift, not extending onto body sides.

Underparts Uniform greyish-brown, as mantle; throat same colour as breast. Obvious contrast between darker, greyish-brown underwing coverts and paler, silvery-grey flight feathers.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Phil Chantler for providing a draft of sections of his forthcoming book on Swifts and Swiftlets. We would also like to thank Paul Leader and Angus Lamont for commenting on the first draft, and Geoff Carey for examining specimens at Academia Sinica. Both Paul and Geoff provided constant encouragement throughout the preparation of this paper. Thanks also to those who helped with references, notably Jim Hackett.

Plumage details were examined at the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, UK, Academia Sinica, Beijing, and the Institute of Zoology,

Kunming, China, and the Zoological Reference Collection, National University of Singapore. We are grateful to these institutions for allowing access to their collections.

直到 1994 年底，本港總共有六次金絲燕類 *Collocalia* 的紀錄。涉及的雀鳥可能屬於三個不同的品種。本文旨在分析這三個品種的特徵，尤其是著重比較短咀金絲燕 *Collocalia brevirostris* 和爪哇金絲燕 *C. fuciphaga*，因為兩者是最有可能在本港出現的。

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THE HISTORY AND STATUS OF EGRETRIES IN HONG KONG WITH NOTES ON THOSE IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA, GUANGDONG, CHINA

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Introduction

Many members of the family Ardeidae (herons and egrets) breed in colonies which can range in size from just a few pairs to up to several thousand (Hancock and Kushlan 1984). The first record of herons breeding in Hong Kong stated that there were several small colonies of Chinese Pond Herons *Ardeola bacchus* nesting in the small trees along the coast of the New Territories, but none on Hong Kong Island itself (Vaughan and Jones 1913).

In 1941 four colonies were known (Herklots 1941, 1953). The largest was at Hang Ha Po in Lam Tsuen valley where 'a hundred or two hundred' Night Herons *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Chinese Pond Herons, and Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* and Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* nested. The other colonies were on either side of the road at Sha Tau Kok and on Lantau Island. Herklots believed that there was another in the Kam Tin district but this was not visited. When the colonies were surveyed in 1972, only those at Sha Tau Kok and Yuen Long were recorded as still being in use (Murton 1972).

In 1954 when the Hong Kong Government conducted the first land-use survey, 70.3% (9,450ha) of the total agricultural land area was found to be under paddy (Wong 1986). These paddy were considered to be important feeding sites for Chinese Pond Herons, and Little and Cattle Egrets, which took frogs, fish and aquatic insects from the fields (Herklots 1953, Murton 1972). However, over the next 25 years as the money to be made from paddy declined and farmers moved into growing vegetables, the birds lost their paddy feeding habitat which apparently caused the disappearance of some colonies (Thrower 1984). A similar situation has been observed in Japan, where ardeid colonies disappeared when the nearby paddy feeding habitat decreased in area due to conversion to dry fields and there was an increase in chemical use on the paddy thus killing the birds' insect food (Narusue 1992).

Surveys of the numbers of nesting pairs of herons and egrets in the Territory were started by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society in 1958 and the results presented in its Annual Report. By 1975 these counts were stopped and did not begin again until 1989. Recent counts were made by visiting each colony at least once a month during the breeding season and taking the highest count of the number of nests for each species over that period.

The count data presented below should be seen as a minimum estimate of the actual number of breeding pairs of the various ardeid species in Hong Kong. This is because of the difficulty of making nest counts without excessive disturbance when many nests in some of the colonies may be hidden under the thick tree canopy. However, between-year changes in the number of breeding

pairs of an individual species or at a particular colony should reflect real changes, especially when the change takes place over a number of years and is in a constant direction.

Species Accounts

Note: percentage figures in brackets are proportions of the Hong Kong breeding population.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Although Hong Kong lies within the breeding range of Grey Heron according to Cheng (1987), breeding was not recorded until 1990 when a single nest was observed at the A Chau egretty in Starling Inlet (Young 1991). Since then, numbers have slowly increased and five nests were observed at the same egretty in 1993. In East/Southeast Asia the population is believed to be still high (up to a million individuals), but declining (Rose and Scott 1994). In Hong Kong, the average number recorded during the annual January Winter Waterfowl Count 1989-1995 was 1270 individuals.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*

The number of breeding pairs has fluctuated over the years, partly due to birds moving to new colony sites which may not be discovered for some time. One example is the site in the mangroves at Tsim Bei Tsui which had been in existence for two or three years before it was reported. As a result, there were fears that the species was declining in Hong Kong (Murton 1972, Thrower 1982), but this does not seem to be the case.

When records began in 1958 Chinese Pond Herons were the sole breeding species at Yim Tso Ha, which was also the most important site in the Territory for the species with 80 pairs (Anon 1959). Numbers remained high at this site throughout the 1960s and 1970s until 1977 when 145 individuals were recorded. Numbers then began to decline until 1991 when only one pair was recorded breeding.

From 1987 to 1990 there were two colonies in the mangroves at Tsim Bei Tsui holding approximately 150 pairs. These are now abandoned possibly because all the fish pond feeding habitat at Tin Shui Wai has been filled in for development. In 1994 158 breeding pairs were counted, with the most important colonies for the species being at Mai Po (71 pairs (45%)) and Ho Sheung Heung (62 pairs (39%)).

From 1989 to 1995 an average of 150 pairs of Chinese Pond Herons bred in Hong Kong, compared to an average during the annual January Winter Waterfowl Count 1989-1995 of 455 birds.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Herklots (1953) stated that Night Herons bred to a limited extent in the New Territories, such as at Hang Ha Po in Lam Tsuen valley, but also on Lantau Island. However, the first record by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society of Night Herons breeding was in 1972, when six individuals were found at Yim Tso Ha. The number of breeding pairs has increased since then with 484 pairs counted in 1994 and 396 pairs in 1995. The largest colony is

presently that in the intertidal mangroves at Tsim Bei Tsui, where an estimated 200 pairs (51%) were counted in 1994. Other important colonies of Night Herons are on A Chau (174 pairs (36%) in 1994), and Stonecutters Island (52 pairs (11%) in 1994).

From 1989-1995 an average of 255 pairs of Night Herons bred in Hong Kong compared to a maximum winter count during the same period of 2200 birds in January 1994. A realistic average winter high count over those five years cannot be calculated because in some years, if the Night Heron roost is not found, then their wintering population is greatly understated.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Little Egrets are the most common breeding ardeid species in Hong Kong with an average of 204 pairs breeding annually during 1989-1995, compared to the average winter high count over the same period of 1667 birds. This large difference is due to an influx of migrants into the Territory during winter.

In the 1950s Herklots (1953) wrote that the species nested annually in Lam Tsuen valley and elsewhere in Hong Kong. Since 1989 the main breeding colonies of Little Egrets have been in the Deep Bay area, with the actual sites having moved several times.

Although commonly seen around the Deep Bay wetlands, the species is declining in East/Southeast Asia, with an estimated population of 25,000-100,000 individuals (Rose and Scott 1994). The wintering population is equivalent to 1.7-6.7% of the regional population; therefore, the Deep Bay wetlands support a regionally important wintering population of the species, and so efforts should be made to protect their wetland feeding habitats in the area.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

The number of nesting pairs has been fairly constant since 1958 with 83 pairs breeding from 1989 to 1995. Although the majority of Cattle Egrets breed at Yim Tso Ha (77 nests (93%) in 1993), the species only colonized the site in 1963 when 6 pairs were recorded (Anon 1964). Previously, they were common at the now abandoned Wong Uk and Shan Pui colonies in Yuen Long. The Yim Tso Ha egretty was, however, abandoned in 1994 for the first time since detailed counts began in 1958, with the birds moving to the adjacent egretty at A Chau. The reason for this is unknown.

