



香港觀鳥會有限公司
THE HONG KONG BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY Limited

認可公共性質慈善機構 Approved Charitable Institution of Public Character

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Secretary, Town Planning Board
15/F, North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong
(E-mail: tpbpd@pland.gov.hk)

26 April 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

Objection on Application for Amendment of Plan in Ping Kong (Y/NE-PK/1)

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) would like to raise our objection on the Application for Amendment of Plan in Ping Kong (Y/NE-PK/1) with regard to the additional information supplied by the applicant, based on the following reasons:

1. Current Zoning is suitable for the area

1.1. The planning intention of the “Agricultural” Zoning is to protect good quality land for agricultural use¹. Currently both active and abandoned farmland is found in the area, indicating that there is great potential for agricultural activities. According to a local research², agricultural lands often have a high ecological value and support a unique community of birds. Agricultural lands in Hong Kong are currently under great pressure from various developments, thus there is a need to preserve them for conservation of rural cultures and biodiversity. The site is one of the few remaining pieces of large adjoining agricultural land in Hong Kong. The current zoning is appropriate for nature conservation and protecting the rural environment from urban encroachment.

2. Ecological Value of the Area

2.1. The area is the only confirmed breeding ground of Malayan Night Heron

¹ TPB, 2008, Master Schedule of Notes – Agriculture, available at http://www.info.gov.hk/tpb/en/forms/Schedule_Notes/msn_gb_e.pdf

² Leven M.R., 1998, ‘Special Feature – Focus on Farmlands’, *Porcupine!*, no. 18, Newsletter of Ecology & Biodiversity, The School of Biological Sciences, The University of Hong Kong.

(*Gorsachius melanolophus*), a rare species with scarce records in Hong Kong³.

- 2.2. There also breeding records of other uncommon species, including Greater Painted Snipe, Black Baza and Asian Barred Owlet in the Ping Kong area. Species of conservation interest such as Crested Serpent Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle and Crested Goshawk, which are Grade 2 Protected Animals in China, are also regularly observed (Refer to attached bird list). These indicate that the area is an important habitat for many species.
- 2.3. Though the area is not a hotspot for bird-watchers, a total of 152 bird species have been recorded in the Ping Kong Area, of which 50 species are of conservation interest (Refer to attached bird list). The actual number of species occurring in Ping Kong is likely to be much higher, as the area is seriously overlooked in the past.
- 2.4. The area is particularly rich in terms of raptors diversity (14 species), which is more than half of all raptor species recorded in Hong Kong (27 species).
- 2.5. Given the habitat diversity (including active and abandoned wetland, fung shui woodlands and adjoining hilly shrublands) and avifauna diversity present in the area, The Ping Kong Area is likely to have high diversity of other fauna.
- 2.6. However, no ecological survey has been carried out in the area. Thus the ecological value of Ping Kong is seriously overlooked and underestimated.
- 2.7. The proposed zoning and development would completely destroy the ecosystem in the area, causing an unacceptable loss of biodiversity.
- 2.8. We consider that a detailed ecological survey should be carried out and the Town Planning Board should take account of the ecological value of the area and consult the Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department regarding the ecological impact.

3. Justification for the development

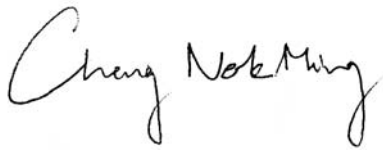
- 3.1. The claim by the applicant that the area is suitable for comprehensive development is based on a distorted interpretation of an outdated study in 2003. Such claims are misleading and should not be considered valid by the Town Planning Board.
- 3.2. The proposed development is not sustainable there are no sustainable economic benefits brought to the local residents, but only the instant income generated to a limited group of people from selling of land to the developer.
- 3.3. The traffic introduced by the proposed development would also cause unacceptable environmental impact.

³ The Record can be viewed on the archive of HKBWS forum:
<http://www.hkbws.org.hk/cgi-bin/YaBB.pl?board=PhotoGallery;action=display;num=1094452205>

3.4. The ecological concerns have not been addressed by the applicant in the supplementary information. Nevertheless, the proposed development would cause an unacceptable ecological impact.

Based on the above reasons, the HKBWS respectfully request the Town Planning Board to reject the proposed change of zoning and proposed development. Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheng Nok Ming". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Cheng Nok Ming
Conservation Officer
Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

Attachment:

Birds recorded in the Ping Kong Area

Birds Recorded in the Ping Kong Area

(Complied by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society)

Number of species	Common Name	Breeding Record	Level of Concern (Fellowes <i>et al</i> 2002)	Conservation Status
1	Grey Heron		PRC	
2	Great Egret		RC	
3	Little Egret		RC	
4	Cattle Egret		LC	
5	Chinese Pond Heron		RC	
6	Striated Heron		LC	
7	Black-crowned Night Heron		LC	
8	Malayan Night Heron	b		CRDB (Endangered)
9	Yellow Bittern		LC	
10	Cinnamon Bittern		LC	
11	Black Baza	b		PRC Class II protected animal
12	Black Kite		RC	PRC Class II protected animal
13	White-bellied Sea Eagle		RC	PRC Class II protected animal
14	Crested Serpent Eagle		LC	PRC Class II protected animal, CRDB (Vulnerable)
15	Crested Goshawk			CRDB (Rare), PRC Class II protected animal
16	Chinese Goshawk			PRC Class II protected animal
17	Japanese Sparrowhawk			PRC Class II protected animal
18	Besra	b		PRC Class II protected animal
19	Eurasian Sparrowhawk			PRC Class II protected animal
20	Common Buzzard			PRC Class II protected animal
21	Bonelli's Eagle		RC	CRDB (Rare), PRC Class II protected animal
22	Common Kestrel			PRC Class II protected animal
23	Eurasian Hobby		LC	PRC Class II protected animal
24	Peregrine Falcon		LC	PRC Class II protected animal
25	Chinese Francolin			
26	Japanese Quail		LC	
27	Yellow-legged Button-quail			
28	Slaty-legged Crane	b		CRDB (Indeterminate)
29	White-breasted Waterhen	b		
30	Common Moorhen			
31	Greater Painted-snipe	b	LC	
32	Little Ringed Plover		LC	
33	Green Sandpiper			
34	Wood Sandpiper		LC	
35	Common Sandpiper			
36	Eurasian Woodcock			
37	Pintail Snipe			

