

# Report on the 5<sup>th</sup> Fall Migration Bird Census

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Our fifth Fall Migration Bird Census (FMBC) held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2008, was marked by generally cloudy weather and a fast rising tide. 48 people participated at 26 selected sites island-wide. In all, 7,343 birds of 142 species were recorded, an increase from 7,159 birds of 134 of 2007 (Lim 2007).

Of the 26 sites counted, Lorong Halus was yet again the most bird diverse with 57 species counted followed by Neo Tiew Lane 2 with 51 species and Buloh Route 2 with 46 species. The least diverse sites were Bukit Brown with 23 species, followed by Sime Road with 23 species and Mount Faber with 24 species respectively.

The most bird populous site was Buloh Route 1 which had 568 birds. Coming in second was Punggol with 446 birds and third was Botanic Gardens with 439 birds. The least populous sites were Nee Soon with 67 birds followed by Mount Faber (93 birds) and Bukit Brown (115).

Because of the lack of volunteers, Changi Coast, Pasir Ris Park and Tampines were left out of this year's census. Two other sites, Marina City Park and Sentosa, were left out because of large scale construction activities.

What then was Singapore's most abundant bird this round? The champion bird of 2007 retained its crown with a total of 929 birds, an decrease from 1,071 birds counted last year. Second was Asian Glossy Starling with a score of 817 birds. Jumping to third was Pink-necked Green Pigeon with 347 birds, up from 170 birds previously.

Coming in fourth to tenth positions were Pacific Swallow (335 birds), Yellow-vented Bulbul (300), Pacific Golden Plover (256), Spotted Dove (206), House Crow (204), Black-naped Oriole (203) and Common Redshank (198).

Making up the eleventh to twentieth positions were two herons, a parakeet, a pigeon, a shorebird and the rest, passerines, including one each of starling, swallow, babbler, sunbird and munia. Of the top twenty species, fourteen (70%) were resident as compared to 90% in 2007 (see Table 1).

The top 20 birds of FMBC 2008 are listed below (Table 1).

#	SPECIES	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
1	WHITE-VENTED MYNA	929	12.65
2	ASIAN GLOSSY STARLING	817	11.13
3	PINK-NECKED GREEN PIGEON	347	4.73

4	PACIFIC SWALLOW	335	4.56
5	YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL	300	4.09
6	PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER*	256	3.49
7	SPOTTED DOVE	206	2.81
8	HOUSE CROW	204	2.78
9	BLACK-NAPED ORIOLE	203	2.76
10	COMMON REDSHANK*	198	2.70
11	GREY HERON	167	2.27
12	LITTLE EGRET*	159	2.17
13	COMMON PIGEON	152	2.07
14	DAURIAN STARLING*	151	2.06
15	SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA	141	1.92
16	LONG-TAILED PARAKEET*	125	1.70
17	BARN SWALLOW*	119	1.62
18	STRIPED TIT-BABBLER	112	1.53
19	OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD	105	1.43
20	WHIMBREL*	104	1.42

Note: An asterisk (\*) denotes a migrant.

**Table 1: Top 20 Most Abundant Birds in FMBC 2008**

Of the 56 nationally threatened species, 20 or 45% were recorded. This is well below 45% recorded in 2007. The most numerous threatened species was Grey Heron, 11<sup>th</sup> overall, with a spectacular count of 167 birds, down from 319 birds in 2007. Also showing well were Straw-headed Bulbul, with 57 birds, an increase from 46 birds of last year, Oriental Magpie-robin (22), Red Junglefowl (17) and Little Tern (17).

The only globally threatened species recorded was the Straw-headed Bulbul which was present at 9 sites, up from 7 sites in 2007 and 5 in 2006. The following globally near-threatened species were also recorded: Red-crowned Barbet (1), Chestnut-bellied Malkoha (3), Long-tailed Parakeet (125), Mangrove Whistler (1) and Short-tailed Babbler (6).

34 (24%) of 142 were true migrants as compared with 15% in 2007, 18% in 2006, 21% in 2005 and 24% in 2004. Of these 34, six were among the top twenty birds counted. The other 28 species (in order of decreasing abundance) included Common Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Cattle Egret, Lesser Sand Plover, Common Greenshank, Brown Shrike, Yellow-rumped Flycatcher, Tiger Shrike, Lesser Crested Tern, Great Egret, Common Kingfisher, Oriental Reed Warbler, Forest Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Wood Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Arctic Warbler, Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, Terek Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Swift Tern, Crested Honey Buzzard, Yellow-billed Egret, Crow-billed Drongo, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Siberian Blue Robin and Yellow Wagtail. It is

also worth noting that new early dates were set for two species – Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, located at Khatib Bongsu, by 16 days and Siberian Blue Robin, by 11 days.

Unlike in the past two years, one migrant raptor was recorded.

In addition to the 142 species recorded, there was also an additional 7 (4 in 2007, 5 in 2006 and 2005, and 7 species in 2004) of exotics recorded comprising 24 birds (8 in 2007, 20 in 2006, 10 in 2005 and 41 birds in 2004). These included 3 Black Swans, 2 Mute Swans, 2 feral Oriental Pied Hornbills, 1 Rhinoceros Hornbill, 1 Red Junglefowl, 1 Painted Stork and a flock of 14 Japanese White-eyes.

A total of 359 unidentified birds (431 in 2007 and 411 in 2006) were recorded in addition to the 7,343 birds counted. 294 (82%) were swiftlets.

The following fantastic people led or assisted in FMBC 2008:

Doreen Ang, Richard Carden, Chan Kim Cheng, Chew Leong Hai, Chew Min Soong, Alfred Chia, Andrew Chow, Geoffrey Davison, Willie Foo, Goh Si Guim, Margie Hall, James Heng, Ho Hua Chew, Ali Jaafar, Kenneth Kee, Nessie Khoo, Khuan Jia Hui, Susan Knight, Koh Ai Kiak, Maurice Kwan, Danny Lau, Beng Lee, Lee Ee Ling, Jimmy Lee, Lim Kim Chuah, Lim Kim Keang, Lim Kim Seng, Cyril Ng, Peng Ah Huay, Quek Joo Kwang, Jane Rogers, Seow Boon Quey, Gloria Seow, John Spencer, Liana Knight Spencer, Tan Kok Hui, Tan Siew Kwang, Tan Soon Im, Wee Sau Cheng, Wing Chong, Wong Chung Cheong, Wong Yoke Suey, Yang Pah Liang, Sunny Yeo, Yong Ding Li, Mel and Tom Yuan, and Rehan Yusoff.

Thanks once again to everyone who helped ensure the success of this year's FMBC. Hope you had fun and see you again in 2009!

## References

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