From 1989 to 1995 an average of 83 pairs of Cattle Egrets bred in Hong Kong, compared to an average January Winter Waterfowl Count total during the same period of 120 birds. This latter figure probably understates the true wintering population since Cattle Egrets also utilise areas away from Deep Bay and its immediate vicinity.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*

This is one of the least common breeding ardeid species in Hong Kong. Although the first breeding record was in 1959 at the Shan Pui colony, Yuen Long, the next was not until 1977 when one pair was found at Yim Tso

Ha. The number of breeding pairs has slowly increased in recent years, with 46 pairs recorded in 1994. Of these, 25 (54%) were at A Chau. This recent increase in the number of breeding pairs could be significant in view of the fact that their population in East Asia is believed to be less than 100,000 and declining (Rose and Scott 1994). From 1989 to 1995 the average winter count of Great Egrets was 547 birds, 0.5% of the regional population.

Swinhoe's Egret *Egretta eulophotes*

The number of breeding pairs of this endangered species reached a high of nine pairs in 1959 and 1960 at the Wong Uk and Shan Pui colonies (Anon 1960, 1961). By the 1980s however, only single birds were generally seen at Yim Tso Ha, Tsim Bei Tsui and Mai Po, and breeding was not proved. The last record of breeding was in 1982 at Yim Tso Ha when one pair was seen; it now occurs only as a passage migrant. A history of this species' breeding in Hong Kong is provided by Murton (1972).

A summary of the number of breeding pairs of the different ardeid species in Hong Kong over the past 37 years (Table 1) shows that while the numbers of breeding Chinese Pond Heron, Little Egret and Cattle Egret have fluctuated over the period, their numbers have stayed roughly constant. In the same period, the numbers of breeding Night Herons and Great Egrets have gradually increased, particularly that of the former. However, there have been no records of Chinese Egrets breeding since 1974.

Table 1. Numbers of nesting pairs of ardeids in Hong Kong from 1958 to 1974 and 1989 to 1995.

Year	Species						
	GH	CPH	NH	LE	CE	GE	SE
1958	—	244+	—	177-200	85	—	3+
1959	—	200	—	114	56	1	9
1960	—	170	—	72	71	—	9
1963	—	145*	—	14*	32	—	1*
1966	—	105*	—	31*	31*	—	2*
1967	—	?	—	50*	50*	—	1*
1968	—	50+*	—	50+*	40+*	—	2*
1969	—	180	—	180	105	—	3
1970	—	15*	—	25*	92*	—	3*
1971	—	131	—	220-270	150*	—	2*
1972	—	?	?	30+	54+	—	1*
1974	—	67+	8+	190+	44+	—	1
1989	—	181	90	94	84	—	—
1990	1	167	97	106	80	4	—
1991	—	153	199	100	107	6	—
1993	5	95	265	272	88	29	—
1994	1	171	485	319	85	46	—
1995	—	136	396	334	53	23	—

Extant colonies in Hong Kong

Records exist of the number of herons and egrets breeding in Hong Kong since the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society began counts of the number pairs in known colonies in 1958. However, there was no information on the conservation status of each of the colonies, nor is it likely that these counts covered all colonies; further, from the early 1960s the recorders did not give quantitative counts of the number of breeding birds but, instead, drew general conclusions.

Each of the currently known colonies in Hong Kong is listed below, with short notes on status. A year-by-year breakdown of colony use is provided in Table 3 (Appendix 1), and a location map is provided in figure 1.

Location: **Sha Ling**

Status: None at present

Description: The colony was first recorded in 1995 and is within the Frontier Closed Area (FCA) close to the Lok Ma Chau border crossing.

Location: **Ho Sheung Heung**

Status: None at present

Description: The colony was first recorded in 1994 and is spread out amongst bamboo growing by the side of a small road leading from Ho Sheung Heung to Ma Tso Lung.

Notes: Birds from this colony have been observed flying to the fish ponds on the northern side of the Shenzhen River, presumably to feed (P.J. Leader pers. comm.), but this area of ponds will be lost as part of the Shenzhen River Training Project. Other threats to this colony include infilling of the birds' wetland feeding habitats at Long Valley and cutting of the bamboo in which the birds nest.

Location: **Mai Po Village**

Status: SSSI

Description: The site is located in a *fung shui* wood and associated bamboo on a hill alongside Castle Peak Road by Mai Po Village.

Notes: The colony has been in use since at least the late 1950s, but a significant number of breeding birds was not recorded until the late 1970s. It has been suggested that this increase is due to birds abandoning the Lok Ma Chau colony and moving to Mai Po (D.S. Melville pers. comm.).

Recent studies have shown that Little Egrets and Chinese Pond Herons will fly on average about 1.5km from the colony site to feed, and that over 50% of these birds will feed around the fish ponds between the colony and Mai Po Nature Reserve (Wong 1990, Pearson 1993, Young 1994). The reason for the use of fish ponds is related to the low amount of oxygen in the pond water in early summer mornings, forcing small Mosquito Fish *Gambusia affinis* to come to the surface to breathe. This then

allows herons and egrets foraging by the pond side a greater chance of prey capture (Britton 1993, Young 1994).

The colony has been disturbed at various times throughout its history. The eastern side of the hill was cut away for construction of the Northwest New Territories Circular Road between 1987 and 1989, and much dust blew from the work site to the colony; bamboo stands by Mai Po Village where Chinese Pond Herons nested were removed to make way for a brick *fung shui* wall during winter 1988; a drainage channel was constructed under the colony in spring/summer 1990; and new telephone cables were laid under the colony in spring 1993. In recent years, it has also been affected by the spread of climbers (principally *Ipomoea* spp.) covering the nesting trees.

The most immediate threat is from the loss of the birds' fish pond feeding habitat due to infilling for development and the associated disturbance. Over the past 14 years, as the area of wetland, primarily fish ponds, around the colony has declined, the number of breeding Little Egrets (for years when data are available) has also declined (see figure 2.). Similar trends for breeding ardeids in other parts of the world have also been recorded when wetland feeding habitat near a colony is destroyed (Fasola and Barbieri 1978, Gibbs *et al.* 1987, Gibbs 1991, Hafner *et al.* 1987).

This demonstrates the importance of protecting the birds' wetland feeding habitat and reducing disturbance to the colony itself during the breeding season.

Location: **Mai Po Nature Reserve**

Status: SSSI

Description: In 1993 the colony was situated in the mangroves at the landward end of *gei wai* 12. It was only separated by 30-40m from a public footpath which may have caused a degree of disturbance from visitors to the reserve. In 1994 the colony moved to *gei wai* 21 which is much less disturbed and there was a large increase in the number of breeding birds. This increase may have been due to birds abandoning the Mai Po Village colony and moving into the reserve.

Notes: In autumn 1994 the mangroves in *gei wai* 21 began to die most probably due to drowning as the water level was kept high for most of the time by the private operator. WWF Hong Kong took over management of this *gei wai* in spring 1995 and has since initiated more suitable water level control, as well as a programme of mangrove planting to replace those that had died.

