

HKBWS AGM, 28 October 2015: Recorder's Report

Since the last AGM in October 2014, the **HKBWS Records Committee** (members Geoff Carey, Gary Chow, Paul Leader, Mike Leven, Richard Lewthwaite and Yu Yat Tung plus secretary Geoff Welch), has met on four occasions (28 Oct 2014, 12 Jan, 20 Apr, 1 Sep 2015), resulting in the changes listed below, which bring the main Hong Kong list (Cats I-II) to **535 species**.

Species added to Category I:

- **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos*. Two records accepted as wild: Tai Mo Shan on 25 December 2005 and Long Valley on 12 November 2014.
- **Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* off Po Toi on 17 May 2006.
- **Russett Sparrow** *Passer rutilans*. Following its regular appearance in autumn since 2011, sometimes in flocks and mainly at Long Valley, the species was moved from Category III to Category I.
- **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* at Long Valley on 3 November 2012.
- **White-tailed Robing** *Myiomela leucura*. Records at Cheung Chau on 14 February 2014 and Pak Sha O on 29-31 December 2014, which were accepted to Category I, led to a review of previous records, after which the following were also accepted as wild: Tai Po Kau on 23 January 1993 and 11 January-10 February 2004, Tai Po Kau Headland on 17 December 2011 and Shing Mun on 26-31 December 2012.
- **Crow-billed Drongo** *Dicrurus annectans* at Po Toi on 7 September 2014.
- **Chinese Barbet** *Psilopogon faber* at Tai Po Kau on 31 December 2014.
- **Ijima's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus ijimae* at Po Toi on 29 March 2015.
- **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis* at Mai Po NR on 19 April 2015.

Subspecies added to Category I:

- **Dark-sided Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica* ssp *rothschildi* / *cacabata* / *gulmergi* at Pui O 29 Dec 2013. The group of ssp breeding from NW Himalayas to West China is a potential split from the nominate Siberian ssp.
- **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* ssp *dealbatus* at Tai Long Wan 26 Oct 2013. Ssp *dealbatus* ("Swinhoe's Plover"), which breeds on the coast of S China (including Guangdong) through to S Vietnam, is a potential split from the nominate.

Species added to Category III:

- **Javan Myna** *Acridotheres javanicus* at Cyberport on 26 February 2013.
- **Indochinese Green Magpie** *Cissa hypoleuca* at Brides Pool on 26 February 2014.
- **Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hyperytha* at Mount Davis and Lau Shui Heung on 17 and 28 November 2014.

Potential first records still circulating / under review:

- **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* at Long Valley on 5 April 2014.
- **Rosy Minivet** *Pericrocotus roseus* at Po Toi on 27 April 2014.
- **Asian Short-toed Lark** *Alaudala cheleensis* at Lok Ma Chau on 20 November 2014.

- **Brown-eared Bulbul** *Hypsipetes amaurotis* at Chai Wan on 9 March 2015.
- **Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher** *Ceyx erithaca* at Tai Po Kau on 7 May 2015.

On-going work on difficult species or species groups:

- **Styan's / Middenforff's Grasshopper Warbler** (awaiting DNA on 8 birds)
- **Purple Swamphen** (taxon in HK - *poliocephalus* or *indicus* or even something else?)
- **Black-throated Laughingthrush** *Garrulax chinensis* (awaiting photographs to determine if individuals with grey cheeks are of the “*lugens*” morph of *G. chinensis* or are examples of the Hainan ssp *monachus*, “Swinhoe’s Laughingthrush”?)

Taxonomic changes:

- **Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula* becomes **Chinese Blackbird** *T. mandarinus*, following recognition of the latter as a full species by the IOC (5.2).

Record assessment:

- The Records Committee has completed assessment of 126 URFs for the year 2014.

Hong Kong Bird Reports (HKBR)

- **HKBR 2013** was available to members in printed or digital format in May 2015. **HKBR 2014** is expected to be posted / made available to members in May 2016.

Number of species by year

- Although it is difficult to compare years due to changes in taxonomy, the species count in 2014 is the highest in the records of HKBWS, and shows an increase on the period 2009-2013 when numbers were fairly steady:

No. of species	Year
318	2000
380	2006
382	2007
385	2008
396	2009
399	2010
397	2011
404	2012
393	2013
411 (to date)	2014

HKBWS Archive. The Records Committee, with assistance from HKBWS Staff, is compiling a digital archive of all historical records comprising data used in *The Avifauna* plus all records since that publication (1999 to date), in the form of digitised Record Cards, Unusual Record

Forms and Annual Master Files. This is intended as a permanent and easily referenced digital archive of all important HKBWS data. All Records Cards are now available as a complete hard copy set but progress on digitising them has been slow given other priorities. All data from 1999 onwards is now available in digitised form as well as all digital data from graphs included in *The Avifauna*.