

Autumn Raptor Migration

Early arrivals for September 2009.

Summary:

The five Japanese Sparrowhawks reported this month was the most numerous early arriving migrant raptors here. This was followed by two Oriental Honey Buzzards, an early Common Buzzard, an Osprey and a Peregrine Falcon over Marina Bay on 28th, which sets a new arrival date for this *falco*.

1. Oriental Honey Buzzard

Lena Chow reported an Oriental Honey Buzzard at Aljunied Park on 6th Sept. However this time round she did not get any photos. On 4th Sept 2007, she took some photos of a pair of Honey Buzzards perched on a tree from her window at the same place. Kim Seng alerted me to check if they were the resident *Torquatus* or the visiting *Orientalis* race. From the side profile, there was hardly any crest showing and the barrings were confined to the lower belly. Her photo showed an *orientalis* race, most probably an adult pale morph male. We will have to revise the early arrival date for this buzzard from the old extreme date of 10th Sept. Ding Li reported another one perched on an Acacia tree at the National Junior College on the 18th.

2. Japanese Sparrowhawk

On 19th Sept, Martii Siponen managed to identify a flying male Japanese Sparrowhawk from a long distance photo taken at Sungei Buloh. This was the first record for this autumn. He also had another Sparrowhawk at the same place but was unable to ID it. A day later, Pete Jones and Horst Flotow, both reported sightings of this *accipiter*. Pete's had his flying over the Chinese Gardens while Horst reported his circling over Kent Ridge Park. Over at Pulau Ubin, another one was reported on the same day flying towards Changi by John Spencer. On 24th, Gim Cheong was searching for the Asian Dowitcher at Sungei Buloh when he saw a Japanese Sparrowhawk flying overhead in a westernly direction.

3. Common Buzzard

A very early arrival was reported by Avian Chia at Tengah Airbase on 25th Sept. This was a new location for this uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant which seems to confirm their preference for open airport grounds.

4. Osprey

During the public walk at Kranji on 26th Sept with Kenneth Kee, we spotted the Osprey perched on one of the BBC towers. The Osprey is both a migrant and non-breeding visitor to Singapore.

5. Peregrine Falcon

Last but not least, Pete Jones was at the F1 Race at Marina Bay on 28th Sept when he witnessed a Peregrine Falcon sparring with a White-bellied Sea Eagle overhead. This could be our new arrival date as the extreme date was on the 14th Oct. We had 2 records of Peregrines in August in the past, but we suspected that they were the *ernesti* race.

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