Location: **Tsim Bei Tsui**

Status: None at present

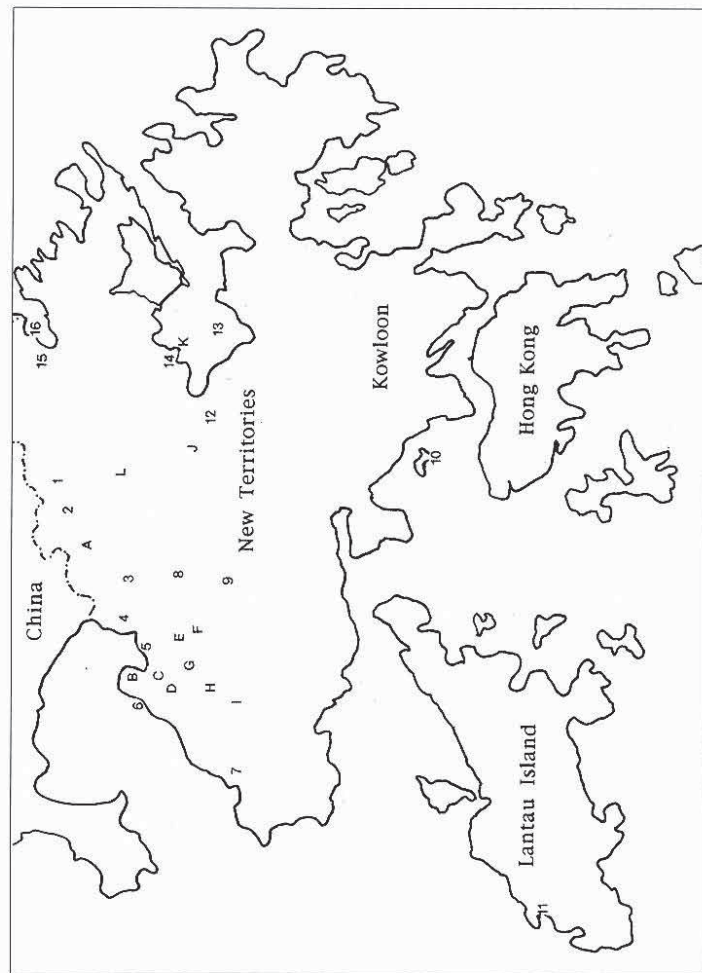
- Description: The colony was established in 1995 in the intertidal mangroves outside the FCA at Tsim Bei Tsui. A study at the colony has showed that the majority of breeding Little Egrets there fed in Deep Bay, but up to a quarter also fed along the edges of the nearby fish ponds (A. Cornish pers. comm.).
- Notes: The main threat to the colony is disturbance from earth-moving works taking place next to the colony as part of the Yuen Long-Kam Tin Drainage Improvement Project.
- Location: **Mong Tseng**
- Status: None at present
- Description: The colony was first identified in 1991 and may have been formed by birds moving from the abandoned Tsim Bei Tsui colony. It lies in a pine woodland next to a footpath and scattered village houses, and so may be affected by human disturbance.
- Location: **Pak Nai**
- Status: None at present
- Description: The colony was identified in 1995 at the end of the breeding season, preventing an accurate count of the number of nesting pairs; however, Little Egrets and Chinese Pond Herons were recorded using the site. The colony is situated in a small mixed woodland on the landward side of Pak Nai Village, and many of the nesting birds presumably feed on the mudflat and along the tideline in front of the village.
- Location: **Ko Po**
- Status: None at present
- Description: The colony was first recorded in 1994 when birds were nesting in a number of bamboo clumps growing by Ko Po Village, Kam Tin. Although the bamboo was beginning to flower and die that year, in 1995 25 pairs of Chinese Pond Herons were found nesting in the dead bamboo still standing. Climbers have started to grow up the dead bamboo stems and, if left unchecked, they will eventually smother and kill it. The future of this colony is thus in doubt unless the climbers are controlled and bamboo replanting is undertaken.
- Location: **Ho Pui Village**
- Status: Conservation Area
- Description: The site is in a disused longan orchard which is now used as a private tree nursery. Breeding at the colony was first reported in 1989. The main threat to the colony comes from construction of the proposed Route 3 motorway and railway line which will be built close to the egretty and will result in the destruction of some of the birds fish pond feeding habitat.

- Location: **Stonecutters**
- Status: None, but on military land and so access is restricted.
- Description: The colony is situated in a low, south facing woodland, although the exact site has shifted somewhat in recent years probably due to disturbance from construction of the government dockyard.
- Notes: The Night Herons feed in Victoria Harbour, including around the island itself and very likely in the Sha Tin/Tolo Harbour area (G.J. Carey pers. comm.). Egrets are seen around the island all year and it is used as a winter roost by Little, Great and Reef Egrets *E. sacra* and Night Herons. Threats to the colony include increased human disturbance due to the island being linked up with the mainland, construction of the government dockyard and man-made changes in the coastline of the island where some birds feed.
- Location: **Tai Po**
- Status: SSSI
- Description: The colony was situated on a wooded hillside overlooking a secondary school by the side of Tai Po KCR station. In 1994 the birds moved one km away to a small planted area by Tolo Highway, but in 1995 they returned to the original site.
- Notes: Initial work has shown that the majority of breeding birds fly towards Tolo Harbour in search of food, but a few feed in the concrete lined river in front of the colony (LY pers. obs.).
- Location: **Centre Island**
- Status: None
- Description: A small island in Tolo Harbour.
- Notes: Only discovered in 1994, this colony had at least two, but possibly as many as ten, nests of Night Herons in 1994 and 30 birds (including 22 juveniles) in 1995. Little Egrets were also present in both years with 55 noted in 1995 (R.W. Lewthwaite pers. comm.). It is possible that the former colony at Sam Mun Tsai has moved here.
- Location: **Shuen Wan**
- Status: SSSI
- Description: The birds are breeding in a small wooded hill by the village of Shuen Wan next to Tolo Harbour. Potential threats include increased human disturbance and filling-in of the adjacent Shuen Wan marsh where many of the birds feed.
- Location: **Yim Tso Ha**
- Status: SSSI
- Description: A wooded island in Starling Inlet.
- Notes: This colony is the oldest in Hong Kong and has been in use since at least 1945 (Herklots 1953). It used to be the largest and

Figure 1. Location of past and present egrettries in Hong Kong.

Present colonies: 1-Shaling; 2-Ho Sheung Heung; 3-Mai Po Village; 4-Mai Po Nature Reserve; 5-Tsim Bei Tsui; 6-Mong Tseng; 7-Pak Nai; 8-Ko Po; 9-Ho Pui Village; 10-Stonecutters; 11-Tai O; 12-Tai Wan; 13-Centre Island; 14-Shuen Wan; 15-Yim Tso Ha; 16-A Chau.

Past colonies: A-Lok Ma Chau; B-Tsim Bei Tsui SSSI; C-Tsim Bei Tsui Mangroves; D-Luen Tak; E-Shan Pui; F-Wong Uk; G-Yuen Long; H-Hung Uk; I-Nai Wai; J-Hang Ha Po; K-Sam Mun Tsai; L-Sheung Shui.



one of the only known Cattle Egret colonies in the Territory. However, the number of breeding Cattle Egrets has decreased in recent years and the site was abandoned by all egret species in 1994. The reason for the decline is unknown, but may have been related to the loss of feeding habitat along the Fanling – Sha Tau Kok valley, where the majority (>90%) of Cattle Egrets in 1993 were found to fly in search of food, due to conversion of agricultural land to container storage areas.

Location: **A Chau**

Status: SSSI

Description: The site is a small island in Starling Inlet, near Yim Tso Ha.

Notes: This is the first colony to be established in the Territory each year, with birds returning as early as February, some two or three months before breeding birds return to Yim Tso Ha. There is also a clear pattern in the timing of nest establishment by the different species. Night Herons and Great Egrets are usually the first to return (in January/February), followed by Little Egrets (March) with Cattle Egrets last (April). A Chau was the first colony in Hong Kong where Grey Herons were recorded breeding (Young 1991).

Initial work has shown that the majority (>90%) of the breeding Night Herons fly to the fish ponds and streams in the nearby Nam Chung valley (about one km away) to collect food (LY pers. obs.). Threats include human disturbance to the colony, especially at low tide, when it is possible to walk across to the island. Other problems include the possible loss of the birds' fish pond feeding habitat at Nam Chung, and the marshes by Yim Tso Ha Village and Luk Keng.

Location: **Tai O, Lantau**

Status: None

Description: A wooded hillside on the northeast slope of Fu Shan.

Notes: Only discovered in 1995, this colony had at least twenty Little Egrets, ten Chinese Pond Herons and three Night Herons, though probably many more of the latter (G.J. Carey pers. comm.). This egretty was probably also present in summer 1994 (P.J. Hopkin pers. comm.). The birds feed in the intertidal and fish pond areas immediately around Tai O Village and also in Yi O bay further south. It is likely that some also feed in Tung Chung bay to the northeast.