38	Common Snipe			
39	Rock Dove			
40	Oriental Turtle Dove			
41	Red Turtle Dove			
42	Spotted Dove	b		
43	Emerald Dove	b		
44	Rose-ringed Parrot			
45	Chestnut-winged Cuckoo	b		
46	Large Hawk Cuckoo	b		
47	Indian Cuckoo	b		
48	Oriental Cuckoo			
49	Plaintive Cuckoo			
50	Common Koel	b		
51	Greater Coucal	b		PRC Class II protected animal, CRDB (Vulnerable)
52	Lesser Coucal	b		PRC Class II protected animal, CRDB (Vulnerable)
53	Collared Scops Owl	b		PRC Class II protected animal
54	Asian Barred Owlet	b		PRC Class II protected animal
55	Brown Hawk Owl			PRC Class II protected animal
56	Grey Nightjar		LC	
57	Savanna Nightjar			
58	Pacific Swift		LC	
59	Little Swift			
60	Common Kingfisher			
61	White-throated Kingfisher	b	LC	
62	Black-capped Kingfisher		LC	
63	Blue-tailed Bee-eater			
64	Dollarbird			
65	Great Barbet			
66	Eurasian Wryneck			
67	Barn Swallow	b		
68	Red-rumped Swallow			
69	Asian House Martin			
70	Yellow Wagtail			
71	Grey Wagtail			
72	White Wagtail	b		
73	Richard's Pipit			
74	Olive-backed Pipit			
75	Red-throated Pipit			
76	Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike			
77	Swinhoe's Minivet		LC	
78	Grey-chinned Minivet		LC	
79	Scarlet Minivet	b		

80	Red-whiskered Bulbul	b		
81	Chinese Bulbul	b		
82	Sooty-headed Bulbul	b		
83	Chestnut Bulbul			
84	Brown Shrike			
85	Long-tailed Shrike	b		
86	Rufous-tailed Robin			
87	Siberian Rubythroat			
88	Red-flanked Bluetail			
89	Oriental Magpie Robin	b		
90	Daurian Redstart			
91	Common Stonechat			
92	Blue Rock Thrush			
93	Blue Whistling Thrush	b		
94	Orange-headed Thrush			
95	Siberian Thrush			
96	Japanese Thrush			
97	Common Blackbird			
98	Brown-headed Thrush			
99	Grey-backed Thrush			
100	Scaly Thrush			
101	Rufus-capped Babbler			
102	Masked Laughingthrush	b		
103	Greater Necklaced	b		
104	Black-throated Laughingthrush			
105	Hwamei			
106	Asian Stubtail Warbler			
107	Japanese Bush Warbler			
108	Zitting Cisticola		LC	
109	Bright-capped Cisticola		LC	
110	Yellow-bellied Prinia	b		
111	Plain Prinia	b		
112	Common Tailorbird	b		
113	Dusky Warbler			
114	Pallas's Leaf Warbler			
115	Yellow-browed Warbler			
116	Arctic Warbler			
117	Pale-legged Leaf Warbler			
118	Grey-streaked Flycatcher			
119	Dark-sided Flycatcher			
120	Asian Brown Flycatcher			
121	Narcissus Flycatcher			

122	Mugimaki Flycatcher			
123	Red-throated Flycatcher			
124	Black-naped Monarch			
125	Asian Paradise Flycatcher		LC	
126	Great Tit	b		
127	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch			
128	Buff-bellied Flowerpecker			
129	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	b		
130	Fork-tailed Sunbird			
131	Japanese White-eye	b		
132	Little Bunting			
133	Chestnut Bunting			
134	Black-faced Bunting			
135	Yellow-billed Grosbeak		LC	
136	White-rumped Munia			
137	Scaly-breasted Munia			
138	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	b		
139	Red-billed Starling		GC	
140	White-cheeked Starling		PRC	
141	Black-collared Starling	b		
142	White-shouldered Starling		LC	
143	Common Myna			
144	Crested Myna	b		
145	Black-naped Oriole		LC	
146	Black Drongo			
147	Ashy Drongo		LC	
148	Hair-crested Drongo	b		
149	Blue Magpie	b		
150	Grey Treepie	b	LC	
151	Common Magpie	b		
152	Large-billed Crow			

Level of Concern – LC = Local Concern, RC = Regional Concern, PRC = Potential Regional Concern, PGC = Potential Global Concern, GC = Global Concern. (Fellowes et al. 2002)

Fellow, J. R. *et al.* (2002). Wild animals to watch: terrestrial and freshwater fauna of conservation concern in Hong Kong. In Hodgkiss, I.J. (ed.). *Memoirs of the Hong Kong Natural History Society*, No. 19, Hong Kong. pp.123-159.

CRDB = China Red Data Book Status