

Third Raptor Watch 2010 Report

We had the largest turnout of 55 counters compared to last year (47) but unfortunately most of the raptors stay put. There was a heavy squall the night before and the skies were mainly overcast for most of the day. Visibility was good with light winds and temperatures at low 30s. Many of the raptors were seen perched with their wings spread out to dry. This may have accounted for the low count this year. Direction of flight when recorded was mostly south to south-east.



Stacked Photos of a hunting Eastern Marsh Harrier by Nicholas Tan

Nevertheless, we still ended up with a creditable total count of 253 raptors. 167 were migrants (Winter Visitor + Passage Migrant) with 85 residents and 1 non-breeding visitor. There were only 6 migrant species seen with the Oriental Honey Buzzards leading the count at 74 birds (33 recorded at Japanese Gardens). This was followed by 28 Black Bazas, 20 Japanese Sparrowhawks, 8 Eastern Marsh Harriers (all recorded at Tanah Merah), 7 Chinese Goshawks and 2 Grey-faced Buzzards (Kent Ridge). A lone Osprey was spotted at Seletar West. We had 25 unidentified raptors (a possible Booted Eagle and an Aquila Eagle) and 3 Accipiters. The peak times when most of the raptors were seen were between 10am-12am and 2pm-3pm.

Four resident species were counted with the Brahminy Kite coming in tops at 50. It gathered a high count of 17 at the Japanese Gardens followed by 11 at Tuas. White-bellied Sea-eagles were second at 19 followed by 9 Black-winged Kites (only at Poyan and Tuas) and 7 Changeable Hawk-eagles.

John Spencer and his team had the highest count of 73 at the Japanese Gardens followed by Horst Flotow's team at Kent Ridge Park with a total of 61. The rest of the sites all had low counts of 14 for Poyan to 29 at Tuas and Tanah Merah each. We were expecting large flocks at the last two sites after Pete Jones's report of 180 Black Bazas earlier in the week. But Tuas had only 6 Oriental Honey Buzzards and Tanah Merah yielded 8 Marsh Harriers and 2 Japanese Sparrowhawks.

The day ended in a more relaxed mood with a sumptuous buffet dinner at Kim Chuah's place. Alan Owyong gave a slide talk on the 6th International Raptor Conference which he, Ding Li and Yue Yun attended in Mongolia and the Raptor trip there. Kim Chuah tortured everyone with a Raptor's quiz with Gim Cheong winning a book prize by correctly identifying 39 out of 51 raptors shown. Well done!

Many thanks to everyone for spending the Sunday getting sunburned and sore eyes counting and recording raptors. It was all worthwhile and contributes greatly to the migratory study of these Raptors in Asia. Report will be sent to the ARRCN's Asian Raptor Migration Survey. This will not be possible without you.

John Spencer, Soe Tint, Pat Chan, Yuko Tokita, Cuifen Pui, Wing Chong, Lam Hon Pui, J K Quek, B Q Seow, Horst and Estella Flotow, Jeremy and Amanda Lewis, Mick Price, Danny Lau, Con Foley, Jimmy Lee, Tan Kok Hui, Alan OwYong, Terry and Jane Heppell, Lee Ee Ling, Pauline Lee, Jeanie Yeo, Yang Pah Liang, Ali Jaafar, Robert Casteels, Goh Yue Yun, Sunny Yeo, KC and Amy Tsang, Kenneth Kee, Yong Ding Li, Nandini and Aditya Bajekal, Tan Hang Chong, Aron Sebastian + Friend, Tan Ju Lin, Arturo Baluyot, Lim Kim Chuah, Gerard Francis, Erik Mobrand + Friend, Joey Chew, Chian Chye Hock, Tan Gim Cheong, Lioe Kim Swee, Linda Oei, Stanley Phang, Felix Wong, Doreen Ang, Alfred Chia and Lim Kim Keang.

Report by Alan OwYong edited by Kenneth Kee.

Photo Credit Nicholas Tan