This whole area is scheduled for redevelopment and so it would seem that the future of this colony is highly uncertain. Even if the trees supporting the egretty itself remain, the feeding areas immediately surrounding seem set to disappear.

Previous colonies in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society used to conduct surveys of the number of breeding herons and egrets in colonies in Hong Kong, but detailed

counts were restricted to a few years only. In addition, if a colony was abandoned, there was usually no explanation of the reason. A summary is presented in Table 4 (Appendix 1) of the number of breeding herons and egrets in now disused colonies in Hong Kong.

The Lok Ma Chau colony was located in a bamboo stand outside the FCA at Lok Ma Chau, but was abandoned in 1993. The number of breeding birds declined between 1974 and 1989, and it has been suggested that these birds moved to the Mai Po Village colony (D.S. Melville, pers. comm.). The reason for the abandonment may have been due to the infilling of the marsh at Lok Ma Chau for development of the vehicle border crossing to Shenzhen, but may also have been due to the infilling of the fish ponds on the Shenzhen side of the Shenzhen River for construction of the Fu Tian Industrial Zone.

Tsim Bei Tsui used to hold two colonies, one designated an SSSI and situated in a pine woodland at the top of a ridge overlooking the FCA Border Fence road at Tsim Bei Tsui, and the other in the mangroves by the FCA Border Fence. In 1989, many of the pine trees at the Tsim Bei Tsui SSSI site had begun to be covered by climbers and in 1990 the colony moved to an adjacent wooded cliff near the Tsim Bei Tsui Marine Police Station. This colony was abandoned in 1991 probably because the birds' fish pond feeding habitats at Tin Shui Wai had been filled in for development of the new town. The second colony was also abandoned in 1991 due to earth-moving works immediately adjacent to the colony site, as well as predation of the eggs and chicks by people and birds, e.g. Magpies *Pica pica* and Greater Coucals *Centropus sinensis*.

In the late 1950s the known ardeid breeding colonies around Deep Bay (Hung Uk Tsuen, Luen Tak Marshes, Nai Wai, Shan Pui and Wong Uk) were located close to Yuen Long (Fig 2). Murton (1972) suggested that two colonies particularly close to Yuen Long, probably Shan Uk and Wong Uk, were abandoned in 1962 due to disturbance from expansion of the nearby town. This was a considerable loss at the time because these two colonies held up to ten pairs of the endangered Chinese Egret. In 1969, however, another colony was found 'close' to Yuen Long which held one pair of Chinese Egret and birds were reported to have been breeding there for 5-6 years by the land owner.

A 1961 Government agricultural land-use map (R7941, G45) shows that much of the land around the Yuen Long colonies was either under rice cultivation or was still unreclaimed intertidal marsh. This agrees with the suggestion that paddy were an important feeding habitat for herons and egrets (Herklots 1953), causing breeding birds establish a colony near their food supply. The subsequent loss of these wetlands due to agricultural change and reclamation of the coastline would therefore have caused the disappearance of these colonies (Thrower 1984). Experience in Japan has shown that paddy around colonies are an important habitat, providing aquatic prey for breeding herons and egrets, and that as the area of paddy declines, then so does the number of breeding pairs at a colony (Narusue 1992).

The Sam Mun Tsai colony was on a small wooded island by Sam Mun Tsai New Village, between Tai Po and Plover Cove. The reason why it was abandoned in 1992 is not known, but may be due to the nesting trees being

badly covered by climbers. It seems that birds may then have moved to Centre Island, Tolo Harbour.

Egretries in the Pearl River Delta

The wetlands of the 41,596km² Pearl River Delta constitute the largest such area in southern China. The area of wetland is dominated by fish ponds which cover approximately 28,300ha or 283km² (Chang 1987). Due to reports by officials from the Ministry of Forestry in Guangzhou and Hong Kong birdwatchers surveys were conducted in July 1994 and June 1995 by the authors together with Forestry officials to check on the status of these colonies.

Colonies at the following sites were visited: Liu Hua Gardens (Liu Hua Gong Yuan), Hok Chau (He Chao), Bird Paradise (Xiao Niao Tian Tang), Wong Po (Wang Pu) and Di Shui Am (Di Shui Yan) (see figure 3.); the total numbers of breeding pairs of ardeids are provided in table 2. Another colony near Foshan was reported (Ng C.N. pers. comm.) but not visited.

Table 2. Minimum number of breeding pairs of ardeids in colonies around the Pearl River Delta and Deep Bay in 1995.

location	NH	CPH	LE	CE	number of colonies
Pearl River Delta	855	40	14	1	6
Deep Bay	203	124	270	4	7

At Hok Chau and Wong Po the villagers have been collecting the young chicks for food for over 25 years. The system of harvesting appeared to be controlled and is presumably sustainable, otherwise the birds would not still be returning to the colony to nest each year. In fact, the villagers reported that the birds remain at the colony site all year round, in contrast to Hong Kong where separate roost sites are used outside the breeding season.

One of the main threats to these colonies appears to be the infilling of wetland feeding habitat due to rapid urbanisation in the Delta. Since 1979 the Delta has become one of the fastest growing areas in China but at the cost of approximately 1% of its agricultural land, including wetlands such as fish ponds, each year (Chau 1994).

Other threats to the birds include adults being shot or trapped as they are feeding in areas frequented by other villagers. Hunting may also explain why more Night Herons were counted in the survey than any other ardeid species, since they are nocturnal feeders and so have a lower risk of being shot compared to day-feeding ardeids. This is supported by the fact that compared with Deep Bay, there are many fewer nesting pairs of Chinese Pond Herons and Little Egrets in egretries around the Pearl River Delta. This serves to underline the importance of conserving egretries around Deep Bay.

Conservation of heronries in Hong Kong

History has shown that heronries in Hong Kong are greatly affected by either disturbance to the site itself, such as the two colonies in Yuen Long which were abandoned in 1962 because of disturbance from local development

(Murton 1972), or from loss of nearby wetland feeding habitat, such as the abandonment of the Tsim Bei Tsui SSSI when the fish ponds at Tin Shui Wai were filled in (Young 1994). However, in the past there were alternative sites with suitable areas of wetland feeding habitat nearby to which birds could move, e.g. inter-tidal marshes or man-made wetlands such as paddy, gei wai or fish ponds.

Historically, colonies in Hong Kong tended to be located inland, e.g. at Hang Ha Po, Sheung Shui, Shan Pui, Wong Uk, Hung Uk Tsuen and Nai Wai, and as these areas became more urbanized or the wetland feeding habitats disappeared, then the colony moved to the coast where there was less disturbance. In Taiwan, a similar trend was noted as ardeid colonies moved towards the coast due to urbanization of the interior (Yen 1992).

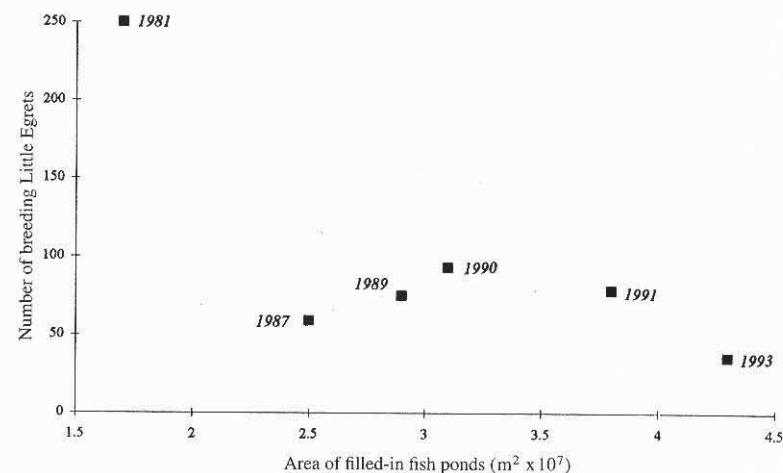
The ability of ardeids to move to alternative colony sites is probably the reason why the numbers of breeding Chinese Pond Herons, Little Egrets and Cattle Egrets in Hong Kong have remained relatively constant over the past few decades, despite the colony sites themselves having changed.

However, the remaining areas of wetlands in the Territory are disappearing at an increasing rate due to infilling for development. From 1985 to 1994 approximately 750 ha (40%) of fish ponds around Deep Bay alone were lost and, if current proposed developments around Deep Bay proceed, then an additional 42% of the remaining fish ponds will be lost (Melville *et al.* 1994).

Work at the Mai Po egretty has shown that the number of Little Egrets breeding at the site is related to the area of wetland feeding habitat around the colony (see figure 2). This is similar to the results of studies abroad which have shown that the diversity and number of heron and egret species breeding at a colony is dependent on the diversity and area respectively of feeding habitats around the colony site (Fasola and Barbieri 1978, Gibbs *et al.* 1987, Gibbs 1991, Hafner *et al.* 1987). Therefore, it is essential to identify and then protect feeding sites around a colony if it is to survive. Recent studies at the Mai Po Egretty SSSI have shown that the fish ponds in front of the colony are the main feeding habitat for breeding Little Egrets and Chinese Pond Herons (Wong 1990, Pearson 1993, Young 1994). These studies have also shown that breeding birds will fly as far as 3km away from the colony to find food. If circles of 3km radius are drawn around each of the colonies in the Deep Bay area to indicate the area of feeding habitat required around each colony, then all the wetlands (fish ponds) around the Mai Po Marshes would be covered (Melville *et al.* 1994). Recently there has been much debate concerning the ecological importance of fish ponds between developers, Government and conservationists, and how they should be managed in future (viz. Chu 1995).

Under the Planning Department's Outline Zoning Plans, the eleven known active breeding colonies of herons and egrets have been given varying degrees of protection. Six have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), one has been designated as a Conservation Area and three have not been given any conservation status at all. This is principally because they have only been recently been recorded and so there has not been enough time

Figure 2. Correlation of number of breeding pairs of Little Egrets at Mai Po Village SSSI with surrounding area of filled-in fish ponds around the egretty 1981-1993.



to assign the correct status. Given the mobility of ardeid colonies as shown from historical evidence and the slow pace at which legal protection is given, it would be better if more flexibility could be shown so that sites can be granted immediate protection as soon as they are used as a breeding colony, and that protection of the site is also extended to the period outside the breeding season.

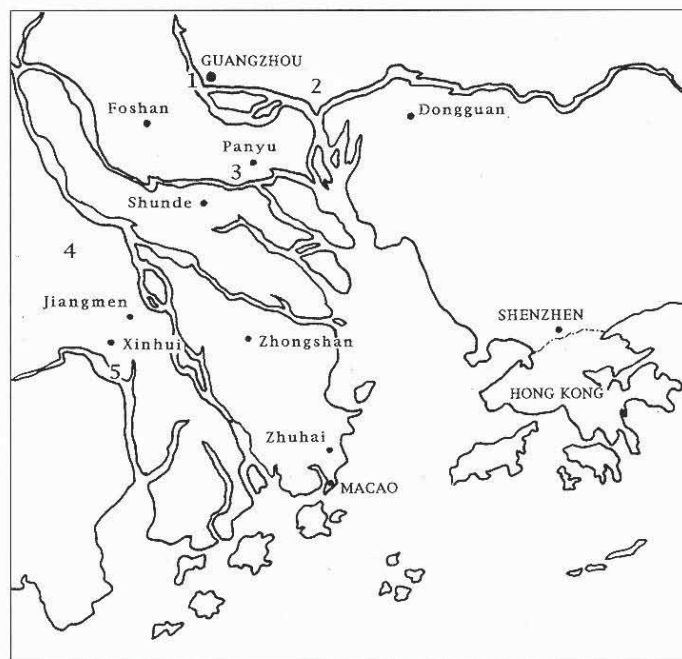
Apart from loss of wetland feeding habitat, the trees used for nesting at many breeding colonies are increasingly affected by climbers (principally *Ipomoea* spp.). These climbers will eventually smother and kill the trees and need to be controlled by cutting. In 1986 staff from the Agriculture and Fisheries Department cut back the climbers at the Mai Po Village SSSI but this will have to be repeated if the site is to remain clear.

From 1989 to 1995 an average of at least 258 pairs of Little Egrets bred in the colonies on the Hong side of Deep Bay. If there are between 25,000-100,000 Little Egrets in East/Southeast Asia (Rose and Scott 1994), then Deep Bay holds 0.3-1.0% of the regional breeding population of the species. However, this percentage is almost certainly higher since amongst the estimated 25,000-100,000 individuals, some will be non-breeders. Therefore, egrettries around Deep Bay and other parts of Hong Kong are important in a regional context, and the recent decision by the Hong Kong Government to designate the Deep Bay/Mai Po area as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention will, hopefully, ensure the sustainable use of these wetlands and their long-term protection.

It should be remembered that one of the criteria for designating wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention is that the site should hold '... 1% of the individuals in a population of one species ... of waterfowl ...' (Davis 1994). If this criterion were applied to Little Egrets and the wetlands around Deep Bay, including all the areas of fish ponds, then the large number of breeding Little Egrets alone would be sufficient to allow the site to be designated a 'Ramsar Site'.

By using Little Egrets as a 'flag-ship' species for conservation of the Deep Bay wetlands, many other wildlife species dependent on these habitats will also be protected. Apart from the conservation of existing habitats and land-uses within the new Ramsar area, there will also be opportunities for management of these wetlands so that they can support greater numbers of wildlife. This area can also provide people with areas for recreation and environmental education, as is being done at the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve. This is an ideal opportunity for Government to take the initiative and show the local and international community that it does care about the wetlands and the environment in Hong Kong.

Figure 3. Location of egrettries in the Pearl River Delta surveyed during 1994 and 1995.



1 - Liu Hua Gardens; 2 - Wong Po; 3 - Di Shui Am; 4 - Hok Chau; 5 - Bird Paradise

Appendix 1.

Table 3. Numbers of breeding pairs of ardeids in extant colonies in Hong Kong

Site	Year	Species						
		GH	CPH	NH	LE	CE	GE	SE
Sha Ling	1995	—	y	—	y	—	—	—
H.S.H.	1994	—	62	—	3	—	—	—
	1995	—	65	—	12	5	—	—
	1996	—	65	—	12	5	—	—
Mai Po Village	1958	—	3	—	2	—	—	—
	1959	—	4	—	—	—	—	—
	1960	—	11	—	—	—	—	—
	1974	—	5	—	12	3-4	—	—
	1976	—	10	—	y	y	—	—
	1977	—	?	y	200	?	—	—
	1981	—	30+	—	2-300	—	—	—
	1982	—	40+	—	100+	3+	—	—
	1983	—	y	—	y	—	—	—
	1986	—	80	100	130	60	—	—
	1987	—	120	125	60	180	—	—
	1988	—	150	160	90	120	—	—
	1989	—	28	y	76	1	—	—
	1990	—	17	y	94	4	—	—
	1991	—	70	2	78	y	—	—
	1993	—	75	y	36	y	—	—
	1994	—	71	2	14	4	—	—
	1995	—	65	3	30	4	—	—
Mai Po Nature Reserve	1993	—	—	25	8	—	—	—
	1994	—	y	253	171	y	13	—
	1995	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TBT	1995	—	5	200	300	20	5	—
Mong Tseng	1993	—	—	—	150	—	—	—
	1994	—	13	y	110	13	8	—
Pak Nai	1995	—	y	—	y	—	—	—
Ko Po	1994	—	y	—	y	y	—	—
	1995	—	25	—	—	—	—	—
	1996	—	25	—	—	—	—	—
Ho Pui Village	1991	—	32	—	13	y	—	—
	1994	—	25	—	y	y	—	—
	1995	—	12	—	y	4	—	—
Stone-cutters	1990	—	—	47	—	—	—	—
	1991	—	—	60	—	—	—	—
	1992	—	—	120	—	—	—	—
	1993	—	—	93	—	5	—	—
	1994	—	—	53	3	—	—	—
	1995	—	—	58	14	5	—	—
Tai Po	1989	—	1	30	1	—	—	—
	1991	—	y	28	—	—	—	—
	1993	—	y	4	36	6	y	—
	1994	—	y	3	18	—	—	—
	1995	—	y	1	32	1	—	—

Table 3. (cont.)

Site	Year	Species						
Centre Island	1994	—	—	2	y	—	—	—
	1995	—	—	30*	55*	—	—	—
Shuen Wan	1991	—	50	50	100-150		—	—
	1992	—	50*	50-80*	140*	165*	40*	—
	1993	—	20	15-20	20	272	10-20	—
	1994	—	118*	72*	142*	353*	59*	—
	1995	—	64*	11*	141*	50*	44*	—
Yim Tso Ha	1958	—	80	—	—	—	—	—
	1959	—	72	—	—	—	—	—
	1960	—	70	—	—	—	—	—
	1963	—	?	?	?	6	—	1+
	1965	—	145	—	14	26	—	1
	1966	—	103	—	31	31	—	2
	1967	—	?	—	50+	50+	—	1
	1968	—	50+	—	50+	40+	—	2
	1969	—	150	—	150	100	—	2
	1970	—	189	—	25	256	—	3
	1971	—	100	—	150-200	150	—	2
	1972	—	?	y	?	?	—	1
	1974	—	y	y	150	y	—	1
	1975	—	y	y	y	y	—	2
	1976	—	40-50	y	y	y	—	y
	1977	—	145	y	y	y	1	1
	1978	—	y	3+	y	y	—	y
	1979	—	y	y	y	y	3	1
	1980	—	y	y	y	y	y	1
	1981	—	30+	30	20	150+	—	y
	1982	—	20	y	20	50	1	1
	1983	—	?	?	y	?	?	y
	1989	—	2	y	y	77	y	—
	1990	—	y	y	2	75	y	—
	1991	—	1	6	3	106	—	—
	1993	—	—	46	11	77	2	—
	1994	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1995	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
A Chau	1981	—	?	3+	?	y	1-4	—
	1982	—	?	y	?	25	1	—
	1983	—	?	y	y	—	y	—
	1989	y	y	60	17	6	y	—
	1990	1	y	50	10	1	4	—
	1991	y	—	53	6	1	6	—
	1993	5	—	82	11	y	17	—
	1994	1	y	174	3	68	25	—
	1995	—	—	137	18	34	23	—
Tai O	1995	—	10	3	20	—	—	—

Table 4. Numbers of breeding pairs of ardeids in disused colonies in Hong Kong

Site	Year	Species						
		GH	CPH	NH	LE	CE	GE	SE
Lok Ma Chau	1971	—	30	—	—	—	—	—
	1974	—	60	—	150	40	—	—
	1989	—	7	—	5	11	—	—
	1990	—	7	y	5	11	—	—
	1991	—	6	—	11	5	—	—
	1994	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
TBT SSSI	1989	—	—	—	226	23	—	—
	1990	—	—	—	78	—	—	—
TBT Mangr.	1989	—	150	—	—	—	—	—
	1990	—	150	—	—	—	—	—
Luen Tak	1958	—	2	—	—	—	—	—
Shan Pui	1958	—	50	—	100-150	25	—	?
	1959	—	9+	—	90	28	1	5
	1960	—	7	—	52	47	—	4
Wong Uk	1958	—	100	—	75	60	—	2-3
	1959	—	60	—	24	28	—	4
	1960	—	12	—	20	24	—	5
Yuen Long	1969	—	30	—	30	5	—	1
Hung Uk	1959	—	30	—	—	—	—	—
	1960	—	30	—	—	—	—	—
Hang Ha Po	1958	—	3-5	—	—	—	—	—
	1959	—	1?	—	—	—	—	—
Sam Mun Tsai	1990	—	2	1	7	—	2	—
	1991	—	10	9	13	—	4	—
Sheung Shui	1958	—	?	—	—	—	—	—
	1959	—	25	—	—	—	—	—
	1960	—	60	—	—	—	—	—

Key to tables: GH = Grey Heron, CPH = Chinese Pond Heron, NH = Night Heron, LE = Little Egret, CE = Cattle Egret, GE = Great Egret, SE = Chinese Egret, + = minimum number, y = birds present but nests not recorded or numbers estimated, — = not breeding, ? = breeding unknown, * number of individuals not number of breeding pairs. HSH = Ho Sheung Heung, TBT = Tsim Bei Tsui.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks go to the following for their invaluable help at various stages in the production of this paper: A. Benton, G.J. Carey, M.L. Chalmers, K.W.H. Chu, A. Cornish, Gao Y.R., P.J. Hopkin, Maj. R. Illingworth, D. Lam (HK Government Planning Dept.), P.J. Leader, R. Lewthwaite, D.S. Melville, Ng C.N., C. Viney, G. Walthew and T. Woodward. We would also like to thank the Guangdong Forestry Department for providing essential support that allowed the egret surveys in the Pearl River Delta to be conducted.

本文分析香港鷺科雀鳥和鷺鳥林過去及目前的情況：各個品種的繁殖歷程、各個具規模的鷺鳥林的位置和狀況等，即使已被鷺鳥放棄的地點，也有論及。此外，作者也曾勘察珠江三角洲一帶鷺鳥林的位置和鷺鳥數量。最後，亦提出保護鷺鳥林的重要性及有關建議。

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Chinese Pond Heron eating a Swallow

On the morning of 17 January 1994 a Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* was seen to eat a Swallow *Hirundo rustica* at Mai Po. It was low tide in Deep Bay and the heron was standing on the mudflat in front of the boardwalk hide. It was seen to pick the live Swallow from the exposed, but still wet, mud surface. It then spent some five minutes holding the Swallow in its bill and occasionally trying to swallow it before eventually succeeding, evidently with some discomfort.

It is not known how the Swallow came to be on the mudflat. However, a weak cold front had reached Hong Kong on 14 January causing the mean temperature to drop 4.1°C and food may have been scarce, thus weakening the bird.

There appear to be no previous records of Chinese Pond Herons, or the closely related Squacco *A. ralloides*, Indian *A. grayii* and Javan *A. speciosa* Pond Herons eating birds (Ali and Ripley 1983, Cramp and Simmons 1977, Hancock and Elliott 1978, Voisin 1991), although other larger ardeids are known to take small birds occasionally (Cramp and Simmons 1977, Voisin 1991).

I would like to thank C.Y. Lam for providing meteorological information.

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Hobby nesting at Ho Sheung Heung, the first breeding record for Hong Kong

Up to recently Hobby *Falco subbuteo* has been regarded primarily as a passage migrant in Hong Kong with passage periods from late March to late April, and late September to late October, though with occasional winter records (Chalmers 1986). However, in 1991, two records of single birds in the Lok Ma Chau area on 27 May and 12 July, and three birds, including one juvenile, at Chek Keng on 16 October raised the possibility that breeding might be occurring in the Territory (Leven and Carey 1992). In 1993 further records up to 27 June of single adults in the Deep Bay area and at Ping Yeung provided further evidence for this (Leven *et al.* 1994).

On 10 May 1994, in the course of a routine survey in Long Valley, I came upon two adult Hobbies near the village of Ho Sheung Heung, near Sheung Shui. They were perched beside an old Magpie *Pica pica* nest built on the maintenance platform at the top of an electricity pylon. One or two adults continued to be seen at the nest throughout May, June and July. On a visit to the site on 11 August I was greeted by the spectacle of an adult hunting low over the fields and, later, at the nest, the sight of four birds, at least two of them juveniles. I did not return until 20 August when there was still one bird beside the nest. No birds were present when the site was revisited on 2 September.

Such a record should come as no surprise because, in addition to the more recent observations listed above, Herklots (1967) relates that 'in recent years birds, usually single, have been recorded for almost every month of the year from the New Territories'; in addition, Dove and Goodhart (1955) concluded from their own records that Hobbies bred somewhere in Long Valley.

Hobbies breed throughout mainland China and are resident in Guangdong province (Cheng 1987), although Vaughan and Jones (1913) state that it was uncommon on the coast. The latter authors also relate that in Guangdong Hobbies usually breed in the old nest of a Magpie or Collared Crow *Corvus torquatus*. Two to four eggs (usually three) are laid, and these are incubated for 28 to 30 days, and the young fledge after a further 28 to 34 days (Cramp and Simmons 1980). This would probably make the laying date of the Ho Sheung Heung birds the beginning of June.

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Peregrine and Tree Sparrow feeding at night

At c.2030h (1½ hours after dark) on 27 April 1994 a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* was seen flying alongside high rise blocks at the southern end of Kowloon peninsula in Tsim Sha Tsui. It was seen to chase a Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* but without success. Shortly afterwards however, a Slaty-legged Crake *Rallina eurizonoides* fell on to the road between two high rise buildings near to where the Peregrine was seen hunting. The crake was able to run but was stunned and we were able to catch it. It was kept in a box overnight, ringed and released the next morning by D.S. Melville.

On the same evening at c.2115h a Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* was seen to fly from a ventilation louvre from which nest material protruded, about 10m above the ground. It flew to the ground where, on the pavement, it found a presumed food item, spent several seconds positioning it in its bill and then flew back to the ventilation louvre. On its return chicks were heard calling from the nest, suggesting that the sparrow was feeding its young.

At the time of these observations the night was moonless but the area was well illuminated by city lights. While birds have been recorded singing in well-lit urban areas, there appear to be few observations of diurnal birds feeding at night (Martin 1990). The observation of nocturnal hunting by a Peregrine is particularly interesting since Falconiform raptors are generally considered to be diurnal (Brown and Amadon 1968), although some, including Peregrines, sometimes migrate by night (Enderson 1965, Cochran 1985, Russell 1991), and Peregrines hunt in low light at dusk (Beebe 1960, Clunie 1976). Some small falcons regularly feed at dusk, especially on insects, and Hobbies *F. subbuteo* and Kestrels *F. tinnunculus* sometimes feed by moonlight, while Lesser Kestrels *F. naumanni* are attracted to insects around artificial light (Cramp and Simmons 1980), but this record of Peregrine hunting by artificial light at night appears to be the first for this species. (Martin [1990] erroneously reported Clunie [1976] as recording Peregrines hunting by artificial light when in actual fact Clunie referred to Beebe's (1960) observation of Peregrines coming to lures in the light of car head lamps, and Beebe thought that Peregrines fed on seabirds at night). Generally, diurnal birds that have been seen feeding at night have done so in open spaces (Martin 1990), and our observation of a Peregrine foraging among high rise blocks appears exceptional. The urban lighting in Kowloon may disorientate migrating birds providing Peregrines with opportunities to catch them among buildings, along with Feral Pigeons which are frequently seen flying at night in cities.

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Possible breeding of Grey Wagtail in Hong Kong

On the morning of 3 July 1994 Vicky and Julia Melville and DSM observed two juvenile Grey Wagtails *Motacilla cinerea* at Shek Pik Reservoir, Lantau. One Grey Wagtail, which was disturbed from a stream running into the head of the Reservoir, flew off and its age could not be determined. Subsequently, two Grey Wagtails were found lower down the same stream and these allowed close approach. Both birds were juveniles, with buffy yellow on the throat and breast and bright yellow under tail coverts. The birds did not show any sign of a gape flange and thus may have been fledged for some time. No adult bird was seen with the juveniles.

The stream flowing into Shek Pik Reservoir is fast flowing and is supplemented by inflow from a catchwater tunnel which joins it a few hundred metres before it enters the reservoir. There are many rocks and boulders in the stream, which provide 'typical' Grey Wagtail habitat. No attempt was made to look for a nest, but suitable sites could have included weep holes in retaining walls beside the stream, amongst the roots of trees growing beside the stream and in old rock structures associated with the water catchment tunnel works (c.f. Baker 1934).

The Grey Wagtail breeds widely throughout the eastern Palearctic, and winters throughout southern China and southeast Asia to Indonesia and New Guinea (Cramp 1988, Dement'ev and Gladkov 1970). Cheng (1987) records the Grey Wagtail as breeding in north and central China, as far south as Sichuan and northern Anhui.

In Hong Kong the Grey Wagtail is recorded as a 'winter visitor and passage migrant' by Chalmers (1986), with extreme dates being until 31 May and from 17 July. There are, however, few late summer records in Hong Kong,

with most records being from late August onwards. Zheng *et al.* (1985) note that in Changbaishan laying started on 7 May and that the last young hatched on 10 July – presumably from a second or third brood, although this is not stated.

La Touche (1925-1930) gives no information on the breeding season in China. Caldwell and Caldwell (1931) record the Grey Wagtail breeding from 'late April on', although it is unclear whether this refers to birds in China or elsewhere. It is possible that birds recorded in July in Hong Kong could be early returning migrants from further north but, as noted above, the nearest known breeding range is over 1400km to the north (Anhui) or northwest (Sichuan).

The Grey Wagtail has expanded its range in Europe in the past century, where it now breeds in lowland as well as mountainous areas (Cramp 1988). There is little information from the east of its range. La Touche (1925-1930) recorded them breeding from 500m to the treeline in China. Brazil (1991) records the species breeding at sea level in northern Hokkaido, Japan.

There are a number of other summer records of Grey Wagtails from southern China. Viney (1987) recorded Grey Wagtails in early May at Nan Kun Shan Nature Reserve, northern Guangdong province, but noted that 'these are considered to be . . . migrant birds as the Reserve is well south of the known breeding range'. Yen (1932) recorded a female collected in northern Guangdong on 25 June 1930. A single bird was recorded during 11-16 June 1987 at Ba Bao Shan, northern Guangdong, (Lewthwaite pers. comm.).

Nine Grey Wagtails were recorded at about 2000m a.s.l., just below the summit of Huanggang Shan, Wuyi Shan area, Fujian province, on 29th and 31 May 1990, although none were recorded at Wuyi Shan between 29 May and 6 June 1986 (Lewthwaite *in litt.*). Neither were any recorded at Yao Shan, Guangxi province, 10-15 June 1994 (Carey *et al.* 1994). Yen (1934), however, noted that 'Quelques individus ont été observés et obtenus en plein été, ce qui prouve que, parmi les nombreux migrateurs, il y en a quelques-uns qui restent pour nicher' (in Guangxi).

Observers in Hong Kong and southern China recording Grey Wagtails in midsummer should carefully consider the possibility that the birds may be breeding in the area.

I am grateful to Richard Lewthwaite for providing information from sites in southern China.

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Striated Yuhina breeding in Hong Kong

On 23 April 1994, along the Amah Rock Fitness Trail near Sha Tin, I came across a family party of six Striated Yuhinas *Yuhina castaniceps* consisting of two adults feeding four young on black caterpillars. The birds were seen under the canopy of a low bush beside the catchwater at a distance of 4-10m. The juveniles, distinguished from the adults by their less well-developed, 'scraggy' crests and duller plumage, sat fluttering their wings begging for food. An adult bird had been seen at the same location a week prior.

Both on this date and at other times that I have seen the species in this area it has frequented bushes and scrub woodland rather than the taller mature trees at the western end of the fitness trail.

This is the first breeding record in Hong Kong although the species is seen commonly throughout the year at hill forest sites in Guangdong (Lewthwaite in prep.).

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Blue Magpie as foster-parent of Koel

On 27 August 1994, while birding in the late morning on a cool and damp day in the garden area at Mount Austin with Paul Carey, from a patch of thick woodland I heard a fairly loud call, persistently uttered, which I transcribed as a rather wheezy, slightly croaky *eah!* (like *yeah* without the *y*). The bird was shy and, on our approach, flew off across a lawn into another dense patch of woodland. As we crossed the lawn in pursuit, an adult Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha* flew off in the same direction as the calling bird, together with another bird which, on perching briefly, proved to be a juvenile Blue Magpie.

After careful approach we eventually clearly saw the calling bird, sitting mid canopy in a large tree about ten metres from us. It was a juvenile Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea* begging for food with its bill wide open. Close to the begging Koel was an adult Blue Magpie trying to subdue a large fleshy caterpillar-like creature by bashing it repeatedly against a perch, much in the manner of a kingfisher dealing with a fish. This took a few minutes before the Blue Magpie flew into the same tree as the juvenile Koel, whose begging cries became even more persistent and were accompanied by rapid wing-quivering. We then saw the Blue Magpie hop onto the same branch and pass the prey directly into the Koel's open bill.

During the next few minutes we saw an adult Blue Magpie once again bashing a prey item against a branch, this time for a second bird that was also begging loudly, though unseen. Whether this was the juvenile Blue Magpie seen minutes earlier or a second juvenile Koel was not certain though the call was the same wheezy *Eagh!*

Vaughan and Jones (1913) mention one species, Black-necked Starling *Sturnus nigricollis*, as a foster parent of this cuckoo in southern China. They observe that there is usually one egg, though two to four have been recorded, and there is no attempt by Koel chicks to eject other eggs or chicks from the nest; in addition, young Koels have frequently been seen being fed together with their foster siblings. Ali and Ripley (1987) state that in India Koel is brood-parasitic 'almost exclusively' on House Crow *Corvus splendens* and Jungle Crow *C. macrorhynchos*, and exceptionally on Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* and Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis*. They also note that there are frequent observations of adult Koel feeding juvenile Koel. This appears to be the first observation of a Koel being fostered by a Blue Magpie.

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GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF RECORDS

Recording

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

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

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

Rarities

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

Field identification techniques for species in the area still need refining and the Society has a Records Committee to assess records and ensure that a high standard of reporting is maintained. A list of species considered by the Committee is given below. The list may seem dauntingly long and includes some apparently unmistakeable species such as Oystercatcher but, nevertheless, field descriptions of the birds listed are required if the record is to be considered for publication. Ideally field notes of a rarity should cover the following points:

- Date, time and location of sighting.
- Power of binoculars/telescope used, distance of bird from the observer, weather and light conditions.
- Description of habitat and what other birds, if any, it was associating with.
- Angle of view and actions: at rest, in flight, swimming etc. The more varied the conditions the better.
- Its general size, shape and structure compared with other more familiar species. Structural features which may be important should be detailed e.g. bill length compared to length of head; relative position of wing tips to uppertail coverts; projection of primary tips beyond closed tertials; length of hind claw etc.
- The most detailed description possible of the plumage and bare parts, not just those parts thought to help in identification. This description should be logical and organised, and the following sequence is suggested:

- i) head
 - ii) upperparts
 - iii) wings, including underwing if seen
 - iv) tail, both upper and lower sides
 - v) underparts
 - vi) bare parts (iris, bill, gape if seen, legs and feet)
- g) Any calls, indicating especially the quality of the sound (harsh, rattling, shrill, hoarse, liquid etc.) and comparison with calls of other species.
- h) Notes on previous experience with the species or species with which it may be confused.
- i) Names of other observers present, if any.

More experienced observers will expand on features known to be critical e.g. extent and shape of supercilium and wing bars in warblers, pattern of scapular feathers in waders etc. A rough sketch or diagram is helpful. If possible try to get someone else to see the bird as two descriptions are better than one. Make sure that you take full field notes on the spot – it is all too easy to imagine field marks after consulting a book!

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

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

The following list of species for which written descriptions are required is based on the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong (Chalmers 1986) plus additions detailed in annual Hong Kong Bird Reports from 1984/85 onwards. In some cases brief notes added to the record cards describing the salient features, ranges and viewing conditions will suffice. However, full descriptions are required for the rarer or more difficult species, or any new species not yet on the Hong Kong List. In addition, the Recorder may request descriptions of other species under unusual circumstances. The list is subject to revision each year to include new species and delete those for which descriptions are no longer needed because of better defined status or fewer identification problems. Records of species new to Hong Kong require detailed written descriptions.

Records of species on the list below submitted without descriptions will not be considered

CATEGORY A

Red-necked Grebe
 Black-necked Grebe
 Streaked Shearwater
 all storm-petrels
 all frigatebirds
 Black Bittern
 Japanese Night Heron
 Glossy Ibis
 Lesser Treeduck
 all swans
 all geese
 Cotton Teal
 Ferruginous Duck
 Velvet Scoter
 Goldeneye
 Smew
 Crested Honey Buzzard
 Brahminy Kite
 Hen Harrier
 Pied Harrier
 identified accipiters except
 Crested and Chinese Goshawks
 Upland Buzzard
 Mountain Hawk Eagle
 Amur Falcon
 Merlin
 Saker Falcon
 all buttonquails
 Water Rail
 all crakes except Ruddy
 Purple Gallinule
 Common Crane
 Oystercatcher
 Long-billed Plover
 Ringed Plover
 Oriental Plover
 Pectoral Sandpiper
 Jack Snipe
 Long-billed Dowitcher
 Lesser Yellowlegs
 Grey Phalarope
 all skuas
 Relict Gull
 Slender-billed Gull
 Common Gull

Glaucous-winged Gull
 Glaucous Gull
 Kittiwake
 Greater Crested Tern
 Sooty Tern
 Ancient Auk
 Bar-tailed Cuckoo Dove
 White-bellied Green Pigeon
 Thick-billed Pigeon
 Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo
 Common Cuckoo
 all owls except Collared Scops
 and Barred Owlet
 Grey Nightjar
 all swiftlets
 Collared Kingfisher
 all woodpeckers
 Blue-throated Bee-eater
 Chinese Pitta
 Plain Martin
 all larks except Oriental
 Pechora Pipit
 Water Pipit
 Citrine Wagtail
 White Wagtail races except
 leucopsis and *ocularis*
 Rosy Minivet
 Brown Dipper
 Wren
 Japanese Robin
 Pied Wheatear
 White-capped Redstart
 White-throated Rock Thrush
 Chestnut-breasted Rock Thrush
 Slaty-backed Forktail
 Booted Warbler
 Pale-footed Bush Warbler
 Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler
 Brown Bush Warbler
 Bright-capped Cisticola
 Styan's Grasshopper Warbler
 Middendorff's Grasshopper Warb.
 Blunt-winged Warbler
 Paddyfield Warbler
 Blyth's Reed Warbler
 Thick-billed Warbler

Chestnut-crowned Warbler
 Fulvous-faced Flycatcher
 Warbler
 Two-barred Greenish Warbler
 Yellow-browed Warbler (*humei*)
 Chiffchaff
 Yellow-streaked Warbler
 Fukien Niltava
 Striated Yuhina
 Gould's Sunbird
 Plain Flowerpecker
 Tiger Shrike
 Daurian Jackdaw
 Carrion Crow
 Chestnut-cheeked Starling
 Rosy Starling
 Brambling
 Japanese Grosbeak
 Yellow-throated Bunting
 Yellow-browed Bunting
 Rustic Bunting
 all Reed Buntings

CATEGORY B

Ring-necked Pheasant
 Pygmy Wren Babbler

CATEGORY D

Emerald Cuckoo
 Blue-winged Pitta
 Singing Bushlark
 Greater Cuckoo Shrike
 Brown-breasted Bulbul
 Japanese Waxwing
 Bohemian Waxwing
 all Niltavas
 Pale Blue Flycatcher
 Blue-throated Flycatcher
 Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher
 Rufous-capped Babbler
 Grey-headed Parrotbill
 Grey-cheeked Fulvetta
 Ruddy Sparrow
 Burmese Shrike
 Pallas's Rosefinch
 Hawfinch
 Rock Bunting
 Meadow Bunting
 Grey-necked Bunting

CATEGORY E

all new species

CATEGORY F

all